A first analysis of Tense-Aspect constructions in Yawarana (Cariban)

Natalia Cáceres Arandia[a,b], Spike Gildea[b]
[a]SeDyL – CNRS, [b]University of Oregon

Abstract

This paper provides a first analysis of the tense-aspect system of Yawarana (yar), a Cariban language spoken in Amazonas State in Venezuela. The data analyzed stems from a documentation collection consisting of recordings of 13 of about 30 known conversational speakers of Yawarana. The inflectional morphology of Yawarana is relatively simple in comparison to nearby Cariban languages, with many fewer person prefixes, fewer inflectional suffixes, and no splits in alignment; in compensation, syntactic collocations with auxiliaries, clitics, and particles play a larger role in creating tense-aspect distinctions. Main clause verbs in Yawarana have a single suffix slot for inflectional tense-aspect morphology, the same slot that holds all category-changing derivational morphology. The inventory of inflectional suffixes in this slot includes three past tense suffixes, two that are identical to synchronic nominalizers *(-sapë, -jpë*) and one to an adverbializer (*-se*). This paper illustrates problems encountered in determining whether each of these forms primarily encodes tense or aspect. Crucial to answering this question is an examination of how the meaning of a given tense-aspect suffix combines with the inherent lexical aspect (especially telic vs. states) of different verbs. Examining all examples of these suffixes in our text corpus, we conclude that the suffix *-se* encodes past perfective, *-jpë* encodes past tense with no aspectual value, and *-sapë* is heterogeneous, with a perfect reading on lexical verbs and a simple past tense reading on the copula. Further, the two past tense forms of the copular auxiliary (one with *-jpë*, the other with *-sapë*) are specialized to occur in different constructions, *chi-jpë* with the progressive and *wej-sapë* with all other compound tense-aspects.

1 Introduction

In this paper, we briefly characterize the tense-aspect system of Yawarana (yar), then we examine more closely three verbal suffixes that all indicate that the event happened (or the state held true) prior to the moment of speech, i.e., they all describe past situations. After discussing various methods for identifying tense-aspect values cross-linguistically, we focus in on the discourse distribution of these suffixes, examining their frequency in our corpus marking main clause verbs and auxiliaries. We suggest that one suffix, *-se* 'PAST.PERFECTIVE' has a meaning similar to the Spanish Preterit, another, *-jpë* 'PAST' has a meaning more similar to the English Past, unspecified for aspect, and the third, *-sapë* 'PERFECT' has a resultative perfect meaning that is not particularly parallel to either the Spanish or English Perfects. With auxiliaries only the latter two suffixes are possible, and not surprisingly, the meanings associated with each (but especially with *-sapë*) are not the same as their meanings when affixed to main verbs.

In the remainder of this section, we briefly introduce the Yawarana language and our documentation project. The Yawarana language belongs to the Venezuelan Branch of the Cariban language family (Gildea 2003, 2012; Matter 2021). The Yawarana speech community is found in the south of Venezuela, to the North of the state of Amazonas; as of the last count by OIYAPAM, the local Yawarana organization, 27 speakers remain. In 2011, during the last Venezuelan census, 440 people self-identified as Yawarana, so fewer than 10% of Yawarana speak their ancestral languages. All Yawarana people speak Venezuelan Amazonian Spanish and some members of the community also speak the local Saliban language, Piaroa.

This paper is based on primary data collection under the auspices of the Yawarana Documentation Project, a joint project with Natalia Cáceres Arandia, Marie-Claude Mattei Muller, and Spike Gildea, financed by the US National Science Foundation's DEL program. Our goals are to produce a linguistic documentary corpus (to be archived at AILLA), a grammatical description, a dictionary, and educational materials. As a part of this project, we have recorded in audio and/or video 20 hours of conversations, personal and traditional narratives, and procedural texts by 13 conversationally fluent speakers (over 9 hours have been transcribed and translated directly with speakers of which 4:55 hours are annotated in a FLEx database). We also compiled over 2,800 lexical entries for the dictionary, with accompanying recordings by 1 female and 1 male speaker and recorded thematic elicitation sessions (17 hours for the grammar, 32 hours for the dictionary).

In the remainder of this paper, we introduce our methodological orientation (§2) and give a sketch of the overall tense-aspect-mood system of Yawarana, with a brief excursus on the origins of each of the three suffixes used with past situations (§3). Then we focus more deeply on these three suffixes, first examining their overall discourse density and distribution with different lexical verbs (§4) before diving into a more detailed examination of examples that illustrate the differences between *-se* 'PAST PERFECTIVE' and *-jpë* 'PAST' (§5), as well as some examples illustrating the meanings associated with *-sapë* 'PERFECT' (§6). Having exposited the meanings of the suffixes with lexical main verbs, we turn to their meanings with copular auxiliaries (§7), before wrapping up the paper with some methodological and theoretical conclusions of more general interest.

2 Tense-Aspect, elicitation, and communicative speech

The terms *tense* and *aspect* are polysemous in linguistics, used sometimes to designate categories of inflections in a given language (e.g. "There is no Future Tense in English") and sometimes to designate semantic notions. In this paper, we distinguish these uses by capitalizing the titles of specific inflections in specific languages, but leaving them lower case when they designate semantic notions. We define the semantic notion of TENSE as the deictic division of time with reference to the speech act, such that PAST is prior to the speech act, FUTURE is subsequent to the speech act, and PRESENT is simultaneous to the speech act. In Cariban languages, it is common for different morphemes to designate degrees of distance in the past, e.g. Immediate/Recent Past, Medial Past, and Remote Past. We define aspect as the temporal perspective taken on a reported event. The primary semantic division is between PERFECTIVE, which takes an external perspective, viewing the event as a whole from start to finish, and IMPERFECTIVE, which takes an internal perspective, describing the beginning or medial stages of an incomplete event. Of course, not all verbal predicates designate events, so this definition will require some modification when we consider different types of lexical aspect, or AKTIONSART.

It is quite common in the languages of the world, including in the Cariban family, to find tense and aspect meanings combined into a single portmanteau morpheme. Frequently, past tenses are separated into past perfective (the Romance Preterit) and past imperfective (the Romance Imperfect), and typically present tenses are inherently imperfective, perhaps distinguishing present habitual/gnomic (the English Simple Present) from present progressive (the English Present Progressive), or perhaps combining the two (the French Simple Present). Cariban present/non-past tenses typically pattern more like the latter, offering either habitual/gnomic readings or progressive readings, although in several languages, the progressive reading can be forced through the use of an innovative Progressive construction (Gildea 1998, ch. 12).

In this paper we examine the temporal and aspectual values associated with three morphemes, seeking to identify how they carve up the temporal and aspectual functional space between them.

In most grammars of Cariban languages, the tense-aspect distinctions are described in terms of translation equivalents, such that two forms might appear to be homonymous because they receive the same translation into a contact language. This is problematic because different languages (especially the unrelated languages that are usually used for elicitation in cases of linguistic contact) generally do not encode exactly the same tense-aspect categories, so that at best such translations only establish a single context in which

there is a point of equivalence between forms across the two languages. However, such translations generally do not establish the range of contexts in which equivalents continue to succeed, e.g. the English and French Simple Presents, which seem fairly equivalent in the contexts of present habitual/gnomic readings. Conversely, such translations fail to establish the range of contexts in which the two forms are not felicitous translations for each other, e.g. the French Simple Present sometimes must be translated as the English Present Progressive. Also, the determination of equivalence in this sort of elicitation is dependent on the skill of the interlocutor in finding intuitive semantic equivalences between two languages, a conscious task that is not precisely parallel to the subconscious native use of the target language in communication.

These methodological issues have led some, like Dahl (1985), to produce extensive questionnaires that seek to create contexts which can separate the kinds of meaning distinctions that have been reported in the languages of the world. However, filling out such a questionnaire is both exceptionally time-consuming and clearly a subtype of the conscious translation task rather than an instance of subconscious usage of language for communicative purposes. In our efforts to fill our Dahl's (1985) questionnaire with speakers of Yawarana, speakers made only a very general distinction between past, present, and future, with no clear distinctions between any forms within these categories.

