Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Ciências Humanas
ISSN: 1981-8122
ISSN: 2178-2547
MCTI/Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi

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Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Ciências Humanas, vol. 17, no. 2, e20210028, 2022
MCTI/Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1590/2178-2547-BGOELDI-2021-0028

Available in: https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=394072583011

Shaping attitudes about indigenous languages and cultures: the exhibition project "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" in Belém, State of Pará, Brazil

Moldando novas posturas em relação à culturas e línguas indígenas: o projeto de exposição "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" em Belém, estado do Pará, Brasil

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Abstract: The paper approaches the subject of using a multimedia documentation corpus on indigenous language and culture in a broader perspective: its promotion via an exhibition – and by means of this making research stored in a digital archive available to a general public and encouraging a debate between representatives of the majority society and of the speech community itself. The exhibition "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" (Belém, 2018) described here is the result of a collaborative project between linguists, an artist and members of the Cashinahua (Huni Kuin) community.

Keywords: Cashinahua (Panoan). Language documentation and archiving. Participation. Exhibition project. Applied research.

Resumo: O trabalho aborda o uso de um *corpus* multimídia de documentação de língua e cultura indígena em uma perspectiva mais ampla: a difusão por meio de uma exposição – e, através desta, disponibilizar a pesquisa armazenada em acervo digital a um público geral e promover diálogo entre representantes da sociedade majoritária e da própria comunidade. A exposição "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" (Belém, 2018) descrita aqui é o resultado de um projeto colaborativo entre linguistas, um artista e integrantes da comunidade caxinauá (huni kuin), grupo indígena pano (Brasil-Peru).

Palavras-chave: Caxinauá (pano). Documentação e arquivo de língua. Trabalho participativo. Projeto de exposição. Pesquisa aplicada.

Reiter, S., & Camargo, E. Shaping attitudes about indigenous languages and cultures: the exhibition project "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" in Belém, State of Pará, Brazil. *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Ciências Humanas, 17*(2), e20210028. doi: 10.1590/2178-2547-BGOELDI-2021-0028

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Recebido em 23/03/2021
Aprovado em 19/01/2022
Responsabilidade editorial: Hein van der Voort

INTRODUCTION

A narrative on indigenous communities of today is only complete when taking into account the influences from the outside world, especially political and economic ones. This text, reporting on an exhibition project in Brazil offering a special form of such a narrative, can be read as a proposal of how material from a documentation archive may be used to set up an exhibition by which the attention of a wider audience is drawn towards the overall situation of and changes within an indigenous group. These are largely determined by its contact with diverse protagonists from the majority society, such as explorers of raw material, merchants, missionaries, educators, but also researchers.

The group in question here are the Cashinahuas, or Huni Kuin as they call themselves, around 10,000 individuals who live on both sides of the Brazilian-Peruvian border. One of the authors had been in contact with this group since the 1980s when in 2005 she was approached by one of its leading authorities who asked her to organize a project in which Cashinahua community members would be able to study their own language and culture, especially the historical information that was stored in written documents, photographs and ethnographic objects stored in museums. He made clear that he did not want the project to be like the previous encounters with researchers which the community perceived very much as described by Haakanson, a researcher and museologist who himself belongs to an indigenous community from the Kodiak Island in Alaska:

> In the past, researchers would come into a community on our island to conduct their research and then leave, taking away what they learned. This knowledge ended up in museums, archives and libraries that have until recently been inaccessible to our people. While the knowledge was not lost, it was located so far away that most community members could not visit these collections (Haakanson Jr., 2015, p. 125).

The focus of this new project should be on an exchange of knowledge between researchers and the community, in both directions. The DoBeS[1] Cashinahua documentation project was carried out from 2006 to 2011. Its major outcome was a digital archive in which information was stored that had been gathered and elaborated by different researchers, including material from the past, as well as new material, also obtained by community members who interviewed their elders.

The exhibition format described here is a later outcome of the project that aims at promoting a dialogue between the Cashinahua indigenous community and protagonists of the national societies they are surrounded by. It is intended to be a long-term project, with further exhibitions to be shown in other places in Peru and Brazil and especially in places, which are nearer to the areas inhabited by the Cashinahuas themselves.

The paper is structured as follows: after a brief section about the Cashinahuas and their history of contact some background considerations with regard to the exhibition project will be outlined in more detail. Possibilities for participation of the indigenous community in the project, title and place of the exhibition as well as choice of exhibits will be discussed, taking into account current issues in museum studies. In the next section, dealing with the exhibition itself, significant aspects of each of the five adjoining rooms of the exhibition space will be pointed out and related to the issues previously discussed. Subsequently, an overall evaluation will be given which is followed by some concluding remarks.

THE CASHINAHUA AND THEIR HISTORY OF CONTACT

Like most indigenous languages in South-America, the Cashinahua language, one of about 30 remaining languages of the Panoan family, too, is threatened, even though most Cashinahuas still speak their language, and on the Peruvian as well as on the Brazilian side a bilingual education system has been established in the village schools. Historically,

[1] *Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen* (DoBeS), in English 'documentation of endangered languages'.

all Cashinahuas were living along several rivers and their tributaries in the Juruá basin, a geographical area which nowadays is situated in the Brazilian state of Acre. The rubber boom, however, that set in in the second half of the 19th century eventually led to the separation of what now is the Peruvian community, when part of the group fled from a rubber plantation in the area of the Upper river Envira after they had killed a non-indigenous foreman and his wife who had been mistreating them (*cf*. Iglesias, 2008; Montag, 2008; Camargo & Villar, 2013; Córdoba & Villar, 2015).

The Cashinahua language and culture have been subject to scientific research from an early stage. Their language is the first to be extensively documented by a Brazilian scholar, the historian Capistrano de Abreu, who as early as 1914 published *Rã-txa hu-ni ku-ĩ*, a bilingual Cashinahua-Portuguese collection of phrases and historical and mythological narratives which also included a sketch grammar and a glossary. Capistrano de Abreu had been working with two young Cashinahuas from the river Muru who had spent a couple of years with him in Rio de Janeiro, providing the texts and word-by-word translations into Portuguese (*cf*. Capistrano de Abreu, 2015, foreword). At that time, scholars working on indigenous languages had formed an international network, influencing each other in methodology and way of presenting their work (*cf*. Protti, 2006). Capistrano de Abreu had followed a methodology developed by the German physician and ethnographer Karl von den Steinen to compile and describe oral indigenous languages. The international academic connection also led to the curiosity that several of the myths were translated into German by Theodor Koch-Grünberg, a German ethnologist and explorer who himself had done linguistic research in the Brazilian Amazon, and published in 1921 in his collection of South-American indigenous myths (*cf.* Koch-Grünberg, 1921). Part of the Cashinahua myths could thus be read by a German non-academic audience long before any prose translation into Brazilian Portuguese was available (see Reiter, 2019 for details)[2].

