Third person agreement and passive marking in Tacanan languages:
a historical perspective

1 Introduction

1.1 Tacanan languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>location</th>
<th>no. speakers</th>
<th>total popul.</th>
<th>actual linguists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Araona</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>~150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Emkow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ese Ejja</td>
<td>Bolivia &amp; Peru</td>
<td>~600</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Vuillermet, Chavarria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavineña</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>~1200</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>Guillaume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reyesano</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>~15</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>Guillaume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacana</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>~50</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- (phonological) reconstructions by Key (1968), Girard (1971) with 504 cognate sets
- hypothetical link with Panoan languages (116 cognate sets in Girard 1971)
- Project: morpho-syntactic reconstruction based on new studies available

1.2 Argument-coding systems of Tacanan languages

- Araona, Cavineña, Ese Ejja and Tacana: ergative case-marking systems

(1) a. Araona intransitive clause

\[ \text{Shanito} \quad \text{hododo} \]
Shanito.ABS run
‘Shanito runs.’ (Emkow 2006: 180)

b. Araona transitive clause

\[ \text{Shanito} = \text{a} \quad \text{awada} \quad \text{pisa-ta-iki} \]
Shanito=ERG tapir.ABS hunt-3A-ANT
‘Shanito has hunted a tapir.’ (Emkow 2006: 179)
(2) a. Cavineña intransitive clause

\[ \text{[Tuke tupuju]} = \text{tu iba tsajaja-chine}. \]
3SG behind =3SG.ABS jaguar.ABS run-REC.PAST
‘The jaguar ran behind him (i.e., the jaguar chased him).’ (Camp and Liccardi 1972:33)

b. Cavineña transitive clause

\[ \text{Iba=} \text{ra iye-chine takure.} \]
jaguar=ERG =3SG.ABS kill-REC.PAST chicken.ABS
‘The jaguar killed the chicken.’

(3) a. Bawaja Ese Ejja intransitive clause

\[ \text{Hikioho ta [Sha \ éja] ani.} \]
here CONTR Sha spirit.ABS sit
‘Here is Sha’s spirit.’ (Chavarría 1984: 62)

b. Bawaja Ese Ejja transitive clause

\[ \text{Shawe=} \text{a dokuei tekua-ta-pa.} \]
tapir=ERG deer.ABS kill-3A-PAST
‘The tapir killed the deer.’ (Chavarría 2003: 2)

(4) a. Tacana intransitive clause

\[ \ldots [\text{tu-sa ete su}] \text{ beju puetiba jida deja.} \]
3SG-GEN house LOc PTCL return that man.ABS
‘… the man returned to his house.’ (Ottaviano 1980: 12)

b. Tacana transitive clause

\[ \text{Da ina-ta-itia [iba ja] bechu.} \]
PTCL grab-3A-PAST jaguar ERG howler.monkey.ABS
‘The jaguar grabbed a howler monkey.’ (Ottaviano 1980: 18)

Flexible constituent order
NPs optional
No person marking the verb, except 3\textsuperscript{rd} person suffix -\textit{ta} in Araona, Ese Ejja and Tacana

2\textsuperscript{nd} position bound pronouns (Cavineña)
- cross-referencing of core arguments: S in (2a), O in (2b)
- functionally very close to a system of person marking in the verb
- ergative patterning (full details in Guillame 2006, 2008: ch. 15, forthcoming-b)

\[ \text{1 When no indication of the source of an example is provided, the example comes from my own corpus.} \]
• Reyesano: no case-marking:

(5) a. Reyesano intransitive clause

\[ A\text{-}wudzudzu\text{-}a\ te\ awadza. \]
\[ \text{PAST\text{-}run\text{-}PAST BM tapir} \]
\[ \text{‘The tapir ran away (when I shot at it)’}. \]

b. Reyesano transitive clause

\[ A\text{-}kachi\text{-}ta\text{(-a)}\ te\ iba\ te\ awadza. \]
\[ \text{PAST\text{-}bite\text{-}3A\text{-}PAST BM jaguar BM tapir} \]
\[ \text{‘The tapir bit the jaguar’}. \]
\[ \text{(or, with a different context: the jaguar bit the tapir)} \]

Person marking in the verb
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} person suffix -\textit{ta}, as in (5b) – prefixes for SAPs → same forms and distribution for S, A and O\textsuperscript{2}

(6) Reyesano intransitive clause

\[ m\text{-}a\text{-}puti\text{-}a \]
\[ \text{1SG\text{-}PAST\text{-}go\text{-}PAST} \]
\[ \text{‘I went’} \]

(7) Reyesano transitive clauses involving a SAP and a 3\textsuperscript{rd} person

a. SAP→3 combinations

\[ m\text{-}a\text{-}ba\text{(-a)} \]
\[ \text{1SG\text{-}PAST\text{-}see\text{-}PAST} \]
\[ \text{‘I saw him/her/it/them’} \]

b. 3→ SAP

\[ m\text{-}a\text{-}ba\text{-}ta\text{(-a)} \]
\[ \text{1SG\text{-}PAST\text{-}see\text{-}3A\text{-}PAST} \]
\[ \text{‘he/she/it/they saw me’} \]