Another method that one might use is to analyze tense-aspect in corpora of recorded communicative speech. This has the immediate benefit of being a more reliable representation of the subconscious production of speech in its natural communicative functions, however, such corpora are also time-intensive to collect, transcribe, translate, and parse. Given that individual linguists often are responsible for several layers of the work flow in corpus production, corpora for under-resourced minoritized languages tend to be small, limited in genre, and to have relatively few speakers. Further, translations of natural speech are sometimes more "free", and so are not always reliable indicators of the specific semantic issues one wishes to investigate, thereby raising new questions. This requires gaps or unclear elements in the corpora to be filled or clarified by elicitation, which is not always possible, especially when populations of speakers live in locations that are difficult to access for reasons of cost, time-consuming or otherwise difficult travel conditions, and/or political constraints. Even with all these caveats, in this work we have found that Aktionsart correlations are relatively straightforward to observe, and so this is the method we rely on most heavily in our findings.

3 Past tenses in the system of tense-aspect in Yawarana

In our preliminary analysis of Yawarana inflectional morphology on verbs, we find a fairly reduced verbal template compared to most Cariban languages. Rather than reflexes of the Proto-Cariban paradigms of person-marking prefixes, we find reduced first or second person pronouns optionally pro-cliticized to verbs in the role of absolutive (S and P); intransitive verbs have no third-person forms, but transitive verbs do optionally take the prefix *ta-* '3A3P'. Beyond the verb, the A NP is optionally flagged with the ergative suffix, with S almost never and P never flagged.

On the other end of the verb stem, we have six suffixes that appear to operate in the domain of tense-aspect, plus one negative and three imperative suffixes, as well as negative and completive particles that each cliticize to two of the tense-aspect suffixes (Table 1).

This conjunction of suffixes and enclitics raises several interesting questions that we do not address here. For example, if there are specific negative forms of three of the TAM suffixes, what is the semantic scope of the stand-alone negative suffix? If the form *-sapë* is already a perfect marker, what additional information could be encoded by the addition of the conclusive particle *=pano*? And why not just consider the third future suffix to be *toj=pano* 'FUTURE=CONCLUSIVE'? And if the three futures and all three pasts are inherently perfective, how do we create imperfective counterparts for any of them? (Hint: the progressive suffix can co-occur with an auxiliary inflected for tense.) We look forward to answering all of these questions (and many more) in a future grammatical description of Yawarana.

Form	Tense	Aspect	Mood	Polarity
-sarë	FUTURE	perfective?		
-tojpe	FUTURE	perfective?		
-tojpano	FUTURE	perfective?(=CONCL?)		
-ri/-rï	NONPAST	IMPERFECTIVE		
-ri=jra	NONPAST	IMPERFECTIVE		NEGATIVE
-se	PAST	PERFECTIVE		
-se=pano	PAST	CONCLUSIVE		
-se-jra	PAST	PERFECTIVE		NEGATIVE
-sapë	PAST	PERFECT		
-saj=pano	PAST	PERFECT=CONCL		
-jpë	PAST			
-nëpëkë	auxiliary	PROGRESSIVE.INTR		
-ːpëkë	auxiliary	PROGRESSIVE.TR		
-ja				NEGATIVE
-kë (*-të-kë*)			IMPERATIVE	
-ta (*-tan-të-kë*)			IMPER.MOTION	
-jrama			PROHIBITIVE	NEGATIVE

Table 1. TAM and polarity suffixes and particles in Yawarana

For this paper, our focus is on the three "basic" past tense suffixes, *se* 'PAST PERFECTIVE', *-jpë* 'PAST', and *-sapë* 'PERFECT'. Often the same translation is offered for the three forms which led to the question of the semantic values that distinguish their use. Early on we began to consider *-sapë* as primarily indicating perfect aspect, and despite some examples that are not consistent with this semantic value it remains a reasonably solid analysis. In contrast, *-se* and *-jpë* appear to overlap substantially. In Table 1, we see that *=pano* 'CONCLUSIVE' is added to *-se* and to *-sapë*, but not to *-jpë*. Limiting our scope to *-se* and *-jpë*, one might hypothesize that, since the addition of a perfective particle like *=pano* adds a perfective value to the preceding suffix, that the basic aspectual value of *-se* is not already perfective. By extension, the semantic value of *-jpë* would already be perfective such that there is no need to add *=pano* to achieve that value. However, the other suffix marked with *=pano* is *-sapë*, which is inherently perfective. This invites the hypothesis that *-se* and *-sapë* are both inherently perfective and that *=pano* is only added to perfective words, to add additional information that refines or restricts the perfectivity to a more specific subtype, focused on the completion or conclusion of activity. By extension, the semantic value of *-jpë* would either be imperfective or simply past, with no necessary aspectual interpretation.

Turning to the comparative dimension, each suffix comes etymologically from a different deverbal derivation.

Yawarana *-se* comes from the Proto-Cariban (PC) circumfixed form **t*-V-*tjə* 'PARTICIPLE/CONVERB' (cf. Gildea 1998: 140-151 for reconstruction of **t*-V-*se*; Meira *et al* 2010: 503-504 for the correct form of the PC suffix; Cáceres Arandia 2015 for a demonstration of the comparative validity of the CONVERB function). Consistently with its adverbial origins, verbs bearing this suffix still can bear the adverbial number enclitic *=jne*. This form is the main predicating element for a passive and then an ergative past perfective construction in several languages (Gildea 1997). From the comparative evidence, we would expect this form to indicate past perfective; in Tiriyó, where the inflectional system encodes more than one depth of past time, the cognate form encodes distant past (Meira 1999: 327). In Panare and Tamanaku there are a few verbs for which the cognate *t-* prefix is lost, but Yawarana is the first language in the family where

the prefix is entirely absent (at least in its verbal function), such that the verb bears the same absolutive prefixal morphology as other main clause verbs.

The Yawarana past tense suffix *-jpë* comes from PC **-ɨɨpə* 'PAST.ACTION.NOMINALIZER', a form paired in several languages, with a form bearing the additional possessed suffix **-ɨɨpi-rɨ*. Even though **-ɨɨpə* does not bear the possessed suffix, in every language the noun it derives can be possessed by its notional absolutive, with limitations to specific persons in some languages, like Waiwai (Hawkins 1998: 196-198). In several languages, a reflex of the unpossessed PC form is the only one of the pair to survive. Consistent with its nominal origin, verbs bearing this suffix can take the nominal number suffix *=komo.* In the Pemón Group the cognate form has become the predicate of an ergative simple past tense construction, and in Panare it has become an inferential past perfect form (Payne and Payne 2013: 222-224 seem undecided whether or not to call it a passive). Thus, from the comparative evidence, we would expect this to be either past perfective or simple past.

The Yawarana perfect suffix *-sapë* comes from PC **-tjapə* 'ABSOLUTIVE.NOMINALIZER' (Cáceres Arandia and Gildea 2014). In several languages the modern reflex of this form can only be possessed by a third person notional absolutive; however, in Ye'kwana and several languages of the Venezuelan Branch, it takes the full range of absolutive prefixes like most other nominalizations. In its etymological function, this suffix has a resultative meaning, which readily becomes a (Perfect) Passive in Ye'kwana and Panare, moving on to become the nucleus of an ergatively organized perfect construction in all three languages of the Pemón Group. The gloss of 'PERFECT' that we have given this suffix is exactly what would be expected from the comparative evidence.

Having introduced the three suffixes in question, we now examine their distribution in our documentary corpus.

	-se		***-jpë***		***-sapë***		Totals
Total tokens	734	42%	333	19%	678	39%	1745
Copular Predicate tokens	0	0%	97	43%	127	57%	181
Copular Auxiliary tokens	0	0%	42	8%	497	92%	511
Non-Copular Verb tokens	734	75%	194	20%	54	5%	982
Number of Verb stems[1]	129		52		28		154

Table 2. Overview of frequency types and tokens of past with three kinds of predicates

4 Discourse distributions of the three past tense suffixes

In this section we share the corpus density of each of our three suffixes, as well as their distribution amongst different subsets of the verbal lexicon. In Table 2, we see the discourse density of each of our three suffixes. Beginning with the Total tokens line, of the 1745 main clause verbs that bear one of these three suffixes, 42% take *-se*, 39% *-sapë*, and only 19% *-jpë*. However, when the data are disaggregated a bit, we see that they are not equally common on all types of verb. Since the copula is extremely frequent, the next two rows separate out the tokens of each suffix with the copula in its two functions, as the nucleus of a nonverbal predicate and as an auxiliary. The copula cannot occur with *-se* in elicitation, so it is not surprising to find no tokens in the corpus in either function. With the copula in nonverbal predicate constructions, *-sapë* occurs with a clear majority of tokens; with the copula in the auxiliary function, *-sapë* occurs with over 90% of tokens, providing over two thirds of the tokens of main clause *-sapë* in the entire corpus. Turning to the next row, the proportions are completely different: of the 982 past tense non-copular main verbs, the vast majority (75%) take *-se*, while 20% take *-jpë* and only 5% take *-sapë*. Disaggregating the data a bit more, the final line shows how many different verb stems each suffix occurs with: *-se* occurs with

[1] The total number of verb stems is not the sum of the columns, as several individual verb stems occur in more than one column.