In the course of time, other researchers as well as missionaries and educators visited the Cashinahuas in their villages, among them Kenneth Kensinger who carried out extensive fieldwork from 1955 to 1996 among the Peruvian group[3]. These established orthographies of the language and produced documents of various formats, including photographs and recordings on audio and video. The book by Capistrano de Abreu served many of them as a means for establishing contact, as is illustrated by the following quotation by a Cashinahua commenting on the visit of the German Brazilian photographer Harald Schultz[4]:

> Os caxinauás viram um alemão alto, de cabelo ruivo. . . . Sabia tudo sobre nós. Tinha um livro grande em caxinauá que olhávamos. Ele não é *nauá*, é caxinauá, diziam as pessoas. Foi assim que o vimos[5].
>
> Adimaundan huni keyatapa, hawen bu huxinipa, huni kuinbun uinniki. . . . Dasibi unankin keyuaidan. Hantxa kuin haya nun uinniki una ewapakiadan. Nawamaki, huni kuinki inibuki. Haska nun uinni.

For a long time, the only products of this contact available to the Cashinahuas themselves were a translation of the New Testament into their language and primers developed

[2] The first publication, readable for a Portuguese-speaking audience as well as for the Cashinahuas themselves, was organized by Camargo (Capistrano de Abreu, 2016) who converted Capistrano's transcription of the Cashinahua language into current orthography and added a prose translation.

[3] His collection of photographs, audio recordings and fieldnotes is stored in the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology at Brown University (Providence, USA) and not yet digitally available (see Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, n.d.).

[4] Capistrano's book was used by Patrick Deshayes (personal communication) when contacting the Peruvian group in the late 1970s. It also inspired André Marcel d'Ans who in 1975 published a collection of myths called "La verdadera Biblia de los Cashinahua" (d'Ans, 1975) (see also Jaulin's review of the publication in French at Robert, 1982).

[5] "The Cashinahuas saw a tall red-haired German. . . . He knew everything about us. He had a big book in Cashinahua which we looked at. He is no *nauá* (non-indigenous), he is a Cashinahua, the people said. That is how we saw him" (Camargo & Villar, 2013, pp. 185, 189, translation by Reiter). This was one of several Cashinahua quotations which – in their Portuguese translation – were placed in the exhibition as comments.

by Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) missionaries who had worked with the Peruvian group at Curanja river.

Capistrano de Abreu book again played a role when Camargo, in 2005, was approached by the above mentioned Brazilian Cashinahua leader who asked her to provide the group with a key to be able to read the Cashinahua orthography the historian had developed and with linguistic knowledge in order to understand his grammatical analyses. At that time, the idea was born of a documentation project which would have continuous linguistic workshops for indigenous teachers as an integral part. The DoBeS documentation project started in April 2006 with a first workshop held in the Brazilian Cashinahua community of Mucuripe at the Tarauacá-river[6]. Further activities of the project took place in villages on the Peruvian side of the border where Camargo had carried out most of her previous research. The official result of the project was a digital archive, which contained data on Cashinahua language and culture not only collected by the project team, but also by previous researchers who – in the case of Harald Schultz – had taken photographs and – in the case of the German anthropologist Barbara Keifenheim as well as Camargo – had recorded music and discourse on audio and video[7]. The linguistic data were transcribed and translated in order to be consulted by an international academic community. Additionally, two volumes were published on paper, a revised edition of Capistrano's collection with an orthography according to current standards and a prose translation as well as a trilingual (Cashinahua – Portuguese – Spanish) textbook on Cashinahua recent history with texts chosen from the corpus of recorded discourse and edited by members of the community themselves (*cf*. Capistrano de Abreu, 2016; Camargo & Villar, 2013). What, however, was still missing was a real participation of the Cashinahua community with regard to knowledge exchange on a broader scale: entering in a dialogue with researchers, national society and beyond.

THE EXHIBITION: BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS AND PREMISES

In times, when decolonization issues are widely discussed, one should think that it would be taken for granted in scientific projects to 'give something back' to the indigenous communities a linguist or anthropologist enters in a relationship with in order to obtain his/her data, but – although financial support for doing documentation or museological work is granted by a variety of institutions worldwide – it is far less common to receive any funding for research output dedicated to the non-academic public or to the indigenous communities themselves[8]. Linguistic workshops in individual communities, for instance, offer the opportunity, for indigenous participants and non-indigenous researchers alike, to work together on the data, developing teaching material for bilingual village-schools, making linguistic analyses with a classroom's expertise and – in the case of a long-standing relationship between researcher and community – even developing a research methodology understandable to and agreed upon by all participating parties. However, while analyses with the help of native experts in the language as well as further data collection during these occasions are items that can be stressed in project reports, primers and other print material usually have to be financed elsewhere, and a continuation of the linguistic workshops is also limited by the overall duration of a project. The same applies to financial support of endeavours directed to a broader public such as the exhibition described here. Data processing is the sole issue that goes on long after a

[6] *Cf.* DoBeS (2000-2022).

[7] The earliest recordings of ritual chants date from 1977, while most of the spoken texts on the Peruvian Cashinahua's history of migration and contacts are from the early 1990s.

[8] Within the context of the German DoBeS-programme, financed by the Volkswagen Foundation for more than a decade, it became common practice to integrate linguistic workshops for indigenous teachers into an individual budget proposal or receive further funding for regional indigenous gatherings for networking between indigenous groups and project teams. The two textbooks mentioned above as the output of the Cashinahua documentation project, however, had to be financed by other sources.

project is finished: digital formats need to be changed over time and annotation conventions within and across projects standardized in order for the academic community to be able to use the data for further analyses[9].

Little thought is given to whether the members of the linguistic community do in fact have access to the digital archive where the data has been stored, or to whether such data can be made use of to their benefit in a broader perspective. With regard to the Cashinahuas, who were promised an archive that could still be used by their future generations, the experience of the years following the end of the documentation project showed that internet is still neither stable nor widely accessible in the geographic area most of them live in, that electronic devices continue to have short life-spans under the climatic conditions, and that the archive structure and formats do not seem to be sufficiently comprehensible or simply do not meet with structuring principles of this specific indigenous culture[10]. Interest in the data, however, is constantly expressed by members of the speech community who revitalize ritual chanting by listening to the old recordings or talk about myths and recent history, told by the elders, in their village schools. On various occasions, therefore, archive material stored on notebooks, DVDs and pen-drives has been handed over to members of the linguistic community.

