Non-verbal predication in Yawanawa (Pano)

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1 Introduction

This presentation addresses a problem in the description of Yawanawa namely how to establish the category of roots that figure in stative predicates: are they verbs or adjectives? First, I will explain the problem and show sentences in which these predicates behave like intransitive verbs. Then, I will show some properties of these roots that distinguish them from verbs, in an attempt to fulfil two main objectives:

- show that there is a categorial distinction between adjectives and verbs in Yawanawa;
- show syntactic diagnostics to distinguish between verbal and non-verbal predication in this language.

Contents

2 Verbal or non-verbal predication?

In Yawanawa, roots like *keya* '(be)tall', *shua* '(be)fat', *yuxtu* '(be)crooked' and *paxtu* '(be)deaf' may behave as stative predicates as in (1), but also as process predicates as in (2).

(1) a. Nawa **keya**.
foreigner (be)tall
'The foreigner is tall'.

b. Awĩhu **shua**.
woman (be)fat
'The woman is fat.'

c. Na peshe **yuxtu**.
DEM.PROX house (be)crooked
'This house is crooked.'

d. A **paxtu**.
DEM.MED (be)deaf
'(S)he is deaf.'

(2) a. Na peshe **yuxtu**-a.
DEM.PROX house crooked-PRF
'This house got crooked.'

b. Na peshe **yuxtu**-i.
DEM.PROX house crooked-PROG
'This house is getting crooked.'

c. A **paxtu**-a.
DEM.MED deaf-PRF
'(S)he got deaf.'

d. A **paxtu**-i.
DEM.MED deaf-PROG
'(S)he is getting deaf.'

e. Pakaruka shani, vari **keyai**-nũ usha.
Pakaruka lazy sun (be)tall.INF-DS sleep.PRF
'Pakaruka is lazy, the sun is going up and he is sleeping.'

f. Vei-nẽ vata itxapa pi **shua**-i.
Vei-ERG sugar a.lot eat.PROG (be)fat-PROG
'Vei is eating a lot of sugar and getting fat.'

This is a common property of Panoan languages. Valenzuela (2003, p. 179) states that adjectives in Shipibo, "can take verbal morphology directly without requiring any formal derivation and thus function as predicates", shifting their meaning to that of an inchoative process, 'become a property'. Fleck (2003, pp. 466, 467) also describes adjective verbalization as a "confounding factor" in the distinction of word classes since there is no overt morphology signaling the class

change. In Shipibo, negation is a diagnostic to distinguish verbs from adjectives because there are different negation morphemes for verbal and non-verbal predicates (Valenzuela, 2003, p. 166). In Yawanawa, however, there is only one negation morpheme, *-ma*. [1]

(3) a. Kuxati txi txai-**ma** raka.
knife fire (be)far-NEG lay.PRF
'The knife is (lying) close to the fire.'
b. shenipahu westi-**ma**
narrative one-NEG
'many narratives'
c. Paxtu-a nika-**ma**.
(be)deaf-PRF hear-NEG
'(He) became deaf and didn't hear (what was said).'
d. Ẽ tua-**ma**.
1S canoeiro.frog-NEG
'I am not a frog.'

Not only Yawanawa has no explicit copulas in constructions with stative predicates, but also it is difficult to draw the line between attributive adjectival constructions and relative clauses with intransitive verbs like in (4).

(4) a. Ẽ [nawa **keya**] nuku-a.
1S.ERG foreigner (be)tall arrive-PRF
'I met the tall foreigner.'
b. Ẽ [awĩhu **itxu-a**] nuku-a.
1S.ERG woman run-PRF meet-PRF
'I met the woman who ran away.'

Thus, the question I pose here is: do we have adjectives in predicative constructions in (1) deriving verbs in (2)? Or, is it the case that these roots are intransitive stative verbs ('be tall', 'be fat', 'be deaf', 'be crooked') that may derive process predicates? Consequently, is the example in (4-a) a biclausal construction, or is *keya* an adjective in attributive function?

Considering that the biclausal hypothesis may be correct, a new question arises as to whether there is an adjective class in Yawanawa, given the claims of the non-universality of this category (Dixon (1982), Schachter (1985)). I will show a series of syntactic diagnostics to argue that there is an adjective class distinct from intransitive verbs in Yawanawa, and that sentences like the ones in (1) are indeed instances of non-verbal predication.

[1] The negation morpheme *-yama* occurs only in imperative constructions.

3 Adjectives and unaccusative predicates

One more evidence that the roots above behave like intransitive verbs is the fact that they may be causativized, just like unaccusative verbs. The process verbs derived from stative predicates – shown in (2) – take aspectual morphology and have the same properties as process verbs like *ewa* 'grow' (5) and *itxa* 'increase.in.number' (6).

