

Temporal Categories in Yaminawa (Pano, Peru)

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1 Overview¹

- Yaminawa has an elaborate set of morphological resources for expressing temporal categories including aspect, temporal remoteness, time of day, and relative temporal sequence.
- Panoan languages are typologically noteworthy for the high number of temporal remoteness distinctions that they make.
- This talk provides a broad overview of these morphemes, and a closer look at how they are employed in discourse.
- The question that draws this talk together: does Yaminawa have tense?

2 About Yaminawa

- Yaminawa (ISO 639-3: yaa) is a Panoan language spoken in southeastern Peru and surrounding areas of Brazil and Bolivia.
- Yaminawa appears to form part of a large dialect complex that also includes Yawanawá, Sharanahua, and Nahua (Yora).
- The data in this talk comes from original fieldwork on the southernmost varieties: Yaminawa of río Sepahua and Nahua.
- Speakers under age 50 (35 for the Nahua) are often unfamiliar with the less-frequent temporal morphemes due to language shift.

2.1 Realization of temporal categories

- All morphological temporal categories in Yaminawa are expressed as verbal affixes or enclitics.
- These categories occupy at least five distinct slots in the verbal template, as in table 1

Table 1. The Yaminawa verb template

-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
REDUP	part prefix	root	VBLZ	lex. class deriv.	affect	NMLZ	dir. / assoc. motion	circadian	DIM & INTENS
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
NEG. NFIN	modal	FUT. IPFV	PL. IPFV	T/A	PL	NEG	Switch-reference & sequence	interrogative, evidential, etc.	

2.2 Types of temporal categories expressed in Yaminawa

- Tense: graded, typologically notable for number of contrasts
- Aspect: verbal suffixes, reduplication
- Sequence: simultaneous vs. consecutive in the switch reference system, other clausal enclitics
- Circadian: describes the time of day of an event (night/day/morning)

3 Tense

- Relates topic time to utterance time (Klein 1994)
- Incompatible with imperfective, perfective, and habitual/perfect aspect markers in Yaminawa because occupy the same slot
- High number of graded distinctions, in table 2

Table 2. The graded tenses in Yaminawa

Past		Future	
-wa	last night	-waidaka	tomorrow, a few days from now
-waiyabea	yesterday		
-ita	days/weeks ago	-nūpukui	weeks/months from now
-yabea	weeks/months ago		
-ti	more than 6-9 months ago	-daka	Indeterminate, years from now
-di	more than 1-2 years ago		

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- Used in Yaminawa to establish what the topic time is relative to the utterance time at an early point in the discourse, then aspect is used.

(1)a. Iskadikia.

iska -di =kia
be.like.this -PST.6 =EVID.REP
'Así dice ha dicho (hace muchos años).'

b. Dii kai.

dii ka -i
forest go -IPFV
'(He) was going to the forest.'

c. Dukuwede dii kaa.

dukuwede dii ka -a
man forest go -PRF
'The man went to the forest.'

(TN.MLGA.Shidipawāwē kashta ñūshīwu widi.lines 1-3)

- When tense is not clearly established, default interpretation is past for perfective and habitual aspect and non-past for the imperfective

(2)a. Ë kai.

ë ka -i
1SG.NOM go -IPFV
'I am going' or 'I will go (soon, later today)'

b. Ë kaa.

ë ka -a
1SG.NOM go -PRF
'I went (earlier today)'

- A fun example of tense in interaction:

(3) **Context:** José is recounting a long and unpleasant trip he made to the city. He is unsure of when he left his hometown. Juan helps him try to figure out the timing based on José's sister's trip. (José left on Oct. 8 and returned a few days prior to the recording date Nov. 8.)

a. José: tii, awetiara ë kayabea?

yii awetia -ra ë ka -yabea
EXCL when -DUB 1SG.NOM go -PST.4
'Ay, when did I go (weeks to months ago)?'

