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Piman Song Syntax: Its Historical Significance¹

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Piman song syntax is archaic in nature. It is verb-final, which is the archaic Uto-Aztecan neutral word order. As is typical of ritual codes, it is reduced; it lacks categories that are ordinary or even fundamental in the spoken language.

The particular phenomenon that I wish to address here is what has been termed auxiliary by Uto-Aztecan and Tepiman linguists. I will hereafter use the shortened form aux to refer to this constituent.

This aux in modern spoken Piman is an obligatory constituent that marks subject, aspect and tense. While the tense and aspect markings in the aux are also coded on the predicate, subject is encoded obligatorily only on the aux.

This paper will examine the correlation between relatively fixed word order and lack of an obligatory aux in some varieties of Piman. Modern song Piman and colonial Pima Bajo show relatively fixed word order and lack a stable morphological aux. Modern spoken Piman, on the other hand, has the opposite situation. I will try to explain the significance of this correlation.

The basic problem is that clitics, originally an optional syntactic category, became the basic means of marking nuclear arguments in modern spoken Piman. I will now present a developmental sequence into which song Piman and modern spoken Piman fit. This developmental sequence is as follows.

(a) (unattested, reflected in Piman song syntax) only full nominals occur (no clitics); there is no case system, or only a marginal one (limited to pronouns); word order (SOV) is used to track subject and object.

(b) (unattested, Proto-Uto-Aztecan times) one of the nuclear categories (here, the object) develops proclitic pronominal forms which attach to the predicate; these object clitics become obligatory; word order is retained.

(c) (attested; Nevome, ca. 1630-1657) subject clitics develop on the model of the object clitics; subject clitics are optional and may appear as a separate aux word; word order remains SOV.

(d) (unattested, but important; perhaps attested in 1774 for Papago) subject clitics become obligatory as an aux; clitic pronominals and aux are now used as the basic means of tracking subject and object; word order is probably in flux.

(e) (attested; modern spoken Piman) the basic (syntactically obligatory) way of marking nuclear arguments is by clitics and aux; word order is now variable and apparently sensitive to context of speech act.

I will first sketch the nature of argument marking and word order in modern spoken Piman. I will then discuss the syntax of song Piman. The diachronic development of the system in modern spoken Piman will then be briefly considered.

Syntax in Modern Spoken Piman

Subjects are marked in modern spoken Piman by a set of personal pronominals that occur in a morphological constituent called aux. This clause-level constituent is made up as follows.²

- (1) conjunction + person + aspect + tense

The person markers are: an- ('I'), ap- ('you'), a-/o ('he/she/it'), at-/ac- ('we'), am- ('ye') and a-/o ('they'). Aspect is either -t ('perfective') or zero ('imperfective'). Tense is either -o ('future') or zero ('non-future'). If the conjunction is present, the aux must be clause-initial. Otherwise, it may occur in a variety of positions, although it is most frequently found in second position.

Examples (2a) and (2b) show that subject marking with the aux is not syntactically equivalent to expression of the subject with a full nominal.

- (2a) cikp an-t
 worked I -PERF
 'I worked.'
- (2b) cikp an-t a:ni
 worked I -PERF I/me
 'It was me that worked.'

The independent pronoun occurs for emphasis, not as the primary means of marking the subject. This is done by the aux constituent. Piman song syntax supports this claim, but before it can be considered, it is necessary to first consider how the object argument is marked.

As shown in (3), objects are marked by pronominal prefixes to the verb.

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--------------|
| (3) | ni- | 'me' |
| | m- | 'you' |
| | Ø- | 'him/her/it' |
| | t- | 'us' |
| | im- | 'you' |
| | ha- | 'them' |

The third person singular is the unmarked category (zero representation).

It should be noted that word order variability in modern spoken Piman has some discourse functions. The order of the nominals may have discourse salience. Given a VSO order (where S and O are full nominals and not clitics or affixes), Saxton and Saxton (1969) account for permutability (fronting of nominals) by such discourse factors as emphasis or reply to a question.

- (4a) (mua a -t g Panco g wisilo)
 killed 3sg-PERF DET P. DET calf
 'Pancho killed the calf.'

- (4b) Wisilo a -t mua g Panco
 calf 3sg -PERF killed DET P.
 'The calf is what Pancho killed.' (Saxton and
 Saxton, 1969:145)

- (4c) Panco a -t g wisilo mua
 P. 3sg-Perf DET calf killed
 'Pancho's the one, the calf is what he killed.'
 (Saxton and Saxton, 1969:145)

A full study of the pragmatic function of word order variability in modern spoken Piman remains to be done. It should be noted that some syntactic contexts still favor verb-final orders (subordinate clauses) and some favor the opposite order; this latter possibility will be discussed below.

Piman Song Syntax

In contrast to the syntax of modern spoken Piman, the word order of song Piman is remarkably rigid. Song Piman is in many ways a reduced code. Underhill (1946:36) noted that in Piman song language, tense and number distinctions were not usually expressed,

and the subject could be omitted. Bahr and Haefer (1978:94) note "suffixing, 'particles' [locatives, for example], and auxiliaries" are frequently lacking from the syntax of Piman songs. Note that songs generally have rigid word order (where the sample is a clause unit correlated with a musical phrase) and almost never have an aux.

Songs were sampled from Saxton and Saxton (1973), Densmore (1929) and Bahr and Haefer (1978).³ Clause units usually have three constituents, and they usually follow the orders given below in (5).

