



# EXPLAINING ALLOMORPHY IN SÀ'ÁN SÀVĨÑÀ YUKÚNANĪ

Sound change and grammaticalization of  
person pronouns

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**¡Tá tsà'vĩ-kue-ní!**

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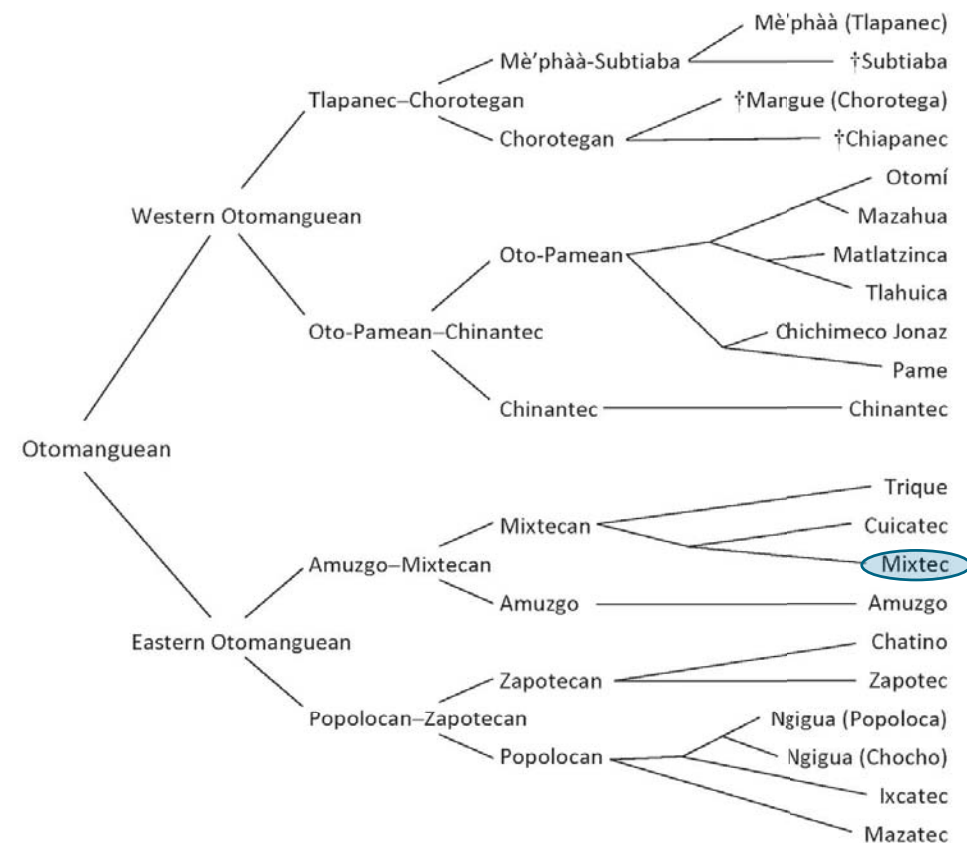
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CONCLUSION

# IN THIS PRESENTATION

# Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani

- Yucunani, San Juan Mixtepec (Oaxaca, Mexico)
- 105 inhabitants
- Approx. 87 speakers (INEGI 2010)