Root	Gloss	*-se*		*-jpë*		*-sapë*		Tokens
womï	enter	11	92%	1	8%		0%	12
yopo	find	10	91%	1	9%		0%	11
yamanë	make	22	88%	3	12%		0%	25
wereta	arrive, sit	21	88%	3	13%		0%	24
yarë	take	14	88%	2	13%		0%	16
ta	say	87	86%	13	13%	1	1%	101
të	go	104	85%	17	14%	1	1%	122
sejpëti	dream	11	85%	2	15%		0%	13
nepï	bring	10	83%	2	17%		0%	12
sepamï	marry	5	83%	1	17%		0%	6
sojpa	take out	5	83%	1	17%		0%	6
yawanka	exterminate	8	80%	2	20%		0%	10
yaka	excavate	4	80%	1	20%		0%	5
yonkopa	play	3	75%	1	25%		0%	4
sëma	die	28	72%	7	18%	4	10%	39
mujnajtë	bury	7	70%	3	30%		0%	10
tojpa	fight	15	68%	7	32%		0%	22
yojtë	fish	2	67%	1	33%		0%	3
nëmë	leave O	13	65%	7	35%		0%	20
yamï	pick up	5	63%	1	13%	2	25%	8
sënka	become finished	3	60%	1	20%	1	20%	5
ita	hear	8	57%	6	43%		0%	14
tu	give	8	57%	6	43%		0%	14
këyata	grow up	26	57%	20	43%		0%	46
wepï	come	10	50%	9	45%	1	5%	20
yakarama	tell	5	50%	4	40%	1	10%	10
yapïchi	grab	10	50%	1	5%	9	45%	20
këyama	raise	3	50%	3	50%		0%	6
nwajtë	dance	1	50%	1	50%		0%	2
yapima	get worse	1	50%	1	50%		0%	2
yëwuku	respond	1	50%	1	50%		0%	2
(a)sawankui	suffer, die	3	43%	4	57%		0%	7
i	put, make	4	40%	5	50%	1	10%	10
nanka	find	2	40%	3	60%		0%	5
ëmpamï	learn	3	38%	3	38%	2	25%	8
serema	eat	3	38%	5	63%		0%	8
pataka	go out	9	33%	17	63%	1	4%	27
yënë	eat meat	3	27%	8	73%		0%	11

Table 3. Comparative counts of verb roots occurring with *-se*, *-jpë*, *-sapë* (38/209)

84% (129) of the verb stems in our corpus, while *-jpë* occurs with only 34% (52) verb stems and *-sapë* with still fewer, only 18% (28). Given that many of the texts in our corpus are narrative, the strong preference

for *-se*, both overall and with the most verb stems, suggests that it is the unmarked form to use when carrying a narrative storyline forward.

In Table 3, we disaggregate the data still further in search of clues about the nature of the distinction between *-se* and *-jpë*. Our first step is to take the 38 verb stems that occur in the corpus with both *-se* and *-jpë*, then to count the number of tokens of each suffix with each verb and convert them to percentages.[2] For example, in the seventh row, of the 101 tokens of the verb *ta* 'say' 86% are with *-se*, 13% with *-jpë*, and only 1% with *-sapë*. Having done this calculation for all 38 verbs, we then sorted according to relative frequency of the two suffixes: the highest percentage of *-se* at top and the highest percentage of *-jpë* at the bottom.

Having sorted the verbs in this way, we then coded verbs for their inherent aspect, or Aktionsart, marking activity and durative verbs with grey highlight and leaving telic verbs unmarked. This exercise resulted in a pattern, such that at the top, the verbs that preferentially occur with *-se* are mostly telic (the top seven and 9 of the top 10), whereas at the bottom, the verbs that preferentially occur with *-jpë* are mostly activity and durative verbs (the bottom four and 6 of the bottom 10). This distribution invites the hypothesis that *-se* is past perfective and *-jpë* is past imperfective.

For completeness, we also include a column for occurrences with *-sapë*, but this table does not reveal any strong patterns, with two in the top 10 and three in the bottom 10.

This concludes the portion of the paper where we examine the overall system and discourse-based tendencies within different parts of that system. Next, we turn to detailed consideration of individual corpus examples of each suffix, *-se* in §4, *-jpë* in §5, alternations between the two in §6, and *-sapë* in §7.

5 Distinguishing between *-se* and *-jpë*

In this section, we examine cases of the main clauses whose verbs take *-se* and *-jpë*, demonstrating first that *-se* encodes a past perfective meaning, then that *-jpë* encodes only past tense without further specifying aspect, concluding with a series of examples where the two are used interchangeably.

As hypothesized in previous sections, all uses of *-se* are perfective no matter the Aktionsart of the verb. This is illustrated with telic verbs such as 'die', 'scare', 'make' and 'leave' in (1a-d) and with durative/activity verbs such as 'grow up' in (2a-b). Here we note that the Aktionsart of the verb 'go' (2a-b) is not inherent, in that the movement of 'going' is an activity, but sense of 'depart' is telic, as is the sense of 'going' to a specified endpoint is specified, as in 'go to school'. In our corpus, when combined with *-se* 'go' only has a telic reading (2a-b).

(1) a.

Ëpi	*warai*	*ana*	*y-ewenke*	*chi-Ø=pëkë*
remedio	como	1+3	REL-no.saber	COP-IPFV=porque
cure	like	1+3	REL-not.know	COP-IPFV=because

asawankui-che	*yawo=pano.*
morir-PSD	tío.VOC=finado
die-PST	uncle.VOC=late

'Porque no conocemos el remedio se murió mi tío.' {ConvHistFamSJM.251:MaFl}
'Because we did not know the cure, my uncle died.'

[2] In the interests of completeness, we include figures for *-sapë* as well, but we do not consider the distribution or semantics of *-sapë* until §7.

b. *Wïrë waraijto-ri-jpë=ya wïrë=ya yonkopa-se kwase.*
1SG esposo-POS-POS.PSD=ERG 1SG=notERG asustar-PSD cómo
1SG husband-POS-PST.POS=ERG 1SG=notERG scare-PST how
'Él que era mi esposo me asustó, cómo.'
'My ex-husband scared me, how.' {CtoTawIrDi.201:IrDi}

c. *Ta-yaman-se nope=ma.*
3O-hacer-PSD bueno=RESTR
3O-make-PST good=RESTR
'Las hizo bien.'
'(S/he) made them well.' {CtoVarMaFl.181:MaFl}

d. *Asanë ta-nëmë-se mërë nono mokontomo warota-tojpe.*
2:madre:POS 3O-dejar-PSD 3IN:MD tierra 2PL trabajar-FIN
2:mother:POS 3O-leave.O-PST 3IN:MD soil 2PL work-PURP
'Tu mamá dejo esa tierra para que ustedes trabajen.'
'Your mother left this land for you-all to work.' {ConvAmGu.048:ElPe}

(2) a. *Tawara wïrë këyata-se warë wïrë kampra-ri*
así 1SG crecer-PSD así 1SG grande-POS
thus 1SG grow.up-PST thus 1SG big-POS

wïrë chi-Ø=yawë takï warota-se wïrë të-se.
1SG COP-NZR=LOC:TMP PTC trabajar-SUP 1SG ir-PSD
1SG COP-NZR=TMP:LOC PTC work-SUP 1SG go-PST
'Así yo crecí, así cuando yo estaba grande, fui a trabajar.'
'So I grew up, thus when I became big, I went/left (in order to) to work.
{ConvHistFamSJM.212:MaFl}

b. *In-che in-che ejnë të-ri papa pïnika wereta-ri*
ver-SUP ver-SUP 1+2 ir-IPFV padre:VOC PROB llegar-IPFV
see-SUP see-SUP 1+2 go-IPFV father:VOC PROB arrive-IPFV

ana tëse, pïrarë.
ana të-se pïrarë
1+3 ir-PSD nada
1+3 go-PST nothing
'"Vamos a ver, mi papá ¿será que está llegando?" Fuimos y no había nada.'
'"We are going to see, Daddy is probably arriving." We went —
nothing.' {ConvAmGu.260-261:AmGu}

The combination of *-se* with the particle *=pano* 'CONCLUSIVE' is often translated in Spanish via the addition of the adverb *ya* 'already', but the combination still appears to express a past perfective meaning, which is compatible with telic verbs such as 'get tired' and 'make' (3a-b), and which forces a telic reading of 'go' (4).

