



# How to say no: a usage-based analysis of negation strategies in Sà'an Sàvǐ ñà Yukúnani

Guillem Belmar & Jeremías Salazar

University of California, Santa Barbara



# This presentation

- The language
  - **Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnanĩ → Mixtepec Mixtec → Mixtec → Otomanguean**
- The data
- Negation in Mixtec
- Negation in Mixtepec Mixtec (previous claims)
- (Morphological) Negation in Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnanĩ (Verbs)



# Sà'án Sàvǐ ñà Yúkúnani

Pictured: views from Yucunani's primary school

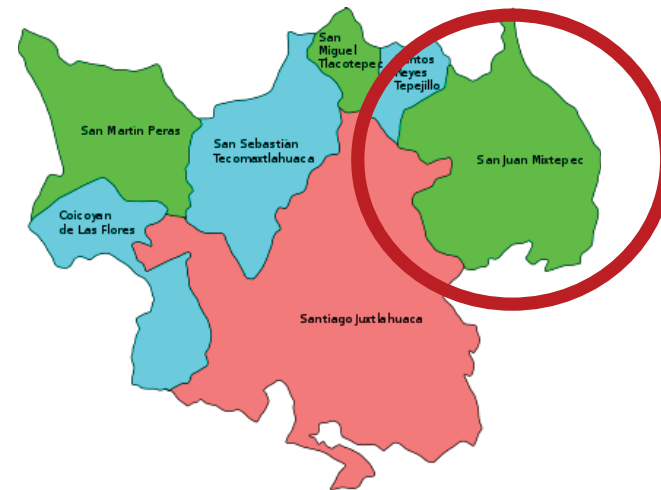
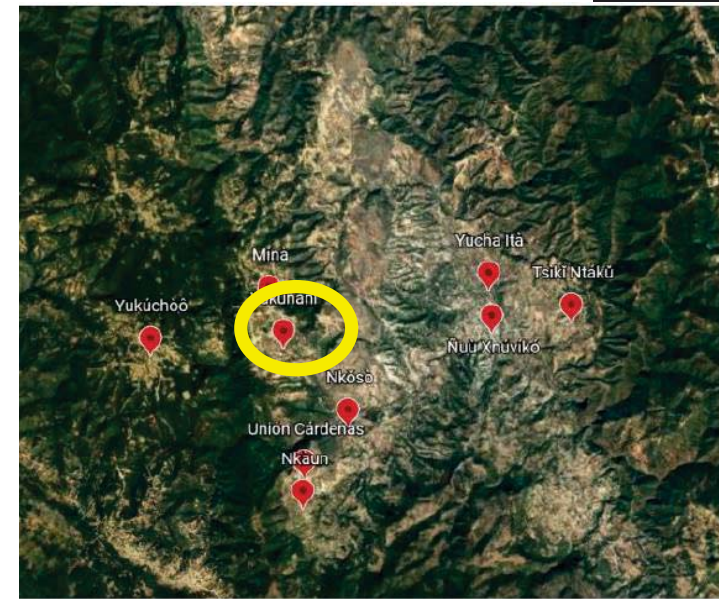
# Sà'án Sàvī ñà Yukúnani

Sà'án Sàvī ñà Yukúnani → Mixtepec Mixtec → Mixtec → Otomanguan

Yucunani, San Juan Mixtepec (Oaxaca, Mexico)

96 inhabitants

Approx. 81 speakers, about 9,000 speakers of the larger Mixtepec Mixtec (INEGI 2020)



Map VII-4. Mixtec Dialect Areas



Sà'an  
Sàvĩ ñà  
Yukúnani

# Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani

- Little documentation, mostly on
  - Phonology (Pike & Ibach 1978; Paster & Beam de Azcona 2004; Belmar & Salazar 2023);
  - Body parts as relational nouns (Bowers 2016);
  - Person marking (Paster 2007; Belmar et al. 2021; Salazar et al. 2022)
  - Subordinators and discourse markers (Belmar & Salazar submitted)
- As other Mixtec languages, Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani is mostly a VSO language
- Sà'án Sàvĩ ñà Yukúnani presents a very complex tonal system
  - 4 level tones
  - Several contour tones
- Tone also fulfills grammatical functions, such marking aspect, mood, **polarity** or person