[...]

b. Juan: más de veinte días wiinū porque el dieciocho chipi kaitanū
más de veinte días wi -i =nū
over twenty days take -IPFV =affirm
porque el dieciocho chipi ka -ita =nū
because the 18th sister go -PST.3 =affirm
'It has been over 20 days because your sister went (days/weeks ago) on the 18th.'

c. José: ia

'Okay.'

d. Juan: dieciocho kaita, ya tiene más de veinte días
dieciocho ka -ita ya tiene más de veinte días
eighteenth go -PST.3 it's already been over 20 days
'She left on the 18th; it's already been over 20 days.'

e. José: ëtsikai awetia kati?

ë -tsi =kai awetia ka -ti
1SG.NOM -INTERR =contrast when go -PST.5
'But when did I go (many months ago)?'
(Conv.JMRS+JnGR.0541) (transcript edited for clarity/brevity)

- In some Panoan languages, graded tense markers may or must co-occur with non-graded tense marking (see Fleck 2001, 2007 on Matsés, and Tallman and Stout 2016 on Chácobo). **This is unattested in Yaminawa.**

3.1 Future tense and degree of certainty

- The precise semantics of the future tenses in Yaminawa have been elusive. In addition to temporal distance, they also have modal meanings, mostly relating to certainty
- In addition to the tenses in table 2, there are other suffixes with future-related semantics:
 - Imperfective aspect *-i*
 - Optative/hortative *-nū* (used with 1sg to indicate intent)
 - Purposive (fut.) + imperfective *-xi-i*
- In particular, these morphemes are used to express future events that are expected to occur the same day (but possibly later).

- In texts and conversation, the 'tomorrow' future tense *-waidaka* often has high certainty, and is often used to make or communicate plans

(4)a. Context: the speaker has just been asked when his son-in-law will be traveling.

Mañana bajawaidaka

mañana baja **-waidaka**
tomorrow go.downriver -FUT.1

'He will go downriver tomorrow.' (Conv.PGF+MRR+AT.0518)

b. Context: the speaker is concerned for her grandchild and is telling her neighbors that she is going to take her to the health post.

Nãskara iyushtawaidaka

nãskara iyu -shta **-waidaka**
just.like.that take.person -DIM -FUT.1

'Just like that, (I'm) taking her tomorrow.'

(Conv.MML.LAW.MMS.0538)

- *-waidaka* can be used ironically to talk about events that are quite unlikely to occur, to humorous effect.

(5) Context: closing the topic of a bad omen that was heard the previous night, the speaker is making a dark joke about mortality; she is very young and healthy.

a. *mẽ iwaidakakǖki*

mã ë i **-waidaka** -kǖi =ki
already 1SG.NOM do.STR -FUT.1 -INTENS =EMPH
'I could die any time.' ("cualquier rato voy a morir")

b. *mã ãnã café ayawaidakaki*

mã ãnã café aya **-waidaka** =ki
2SG.NOM again coffee drink -FUT.1 =EMPH
'Tomorrow you will be drinking coffee again.' (at her wake)
(Conv.MMS.MML.LAW.0538)

- In text work, speakers translate *-nãpukui* (intermediate future) as being weeks or months in the future and *-daka* (remote future) as being years in the future. *-nãpukui* is very infrequent – just a handful of non-repeated tokens in my corpus.

- *-nãpukui* appears to involve at least some degree of uncertainty:

(6) Context: the speaker is quoting speech that was spoken to an ex-wife upon her husband leaving due to her affair with her brother-in-law

a. *ë awara wixññpukuiba*

ë awara wi -xud **-nãpukui** -ba
1SG.NOM anything buy -BEN -FUT.2 -NEG
'I won't buy him (the love child) anything.'

b. *aka, nã mĩ wakapã awara wixññpukui*

aka da -N mĩ wakapa -N awara
so DEM -same 2SG.POS brother.in.law -ERG something
wi -xud-**nãpukui**
buy -BEN-FUT.2
'So this very brother-in-law of yours will buy him something.'
(CN.PGF.0586)