(3) a. *Wïrë* *kinta-se=pano* *ta-Ø* *ta*.
1SG cansarse-PSD=CONCL decir-IPFV pues
1SG get.tired-PST=CONCL say-IPFV PTC
‘ “Yo me cansé.” dijo.’
‘ “I got tired,” he said.’ {CtoVarMaFl.310:MaFl}

b. *Warë=ne* *tane* *wïrë=ya* *yaman-se=pano*.
así=INTS PTC 1SG=ERG hacer-PSD=CONCL
thus=INTS PTC 1SG=ERG make-PST=CONCL
‘Así, ya lo hice.’
‘Thus, I already did it.’ {CtoVarMaFl.146:MaFl}

(4) *Irëjpë* *ij-të-se=pano*.
después 3-ir-PSD=CONCL
then 3-go-PST=CONCL
‘Después, ya se fueron.’
‘Then they already left.’ {CtoVarMaFl.333:MaFl}

Like all inflections in modern Yawarana, the past form with *-se* can take an auxiliary. However, as in other Cariban languages (Apalaí, Tiriyó, Wayana, Ye’kwana’s Durative Past [Cáceres 2011:241]) the auxiliary is rarely present. For example, in a sub-sample of four texts, of the 142 occurrences of *-se* on a main verb, only 14 take an auxiliary (for examples see §6).

This consistent past perfective reading for *-se* contrasts with the aspectual inconsistency of *-jpë*. A careful examination of individual examples of main clause verbs bearing *-jpë* confirms that the semantic value is past tense with no specified aspectual interpretation. We begin our illustration of this by considering telic verbs with *-jpë*. A few of these have an imperfective interpretation, like *yakarama-jpë* ‘(were) telling/told’ in (5), but nearly all have a perfective interpretation, like *sawankui-jpë* ‘died’ in (6) or *ta-nëmë-jpë* ‘he (had) left it’ in (7).

(5) *Mërë* *yakarama-jpë* *warë* *enirë*.
2SG contar-PSD así ahora
2SG tell-PST thus now
‘Como usted lo estaba contando ahorita.’
‘Like you were telling/told just now.’ {ConvHistFamSJM.010:PaPe}

(6) *Ë'ë* *papa=pano* *sawankui-jpë* *marë*.
sí padre:VOC=finado morir-PSD así
yes father:VOC=late die-PST thus
‘Sí, mi papá, así se murió.’
‘Yes, my late father, thus he died.’ {ConvAmGu.002-003:AmGu}

(7) *Ta-nëmë-jpë* *tëpu=po* *traj* *traj* *traj* *jwama* *ta-nëmë-jpë*.
3O-dejar-PSD piedra=LOC regado regado regado PTC 3O-dejar-PSD
3O-leave.O-PST rock=LOC scattered scattered scattered PTC 3O-leave.O-PST
‘Lo había dejado en una piedra, regado.’
‘He had left it on a rock, *scatter scatter scatter* he left it.’ {ConvAmGu.192:AmGu}

A more balanced aspectual flexibility is seen with durative or activity verbs. In (8-9) we see a perfective interpretation, in (8) with the durative process verb *këyata-jpë* ‘grew up’ and in (9) with *tëjta pataka-jpë* ‘the hole appeared’, indicating the result at the culmination of a slow process of digging. In contrast, in (10) there is a straightforward past habitual interpretation of *yojtë-jpë* ‘fished/used to fish’, in (11) of *yakara-jpë*

'believed/used to believe'; in (12c) we presume a continuing past habitual interpretation of the activity *ojtojpa-jpë* 'fought/used to fight'.

(8) *Tëwï=po* *wïrë* *këyata-jpë.*
3SG=LOC 1SG crecer-PSD
3SG=LOC 1SG grow.up-PST
'Con ese me crié.'
'With it I grew up.' {ConvInsectMAJ.121:IrDi}

(9) *Tajne* *kapëj-se* *ti,* *ënwarë* *ti* *tëjta* *pataka-jpë.*
3PL excavar-PSD PTC así PTC hueco aparecer-PSD
3PL dig-PST PTC thus PTC hole appear-PST
'Ellos cortaron, así apareció el hoyo.'
'They dug, and like that the hole appeared.' {CtoTawIrDi.227:IrDi}

(10) *Papa kampra* *=pano* *=ya* *yojtë-jpë.*
tío.paterno =finado =ERG pescar-PSD
paternal.uncle =late =ERG fish-PST
'Mi papá pescaba.'
'My late father fished / used to fish.' {ConvCosNoInd.082:AnFo}

(11) *Onono* *wara* *ana* *yakara-jpë.*
otro como 1+3 creer-PSD
another like 1+3 believe-PST
'El creía que nosotros éramos como otras.' {Conv1stEnc.018:GrMe}
'He believed / used to believe us like the others.'

(12) a. *Sëmpë-pëj-se=jne* *mëtë.*
discutir-PLAC-PSD=PL ahí
argue-PLAC-PST=PL there
'Se pelearon ahí.' {CtoVarMaFl.593:MaFl}
'They argued (with each other iteratively) there.'

b. *Sëmpë-pëj-se=jne* *ë'ë.*
discutir-PLAC-PSD=PL sí
argue-PLAC-PST=PL yes
'Discutieron, sí.' {CtoVarMaFl.594:MaFl}
'They argued (with each other iteratively), yes.'

c. *Warë* *ojtojpa-jpë* *pïnika* *wej-sapë* *mëtë.*
así pelearse-PSD PROB COP-PERF ahí
thus fight-PST PROB COP-PERF there
'Así, pelearon ahí será.' {CtoVarMaFl.595:MaFl}
'Thus, probably they fought / used to fight, it was there.'

At this point, it seems clear that *-se* is a straightforward past perfective inflection, whereas *-jpë* is a past inflection that is compatible with either a perfective or an imperfective interpretation. Even so, we have observed informally that the perfective reading of *-jpë* is much more common than the imperfective reading, such that finding examples of the imperfective reading required examination of many more tokens from the corpus. As might be expected, *-jpë* is a relatively minor means of indicating a past imperfective event. The derivational aspect marker *-pëti/-pëj* 'PLURACTIONAL' can co-occur with the past perfective *-se* as in (12a-

b), providing a range of imperfective readings to the event denoted (cf. Mattiola 2019 for a typology of the readings of pluractional morphemes). In addition, the progressive suffixes *-nëpëkë* 'PROGRESSIVE.INTRANSITIVE' and *-:pëkë* 'PROGRESSIVE.TRANSITIVE' can co-occur with a past tense copular auxiliary, as in (13), yielding a past progressive reading.[3] We return to the question of auxiliaries in §6.

(13)	*Të-ke*	*ëj-tapa-nëpëkë*	*chi-jpë*	*ta*	*penajrë.*
	3-INSTR	DTR-pegar-PROG.INTR	COP-PSD	pues	antes
	3-INSTR	DTR-hit-INTR-PROG	COP-PST	like	before
	'Con ese se sobaba antes.' {DescCasaGrMe.37:GrMe}				
	'With it (INSTR) one was (being) beaten in the past.'				

