

Mirativity, Epistemic Modality, and Egophoricity in Yaminawa (Pano, Peru)

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1 Overview

- This talk presents some data on a group of enclitics in Yaminawa that express epistemic and mirative meanings, and argues that some of these enclitics also encode egophoric meanings specifying speaker and (perceived) interlocutor expectations of knowledge or epistemic responsibility/authority.
- This talk grows out of previous work on affective expression in Yaminawa (Neely *ming*) where mirativity and epistemic categories were not explored in depth.
- The primary aim of this talk is to organize some thoughts on the distribution of these enclitics, and suggest some methods for investigating similar phenomena in other (Amazonian) languages.

1.1 About Yaminawa

- Yaminawa is a Panoan language spoken in Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia. It forms part of a geographically-disperse dialect complex that also includes Yawanawá, Sharanahua, and Nahua (Yora), among other varieties.
- These languages form part of the “Headwaters” subgroup within the “Nawa” group of the Mainline branch of Panoan (Fleck 2013).
- Data for this talk comes from Río Sepahua Yaminawa and Nahua (Yora), as spoken in Sepahua, Ucayali, Peru.

1.2 Definitions

- **Mirativity**: “semantic category of new or unassimilated information” (Delancey 2012); affective notion of “surprise” in earlier definitions (DeLancey 1997, 2001).
- **Epistemic modality**: (speaker’s) confidence in or knowledge of the truth of the proposition; taken broadly here to include evidentials, morphemes that evaluate the likelihood of the proposition, and morphemes that express lack of speaker knowledge or commitment to the truth of the proposition.
- **Egophoricity**: broadly, “general phenomenon of linguistically flagging the personal knowledge, experience, or involvement of a conscious self” (San Roque et al. 2018).

- Note! I am not using the term egophoricity in the way used in descriptions of some Tibeto-Burman languages.

Table 1: Table of erstwhile “dubitatives”

form	gloss
<i>=ra</i>	DUB
<i>=raki, =raka, =raiki, =rakikia, =rakakia</i>	DUB
<i>=tsi</i>	DUB
<i>=ruku</i>	DUB
<i>=keruku</i>	DUB.(NEG)
<i>=mākai, =māiki</i>	DUB

- Probably not the case that there are like 5 or 6 “dubitatives”...
- Hard to get at with elicitation, but traditional narratives turn out to be an awesome source of unexpected events and miratives.

1.3 Markers with apparent egophoric semantics

- *=ruku* counter-expectational and *=keruku* negative counter-expectational
- *=tsi* expresses lack of knowledge about something presumed to be common knowledge
- *=nũĩ* ignorant interlocutor existential
- ...others?

2 Miratives

- “general” mirative is *=pu*
- Seems to be a general expression of surprising information.
- Also has a second life as a mirative imperative.

- (1) a. CONTEXT: A shaman travels to the afterlife and brings back a *pijuayo* seed; his daughter plants it and it nearly matures in a year (very quickly).
wari wistipa wadaki, ãnã wari ikeradaitũ, mã dedupu!

wari wistipa wada =ki ãnã wari ik -kerad =ai =tũ mã
sun/year one plant =SS.SIMULT again year ITR -AM:come =IPFV.SUB =S=O already
dedu =pu
here =MIR

‘(That) year (she) planted (it), and the next year came, and (it) was here (this tall)!’
(TN.MML.Yura ñũwẽ.line 92)

- b. CONTEXT: One of my consultants had something on his forehead and when he slapped it, we saw it was a mosquito.

ea- ea- ea ãnã- wĩ chakaki, ãĩpu

ea ãnã wĩ chaka =ki ãĩ -pu
1SG.ACC again mosquito bad =AFFIRM see -IMPER.MIR

‘me again- it’s a damned mosquito, look!’ (CN.PGF.0586)

- The counter-expectationals =*ruku* and =*keruku* (negated):

- (2) a. CONTEXT: María has been accused of stealing some *humita*, and she denies it.
baa, ěruku wiabaki

baa ě =ruku wi -a =ba =ki
no 1SG.NOM =CNTEXP take -PFV =NEG =AFFIRM

‘No, I wasn’t the one who took (them).’ (TN.MRR.Pãmã.line 264)

- b. CONTEXT: A group of people are traveling through the forest, but they are very slow compared to their supernaturally fast relative. When they complain that they have been traveling for too long and have run out of food, he reproaches them.

Mã waki kaakeruku...

mã waki ka -a =keruku
2PL.NOM where go -PFV =CNTEXP.NEG

‘But y’all haven’t gone anywhere!’ (Contrary to what they think, they haven’t actually gone far.) (TN.MRR.Shidu)

- These *do* appear to reference the knowledge or epistemic authority of the first person, and the ignorance or lack of epistemic authority of the second person.
- When directed toward an interlocutor in a declarative, they are typically new information or corrections.