Another issue is a possible effect of informing a broader public about the Cashinahuas' specific culture, reflecting a unique way of perceiving the world, as well as about the group's recent history which has been shaped by its contacts and thus stands for similar experiences of innumerable indigenous groups in the Amazon and around the world. This gave rise to the idea of an exhibition, a format which – for offering a more vivid and directly appealing mode of presentation – would hopefully also render the utility value of the archive more plausible to Cashinahua community members themselves.

The exhibition "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" took place from 1st of February to 25th of March of 2018 at the Museum of the State of Pará (MEP) in Belém (Figure 1). The original plan had been to exhibit, on a smaller scale, photographs of the Cashinahuas, taken in 1951 by Harald Schultz and digitized for the documentation archive, which show the Peruvian group, shortly after they had admitted to be re-contacted by non-indigenous woodcutters in the area of the Purus river[11]. However, in

Figure 1. Opening of the exhibition with party ornament (left) and respectable persons' tunic (right) (©Reiter 2018).

[9] In 2021, funding was granted to a project which plans to join two big digital language documentation archives (Endangered Languages Documentation Projects – ELDP and DoBeS) in a new 'Humboldt language archive' at Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin (see Bolay, 2021). Another initiative is the French-German collaborative project Language Documentation Reference Corpora (DoReCo) which builds up a resource from spoken language corpora for cross-linguistic research (see DoReCo, n.d.).

[10] A current initiative showing a positive approach in this context is the ethnographic SAWA project ("Savoirs Autochtones Wayana et Apalaï, Guyane - Une nouvelle approche de la restitution et ses implications sur les formes de transmission") of the Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre la Défense (UPOND) in collaboration with the *Musée du quai Branly*. Part of the project time has been dedicated to establishing an archive surface by directly consulting speakers of the two indigenous groups (Watau, n.d.). A similar collaborative approach towards a collection of Kwakwaka'wakw cultural objects at Ethnologisches Museum Berlin is described in detail by Glass (2015).

[11] 80 Cashinahua photographs taken by his father were given to the DoBeS project by Alexander Schultz. Since the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (MAE) in São Paulo, hosting the legacy of Harald Schultz which additionally *consists* of a large ethnographic corpus, claims the authorship rights for the photographs, the digital archive grants free access to copies in low resolution. For the exhibition, permission of presentation of photographs in high resolution was granted by Schultz' widow Vilma Chiara († 2020).

order to give the Cashinahuas themselves the opportunity to actively participate in the planning and realization of the exhibition and to include a 'view from within', thus also responding to the changing paradigms in museological and other work related to indigenous populations, other components were added.

The preparations of the exhibition took a number of years. In 2007, Schultz' photographs and film (Schultz, 1962) were shown in different Cashinahua communities, and in 2010, thirty Cashinahuas gathered in Puerto Esperanza (Peru) and preselected the photographs for the exhibition (Figure 2). Another important part of the exhibition were statements given by Cashinahua community members. These were taken from oral discourse, recorded and stored in the Cashinahua digital archive.

Funding for the exhibition was eventually granted in 2017[12]. In its extended form itwas conceptualized by the authors, in collaboration with members of the Cashinahua community from the Purus area (all of them descendants of the group contacted in 1951). The scenography was developed by the German artist Martin Juef in cooperation with Reiter[13].

For the title of the exhibition, which also includes a historical dimension, the authors opted for *caxinauá* instead of *huni kuin*, since this – with different spellings in other languages – is the term the group has come to be known by. A second reason for the choice was that *huni kuin*, used by the Cashinahuas themselves as an auto-denomination since the 1990s and widely treated as an ethnonym of the group, is problematic in various ways. On the one hand it has probably been adopted by the group due to external influence, on the other hand it is used with some variation ('oni kui', 'uni koin', 'noke koĩ', etc.) by almost all groups of the same language family in the Juruá-Purus basin of whom none has a specific auto-denomination differentiating them from one of the other groups.

Huni kuin has often erroneously been translated as 'real men'. However, 'real' in Cashinahua language is referred to by *kayabi*; it is in fact possible to say *huni kuin kayabi* ('a real being *kuin*'). The meaning of the construction *huni kuin* ('being kuin'), by contrast, highly depends on its context of use. In a village, for example, a group engaged in a specific task is considered *huni kuin* (or rather *huni kuinbu*, in its plural) in opposition to *huni kuinma*, those who do not participate in the activity. Likewise, the term may encompass a whole village, as opposed to other villages, the whole ethnic group, as opposed to other ethnicities, or even all indigenous groups in opposition to their alterity, denominated by *nawa* ('inka'). The term *nawa* by semantic extension refers to 'the other', 'outsider', 'foreigner'. In addition, both terms *kuin* and *nawa* are symmetrical: in the same way as an indigenous group perceives itself as *kuin* and the non-indigenous people as *nawa*, a non-indigenous may refer to his group as *kuin* and see the indigenous people as *nawa* (see also Keifenheim, 1990).

The term *caxinauá* or *kaxi nawa* (literally 'bat people'), on the other hand, is a mocking, non-offensive

Figure 2. Exhibition of Schultz' photographs (©Camargo 2018).

[12] The authors would like to thank the Goethe Institute (via *Casa de Estudos Germânicos* at *Universidade Federal do Pará* – UFPA, Belém) and the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Service* - DAAD) for giving them the opportunity to realize this exhibition. Thanks also to the local collaborators, especially to Sérgio Melo and Antonio Eutalio (MEP), Hein van der Voort, Cândida Barros and Joshua Birchal (*Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi* - MPEG) as well as Marília Ferreira and Sidney Facundes (UFPA).

[13] See Juef (2020).

denomination of the group by other Panoan groups. With this name a habit, perceived by these, was referred to that the Cashinahuas excessively used bananas in preparing their meals, thus attracting bats which were observed to frequently invade their houses.

The exhibition took place in a gallery consisting of five adjoining rooms on a space of altogether 350 m^2. The hosting institution, MEP, is located in the former Governors' Palace of the State of Pará in the old centre of Belém. Built in the 18th century as a residency for the Portuguese court, the building witnessed the most important moments in the history of the State. Having been the seat of a government in colonial times in one of the two Brazilian cities that most profited from the rubber boom in the Amazon region and hosting an exhibition about one of the indigenous groups that most suffered from the same development, turns the occupation of the place itself into a symbol. This corresponds to Ravelli's observation that a museum itself is a 'spatial text', a communicative resource replete with meaning that can be analysed in terms of what it represents, what we can 'see' in it and what we can do with it (Ravelli, 2016, p. 524-527). According to Antonio Eutalio Corrêa, MEP museologist, the mediation influenced by factors related to the place of the exhibition can be read as a "conquest":

> Ao entendermos que a mediação ou o processo de mediação 'surge' ou ocorre ligado a contextos ou camadas de contextos, que trazem na semântica do objeto: narrativas, discursos, formas de comunicação, inerentes a uma orientação 'promocional/institucional' e a 'mediação cultural', entende-se assim, esse processo de mediação enquanto uma 'conquista', influenciada por fatores em torno do 'lugar', seu processo histórico, pedagógico, social e cultural, diante dos preceitos e abordagens (Antonio Eutalia Corrêa, personal communication, 2019)[14].

