Spanish loan verbs in Paunaka: From verbal to non-verbal predication

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This talk is about inputs and outputs concerning the borrowing of verbs from Spanish into Paunaka, a critically endangered Southern Arawakan language spoken in Eastern Bolivia.

Spanish verbs can be borrowed with two different input forms. The first form, the reduced infinitive, is a common input form, not only among genetically and geographically close languages, but also as a general pattern among South American languages in contact with Romance languages (Wohlgemuth 2009:81). The second form that Paunaka borrows is past participles, preferably of verbs that end in -ar in Spanish (with participles in -ado), but also of some verbs that end in -er or -ir. Wohlgemuth (2009:112-113) reports that some languages in the world borrow participles as input forms, and Napeka, a language that was spoken in the same area, possibly shares this trait with Paunaka.¹

The input forms are then either verbalized, see (1), using the same strategy that Baure and Trinitario employ, two very closely related languages, or they are integrated as non-verbal predicates, see (2).² Those non-verbal predicates can be stative or active, and they can even be used to express transitive relations. This is highly uncommon cross-linguistically, because active relations are usually encoded by verbs (e.g. Langacker 1987:189, 244; Frawley 1992:140, 142; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:82-83, Givón 2001:52). Considering native non-verbal predication structures only, this also holds for Paunaka. The integration of Spanish verbs has thus extended the semantic space of non-verbal predication to encode not only stative, but also active relations. Interestingly, non-verbal predicates of borrowed active verbs are also found in Bésiro, the language that has been dominant in the region for 300 years (Sans 2012, p.c.).

(1) a. native verb
\[ \text{tikechuny} \]
\[ \text{ti-ke-chu-nø} \]
\[ 3i\text{-say-TH-1SG} \]
’she says to me’

b. borrowed verb
\[ \text{tayurauchuny} \]
\[ \text{ti-ayurau-chu-nø} \]
\[ 3i\text{-help-TH-1SG} \]
‘she helps me’

(2) a. native non-verbal predicate
\[ \text{chubuyu-bi-tu} \]
\[ \text{chubui-yu-bi-tu} \]
\[ \text{old.man-INTS-1PL-IAM} \]
‘we are very old now’

b. borrowed non-verbal predicate
\[ \text{metu pagaubitu} \]
\[ \text{metu pagau-bi-tu} \]
\[ \text{already pay-1PL-IAM} \]
‘we have already paid it’

Glosses:
1 = first person; 3i = 3rd person; IAM = iamitive (perfect); INTS = intensifier; PL = plural; SG = singular; TH = thematic suffix

¹ Since Napeka has become extinct by now and has hardly been documented there is no possibility for verification.
² Verbal and non-verbal predicates can easily be distinguished by different place of subject marking (prefixed vs. suffixed) and a different marker for irrealis reality status.
References