- (3) a. CONTEXT: José Manuel asks Juan how much his new *motocar* cost.
 ... *tres, este, tres mil soles* ruku wisti moto ik -ita =nũ

tres este tres mil soles =ruku wisti moto ik -ita =nũ
 three um three thousand soles =CNTEXP only motocar ITR -PST3 =PURPOSE/REASON

‘...three, umm, actually, just three thousand soles, the moto was (the other day).’
 (Conv.JMRS+JnGR.0541)

b.

- In interrogatives, the speaker is suspending epistemic authority, or surrendering it to the interlocutor.
- Counter-expectationals can also be used in interrogatives or declaratives that constitute self-directed speech – with the same effect.
- These uses are frequent and led me to first label these as DUB.

- (4) a. CONTEXT: In the mythological times, humans had never planted large fields of maize. The Squirrel Spirit is the first to do so, and his human family is amazed to see the amount of maize he has brought home.
 wakiax xikirukumẽ da mã wia?

wakiax xiki =ruku =mẽ da mã wi =a
 from.where maize =CNTEXP =INTERR this 2PL.NOM harvest -PFV

‘From where did you harvest this maize?!’ (TN.MRR.Kapa.line 392)

- b. CONTEXT: María is complaining about not getting sleep the night before and reporting what she thought to herself about her insomnia.
 awetiaruku ã uxachaimẽ?

awetia =ruku ã uxa -chaka -i =mẽ
 when =CNTEXP 1SG.NOM sleep -BAD -IPFV =INTERR

‘When will I ever fall asleep?’ (Conv.LAW+MML+MMS.0538)

CONTEXT: María is starting the narration of a long story.

ẽruku bia yuinũ

ẽ =ruku bia yui -nũ
 1SG.NOM =CNTEXP 2SG.ACC tell -OPT

‘I guess I’ll tell you.’ (TN.MRR.Pama.line 2)

- The flipping of roles seen in the interrogatives (where the first person does *not* have epistemic authority) is what is expected for egophorics (San Roque et al 2018)

3 Epistemic modals

- Yaminawa has a good-sized inventory of epistemic modal enclitics; most of these are oriented toward speaker knowledge or speaker ignorance.
- I include the interrogative *=mē* in this table due to the fact that interrogatives signal speaker ignorance.
- One of these enclitics, *=tsi* is particularly interesting, as it appears to encode the speaker's assumption/understanding that the interlocutor expects them to know something (but they don't!)

Table 2: Inventory of epistemic and utterance-type enclitics

form	gloss	meaning	category
<i>=ki, =kī</i>	ASSERT	assertive	utterance type
<i>=kia</i>	EVID.REP	reported evidential	epistemic
<i>=mākai,</i> <i>=māiki</i>	ASSUMP	speaker's assumption	epistemic
<i>=ra</i>	DUB	speaker doubt	utterance type, epistemic
<i>=tsi</i>	TSI	speaker assumes that the interlocutor expects them to know	utterance type, epistemic
<i>=mē</i>	INTERR	interrogative	utterance type
<i>=raki,</i> <i>=rakai,</i> <i>=raiki,</i> <i>=rakikia,</i> <i>=rakakia</i>	maybe	speaker doubt; possibly related to <i>=ra</i> , but with distinct distribution	epistemic

- In other words, *=tsi* marks that a speakers knows/senses that they should know something or are expected to know, but don't.
- *=tsi* is common when doing linguistic work!

- (5) a. CONTEXT: The Squirrel Spirit is not familiar with the human concept of fishing with poison. When his two new wives ask him if he wants to go see where their dad used to fish, he doesn't understand, and asks the meaning of the word.

awatsi "techanēādi"? wadikia

awa =tsi techanēā -di wa -di =kia
 what =TSI fish.with.poison -PST6 say -PST6 =EVID.REP

'He said, "what's *techanēādi*?"' (TN.MRR.Kapa.line 62)

- b. CONTEXT: José Manuel is trying to remember when he went to Pucallpa.

ētsikai awetia kati? *el sietebamē?* baa. *quincetsi...*

ē =tsi =kai awetia ka -ti el siete =ba =mē baa quince =tsi
 1SG.NOM =TSI =CONTR when go -PST5 the seventh =NEG =INTERR no fifteenth =TSI

'But when was it that I went? Was it the seventh? No. The fifteenth?' (Conv.JMRS+JnGR.0541) (JMRS part only – Juan suggests 15th after 1st utterance)

- The enclitic =*tsi* can also be used in declaratives, often to form placeholders for forgotten/unknown nouns
- It can also hold the place of an unknown entity

- (6) a. CONTEXT: Lucy, María, and Mechi are looking for a place to put the recorder while they have a conversation; Lucy (the hostess) suggests a small stool but forgets the word.

awatsi, awara pishta dedu witā...

