

Contact and No Change: The Preservation of Specific Verbal Sequences in Some Tupi-Guarani Languages

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The Tupi-Guarani (TG) languages are a real laboratory of different situations of language contact and its potential effects on language change. In this paper, three languages with very different socio-historical backgrounds will be presented: a) Guajá, spoken by a monolingual population and whose permanent contact with little intensity only began in 1973 (Magalhães 2007); b) Apyãwa, people with a majority of bilingual speakers in Apyãwa and Portuguese, whose contact began around the 1910s and was practically decimated in the 1940s, only re-establishing their population in the mid-1990s (Paula 2012; Praça 2007); c) Nheengatú, a descendent of Old Tupi, which was used in the Amazonian colonization as *lingua franca*. Nowadays, Nheengatú is the first language of Baré, Baniwa and Werekena peoples, who have replaced their original Arawakan languages by Nheengatú (Rodrigues 1996; Cruz 2011; Moore 2014). In addition to very different contact situations, it should also be mentioned that the three languages are geographically quite distant from each other, since they are spoken in three different regions from Brazil: Guajá, in Northeast Region; Apyãwa, in Central-West Region; and Nheengatú, in Upper Rio Negro, Amazonas, North Region.

Despite geographic differences and intensity of contact, there are some constructions in these languages that remain almost intact (*i.e.*, structurally identical). That is the case, for instance, of the verbal sequence formed by PERSON-V1-V2, in which V1 position is filled by any lexical verb and V2 position by a small group of verbs (in general, only four specific verbs), each one presented for Guajá, Apyãwa and Nheengatú respectively:

- a) 'to complete/finish': *pa, pãw, pa*;
- b) 'to want/desire': *ta, patãr, putai*;
- c) 'to know/know how': *kwa, kwããw, kua*;
- d) 'to be good': *katy, kãto, katu*.

All three languages present verbal sequences with these four verbs in V2 position, as can be seen in the examples below, which bring forward the language with less contact, Guajá, and the one that suffered more contact, Nheengatú¹:

Guajá		Nheengatú	
<i>ha=n-imi- 'ú-a</i>	<i>a- 'u-pa</i>	<i>ta-suu-suu-pa</i>	<i>ae</i>
1SG.A=LK-NMLZ-eat-RF	1SG.A-eat-finish	3PL.A-RED~bite-finish	it
'I've finished eating my food.'		'They have finished biting it'	

In addition to their use in the verbal sequences, these four verbs are also employed as independent verbs (except for *ta* 'want' in Guajá, that has become a projective aspect particle).

Guajá			Nheengatú	
<i>Ø-pa</i>	<i>i-mymy</i>	<i>n-imi 'ũ-a</i>	<i>u-pa=wã</i>	<i>kariamã</i>
3SG.A-finish	3SG.NA-child	LK-food-RF	3SG.A-finish=PFV	ritual
'The child's food has finished.'			'The kariamã ritual has finished.'	

The hypothesis that arises is that verbal sequences can be examples of preservation of the conservative structure even with contact due to the absence of an equivalent structure in the innovative languages, as postulated by Enrique-Arias (2010).

¹ A = active set of pronouns; LK = linker; NMLZ = nominalizer; PL = plural; PFV = perfective; RF = referrer; RED = reduplication; SG = singular.

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