From the late 19th to the early 20th century, at the same time when Belém, alongside Manaus, had developed into a flourishing modern city, the entire Juruá-Purus river basin, today belonging to the state of Acre, was turned into an area of rubber exploitation and its indigenous population, including the Cashinahuas, forced to work in the plantations.

Contemporary Belém continues to be the largest and most important city in the north of Brazil. The *Belle Époque*, as the short period of the rubber boom was labelled, is still omni-present in the memory of its population and constantly alluded to, but the approach towards these years of abundance for a small elite as well as Belém's colonial past in general is mostly non-critical[15]. Another aspect, which needed to be taken into account when setting up the exhibition, is the overall attitude of Belém's population with regard to its own indigenous inheritance. Most inhabitants of today's city are of mixed ethnic origin, and indigenous customs and habits form a natural component of the popular culture. Few but increasingly more people consciously acknowledge this fact, whereas a majority prefers to emphasize European ancestry. Although, Belém, too, has been reached by the academic identity debate, 'the indigenous', in the opinion of many, is still perceived as something indiscriminate, uncultured and undesirable[16].

Another aspect to be considered is that museums and other exhibition places in Belém until very recently were mostly visited by the educated classes, and that it has become a declared goal of museological work to encourage other social groups to frequent such spaces (Antonio Eutalio Corrêa, personal communication, 2019).

Although the exhibition took place in Belém with its renown Centre of Amazonian Study MPEG, it is no direct

[14] "By understanding that mediation or a mediation process "comes up" or occurs connected to contexts or context layers that add to the semantics of the object: narratives, discourses, forms of communication inherent to a 'promotional/ institutional' orientation and 'cultural mediation', this mediation process is understood as a "conquest", influenced by "spatial" factors, its historic, pedagogical, social and cultural process, with regard to precepts and approaches" (Antonio Eutalia Corrêa, personal communication via email, 2019, translation by Reiter).

[15] The MEP itself with its constant exhibition in the first floor of the building, displaying five salons, lavishly decorated during the administration of governor Augusto Montenegro (1903-1908), is an example for the idealization of the *Belle Époque*.

[16] Personal observations made by both authors on many occasions during the last two decades.

output of the new tradition regarding museological work with indigenous patrimonies which was established by researchers of this institution. And the MEP is certainly not an exhibition place with an ethnographic bias but usually rather focusses on visual arts. However, in many respects "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" meets the demands outlined for the "ethnomuseological approach" by Shepard et al. (2017). This new and critical approach aims at "making the other present" within the institutions, giving indigenous peoples the opportunity to enter in a dialogue with and about their patrimony (see Shepard et al., 2017, p. 767). Such a dialogue was promoted by the contributions to the exhibition which were decided upon by the Cashinahuas themselves, not only in form of objects but especially by the explanations given by two young representatives during their guiding tours at the opening and a 'guiding tour capacitation' they gave to the museum guides beforehand.

With regard to the items to be displayed it was decided to show only reproducible objects such as photographs, films and books, or pieces that had been produced by older Cashinahua community members specifically for the exhibition. This had practical, financial as well as ethical and proprietary reasons. Permission had been granted by Schultz' widow and his son to show his photographs, and a screening licence for his film had been obtained. Other videos, photographs and texts had been collected by the authors themselves or were of open access (as in the case of the two digital versions of the New Testament). For traditional objects of material culture as stored in other museums, however, there was no way to integrate them into the exhibition, even though it might have been interesting to show some of them, especially those that had been collected by Schultz himself and that could be seen on his photographs.

During the Cashinahua documentation project and afterwards there had been visits of several younger (2008, 2014) and one older Cashinahua (2007) team members to the archive of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (MAE) at University of São Paulo (USP) to see the material objects gathered by Schultz in the 1950s[17]. These were arrows, pottery as well as headdresses and diadems made with feathers. The older man who was born in the 1940s pointed out that arrows laced with curare poison – even after many decades – needed to be handled very carefully because their owner and producer could have been a powerful shaman in which case the object would still have a negative impact on the ones who touched it. He further gave information on one of the diadems of the collection, made of blue hummingbird-feathers, which was also shown on one of Schultz' photographs. This item used to be worn by a chief on the occasion of an outsider's visit to the village so that the former could be identified by the latter. The younger men (between 25 and 40 years of age), on two visits, showed less knowledge with regard to their ancestors' material culture; they were, for example, very much astounded by the beauty of the design of some of the clay pottery they saw at the MAE. All of them, however, were able to identify the arrows as belonging to their culture because of the diagonal way in which the feathers were attached to it.

A transport of such sensitive objects from São Paulo to Belém would have been too expensive, also with regard to insurance costs, for the exhibition project, and it is usually not easy to get permission for such an endeavour from the institution that owns the collection[18]. Another important aspect is what here has been called an 'ethical' one: it is most often the case that the origin of an object is not known by the indigenous people from the community it originally belonged to and that these have reservations with regard to its usage

[17] Such visits of representatives from descendant communities to ethnographic collections have become common practice in museological work throughout the world (see, for example, AMNH, n.d.).