(5) a. Vakehu **ewa**.
child grow.PRF
'The child has grown.'

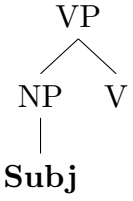
b. Vakehu **ewa**-i.
child grow-PROG
'The child is growing.'

(6) a. Peshe **itxa**.
house increase.in.number.PRF
'The number of houses has increased (in the village).'

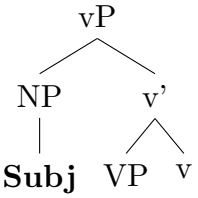
b. Peshe **itxa**-i.
house increase.in.number.PROG
'The number of houses is increasing (in the village).'

One thing that all the predicates above have in common is the fact that their subjects are themes or experiencers, not agents. According to Baker (1988)'s Uniformity of Thematic Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH), a thematic relationship between a predicate and an argument is always represented syntactically by the same structure. Thus, verbal constructions that assign the thematic role theme or experiencer (unaccusative) have a different structure, (7), than the ones that assign the thematic role agent, (unergative or transitive) (8).

(7) Unaccusative structure



(8) Unergative/Transitive structure



(cf. Hale and Keyser (1993))

In Yawanawa the morphological causative construction is a diagnostic that distinguishes between verb classes. Unaccusative verbs take the causative *-wa* (9-a), (9-b) whereas unergatives and transitive verbs take the causative *-ma*, (9-c) and (9-d).

(9) a. Ẽ mahu itxa-**wa**-i. / (* itxa-**ma**-i)
1S.ERG things increase.in.number-CAUS.UA-PROG / increase.in.number-CAUS.UE-PROG
'I am gathering my stuff.'

b. Ẽ na peshe ewa-**wa**-i. / (* ewa-**ma**-i)
1S.ERG DEM.PROX house grow-CAUS.UA-PROG / grow-CAUS.UE-PROG
'I am making my house bigger.'

c. Tika-nẽ ea itxu-**ma**. / (* itxu-**wa**)
Tika-ERG 1S.ACC run-CAUS.UE / run-CAUS.UA
'Tika made me run (to catch the boat).'

d. Ẽ vakehu pi-**ma**. / (* pi-**wa**)
1S.ERG child eat-CAUS.UE / eat-CAUS.UA
'I fed the child. (lit. 'I made the child eat')

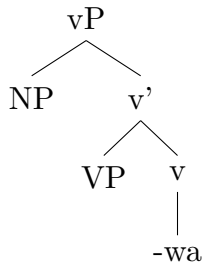
The process predicates derived from stative *yuxtu* '(be) crooked' and *paxtu* '(be) deaf', pair with unaccusatives in taking causative -wa:

(10) a. Mĩ ea paxtu-**wa**! / (* paxtu-ma)
2S.ERG 1S.ACC deaf-CAUS.UA / deaf-CAUS.UE
You made me deaf!

b. Mĩ na peshe yuxtu-**wa**-i! / (* yuxtu-ma-i)
2S.ERG DEM.PROX house crooked-CAUS.UA-PROG / crooked-CAUS.UE-PROG
'You are making the house get crooked!'

That is, -wa functions as a transitivizer; a head that enables an intransitive unaccusative verb to introduce an agent into its structure. Constructions with *-wa* (11) will look like the transitive structure shown in (8) above:

(11)



This diagnostic shows that the process predicates derived from stative like *paxtu* and *yuxtu* (among others like *keya* '(be)tall', *shua* '(be)fat', etc) are unaccusative verbs. The question remains, however, of whether they are a verb class or if they are adjectives that derive verbs. In the next section I will contrast stative and non-stative intransitive predicates to argue for the latter.

4 Morphosyntactic diagnostics of non-verbal predicates

There are some diagnostics that help distinguish stative from non-stative predicates in Yawanawa: inflection morphology, number agreement, the possibility to function as an argument, and coordinated constructions. I will demonstrate each of these syntactic diagnostics in an attempt to argue for the existence of an adjective class in this language.

The first property that sets stative and non-stative predicates apart is that the former may take the intensifier -tapa whereas the latter may not.

(12) a. Winũ-hĩ nii namã-nua nena ik-a aska-she
club(weapon)-FOC forest under-HITHER pupunha.tree AUX.INTR-PRF thus-SS.PREV.NOM
iwe-tapa.
heavy-INTS
'Clubs are made of wild pupunha wood and are thus very heavy.'

b. Na awĩhu **keya-tapa** nashavata nuku-a.
DEM.PROX woman tall-INTS today arrive-PRF
'This very tall woman arrived today.'

c. Peshe **yuxtu-tapa**.
house crooked-INTS
'The house is really crooked.'

d. *Peshe **ewa-tapa**.
house grow-INTS
'The house has grown a lot / The house is really big.'

e. *Vakehu **shetxi-tapa**.
child laugh-INTS
'The child laughs a lot.'