The suffixes *-se* and *-jpë* participate in an interesting pattern found in other Cariban languages, in which an important utterance in a narrative is repeated using a different verb form. In Kuikuro (Franchetto 2003), the alternations involve a transitive verb and a detransitivized version of the same verb. In Akawaio (Gildea and Fox 2004), the alternations are between two different past tense inflections, one from the old Proto-Cariban Set I system and the other from the modern Set II system (a cognate of Yawarana *-jpë*). In Yawarana, the first iteration can utilize *-jpë* and the second *-se*, as in (14-15), or the order can be *-se* and then *-jpë*, as in (16). The most common situation is for the sequence to come in a narrative by the same speaker (14-15), but is it also attested in back-and-forth exchanges between interlocutors, as in (16).

Looking more closely at the individual examples, prior to (14a), the narrator was describing her father's childhood as he had once described it to her, such that (14a) is quoted direct speech from her father, 'my sisters', (14b) is an aside from the speaker to the listener 'he grew up with them as well', then (14c) returns to quoted direct speech from the speaker's father. The initial assertion is in the aside in (14b), *këyata-jpë* '(he) grew up', which is repeated in (14c) as *wïrë këyata-se* 'I grew up'. In addition to the changed tense suffix on the verb, the personal deixis of the utterance is shifted, from third person to first person.

(14) a. *Pachi-tomo.*
hermana.mayor.f-PL
older.sister.f-PL
'Mis hermanas.' {ConvHistFamSJM.190:MaFl}
'"My sisters."' (quoted speech from father)

b.

Tëwïsantomo	*y-akërë=ma*	*këyata-jpë*	*tawara=n.*	*-JPË*
3PL	REL-COM=RESTR	crecer-PSD	también=INTS	
3PL	REL-COM=RESTR	grow.up-PST	too=INTS	

'Con ellas también creció.' {ConvHistFamSJM.191:MaFl}
'With them he grew up as well' (aside from speaker)

c.

Wïrë	*këyata-se*	*tëwïsantomo*	*y-akërë=ma.*	*-SE*
1SG	crecer-PSD	3PL	REL-COM=RESTR	
1 SG	grow.up-PST	3PL	REL-COM=RESTR	

'Yo crecí con ellas solamente.' {ConvHistFamSJM.192:MaFl}
' "I grew up with them only." ' (quoted speech from father)

In (15a), the speaker has been discussing a particular food, and uses *-jpë* to assert that with/on this food *wïrë këyata-jpë* 'I grew up'. Then in (15b), she repeats the assertion with the verb form *këyata-se* 'grew up' plus two other changes, first expanding the subject referent from first-person singular to the first-person

[3] The passive reading in (13) is one of the meanings found with Detransitive verbs, in a way quite similar to the cognate constructions described for five other Cariban languages in Sapién *et al* (2021).

exclusive pronoun *ana* '1+3 [we (EXCL)]', second expanding the adverbial to include the more specific verb phrase *tëwï yënë-Ø=pëkë* 'on the eating of it'.

(15) a. *Wïrë* *këyata-jpë* *të-po* *tanijpë.* *-JPË*
1SG crecer-PSD 3-LOC parece
1SG grow.up-PST 3-LOC it.seems
'Con eso me crié yo, así.' {ConvInsectMAJ.128:IrDi}
'I grew up with it, thus.'

b. *Ana* *këyata-se* *tëwï* *yënë-Ø=pëkë.* *-SE*
1+3 crecer-PSD 3SG comer.carne-IPFV=CONV
1+3 grow.up-PST 3SG eat.meat-IPFV=CONV
'Nosotros nos criamos comiendo eso.' {ConvInsectMAJ.129:IrDi}
'We grew up eating it.'

In (16a), the narrator culminates an episode in her personal history by asserting that it was not her father who left a group of others, but rather it was the others who *ta-nëmë-se* 'they left him'. The interlocutor then repeats the assertion in the form of a question asking why, switching from the *-se* form used in the previous sentence to *tajne nëmë-jpë* 'they left him'. Note that neither suffix is conditioned by asking a question, such that the original verb form would also have been grammatically felicitous in the question. In addition to changing the suffix, the optional third-person prefix is not used in the repeated sentence.[4]

(16) a. *Tëwïsantomo=ma* *tajne* *papa=pano=ma*
3PL=RESTR 3PL padre:VOC=finado=RESTR
3PL=RESTR 3PL father:VOC=late=RESTR

ta-nëmë-se *wej-sapë.* *-SE*
3O-dejar-PSD COP-PERF
3O-leave.O-PST COP-PERF
'Ellos nada más dejaron a mi papá.' {ConvHistFamSJM.178:MaFl}
'It is them who left my father.'

b. *Kwa* *chi-Ø=pëkë* *tajne* *nëmë-jpë* *tëwï.* *-JPË*
qué COP-IPFV=por.qué 3PL dejar-PSD 3SG
PTC COP-IPFV=why 3PL leave.O-PST 3SG
'Por qué será que lo dejaron a él.' {ConvHistFamSJM.179:PaPe}
'Why is it that they left him?'

At this point, we have answered our main descriptive question by identifying the differences between *-se* 'PAST.PERFECTIVE' and *-jpë* 'PAST' in a way that explains their substantial overlap while recognizing their divergences. We turn next to a brief exposition of the suffix *-sapë* 'PERFECT'.

6 *-sapë* 'RESULTATIVE' > 'PERFECT'

The suffix *-sapë* 'PERFECT' is by far the least frequent of the past forms when considering verbs that function as the nucleus of a main clause verbal predicate, with only 54 tokens encountered on only 28

[4] Note that we use the word "optional" here as a stand-in for "whose distribution we do not yet understand". We have yet to encounter a grammatical construction with third person subject and object where this prefix is either obligatory or disallowed. In future work, we hope to identify statistical tendencies in its occurrences.

different verb stems. Table 4 shows the comprehensive list of main clause verb stems that bear *-sapë* in our spontaneous speech corpus.

Root	Gloss	Count	Total past tokens	Percentage of past uses
sëmpinuku	close eyes, die	3	3	100%
sene	be seen	3	3	100%
yakïjtë	impregnate	2	2	100%
chapïtï	cry, scream	1	1	100%
ëjmëtï	boil	1	1	100%
senejka	remain	1	1	100%
tamanë	be made	1	1	100%
watï	burn	1	1	100%
yapijtonta	become old	1	1	100%
(e)serepï	get scared	2	3	67%
(a)tampa	get mad	4	7	57%
pomï	tie	4	7	57%
yapïchi	grab	9	20	45%
yamï	pick up	2	8	25%
ëmpamï	learn	2	8	25%
tujpa	put in	1	4	25%
(a)tapïchi	grab onto, grab self	2	10	20%
sënka	become finished	1	5	20%
sëma	die	4	39	10%
yakarama	tell	1	10	10%
i	put, make	1	10	10%
wë	shoot	1	10	10%
wënkepï	forget	1	10	10%
yakëtë	cut	1	12	8%
wepï	come	1	20	5%
pataka	go out	1	27	4%
ta	say	1	101	1%
të	go	1	122	1%

Table 4. The 28 verb stems that occur with *-sapë*

We identify main clause verbal uses as those where the predicate entails a change of state, or a difference from time 1 to time 2 in the event line. It is common also for a verb bearing *-sapë* to describe only the state a participant is in as a result of a prior event. We interpret this non-eventive usage as a token of the etymological function of *-sapë*, which derives an absolutive resultative nominalization. When such a non-eventive nominalized usage occurs as the nucleus of a nonverbal predicate, the construction may be formally ambiguous between a verbal clause and a predicate nominal clause, such that the only distinguishing feature is the eventive vs. stative reading of the predicate. Examples (17-18) illustrate clear stative readings, in which the verb plus *-sapë* indicates that the subject noun is encountered already in the state as a result of the (non-profiled) prior event denoted by the verb, *wëjka-sapë* ‘fallen’ in (17) and *kërëta-saj* ‘ripened’ in (18).

(17) *Ijtë=ma* *wëjka-sapë.*
ahí=RESTR caerse-NZR.ABS
there=RESTR fall-ABS.NZR
'Ahí estaba caído.' {ConvAmGu.281:AmGu}
'There it was, fallen (down)'(lit. 'the fallen one was there.')