[18] A solution could have been to show photographs of the objects, as was done in another exhibition, "Diálogos – Os Snethlage e as ciências humanas no Museu Goeldi", organized in 2014 by Reiter, as representative of DAAD/*Casa de Estudos Germânicos* (UFPA), in cooperation with MPEG. In that case, however, the photographs had been officially taken and authorized by the museum the collection belonged to which was Ethnologisches Museum Berlin.

in an exhibition. Researchers working with indigenous communities from the Amazon basin could give innumerable examples for this kind of attitude which is not only visible in the avoidance of the old Cashinahua to touch the arrows from the Schultz collection. Shepard et al. (2017) describe the strong reactions of members of the Mebêngôkre-Kayapó community who, when visiting the ethnographical archive of the MPEG, were afraid of being attacked by the spirits associated with the old objects. One of the authors, when in 2003 visiting the archive of Ethnologisches Museum Berlin together with an Awetí (Tupian) chief, was asked by him to record on video an object, officially labelled 'Tierfigur aus Wachs' ('animal figure made of wax') by the collector Karl von den Steinen[19]. The chief himself did not even want to touch it, and when asked why he was specifically interested in that object he explained that it had been made by a sorcerer and that nowadays the Awetí would not let outsiders see and even less so buy such objects[20]. The other author had similar experiences with members of the Wayana (Cariban) group at the *Musée du quai Branly* in Paris. She observed that the Wayana visitors to the archive commented among themselves in their own language about the ethnographer from the museum, touching and shaking some figurines from their material culture. They considered his behaviour to be extremely risky because they did not know whether the figurines had been made for sale or for 'internal use'[21]. All this shows that a different attitude towards such 'traditional' ethnographic objects in exhibitions must be adopted when living members of the indigenous groups in question are involved in a project.

ASPECTS OF THE EXHIBITION

In order to meet the conditions of reaching a wide, not necessarily academic audience in the city of Belém, an approach for the exhibition was chosen which permitted an empathizing approximation to Cashinahua cosmology and a further presentation of their culture as a matter of perception of self and other in situations of contact and in changing perspectives. The exhibition deliberately reduced written texts to a minimum, also, because many of the expected visitors do not read them. But the objects were joined in a way to make people draw conclusions, and guided tours were offered, giving the opportunity to ask further questions[22]. This way, the visitor to the exhibition was placed in the centre of "meaning making practices" (*cf.* Ravelli, 2016), having at his/her disposition a broad range of multimodal resources. These included not only the visual – films, photographs, written text and material objects, but also sound (music and oral discourse), scent, light and spatial arrangements. In fact, even touch was involved, since a glass case containing several feather headdresses was open[23].

The concept of the exhibition thus can be seen as following the social semiotic framework, building on Halliday's work (see Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). According to this approach, meaning is understood as systemic, conceptualized as a system of choices, and as functional. The latter is divided in three intertwined strands: an ideational function, representing experience, an interpersonal function, enacting relationships and values, and a textual function which forms coherent 'texts' from smaller units of meaning (Blunden, 2020, p. 46-47; see

[19] The German explorer Karl von den Steinen had visited the headwaters of the Xingu river in Central Brazil in 1884 and 1887. From his second expedition he brought back a considerable number of ethnographic objects from the different indigenous peoples living in that area which he gave to the *Museum für Völkerkunde* (today *Ethnologisches Museum*) in Berlin.

[20] Reiter (personal observation, 2003).

[21] The figurines, from a collection dating back to 1938, normally were made by shamans to call back the 'vital energy' from a person who got lost and may have died in the forest during a hunting trip. After calling back the vital energy of a deceased to the figurine, his relatives were able to bury it instead of the body (Camargo, personal observation, 2016).

[22] See also Tyradellis (cited in Berkenheide, 2020) who emphasizes the role of the museum as a site of public debate, a concept to be followed by the newly opened Humboldt-Forum in Berlin.

[23] See Classen and Howes' (2006) description of the changing paradigms towards the museum as a sensescape throughout the centuries. They argue that indigenous artifacts can only be apprehended by using more than just the visual sense which predominates in Western perception.

also Ravelli, 2016, p. 526). Important is further that each of the modalities has its own system and that intermodal relationships may be complementary and converging, but also diverging, with differing meanings (*cf.* Blunden, 2020, p. 47). While meaning in a text may co-pattern with that displayed in an artifact as mostly occurs in the here described exhibition, this may not always be the case. An example for the latter will be given further down in the context of a quotation related to the translation of the Bible into Cashinahua.

A starting point for the meaning-making process within a visitor to the exhibition were the explanations given by Keifenheim (2000, pp. 69-71) on Cashinahua perception as reflecting a specific view of the world[24]:

> Die Schöpfungsmythen der Kashinawa erzählen Begebenheiten aus einer Epoche, in der sich das Leben in einem Fluxus ständiger Transformationen (*dami*) entfaltete. Alles Bestehende konnte die Gestalt austauschen, sich anderen Formen des Seins anverwandeln und allumfassend kommunizieren. Sichtbares und Unsichtbares, Materielles und Immaterielles standen sich nicht als Gegensätze gegenüber, sondern waren fließende Erscheinungen ein und derselben ungebrochenen Wirklichkeit. Zeit war Gleichzeitigkeit, in der alles es selbst und etwas anderes sein konnte. . . . Mit dem Bruch der Urschöpfung geht die Verwandlungsfähigkeit der ersten Wesen verloren und es entstehen getrennte Wirklichkeitsebenen von Materialität und Immaterialität, von Sichtbarem und Unsichtbarem, von Raum und Zeit. Dennoch sind diese nicht streng geschieden, sondern besitzen fließende Grenzen, wodurch es immer wieder zu Interferenzen kommen kann.
>
> Als Folge der Differenzierung hat nun jedes Lebewesen einen gattungsspezifisch festgelegten Körper (*yuda*), der von einem oder mehreren Geistern (*yushin*) belebt wird, und muss sich damit begnügen, während der kurzen Zeit seiner Endlichkeit „in sich" zu sein. . . . Diese Beschränkung ist um so einschneidender, als es die Fähigkeit der Allkommunikation verloren hat. Die Tiere sind nur noch in der Lage, Schreie auszustoßen, und die Menschen sind in eine Sprache eingefangen, die mehr Mißverständnisse als Verstehen erzeugt. Mit der Sprache, die alles benennend zu fixieren sucht, sind . . . zudem auch die Krankheiten und der Tod entstanden. So führt der Schöpfungsbruch zur gleichzeitigen Hervorbringung der Sprache und der trügerischen Kommunikation, der Krankheiten und des Todes sowie des Problems von Schein und Wirklichkeit. Es gehört seitdem zur *conditio humana*, daß jeder Lebensvollzug in einem gefährlichen Spannungsfeld stattfindet, da alles zwischen der Illusion der Realität und der Realität der Illusion zu schwanken scheint. Immer läuft man Gefahr, sich in trügerischer Realitätswahrnehmung und -deutung zu verlieren und als einer, der „außer sich" gerät, in den Sogstrom der Alteration gezogen zu werden. . . . . [D]er Blick [erfast] lediglich eine auf Sichtbarkeit reduzierte Welt, hinter der sich weitere Wirklichkeiten verbergen. . . . Dies betrifft nicht nur den Bereich des Visuellen. Es besteht vielmehr eine prinzipielle Skepsis gegenüber allen Sinneswahrnehmungen (Keifenheim, 2000, pp. 69-71)[25].