Another property that sets stative predicates like 'yuxtu' and 'paxtu' apart from non-stative predicates is that the former may figure in sentences without any verbal inflection. This is not a property of intransitive verbs like *ni* 'stand', *tsau* 'sit', and *pake* 'fall' in Yawanawa. (Note in (13-f) that the roots are indeed *ni* and *tsau*, not *nia* and *tsaua*,).

(13) a. Na peshe **yuxtu**.
DEM.PROX house (be)crooked
'This house is crooked.'

b. A **paxtu**.
DEM.MED (be)deaf
'(S)he is deaf.'

c. Mẽni waka kesha-ki **ni**-a. / (* ni)
Mẽni water edge-PP(LOC) stand-PRF / stand
'Mẽni is standing by the edge of the water.'

d. Ua xumu tsauti-ki **tsau**-a hi-tã-we. / (* tsau)
DEM.DIST jar seat-PP(LOC) sit-PRF get-MOV-IMP
'Go get that jar that is (sitting) on the table.'

e. Itxu-tia-she ẽ **pake**-a.
run-INCEP-SS.PREV.NOM 1S.NOM fall-PRF
'When I started running I fell down.'

f. Ni-we! / Tsau-we!
stand-IMP / sit-IMP
'Stand up!' / 'Sit down!'

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that distinguishes these stative predicates from non-stative verbal predicates is the fact that the former do not agree in number with plural arguments.

Plural clitic *=hu* marks agreeing subjects and verbs in unaccusative (14-a), unergative (14-b), and transitive (14-c) verbal constructions. In stative constructions such as (14-d), however, agreement does not occur.

(14) a. Vakehu=**hu** ewa=**hu**.
child=PL grow=PL
'The children have grown.'

b. Yume=**hu** ve-a=**hu**.
young.person=PL come-PRF=PL
'The young people came.'

c. Awihu=**hãu** [yuma pitxã]=**hu**.
woman=PL.ERG fish cook=PL
'The women cooked fish.'

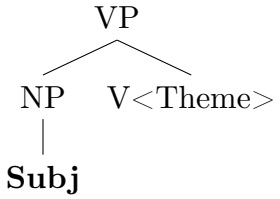
d. Peshe=**hu** yuxtu(*=hu).
house crooked=PL
'The houses are crooked.'

Stative predicates may only agree with a plural argument in constructions that involve an auxiliary verb, for instance, the habitual past construction in (15). In such cases, the agreement marker cliticizes to the auxiliary.

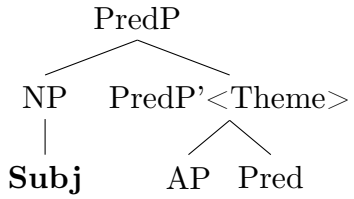
(15) Peshe=hu yuxtu i-misi=hu.
house=PL crooked AUX-HAB=PL
'The houses used to be crooked.'

Baker (2003)'s idea for the structural difference between verbs and adjectives is that adjectives (and nouns), in contrast to verbs, cannot assign a thematic role to a subject directly. While the argument structure of unaccusative verbs includes a theme subject, that of adjectives does not and thus requires an additional piece of structure in order to have a subject. The head Pred in (17) enables adjectives in predicative constructions to have a theme subject. This structural distinction could account for the difference in agreement.

(16)



(17)



The fact that stative predicates may not agree in number with a plural argument seems to be evidence of their non-verbal nature. Another property of these elements that seems to point in the same direction is the fact that they may be the sole element of a nominal argument, as in (18). (18-c) shows that they may also be possessed and take the diminutive morpheme *-xta*, (which are properties of nominals, not verbs) :

(18) a. **Shua** pake-a.
(be)fat fall-PRF
'A fat (person) has fallen.'

b. **Keya** nuku-a.
(be)tall arrive-PRF
'A tall (person) has arrived.'

c. Na e-wẽ **maina**-xta.
DEM.PROX 1S-POSS (be)thin-DIM
'This is my skinny little (one).'

Finally, coordination is another diagnostic that can help distinguish the properties of stative from non-stative predicates. The stative predicates in (19-a) are connected by the same conjunction used to coordinate noun phrases as in (19-b). Verbal predicates, on the other hand, are never coordinated by the conjunction *inũ*. They are either connected by switch reference markers as in (19-c) and (19-d) (asymetrical coordination, cf. Nonato (2014)) or they have no explicit conjunction as in (19-e).

