Changing livelihoods and language repertoires:

Hunting, fishing and gold mining in the Southeast Peruvian Amazon

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Abstract

This article investigates how over the space of three decades the language repertoires of the Arakmbut people of the SE Peruvian Amazon have shifted from being predominantly Harakmbut language based to Spanish language based. It asks not how one language has come to replace another in the daily lives of the Arakmbut, but what this shift represents in terms of changing lifestyles, social relations, desirable affiliations and the changing value Harakmbut and Spanish language resources have for them in furthering these relationships. Drawing on long term ethnographic research, it present four scenarios over this period through which the changes in Arakmbut livelihoods from hunting and fishing to gold mining are discussed and what these changes mean in terms of their social, cultural and spiritual relationships with their territory. As their livelihoods have become more entwined with the gold economy and new national alliances and international networks, they have sought to reshape their communicative repertoires to respond to and ensure their continuing access to resources for their health and stability as a community in an intense and fast moving social, economic and cultural landscape.

Keywords: Arakmbut, Amarakaeri, Harakmbut, Peruvian Amazon, language repertoire, language

shift

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1 Introduction

At the beginning of the 1980s when I first had the privilege of living with the Arakmbut community of San Jose in the Madre de Dios region of the Peruvian Amazon, the Harakmbut language was the one most heard in the community. By 2010 and my recent visits to San Jose, the language situation had changed and Spanish is today the language most heard and used. This change has been accompanied by a radical change in Arakmbut territory and the kinds of livelihoods it offers them. In the 1980s they were engaged predominantly in hunting, fishing and small-scale agriculture in this area of lowland tropical rainforest, but by the 2010s artisan gold mining had become the mainstay of their livelihoods. Arriving in the community of San Jose in the 21st century, one finds a lowland tropical rainforest environment devastated by unregulated artisan gold mining on an industrial scale, accompanied by massive in-migration. This article investigates how this language shift has taken place, asking not how one language has come to replace another in the daily lives of the Arakmbut (formerly referred to as Amarakaeri), but what this shift represents in terms of changing lifestyles, social relations, desirable affiliations and the changing value Harakmbut and Spanish language resources have for them in furthering these relationships.

The change in Arakmbut livelihoods implies a "recentering" (Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 13) of their language resources. Social interactions and relationships forged to promote their hunting and fishing livelihoods and to ensure the strength and health of their community and home territory are built around a Harakmbut-language repertoire. Harakmbut language resources are embedded in their *wandari*, a term translated into English as 'territory,' which for the Arakmbut encompasses the land, the forest and rivers, their creatures and spirits, and Arakmbut history and identity. The gold-mining activities they rely on today for their subsistence and the relationships vital to its success and continuation are dependent on Spanish-language communicative resources. A Spanish-language repertoire is necessary for the exploitation of gold dust found in river sediments and subsoils, through interactions with migrants to the region and through advocacy for the protection of what is today their legally delimited and officially recognized *territorio* 'territory'. The composition of their language repertoires has changed over time, widening in scope to meet their needs for, *inter alia*, new relationships with representatives of the state, missionaries and migrants from the Peruvian Andes and urban fringes. As their livelihoods have become more entwined with the gold economy and new national alliances and international networks, they have sought to reshape their communicative repertoires to respond to and ensure their continuing access to their territory's resources for their health and stability as a community in an intense and fast-moving social, economic and cultural landscape.

The article explores the ways that different language resources are valued (Hymes 1996; Martin-Jones et al. 2012) through four scenarios. The first event is the performance of an

Arakmbut myth on an evening in 1980. This is followed by a meeting some ten years later when the Arakmbut decided to change the name by which they were known. The third event takes place around a televised volleyball game in San Jose community in 2010, and the fourth is a community meeting to discuss gold-mining legislation. These social and linguistic scenarios explore language uses in time and over time. They are illustrative of the San Jose Arakmbut people's multilingual and multigenre repertoires of Harakmbut and Spanish, and they are used to help understand the nature of Arakmbut active engagement with the changes in territory, livelihoods, and physical environment. Over this period there have been massive in-migration and physical and social mobility which, as Blommaert (2013) highlights, are important processes and concepts for understanding changing sociolinguistic environments and changing language use.

The article draws on ethnographic research with the community of San Jose over a period of 35 years,[1] from published work (see Aikman 1999, Aikman 2009, and Aikman 2012) and data gathered over this period from field work of different durations. It also draws on the work of Andrew Gray (1986, 1996, 1997a, 1997b). Following Hymes (1996) and McCarty (2011), it emphasizes historically grounding ethnography in order to examine ways in which language is used for sociocultural interaction and consider how people deploy language in specific social arenas and as active agents (Blommaert 2013; Duchene and Heller 2007; Grenoble 2009; Meek 2007). The concept of language repertoire is used to throw light on the nature of the changes of language forms, genres and styles and the hybridity and "bits and pieces of language practices" (Garcia and Flores 2012:240; Makoni and Pennycook 2007) that San Jose Arakmbut use in their livelihood activities.[2] It also allows for an investigation of the fluidity and intricacies of language use in an "age of heightened mobility and transnational communication" (Arnaut 2012: 3) as distinct from perceiving language as a bounded, counted and grammatically structured entity (Collins and Blot 2003). In San Jose, language repertoires are changing as the knowledge needed for constructing meaningful interactions changes and shifts (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez 2002), as they make sociopolitical affiliations which are vital for their individual and collective health. The diglossic relationship between the oral tradition of the Harakmbut language and the literate and international language of Spanish, used as a lingua franca throughout Peru today, provides a very unequal terrain for these interactions.

