Achuar (Pastaza)

Philippe Descola & Anne-Christine Taylor

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Presentation

a) The data-set

The data-set “Achuar (Pastaza)” is the product of a collaboration among the authors Philippe Descola and Anne-Christine Taylor, the encoders Vincent Hirtzel and Grégory Deshoulière, and the Kinsources project.

Collected during long-term fieldwork by Anne-Christine Taylor and Philippe Descola and based on their fieldwork notes (October 1976 to March 1979), this data-set is concerned principally with the Achuar speaking population from the Pastaza area of Ecuador (mainly Kapawi river, Ishpinku river, Copataza river, Bobonaza River, Sasaïme river and Conambo river).

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**b) The Achuar**

Distributed between north-east Peru and south-east Ecuador, the Achuar\(^2\) are part of the Jivaroan population cluster which includes the Shuar, located in southeast Ecuador, the Awajun and Wampis (Huambisa) of the Marañón basin, and the Shiwar of the middle Pastaza valley, closely connected to the Achuar. During the period in which Anne-Christine Taylor and Philippe Descola conducted fieldwork, the Achuar – mainly hunters and swidden-horticulturalists – lived in dispersed settlements of three or four closely related households. These local groups were embedded in territorialized networks of regularly intermarrying households. These units – called “endogamous nexi” by the ethnographers – comprised an average of 100 to 150 persons, or some ten scattered households. The residence pattern was prolonged temporary uxorilocality\(^3\). The Achuar terminology of reference corresponds to the "two-line terminologies" that has been associated with the Amazonian Dravidian systems.

**Data collection**

We can distinguish two groups of original documents:

**a) Corpus from Philippe Descola** in hand-written form which includes:

- “Folder Genealogies” (PhD:1): It is a folder of photocopies (first side) including mainly the reproduction of genealogical diagrams accompanied by some drafts, and in certain cases by biographic notes (the authors of which are Philippe Descola and Anne-Christine Taylor). All these forms are preceded by a document called “Index of the genealogies”, written by Philippe Descola. The folder includes 43 photocopies numbered in pencil by Vincent Hirtzel.

- “Folder Notebook Ph. Descola” (PhD:2): It is a folder of photocopies (first side) including 4 sub-files gathered with paper clips, including excerpts from the notebooks of the author. These are numbered II (2 pages), III (7 pages), IV (17 pages) and V (7 pages).

**b) Corpus from Anne-Christine Taylor** in hand-written form (ACT): it is composed of 5 folders of photocopies which correspond to 5 different notebooks classified following the original annotations of Anne-Christine Taylor (1 to 5): “Cahier 1” 28 pages, “Cahier 2” 22 pages, “Cahier 3” 31 pages, “Cahier 4” 33 pages, “Cahier 5” 24 pages. The original numeration of the pages has been always kept. Each folder includes genealogical diagrams and notes taken during the author’s fieldwork.

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\(^2\) Sometimes referred as Achual, Achuara, Achuale, Jivaro or Maina.

\(^3\) Bride capture excludes uxorilocal residence.
Abbreviations and Attributes.

Note that both individual names and associated place names are not shown in the anonymized version of the data-set. However, residence is still shown as a separate attribute (see below).

a) Name: All the orthographical versions of the names of each individual appear as they were originally written. This means that the readers can find in parenthesis all the different ways of writing the name that have been found in the notebooks. However, to allow future comparative works, the most established orthography of the name has been chosen (in accordance with the encoder’s knowledge of the current orthographic consensus on the Jivaroan language in Ecuador). For instance:

287 Chunji (Chuji, Chuhi) or 607 Tsapak (Zapaku, Tsapik, Tsapic)

b) Place: To facilitate coding, and when the information is clear from the notebooks, the place of residence of the individual appears written in square brackets. This is, at times, preceded by the place of birth and followed by the name of the larger area of residence. These are frequently names of rivers. For instance:

536 Kajekai (Kajikue, Kajekui) [Kapawi] Place of residence

311 Nampich (Nampichka, Nambichka) [Wampuik ; Chiriboga, Pastaza Moy.] Place of birth Place of residence Area of residence

c) Attributes:

- **Fi / Al**: Filiation / alliance. Attribute which synthesizes the information of *Prim. Ref* [see below] with a binary sorting. Filiation (Fi): the people who are included in the genealogy by links of descent; and alliance (Al): those who are included in the genealogy by links of marriage. This attribute has not been applied to all individuals.

- **Prim. Ref**: Primary references. Reference to the localization of the individual in the notebooks (see above). PhD refers to Philippe Descola’s notebooks and ACT refers to Anne-Christine Taylor’s notebooks. For instance:

“PhD:1:10 ; ACT:5:123”

Read: *PhD:1:10* folder “Genealogies of Philippe Descola”, page 10

*ACT:5:123* Corpus of Anne-Christine Taylor, notebook 5, page 123.
- **Note**: When the information is clear from the notebooks of the authors, the encoder has included in “Note” information regarding the status of being killed, details as “twin of” or commentaries concerning genealogical or marriage aspects of an individual.

- **Dupli**: Indicates a possible duplicate in the corpus (after coding). Most of them have been checked, but errors can still emerge so the encoder has chosen to leave this information for future work on the data-set.

- **RESI**: Place of residence. Almost always name of rivers. To allow comparative works and in order to standardize the data-set, the encoder has applied the actual orthography of the names as used in Ecuador: *Kapawi* for *Capahuari*, *Capawi*; *Ishpink* for *Ishpingu*, *Ishpinku*; *Copataza* for *Kupatza*.

- **BIRT_PLACE**: Place of birth.

- **BIRT_DATE**: Date of birth. In this corpus, this attribute mostly concerns individuals under 18. It is based on several approximations: first, age estimates, in years, over the course of a three-year period of fieldwork, and second, the after the fact translation of these estimates into years of birth.

- **ETHNI_FIL**: Ethnic affiliation. The entries are: Kichwa, Shuar, Shiwiari and Candoshi. No indication means “Achuar”.

- **OCCU**: “occupation”. Mainly “shaman”.

- **DEAD**: If an individual is noted as dead or not.

- **Add.**: The cross (X) indicates that the person has been added by the encoder. It is not indicated in the authors’ photocopies.

**Remarks on coding**

The coding took place in two phases. In 2012, Vincent Hirtzel coded Philippe Descola’s Folder Genealogies. Then in 2014, Grégory Deshoulrière checked and completed this corpus by coding, with Puck, Philippe Descola’s Folder Notebook and the photocopies from the notebooks of Anne-Christine Taylor, and finally by standardizing information included in the data-set.

Despite our efforts, the data-set at this stage still imperfectly reflects the data contained in the notebooks. The main difficulty emerges from the fact that the encoders are not the ethnographers. Without a global understanding of the notebooks and the fieldwork, it was at times impossible to avoid duplications of individuals or to establish certain connections between them. A revised version will be made available in the near future.

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4 The anonymized version does not include this information.
5 It is usually noted “Pot. Id. de…”, which means “potentially identical to…”.
6 [http://www.kintip.net/](http://www.kintip.net/)
Perspectives on the Achuar population of the 1970s

The data-set Achuar (Pastaza) is part of the “Cluster Achuar” which contains the corpus of Antonino Colajanni (around 1160 individuals, coded by Grégory Deshoulière) and the corpus of Richard Gippelhauser / Elke Mader (around 1130 individuals, coded by Grégory Deshoulière), both corpus based on fieldwork conducted during the 1970s. Both data-sets will be soon available at kinsources.net.

Authors’ bibliography:


