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# **Language contact in Caquetá and Putumayo river basins in Northwest Amazonia**

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Figure 1. Established linguistic and cultural areas/regions in South America

## South America:

- Despite the fact that many languages spoken in such areas are vastly different in terms of their lexicons, their grammars share numerous structural similarities, which are not due to their common descent, but to **intensive language contact**.
- Areally spread grammatical patterns in Northwest Amazonia include:
  - complex classifier systems,
  - differential object marking,
  - evidentiality, and
  - lexical number words.

See also Payne (1990), Aikhenvald and Dixon (1999, 8-9), Aikhenvald (2002, 2012).

- **Caquetá-Putumayo (C-P) River Basins** form an established **cultural area** but people are different from neighbouring groups.
- C-P languages have been given attention by linguists (e.g. Thiesen and Weber 2012, Fagua Rincón 2013a, Wojtylak 2017b) but the long term cultural interactions between the C-P groups have rarely been taken into account.
- Lexical and grammatical borrowing: the case of Resígaro (Aikhenvald 2001, Seifart 2011, 2015b).
- C-P languages share a number of linguistic features with other languages of Northwest Amazonia; perhaps the most detailed works concerns classifier systems of Northwest Amazonia (Seifart and Payne 2007).
- The CP languages also lack some of the prominent features of the languages of the Vaupés:
  - no verb serialization,
  - no distinction between animate and inanimate plural,
  - no switch reference systems,
  - no alienable and inalienable possession,
  - little gender opposition in verbal-cross referencing markers,
  - CP languages have relatively rich case systems.

## Questions

- Do C-P languages have a grammatical category of evidentiality?
- How is it expressed?
- Is it different from that in non-C-P languages?
- What does this tell us?

## The Caquetá-Putumayo (C-P) groups = *People of the Centre*

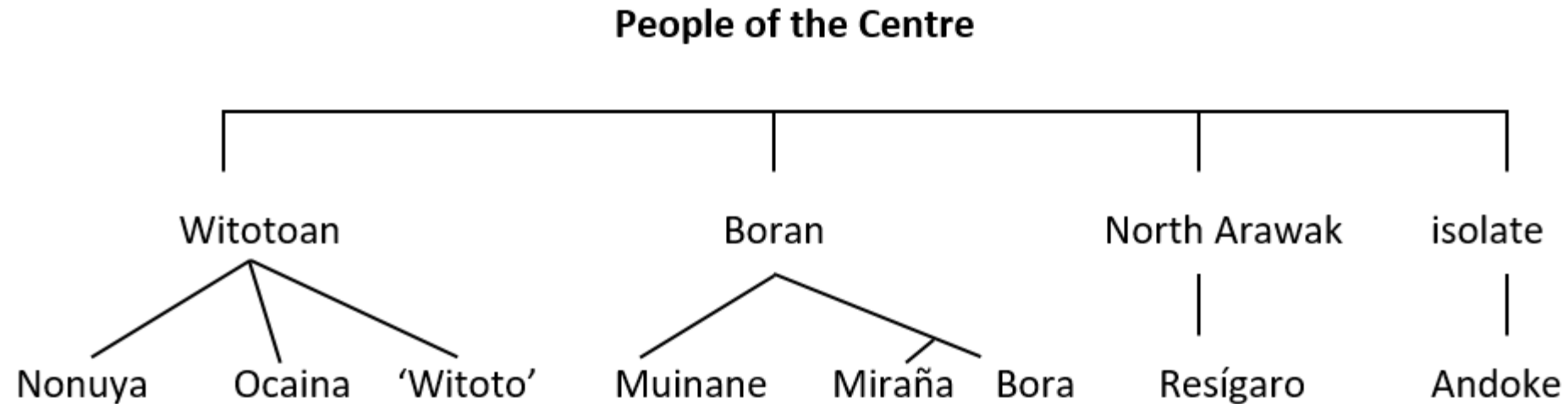


Figure 2. Ethnolinguistic groups of the *People of the Centre* cultural area  
(‘Witoto’ = Murui, Míka, Miníka, Nípode)

- **46,000** at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Whiffen 1915, 247).
- about **10,200 people** (Fagua Rincón 2015, 137, Wojtylak 2017b).