2 The linguistic and sociohistorical environments of the San Jose Arakmbut

The San Jose village and its surrounding territory are located in southeast (SE) Peru, Department of Madre de Dios, in the lowland tropical rainforest of the Amazon Basin. It is one of five Arakmbut communities situated between the right bank of the Madre de Dios River and the

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[1] I am grateful to the Arakmbut for their support and friendship over many years. The ideas and analysis in this paper are my own and all names have been changed.
[2] In taking this perspective, I am, nevertheless, acutely aware as a researcher of the shrinking spaces where the Harakmbut language has value and meaning for the San Jose Arakmbut.

Inambari river and the foothills of the Andes. Their indigenous neighbors are Ese-Eja (Takanan language family) in the lower Madre de Dios River towards the border with Bolivia, and Matsigenka (Arawak language family)[3] in the east of the Department and in the Manu National Park (see Map 1). The Department of Madre de Dios is also home to several indigenous groups whose history in the region is more recent, arriving in the late 19th century: Yine (Piro) (Arawak language family), Amahuaca and Shipibo (Pano language family) and Kichwa Runa (Quechua language family) (FENAMAD). There are also at least four small nomadic indigenous groups (the so-called Mashco-Piro from the Arakwak language family) living in isolation (Huertas Castillo 2002).

The identification and linguistic status of Harakmbut has been complicated by changes in names attributed to the Harakmbut speaking peoples. This situation is not unique to Harakmbut and, as Aikhenvald (2012: xvii) notes, one of the major issues in Amazonian languages is names of language families and of languages themselves. There are considered to be some 350 languages in lowland Amazonia grouped into some fifteen language families and isolates, resembling a patchwork quilt (Aikhenvald 2012). None of the Amazonian languages had a written tradition before the European invasion in the 1500s, and the vast majority which have a written form today acquired this over the 20th century through the work of, among others, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and spurred on by a demand for intercultural bilingual schooling (Aikman 2012).

There has been discussion as to whether Harakmbut is a single language isolate (Wise 1999) or a small language family (Aikhenvald 2012; Campbell 2012). Adelaar (2000, 2007) posits a genetic relationship between Harakmbut in SE Peru and Katukinan in the State of Amazonas, Brazil, and that they form a small Harakmbut-Katukinan language family. Lyon (2003) discusses problems with classification in Madre de Dios and the problems that researchers have had in the past in recognizing Harakmbut as one language with various dialects and distinct from their neighboring Tacana, Pano and Arawak speakers. Helberg (1984) provides a detailed account of Harakmbut, indicating a complex structure, seminasals and the nasaling of vowel sounds. Aikhenvald (2012) summarizes the distinctive features of Harakmbut languages as their use of nominative-accusative, suffixes and prefixes, and numerous classifiers on verbs, adjectives, and nouns.

Since the beginning of the 20th century the name Mascho was used as a general term for the Harakmbut-speaking peoples. Lyon (2003) notes that this name was possibly erroneously applied and confused with a Piro group, but the name persisted through its use by Dominican missionaries in Madre de Dios. It was in the mission of Shintuya in the 1950s that the missionaries first became aware that the people to whom they had hitherto referred as Mashcos did not consider this their name. On the contrary, they understood the term to mean 'criminal' (Van den Eynde 1972). While the name persisted in the work of anthropologists and missionaries beyond the mid-20th century (Barriales 1973; Califano 1982), their own term, Harakmbut,

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[3]For discussion of Eje Eja oral tradition see Chavarria Mendoza 2003, and for discussion of Matsigenka see Shepard and Izquierdo 2003.

meaning '(good) people' (Gray 1987: 300), began to be more commonly used for both the people and the language. When I first worked with the people of San Jose in the early 1980s, the Arakambut were known in the academic literature and in Peruvian official discourses as "Amarakaeri". However, as is discussed later in this article, in 1992 they chose to use the name Arakmbut.[4]

The dialects of Harakmbut cluster into two main branches, each with subdialects: Wachipaeri (with Arasaeri, Sapiteri, and Toyeri) and Amarakaeri (with Kisambaeri) (Wise 1999). There are further dialectal differences: the Arakmbut of San Jose speak Wandakweri while the Arakmbut of Puerto Luz, a neighboring community, speak Kipodneri (Gray 1996; Helberg 1984). These differences, which are mainly lexical (Gray 1996), are reflective of residential and territorial distinctions which stem from a period before sustained contact with Peruvian national society and Dominican missionaries in the 1940s. Then the Arakmbut lived in communal *haktone* 'longhouses,' each a residential community which often took its name from a nearby stream or river (e.g., Wandakweri, 'people of the river Wandak'). Their history through the late 19th and early 20th centuries can be traced through movements of their longhouses over their extensive territory and the changing relationships and alliances between longhouses, as well as their interactions and affiliations with speakers of other Harakmbut dialects and of other indigenous peoples of the region. Anthropological research (Gray 1987 describes the San Jose Arakmbut as having, in common with all Harakmbut groups, a symmetric relationship terminology and social organization based on principles of gender, age, residence and marriage exchange. The Arakmbut have a system of seven patrilineal clans that play an important part in their relationships with their social, natural, and invisible worlds.