Table 1: Summary of argument-coding systems of Tacanan languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>marking system</th>
<th>alignment</th>
<th>ergative marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Araona</td>
<td>case-marking</td>
<td>ergative</td>
<td>(h)a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavineña</td>
<td>case-marking + second position bound pronouns</td>
<td>ergative</td>
<td>ra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ese Ejja</td>
<td>case-marking</td>
<td>ergative</td>
<td>(y)a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reyesano</td>
<td>person marking in the verb</td>
<td>hierarchical</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacana</td>
<td>case-marking</td>
<td>ergative</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 The problem

Verbal suffix -\textit{ta}:
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} person plural S argument within an intransitive clause
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} person (singular or plural) A argument within a transitive clause

\[ \text{2 See full details in Guillaume (Forthcoming-a).} \]
1.3.1 Reyesano

(Data from Guillaume fieldnotes, forthcoming-a)

(8) Intransitive clauses

a. 3SG
a-puti-a
PAST-go-PAST
‘he went’

b. 3PL
a-puti-ta(-a)
PAST-go-3S.PL-PAST
‘they went’

(9) Transitive clauses

a. 3→3
a-ba-ta(-a)
PAST-see-3A-PAST
‘he/they saw him/them’

b. 3→1
m-a-ba-ta(-a)
1SG-PAST-see-3A-PAST
‘he/they saw me’

Note:
- intransitive -ta is nearly obligatory
- transitive -ta obligatory

1.3.2 Tacana

(10) Intransitive clauses

a. 3SG
e-neti-ani
IMPFV-stand-IMPFV
‘he is standing’

b. 3PL
e-neti-ta-ani
IMPFV-stand-3S.PL-IMPFV
‘they are standing’

(11) Transitive clauses

a. 3→3
e-manuame-ta-ani
IMPFV-kill-3A-IMPFV
‘He is killing him.’ (Ottaviano & Ottaviano 1965: 362)

b. 3→1
[Jame cuana ja] da ema jid’iu-ta-itia
frog PL ERG ? 1SG.ABS peal-3A-PAST
‘The frogs skinned me.’ (Ottaviano 1980: 14-15)

Note:
- intransitive -ta nearly obligatory
- transitive -ta obligatory
1.3.3 Ese Ejja (Bawaja dialect)\(^3\)

(12) Intransitive clauses

a. 3SG
   Hikioho ta [Sha éja] ani.
   here CONTR Sha spirit sit
   ‘Here is Sha’s spirit.’
   (Chavarría 1984: 62)

b. 3PL
   [Ebákua deja] ani-ta kiawéshaschii.
   child male sit-3S.PL there.far.away
   ‘The children are there far away.’
   (Chavarría 1984: 58)

(13) Transitive clauses (Chavarría 2003)

a. 3→3
   Shawe-a dokuei tekua-ta-pa
   tapir-ERG deer.ABS kill-3A-PAST
   ‘The tapir killed the deer.’
   (Chavarría 2003: 2)

b. 3→1
   Eseéja-a mo tekuá-ta-ni
   person-ERG 1SG.ABS sting-3A-PROG
   ‘Someone is stinging me.’
   (Chavarría 1984: 26)

Note:
- intransitive -ta **optional and very rare** (mostly found on posture/motion verbs)
- transitive -tal/-ka **obligatory**

1.3.4 Araona

(14) Intransitive clauses

a. 3SG
   ketsio reunion po-ani
   when meeting be-PROG
   ‘When will the meeting be?’
   (Emkow 2006: 288)

b. 3PL
   teje-o pó-ta-ja
   plantation-LOC be-3S.PL-PROG
   ‘They are in the plantation.’
   (D. Pitman 1980: 44)

(15) Transitive clauses

a. 3→3
   Wada teje kwé-ta-ja
   3SG.ERG garden.ABS cut-3A-PROG
   ‘He is clearing the garden.’ (D. Pitman 1980: 33)

b. 3→1
   Wada ema dobea-ta-iki jidyo.
   3SG.ERG 1SG.ABS bring-3A-PAST here
   ‘He brought me here.’ (D. Pitman 1980: 83)

Note:
- intransitive -ta **optional and very rare** (only found on posture verbs and ‘be’)
- transitive -ta **apparently not obligatory** (Emkow 2006: 560)

\(^3\) We have the same pattern in the Sonene dialect of Ese Eja, except that we have -\(ka\) instead of -ta (Shoemaker and Shoemaker 1965, Vuillermet 2007, pc.), according to the regular phonological change \(*t \rightarrow k\) in this language.
1.3.5 Cavineña (passive)

Data from Guillaume (2004, 2008, Fieldnotes)

(16) Intransitive verb (only found with *maju*- ‘die’): unspecificity of 3rd person S (?)

