

## First thoughts on surface tonal patterns in Amawaka, a Panoan language of Peru and Brazil

Amawaka ([ɑm̃ˈwɛkɑ]) is a highly endangered and underdocumented tonal language of the Headwaters (Fleck 2011) subgroup of the Panoan family in the Southwest Amazon Basin, spoken by approximately 200 people. Undocumented phonetic and phonological phenomena of Amawaka include its tonal structure, both in terms of surface realizations and the patterns underlying these realizations. Original audiovisual data from the author's fieldwork in various Amawaka communities at the Peru-Brazil border will illuminate the as-yet obscure tonal systematicity of the language.

Unlike other elements, monosyllabic bimoraic phonological nominal words with long vowels display variation in their surface realization. All the words with the open back unrounded /ɑ/, like /'kɑ:/ (patarashca, a traditional Amazonian dish), /'nɑ:/ "mestizo" etc. [with the exception of /'tɑ:/ "reed", which surfaces with either a H or L tone] bear a low tone in isolation. This realization contrasts with all the encountered nominal monosyllables with vowels from the close and close-mid front and central spectrum /i, ɐ, i, ɨ/, which clearly surface as high tone words in isolation, for example /'m̃ˈi:/ (a clay-lick for animals), /'w̃i:/ "Anopheles, spp. mosquito".

Monosyllables with close-mid back rounded /o/ have a less restrictive pitch that varies among speakers from low to high realizations, and sometimes even across the speech tokens from an individual speaker, e.g. /wó:/ or /wō:/ "hair", /h̃ō:/ or /h̃ò:/ (a type of tarantula).

Phrasal tonal phonology is more complex, when these three kinds of monosyllables appear in larger noun phrases. Some retain the same surface tones as their isolation form, while others seem to vary freely in their surface realization, e.g. /'t̃ɐː.nɑ:/ or /'t̃ɐː.nɑ:/ 'one mestizo'. Yet other monosyllables, e.g. /m̃ɑ:/, exhibit a falling tone when preceded by a H syllable, suggesting probably latent tone sandhi phenomena, e.g. /'t̃ɐː.m̃ɑ:/ (one clay-lick for parrots). In disyllabic, trisyllabic and quadrisyllabic nouns, tonal and stress patterns generally seem to be more consistent and tend to be retained both in isolation and in larger intonational phrases. Disyllabic nouns, for instance, surface as L-H or L-L when a glottal stop is in coda position. The association of L with a glottal stop is a feature that occurs in other Panoan languages as well, like Capanahua (Loos 1969), and more generally it is an areal feature, found in other parts of Amazonia (Hyman 2010). So, tone has significant interactions with the glottal stop and glottalization, which generally co-occurs with L.

The data above suggest that the underlying tonal system of Amawaka is much more complex than the privative one-tone analysis (/H/ vs. Ø, i.e. lack of tone) that was proposed by Russell and Russell (1959). Evidence from field data suggests either an equipollent (Hyman 2010) two-tone opposition between /H/ and /L/, or a hybrid system, with both equipollent and privative features; that is, /H/ vs. /L/ vs. either Ø or /M/. This first systematic description of Amawaka tone, in conjunction with ongoing research, is poised to address broader questions concerning interrelationships between surface/underlying tone and other suprasegmental features, such as nasality, metrical stress, and intonation.

## References

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