Over the turn of the 19th century, the Arakmbut felt the indirect impact of the international boom and demand for rubber, which was directly devastating the lives and territories of other Harakmbut and Ese-Eja neighbors who lived along the Madre de Dios River (García Morcillo 1982; Rummenhoeller 1985; Santos and Barclay 2002). Slaving expeditions for labor for the international rubber market provoked movements and migrations up into tributaries of the Madre de Dios and into the territory of the Arakmbut. This, in turn, led to conflict between indigenous groups. The expeditions also spread diseases new to the region, such as yellow fever and influenza, which caused widespread sickness and death (Barriales 1973; Van den Eynde 1972). Conflict, displacement, and disease, which continued through the first half of the 20th century, decimated the Harakmbut population, and in the 1950s Arakmbut from different longhouses sought refuge in the Dominican mission of Palatoa. From an estimated population of around 30,000 Harakmbut individuals in the 19th century, and some 10,000 before the rubber

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[4] The dynamics of change are evident in the fluidity and shifting of names and externally imposed labelling. To minimise confusion, I use the term Arakmbut (formerly Amarakaeri) for the people of San Jose, who are a sub-group of the Harakmbut people. Today the Arakmbut are the largest Harakmbut sub-group and live in five communities, one of which is San Jose. I also use the term Harakmbut to refer to the language spoken across the ethnic group including the people of San Jose.

boom, today the population is estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000 (Crevels 2012; Huertas Castillo 2002; Iviche 2003).

Arakmbut language repertoires have continued to be shaped by the social relationships they sought and maintained with other longhouses to secure marriage partners and political alliances, as well as access to the resources of their territory – animals, birds, fish, fruits, building materials, and the salt licks where the animals congregated – and to protect these resources from predation. As the following brief historical overview suggests, the language repertoires of the San Jose Arakmbut people have always been fluid and emergent. The move to Palatoa and then to the Shintuya mission signified important political changes and relationships which required new language resources and a new need for Spanish. Mission life revolved around Spanish-style hacienda farming, attendance in church, and Spanish-language primary schooling for the younger generations (Gray 1987; Wahl 1987). Those students who showed promise were sent for secondary schooling to Dominican boarding schools in the Andes. Around the mission, the forests and rivers became overhunted and over-fished, and Harakmbut continued to die from disease. In 1969 the Wakutangeri fled from the mission under the cover of darkness and returned to their *wandari*. There on the banks of the Karene River, they established their village of San Jose.

Returning to hunting, fishing, gathering, and slash-and-burn agriculture in their *wandari* allowed them to reestablish relationships between the invisible world, the natural world of the river and the forest, and their society. Their livelihoods also relied on a degree of incorporation into the monetary economy through gold work, and the natural resources of the region – timber, game, and gold - attracted interest nationally and internationally. By the 1960s several Quechuan families had established gardens and canteens and staked out claims for gold panning on the beaches and streams of the Karene. The river was a magnet for seasonal gold miners, and over the 1970s and 1980s shanty settlements proliferated. The increasing international price of gold drew landless and jobless migrants from throughout Peru in a new gold rush, who quickly set up permanent settlements and encroached ever further into the forest (Gray 1986; Rummenhoeller 1985). This new diversity of migrants communicated through Spanish, the language of the nation, of schooling, and of commerce. For some Spanish was a first language, but for many it was a second language, spoken with a diversity of first language "interferences," with multiple dialects and through heteroglossic practices.

In 1979 the Peruvian government embarked on a process of titling and delineating indigenous territories, and in 1986 the San Jose were presented with legal titles to a formally mapped and marked area of land within their extensive traditional *wandari*. The Law of Native Communities (Peruvian Law 22175, May 1978) legally recognized and formalized them as a Native Community and clearly demarcated their *territorio*. On the frontiers of national society and with increasing Spanish-language interactions with traders, explorers, and priests (Hvalkof 2008; Varese 1982), the San Jose Arakmbut found that holding a title *de jure* did not mean respect for their territorial boundary *de facto*. Miners, now illegally working within their *territorio*, were no longer seasonal visitors from the Cusco region, but on the contrary, the rush

for gold increased, and the miners – legal and illegal – intended to stay to make their fortunes. In 1982 the Arakmbut took the first steps towards establishing a regional indigenous representative organization, the Native Federation of Madre de Dios and Tributaries (Federación Nativa de Madre de Dios y Afluentes - FENAMAD). FENAMAD was established with a mandate to ensure respect for Native Community territories and for indigenous rights (Davila Puno 2005; Iviche 2003).

This brief, partial, and external history illustrates something of the wider physical, socioeconomic and linguistic environments of the San Jose Arakmbut. It indicates the changing nature of their lives and language repertoires. The next sections explore the increasing intensity and pace of change the Arakmbut have experienced over the past 35 years.

3 Scenario 1: The San Jose community, April 1980. *Wandari* nd Harakmbut language

> In the dusk, word spread from house to house around the San Jose clearing that Wairi was settling down outside to tell the myth of Marinke. Women gathered up their reed mats and placed them in the growing dark around the old man, men clustering together at one side, women and children at the other. A few women lingered in their kitchen huts to ensure that the large pots of meat were boiling. A group of brothers had brought home three wild pigs and they had been jointed and distributed according to clan and rank around the village. The cooking of the meat was underway and there would be plenty of "real food" for several days for everyone. It was a good night to sit outside together, a bright starry night, which meant the potentially dangerous forest spirits would keep well away. As Wairi warmed to his story about Marinke, a story familiar to everyone, the men and women participated and chipped in with the noises and language of animals, jokes and comments, accompanied by general laughter. Some of the hunters rose to their feet to mime the animal actions and demonstrate Marinke's flight up to the sky chased by jaguars. Babies and small children slept soundly on their mothers' laps, and as the story performance continued through the night, older children dozed and the young adults listened and chatted.