# “Corpus”

- Fieldwork Corpus (+ Field Methods Class recordings)
- Unplanned naturalistic data
  - Different genres: personal narratives, folk tales, social commentary, and 2 conversations
- 19 recordings from 11 speakers
- 2 hour and 51 minutes
- Transcriptions in ELAN & Praat



# Negation in Mixtec

- Normally a split between *realis* (IPFV, PFV) and *irrealis* (POT/PURP, PROH) prefixes/clitics
- Irrealis: Ma (na, ña, a)
- Realis: tuu / koo

DIALECT	FORM(S)	SOURCE
Atatláhuca	<i>ma-/tu-</i>	Alexander 1980
Ayutla	tone change	Hills 1990
Coatzospan	<i>ñá</i>	Small 1990
Jamiltepec	<i>ma/ñà</i>	Johnson 1988
Jicaltepec	<i>ñà</i>	Bradley 1970
Ocotepec	<i>mà/nduí, ñaá</i>	Alexander 1988
Peñoles	<i>ñà-díú, ñà-túú,</i> <i>túú, ñà</i>	Daly 1973
San Juan Colorado	<i>ña</i>	Stark Campbell et al. 1986
San Miguel el Grande	<i>ma-/tu-</i>	Dyk and Stoudt 1965
Silacayoapan	<i>a/ko</i>	Shields 1988

NOTE: I have standardized the tone marking in this table to conform to my own. I have only given one source for Jamiltepec Mixtec, since the two available sources (Pensinger 1974 and Johnson 1988) provide the same data.

Macaulay 1990



# Negation in Mixtec

(1) *Tu-ni-xižaa=ró*

NEG-CP-be+located(R)=2

‘You weren’t there.’ (Chalcatongo Mixtec)

(2) *Ma-k̄i?i=rí*

MA-go(P)=1

‘I will not go’ (Chalcatongo Mixtec)

(3) *Ma cíu*

‘One cannot or should not’ (San Miguel el Grande Mixtec)

Macaulay 1990

# Negation in Mixtepec Mixtec

(4) **Kue** kúni-yu sachuun, (Gómez Hernández 2007, gloss from Bowers 2020)

<b>kue</b>	kúni=yu	sachuun
NEG	IPFV/want=1 SG	IPFV/work/1 SG

‘I don’t want to work’

(5) **Ma** sana ino sa’an-ko (Beckmann & Nieves, 2008, gloss from Bowers 2020)

<b>ma-sana+in-o</b>	sa’an=ko
NEG-forget -1PL.INCL	language=1PL.INCL

‘We must not forget our language’

# Negation in Mixtepec Mixtec

According to Bowers (2020)

Kuě	Mà
REALIS FORMS	IRREALIS FORMS
PFV (REALIS)	

But the situation is much more complex!

(Morphological)  
Negation in  
Sà'án Sàvǐ ñà Yukúnanǐ

VERBS!

# Standard negation

The basic strategy that a language has for negating declarative verbal main clauses that are modally as unmarked as possible (Payne 1985)

(6) **Tsáin**-nà yaà tsáin-nà [ntsisaa\_kue\_na\_yata\_viko; HVL; 5:26]

<b>tsáin</b> =nà	yaà	tsáin=nà
IPFV.step=3PL.HUM	music	IPFV.step=3PL.HUM

‘They dance.’

(7) **Kuě tsáin**-rà ñu’ú [iin\_chaa\_tsini\_tsi\_tachi; JS; 4:12]

<b>kuě</b>	<b>tsáin</b> =rà	ñu’ú
NEG	IPFV.step=3M	dirt

‘He wasn’t stepping on the ground.’