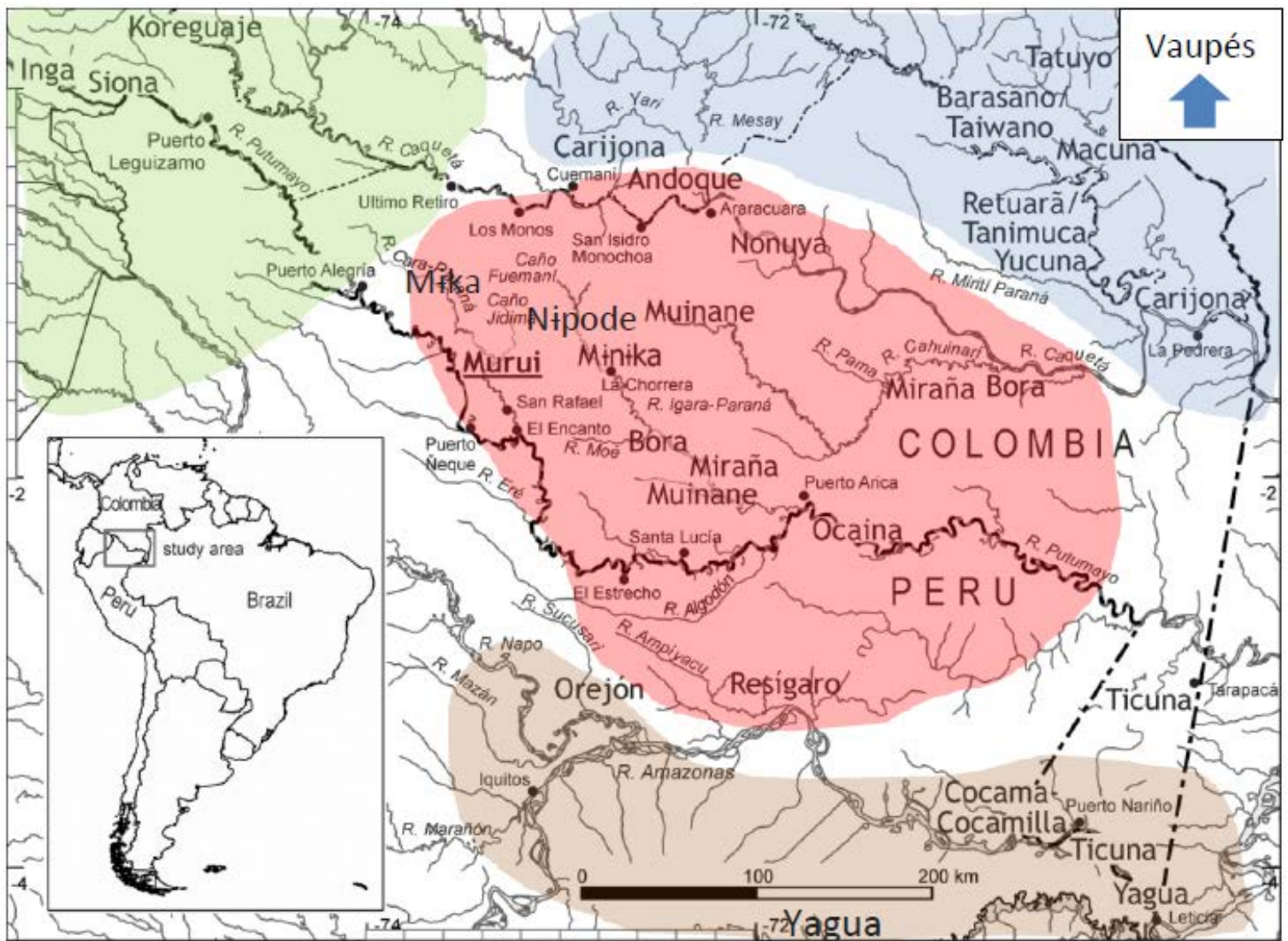


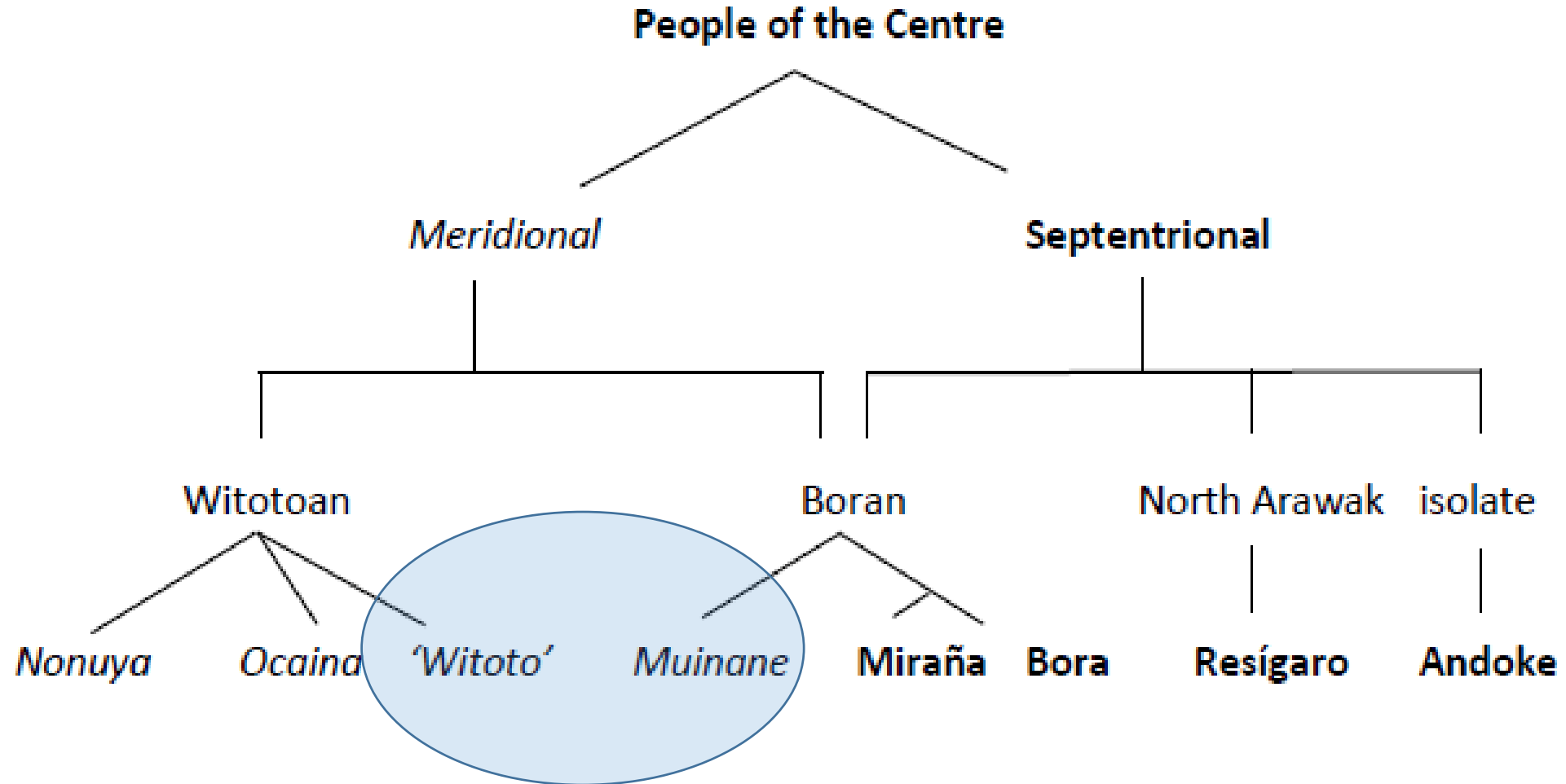
Figure 3. Approximate location of the C-P groups (in red),  
 Carib, East Tucanoan and Arawak (in blue),  
 West Tucanoan and Kichwa (in green),  
 West Tucanoan, Peba-Yaguan, Tupí-Guaraní, and Ticuna (in brown)

**The *People of the Centre* share relative cultural homogeneity, including:**

- - trade specifications (Echeverri 1997, Eriksen 2011),
- - multilingualism (no obligatory societal multilingualism as in the Vaupés),
- - intermarriage (Gasché 1972),
- common practices:
  - signal drums ‘manguaré’ used for long distance communication (Thiesen 1969, Wojtylak forthcoming-b),
  - traditional dance rituals (Seifart 2011, Wojtylak 2017a),
  - ritual activities that relate to the consumption of pounded coca and liquid tobacco (Echeverri 1997),
- others characteristics:
  - patrilineality (Gasché 1982),
  - traditional communal roundhouses (Gasché 2009).
  - common mythological heroes (Echeverri 1997).



# Relations with the C-P area - the case of 'Witoto' (WITOTOAN) and Muinane (BORA)



- Documented existing bilingualism between the two groups (Whiffen 1915, 247).