In 1980–1981, I spent 18 months living with the Arakmbut people of the San Jose community. Their major livelihood activities were centered on hunting and fishing. Men hunted wild pig, tapir, and deer, as well as smaller animals and birds. Men and women fished the large rivers and small streams, and women were gardeners providing staples of manioc, plantains, and a range of fruit and other vegetables. They were also mobile around their *wandari*, and families sometimes spent a few weeks or months in camps hunting and fishing. They had an intimate knowledge of forest products, both foodstuffs and materials for house building, clothing, and other needs such as bags and arrows. During the dry season they occasionally panned for gold dust in the sand on the wide beaches and sold this at a trading post a day's canoe journey downstream. They brought back cigarettes, tinned fish, shot for their guns and beer for community parties.

Their term *wandari* has many dimensions: it connotes landscape and features of historical, physical and mythological origin; it encompasses the visible world, but also an invisible world inhabited by the spirits which pervade human, animal, bird, and fish life. The myth of Marinke is about the birth and maturity of an Arakmbut hero character whose adventures take him through the *wandari* and its human and nonhuman worlds. It is a story about growth, responsibility, and distinct and unique aspects of Arakmbut culture and identity (Gray 1997b). It is also about the kinds of relationships that are necessary for the continuance of Arakmbut life, and how to access the potential and resources that their *wandari* offers. In the 1980s and 1990s when discussing with the Arakmbut what they wanted out of life and for their future, they expressed their desire to control access to the resources of their *wandari* and retain consent over what happens on it. They wanted a strong and healthy community, which depended on supplies of meat, fish, gold, and children who would continue life (Gray 1997a). They wanted to acquire new technologies and new knowledge, but they also wanted to be able to control change. Gray (1997a: 254) notes that "the Arakmbut ideal is based on stability, sufficiency and control over the environment." This control was not only economic, but social, cultural and political. The ability to hunt and fish safely depends on the ability of those who hunt and fishto establish and maintain desired beneficial relationships with kin, affines, and spirits. Focusing on Arakmbut livelihoods, as this article does, means a consideration of the ways in which the Arakmbut access and use the resources of their *wandari* safely and for the benefit of the health and strength of their community and their children.

The Harakmbut language myth-telling scenario brought the San Jose community together, and individuals were able to interpret and take meaning and value from the myth in different ways depending on, among other things, their age, gender and clan. Each individual related to the multiple layers of meaning in the myth according to their social and cultural repertoires. It was a collective and multimodal performance led by Wairi, involving bodily movement, gestures, sound and language – including the language of large animals such as tapirs or peccaries. The myth-telling reinforced a shared history and identity and their relationship with the visible and invisible worlds (Aikman 1999; Gray 1996; Helberg 1996). Writing in 1986, Gray notes that the San Jose Arakmbut said their three great myths, of which Marinke is one, help explain their social organization, culture and interactions with nonindigenous people.

Hunters at the peak of their abilities are heads of households who have developed the knowledge and skills to be good and safe hunters. Such skill and knowledge comes from learning through interactions with fathers, uncles, and other kin, through listening and learning from the stories and descriptions of hunters and elders such as Wairi who, through myths and stories, offer important information and knowledge about how to hunt. Accessing resources is about using language to develop strong beneficial relationships with close kin who have experience and knowledge to share.

Women at the peak of their abilities manage several different gardens with a diversity of crops, complemented by their knowledge of fruits, berries, insects and other forest resources. By means of dreams the Arakmbut find out about the creatures that live in the forest and river, and

hunters receive information from spirits about the animal world and where to go to have a successful hunt, how to keep safe, and how to provide well for the family. Young men and women learn to communicate with the spirits through dreaming, and acquire their knowledge from the spirits over time. A good and well-respected hunter – just as a good and well-respected gardener – is a person who manages their conversations with the spirits, avoids over-hunting or exploitation through their generosity and sharing of the fruits of their relationships and activities. This relationship is built up slowly through spiritual experience and learning from communication with the invisible world, and learning about how far they can use the potential in the environment without transgressing the health of the individual or the cosmos (Gray 1997a).

The story of Marinke's exploits with animals and spirits as he grows is well known to the Arakmbut but the telling of the myth that night was a performance of Wairi's knowledge and wisdom. It was crafted and informed by his knowledge of the *wandari*, knowledge he had acquired over his lifetime as a hunter and through the relationships he had cultivated with spirits. Being knowledgeable is about knowing not only words but classificatory names. These names identify different species and their relationships with the spirits. Knowledge from the visible world through hunting and knowledge from the invisible spirit world through dreaming are combined through language and names to reinforce among the Arakmbut ways of using the resources of the *wandari* safely and ensuring good health (Gray 1996). The importance of Wairi's telling of the Marinke myth that night in 1980 was in the names he knew and the way he used them to generate a sense of collective wellbeing and respect for their *wandari*.

Wairi reinforced his position as an elder and storyteller by sharing this wisdom and knowledge for the benefit of the community. Other elders are recognized for their use of knowledge of species and names for diagnosis and curing. The spirit of, for example, a tapir can make a person sick if the relationship is not carefully maintained. The curer draws on detailed understanding of the spirit's behavior and desires to chant to the spirit and lead it back into the forest. The *chindign* 'curing chant' is individual to the curer and will contain the names of fruit the tapir eats, and places it likes to wander and sleep. Once the tapir is lured away, the sick person will recover. A good curer develops knowledge of how life appears from the perspective of different animals, and does this through developing the languages of animals and communicating with them.

