KAMSÁ, A POORLY DOCUMENTED ISOLATED LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN SOUTH-WESTERN COLOMBIA

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0. INTRODUCTION. The number of indigenous languages currently spoken in Colombia has been estimated by specialists to be about 65 (Pachón & Correa 1997). With regard to both numbers of speakers and language maintenance, there is, as can be expected, a wide range of different situations. In Southwest Colombia, a region including segments of the Pacific coast, the Andes mountains and the rugged transition toward the Amazon basin, ten languages are spoken besides Spanish, the dominating language: (1) Southern Emberá, belonging to the Chocó language family, spoken on the Pacific coast; (2) Awá pit, belonging to the Barbacoan language family, spoken on the Western slopes of the Andes; (3) Nasa yuwe, an isolated language spoken in the Andean region North-East of the city of Popayán; (4) Guambiano, usually considered a language isolate though according to some recent investigations by Curnow it could be remotely related to the Barbacoan language group; (5) Kamsá, (actually **kamnt̃ká**) a language isolate spoken in the Sibundoy valley, a transit point between the mountains and the Amazon rainforest; (6) Ingano, spoken in the Sibundoy valley and other parts of the region, belonging to the Quechua language family; (7) Cofán, also an isolated language spoken in the Amazonian lowlands immediately South of the Kamsá, spread along the border between Colombia and Ecuador; (8) Siona, belonging to the Western branch of the Tukano language family, also spoken on the border between Colombia and Ecuador; (9) Secoya, another Western Tukano language, spoken in the same general area as Siona, but only in Ecuador; (10) Koreguaje, a third Western Tukano language (see map). Moreover, there exist in the region at least three indigenous groups who have completely shifted to Spanish. Even for a language like Nasa yuwe, with around one hundred thousand speakers, different localities display a geat deal of variation in the range of language attrition, replacement by Spanish and the fact whether or not it is still being learned by children. Nasa yuwe and Emberá are the only languages of South West Colombia that have been studied from the point of view of their vitality (Pachón 1997 for Nasa yuwe and Pardo for Emberá and the other languages of the Chocó family).

The Sibundoy valley, where both Kamsá and Inga are spoken, is located on the Eastern slopes of the Andes, at an altitude of about 2 200 meters. This is also where the Putumayo River, a major affluent of the Amazon, begins. Although children are still learning the Kamsá language, it cannot be said that its future is secured. The main threat comes of course from encroaching Spanish, spoken as a native language by more than two thirds of the population of the valley. Moreover, the Inga language is not restricted to the Sibundoy valley, but is spoken in many different localities spread about the region. The prestige value of Spanish added to the narrow geographical sphere in which the Kamsá language is used are certainly not encouraging. From the point of view of ethnohistory, anthropology and linguistics, it is interesting that the Sibundoy valley has always been a connecting link between the Andes and the rain forest.

Serious areal linguistic work is a rather late but promising newcomer to South America, especially Western South America, as can be shown by the variety of studies which have begun to appear during the last fifteen years. An overall picture of the interface between the Andes and Western Amazonia is

slowly beginning to emerge from Bolivia to Colombia, but much work remains to be done as well as more articulate interdisciplinary research and cooperation between linguists, ethnohistorians and archaeologists. Some relevant information is mentioned in the bibliography such as studies by Constenla (1991), Kerke (2000), Muysken (2000), David Payne (1990), Doris Payne (1987).

The following study of the Kamsá language is based on a corpus of about 450 pages of texts collected by Howard (1977b, c), Monguí (1981), Jacanamijoy et al. (1994) and McDowell (1989). The first three corpora appear with a Spanish translation and the last with an English version based on the Spanish translation offered by McDowell's informants. All translations provided are very free and very loosely follow the Kamsá original. My analysis had to consider this inescapable fact and obliged me to a great deal of cross-referencing, checking and rechecking in order to separate stems and affixes as well as assessing their meaning. The analysis I offer here are therefore only a first step towards a better understanding of the morphosyntax of Kamsá. They are based exclusively on such portions of the texts the segmentation and meaning of which I could be reasonably sure and deliberately exclude all others.

