The interaction of negation and constituent order in Iquito (Zaparoan) [Oral Presentation]

Negation in Iquito, an endangered Zaparoan language of the Peruvian Amazon, provides an interesting case study for the application of Dryer's (2011) typology of negative morphemes and their positioning with respect to the subject, object, and verb of a clause.

Iquito uses word order to mark the reality status of a clause. Irrealis clauses are characterized by an 'SXV' order, where the subject and verb are separated from each other by an intervening element, whereas realis clauses exhibit 'SVX' order, where the subject and verb must be contiguous. (The intervening element can be an object, determiner, adverb, postpositional phrase, or negation particle, which is why it is labeled 'X' rather than 'O'.) Word order is the sole indicator of a clause's reality status; there is no additional morphological marking associated with this grammatical category.

This word order alternation interacts with negation in an interesting way. In independent or main declarative clauses and finite complement clauses, negation is straight-forwardly marked by a negative particle (*caa*) immediately preceding the subject (which in turn precedes the verb). This strategy is by far the most common strategy for marking negation in Dryer's (2011) survey, occurring in over one-third of the 1326 languages sampled. In Iquito, it occurs in both realis and irrealis constructions. Clausal negation in interrogatives and subordinate clauses, however, is marked by an obligatory negative suffix (*-ji*). Suffixation is the second most common strategy outlined by Dryer (2011a), occurring in over 200 languages, but only 12 languages employ both of these types.

When we look more closely at the suffixal negation strategy, we see that it can optionally co-occur with the negative particle caa, and when it does, the positioning of the negative particle is sensitive to whether the clause is realis or irrealis. In realis clauses, caa follows the verb, and in irrealis clauses, caa precedes the verb. As a result, we see another word order alternation within Iquito irrealis subordinate clauses: the affirmative order for these clauses is SXV and the negative order is SNegVX. Dryer (2011b) lists Hungarian as the sole instance of a language of this sort; I submit that Iquito should also be included in this list. We also see optional triple negation in these clause types (a strategy evident in only 6 languages), as it is possible for the negative particle to occur both before and after the suffixed verb in irrealis subordinate and interrogative clauses. Although Dryer excludes from his classification instances of double and triple negation that only occur in subordinate clauses, I argue that it is necessary to include this type of clausal negation in a thorough treatment of the Iquito negation system.

By examining the ways in which Iquito clausal negation interacts with realis and irrealis word orders, we are able to see how two fairly common negation strategies co-exist with several rare negation strategies and expand our understanding of the complexity of negation strategies evident within a single language.

References

Dryer, Matthew S. 2011a. Order of negative morpheme and verb. In: Dryer, Matthew S. and Haspelmath, Martin (eds.) The World Atlas of Language Structures Online. Munich: Max Planck Digital Library, chapter 143. Available online at http://wals.info/chapter/143.

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