The Harakmbut language in its multiple forms and genres is used to establish the social and spiritual relationships important for the kind of life they value (Gray 1996, 1997a, 1997b). In San Jose in 1980, Spanish was rarely heard and only occasionally used by some of the adult men when there was a visitor in their midst, such as a trader, the schoolteacher, or myself.

4 Scenario 2: The neighboring Arakmbut village, May 1992. Changing names and multi-faceted identities

> In 1992 the leaders of the Arakmbut communities decided to hold a meeting together
> with representatives from their Federation (FENAMAD) to discuss problems of territorial
> rights, illegal gold miners and plans for a road near their community. During the meeting

they expressed their uneasiness about the names that were applied to them by 'outsiders.' They had become alert to the use of the term Amarakaeri by other Harakmbut peoples, by the Peruvian authorities, and by researchers, including myself. Some Arakmbut complained that the word translated as 'stupid,' while others said it referred to 'hunters who live over the hill.' After some debate, it was agreed that they would request that the name Arakmbut, their own name for themselves, be used in the future.

Among the San Jose people the word Arakmbut is used in various ways (Gray 1997b). It has the same sense as the Spanish terms *gente* or *pueblo*, and it is used to refer to all those who speak the Harakmbut language. It also refers to the people from the five Arakmbut Harakmbut-speaking communities, and is sometimes used to refer to people of the same clan. Prior to the 1950s, other indigenous neighbors or those with whom they had wary relationships were referred to as *taka,* meaning 'foreigner' or 'someone from elsewhere' (Gray 1997b: 138). Since the establishment of the San Jose community in the late 1960s, and increased contact with indigenous migrant gold laborers from the Cusco region, they used the term *wahaipe* for migrants of Andean origin, and non-Andean migrants were *amiko*. When I first stayed in San Jose I was referred to as *gringo* and also *apoyning*, meaning 'boa constrictor,' indicating my ambiguous position which they had yet to evaluate. This name changed as my relationship with members of the community changed.

Being Arakmbut is not only about speaking Harakmbut, or being part of a patrilineal clan but also, as Gray (1997a) argues, about acting as Arakmbut and sharing certain features, such as the capacity to cooperate for mutual benefit and to organize themselves to protect their families and offspring. As Wairi's telling of the Marinke myth demonstrates, acting as Arakmbut for collective and individual health and strength is about using knowledge, language, and names to establish and maintain desirable social and spiritual affiliations. The name Arakmbut identifies them in relation to the species and spirits of their *wandari*.

The decision about their name happened at a time of increased awareness of their position within the Peruvian nation and intensifying contact with diverse members of national and international society. The term Amarakaeri was used for this subgroup of Harakmbut when I first lived in San Jose (Gray 1986; Moore 1979). However, increasing interaction with researchers and representatives of Amazon indigenous organizations, and the expansion of unregulated migration and squatter settlements led the Arakmbut to question these labels. Illegal and environmentally devastating mining practices using mercury were changing social relationships and structures within and beyond the San Jose community. The movements of people, the expansion of institutions, and the loss of animals, fish, and spirits thrust the Arakmbut into new relationships, new sociolinguistic arenas and new livelihood challenges.

Their determination to rid themselves of pejorative labels and their associations was one expression of their increased political organization in the face of violations of their territorial rights and uncontrollable depletion of the resources of their *wandari*. Their decision to be referred to externally as Arakmbut rather than Amarakaeri was an "act of power" and a performance of an identity (Butler 1999). The use of the name Arakmbut signalled their

collective strength and, Gray (1997b) argues, reflected their desire to be recognized as a people and not a named group in the context of increasing tensions and territorial disputes with nonindigenous migrants.[5] Their insistence on being called Arakmbut emphasizes the relational and fluid aspects of identity formation, and a responsiveness to "context, time and historical processes of change" (May 2003: 96).

Over the decade since FENAMAD was first established, their indigenous representative organization had networked with the wider regional and global indigenous movement. FENAMAD leaders worked for the recognition of legal territorial rights and the cessation of illegal plundering of natural resources (Huertas Castillo 2010). The rise of the Arakmbut's active participation in defense of their *wandari* required a new kind of mobility, which extended out beyond their community. In 1991 two members of FENAMAD participated in the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva and formally denounced the land invasions, illegal hunting, and felling of hardwoods, and a proposed road through their territory (Gray 1997b).

Operating locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally in a wide range of social contexts and language arenas, the Arakmbut developed new social relationships and sought out affiliations that were important for the success of their livelihoods. To do this they required diverse dynamic and multifaceted language repertoires and language specialisms. Their language and their identity, through their name, were embedded in their relationship with their *wandari*, all of which were part of ongoing processes of internal and external change and differentiation (May 2003).