1. SPANISH AND QUECHUA INFLUENCE ON KAMSÁ.

The first Spaniards, lead by Sebastián de Belalcázar, entered the region of Sibundoy in 1535. Ten years later, a second wave of Spanish invaders began to settle in the region, seizing the best agricultural and pasture land from the Indians but the settlements declined to the point of slowly disappearing leaving only members of religious orders. Until the 1950s, the main native speakers of Spanish were thus catholic missionaries, which had become both landlords of the valley and the only official representatives of the State. A consequence of this is a very heavy and long lasting impact of the variety of Spanish spoken by monks on both Kamsá and Inga. This explains why the Spanish layer we can detect in Kamsá and Inga is so replete with quaintly old-fashioned church Spanish. The corpora I've been working with contain plenty of chunks of Spanish either will full morphology or completely stripped of it like in the following fragment taken from a book published by the Kamsá community (Jacanamijoy et al. 1994):

(1)
ponto oración ora

The Spanish translation provided by the authors is 'A la hora del crepúsculo' (When the sun goes down). Every word is Spanish, although prepositions and articles are completely missing from this particular example, which represents an antiquated form of Spanish: the word **oración** means literally 'prayer' but the text makes it quite clear that the actual meaning has time-reference only. The first word refers to a 'point' of time, while the last one simply means 'hour' (hora), and is widely used in temporal adverbial phrases in both Kamsá and Inga. The fact that Spanish words have been entering Kamsá since colonial times can often be detected by their phonological form or by semantic shifts showing particular discrepancies between colonial and modern Spanish.
An example is the Kamsá word for 'lamb', /**obioa**/, which has retained the Old Spanish postalveolar fricative, which became velar about four hundred years ago (the modern word is **oveja**). The same postalveolar fricative has been retained in the same word in widely different regions of Western South America. It is still found in Andean languages such as Quechua, Aymara and Mapudungu.

Another example of a diachronic shift of meaning can be seen in the verb /**parla**/ 'to speak', a word seldom used in Modern Spanish. Incidentally, it is also used in some Quechua languages and in Aymara. All loanwords are so well integrated in Kamsá that any native morpheme, be it prefix or

suffix, can be added to it. In the following example, we found the Spanish word 'hora' (time, hour) suffixed to a deictic, as well as the verb 'to rest' (descansar), in the middle of a predicate-word:

(2)
c-ora   **bo-x-a-descansa-t-ka**
DEIC-time   3DU-DIST-VAL-rest-DU-SOC   'and both rested'

Noun classifiers are also regularly added to both Spanish (3) and Inga words (4):

(3)
naranxa-bé 'orange-CL' (Spanish: naranja);   **em-bé** 'paddle-CL' (Spanish: remo); **blandb-t- a** 'banana-CL' (Spanish: plátano); **ataa:aj: -- a** 'fishing.net-CL' (Spanish: atarraya);

(4) **mandorm- a** 'achiote (Bixa orellana)-CL' (Quechua: mandur); **tt ombia-toe** 'belt-CL' (Quechua: cumbi); **tandt --** 'bread-CL' (Quechua: tanta);

There are many other structural convergences between Spanish and Kamsá, some of them also involving Inga. I shall only mention two of them here. First, the use of the prefixed deictic **c (a)-**, who very often appears where Spanish would use a definite article. Incidentally, **ca-** could be a loanword from Inga since it has cognates in all Quechua languages. The second point of convergence between Kamsá and Spanish has to do with the recurring and redundant use of classifiers, which appears both on a noun and its accompanying adjective. Although Spanish is of course not a classifier language, the redundant use of the same classifier, even with no intervening word between them, strongly reminds of the Spanish number and gender agreement rules between the same two parts of speech and sets Kamsá apart from classifier languages of Western Amazonia, where classifiers are mostly used as an anaphoric device, there being no need of repeating the noun to which they refer.

As to the period of time under which the influence of Quechua in the valley has been felt, it is more difficult to assess. A Quechua language was probably spoken in the region already some time before the European invasion and even before the impact of the Inca Empire in Northern Ecuador and the southernmost parts of Colombia. It is also well known that the Spaniards brought with them further speakers of Quechua languages. The local Quechua language, called inga or ingano, is in all probability the merging of those different varieties of Quechua plus a heavy layer of Spanish. For more than four centuries, three languages have thus been spoken in the valley of Sibundoy: Kamsá, Inga and Spanish.

2. TYPOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF THE KAMSÁ LANGUAGE.

2.1. Phonology. Before presenting Kamsá data, I shall briefly present a tentative list of phonemes. Further investigation in strongly needed in order to sort out the range of allophones, which show a considerable amount of overlaping. Only two analyses have been proposed so far in the literature. Howard (1967 and 1977a for a Spanish translation) presented a phonological analysis written in mainstream American structuralism. The other has been written by Monguí (1981), appeared as an introduction to a corpus of Kamsá texts. The theoretical background is structural distributionalism as practiced by Martinet. Although the analysis proposed by both authors seem roughly adequate, they leave many questions unanswered and raise problems. On he whole, Howard and Monguí agree as to the number of phonemes they posit for Kamsá. I therefore follow them in my transcriptions:

Vowel phonemes: /i, u, e, o, a, V/

Phonetic and/or allophonic fluctuation greatly affects an overall clear picture, especially for the high and mid front vowels, [i] fluctuating with [e] and [u] with [o] and each in turn being able to be neutralized through the mid-central vowel [n]. Howard and Monguí present minimal pairs showing that the six vowels are in phonological opposition. The corpora I have used all show these fluctuations, which I left unchanged in my own analysis.

From an areal viewpoint Kamsá has a modest vowel inventory and can be compared only to Awá pit, which has only four voiced vowel phonemes, plus three controvertial unvoiced vowel phonemes (see Curnow 1997: 40-45) and Guambiano, which has five vowels. Kamsá does not, at least on the basis of the available data, have phonological nasal vowels like Nasa yuwe, the Tukano languages or Cofán. Still less such further phonological opposition with the voiceless and glotalized vowels of Nasa yuwe.

Consonant phonemes: /p, t, k, b, d, g, f, ts, tꞆ, c, s, , , , , , m, n, , , , , , r, l, j, w, x/

/r/ has an voiced retroflex allophone [/] appearing in Spanish loanwords and /j/ has the variant []] after /n/.

Apart from disturbing fluctuations between the alleged consonant phonemes of Kamsá, the main originality of the system is to be found in its affricate and fricative members who display a three-fold opposition between alveolar, retroflex and palatal members. Areally, only Nasa yuwe matches Kamsá, although with a much richer consonant inventory. I shall not deal here further with phonological problems and move directly to morphology and syntax.

2.2. Morphology and syntax. Kamsá can be characterized as a polysynthetic language with grammatical prefixes as well as suffixes (5-7). Prefixation is almost unknown in the languages of this area. In fact, none of the ten languages mentioned above make use of it although a few isolated examples may be found in derivation. Prefixation of grammatical morphemes is however usual farther East (in Andoke, an isolated language of Southern Colombia, see Landaburu 1979) and South (Waorani, an other isolated language spoken in Eastern Ecuador, see Peeke 1973; Pike & Saint 1988). In Kamsá, as a rule, prefixation is always used in verbs and the most basic verb form cannot appear without one or two. Other parts of speech, however, use almost only suffixes. Suffixes can be added to verbs too:

(5) prefixation only:
k-bu-c-x-i-kace
2-DU-PROS-DIST-VAL-catch   'I will catch you'

(6) suffixation only:
bᵬnda-t-be   **kontrát**
1DU-DU-POS   agreement   'our agreement (of both of us)'
(Spanish loanword: contracto)

(7) prefixation and suffixation:
bo-x-a-deskansá-t-ka
3DU-DIST-VAL-rest-DU-SOC   'and both rested' (on a loanword from Spanish: descansar 'to rest')

The presence of the dual category is also rather atypical in the region. It is unknown in Nasa yuwe (Rojas 1999), Guambiano (1985), Cofán (Borman 1976), Emberá (Aguirre 1999), Tukano languages (Barnes 1999) and Inga. Only some dialects of Awá make use of it (Curnow 1997). Dual is found in some languages farther East in the rainforest, the nearest of which are varieties of Uitoto from the

Witoto-Bora language group (Petersen 1994) and Waorani (Eastern Ecuador, see Peeke 1973 and Pike & Saint 1988).