(18) *Këröta-saj* *chi-Ø=poko-n* *ti* *aya* *ëjpïna=yawë.*
madurar-NZR.ABS COP-IPFV=sobre-NZR pues antojo mucho=LOC:TMP
ripen-ABS.NZR COP-IPFV=about-NZR PTC craving a.lot=TMP:LOC
'Porque estaba maduro, ay, hay bastante.' {ConvHistFamSJM.186:MaFl}
'Because it was ripe, yum, there is a lot [of fruit]' (lit. 'there were ripened ones...')

At times, it is difficult to determine whether or not the best intepretation is eventive, as in (19), translated via an active verb in the Spanish free translation: the verb *waj-saj* 'burnt' is ambiguous because the utterance describes a gnomic truth ('it becomes bitter') when the condition is met, but the condition in question could be either that 'it becomes burnt' (change of state) or 'it is burnt' (state).

(19) *Tutune* *wïchika-ri* *waj-saj* *=yawë.*
amargo transformarse-IPFV quemarse-PERF =LOC:TMP
bitter transform-IPFV burn-PERF =TMP:LOC
'Se queda amargo cuando se quema'{DescOkiGrMe.35:GrMe}
'It becomes bitter once it has/is burnt.'

However, there are also contexts in which the only interpretation available is eventive, as in (20a-c). In (20a), the utterance is clearly a part of the story line (the first description of a specific picture in the Family Task stimulus), but the interpretation of the main verb is ambiguous between a simple past perfective (continuing the story) and a present perfect description of the picture: *yapëj-saj* '(He [has]) grabbed her mouth'. In (20b), *ij-të-sapë* 'he went/left', the free translation suggests a simple past departure. However, in the context of the story, it is also possible to interpret the event has having current relevance, such that the perfect reading 'had gone' would also be appropriate. When the verb plus *-sapë* is the object of a postposition, as in (20c), the reading is most frequently eventive.

(20) a. *Pota* *yapëj-saj* *ti* *ta.*
boca agarrar-PERF pues pues
mouth seize-PERF like like
'Le agarró la boca' {StimSJMFamPb.385:AnFo}
'(He) grabbed her mouth' or '(she was) a mouth-grabbed one'

b. *Yawo* *Tamanako* *ka* *ij-të-sapë* *mokontom* *y-akërë.*
tío N.P. PREG 3-ir-PERF 2PL REL-COM
uncle P.N. QP 3-go-PERF 2PL REL-COM
'El tío Tamanaco se fue con ustedes?' {ConvHistFamSJM.186:MaFl}
'Did uncle Tamanaco go with you?'

c. *Nwarë* *tampa-saj=pe* *nwarë.*
así enojarse-PERF=ESI así
thus get.mad-PERF=ESS thus
'Así se pusieron bravos.' {CtoWaruMaFl.26:MaFl}
'Thus they got mad.'

While *-sapë* clearly does occur on main clause verbs to describe events, it is far more frequent in our corpus as a suffix on the main clause copula, both in its nonverbal copular function and its function as a verbal auxiliary. The latter is the subject of the next section.

7 The past auxiliaries

As indicated earlier (§3, Table 1), of our three semantically past suffixes, the copula cannot co-occur with our most frequent verbal suffix, the past perfective *-se*; it only occurs with *-jpë*, as *chi-jpë*, and *-sapë*, as *wej-sapë*. In both the nonverbal predicate and the verbal auxiliary functions, *wej-sapë* is more frequent than *chi-jpë*, most strikingly in its auxiliary function, where it is ten times more frequent. This section describes the past tense copular auxiliary, which occurs with the Imperfective and Past Perfective verbs, as well as with the Negative, Progressive, Desiderative, one Counterfactual construction. As auxiliaries, the two forms are in almost perfect complimentary distribution: in the progressive construction, *chi-jpë* occurs 36 times compared to 2 occurrences of *wej-sapë*; in the remainder of auxiliary functions, *wej-sapë* occurs 495 times compared to 8 occurrences of *chi-jpë*, 4 each with a negative verb and with an imperfective verb. Given the absence of *-se* 'PAST PERFECTIVE' with the copula and the paucity of overlap in distribution for the remaining two past auxiliaries, the meanings of these suffixes on auxiliaries could not express the same distinctions as already described with full verbs. We consider the contrasts between these two forms in each construction where both are attested, then briefly characterize the remaining constructions, where only *wej-sapë* is attested.

In our corpus, we have 38 instances of the progressive construction with a past tense auxiliary, 36 with *chi-jpë* vs. only 2 with *wej-sapë*. This asymmetry suggests that *chi-jpë* has almost become the dedicated auxiliary for expressing the past progressive. Examples with *chi-jpë* are consistently translated as a standard past progressive or past habitual, as seen in (21) with intransitive verb *asamo-nëpëkë* 'crying' and in (22) with transitive verb *ta-:pëkë* 'saying'.

(21)

Tapëkë	*asamo-nëpëkë*	*chi-jpë*	*yïpï*	*in-charë.*
por.eso	llorar-PROG.INTR	COP-PSD	cerro	ver-CONV
that.s.why	cry-INTR.PROG	COP-PST	mount	see-CONV

'Por eso estaba llorando cuando veía el cerro.' {HistYarIrDi.0111:IrDI}
'That is why he was crying each time he saw the hill.'

(22)

Ta-:pëkë	*chi-jpë*	*yawo*	*=pano*	*waimu-Ø-kontomo*	*erem=pëkë.*
decir-PROG	COP-PSD	tío.VOC	=finado	hablar-IPFV-PL	salmo=sobre
say-PROG	COP-PST	uncle.VOC	=late	speak-IPFV-PL	psalm=about

'Así decía mi tío cuando hablaba de los cantos.' {HistYarIrDi.0161:IrDI}
'(like this) my late uncle used to say when he would speak about the psalms.'

Examples (23-24) are the only two in the corpus with *wej-sapë* as the auxiliary for the Progressive. One was produced by someone younger than 65, who we think of as an innovative speaker, and the other, while it is produced by a speaker older than 75 (who only learned Spanish as an adult), has been difficult to interpret. In particular, the speakers who work with Cáceres to translate the texts, and who provide the elicitation examples that usually help to clarify how the Yawarana constructions create the meanings that they do, were unable to clarify this latter example. Crucially, there is no readily observable semantic difference that could be based on the choice of auxiliary. We think it is likely that these two examples do not represent the norms of the speech community, and more likely represent a possible hesitation or moment of mis-speech. We take the canonical pattern to be represented by the remainder of the examples, and as such, that *chi-jpë* is the dedicated auxiliary for the past progressive.

(23) *Tawara* *ta-pëkë* *wej-sapë* *tajne.*
así decir-PROG COP-PERF 3PL
thus say-PROG COP-PERF 3PL
'Así decía.' {ConvHistFamSJM.209:MaFl}
'Thus he used to say.'

(24) *Yëtu* *moronka-Ø-pïkë* *wïrë* *wej-sapë.*
? causar.dolor-IPFV-PROG 1SG COP-PERF
? cause.pain-IPFV-PROG 1SG COP-PERF
'Yo estaba aguantando dolor.' {HistAcciGrMe.39:GrMe}
'I was in pain.'

It is possible that its lack of perfective meaning made *chi-jpë* a better candidate for this auxiliary role in the progressive construction, such that it is now almost the automatic choice. However, this same reasoning would also predict that *chi-jpë* would be the primary auxiliary to co-occur with the imperfective verb, which it clearly is not. We turn now to that construction.

As introduced in §2, the Imperfective form of the verb bears the suffix *-ri/-rï*, which is phonologically unstable, frequently reducing to length on the preceding vowel, or even to *-Ø* when followed by clitics, the ergative A argument, or auxiliaries, as in (26-28). The examples in (25-26) illustrate the typical uses of the Imperfective verb with the auxiliary *wej-sapë*, in (25) as a past progressive *nwajtë-Ø wej-sapë* 'were dancing' and in (26) *wajyata-pëti-Ø wej-saj* 'used to become happy (iteratively).'

(25) *Ti* *waijta-ton* *nwajtë-Ø* *wej-sapë.*
pues ratón-PL bailar-IPFV COP-PERF
PTC mouse-PL dance-IPFV COP-PERF
'Las ratas estaban bailando.' {CtoRat.09:AnFo}
'The mice were dancing.'