5 Scenario 3: San Jose village, November 2010. San Jose *Territorio* and Spanish language affiliations

As night began to fall, Rosa's hut on one side of the village clearing flickered with the blue light of television and resounded to the shouts of those around the screen watching a volleyball match between Peru and Chile. On the open verandah, a group of Arakmbut men and migrant workers sat on plastic seats, a crate of beer at their side, cheering on their team. Rosa sat outside on a bench with her daughter, who was preparing to leave at dawn for her gold camp several bends upriver, where she would cook for her hired workers and her *mestizo* husband. The women commented on the day ahead, the need to cut firewood and fetch manioc from the gardens. Rosa was concerned that there was only plantains and rice for her grandchildren, who stay with her in the village and attend the Spanish-language school. She was also worried about her husband's deteriorating health. He rarely worked for gold these days, but would go off with his gun, bow, and arrows in search of game in the depleted and uprooted forest. She looked forward to a visit from

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[5] Gow (2013) has discussed the political practice of autodenomination and issues arising in relation to this in the alto Ucayali.

her son who was a teacher in the town, or from her daughter who was a health worker in a migrant community near the Brazilian border.

The linguistic repertoires which Rosa and her family draw from in this scenario are very different from those of the 1980s when Wairi told myths to the whole community. The last sections of the road that the Arakmbut had opposed in the 1990s were completed, providing access to San Jose territory from the Andean city of Cusco and the Departmental capital of Puerto Maldonado in less than a day. As the international price of gold continued to increase, migrants had been arriving from the peripheries of towns and cities across the Andes and the coast. They came from a diversity of sociocultural backgrounds and brought diverse language repertoires and varieties of Spanish. Puerto Maldonado had expanded to become a bustling commercial center with the presence of state legal, judicial, educational, and health institutions and tourist lodges which have proliferated along rivers beyond the gold-mining areas. To the north and east, on the fringes of the Manu National Park and towards the Brazilian border, "uncontacted" indigenous groups continued to live "in voluntary isolation" (Huertas Castillo 2010).

Rosa was the mother of a young family in 1980. With her sisters-in-law she had occasionally taken part in the family-organized gold panning by the riverside. By 2010, gold work had become the main source of income and subsistence for the Arakmbut of San Jose, and most families worked with hired migrant labor in temporary camps, returning to the village only occasionally. With increasing intensity of gold production, and miners reaching further and further into the forest, the ability of the Arakmbut to sustain their hunting, fishing, gathering, and gardening became severely curtailed. The destruction of forest cover and river contamination with mercury and silt runoff from extensive gold mining meant that their livelihoods became more reliant on their own mining as animals and fish became scarce. Having found relatively rich sources of gold dust, some families lived between their gold camps, new houses they built in Puerto Maldonado, and occasional visits back to San Jose village. Those who had less success in encountering sources of gold dust continued to live in the village and make a daily commute to their gold areas on the beaches, working in small family groups, often with their non-Arakmbut in-laws. This is the situation for Rosa's family in 2010. Her hopes for the future lie with her sons and daughters who, on completing Spanish-language monolingual primary schooling in the village, had gone to boarding school in Puerto Maldonado, and with missionary and other external funding had continued professional education in Lima and Cusco.

Rosa's social interactions revolved around her hearth and her gardens, where she grows crops of manioc, plantains, sweet potato, maize, and barbasco for its roots for fishing. Whereas in the 1980s she worked in the close company of her sisters-in-law, going together to their gardens in different areas of the forest, these women now work with their own adult children. In 2010 she often worked with her husband, who was no longer fit enough for the gruelling physical labor of gold panning. Forest suitable for swidden agriculture, or where she could grow crops without fear of looting, was difficult to find as the gold mining continued to lay waste to the land. Rosa, together with others of her generation, had had some Spanish-language schooling

in the mission in the 1960s, and for a short period her husband had been the teacher of the Dominican multigrade school in San Jose (Aikman 1999), but since then she rarely used Spanish; Harakmbut had always been the language of inter- and intrafamily communication. But that situation had changed and she used her restricted Spanish-language resources together with fragments from her Harakmbut repertoire to communicate with her Spanish-speaking grandchildren. These children had spent much of their early years in gold camps where Spanish dominates. Now of school-going age, the children attended the Dominican-run village school where Spanish was the medium of instruction (Aikman 1999, and Aikman 2012). Rosa refers to her grandchildren as *wahaipe sipo* 'little highlanders.' Her Spanish-speaking son-in-law, a migrant miner, has no Arakmbut clan identity to pass on to his children, and not only does he speak no Harakmbut, but he has no desire to learn or use it.

By the time Wairi the storyteller died in 2011, the collective evening-time performances of Arakmbut myths had long since ceased. With increasing numbers of non-Arakmbut Spanish speakers living in the community, myth and storytelling became confined to the nuclear family and in the privacy of the house, away from migrant workers for fear of ridicule. But as intermarriage increased, family storytelling became less frequent too. Together with a decrease in hunting and fishing, relationships with the invisible world of the spirits became less important for the material health of the community, as sociopolitical relationships forged with diverse actors in the regional gold-mining economy increased. Thus, there has been a change in the value of particular language competencies (Blommaert et al. 2005). Harakmbut language competencies related to knowledge of the forests and its species and spirits has declined, while the value of Spanish-language competencies related to gold mining, land rights, and mining legislation has increased.

The San Jose community comprises a microcosm of the complex linguistic repertoires (Martin-Jones et al. 2012) found in this mining region. The migrants and Arakmbut who live and work together in San Jose are a diverse group whose individual forms of spoken Spanish identify them as, variously, first-language Quechua speakers or first-language Spanish speakers; it identifies them as of Andean, Coastal, or Amazonian provenance and provides an indication of their level of formal education. Their Spanish communication draws on a complex multilingual and multigenre mix reflecting their diversity: a racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic mix of identities in processes of change and flux (Thorp and Paredes 2010).

