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Negation and indeterminate phrases in Yawanawa (Panoan)

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1 Introduction

1.1 The language

Yawanawa is a Panoan language spoken in the Rio Gregório indigenous reservation in the state of Acre, Brazil. The language belongs to the Central-Southern branch of the Panoan family, Subgroup 2, “Pano de las Cabeceras”, according to the classification in **valguiXX**.

The language is highly endangered, with only 160 self-declared active speakers, 82 of which were over 45 years old in 2010 (ProDocLin, 2010). In the same period, 308 people declared to be monolingual in Portuguese, with 305 under 45 years old. In 2010, the Yawanawa population totaled 565 individuals, meaning 28% of the population consisted of active speakers. It is estimated that the population currently totals circa 800 people, which means that the percentage of active speakers has dropped to 20%.

Community-based cultural revitalization efforts have been carried out for decades, with a focus on bringing back traditional rituals, empowering the shamans, and encouraging language learning, especially through music. A significant number of young people have been showing interest in learning the language to understand shamanistic practices, making the ground fertile for language revitalization projects.

Figure 1: Map of Panoan Languages (adapted from **fle13**)

1.2 The data

All data presented here – naturalistic and elicited – was originally collected in the context of two language projects:

1. Yawanawa language documentation project: *Yawanawahãu xinã*, ProDocLin (Museu do Índio/UNESCO, 2010–2013),
2. Línguas indígenas ameaçadas: pesquisa e teorias linguísticas para a revitalização (Cnpq, 2014 –)

1.3 Goals

The goals of this presentation are:

1. to put forth a brief description of the morphosyntax of negation in Yawanawa,
2. to describe the role of negation as a sentential operator in the interpretation of indeterminate phrases.

2 A brief description of Yawanawa negation

In general, Yawanawa negative sentences exhibit no general syntactic distinction from their positive counterparts besides the addition of the Negation morpheme:

- (1) a. Shavama ã mia ãi-a.
early.morning 1S.ERG 2S.ACC see-PRF
‘I saw you this morning.’
b. Shavama ã mia ãi-a=**ma**.
early.morning 1S.ERG 2S.ACC see-PRF=NEG
‘I didn’t see you this morning.’

Negation morphology in Yawanawa does not make a category distinction between verbs and non-verbs in the same way that Shipibo morphology (Panoan, Peru), for instance, does. While Shipibo verbal negation is expressed by *-yama ??* and non-verbal (nominal, adjectival) negation is expressed by *-ma ??* (**val03**); negation morphology in Yawanawa is expressed by the enclitic *=ma* independently of the category of the base *??*, similarly to Kashibo (Panoan, Peru, **zar11**).

- (2) Negation in Shipibo
 - a. Verbal:
 - (i) pi-**yama**-ke
eat-NEG-CMPL
‘did not eat’
 - b. Non-verbal:
 - c. ainbo-**ma**; ani-**ma**
woman-NEG; large-NEG
‘not a / the woman’; ‘not large’
(**val03**)
- (3) Negation in Yawanawa:
 - a. Maria piti wa=**ma**.
M. food make.PRF=NEG
‘Maria didn’t make food.’
 - b. Na-shavata nuku-iri-xiã, aska-hia nuku-xina=**ma**.
DEM.PROX-day arrive-CNTRF-PST.NIGHT anaf.disc-but arrive-PST.NIGHT=NEG
‘(The chief) was going to arrive last night, but didn’t.’
 - c. A-wẽ txai=**ma**, a-venanea.
3S-POSS cousin=NEG 3S-SIBLING
‘That’s not his cousin, that’s his brother.’
 - d. Na peshe xara=**ma**.
DEM.PROX house good=NEG
‘This house is not good.’

In *??*, *=ma* cliticizes to the verb phrase, yielding the negation of the clause: ‘make food’ → ‘not make food’; ‘arrive’ → ‘not arrive’. In constructions with silent copulas such as *??* and *??*, the negative

morpheme *=ma* appears cliticized to the non-verbal predicate. Since copulas are only covert in present tense, however, a construction in past tense shows two distinct possibilities.