(26) *Warë* *yojtë-se* *wepï-Ø=yawë* *wajyata-pëti-Ø*
así pescar-PSD venir-IPFV=LOC:TMP alegrarse-PLAC-IPFV
thus fish-PST come-IPFV=TMP:LOC become.happy-PLAC-IPFV

wej-saj *ti* *ta.*
COP-PERF pues pues
COP-PERF PTC PTC
'Cuando regresaba de pescar, se alegraba (bastante).' {ConvHistFamSJM.198:MaFl}
'When he came back from fishing, he used to become (very) happy.'

At least 176 examples of the Imperfective verb with a past tense auxiliary are like these two, with *wej-sapë*, vs. only 4 with *chi-jpë*, as in (27-28). As these two examples show, the aspectual meaning with *chi-jpë* is not consistent. In the storyline in (27), the narrator first uses a simple past perfective verb *ta-yapëj-se* 'he grabbed him', then follows immediately with *ta-yapëchi-Ø chi-jpë*, which should intuitively translate as something like 'he was grabbing him / used to grab him', but which instead is given the free translation into Spanish using the past perfect, 'he had grabbed him'. In contrast, (28) *asamo-Ø chi-jpë* '(she) was crying' has the expected past imperfective reading. The remaining two examples (not given here) are by two different speakers, one past perfective and the other past imperfective. Since historically both auxiliaries would have been possible, and since both present exactly the same range of meanings in our synchronic data, we consider the standard auxiliary with the Imperfective to be *wej-sapë*, such that cases with *chi-jpë* represent an archaic pattern, perhaps used for stylistic purposes.

(27) *Ta-yapëj-se* *ta-yapëchi-Ø* *chi-jpë* *tanijpë.*
3O-agarrar-PSD 3O-agarrar-IPFV AUX-PSD parece
3O-seize-PST 3O-seize-IPFV AUX-PST it.seems
'Lo agarró, lo había agarrado se dice.' {StimCaz2SJM.096:PaPe}
'He grabbed him, he had grabbed him, it seems.'

(28) *Asamo-Ø* *chi-jpë.*
llorar-IPFV COP-PSD
cry-IPFV COP-PST
'Estaba llorando.' {StimSJMFamPb.215:PaPe}
'She was crying.'

The other construction that allows both auxiliaries is the Negative with the suffix *-ja* 'NEG', which is not additionally specified for TAM. Across the Cariban family, main clause verbal negation typically requires a copular auxiliary to express tense and the person of the subject (Álvarez 2016; Gildea and Meira 2016). In Yawarana the auxiliary is not obligatory, but even so, at least 72 past tense Negative verbs that take an auxiliary occur with *wej-sapë* vs. only 4 with *chi-jpë* (one of which is repeated). Both auxiliaries appear to be equally felicitous to express simple past (perfective) negation, as in the simple past questions in (29-30) and also to express past imperfective negation, as in (31-32). Also, in (33) *ita-ja wej-sapë* '(I) have not heard it' receives the present-perfect reading that would be expected with *-sapë* on the main verb. Again, since we see nothing to motivate the selection of *chi-jpë* in the specific examples where it occurs, in that *wej-sapë* clearly has the capacity to express the same meanings, we consider the standard auxiliary with the Negative to be *wej-sapë*, such that the four cases with *chi-jpë* represent an archaic pattern.

(29) *Ta-ini-ja* *ka* *wej-sapë?*
3O-ver-NEG PREG COP-PERF
3O-see-NEG QP COP-PERF
'No lo vio?' {CtoRosq.082:ElPe}
'Didn't she see it?'

(30) *In-che* *më-të-ja* *chi-jpë* *kwa* *chi-Ø=pëkë* *in-che* *më-të-ja* *chi-jpë*
ver-SUP 2-ir-NEG COP-PSD qué COP-NZR=sobre ver-SUP 2-ir-NEG AUX-PSD
see-SUP 2-go-NEG COP-PST what COP-NZR=about see-SUP 2-go-NEG AUX-PST
'Por qué no fuiste a ver.' {CtoTawIrDi.021:IrDi}
'You did not go see. Why didn't you go see?'

(31) *Tajne=ya* *yëmpanïkï-ja* *wej-sapë.*
3PL=ERG enseñar-NEG COP-PERF
3PL=ERG teach-NEG COP-PERF
'Ellos no enseñaban.' {ConvEstSJM.071}
'They did not (use to) teach.'

(32) *Tëwï=ne* *ta-pojtë-ja* *chi-jpë* *tëwï=ya.*
3SG=INTS 3O-querer-NEG AUX-PSD 3SG=ERG
3SG=INTS 3O-want-NEG AUX-PST 3SG=ERG
'Él no la quería a ella.' {HistPajIrDi.009:IrDi}
'He did not love her.'

(33) *Wïrë* *ita-ja* *wej-sapë.*
1SG oir-NEG COP-PERF
1SG hear-NEG COP-PERF
'No lo he escuchado.' {CtoRosq.005:GrMe}
'I have not heard it.'

Example (29) suggests that *wej-sapë* has expanded into the functional space of the missing copula plus *-se*, which would have been expected to express the simple past perfective with the negative. This is particularly clear in the negative desiderative example in (34), where *ta-tu-pojra wej-sapë* 'he did not want to give it' has a past perfective reading that limits the scope of the negative desire to a specific, bounded episode.

(34) *Makë* *ta-Ø* *ta* *wïrë* *inaka* *ta-tu-pojra* *wej-sapë.*
madre:VOC decir-IPFV pues 1SG BEN 3O-dar-DES.NEG COP-PERF
mother:VOC say-IPFV PTC 1SG BEN 3O-give-NEG.DES COP-PERF
' "Mamá," dijo, "a mi no me quiso dar." ' {CtoTawIrDi.052:IrDi}
' "Mother," she said, "he did not want to give it to me." '

That said, it is also clear that *-sapë* can occur with a still broader range of TAM readings, in one example (35) being used even with a past counterfactual reading, *sawankui-ja pïnika wej-sapë* 'would likely not have died'.

(35) *Yawo=pano* *sawankui-ja* *pïnika* *wej-sapë* *pïnika* *tëwï* *enirë* *warai.*
tío.VOC=finado morir-NEG PROB COP-PERF PROB 3SG ahora como
uncle.VOC=late die-NEG PROB COP-PERF PROB 3SG now like
'Si fuera así como ahora no se hubiera muerto el difunto mi tío.'
'(My) late Uncle would likely not have died had it been like now' [i.e., with medical attention].' {ConvHistFamSJM.249:MaFl}

The final auxiliary domain is with the past perfective main verb. In all 42 examples of *chi-jpë* as an auxiliary, none are attested with the past perfective, while there are at least 78 past perfective constructions attested with *wej-sapë*. One would perhaps expect the reading in (36), where *ënuj-se wej-saj* 'had ascended' contains both the perfect reading associated with *-sapë* and the past reading associated with *-se*. Interestingly, in the translations the perfect is marked on the main verb and the past is marked on the auxiliary, whereas in the Yawarana example, the perfect suffix occurs on the auxiliary and the past tense on the main verb.

(36) *Ënuj-se* *wej-saj* *ti* *ta* *ja.*
subir-PSD COP-PERF pues pues PTC
go.up-PST COP-PERF PTC PTC PTC
'Se había subido.' {ConvHistFamSJM.188:MaFl}
'He had gone up.'

However, in contrast to the expected reading in (36), in (37) we see a less expected past imperfective reading for *ta-yëmpëka-se wej-sapë* '(they) used to insult her'. This surprising reading is found in only a few cases.

(37) *Tawara* *chi-Ø=pëkë* *ta-yëmpëka-se* *wej-sapë.*
así COP-IPFV=porque 3O-ofender-PSD COP-PERF
thus COP-IPFV=because 3O-offend-PST COP-PERF
'Por eso la insultaban.'{CtoTawIrDi.007:IrDi}
'Because thus, they used to insult her.'