- In just one instance have I found *-nãpukui* and *-daka* in proximity:

(7) Context: quoted speech of the speaker's late father-in-law, who was angry about family members who did not share meat.

a. *ë daxü, a nã yawawu iyunñpukui*

ë da =xü a n- ë yawa -wu
1SG.NOM die =SS.PE 3SG EMPH- 1SG.NOM peccary -PL
iyu **-nãpukui**
take.with -FUT.2
'When I die, I will take all the peccary with me.'

b. *ë yawa wepuwãññpukui*

ë yawa wepu -waid **-nãpukui**
1SG.NOM peccary cover -AM:go.doing -FUT.2
'I will leave all the peccary hidden.'

c. *mã ãnã yawa pidakaba*

mã ãnã yawa pi **-daka** -ba
2PL.NOM again peccary eat -FUT.3 -NEG
'You will not eat peccary (ever again).' (CN.JMRS.0298)

- This example makes it clear that *-daka* concerns a future that extends farther from the utterance time than *-nãpukui*

- Whether *-daka* involves a greater, lesser, or equal degree of certainty as *-nūpukui* will require further work.

3.2 Tense vs “temporal remoteness markers”

- Other Panoan languages make a high number of contrasts, but are these suffixes actually tense in the Kleinian sense?
- For Chácobo, Tallman and Stout (2016) argue they’re not, because in “switch contexts” (where tense changes in narration), the second use doesn’t relate topic time to utterance time, rather topic time to eventuality time.
- In Yaminawa, I have so far found just three examples of this (from a single speaker, out of over 6000 lines of past tense narratives).

(8) Context: from a text set in the remote past (*-di*), in this case the mythological past.

Nā pia wuita, ãnā weiba, mā atu ãnāita
 da -N pia wu **-ita** ãnā we -i -ba
 DEM -same arrow take -PST.3 again bring -IPFV -NEG
 mā atu ãnā **-ita**
 already 3PL.ABS give -PST.3

‘The arrows that he had taken (days prior), he wasn’t carrying them, he had given them away (days prior) to them (his grandchildren).’
 (TN.MML.Ruawu.Dawawu.line 193)

- Most examples that superficially appeared to be switch contexts were actually reported speech.
- Switch contexts appear to be avoided by Yaminawa speakers. If we take the three instances as evidence that the “tense” markers don’t relate topic time to utterance time, rather topic time to eventuality time, this would mean Yaminawa is a tenseless language.

4 Aspect

- Relates eventuality time to topic time (Klein 1994)
- Two primary aspects:
 - Perfective *-a*
 - Imperfective *-i*

- Others:

- Perfect/Habitual nominalizer *-bis*
- Iterative/frequentative reduplication
- Habitual/frequentative *-tai*
- Iterative *-ria*
- Continuous *-wawāi*

- Out of these, only the perfective, imperfective, or habitual can form a finite verb alone – the others require an additional T/A/M suffix.

(9)a. *Nātixū nū dikabis*

da -N -ti =xū nū dika **-bis**
 DEM-same-all=LOC.COMP.TR 1PL.NOM hear-HABIT
 ‘Up to this very point is all we have heard.’

b. *Ea ãnū wārā pīawāpīawādi*

ea adu -N wārā
 1SG.ACC paca -ERG squash
pīawā- pi -ā -wad -i
 REDUP.FREQ- eat -MAL -AM:come.and.do -IPFV
 ‘A paca repeatedly comes to eat my squash.’

c. *awe iriai*

a -we i - **-ria** -i
 3SG -comit do.ITER -always -IPFV
 ‘He did it (had sex) with her constantly.’

d. *ẽ ayawawāidi*

ẽ aya **-wawāid** -i
 1SG.NOM drink -CONT -IPFV
 ‘I will drink it continuously / throughout the day.’