# Standard negation

It can be used in direct questions:

(8) ¿a tsí'ú á kuě tsí'ú? [Nixi\_ntavi\_ntixi; FVM; 2:46]

á	tsí'i=ú	á	kuě	tsí'i=ú
or	IPFV.drink=2NFORM	or	NEG	IPFV.drink=2NFORM

‘Do you drink or do you not drink?’

## Negation with *irrealis*

(9) *Nórtì kú nchìchúìn-ñà kù'ùn tavà nùŭ Universidad skuá'a-kue-ì-à* [Consentimiento; CS; 1:36]

Nórtì	kún-chì-chúun=ì=ñà	kù'ùn	tavà	nùŭ	Universidad
EEUU	PROSP-CAUS-send=3GNR=3GNR	POT.go	so_that	OBL	Universidad

**skuá'a=kue=ì=à**

**POT.study=PLZ=3GNR=3GNR**

‘They will send it to the US so that they can/may study it at the University’

(10) *Mà skuǎ'a-vì tù'un-ka* [Nixi\_tantaa-na; CS; 16:36]

mà	skuǎ'a=kue=ì	tù'un=ka
DEO.NEG	NEG.POT.study=PLZ=3GNR	word=ANA

‘They will not study these words’

# Negation with perfective (counterfactual)

(12) *Ntsìtsà'àn-yù skuélà* [California, JS; 0:43]

**ntsì-tsà'àn=yù**      **skuélà**  
PFV.HAB-go=1      school  
'I would (past) go to school'

(13) *Kuě nìtsìtsà'àn-kà-yù* [California; JS; 0:59]

**kuě**      **nì-tsì-tsà'àn=kà=yù**  
NEG      CNTF-HAB-go=more=1  
'I would no longer go (there)'

(14) *Nìkuu nchàâ stàă* [kue\_nchai, A; 8:23]

**nìkuu**      **nchàa=L**      **stàă**  
PFV.be\_able      PFV.make=1      tortilla  
'I was able to make tortillas.'

(15) *Mà nìkuu-kà katsî* [koto\_kiti; HVB; 9:34]

**mà**      **nì-kuu=ka**      **katsî=L**  
DEO.NEG CNTF-be\_able=more      POT.eat=1  
'I couldn't eat anymore.'

Counterfactual ní- (e.g., Hollenbach 2015)



# Tonal alternation

A Rising tone in the first mora indicates negation

(16) Ñà-ka kúu-ñà **ntsìni-yù** [Yukunani\_ta\_tsaa\_naa; HVL; 3:33]

ñà=ka                      kúuñà      **ntsìni=yù**

CL.GNR=ANA              FOC              PFV.see=1

‘This is what I have seen’

(17) Cha **ntsĩni** sò'o tuku-kue-tù [Yukunani\_ta\_tsaa\_naa; HVL; 5:17]

cha              **ntsĩni-sò'o**              tuku=kue=tu=L

and              NEG.PFV.see-ear      also=PLZ=SURPR=1

‘And we also didn’t understand it!’

# Tonal alternation ( + pre-nasalization)

A Rising tone in the first mora indicates negation + pre-nasalization of the first oral stop

ne'ě

(18) *Ně'ě ñàà.. ñà ntakuaàn ñà ko'ò ra* [nixi\_ntavi\_ntixi; FVM; 1:55]

**ně'ě**=L                      ñàà                      ñà                      ntakuaan=L                      ñà                      ko'o=L                      ra  
 NEG.POT.get=1                      DISC                      SUB                      POT.buy=1                      RLZ                      POT.drink=1                      TOP

'I won't get... to buy anything to drink'

kù'ùn

(19) *Nkù'ùn-kà-yù keè kaka ntá'vi-kà-yù* [Na\_tsika\_ntavi; FVM; 6:29]

**nkù'ùn**=kà=yù                      kee=L                      kaka-ntá'vi=kà=yù  
 NEG.POT.go=more=1                      POT.go\_out=1                      POT.walk-poor=more=1

'I will not emigrate anymore'