awa =tsi awara pishta dedu wi =tā
 what =TSI something small here bring =IPE

'After bringing a whatchamacallit, some little thing here...' (Conv.LAW+MML+MMS.0538)

- b. CONTEXT: In the mythological times, a forest gnome stuck itself onto a man's leg and wouldn't let go. The speaker is presenting some things that the man might have tried to get him to let go.

da Wuipapi mā asapaiwia, baa, tsuatsi asai

da Wuipapi mā asa -pai -wi -a baa tsua =tsi asa -i
 this Wuipapi already drown -DESID -CONCESS -PFV no noone =TSI drown -IPFV

'Although he had already tried to drown this Wuipapi, to no avail, I guess no one can drown him.' (TN.MRR.Wuipapi.line 82)

4 Existentials

- Yaminawa has two existential enclitics, =*kīā* (no expectation of interlocutor knowledge/ignorance) and =*nūi* (expectation of interlocutor ignorance).

- =*kĩã* is used in general contexts:

- (7) a. CONTEXT: A woman has chewed maize to make chicha for her mother-in-law and gives it to her.

ñũshãwu, dakĩã, mẽ bia axũa

ñũshãwu da =kĩã mã ě bia ak -xud -a

old.woman DEM.PROX =EXIST already 1SG.NOM TR -BEN -PFV

‘Mother-in-law, here it is, I already did (chewed) it for you.’ (TN.MRR.Aya.line 134)

- b. CONTEXT: The speaker is describing a scene in a text where a bird distracts a man and steals fire.

aweskara atadaidukia, chiikĩã

aweskara ak -tad =ai =du =kia, chii =kĩã

somehow TR -AM:go.do.and.return =IPFV.SUB =DS =EVID.REP fire =EXIST

‘They say after he somehow went and (distracted him), the fire was (t/here).’ (TN.MRR.Yuashi.71)

- That =*kĩã* doesn’t encode information expected to be novel to the interlocutor is clear in examples like the following, where it is offered unhelpfully:

- (8) CONTEXT: Two children are being raised by their mother who has re-married with a tapir named Papapapadi. Their mom’s (human) boyfriend on the side comes and tries to learn more about who her new husband is.

- a. Man: *tsuamẽ Papapapadi?*

tsua =mẽ Papapapadi

who =INTERR Papapapadi

‘Who is Papapapadi?’

- b. Children: *Papapapadikĩã*

‘He’s Papapapadi.’

- c. Man: *ẽ ãĩũũ*

ẽ ãĩũũ -nũ

1SG.NOM see -OPT

‘I’m going to have a look-see.’ (TN.MML.Awa.line 74)

- =*nũĩ* is used for information that the speaker believes is new to the interlocutor.
- The most frequent context it appears in is a genre of folktales where animals become human and present themselves to their new human spouses.
- (Some of these use =*kĩã*)

- (9) CONTEXT: A man asks a clay pot to become his wife. She becomes human and comes to him, but he doesn't recognize her as a human, so she introduces herself. Following this line, she repeats the man's own words to remind him of her identity.

ẽnũĩ, ẽnũĩ

'It is I, it is I.' (TN.MRR.Bapu.line 37)

- (10) CONTEXT: María is describing the arrows of the Mashco-Piro to Lucy and Mechi who are too young to have seen them first-hand.

askara ewapãnẽwã chaawunũĩ

askara ewapa -nẽ -wã chaka =wu =nũĩ
like.so big -LATSYLL -AUG bad =PL =EXIST

'They are huge, nasty (arrows) like so.' (Conv.MML+LAW+MMS.0538)

- This appears to be signaling something like 'epistemic authority' (to use the term from Hargraves 2005).
 - Specifically, =*nũĩ* appears to signal that the speaker assumes epistemic authority and does not assume that the interlocutor shares this knowledge/authority.
 - Predictably, we see that the ignorant interlocutor existential occurs with the counter-expectational enclitics:
- (11) CONTEXT: A woman asked a palm weevil to become human and be her husband and he does so. When he presents himself to her, she asks who he is, and he replies like so:

ẽnũĩ, ẽ wupakeruku...

ẽ =nũĩ ẽ wupa =keruku
1SG.NOM =EXIST.EGO 1SG.NOM beetle =CNTEXP.NEG

'It is I; actually, I am not a beetle...' (TN.MML.Wupa.line 13)

5 Some remarks

- These kinds of categories are tough to pin down; grammaticalized elements encoding these meanings probably have meanings that are ego vs non-ego sensitive more often than we think!
- Evidentials have attracted a lot of attention in Amazonianist scholarship, but there's a lot of interesting stuff in the epistemic domain beyond that.
- Data with rich context is crucial; developing conversational competence in the language makes this easier to observe and test
- Looking for convergences in data, like the use of the counter-expectational =(ke)ruku with the second-person ignorant existential =*nũĩ* (or contrastive focus, etc.) can provide support to arguments

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