(19) a. Awĩhu [keya **inũ** shua].
woman tall CONJ fat
'The woman is tall and fat.'

b. [Ẽ **inũ** mĩ **inũ** Sana] ka-i.
1S.SUBJ CONJ 2S.SUBJ CONJ Sana go-PROG
'You and Sana and I are going.'

c. Wixi ture=hu ane-**shũ**, itxa-wa-**shũ**, wixa-we.
word piece=PL read-SS.PREV.ERG increase.in.number-CAUS.UA-SS.PREV.ERG write-IMP
'Read the syllables, put them together, and write them down.'

d. Shanẽ tae-a-**she** ewa.
village come.into.existence-PRF-SS.PREV.NOM grow.PRF
'The village has come into existence and grown.'

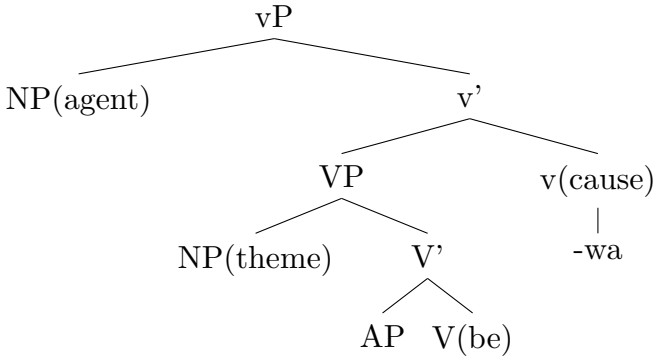
e. Txinĩ wixa-pai-misi (*inũ) Sanã wixa-pai-yusma.
Txini.ERG write-DES-HAB and Sana.ERG write-DES-NEVER
'Txini likes to study and Sana does not' (lit. 'Txini always wants to write and Sana never does').

Thus, these diagnostics seem to indicate that stative predicates in Yawanawa are indeed non-verbal and that the language has a class of adjectives that may occur in predicative (20-a) and attributive (20-b) constructions.

(20) a. Nawa **keya-(tapa)**.
foreigner tall-INTS
'The foreigner is (really) tall.'
b. Nawa **keya-(tapa)** nuku-a.
foreigner tall-INTS arrive-PRF
'A (really) tall foreigner has arrived.'

These adjectives may derive unaccusative process verbs in the manner described by Hale and Keyser (1993, p. 72) and Baker (2003, p. 81):

(21)



This structure represents a verbal predicate derived from an adjective, which is a lexical category associated with states. That is, this is a "change resulting in a state" predicate. The theme is the entity undergoing change and the addition of a "cause component" to the structure allows for the introduction of an agent that brings about the change.

5 An additional puzzle

I have shown through morphosyntactic diagnostics that there is a categorial difference between adjectives and intransitive verbs in Yawanawa. An evidence that seems to corroborate this hypothesis is that there are at least two instances of related roots that belong to different classes in Yawanawa: process verb *ewa* 'grow' and adjective *ewapa* 'big'; and process verb *itxa* 'increase in number' and adjective *itxapa* 'many/a lot'.

(22) a. Vakehu **ewa**-i.
child grow-PROG
'The child is growing.'

b. Na peshe ewa-**pa**.
DEM.PROX house grow-ADJTZ
'This house is big.'

c. Peshe **itxa**-i.
house increase.in.number-PROG
'The number of houses is increasing (in the village).'

d. Yuma itxa-**pa**!
fish increase.in.number-ADJTZ
'There's a lot of fish!'

These forms ending in *-pa* behave like non-verbal predicates in other senses as well. They may be coordinated with *inũ*, they may modify a noun, and they may not take plural agreement morphology when used predicatively:

(23) a. Na peshe [ewa-pa **inũ** xarakapa].
DEM.PROX house grow-ADJTZ CONJ good
'This house is big and good.'

b. Peshe **ewa**-*(pa) pake-a.
house grow-ADJTZ fall-PRF
'The big house fell down.'

c. Peshe=hu ewa-pa=(*hu).
house=PL grow-ADJTZ=PL.
'The houses are big.'

Apparently, this is a diagnostic to establish a distinction between the two classes. One could imagine that the morpheme *-pa* derives adjectives out of unaccusative verbs. The puzzle, however, is that these forms do not imply processes, their meaning is not that of a change resulting in a state. They denote states. If we assume that the structure of process verbs shown above is correct, a process verb would have to lose a verbal component to become a state. If process verbs are indeed derived from stative adjectival predicates, then we have a derivation from *ewapa* to *ewa* with morphological loss. I leave this question open for further investigation.

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