Campbell 2017: 24

		SUBJECT PRONOUNS		OBJECT PRONOUNS		TOPICALIZED PRONOUNS	
		SG*	PL	SG*	PL	SG*	PL
1 <sup>st</sup>	EXC	=yù / =l	=kuê	=yù	=kuê	meé	meé-kuê
	INCL	—	=ó / =kó / =H	—	=kue-kó	—	meé-kó
2 <sup>nd</sup>	NFORM	=ú / =H / =kú	=kue-yú	=yô	=kue-yú	meú	meé-kue-yú
	FORM	=ní	=kue-ní	=ní	=kue-ní	meé-ní	meé-kue-ní
3 <sup>rd</sup>	GNR	=ì / =à	=kue-ì	=ñà / =à	=kue-ì	mií	meé-kue-ì
	INAN	=ì / =à	=kue-ñà	=ñà / =à	=kue-ñà	meé-ñà	meé-kue-ñà
	PL_HUM	—	=nà	—	=kue-nà	—	meé-kue-nà
	CHILD	=tsi	=kue-tsi	=tsi	=kue-tsi	meé-tsi	meé-kue-tsi
	M	=rà	=kue-rà	=rà	=kue-rà	meé-rà	meé-kue-rà
	F	=í / =á	=kue-ñá	=ñá / =á	=kue-ñá	meé-ñá	meé-kue-ñá
	ZOO	=tí ~ =rí	=kue-tí	=tí ~ =rí	=kue-tí	meé-tí	meé-kue-tí
	ROUND	=tí	=kue-tí	=tí	=kue-tí	meé-tí	meé-kue-tí
	TRUNK	=tú	=kue-tú	=tú	=kue-tú	meé-tú	meé-kue-tú
	LIQ	=rá	=kue-rá	=rá	=kue-rá	meé-rá	meé-kue-rá
	DEITY	=yà	=kue-yà	=yà	=kue-yà	meé-yà	meé-kue-yà
	METAL	—	—	—	—	—	—

\* With the exception of =nà, which is always plural, all third person pronouns can refer to both singular and plural referents. The pluralizer =kue= is optional, and only appears if number is not easily recovered by context.

- These are the pronouns we've documented so far with verbal elements
- We've got somewhat distinctive subject and object pronouns, as well as topicalized pronouns.
- Plurality in the third person, optional pluralizer =kue.
- In this presentation, we'll focus on the allomorphy in the subject pronouns

		SUBJECT PRONOUNS									
		SG*		PL				SG*		PL	
1 <sup>st</sup>	EXC	=yù / = <sup>L</sup>	=kuê	3 <sup>rd</sup>	M	=rà	=kue=rà	F	=í / =á	=kue=ñá	
	INCL	—	=ó / =kó / = <sup>H</sup>		ZOO	=tí ~ =rí	=kue-tí				
2 <sup>nd</sup>	NFORM	=ú / = <sup>H</sup> / =kú	=kue-yú	ROUND	=tí	=kue-tí					
	FORM	=ní	=kue-ní	TRUNK	=tú	=kue-tú					
3 <sup>rd</sup>	GNR	=ì / =à	=kue-ì	LIQ	=rá	=kue-rá					
	INAN	=ì / =à	=kue-ñà	DEITY	=yà	=kue-yà					
	FORM	—	=nà								
	CHILD	=tsi	=kue-tsi								

		SUBJECT PRONOUNS									
		SG*		PL				SG*		PL	
1 <sup>st</sup>	EXC	=yù / =L	=kuê	3 <sup>rd</sup>	M	=rà	=kue=rà	F	=í / =á	=kue=ñá	
	INCL	—	=ó / =kó / =H		ZOO	=tí ~ =rí	=kue-tí				
2 <sup>nd</sup>	NFORM	=ú / =H / =kú	=kue-yú	ROUND	=tí	=kue-tí					
	FORM	=ní	=kue-ní	TRUNK	=tú	=kue-tú					
3 <sup>rd</sup>	GNR	=ì / =à	=kue-ì	LIQ	=rá	=kue-rá					
	INAN	=ì / =à	=kue-ñà	DEITY	=yà	=kue-yà					
	FORM	—	=nà								
	CHILD	=tsi	=kue-tsi								