The *People of the Centre* had contact with groups **beyond the C-P region**:

## **WI**

- The 'Witoto' with **the Carijona** (Carib) (Urbina Rangel 1997),
- The 'Witoto' and **the Sekoya** (West Tucanoan) (Gasché 2009b).
- (?) The 'Witoto' and Ocaina with **the Yagua** (Gasché 2009b, 7).

## **BO – link to the Vaupés**

- The Bora with either **the Tanimuca** (East Tucanoan) or **the Yucuna** (Arawak) (Gasché 2009b).
- The Bora with **the Tariana** (Vaupés, Arawak) (von Martius 1867, 297).

## The C-P languages – typological profile

- The C-P languages are **polysynthetic** and primarily **head marking; agglutinating** with little fusion.
- The alignment of arguments is **nominative-accusative** throughout.
- Typical clause structure is **predicate final** (SV/AOV) but ordering can be determined by pragmatic factors.
- Pronouns and pronominal markers have a **tripartite number system** that distinguishes singular (male vs. female in 3<sup>rd</sup> person), **dual** (male vs. female in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> person), and **plural**.
- Differential object marking (Witotoan, Boran).

- One or two arguments can be cross-referenced on the verb:

**i) one argument (S/A) on the verb** marked with suffixes (WI), prefixes (RE, MU), and proclitics (BO, MI):

- (1) Bora (Seifart 2015a, 1776)  
 mε-kε<sub>O</sub>                      ó=i:té-ʔi<sub>PRED</sub>  
 1pl-ACC                      1sg=see-PRED  
 'I see us.'

**ii) two arguments on the verb** marked with prefixes (AN, NO, OC; **O-A-verb**):

- (2) Andoke (Landaburu 2000, 280)  
 ja-o-do-k̄<sub>PRED</sub>                      bʌʔi<sub>A</sub>  
**I31-I-know-GEN1**                      1.ASSERTIVE  
 'I know him.'

- (3) Ocaina (Fagua Rincón 2009, vii:18)  
 tʃa-ko-tõ:ʔφ<sub>PRED</sub>  
**3.INANIM-1SG-tie**  
 'I tied it.'

# Evidentiality in Northwest Amazonia - the Vaupés linguistic area

- East Tucanoan languages have complex systems of evidentiality (portmanteau forms encoding person, tense, number).
- They distinguish four to five different evidential specifications:
  - visual,
  - non-visual,
  - inferred,
  - assumed,
  - reported.
- Evidentials are likely to undergo restructuring under areal pressure (e.g. Tariana, an Arawak language) (Aikhenvald 2003, 2004).

# Evidentiality in C-P languages

Table 2. Evidentiality and epistemic modality systems in the C-P languages

	WITOTOAN			BORAN		ARAWAK	ISOLATE
	'Witoto'	Ocaina	Nonuya	Bora and Miraña	Muinane	Resígaro	Andoke
<b>Reported</b>	+	+	?	+	+	+	+
<b>Inferred</b>	-	-	?	+	-	-	-
<b>Direct evidence</b>	-	-	?	+	-	-	-
<b>Certainty</b>	+	- (particles)	?	- (particles)	+	?	knowledge of the speaker vs knowledge of the hearer
<b>Uncertainty</b>	+				+		

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<b>Inferred</b>	-	-	?	+	-	-	-
<b>Direct evidence</b>	-	-	?	+	-	-	-
<b>Certainty</b>	+	-	?	-	+	?	knowledge of the speaker vs knowledge of the hearer
<b>Uncertainty</b>	+	(particles)	?	(particles)	+	?	knowledge of the speaker vs knowledge of the hearer

## Evidentiality in Witotoan (WI, OC, NO) languages - WITOTO

- A relatively simple system of evidentiality, with two choices available, ‘reported’ and ‘everything else’.
- Grammatical marking of the reported evidential is optional — and depends on speaker’s attitude towards assertion.
- In WI, reported evidential is also genre-specific; mostly in every-day conversation, e.g.:

(4) Witoto (Murui) (Wojtylak forthcoming-a)

ri-ño-mo <sub>O</sub>	eroda-t-e <sub>PRED</sub>	ie=ta	maraiñe-d-e <sub>PRED</sub>
woman-CL:DR.F-LOC	look.body-LK-3	CONN=REP	good.NEG-LINK-3

‘He looks at women. **This (his looking at women, reported)** is not good.’

- The auditory demonstrative *aki* ‘ is often used for indirect quotation.