1. Adjectives may compose with negation, yielding the negation of the property it expresses, as in ??.
 2. Negation morphology may occur on the verbal copula, as in ?? and ??. The morpheme *=ma* only cliticizes to the non-verbal predicate if the copular verb is silent.
- (4) a. Na peshe xara=**ma** i-misi, hia-[a]she iskara ãnã xara.
DEM.PROX house good=NEG AUX.INTRS-HAB but-SS.PREV.INTRS now again good
'This house used to be *not-good*, but now it's good.'
- b. Na peshe xara i-misi=**ma**, hia-[a]she iskara ãnã xara.
DEM.PROX house good AUX.INTRS-HAB=NEG but-SS.PREV.INTRS now again good
'This house didn't use to be good, but now it is.'
- c. Shukuvena e-wẽ txai i-misi=**ma**, hia-[a]she iskara ea
Shukuvena 1S-POSS cousin AUX.INTRS-HAB=NEG but-SS.PREV.INTRS now 1S.ACC
txãi wa.
cousin.OBL say.PRF
'Shukuvena didn't use to be my cousin, but now he is.' lit. 'now he calls me cousin'
- d. *Shukuvena e-wẽ txai=**ma** i-misi, hia-[a]she iskara ea
Shukuvena 1S-POSS cousin=NEG AUX.INTRS-HAB but-SS.PREV.INTRS now 1S.ACC
txãi wa.
cousin.OBL say.PRF
'Shukuvena used to be my *not-cousin*, but now he's my cousin.'

Like what happens in ??, the negative morpheme *=ma* may be productively added to a number of modifiers to form new words:

- (5) a. ewapa=*ma* → ewapama
large=NEG small
Amati **ewapa=ma-xta**, aska-hia-ashe yura teka-tiã, isinipa.
hornet large=NEG-DIM **anaf.disc-but-ss.prev.intrs** person sting-WHEN painful
'The hornet is really small, but when it stings you, it really hurts.'
- a. westi=*ma* → westima
one=NEG many
Takara shuku **westi=ma** tuxi-tamea-kẽ, ẽ wetsa rete-shei.
chicken offspring one=NEG break.out-PST.REC-DS.PREV 1S.ERG some kill-FUT
'Several chicks were born and I'm going to kill some of them.'
- a. shava=*ma* → shavama
light=NEG early morning before dawn
Yameri kapũ-mã i-pai, shava=*ma* ẽ vepei-shei.
tomorrow kapũ.frog-INSTR AUX.INTRS-DES light=NEG 1S.NOM wake.up-FUT
'I want to take the *kapũ* shot tomorrow, so I will wake up before dawn.'
- a. txai=*ma* → txaima
far-NEG near
Kuxati txi txai=*ma* raka.
knife fire far=NEG lie.PRF
'The knife is lying near the fire.'

Below is an example of negation scoping over different parts of a causative construction:
eu fiz meu filho não comer

- (6) a. Even though negation morphology in Yawanawa does not distinguish between verbs and non-verbs as it does in Shipibo, a specialized negation morpheme still exist in Yawanawa. It is homophonous to the Shipibo verbal negation morpheme *-yama*. Its distribution in Yawanawa is restricted to hortative moods, as shown in ??:
- (7) a. Tsãi-**yama**-we!
speak-NEG.HORT-IMP
'Don't speak!'

- b. Nenu mispu puta-**yama**-kĩ.
here trash throw-NEG-ATT
'Attention! Don't throw trash here.'
- c. E-wē pahĩki nini-**yama**-pũ!
1S-POSS ear pull-NEG-POLREQ
'Please, don't pull my ears !'

2.1 Specialized morphemes with negative meaning

As shown above, the interpretation of most words in the agglutinative language Yawanawa is compositional in the sense that negative expressions are built from the negation of their positive counterparts. Below is an example of a negated causative construction. The presence of the negative morpheme is the only thing that distinguishes ?? from ??.

- (8) a. Ē shashu txiuku-ma.
1S.ERG canoe sink-CAUS
'I caused the canoe to sink.'
- b. Ē shashu txiuku-ma=**ma**.
1S.ERG canoe sink-CAUS=NEG
'I didn't cause the canoe to sink.'

