The metaphorical uses of PT **-*k'ýp* in Tupían languages, with a special focus on the Zo'é language

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ABSTRACT

This article is the first attempt to study metaphors in Tupian languages from a historical-comparative perspective, seeking to demonstrate that conceptual metaphors can be reconstructed for subbranches of the Tupian family tree and even for Proto-Tupian. We analyze the semantic extensions of the reflexes of Proto-Tupian (PT) *-*k'ýp* "trunk, stem, tree" in languages of several subbranches of the Tupi-Guarani language family, as well as Awetý and Saterê Mawé, seeking to demonstrate that in these three Tupian subfamilies, the metaphorical extension in the reflexes of PT*-*k'ýp* applies to humans and non-humans conceived as strong, thus associating these with resistant, durable, imposing trunks, supporting objects, possessors of roots, and ramifications. Although Tupian languages present cognate words for leaders, it is the symbolic meanings of the reflexes of Proto-Tupian *-*k'ýp* that characterize the essence of Tupian great leaders as important, strong, imposing, holders, and providers of knowledge. The leafy, fruitful, and centuries-old Amazonian trees with their resistant and robust trunks are thus the symbolic sources that profile great Tupin men. The findings of the present study bring new data from South American Indigenous languages that allow us to argue that 'tree' as a concept is a metaphorical source for describing human experience. The study also contributes to the historical reconstruction of Proto-Tupian, providing the first reconstruction of a Tupian metaphor, as well as to the broader study of semantic change.

Keywords: Metaphor, Tupian Languages, Historical Reconstruction, Semantic extension.