\[ \text{Ejeke=kwana =tu maju-ta-ya.} \]
\[ \text{INT=UNCERT =3SG.ABS die-TA-IMPFV} \]
\[ \text{‘Someone (unidentified) is going to die.’} \]

(17) Transitive verbs: agentless passive

a. \[ \text{A-ta-wa =taa =yatse!} \]
\[ \text{affect-PASS-PERF =EMPH =1DL.ABS} \]
\[ \text{‘We (me and my brother) got killed (lit. affected)!’} \]

b. \[ \text{Kuchiru =tu tsume-ta-ya tsaje=ishu.} \]
\[ \text{machete.ABS =3SG.ABS use-PASS-IMPFV cut.vegetation=BUT} \]
\[ \text{‘The machete is used to cut the vegetation.’} \]

Evidence for detransitivization:
- the Agent cannot be expressed
- the verb takes intransitive suffix allomorphs: -tere ‘COMP (itr.)’ vs. -tirya ‘COMP (tr.)’

(18) Dutya ekana iye-ta-tere-wa. *iye-ta-tirya-wa
all 3PL kill-PASS-COMP.ITR-PERF
\[ \text{‘There were all killed.’} \]

Note: variant -tana

(17b') Kuchiru =tu tsume-tana-ya tsaje=ishu.
\[ \text{machete.ABS =3SG.ABS use-PASS-IMPFV cut.vegetation=BUT} \]
\[ \text{‘The machete is used to cut the vegetation.’} \]

(18') Dutya ekana iye-ta-tana-tere-wa.
all 3PL kill-PASS-COMP.ITR-PERF
\[ \text{‘There were all killed.’} \]

(Whether -ta and -tana are semantically identical or not is still unresolved.)
### 1.3.6 Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>intransitive -\textit{ta}</th>
<th>transitive -\textit{ta}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reyesano</td>
<td>3S plural, \textbf{obligatory}</td>
<td>3A (singular or plural), \textbf{obligatory}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacana</td>
<td>3S plural, \textbf{obligatory}</td>
<td>3A (singular or plural), \textbf{obligatory}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ese Ejja(^4)</td>
<td>3S plural, \textbf{rare}</td>
<td>3A (singular or plural), \textbf{obligatory}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Araona</td>
<td>3S plural, \textbf{rare}</td>
<td>3A (singular or plural), \textbf{not obligatory (?)}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavineña</td>
<td>3S unspecified, \textbf{1 verb}</td>
<td>agentless passive -\textit{ta} (~ -\textit{tana})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2 Diachronic development of -\textit{ta} suffixes

- **hypothesis**: cognacy $\rightarrow$ single source *-ta* in proto-Tacana

- **meaning of source morpheme?**
  - 3\textsuperscript{rd} person plural?
  - 3\textsuperscript{rd} person unspecified?
  - 3\textsuperscript{rd} person number-neutral?
  - passive marker?
  - something else?

- **grammaticalization theory predictions:**
  - **plural** rather than **number-neutral** (because of passive output)

- **hypothesis:**
  - suffix *-ta* marking 3\textsuperscript{rd} person plural S and A arguments

### 2.1.1 Development of *-ta with intransitive verb roots

- remained 3\textsuperscript{rd} person plural S marker (Reyesano, Tacana, Ese Ejja and Araona)
- loss of plural meaning $\rightarrow$ unspecified 3\textsuperscript{rd} person S (Cavineña)

Obligatory (Rey. and Tac.) vs. optional (Ara. and Ese.)
- influence of Spanish?

Restricted to the verb \textit{maju} ‘die’ (Cav.):
- meaning (unspecified) congruent with evolution of *-ta* into a passive marker in Cavineña

\(^4\) -\textit{ka} in the Sonene dialect of Ese Ejja.
2.1.2 Development of *-ta with transitive verb roots

- detransitivizing passive marker (Cavineña)
- 3rd person number-neutral A (Reyesano, Tacana, Ese Ejja and Araona)

- Passive:
  - question of variants -tana (originally related or not?)

- 3rd person number-neutral A → unusual development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(definite) 3rd person plural</th>
<th>(definite) 3rd person number-neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- loss of plural marking specifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- maintaining of definiteness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- only in transitive clauses</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis: extension for the purpose of A vs. O disambiguation:
- all languages with optional NPs
- no indication of grammatical function of core participants when NPs are absent

Why in Reyesano? Because SAP verbal marking are insensitive to grammatical functions

Why not in Cavineña? Because presence of a system of 2nd position bound pronouns

3 Conclusion

- proposed new cognate set and proto-Tacanan morpheme *-ta ‘3PL.S/A’ (not in Girard 1971)
- new example of grammaticalization from 3rd person plural → passive
- identification of a possible unusual development: (definite) 3rd person plural → (definite) 3rd person number-neutral
- proposed explanation because of need of A vs. O disambiguation
4 References


Emkow, Carola. 2006. A Grammar of Araona, an Amazonian language of Northwestern Bolivia. Ph.D. dissertation. La Trobe University. Research Centre for Linguistic Typology. La Trobe University (Melbourne, Australia)