(5) Witoto (Murui) (Wojtylak forthcoming-a)

Kiña <sub>OBLIQUE</sub>	ui-ga=di <sub>PRED</sub>	fuiɾi	aima-jai-d-e <sub>PRED</sub>	<b>aki</b>
Kiña	bring-PASS-CONFIRMED	up.stream	fish-DIR-LINK-3	<b>AUDITORY</b>

‘(The canoe) was brought by *Kiña* (I am certain of it). **(Then we heard)** went to fish.’



## Evidentiality in Witotoan (WI, OC, NO) languages - WITOTO

- WI has two epistemic markers that express speaker's attitude towards their assertions and commitment to the statement based on some type of tangible evidence:

- the clitic =**di** indicates 'confirmed certainty'

- (6) Witoto (Murui) (Wojtylak forthcoming-a)
- |                     |                |                                    |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| camara <sub>S</sub> | jaai-ra-mona   | uai-d-e= <b>di</b> <sub>PRED</sub> |
| camera.Sp           | go-CL:NEUT-ABL | fall-LK-3= <b>CONFIRMED</b>        |
- 'The camera fell from the staircase (**I am sure of this**).'

- the clitic =**za** indicates 'unconfirmed certainty'

- (7) Witoto (Murui) (Wojtylak forthcoming-a)
- |                     |         |                                    |
|---------------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| nai-ño <sub>S</sub> | jai     | ini-d-e= <b>za</b> <sub>PRED</sub> |
| ANA-CL:DR.F         | ALREADY | sleep-LK-3= <b>UNCONFIRMED</b>     |
- 'She must be already asleep (**I assume but I can be wrong**).'

- They can qualify as evidentiality strategies in that they can be semantically extended to express evidential meanings, those of 'firsthand' and of 'non-firsthand' knowledge in WI.

## Evidentiality in Witotoan (WI, OC, NO) languages – OCAINA, NONUYA

- In OC, the reported expresses the source of information and refers to information obtained from another source for whose veracity the speaker does not want to take responsibility (Fagua Rincón, p.c.):

(8) Ocaina (Fagua Rincón 2013b, 270)

<b>xaʔ</b>	tʃíí	háá-hoa.dʒw-ŋo	úú-na
REP	all	3PL-work-CONT	COP-PAST

‘They were **(said to be)** working.’

- Additionally, OC has many particles, such as the dubitative *-buʔ*, which refers to the degree of commitment in respect to speaker’s assertion.
- No information on NO.

# Evidentiality in Boran (BO, MI, MU) languages – BORA, MIRAÑA

- Unlike in MU, marking of evidentiality in BO/MI is very elaborate.
- There are with **three choices** available (two evidentiality systems in fact, Aikhenvald 2004, 83):

- **unmarked** clause refers to **direct evidence**:

- (9) Bora (Seifart 2015a, 1775)  
tsáʔá=i:kε                      di:-:bε      **pé:-twí-nε**<sub>PRED</sub>  
NEG=PRPT                      3-CL.SG.M    **GO.SUBORD-NEG-CL.SG.M**  
'He has not gone yet.' (speaker has direct evidence)

- **inferred** implies indirect evidence (enclitic -ʔhá)

- (10) Bora (Thiesen and Weber 2012, 429)  
à:-nè-ʔhá-p<sup>h</sup>è                      p<sup>h</sup>è:-:pè<sub>PRED</sub>                      [I<sup>G?</sup>                      há]-βù  
CONN-thing/event-**INFER-REM**    GO-CL.SG.M                      self                      house-GOAL  
'So he went to his house (but I did not see it).'

- **reported** describes information obtained by hearsay (enclitic -βá):

- (11) Bora (Thiesen and Weber 2012, 307)  
tì:-:p<sup>j</sup>é-βá                      p<sup>h</sup>è-é-ʔ<sub>PRED</sub>                      ú:-:mà:  
that-CL.SG.M-**REP**                      GO-FUT-CL                      2SG-with  
'Someone says that he will go with you.'

## Evidentiality in Boran (BO, MI, MU) languages – MUINANE

- MU has the suffix *-va* [-βa] meaning ‘it was said’ and ‘informed’ (Walton and Walton 1975):

(12) Muinane (Walton and Walton 1975, 43)

dii-bo                      kaani-badi-**va**  
3-CL:SG.M                  padre-SIMIL-REP  
‘(It is said that) he is like (his) father.’