Unlike the causative however, certain morphemes have suppletive forms with negative meaning. One of these is the desiderative morpheme, which has the form *-pai* if positive and *-kasmai* if negative, as in ??. Related languages (Shipibo[366]val03; Kashibo **zar11**) employ the form *-kas* as the desiderative, suggesting that *kasmai* is morphologically complex diachronically, but the form *-kas* is not productive in Yawanawa.

- (9) a. Veã nami hi-**pai**.
Vea.ERG meat get-DES
'Vea wants to buy meat.'
- b. Veã nami hi-**kasmai**.
Vea.ERG meat get-NEG.DES
'Vea doesn't want to buy meat.'

Another morpheme with a suppletive negative form is the existential. The positive existential is *ya*, ?? and the negative is *yamai*, ??. Sentence ?? shows that *yamai* is a fixed form, though it looks like it could be compositionally derived from *ya* + Neg.

- (10) a. Ne-ri-we! Yuma pitxã ya!
DEM.PROX-DIR-IMP fish cooked EXIST
'Come here! There's cooked fish.'
- b. Nawe **yamai**.
tabacco NEG.EXIST
'There's no tabacco.'
- c. Ātiã motor **yamai** i-pãu-ni.
back.then engine NEG.EXIST AUX.INTRS-IMPF.REM-PST.REM
'Back in the day, there were no engines.'

Like in Portuguese, existential constructions in Yawanawa are built with the same verb (*ya*) that means 'to have'. A distinction arises in the negative forms, however. While the negative existential has the fixed form *yamai*, the negation of the verb 'to have' is compositional: *ya* + Neg:

- (11) a. Ē mayti ya.
1S.ERG hat have
Eu tenho chapéu.
- b. Atu-ki nutsi ya=**ma**.
3S-PP anger have=NEG
'I'm not angry at him.'
lit. 'I have no anger of him.'

Another similar use of *ya* that distinguishes between a positive and a negative form is the propriative/privative. The nomenclature is from **val03**, who observes that in Shipibo, “adjectives can be formed by adding the propriative *-ya* or the privative *-oma* to a nominal”.

- (12) a. E-wē vesu kene-**ya**.
1S-POSS face painting-PROP
‘My face is painted.’ lit. ‘My face is with paintings.’
b. E-wē vesu kene-**uma**.
1S-POSS face painting-PRIV
‘My face is not painted.’ lit. ‘My face is without paintings.’

One last morphological distinction observed in positive vs. negative contexts is with the habitual morpheme. The positive habitual is *-misi*, whereas the negative is *-yusma*:

- (13) a. Txini wixa-pai-**misi** Sanā wixa-pai-**yusma**,
Txini.ERG write-DES-HAB Sana.ERG write-DES-NEVER
aska-hia-[a]she nā rave wixa-i
ANAF.DISC-but-PRF-SS.PREV.INTR DEM.PROX.ERG two write.SS.SIMULT.INTR
hu-kān-i.
go.PL-AGR.PL-PROG
‘Txini likes to study and Sana doesn’t, but both of them went to school today.’
lit. ‘Txini always wants to write, Sana never wants to write, even so, the two of them went writing today.’

3 Indeterminate phrases

Another instance of the negative morpheme *=ma* cliticizing to a nominal phrase is in short answers like ??:

- (14) -Tsua-mē u-a?
INDET.HUM-INT come-PRF
-Tsua=**ma**!
indef=NEG
‘Who came?’
‘Nobody!’

Tsua in ?? is an instance of an indeterminate pro-form in Yawanawa, whose interpretation depends on another sentential element. It behaves similarly to indeterminate XXXphrasesXXX in Japanese (**kurXX**; **krashiXX**), which are “caught” by the first relevant operator in a clause. As described by (**krashi**), depending on the operator they appear with, Japanese indeterminate phrases take on existential, universal, negative polarity, free choice, or interrogative interpretations.

zar11 describes something similar of Kashibo (Panoan, Peru); according to him, interrogative words can be turned into derived indefinite or negative pro-forms by adding enclitics to them. As in Japanese, the interpretation of all these forms depends on the corresponding sentential operator: interrogative words must cooccur with an interrogative second position enclitic and “negative pro-forms need to be used in negative sentences”, otherwise resulting in ungrammatical constructions.