According to Keifenheim (2000), a Cashinahua for his/her orientation in the world therefore relies not only on vision and audition, but also on impressions conveyed by the usually less developed senses. Such a perception with all senses is reflected in the first of the five rooms, where the visitors face – lit up in the dark – an

[24] This citation – in Portuguese translation – was the only written text in the "room of the senses", the first of the five rooms of the exhibition.

[25] "The creation myths of the Cashinahua talk about a time, when life was unfolding in a flux of continuous transformations (*dami*). Everything that existed was able to change its form, to take on other forms of being and communicate in all directions. The visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial were no opposites but floating appearances of one and the same unbroken reality. Time was simultaneity where everything could be itself and something different. . . . Rupture with the original creation made these first entities lose their capacity to transform, and separate layers of reality, of materiality and immateriality, of the visible and the invisible, of space and time, come into being. These, however, are not strictly separate, but have floating boundaries, constantly causing interferences. As a consequence of differentiation every living being now has a body (*yuda*), determined by its species, which is animated by one or several spirits (*yuxin*), and has to be content with being 'within itself' in the short time of its finite existence. This limitation is aggravated by the fact that it has lost the capacity for universal communication. Animals are merely capable of uttering their cries, and humans are trapped in a language that creates more misunderstandings than comprehension. With a language, striving to fixate everything by naming it, have also emerged diseases and death. Rupture with creation, therefore, at the same time brings language and treacherous communication, diseases and death as well as the problem of appearance and reality. Since then, it belongs to human condition that each life is lived in a dangerous tension area, everything seeming to oscillate between the illusion of reality and the reality of illusion. A person is in constant danger of losing oneself in treacherous perception and interpretation of reality and to be sucked into alteration as someone who is 'outside oneself'. . . . Sight merely captures a world reduced to visibility which hides other realities behind it. . . . This is not only true for the realm of the visual. There is a general scepticism [of the Cashinahua] regarding all perceptions with the senses" (Keifenheim, 2000, pp. 69-71, translation by Reiter).

enlarged *kene*, one of the characteristic graphic designs of the Cashinahua, while listening to ritual chanting and perceiving what is considered to be a fragrant smell by the indigenous community[26]. They can dive into this other realm of perception, from where they are led out into the second room with the photographs and a film produced by Schultz in 1951. These historical records show a return of the Peruvian group to a near-traditional way of life, approximately four decades after their flight from the rubber plantation (Figure 3).

The next room is dominated by the projection of a video, the documentation of a myth usually told in preparation of a successful hunting trip[27]. The narration gives visitors the opportunity to listen to the Cashinahua language spoken by one of the descendants of the group that Schultz met in 1951. A translation of the discourse is given in the form of subtitles, also to avoid any exoticization of the language (Figure 4).

The general subject of this third room is migration, which in the case of the Cashinahuas is mostly characterized by flight and expulsion from their traditional territories. Their violent enslavement on the plantations is alluded to by several specimen of the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*). A map of the territory occupied by the Cashinahua population in a vast area along the rivers Purus and Juruá and their tributaries exemplifies their dispersal as a group. At the same time the map – together with a smaller map showing its location in Brazil – may remind the visitor of the fact that a place far from the city of Belém used to have a major impact on the development of the city[28].

Figure 3. Visitors at the exhibition (©Reiter 2018).

Figure 4. The hunting myth and conversation between Cashinahua community members and visitors (©Reiter 2018).

The rubber boom that invaded the Western Amazon region was extremely damaging to the indigenous peoples living there. The Cashinahuas had to give up their rites, especially those with songs and dances, and in the rubber plantations Portuguese became their primary means of communication. Today, the variety of Cashinahua spoken in the Jurua basin in Brazil shows strong influence of the

[26] The perfume was produced by Isaka Mateus, a young Cashinahua from the Jordão area who joins local ingredients with modern methods of gaining essences.

[27] A written version of the same myth *O caxinauá de coxas pegadas* was published by Capistrano (see Capistrano de Abreu, 2015, p. 317-321 or – with revised Cashinahua orthography and Portuguese translation in prose – Capistrano de Abreu, 2016, pp. 472-478). The myth presented in the exhibition was told by Joaquin Cumapa and recorded for the DoBeS archive (*cf.* Camargo et al., 2011). His speech exhibits some Spanish influence on the language which started in the 1950s and since the 1980s has continuously intensified due to the administration of the Peruvian Cashinahua villages at Puerto Esperanza, a small urban centre situated at the river Purus near the Brazilian border.

[28] In fact, the map made various visitors ask why there was an exhibition of an indigenous group so far away from them, even from a different state (personal observations of the authors).

Portuguese language, on the lexical as well as on the grammatical level[29]. The impact of Portuguese on the Brazilian Cashinahua variety, however, varies individually and from region to region.

In the fourth room the interconnection of cultures is illustrated by written works reflecting the Cashinahuas' early presence as objects of international research. The earliest documentation of their language, Capistrano's text collection, time and again found its way back to the speakers themselves being read aloud by outsiders, as mentioned in the above quotation. Another written example is the collection of indigenous myths which was translated into German and published by Theodor Koch-Grünberg to a German audience in 1921. Both works, together with other books about the group, are exhibited in a glass case as traditionally used in museums, being the only 'untouchable' objects of the exhibition and at the same time representing 'exclusive' knowledge. An identical glass case in the same room contains five feather diadems, the Cashinahua artifacts that had been produced by the elders as examples of the material patrimony. This case, by contrast, is open and thus invites the visitors to touch the objects[30] (Figures 5 and 6).

The impact of the non-indigenous world on the Cashinahuas' perception of themselves in relation to the other is made explicit by a video from 1996 in which an important Cashinahua chief, Grompez Puricho, tells Keifenheim about his groups' recent encounter with members of an uncontacted Panoan group. Confronted with people resembling themselves on the photographs taken in 1951 and thus representing their own recent past, they become scared and even think about asking national authorities for help[31]. The subject of transformation is taken

Figure 5. Glass case with written works about the group (©Octávio Cardoso, 2018).

Figure 6. The glass cases (©Octávio Cardoso, 2018).

over to the fifth room with another quotation: "Eu era assim. Agora sou *nawa*. Agora sei escrever. Agora tenho coisas[32] / En haskaniki. . . . Eskatian en nawaki, iki. Eskatian en kenenikaki, iki. Eskatian en mabuyaki, iki".

The quotation is from an audio recording collected in 2006 with Mario Bardales, one of the elders who had worked from an early age with SIL-linguists visiting his village of Balta. He became one of the first literate community

[29] This can be illustrated by a recording from the Cashinahua archive, the myth "O panema de mulher bonita" told by one of the elders from the Jurua basin (see Reiter & Kaxinauá, 2006).