The gold miners are a heterogeneous group within which complex historical racial, linguistic, and cultural hierarchies are played out (Cotler 2011). This can be seen in the relationship that migrant gold miners have towards Harakmbut. Men and women married into San Jose Arakmbut families have incorporated, at most, a few isolated Harakmbut words into their repertoires. Harakmbut has little value for social or economic relations, and, moreover, it occupies a lowly place in the national linguistic imaginary. On the contrary, Spanish is the *lingua franca* of gold mining and the language of the nation. For their part, the Arakmbut are aware of the pejorative association of speaking Harakmbut. Their contact with missionaries, interactions

with officials of state institutions, and their daily experiences with miners and traders reinforce their supposed deficits of civilization, of modernity and of progress.

The *wandari* continues to be the source of the resources the San Jose Arakmbut need for their livelihoods. Today its main resource is gold dust. Their access to the gold dust is not dependent on the health of their relationships with the invisible spirit world, but on their ability to protect their rights and ensure legal compliance with the conditions of their *territorio* title. The large animals – tapir, wild pig and deer – and their spirits have gone to distant parts of their *wandari* where the gold miners are only beginning to penetrate and have not yet devastated the landscape.[6] The language repertoires needed for their livelihoods today comprise new constellations of Harakmbut and Spanish. The diversity of Harakmbut has changed as the names and animal languages used in myth-telling, curing, hunting, and contacting the spirit world to maintain a healthy society have become less valuable. On the contrary, the diversity of styles, forms, genres, and heteroglossic mixes required for managing and maintaining beneficial social and economic relationships within the mining economy have expanded. The young adult generation of Arakmbut requires competencies in managing and maintaining relationships with miners and migrants in what is a violent and unpredictable world of gold mining and gold miners.

6 Scenario 4: A San Jose meeting, October 2012. Harakmbut language resources and political rights

> A community meeting was called for a Sunday, a nonworking day, to discuss changes in mining regulations. San Jose families arrived by canoe through the morning from their gold camps and the meeting got underway with the arrival of the two Arakmbut FENAMAD leaders. They brought with them a legal consultant to advise and explain the latest twist in mining regulations. He was presented to the meeting of San Jose Arakmbut of all ages and a few non-Arakmbut wives and husbands. The meeting was conducted in Harakmbut with Spanish-language mining terms and legal phrases. The lawyer made a brief presentation about the new process of collective registration for Arakmbut mining on San Jose territory, which the FENAMAD leaders translated and contextualized for the Arakmbut audience. For most of the meeting the lawyer sat in silence watching while the Arakmbut leaders explained the issues and answered questions, and listened to the concerns and worries of the San Jose Arakmbut, who listened carefully to the intricacies of the latest changes in the mining regulations and struggled to reconcile these with their rights as an indigenous community. With the purpose of the meeting concluded, the leaders and lawyer headed for their canoe to start the long journey back to Puerto Maldonado and the followup work and meetings with officials.

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[6] The Amarakaeri Communal Reserve was legally recognised in 2002 after more than a decade of lobbying by FENAMAD. Its integrity is under threat from oil and gold prospecting.

With a shared concern over their futures, this meeting brought the community together physically and socially. The Peruvian Mining laws contradict rights enshrined in the Law of Native Communities, and there are inconsistencies and irregularities. Moreover, Peruvian mining laws are focused on mining by large international companies, and are inadequate to regulate the informal mining in Madre de Dios (Torres 2007). For the Arakmbut this has meant the imposition of regulations that are contradictory, disregarded and contested, resulting in the continuation and spread of illegal and unregulated artisan mining and a violent and unpredictable environment (Swenson et al. 2011). However, in the midst of fast-changing mining regulations and often violent confrontations with groups of illegal migrant miners, the Arakmbut have legal rights that other gold miners do not; that is, their rights as a Native Community to their legally demarcated *territorio*. The Arakmbut leaders brought experience and knowledge of the Law of Native Communities, and wider knowledge of the relationships, discourses, systems, and structures of the Peruvian state, its institutions, and sociocultural practices. They knew how to draw on external technical expertise, and through the legal consultant, build their understanding and build their prestige and status vis-à-vis the community.

The meeting brought them together as Arakmbut for the maintenance of legal mining rights within their legal *territorio.* Whatever the legal contradictions and complexities, as a Native Community, the Arakmbut had a legal status which afforded them political status vis-à-vis the nonindigenous miners. Using the Harakmbut language as the medium of communication played to the identity of the San Jose people not only as gold miners, but as Arakmbut gold miners, linking them through language to their territory as *territorio* but also as *wandari*, drawing them together in terms of their history and identity. It reinforced Arakmbut social and cultural bonds and affiliation. In their daily working lives they lived dispersed in their family-based gold camps throughout their territory. The meeting brought them together as a community.

As was demonstrated in the first scenario, language repertoires differ across and between Arakmbut individuals. In the 1980s knowledge, expertise, and the names needed for successful hunting, fishing, and gardening came from strong relationships developed between the visible and invisible worlds of their *wandari*. In this scenario, the knowledge, expertise, and names needed to secure their livelihoods from mining gold emerged from relationships and affiliations with non-Arakmbut. The two Arakmbut leaders had specialist knowledge about rights, laws and regulations acquired through political, social and economic affiliations that extend far beyond their *territorio*. Their knowledge had been acquired through social relations and experience built through formal education, advocacy and lobby, engagement with the indigenous movement regionally and globally, as well as through interactions with representatives from local and national institutions and organizations. Their social affiliations were forged through multiple forms and uses of Spanish in arenas beyond their community. This Spanish language-based knowledge and understanding was recognized and valued by the community when they used it to strengthen the community. An important aspect of their recognition as leaders also came from having at different times shared with their kin and peers the hard labor of digging and panning

for gold dust on the beaches. This experience and the relationships it built also earned them respect.