In Yawanawa, *tsua* is an indeterminate pro-form with a [+human] feature and *awe* is an indeterminate pronoun with a [-human] feature. Both can receive a number of interpretations, depending on 1.morphology that cliticizes to them, and 2.the type of clausal operator they interact with:

- (15) a. interrogative → wh/question word
(i) Tsua=**mē** u-a? / Tsua u-a=**mē**?
INDET.HUM=INT come-PRF / INDET.HUM come-PRF=INT
‘Who came?’ / ‘Did anyone come?’
(ii) Awea=**mē** mī wa-i ka-i? / Awea mī
INDET.INAN=INT 2S.ERG make/do-SS.SIMULT.INTRS go-PROG=INT
wa-i ka-i=**mē**?

- ‘What are you going to do/make?’ / ‘Are you going to do/make anything?’
- b. relativizer → definite in free relative (with enclitic =*mãĩ*)
- (i) *Ē ũi-a-ma [tsua=mãĩ u-a-ki].*
1S.ERG see-PRF-NEG INDET.HUM=EMB.WH come-PRF-REL
‘I didn’t see who arrived.’
- (ii) [*Awea-mãĩ yuka-ki*] *hu-shũ-we!*
INDET.INAN-EMB.WH request-REL take-BEN-IMP
‘Take to her what she is requesting!’
- c. existential → epistemic indefinite (with enclitic =*ra*)
- (i) *Tsua=ra u-a*
INDET.HUM=EP.IGN come-PRF
‘Someone arrived (I don’t know who).’
- (ii) *Pakaruka tsau-a, a-wě rewe tsuma-hãi, awea=ra xinã-i.*
Pakaruka sit-PRF 3S-POSS flute hold-AND INDET.INAN=EP.IGN think-PROG
‘Pakaruka is sitting holding his flute, thinking of something (I don’t know what).’

Relevantly, these indeterminate elements are interpreted as negative polarity items when in the scope of negation. In the examples below, only one negative morpheme occurs in the clause, cliticized to the verb, and it determines the interpretation of *tsua*, independently of its grammatical function in the clause:

(16) *Tsua*

- a. intransitive subject:
- (i) *Tsua u-a=ma.*
INDET.HUM come-PRF=NEG
‘Nobody came.’
- (ii) **Tsua=ma u-a=(ma).*
INDET.HUM=NEG come-PRF=NEG
- b. object:
- (i) *Ē tsua ũi-a=ma.*
1S.ERG INDET.HUM see-PRF=NEG
‘I didn’t see anyone.’
- (ii) **Ē tsua=ma ũi-a=(ma).*
1S.ERG INDET.HUM=NEG see-PRF=NEG
- c. transitive subject:
- (i) *Tsuã ea ũi-a=ma.*
INDET.HUM.ERG 1S.ACC see-PRF=NEG
‘Nobody saw me.’
- (ii) **Tsuã=ma ea ũi-a=(ma).*
INDET.HUM.ERG=NEG 1S.ACC see-PRF=NEG

Note the relevance of scope in the interpretation of the indeterminate pro-form. In ??, *tsuara* is interpreted as an epistemic indefinite (c.f. *alguém* in Portuguese, *irgendein* in German) and it’s possible to follow up the sentence with ‘I don’t know who’. In ??, on the other hand, *tsua* is interpreted as a negative polarity item (c.f. *ninguém* in Portuguese, *anyone* in English) and the follow-up clause is infelicitous:

- (17) a. *Tsua-ra u-a-ma, aska-hia tsua-mãi ě*
INDET.HUM-EP.IGN come-PRF-NEG ANAF.DISC-BUT indef-EMB.WH 1S.ERG
tãpĩ-a-ma.
know-PRF-NEG
‘Someone didn’t come, but I don’t know who.’ *‘It’s not the case that someone came.’
- b. *Tsua u-a-ma, # aska-hia tsua-mãi ě tãpĩ-a-ma.*
INDET.HUM come-PRF-NEG thus-BUT indef-?? 1S.ERG know-PRF-NEG
‘Nobody came, # but I don’t know who.’