As for alignment, it should be noted that in Kamsá the arguments AGENT and PATIENT are not formally distinguished within NPs, there being neither nominative-accusative nor absolutive-ergative or active-stative marking. Cross-referencing patterns in the verb clearly show that the system is nominative-accusative: subjects of transitive (and bitransitive) verbs are have the same morphemes as subjects of intransitives, both contrasting with the marking of objects of transitives. Free personal pronouns are left unmarked in the same way as NPs. In the other languages of the region, we usually find nominative-accusative structures with accusative marking, although in Guambiano and Coreguaje, the accusative suffix is not used with generic objects. Only Emberá has an ergative system. In (8), the only suffix used with the PATIENT NP is the noun classifier. The AGENT is not marked at all. As to the order of constituent NPs, there is no clear picture. Out of one hundred instances I found a slight predominance of VERB + PATIENT (56%). Most AGENT NPs appear first, but the inverse order is not rare either (10):

(8)
(lof-tl e	atae	ss -n- b-e-- ace	
bird-CL	I	1-HAB-VAL-catch	'I always catch a bird'

In example (9), there is no marking at all on the PATIENT (the young lad). Note the third person dual prefix on the verb, which is typical in Kamsá and used when two animate entities are involved in a process. The prefix on the verb refers to the AGENT although there is the implication of a [+animate] PATIENT:

(9)
kanke	bobóns	bu-x-at-o-bianxetbí	
one	young man	3DU-DIST-IMP-VAL-observe	'He observed a young man'

(10)
kanke	sólid	txán-tt -éntt	mu-x-á-boka-n	únga
one	solitary	mountain-CL-LOC	3PL-DIST-VAL-go.out-DUR	three

t kena- tke-ng	
white.man-CL-PL	'Out of a solitary mountain there came out three white men'

In (11) the PATIENT is only marked for PLURAL:

(11)
t-mo-x-an-o-fxa	ini e-nga	
PP-3PL-DIST-PAST-VAL-invite	other-PL	'They invited others'

In the other ten languages of the region, PATIENT NPs as a rule precede VPs, the only exceptions being Kamsá and Inga where both orders regularly occur and Koreguaje where PATIENT NPs usually appear after the VP.

Kamsá adjectives can appear either before or after the NP. A general pattern of preference can be shown: if a classifier appears on the adjective, it is more often postposed than preposed. Deictic elements and genitives appear regularly before the NP.

It has frequently been observed that in highly polysynthetic Western Amazonian languages verbs greatly outnumber free NPs, a fact which has been explained in functional terms as a strategy to avoid redundance insofar as at least the main arguments are cross-referenced in the predicate word. However, this does not hold for polysynthetic Andean languages, in which cross-referencing of arguments and morphological complexity of predicate-words do not entail low use of NPs. In this respect, Kamsá patterns with Andean languages and not with Western Amazonia. This shows that the functional explanation alone cannot be the answer. As is often the case, different causes may conspire in a language to produce a particular effect or another.

3. NOUN INCORPORATION IN KAMSÁ. From an areal point of view, noun incorporation is not used in Andean languages like Nasa yuwe, Guambiano or Quechua, nor in the neighbouring lowland language Cofán. It is however found in Emberá, spoken on the Pacific coast, but with only a few verbs. Noun incorporation is attested in Western Tukano languages and extends further East and South to Uitoto, Andoke, Waorani and Záparo. It should be noted that noun incorporation cannot be said to be typical feature of lowland Amazonian languages because many of then lack it entirely. Because Kamsá is spoken in an interface region between the Andes and the Amazon, it might seem logical to attribute the existence of noun incorporation in this language as an areal extention from the lowlands. Noun incorporation is by no means very frequent in Kamsá but it is an option occasionaly used. No occurrence of incorporated animate nouns have been found, which comes as no surprise as this particular option is not typologically frequent. On the other hand, names of body-parts are fairly well represented as well as locative nouns. A further possibility is to incorporate in the same verb a locative plus the name of a body-part, in which case the locative comes first. Both appear immediately to the left of the verb stem. In order to be incorporated, a noun is stripped of its classifier if it has one.