# Morphological negation (Verbs)

+	-
IPFV	Kuě + IPFV
PFV	Kuě + CNTF Mà / Maa + CNTF NEG.PFV ((n)R-)
POT	NEG.POT ((n)R-) Mà + NEG.POT Maa + POT
PROSP	Mà / Maa + NEG.POT Kuě + PROSP
IMP	Mà + NEG.POT

# Kuě vs. Mà/Màa

Kuě



General negative particle

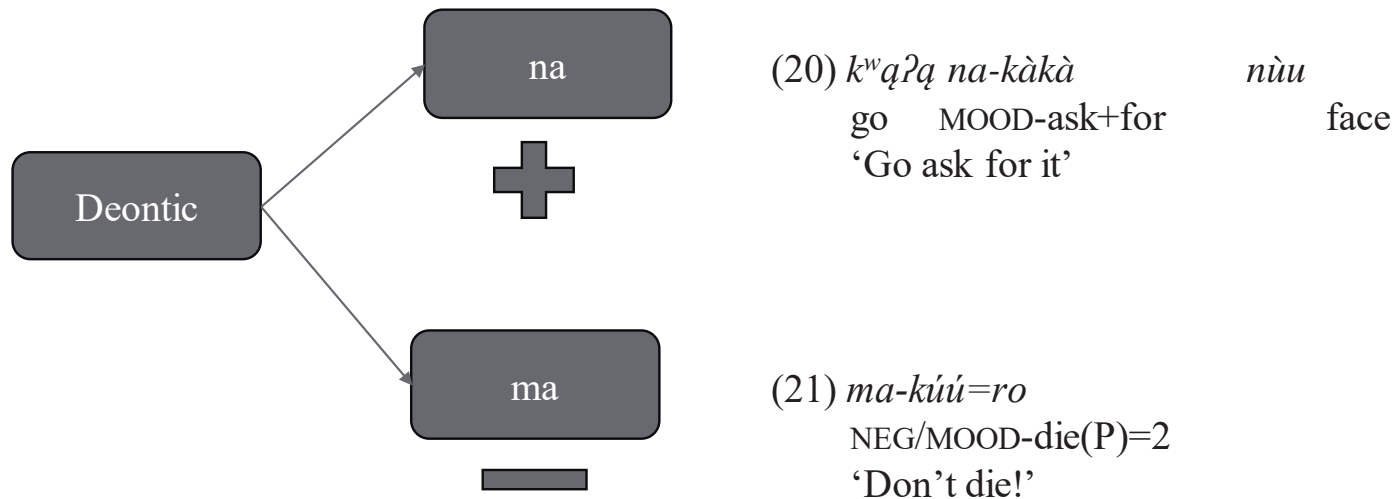
Mà/Màa



Deontic mood particle  
(non-actual events)

# Deontic mood

Macaulay 1990, for Chalcatongo Mixtec: **ma** is the negative counterpart of **na**



**na** & **ma** do NOT co-occur



# Acknowledgments

We want to thank:

- Celia Bautista, Constantino Bautista López, Alicia López Cruz, Guillermo Martínez López, Almadelia Ortiz Cruz, Fernando Víctor Morales Velasco, Griselda Reyes Basurto, Claudia Salazar, Hermelinda Velasco Bautista, Hilaria Velasco López, and those who preferred to remain anonymous for sharing their language with us
- The Chumash people, whose unceded lands UCSB stands on
- Everyone at the UCSB Field Methods Class 2019/20
- Verónica and Claudia for their work recording speakers in Yucunani
- UCSB's LangDoc lab for their feedback
- This project was supported partly by NSF award #1660355, a UCSB Academic Senate Faculty Research Grant and the Jacobs Research Funds (Whatcom Museum Foundation, Bellingham, Washington USA)

**¡Tá tsà'vĩ-kue-ní!**

# •TÁ TSÀ'VĚ-KUE-NÍ NÀÀ CHÁA SÒ'O-NÍ!



Twitter: @yucunani

Instagram: @yucunani\_saansavi

Facebook: Yucunani Sà'án Sàvĭ