Similarly to *tsua*, the interpretation of *awea* also depends on the operator it interacts with: it

is interpreted as a *wh* element when in the scope of an interrogative marker and as a negative polarity item when in the scope of sentential negation.

(18) Awea

- **Awea** mĩ wa-i ka-i-**mē**?
 INDET.INAN 2S.ERG do/make-SS.SIMULT.INTRs go-PROG-INT
 – **Ē** **aweā** wa-i ka-i-**ma**
 1S.ERG INDET.INAN do-SS.SIMULT.INTRs go-PROG-NEG
 ‘What are you going to do? -I’m not going to do anything.’

This example shows that clausal negation can fix the interpretation of two indeterminate phrases in the same clause, the subject and the object:

- (19) Tsuā(*=ma) awea(*=ma) ũi-a=**ma**.
 INDET.HUM.ERG=NEG INDET.INAN=NEG see-PRF=NEG
 ‘Nobody saw anything.’

Interestingly, Yawanawa is distinct from Kashibo in that it only allows indeterminate pro-forms to be interpreted as epistemic indefinites in declarative sentences. I’m assuming epistemic indefinites to be indefinites with a conventionalized ignorance implicature (c.f. **alopor10**) like German *irgendein*, Portuguese *alguém*.

Kashibo can derive two different indefinite pro-forms from question words. The first are forms with the ending =*birēs*, which are interpreted like the Yawanawa forms ending in =*ra*: indefinites with an ignorance interpretation, as in **??**. Forms ending in =*bira*, **??**, on the other hand, are indefinites, but they do not have the ignorance interpretation. **zar11** describes both forms as indefinite, with “a difference in specificity.”

(20) Kashibo (**zar11**)

- a. **uinbirēs** ka ‘ē=n piti pi-ti ‘ikēn
 anyone.A NAR.3P 1P=GEN food.ABS eat-NOM be.3P
 ‘Somebody will eat my food (but I do not know who: non-specific).’
 b. **uinbira** ka ‘ē=n piti pi-ti ‘ikēn
 someone.A NAR.3P 1P=GEN food.ABS eat-NOM be.3P
 ‘Somebody will eat my food (and I know who: specific).’

Unlike Kashibo, Yawanawa must employ different expressions when referring to indefinites that don’t give rise to an ignorance interpretation. This is shown below:

- (21) a. Veā ***aweā** / mahu wetsa ea ũi-shūn-i.
 Veā.ERG INDET.INAN / thing some 1S.ACC see-BEN-PROG
 ‘Vea is looking at something for me.’ (I know what it is, I asked him to do it.)
 b. Na-shavata ***tsua** / yura wetsa nuku-xina, xina-pū
 DEM.PROX-day INDET.HUM / person some arrive-PST.NIGHT think-POL.REQU
 tsua-māi!
 indef-EMB.WH
 ‘Someone arrived last night. Guess who it was!’

From this perspective, Yawanawa behaves more like Brazilian Portuguese than like Kashibo. In Portuguese, the indefinite *alguém* can only be used if the speaker is unaware of the identity of the referent:

- (22) a. Eu vi alguém na rua...
 I saw alguém in.the street
 ‘I saw someone in the street...’
 b. ✓I can’t remember who it was.
 c. #It was John./ It was Maria’s kid./ It was a blond little boy.

Thus, when under negation, we get two different possibilities:

- (23) a. **Yura wetsa** u-xiã=ma.
person some come-PST.NIGHT=NEG
'Someone didn't come last night (I know who it was).'
- b. **Tsua=ra** u-xiã=ma.
INDET.HUM=EP.IGN come-PST.NIGHT=NEG
'Someone didn't come (but I don't know who it was).'

Both sentences refer to a specific person, the only difference is the speaker's knowledge or ignorance of this person's identity. *Tsuara* in ?? is used if the speaker doesn't know or has forgotten who the person is and IT YURA WETSA in ?? is used if the speaker knows the person's identity but still chooses to use an indefinite.

4 Conclusion