Incorporation of body-part names:

(12)

cana	mntná	x-u-ts-en-a-<u>best a</u>-kwatxona-n
then	like that	?-3-APROX-REFL-VAL-head-prop-DUR

's/he lay there like that with his/her head propped up'   (**bestba-ae** 'head-CL')

(13)

i-o-x-ts-o-<u>boc</u>-x-a-bia-ye
3-3-DIST-APROX-FACE-DIST-VAL-wash-DUR   's/he went to wash her/his face'
(**buc** 'head; face')

(14)

cu-ca	kata-t-oy	i-o-x-at-en-a-<u> ufxe</u>-na-y
DEIC-CL	leg-DU-LOC	3-3-DIST-?-REFL-V-ankle-DUR-DUR

'he tied it (the rattle) to the ankle of both his legs'   (**(ufxe-je** 'ankle-CL')

Incorporation of both locative noun and object in the predicate:

(15)

x-o-<u>sij</u>-<u>bést </u>-bebe-an

DIST-VAL-fireplace-head-wash-DUR   'to wash one's head at the fireplace'

4. NOUN CLASSIFIERS. I found about ten nominal classifiers in Kamsá plus some other endings I suspect to be classifiers although the question needs further investigation. Five classifiers point to a prominent feature of their referent:

CL	FEATURE	EXAMPLE WORDS
-bé	spherical, round, oblong	armadillo, stone, elbow, paddle, egg…
-xa	long	bone, vine, tongue, path…
-fx(w)a	sharp, spiky	knife, mosquito, hook, arrow…
-je / -- e	liquid	water, river, milk, chicha (maize beer)…
-- a	hole, opening	door, flower, navel, mouth…

Other classifiers are **-tt a/-tae** (probably allomorphs), **-- e** (could be an allomorph of - a, the classifier for 'openings' but most nouns using it do not have this feature), **-- a/-ae** (probably allomorphs), **-xwa**, and maybe **–na**. It seems impossible to assess any basic meaning for those classifiers, which appear suffixed to vast array of nouns. Moreover, two or three classifiers can be found suffixed to the same stem with sometimes, but not always, a semantic change. An example of this fluctuation is shown in (16) and (17):

(16)
((-fxá-t- e 'calf of the leg'

(17)
  1-fxá-xa 'shin; shinbone'

For some extreme examples of the use of classifier concatenation in the formation of new lexemes see Peeke (1973: 125), which deals with Waorani, an Amazonian lowland language isolate of Eastern Ecuador.

A classifier will always appear as the first suffix added to the root. It can, but not necessarily, be followed by further suffixes:

(18)
c-kac:: -- a-nga   enane-- a   t-o-k-x-a-cnt x-na
deic-car-CL-PLempty-CL   PP-3-TEST2-VAL-pass-DUR   'The empty cars passed by'

(19)
acna   ff en-ea   i-o-x-at-i-ni e-n
then   rattle-CL   3-3-DIST-IMP-VAL-find-DUR   'then s/he found a rattle'

(20)
ca-na   i-n-ets-o-ftako-i e   coro-cu-nga
s/he   3-TEST-APROX-VAL-pick.at-DUR   snail-CL-PL   's/he picked at those snails'

Apart from classifiers, there are three suffixes which function much like classifiers: **-tem(a)**, diminutive, **-jem(a) /-kwem(a)**, augmentative, and **-xem(a)**, caritative. These can be added to different parts of speech, including verbs:

(21)
(-ko-is-at-wama-xema
1PA-2-?-?-place-CARIT   'you put me (there, poor me)'

(22)
i-bo-x-o-kui e-tema
3-DU-DIST-VAL-give.shelter-DIMIN   'he took him (the little fellow) in'

The only occurence I found of a basic classifier used with a verb was in the following isolated sentence from Jamioy and cited by Landaburu (1999). I did not found any in my corpus:

(23)
(-ko-n-- -a-t - et-na-<u>be</u>-n
1PA-2-TEST-APROX-VAL-give-?-CL-DUR
'you are giving me round objects' (Jamioy *apud* Landaburu 1999 with classifier underlined)