		SUBJECT PRONOUNS									
		SG*		PL				SG*		PL	
1 <sup>st</sup>	EXC	=yù / =L	=kuê	3 <sup>rd</sup>	M	=rà	=kue=rà	F	=í / =á	=kue=ñá	
	INCL	—	=ó / =kó / =H		ZOO	=tí ~ =rí	=kue-tí		ROUND	=tí	=kue-tí
2 <sup>nd</sup>	NFORM	=ú / =H / =kú	=kue-yú	TRUNK	=tú	=kue-tú	LIQ	=rá	=kue-rá		
	FORM	=ní	=kue-ní	DEITY	=yà	=kue-yà					
3 <sup>rd</sup>	GNR	=ì / =à	=kue-ì								
	INAN	=ì / =à	=kue-ñà								
	FORM	—	=nà								
	CHILD	=tsi	=kue-tsi								



# SOUND CHANGES & GRAMMATICALIZATION

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# First-person singular

(1) *Tá ntsìtsà'àn-yù ntsìsáchuùn.* [MYUC-1028, JS, 01:14]

tá	ntsìtsà'àn=yù	ntsìsáchuun=L.
when	HAB.PFV.go= <b>1SG</b>	HAB.PFV.work= <b>1SG</b>

‘When I used to go to work.’

# First-person singular

- When the tone of the preceding element in the verbal template is either Low or Falling: =yù
- In all other contexts, the first person is marked by =<sup>L</sup>, which overwrites or modifies the final tone of the preceding element
- Josserand (1983) and Dürr (1987) reconstruct this pronoun as \*yù<sup>2</sup>ù in Proto-Mixtec
- Paster (2010) mentions that San Juan Mixtepec Mixtec shows the same alternation between =yù and =<sup>L</sup>, but it is based on formality instead of the phonological environment
- A similar alternation has been attested for Yoloxóchitl Mixtec between =ju<sup>1</sup> and =<sup>2</sup> (Castillo García 2007: 139)

\*yù'ù > =yù > =L

(2) Ñà ntàà meê ra mikĩ tù'vâ tâân ñà katsí-tí. [MYUC-1042, GML, 02:39]

ñà	ntàà	meé=L	ra	mikĩ	tù'va=L
CL.GNR	true	TOP=1SG	TOP	never	IPFV.tend_to=1SG
tâân=L		ñà	katsí=tí.		
IPFV.throw=1SG		REL.GNR	PURP.eat=3ZOO		

‘The truth is that I normally don’t give them food’

\*yùʔù > =yù > =L

(3) *Ntǎ'àn inì-yù kúu ku'mí ñùñǔ.* [MYUC-1042, GML, 01:54]

ntǎ'àn-inì=yù

PFV.like-core=1SG

kúu

POT.COP

ku'mí=L

POT.have=1SG

ñùñǔ

bee

‘I liked being able to have bees.’

# Second-person singular non-formal

(4) *Kuě tsíní ñú'ú sáchuún ra tsítsá'ǔn* [MYUC-1011, JS, 01:18]

kuě	tsíníñú'u= <sup>H</sup>	sáchuun= <sup>H</sup>	ra
NEG	IPFV.have.to= <b>2SG.NFORM</b>	IPFV.work= <b>2SG.NFORM</b>	TOP

tsítsá'an=<sup>ú</sup>.

IPFV.eat=**2SG.NFORM**

‘You don’t have to work to eat.’

# Second-person singular non-formal

- There seems to be some apparent allomorphy between =ú and =<sup>H</sup>
- However, we can see how the form =ú overwrites the preceding vowel:

(5) ...*ne'ǔ ñà katsǔ káchà* [MYUC-1006, JS, 01:09]

*ne'ě=ú*

PURP.get=2SG.NFORM

*ñà*

REL.GNR

*katsí=ú*

PURP.eat=2SG.NFORM

*káchì=à.*

IPFV.say=3GNR

‘...in order to get something to eat, he said’

# Second-person singular non-formal

➤ In fact, the =<sup>H</sup> only appears where the preceding vowel is either [u] or [ũ]. And so, what appeared to be allomorphy, is probably not:

(4) *Kuě tsíní ñú'ú sáchúún ra tsítsá'ǔn* [MYUC-1011, JS, 01:18]

kuě	tsíníñú'u=ú	sáchuun=ú	ra
NEG	IPFV.have.to= <b>2SG.NFORM</b>	IPFV.work= <b>2SG.NFORM</b>	TOP

tsítsá'an=ú.  
IPFV.eat=**2SG.NFORM**

‘You don’t have to work to eat.’