To summarize, the alternation between the auxiliaries *chi-jpë* and *wej-sapë* is quite different from the alternation with the same suffixes on main verbs, due mainly to differences in the range of meanings attested with *wej-sapë*. The form *chi-jpë* seems to have become the dedicated auxiliary for the Progressive construction, but otherwise it occurs quite rarely in an auxiliary function. That said, when it does occur, it still shows an aspectual flexibility reminiscent of its meanings with main clause verbs. In contrast, the form *wej-sapë* shows a much wider range of semantic values than any main verb with *-sapë*, including simple past perfective (expected, given the absence of the copula with *-se* 'PAST PERFECTIVE') and, occasionally, past imperfective (not unexpected given that *wej-sapë* is the only past auxiliary available to some constructions). This concludes our exposition of the past tense Copular auxiliaries.

8 Conclusions

We conclude this paper with some observations of potential relevance for those linguists who might not be as fascinated by the details of Yawarana grammar as we are, but who are instead looking for larger lessons that can be drawn from this study. We begin with the hedge that this study is preliminary, providing less conclusive analyses and more hypotheses regarding distribution that could be further tested in direct elicitation. We continue to hope that some of the few remaining speakers will survive the pandemic, so that when we are able to return to Yawarana communities we will be able to work further with them.

A methodological conclusion that we believe is firm is that (decontextualized) direct elicitation of tense-aspect distinctions gives a different picture of the system than analysis of spontaneous texts. Building on this finding, we plan that most of our follow-up elicitation will be grounded in actual text examples, seeking to substitute a different TAM suffix or a different auxiliary for the one in the original speech, in the hopes that speakers will be able to articulate how this minimally changed utterance might suggest a different scenario from the original.

A second methodological question is specific to languages in advanced stages of obsolescence, like Yawarana. As has been observed in the literature (Grinevald and Bert 2011, Skilton 2017:107), the last speakers of a language tend to show an unexpectedly high degree of variation both within and between their idiolects. We have seen high degrees of variation in our Yawarana corpus in both phonology and morphology, and we wonder if some of the variation that we see in the use of these past tense suffixes might also be an effect of the social conditions of language (dis)use in Yawarana communities — in the last decade or more, there has been little spontaneous contact or conversation between the final L1 speakers. It is possible that different speakers have internalized different grammatical systems, such as the one younger speaker who produced the only examples of the auxiliary *wej-sapë* in the Progressive construction. In this situation, in order to refine our analyses in further work, it will be necessary to sort all examples not just by speech context, but also by the identities of the speaker and the interlocutor(s).

A final conclusion, perhaps more typological-historical in nature, is that the same suffixes show different meanings when affixed to main verbs as opposed to copular auxiliaries. This is not completely unsurprising in that it is a well-known correlate of grammaticalization studies that innovative grammatical constructions usually generate somewhat different meanings, which cannot be predicted by combining the etymological meanings of their components. In the case of Yawarana past tense auxiliaries, however, the changes are more striking, in part because one of the three past morphemes no longer occurs with the copula, an absence that would only be possible in a situation where one or more of the other forms was already capable of expressing the meaning that the missing form would have provided.

9 Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the support of NSF Grant No. BCS-1500714 in our research and Natalia acknowledges support of ELDP Grant MDP-0407 during writing and revisions. We also thank our collaborator Marie-Claude Mattei Muller and all Yawarana speakers who have invested their time to collaborate on the documentation of their language and their families for welcoming us in their homes while in the field. Special thanks to Pablo Amazonas with whom Natalia elaborated most of the transcriptions and translations.

10 Glossing conventions

ABS 'absolutive', AUX 'auxiliary', BEN 'benefactive', COM 'comitative', CONCL 'conclusive', CONV 'converb', COP 'copula', DES 'desiderative', DTR 'detransitive', ERG 'ergative', ESI, ESS 'essive', FIN 'purpose', IN 'inanimate', INSTR 'instrumental', INTR 'intransitive', INTS 'intensifier', IPFV 'imperfective', LOC 'location', MD 'medial', N.P., P.N. 'proper noun', NEG 'negative', NZR 'nominalizer', PERF 'perfect', PL 'plural', PLAC 'pluractional', POS 'possessive', PREG 'question particle', PROB 'probabilitive', PROG 'progressive', PSD, PST 'past', PTC 'particle', QP 'question particle', REL 'relator', RESTR 'restrictive', SG 'singular', SUP 'supine', TMP 'temporal', VOC 'vocative'

11 References

Álvarez, José, 2016. Morfosintaxis de la negación clausal en kari'ña y otras lenguas caribes. *Simposio de Sintaxis: La negación en lenguas amazónicas, Amazónicas VI*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia en Amazonia, Leticia, Colombia, 23-27 May.

Cáceres Arandia, Natalia. 2011. *Grammaire fonctionnelle-typologique du ye'kwana, langue caribe du Venezuela*. PhD dissertation, Université Lyon 2.

Cáceres Arandia, Natalia. 2015. Constructing Cariban Property Concepts through adverbs. Paper presented at the *Meeting of the Association for Linguistic Typology (ALT 11)*, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1 September.

Cáceres Arandia, Natalia and Spike Gildea. 2014. Patient Nominalization>Passive in Panare and Ye'kwana (Cariban). Paper presented at the *Workshop on Voice Systems in Diachrony: a comparative perspective*, University of Pavia, Italy, 12 September.

Colina Amaro, Angel A. 1991 *Descripción del idioma Yawarana*. Senior thesis. Escuela de Antropología, Universidad Central de Venezuela.

Franchetto, Bruna. 2003. L'autre du même: parallélisme et grammaire dans l'art verbal des récits Kuikuro (caribe du Haut Xingu, Brésil). *Amerindia* 28:213-248

Dahl, Östen. 1985. *Tense and Aspect Systems*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gildea, Spike. 1997. Evolution of Grammatical Relations in Cariban: How Functional Motivation Precedes Syntactic Change." In Givón, Talmy (ed.), *Grammatical Relations: A Functionalist Perspective, Typological Studies in Language* (TSL 35), pp. 155–198. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Gildea, Spike. 1998. *On Reconstructing Grammar: Comparative Cariban Morphosyntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gildea, Spike. 2003. The Venezuelan Branch of the Cariban Language Family. *Amerindia* 28:7-32.

Gildea, Spike. 2012. Linguistic Studies in the Cariban Family. In Campbell, Lyle and Veronica Grondona (eds.), *Handbook of South American Languages*, pp. 441-494. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter

Gildea, Spike and Desrey Fox. 2004. Attention, topic continuity, and topic persistence: Empirical studies of the functional basis of ergativity in Akawaio. *Troisième Réunion Internationale, Ergativité en Amazonie*, PICS-CNRS. Paris, France, 29 November-5 December.

Gildea, Spike and Sérgio Meira. 2016. A Comparative survey of Verbal Negation in the Cariban Family. *Simposio de Sintaxis: La negación en lenguas amazónicas, Amazónicas VI*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia en Amazonia, Leticia, Colombia, 23-27 May.

Grinevald, Colette and Michel Bert. 2011. Speakers and communities. In Austin, Peter and Julia Sallabank (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages*, pp. 45–65. Cambridge: Cambridge

Hawkins, Robert E. 1998. Wai Wai. In Derbyshire, Desmond C. and Geoffrey K. Pullum (eds.), *Handbook of Amazonian Languages*, vol. IV, pp. 3–202. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Mattei-Muller, Marie Claude. 2005. Sistema verbal Yawarana. *Grammar of Cariban Languages meeting*. CELIA, Villejuif, 5-9 December

Matter, Florian. 2021. *Diachronic and typological aspects of Cariban verbal argument marking*. PhD dissertation, University of Bern.

Mattiola, Simone. 2019. *Typology of Pluractional Constructions in the Languages of the World*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Meira, Sérgio, Spike Gildea, and Berend J. Hoff. 2010. On the Origin of Ablaut in the Cariban Family. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 76(4): 477–515.

Payne, Thomas E. and Doris L. Payne. 2013. *A Typological Grammar of Panare: A Cariban Language of Venezuela*. Brill's Studies in the Indigenous Languages of the Americas. Leiden: Brill.

Sapién, Racquel-María, Natalia Cáceres Arandia, Spike Gildea and Sérgio Meira. 2021. Antipassive in the Cariban family. In Witzlack-Makarevich, Alena and Katarzyna Janic (eds.), *Antipassive: Typology, diachrony, and related constructions* (TSL 130), 65–96. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Skilton, Amalia. 2017. Three speakers, four dialects: Documenting variation in an endangered Amazonian language. *Language Documentation & Conservation Special Publication* 13:94–115.