

Attitudes of the Indigenous People from Providencia, Amazon towards the Bora Language

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Abstract : Since the end of the 19th century, the Bora people struggled to survive two stages of colonial domination, which resulted in situations of forced contact with the Western world. Their inclusion in global designs altered the configuration of their local spaces and social practices; thus the Bora language was affected and prone to transformation. This descriptive, interpretive study, within the indigenous and minoritized groups' research field, aimed at analysing the linguistic attitudes as well as the contextual situation of the Bora language in Providencia, an ancestral territory and a speech community contained in the midst of the Colombian Amazon rainforest. Through the inquiry of their sociolinguistic practices, this study also considered the effects of the course of events derived from the rubber exploitation in the late 19th century, and the arrival of the Capuchin's mission in the early 20th century. The methodology used in this study had an ethnographic approach, which allowed the researcher to study the social phenomena from the perspective of the participants. Fieldwork, diary, field notes, and semi-structured interviews were conducted and then triangulated with participant observations. The findings of this study suggest that there is a transition from current individual bilingualism towards Spanish monolingualism; this is enhanced by the absence of a functional distribution of the three varieties (Bora, Huitoto, and Spanish). Also, the positive attitudes towards the Spanish language are based on its functionality while positive attitudes towards the Bora language mostly refer to pride and identity. Negative attitudes are only directed towards the Bora language. In the search for the roots of these negative attitudes, appeared the traumatic experiences of the rubber exploitation and the indigenous experiences at the capuchin's boarding school. Finally, the situation of the Bora language can be configured as a social fact strongly connected to previous years of colonial dominations and to the current and continuous incursion of new global-colonial designs.

Keywords : Bora language, language contact, linguistic attitudes, speech communities

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