# First-person plural inclusive

(7) *Nchì kúu tá kutù'va-kó ra tsítú nǐnǒ nchì vàtsǒ?* [MYUC-1034, JS, 00:01]

nchì	kúu	tá	kutù'va=kó	ra
what	COP	when	IPFV.learn= <b>1PL.INCL</b>	TOP

tsítú-nǐnì=ó	nchì	vàtsi=ó?
IPFV.fill-core= <b>1PL.INCL</b>	where	PROG.IPFV.come= <b>1PL.INCL</b>

‘What happens when we learn and understand where we come from?’

# First-person plural inclusive

- When the preceding element ends in a high vowel, =*ó* is used and overwrites the high vowel.
  - *tsítú nǐnì* ‘understand’ → *tsítú nǐnǒ* ‘we understand’
  - *kù'ùn* ‘go’ → *kò'ǒn* ‘we go’
  - *vàtsi* ‘come’ → *vàtsǒ* ‘we come’
- In all other contexts, the first person plural inclusive can be marked by either =*kó* or just =*H*, which overwrites or modifies the final tone of the preceding element.

**=kó ~ =H**

(8) *Ná ntasama-kó ñàà sa'mă-kó ra* [MYUC-1045, JS, 01:44]

ná	ntasama= <b>kó</b>	ñàà	sa'mă= <b>kó</b>	ra
HORT	POT.exchange= <b>1PL.INCL</b>	DISC	body= <b>1PL.INCL</b>	TOP

‘Let’s exchange our bodies’

(9) *Ná ntasamá sa'mă-kó* [MYUC-1006, JS, 02:29]

ná	ntasama= <b>H</b>	sa'mă= <b>kó</b>
HORT	POT.exchange= <b>1PL.INCL</b>	body= <b>1PL.INCL</b>

‘Let’s exchange our bodies’

## \***kue-ó** > =**kó**

- We hypothesize that the [k] in =*kó* may have its origins in the pluralizer =*kue*.
- This pluralizer =*kue* may be used with all persons in Sà'án Sàvǐ ñà Yukúnani, although it is not obligatory.
- In this case, we hypothesize that the pluralizer started being used in conjunction with the pronoun =*ó*, and later merged into becoming =*kó*.

=kó ~ =H

(10) *Sà'án-kó ra xná'ǎ nùŭ-tsi nixi viŭ ká'àn-tsi tsi xitò-tsi tsi xixì-tsi* [MYUC-1047, CB, 03:16]

sà'án=kó	ra	xná'à= <sup>H</sup>	nùŭ=tsi	nixi	
language=1PL.INCL	TOP	POT.teach=1PL.INCL	OBL=3CHILD	how	
viŭ	ká'àn=tsi	tsi	xitò=tsi	tsi	xixì=tsi
beautiful	IPFV.speak=3CHILD	COM	uncle=3CHILD	and	aunt=3CHILD

‘In our language, we can teach them (kids) to speak properly with their uncles and aunts.’