The leaders knew their audience, the nature of intra-and interfamily relationships, the alliances with miners, the influence and complexities of shifting and contradictory laws and procedures, and the dangers and violence of this gold-mining region. Their aim was to reaffirm the importance of working together as a community to ensure their ability to access and safely use the resource of gold within their *territorio*. To do this the families needed to understand and comply with new mining requirements that would keep them within the law and help them avoid further invasions of illegal miners. Alliances with migrant miners, whether informal work agreements, marriage, or the parenting of children, were important but often temporary and uneasy (Aikman 2001). Like Wairi before them, the leaders drew from their language repertoires to communicate with the community in ways they would respond to and value. Their interaction was multimodal, drawing from their shared language resources, social and cultural backgrounds, and shared lives. They knew the power of Harakmbut names, and used these to evoke their shared links to their *territorio* as gold miners and as an indigenous community, but also linking them with their *wandari* as Arakmbut.

7 Concluding Discussion

The four scenarios have been used to explore a period of more than three decades over which Arakbmut language repertoires have responded and changed as their social, cultural, and economic environments have changed. They have offered insights into the dynamics of change, and permit some conclusions to be drawn about the social value of different language resources as the Arakmbut endeavor to maintain their individual and collective strength and health through their livelihoods. As their livelihood activities have changed in response to the destructive spread of mining and its impact on the rainforest flora and fauna, so have the social affiliations and relationships important for ensuring their livelihoods.

In the first scenario, Wairi was recognized as a storyteller and a curer. He brought to his myths the knowledge he had developed over his lifetime through hunting and communicating with spirits. With his specialist Harakmbut language repertoire, his performances of the major Harakmbut myths could unite the community through the names he used and the relationships they implied. In this way his myth-telling could reinforce the social and cultural cohesion of the Arakmbut through the health of the visible and invisible worlds of humans, animals and spirits. In the second scenario the Arakmbut come together to agree on their name vis-à-vis external actors. The discussion about their name indicates the importance of a name in terms of the nexus of relationships it evokes. The name Arakmbut brought them together politically around a cluster of social and cultural relationships and a common history. It indicated the continuing importance of the Harakmbut language as one of several features of Arakmbut identity – and the affirmation of this name as a political act of self-determination in an environment of increasing violence and conflict over land invasions. At the time of the third scenario, in 2010, the San Jose people are reliant on gold mining for their subsistence. The resources of meat and fish have dwindled, and

gold has become the mainstay of their livelihoods. Through intermarriage with migrants their family sociocultural composition has changed, and their collective practices of sharing and reciprocity have become more restricted within the nuclear family. The value and importance of Spanish-language resources for daily communication in relation to gold mining have increased. A generational language gap has emerged between grandparents and grandchildren. In the fourth scenario the community is brought together to consider how to work together for the future of their livelihoods and their access to gold. The two Arakmbut working for FENAMAD are from a Spanish-language-schooled generation and have taken on political leadership roles and the external struggle for recognition of Arakbmut rights to legally mine gold and defend their *territorio*.

Over the three decades there are patterns of continuity that emerge in the midst of change. The importance of accessing the resources provided by their territory involves negotiating relationships – be these with spirits of the invisible world, agents of government institutions, or migrant miners – that are unpredictable, potentially harmful, but also potentially helpful. While all Arakmbut have the potential to forge these relationships, there are some individuals who are recognized as having developed specialist knowledge, abilities, and language resources, which they put to work for the overall health of the community. Harakmbut continues to be part of Arakmbut adults' language repertoires. In an "age of heightened mobility and transnational communication" (Arnaut 2012: 3) the Arakmbut people have shown to have within their community a complex diversity of language resources. Nevertheless, the Harakmbut and Spanish languages point towards different aspects of Arakmbut identities; the former with strong vertical links to their history and spirituality and lives as hunters and fishers, the latter with increasingly strong horizontal links with identities as national and global citizens, and as indigenous peoples within the national and global indigenous movement. But the Harakmbut term *wandari* embracing the visible and invisible world of the spirits and animals of the forest and river might appear to be losing significance in face of the Spanish term *territorio* and the granting of community titles to a delimited and bounded area of land associated with legal rights and mining activities.

However, a unidirectional move towards a Spanish-only language repertoire, however diverse, is challenged by the fourth scenario. At this meeting the leaders were using Harakmbut to unite and galvanize the San Jose Arakmbut to work together. The Arakmbut are today embedded in the gold economy and their livelihoods reliant on it. But it is their historical and spiritual relationship to their *wandari* that afforded them recognition as a Native Community with a legally defined *territorio*. The leaders, like Wairi in Scenario 1, were using their Harakmbut language resources to unite the Arakmbut through evoking the shared meanings of Harkambut names and reinforcing their collective spiritual and cultural identity.

The recentering of San Jose Arakmbut language resources over the last three decades demonstrates a more prominent place for Spanish within their fluid, mobile and multilingual repertoires. But this shift is not inevitable or irrevocable. Within their repertoires today the Arakmbut still value Harakmbut language resources for the potential they have to reinforce

shared social, cultural and spiritual identities. How these Harakmbut language resources are valued in the future will be related to how the Arakmbut are able to use them to secure the resources that their territory offers.

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