- A small number of affixes combine tense/temporal distance and aspect, such as remote past imperfective: *-paudi*

5 Temporal relations in the switch reference system

- The switch reference system in Yaminawa marks whether a subordinate clause has the same or different subject distinction as a following clause, as well as whether the event was prior or simultaneous.

- It is ungrammatical to mark SR clauses for tense. They are temporally and syntactically dependent on the main clause.
- Same subject (simultaneous and prior event) SR clauses may have any of the non-finite aspectual morphology, but not the perfective or imperfective.
- Different subject (prior event) SR clauses may take the perfective, with the interpretation of being prior to the main clause (10a), but SR clauses take a different form of the imperfective (-ai) when they are interpreted as having temporal overlap with the main clause (10b).

(10)a. *Piã akadu, adu pakedi*

pia -N ak -a =du adu pake -di
 arrow -INSTR do.TR -PRF =DS.PE paca fall -PST.6
 'He (the man) shot it with the arrow, and (then) the paca fell.'
 (TN.MML.Adu ñush̫wu.line 16)

Peda uaidu, buidikia

peda u -ai =du bui -di =kia
 day come -IPFV =DS.PE wake -PST.6 =EVID.REP
 'As the sun was coming up, he woke up, they say.'
 (TN.MML.Chai Kushi Wewadi.line 53)

- There is at least one clausal enclitic that encodes a temporal relationship between clauses, but not information about argument tracking
 - Immediately prior event =*tã*

(11) *wiñ utatã, pia wiakewuwãtã, piã akadu, adu pakedi.*

wiñ uta =tã pia wi -ake -wuwã =tã
 latex light=ipe arrow grab-circ -am:lateral=ipe
 pia -N ak -a =du adu pake -di
 arrow -INSTR do.TR -PRF =DS.PE paca fall -PST.6
 'He (the man) lit the rubber torch, grabbed his arrow from his side, and shot it with the arrow, and (then) the paca fell.'
 (TN.MML.Adu ñush̫wu.line 16 – full version of 10a)

5 Circadian indicators

- Describe the time of day that an event took/takes place
- At least three identified so far:
 - At night: -*shid* ~ -*sh̫i*
 - During the day: -*waid* ~ -*wāi*
 - In the early morning: -(y)uku

(11)a. *nū budush̫ipaudi.*

nū budu -shid -paudi
 1PL.NOM dance -at.night-PST.6.IPV
 'We used to dance at night/all night' (E.LAW.0352)

b. *nū budushidita*

nū budu -shid -ita
 1PL.NOM dance -at.night-PST.3
 'We danced at night/all night (last week, sábado, etc.)'
 (E.LAW.0352)

- These suffixes are compatible with the aspect markers (12a), also in SR clauses (12b).

(12)a. *"Eee!" da yabe ish̫kadi.*

Eee da yabe i -shid -kad -i
 (grito) DEM night do.ITER -all.night -PL.IPFV -IPFV
 'They were yelling "eee!" all night long that night.'
 (TN.MML.Xeki ñush̫wu.line 15)

b. *atu kexewãiaidu wari ñätãpakeikia.*

Atu kexe -wāi -ai =du
 3SG.ABS watch -all.day -IPFV =DS.PE
 wari ñätã -pake -i =kia
 sun atardecer -DIR:down -IPFV =EVID.REP
 'He watched them all day, and it was getting late, they say.'
 (TN.MML.Adu ñush̫wu.line 85)

- The circadian indicators have an adverbial-like function that describes time of day; they do not help the listener identify the particular point in time that an event took/takes place.

6 Conclusion

- Yaminawa has a lot of temporal categories that are expressed morphologically.
- So far, there is no conclusive evidence that Yaminawa does not have tense. My inclination is that it the graded temporal markers **are** tense.
- Targeted elicitation on presuppositional values of the graded tenses and the acceptability of “switch contexts” is necessary to conclusive answer whether or not Yaminawa is actually tenseless.
- In the current corpus, past tense narratives and conversation about past events dominates; the future is not well studied (though I would hesitate to say that it is not well represented)

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