As usual with noun classifier languages, not all referents possessing the features above mentioned use the classifier. A noun can also be assigned a classifier although its referent does not seem to share the feature implied. Further classifiers do not seem to point to any obvious feature of the referents. Occasionaly, the same noun can appear with one or another classifier without any apparent change of meaning although this must be subjected to further study (24) and (25). A possible explanation would be that (24) refers to an egg as a threshold toward a new emerging entity (among the nouns belonging to the **-t e**-class we can find, among others, 'door', 'flower' and 'navel') and (25) to a broken egg shell (to the **–fx[w]a**-class belong nouns like 'hook', 'arrow' and 'mosquito', which clearly point to objects with sharp edges or points):

(24)
betá-be 'egg-CL'

(25)
betá-fxa 'egg-CL'

In (26), another synonym for 'egg' shows the typical ordering of suffixes: first the classifier **–be** (for spherical or round objects) and then case:

(26)
c-c- mnmabe-ka
DEIC-egg-CL-SOC   'with this egg'

Another option for the same noun is to appear either with or without the classifier. Apparent synonyms can make use of a different classifier, like for instance the word for 'eye' (27) and (28):

(27)
bomín-je 'eye' + classifier for liquids

(28)

ffnn-bé 'eye' + classifier for spherical objects

In a seminal paper, which appeared in 1987, Doris Payne proposed a typological linguistic area called Western Amazon based on an array of typical features involving noun classification systems. Although Doris Payne restricted her attention to a small though representative sample of languages spoken over this huge area, most of her conclusions appear to be borne out by the available data but they obviously call for refinements. Of the languages spoken in the Southwestern part of Colombia, only Siona, a Western Tukano language, was considered by Payne. The northern border of the portion of Western Amazon chosen by Payne for her study roughly follows the Putumayo River. Payne divided the area into four groups of languages, according to the main type of noun classification. The languages spoken in this northernmost area fall mainly in her Group 1 –languages. Typical features of noun classification for this group are, according to Payne, the following, which appear on left side of the table. The right side has been added by me for comparison:

Typical features shared by Group-1 languages of the Western Amazon according to Doris L Payne (1987)	Does the feature apply to Kamsá?
> 20 classifiers	NO
Many CLs correspond to at least 1 or 2 syllables of noun roots or to entire noun roots	NO (?)
Indistinct boundary between some nouns and CLs	NO
CLs are mostly obligatory in numerical expressions	NO
CLs are affixal and never free forms	YES
All the languages are highly polysynthetic and agglutinative	YES
Agreement between head noun and other elements of the NP	YES
CL's display both inflectional and derivational characteristics	YES

As we see, the overall picture needs to be refined in order to accommodate Kamsá as a language spoken in a linguistic area between the Andes and the Western Amazonian lowlands. It should not of course be expected that inside the same linguistic area all features would agree on a one-to-one basis. We could instead maybe agree that a certain subset of all available linguistic features tends to cluster inside a typical Sprachbund. Each individual language could then pick its own features from this common pool.

For Payne, Group 2-languages have no noun classification at all, whereas Group 3-languages display also verbal incorporation of classifiers and Group 4-languages have only verbal incorporation. For Kamsá, I have only one certain example of a classifier being incorporated into a verb. On Payne's map, Group 3-languages are situated much further South and consist of Chayahuita (spoken in the Northern Peruvian Amazon) and Pre-Andine Arawak languages spoken still further South in Peru. Other Arawak languages from the Western Amazon also show classifiers incorporated into verbs as for example in Tariana, spoken in the northern subregion of the Western Amazonian lowlands, an area not considered in Payne's paper (Aikhenvald 1994). In a follow up study on the same subject Derbyshire & Payne (1990) added Waorani from Eastern Ecuador, which brings Group 3-languages nearer to our area.

Noun classifiers suffixed to adjectives:

I found some instances of noun classifiers suffixed to adjectives. The majority of such occurences appear with the order Noun + Adjective, whereas the reverse order shows more often than not no classifier on the adjective member.