[30] In order to allow for save transport and storage, the diadems are provided with a mechanism by which the feathers can be either put upright or closed 'automatically', as the Cashinahuas say

[31] See Keifenheim (2000, p. 49ff.) for an analysis of the event.

[32] "I was like that. Now I'm a *nawa* (non-indigenous person). Now I know how to write. Now I own things" (Mario Bardales, 2006, cited in Reiter & Tuesta, 2006).

members and later worked as a school teacher in his village. In the recording he reflects on the changes he has passed through in his life and attributes them to the contact with outsiders. The quotation itself is neutral; the speaker does not attribute any value to his self-categorization as a *nawa*, one of the 'others', but it may also be interpreted as a loss of identity.

This room also contains an interview with Barbara Keifenheim, recorded in 2017 especially for the exhibition. The anthropologist talks about the changes within the group she observed in the course of 20 years of research in the field. In addition, she reads important passages from her book "Wege der Sinne" (Keifenheim, 2000) which thus are made accessible to a Brazilian public in a translation provided by subtitles (Figure 7).

Another aspect leading to massive change especially within the Peruvian group, is their exposure to Christian religion. A result of their cooperation with a SIL-missionary is a translation of the New Testament into their language. In the exhibition, two tablets illustrate the availability of digital formats of this translation in a Peruvian as well as a Brazilian orthography, thus presenting integration into two national administrative systems as another dividing factor[33]. These exhibits are further accompanied by a quotation of a Cashinahua describing the task of translating the bible:

> [Ricardo] me falou da palavra de Deus e me fez trabalhar logo nela. Ele me fazia trabalhar com a palavra de Deus, mas eu não falava espanhol, não entendia nada, não sabia escrever, então ele ralhava comigo e eu tinha medo[34].
>
> Há diusun hantxa yuia ma ea wamakin. Em nawan hantxauma, nawan hantxa en ninkadiama en kenea unama ea dayamakin, ea haa aka, datei.

In this part of the exhibition the two modalities clearly do not connect (*cf.* Blunden, 2020, mentioned at the beginning of this section). While there are two translations

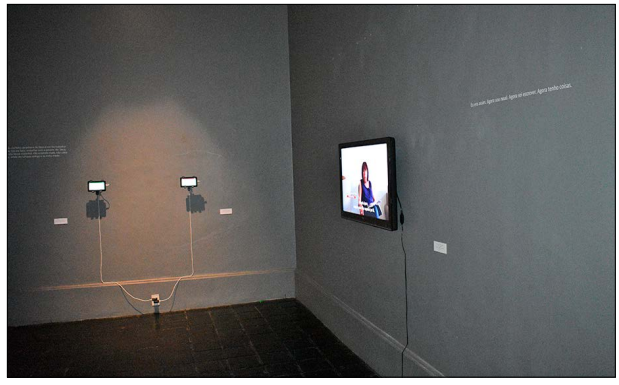

Figure 7. Interview with Keifenheim and tablets presenting two Cashinahua versions of the New Testament (©Reiter 2018).

digitally available to modern bible-reading Cashinahuas from the Peruvian as well as the Brazilian side of the border, the quotation suggests that the Cashinahua bible translators (from 1980 onwards) did not dominate the source language Spanish sufficiently to produce an equivalent text in their own language. In addition, the representative of 'the word of God' is characterized as a choleric person of whom the Cashinahua collaborators were afraid. From such a 'diverging intermodal relationship' the visitors may draw their own conclusions.

The walk through the exhibition ends with sequences of photographs portraying modern Peruvian and Brazilian Cashinahuas. When comparing the photographs showing day-to-day activities of the Peruvian group between 2006 and 2011 with those taken by Schultz in 1951, many of the changes that have occurred from then to the present become clearly visible.

The exhibition was limited by its low budget and therefore could not integrate other features which characterize modern exhibitions, such as interactive tools. It was, however, accompanied by a small supporting programme which consisted in activities in and outside the museum. Alberto Roque Toribio and Hulício Moisés Kaxinawá, two young Cashinahua community members

[33] See Scripture Earth (n.d.a, n.d.b).

[34] "He [Richard Montag] talked to me about God's word and made me work with it right away. He made me work with God's word, but I didn't speak Spanish, didn´t understand anything, didn't know how to write, so he scolded me and I was afraid (of him)" (Camargo & Villar, 2013, p. 201, translation by Reiter).

from the Purus area who had worked as research assistants in the documentation project, led through the exhibition, explaining it to museum guides and visitors[35]. Together with the authors, they held a talk at the MPEG, participated in a panel discussion ("Focus on Indigenous Patrimonies") with researchers from the MPEG at the MEP, and gave a workshop on their language to students of linguistics at the Federal University of Pará.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTROVERSIES

Within the seven weeks of the exhibition's duration 1,500 of all visitors registered in a list; the overall number was estimated to have been considerably higher. Among the visitors were also a number of school classes. Supported by educational guided tours, the students were made aware that the history of the Cashinahuas reflected the histories of many indigenous peoples of the Amazon and that this exhibition on the ground floor of the MEP permitted a reinterpretation of the victorious narration of European colonization and especially of the *Belle Époque*, represented by the pompous and lavishly decorated rooms of the palace's first floor. This is reflected in a written statement given by Antonio Eutalio Corrêa, MEP museologist:

> A Exposição "Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato" . . . apresentou uma narrativa oportuna e pertinente enquanto contraponto a museografia do Museu do Estado do Pará (MEP) diante do contexto da *Belle* Époque e a profusão econômica da borracha no Pará no início do século XX[36] (Antonio Eutalio Corrêa, personal communication, 2019).

The memory of the *Belle Époque* during the rubber boom, when Belém turned into one of the most modern cities of Brazil and got its nickname of a 'tropical Paris', is still very present in the minds of many inhabitants of the place and often subject of cultural events. However, little is known of the indigenous peoples living far from these urban centres who were forced to extract rubber and abandon their modus vivendi, in order to fulfil an international commercial demand and thus contributed to the prospering of this place. This became clear during preparatory talks to museum guides and in conversations with visitors to the exhibition. Many people asked why there was an exhibition about indigenous people who were not from the state of Pará and were surprised when finding out about the historical connection.

A related aspect that made the exhibition an important event in Belém is a still prevalent negative attitude towards indigenous people in its population. While being well-received in the institutions, the two Cashinahua representatives had a very different experience in the streets, when exploring the *Ver-o-Peso* market or a shopping centre. Here they felt to be looked at or overheard that passers-by loudly referred to them as '*índios selvagens*', i.e., as 'avages'.