- MU has a system of two optional markers referring to ‘speaker’s certainty’ towards statements (Vengoechea p.c.):

*-he* refers to past actions, processes, or events which their veracity the speaker is certain of:

(13) Muinane (Vengoechea 2012, 143)

dV-hî:bi-nw-**he**-ʔi  
2SG-COCA-DENOMINAL-CERTAINTY-PREDICATIVE.MARKER  
‘You (**certainly**) picked some coca leaf.’

*-te* expresses ‘uncertainty’ regarding the information conveyed by the statement

(14) Muinane (Vengoechea 2012, 144)

dî:-to                      té:-ʔi-ko                      mê:kw-**te**-hi  
3-CL:GROUP                  stream-CL:THREAD.LIKE-OBJ                  watch-UNCERTAINTY-PRPT  
‘They (**supposedly**) went to watch the stream.’

## Evidentiality in Resígaro (Arawak)

- RE has the reportative clitic =*tsá* , Allin (1976):

(15) Resígaro (Allin 1976, 336)  
teéʔi-kóo=**tsá**          doʔ-pí  
river-to=**REP**          she-go  
'It is said that she goes to the river.'

(16) Resígaro (Allin 1976, 337)  
tsá=**tsá**=ʔpe          doʔ-mótshó  
him=**REP=REM**          she-hit  
'It is said that she hit him.'

- There appear to be no other types of evidentials / certainty markers.

## Evidentiality in Andoque (isolate)

- AN has a reported evidential, the marker *-ha* (Landaburu 1979, 120).
- A paradigm of ‘engagement’ markers with evidential overtones that can also express doubt (Landaburu 2007).
- AN shows the system where:

Table 2. The ‘engagement’ markers in Andoke (cf. Landaburu 2007, 30)

	<b>KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPEAKER</b>	<b>LACK OF SPEAKER'S KNOWLEDGE</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEARER</b>	<i>b-</i>	<i>k- (or d-)</i>
<b>LACK OF HEARER'S KNOWLEDGE</b>	<i>kě-</i>	<i>bã-</i>

## Evidentiality in Andoque (isolate)

(17) Andoke (Landaburu 2007, 25)

a. duiíhɬ    **b-ǽ**                            dǎ-ǽ-ɬ<sub>PRED</sub>  
whites    **ENGAG-i.33**                    INGRESSIVE-move-ACCORD3

‘The white men came in.’ (*some type of evidence, direct or not; known by speaker and hearer*)

b. duiíhɬ    **kǽ-ǽ**                            dǎ-ǽ-ɬ<sub>PRED</sub>  
whites    **ENGAG-i.33**                    INGRESSIVE-move-ACCORD3

‘The white men came in.’ (*direct evidence; not known by the hearer; known by the speaker*)

(18) Andoke (Landaburu 2007, 27)

duiíhɬ    **ĩ-ǽ**                            dǎ-ǽ-ɬ<sub>PRED</sub>  
whites    **ENGAG-i.33**                    INGRESSIVE-move-ACCORD3

‘Those who arrived are the white men?’ (*presupposition; not known the speaker, known by the hearer*)

(19) Andoke (Landaburu 2007, 28)

hí-ɬ-ɣ-ahá                    **bǎ-ñé?**                    ɬ-ka                    s-ə-bu-dĩ-i?<sub>PRED</sub>  
which-i.1-LOC-SINCE **ENGAG-PROX**                    i.1-ANAPH                    downward-i.33-destroy-FREQ-ACCORD

‘And why were they killing?’ (*presupposition; not known by either the speaker or the hearer*)

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	WITOTOAN			BORAN		ARAWAK	ISOLATE
	'Witoto'	Ocaina	Nonuya	Bora and Miraña	Muinane	Resígaro	Andoke
<b>Reported</b>	<i>=ta</i>	<i>xa?</i>	?	<i>=βá</i>	<i>-vá</i>	<i>=tsá</i>	<i>=ha</i>
<b>Inferred</b>	-	-	?	<i>-ʔhá</i>	-	-	-
<b>Direct evidence</b>	-	-	?	unmarked	-	-	-
<b>Certainty</b>	<i>=di</i>	-	?	-	<i>-he</i>	?	<i>b-</i>
<b>Uncertainty</b>	<i>=za</i>	(particles)	?	(particles)	<i>-te</i>	?	<i>k-</i> (or <i>d-</i> ) <i>kē-</i> <i>bā-</i>

Language contact:

- WI and MU
- BO with groups to the north



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