In (29) we see an adjective without a classifier followed by a noun with both classifier and locative case and in (30) a sequence adjective plus noun with both classifier and plural agreement:

(29)

kanke	**bbts**	**trónko-tt-ént-**	
one	big	trunk-CL-LOC	'in a big trunk'

(30)

únga	**úkena-tke-ng**	**bbtst tsa-tt s-ng--ka**	
three	white.man-CL-PL	big-CL-PL-SOC	'three huge white men'

(31) is an example of a two bare adjectives preceding a noun plus classifier whereas (32) shows the same word order with a copy of the classifier on the adjective. Note the different classifiers used with the word 'house', a fact I am unable to explain at the moment:

(31)

bbts	**jébj na-tn-kai**	**tangwá**	**jébj na-kwem-ka**
big	house-CL-SOC and	old	house-AUG-SOC

'A big house and an old big house'

(32)

kanke	**jébj na-n**	**bien**	**tangwa-t-ka**	
one	house-cl	well	old-cl-soc	'one quite old house'

In the following sentence (33) neither the postposed adjective nor the noun has any classifier:

(33)

ko-ca-n-xa	**kánke**	**tt x-ók**	**bien**	**solidis**
2-PROS-TEST-go	one	mountain-LOC	well	solitary

'you will go to a very solitary mountain'

Noun classifiers suffixed to demonstratives. A classifier can be suffixed to a deictic root, in which case it functions as anaphoric reference. In view of the low occurrence of this construction it must be highly marked :

(34)

c-batas-oje	**i-o-x-en-a-namba**	**c-tongentse-c-na**
DEIC-crotch-LOC	3-3-DIST-APROX-REFL-VAL-lower	DEIC-cotton-CL-SOC

c-ore	**ce-ce-na**	**i-bo-x-ts-e-toto-na**	**c-canaana**
DEIC-time	DEIC-CL-SOC	3-DU-DIST-APROX-VAL-stick	DEIC-house.warden

'to his crotch he lowered that cotton, Aha! Then it (the cotton) stuck to the guardian of the house'

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS. The main purpose of this communication was to present the main typological features of one particular indigenous language of Colombia, Kamsá. In South America, the interface zone tucked between the Eastern slopes of the Andes and the adjacent Amazonian lowlands is a particularly interesting one since by calling forth a combination of approaches between different fields of study, especially linguistics and ethnohistory, it gives us fresh insights on human populations who, while living in widely divergent ecological zones and owning unique cultural backgrounds, have continuously been influencing each other. Within the field of linguistics proper, a fascinating and promising picture of Western South America is slowly beginning to emerge through the combination of typological and areal studies.

LANGUAGES OF SOUTH-WEST COLOMBIA		
LANGUAGE	**GENETIC STATUS**	**NUMBER OF SPEAKERS (estimates)**
Southern Emberá	Chocó family	3 500 (Southernmost dialects)
Awá pit (Kwaiker)	Barboacoa family	8 000 – 25 000
Nasa yuwe (Páez)	Independent	95 000 – 100 000
Guambiano	Independent (or linked to Barbacoa family)	10 000 – 18 000
Kamsá	Independent	4 000 – 5 000
Ingano (Inga)	Quechua family	11 000 – 15 000
Cofán	Indepenent	1 000
Siona	Tukano family, Western branch	470
Secoya	Tukano family, Western branch	300-600 (Ecuador)
Koreguaje	Tukano family, Western branch	1 700

ABREVIATIONS:

1,2,3 = FIRST, SECOND, THIRD PERSON	IMP = IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT
1PA = FIRST PERSON PATIENT	LOC = LOCATIVE
AG = AGENT	PAST = PAST TENSE
APROX = APROXIMATION (MOVEMENT TOWARD SPEAKER)	POS = POSSESSION / GENITIVE
	PP = PAST PERFECT (PERFECTIVE ASPECT?)
AUG = AUGMENTATIVE	PROS = PROSPECTIVE (FUTURE, INTENTION)
CAR = CARITATIVE	REFL = REFLEXIVE
CL = CLASSIFIER	SOC = SOCIATIVE / INSTRUMENTAL / COORDINATIVE
DEIC = DEICTIC	TEST = TESTIMONIAL
DIM = DIMINUTIVE	TEST$_2$ = TESTIMONIAL
DIST = DISTANCIATION	VAL = VALENCY VOWEL (might as well be an epenthetic vowel but Jamioy 1992 calls it a valency vowel. Because of wide overlaping in allophones of vowel phonemes, it is presently impossible to determine)
DU = DUAL	
DUR = DURATIVE	
HAB = HABITUAL	

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