They themselves, by contrast, felt to be in a city with an indigenous population and perceived the exhibition as "a Brazilian indigenous face" brought by natives to the knowledge of the people of Belém who were "as native as themselves" (Alberto Roque and Hulício Moises, personal communication, 2018).

The Cashinahua people participated in the exhibition project in many ways, not only as authors and by choosing the exhibited material, but also – in the case of the two

[35] Both are direct descendants of the Peruvian group captured in Schultz's photographs but do not live at the same place and did not know each other very well before travelling together to Belém During a pre-visit to the exhibition, they walked slowly from room to room, making comments and pointing out details of each photograph to each other, laughing about the story-teller's lively presentation of the hunting-myth, discussing about how they wanted to present aspects of their world to an audience of *nawa* (Brazilians). In the room with the feather-headdresses they stayed for a long time to remember, by the sight of these, what the elders had told them about their original function in rituals with dancing and chanting. This reflects the vital interest of the Cashinahua community of today in this specific aspect of their culture, as had also been pronounced by others during the documentation project. For both Cashinahuas in Belém it had been the first time that they entered a museum.

[36] "The exhibition 'Os Caxinauás – autonomia e contato' [...] presented an appropriate narrative, counterbalancing the museography of the Museu do Estado do Pará regarding Belém's so-called *Belle Époque* and the economic wealth of the State of Pará at the beginning of the 20th century" (Antonio Eutalio Corrêa, personal communication via email, 2019, translation by Reiter).

invited community members – by providing further information and interacting with the public during their guided tours and in the supporting events. For the opening of the exhibition, they decided to chant and invite the visitors to join them for dancing in the 'room of the senses'. This way they turned themselves as well as the visitors into 'integral parts of the exhibit' that could be observed by others and took on agentive roles in the meaning-making process (*cf.* Ravelli, 2016, p. 530). Unaware of such theoretical considerations in modern museology, the two Cashinahuas had uttered this idea after their pre-visit to the exhibition. Their intention was, as they pointed out, to give visitors the opportunity to dive into their culture together with them, taking as a model their famous myth about an anaconda that takes a human to the ground of the river to show him its/her world in a state of indifferentiation (*cf.* Keifenheim's citation above, Camargo, 1999). For the visitor the effect of immersion into an unknown realm was further enhanced by the features of the 'spatial text': a dark, windowless room with high ceilings, in which only the *kene* was illuminated.

During their guided tours the two Cashinahuas drew the visitors' attention to aspects they considered most important and, by entering in a dialogue with them, participated in the construction of interactional meaning (*cf*. Ravelli, 2016, p. 528). An interesting side-effect of explaining the exhibition to the visitors was that an exchange of knowledge even occurred among the two guides themselves, who both grew up in the Purus area, but in different villages and on different sides of the national border (Figure 8).

In some respects, however, the exhibition could only be an approximation. One of them was the fact that 'the Cashinahuas' here were represented by a small group of descendants of the Peruvian community[37]. Accordingly, the exhibition was hotly debated and criticized especially by the politically well-organized Brazilian Cashinahuas in the social networks (facebook and whatsapp), showing, once again, that national borders can be a strong dividing factor for a speech community. If the story had been told by one of the Cashinahua groups who stayed in the rubber plantations, the contact situations would have been slightly different.

Figure 8. Dancing in the 'room of the senses' led by the two Cashinahua representatives (©Reiter 2018).

Another approximation was the choice of objects in the exhibition which was determined by aspects of feasibility and practicality, because the project, set up with a very limited budget, did not permit a consultation of the group with regard to every detail.

Finally, the exhibition was scientifically coherent, but no attempt was made for completeness. Instead, the focus had been on a presentation that made scientific research, kept in an archive, perceivable by the senses and available to a broader public. Almost needless to say, that the inclusion of additional dimensions of perception than just the visual and the auditory in the scenography is also an approximation, because questions like the following cannot be satisfactorily answered: "How is the . . . presentation of indigenous artifacts related to Western notions of the sense lives of indigenous peoples? . . . To what extent can one ever apprehend the sensory world of the 'other'?" (Classen & Howes, 2006, p. 201).

[37] In order for the community members 'at home' to participate in the exhibition, the two representatives documented the events they participated in on their smartphones. In addition, a film of aspects of the exhibition which they took back to their communities was produced by a professional filmmaker.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND PROSPECTS

Each indigenous language reveals the richness of a unique sociocultural, spiritual and linguistic universe. Every single contact has brought about changes, destroyed traditions, modified and strengthened others, and – in the specific case of the Cashinahuas – preserved some of the older structures in scientific archives which are interesting not only to researchers, but also and especially to members of the speech community themselves.

In this specific exhibition, furthermore, it was possible to present facts with regard to an indigenous culture that did not touch on the subject of ownership and property: no historical material was presented that had the character of traditional artefacts. Some cultural objects were produced specifically for the exhibition by older community members. Other items, such as photographs, films and books are reproducible. Instead; the focus of the exhibition was on restitution, division and exchange of knowledge. Such endeavours had started with the Cashinahua documentation project when researchers and Cashinahua team members gathered in workshops to make Capistrano's book, his transcription of Cashinahua discourse as well as his grammatical observations, more intelligible to a Cashinahua audience or by the creation of an archive that also included older material collected by other researchers. The exhibition, in this context, was meant to mark a further step in that it makes research results known to a wider public and offers a variety of possibilities for members of the speech community to get involved. Such a cooperative work represents for an indigenous speech community a way of valuing knowledge by not only being informants but active participants in projects which may even have a positive impact on the society they are surrounded by. For the two young Cashinahuas who had been invited to Belém the interest in and appreciation of their ancestors' language and culture during the event certainly was a very positive experience. For the visitors of the exhibition, too, such a direct contact and exchange of ideas with representatives of an indigenous culture who – at the same time – could be perceived as modern young people, teachers, university students, users of social media, etc., was a stimulus for breaking down existing prejudices and rethinking colonialism, especially in a place like Belém. Such an approach by which indigenous peoples become subjects of research and act in public as experts of their own language and culture becomes even more important in the light of recent political developments in Brazil which are little favourable for indigenous peoples[38].

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[38] Just to mention some facts: Since 2018, deforestation of the Amazon rainforest has massively increased. In addition, ratification of indigenous territories came to a stop, and the *Fundação Nacional do Índio* (FUNAI - Brazilian governmental protection agency for indigenous people) was moved from the Ministry of Justice and subordinated to the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

All authors declared active participation during the stages of elaboration of the manuscript.