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Summary

The Negarotê language is part of the northern branch of the Nambikwára linguistic family. It is the ancestral language of the indigenous group of the same name, living in the Terra Indígena Lagoa dos Brincos, of the Guaporé Valley Reserve, in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso. According to SESAI (2014), there are roughly 140 Negarotê, most of whom still speak their traditional language.

This study is part of a larger documentation project concerning the Nambikwára languages developed in partnership between the Nucleus of Indigenous Studies of the Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil and the Chair of Amazonian languages of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. We provide the first detailed analysis of Negarotê phonology, based on data collected in interviews with native speakers during fieldwork in 2013.

This work is divided into four chapters. The first is dedicated to the ethnography of the Negarotê group. There we present the Nambikwára linguistic family, the contact history and the classification of languages within the family, and provide an overview of the Negarotê group and their current linguistic situation. The rest of this work is devoted to the language's sound structure.

In Chapter 2, we present the consonantal and vowel phonemes and their allophones. In the same chapter, we treat the syllable, the syllable structure and (re)syllabification.

In Chapter 3, we present the phonological processes that occur in the syllable and word domains.

In the last chapter, we turn to the suprasegmental phonology. From the point of view of their word prosody, the Nambikwára languages (except Sabanê) are mixed systems, with independent stress and

tone. We begin the chapter with a presentation of the Negarotê stress system, describing its predictable stress in lexical roots and unpredictable stress in affixes. Thereafter, we show that the language has contrastive lexical tone. Finally, we define the phonological word as a prosodic domain, in terms of the domain for stress and word-domain phonological rules.

With the exception of Sabanê, the languages of the Nambikwára family all exhibit a large degree of polysynthesis with its characteristic morphological complexity. From this perspective, this description of Negarotê phonology provides a deeper understanding of the prosodic structure of this language and, by extension, of polysynthetic languages in general.

Keywords: Indigenous Languages, Linguistic Analysis, Phonology, Tone, Stress, Nambikwára, Negarote.