# Third-person generic & feminine

(11) *Cha vása kuě níka'àn-kue-ì níkăchă* [MYUC-1009, JS, 03:19]

cha	vása	kuě	níka'àn=kue=ì	níkăchì=á
QT	EMPH.NEG	NEG	NEG.PFV.speak=PLZ= <b>3GNR</b>	PFV.say= <b>3F</b>

‘No, they didn’t say anything, she said’

# Third-person generic & feminine

- They're segmentally the same but with different tones.
- For both pronouns, the forms =à/=á are used when
  - the preceding element ends in [i]
    - *Ntsìni* 'see' → *ntsìni-à* 'he/she/it sees'
  - the preceding element ends in [ĩ], in which case the pronoun overwrites the last mora.
    - *Kí'in* 'poke/catch' → *kí'àn* 'he/she/it pokes/catches'
    - *Tíin* 'grab' → *tíán* 'she grabs'

# Third-person generic & feminine

- The forms =*i*/=*í* are used in all other contexts, and overwrite the last\* vowel of the preceding element
  - *ntàtsàà* ‘arrive’ → *ntàtsàǐ* ‘she arrives’
  - *sáchuun* ‘work’ → *sáchuìn* ‘he/she/it works’
  - BUT *ne'ě* ‘get’ → *ni'í* ‘he/she/it gets’



## Third-person pronouns

- Third person pronouns in Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani are related to a set of particles often called classifiers.
- The third person feminine pronoun, for example, is related to *ñá* which comes from *ña'á* 'woman', ultimately from Proto-Mixtec *\*yaʔãʔ* (Josserand 1983).

Bound Pron.	Gloss	Clas.	Noun
=ì / =à	generic	ñà	ñà'a 'thing'
=rà	male human	chà	chàa 'man'
=í / =á	female human	ñá	ña'a 'woman'
=tí ~ =rí	animal	tí	kitĩ 'animal'
=tú	trunk	tú	yutũ 'tree'
=rá	liquid	nchá	ntùchă 'ocean'
--	--	kà	kàa 'metal'
=nà	plural human	nà	--
=tsi	human child	su	--
=tí	round	tí	--
=yà	deity	yà	--

## Third-person pronouns

- The third person generic pronoun is related to *ñà*, which comes from *ñà'a* ‘thing’.
- Neither Josserrand (1983) nor Dürr (1987) reconstruct a Proto-Mixtec word for ‘thing’, but we can infer that it has the same segmental shape as the word for woman.

Bound Pron.	Gloss	Clas.	Noun
=ì / =à	generic	ñà	ñà'a ‘thing’
=rà	male human	chà	chàa ‘man’
=í / =á	female human	ñá	ñá'a ‘woman’
=tí ~ =rí	animal	tí	kitĩ ‘animal’
=tú	trunk	tú	yutũ ‘tree’
=rá	liquid	nchá	ntùchă ‘ocean’
--	--	kà	kàa ‘metal’
=nà	plural human	nà	--
=tsi	human child	su	--
=tí	round	tí	--
=yà	deity	yà	--

**\*j > ɲ / \_\_ [+nas]**

pMx (Josserand 1983)	Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani	Gloss
*yeni	ñani	'brother (of a man)'
*yuũ	ñuù	'village'
*yaʔãʔ	ña'á	'woman'
*koyõ	kũñù	'meat'

**\*j > ɲ / \_\_ [+nas]**

pMx (Josserand 1983)	Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani	Gloss
*yeni	ñani	'brother (of a man)'
*yuũ	ñuù	'village'
*ya'ã?	ña'á	'woman'
*koyõ	kũñù	'meat'

\*j > Ø / V[+front]\_\_

\*i > i

\*j > Ø / \_\_ i

pMx (Josserand 1983)	Sà'án Sàvǐ ñà Yukúnani	Gloss
*teye	chàa	'man'
*we <sup>?</sup> yi	ve'e	'house'
*niyi <sup>?</sup>	ni	'blood'
*yii <sup>?</sup>	i	'husband'
*yĩ <sup>?</sup>	iin	'salt'

## Third-person pronouns

- These words, however, must have undergone a process of grammaticalization before the change from *\*j* to */n/* took place:
  - Following regular sound changes in the language, *\*j* was dropped after front vowels
  - Elsewhere, the pronoun eroded until only *\*j*, now */i/*, remained

Bound Pron.	Gloss	Clas.	Noun
=ì / =à	generic	ñà	ñà'a 'thing'
=rà	male human	chà	chàa 'man'
=í / =á	female human	ñá	ñá'a 'woman'
=tí ~ =rí	animal	tí	kitĩ 'animal'
=tú	trunk	tú	yutũ 'tree'
=rá	liquid	nchá	ntùchă 'ocean'
--	--	kà	kàa 'metal'
=nà	plural human	nà	--
=tsi	human child	su	--
=tí	round	tí	--
=yà	deity	yà	--

**\*yaʔãʔ > \*ya > =a ~ =i**

(12) *Iká kúu nùǔ ntsìni-à nùǔ tàchǐ.* [MYUC-1007, JS, 04:42]

iká	kúu	nùǔ	ntsìni= <b>à</b>	nùǔ	tàchǐ.
DIST	COP	where	PFV.see= <b>3GNR</b>	OBL	devil

‘There is where he saw the devil.’

**\*yaʔãʔ > \*ya > =a ~ =i**

(13) *Nini'î ñà ntsàtsí-à.* [MYUC-1011, JS, 02:55]

nìnè'ě=i

ñà

ntsàtsí=à

PFV.get=**3GNR**

REL.GNR

PFV.eat=**3GNR**

‘He got something to eat.’





# DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

# Conclusions

- Considerable allomorphy among the dependent pronouns, particularly subject pronouns, as we have discussed here
- Allomorphs that look quite different reflect different stages of segmental erosion
- This is especially true for first and second persons
- The high topicality of speech act participants, together with frequency in discourse, may be the reason why these pronouns underwent the most segmental erosion
- This shows a pathway for the emergence of grammatical tone, or tonal alternation as a device for person marking

# Discussion

- Other Otomanguean languages also feature tonal inflection to mark person:
  - Zenzontepec Chatino (Campbell 2016)
  - San Miguel Huautepec Mazatec (Léonard & Fulcrand 2016)
  - Soyaltepec Mazatec (Léonard & Fulcrand 2016)
  - Itunyoso Triqui (DiCanio 2016)
  - Santa María Pápalo Cuicatec (Feist & Palancar 2016)
  - Yoloxóchitl Mixtec (Castillo García 2007; see also Palancar et al. 2016).
- These languages also feature tonal inflection to mark **first** or **second** person, but they do not rely solely on tone to mark the third person.
- The high discourse frequency of **first** and **second** person subjects may lead to the emergence of inflectional tone as a person marking strategy

Stage 1:	Person is encoded via an independent pronoun which bears its own tone.
Stage 2:	Frequency in discourse leads to the cliticization of these independent pronouns into dependent pronouns.
Stage 3:	The most commonly topical dependent pronouns undergo segmental erosion but maintain their tone.
Stage 4:	In some cases, particularly first and second person, the segmental erosion is complete and only the tone remains. In these cases, tonal inflection emerges.

# Conclusions

- The third person generic and feminine allomorphs look more different on the surface, perhaps suppletive.
- However, with a good understanding of the historical phonology of the language (and with access to reliable reconstructions, such as those by Josserand 1983 and Dürr 1987) we can actually see that this allomorphy is due to regular sound change with some later processes of erosion
- It is not a coincidence that the generic pronoun, which can be used for any 3<sup>rd</sup> person referent in Sà'án Sàvǐ ñà Yukúnani, eroded more than other third person pronouns. Frequency must have played a role.
- The feminine pronoun underwent the same sound changes and likely underwent the same processes of erosion on analogy with the generic pronoun.

# ¡TÁ TSÀ'VĬ-KUE-NÍ ÑÀÀ CHÁA SÒ'O-NÍ!

You can find many of the primary texts used in this presentation, as well as many other resources to learn and practice Yucunani Sà'an Sàvĭ here: <https://sites.google.com/view/saansavi-yucunani>



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