- (5) O S V
 S O V
 S A V
 S V₁ V₂

S = subject; O = object; V = verb; A = adverbial

Over 100 clauses were sampled. Lines that were realized by more than one musical phrase were not included because they are complex sentences and beyond the scope of this analysis.

In order to show how this analysis works, I will illustrate with examples from Densmore (1929; numbers 21 and 67).

- (6a) 21.1 S O V
 21.2 S A V
- (6b) 67.1 S O V
 67.2 S A V
 67.3 A V₁ V₂
 67.4 Topic A Predicate

Additional study of Piman song syntax would be helpful.

The Development of the Aux Category

In this concluding section, I will present three arguments which will support the developmental sequence outlined above. The first discusses extreme divergence in modern spoken Piman from the older SOV word order. The second argument will show that the aux was not a unitary entity in colonial Pima Bajo (Nevome), although it tended to be so. The third argument will account for the sudden appearance of the third person imperfect marker for non-future tense 'o in modern spoken Piman.

Point One: Verb-Initialness

The SOV order of song Piman is the most neutral word order in the Uto-Aztecan family and reconstructs for the ancestor (Langacker, 1977:24). This order is virtually the only one to be found in colonial Pima Bajo (ca. 1630-1657), and is not prevalent in modern Pima Bajo of the same environs (Onabas, Sonora, Mexico) ca. 1960; please refer to Table I.

Basic word order is variable in modern spoken Piman. One account of the syntax of modern spoken Piman posits an underlying or neutral order of VSO (Saxton and Saxton, 1969:115), where S and O refer to full nominals. An alternative account (Hale, in Hale, Jeanne and Platero, 1977) posits SOV as the basic order, but must provide for verb-initial contexts which are frequent and favored in some cases.

Among these favored verb-initial contexts are questions and imperatives. Verb-initial contexts are in complete violation of the older verb-final convention. Examples (7) and (8) illustrate these contexts in modern spoken Piman.

- (7) n-a -t ma: g Panco g Hosi g wisilo
 Q-3sg -PERF gave DET P. DET H. DET calf
 'Did Pancho give Jose the calf?'
 (modern spoken Piman)
- (8) oig ma:k g Hosi g wisilo
 IMP give DET H. DET calf
 'Give Jose the calf.'
 (modern spoken Piman)

Similar contexts in colonial Pima Bajo (Nevome) require that the word order be SOV, as shown in (9) and (10).

- (9) n-ap -ta hucudoï oui tohoï?
 Q-you -PERF any woman wanted
 'Have you wanted some woman?'
 (Nevome)
- (10) Joan ga vaita co Zuaki buy himu-na
 John IMP call and Z. to go -COND
 'Call John, so that he can go to Zuaque.'
 (Nevome)

It may be seen that the Nevome word order remains SOV.

Point Two: Developmental Status of the Nevome Aux

It is significant that in Nevome there is an aux-like trend. However, aux is not yet a stable, unitary phonological entity. Its constituents may be discontinuous, absent, or reversed in order. An example of discontinuity and an absent aux is shown in example (11), which is Nevome.

- (11) n-apimu ni-nunaspa durhu io vopohi
 Q-ye me-near from FUT run(pl.,PERF)
 'Will you run from my presence?'

In (11), the future marker is separated from the rest of the aux and the perfective marker does not appear (in modern spoken Piman, the future marker must be accompanied by a perfective marker in the aux with a perfective predicate). The future marker is again used alone in example (12), which is also Nevome.

- (12) oi asp -io usi -aba
 soon maybe-FUT plant-be time for
 'Soon it will be time for planting'

In Nevome, the perfect aspect marker may occur with the full, non-clitic form of the subject pronoun, which could never happen in modern spoken Piman. This is shown in (13), in the second clause.

- (13) dod-amu -ki amu-guguba-na
 OPT-PASS-EVID ye -beat -COND
- coiva teop -urha pima apimu ta si-vapki-ma
 because church-in NEG ye PERF S-enter-ma
 'Would that you would be beaten because you
 did not want to enter the church.'

It is also possible for the future marker to occur in front of the perfect marker, as seen in (14).

- (14) va -t -igui usi -ab -cada
 already-PERF-EVID plant-time for-PAST
- io t' -igui padre divia
 FUT PERF-EVID priest arrived
 'The priest arrived when it was already time to
 plant.'

Nevome lacked a consistent morphological aux of the sort that modern spoken Piman utilizes. The clitic forms of the colonial stage are still to be considered as allomorphs of the full pronoun forms, which is not the case in modern spoken Piman.

Point Three: Modern Piman 'o.

Modern Piman 'o has no analogues in Nevome, despite an overall similarity in the structure of the maximal aux in both varieties. A shortened form of the subject form of the demonstrative 'that' (Nevome hugai) or a shortened subject form of 'this' (Nevome ida) should have developed as a subject clitic.⁴ Both developed short forms, but these are used in modern spoken Piman as full nominals. The demonstrative 'that' is the unmarked choice for third person representation in both modern spoken Piman and Nevome; the only specialized development of it is the modern Piman determiner hi/g/g.

Third person marking in Nevome was accomplished by the use of full nominals. Once the aux became the essential subject marking device, a potential ambiguity arose. Since tense, aspect and third person may all be zero, there is no way of marking third person singular subject with imperfective non-future verbs, especially if the most likely candidate (Nevome hugai) were on its way to becoming a general determiner.

I suggest that 'o arose from Nevome co ('and') and that the modern Piman a- ('third person perfective') was modeled after the stem vowel of the Nevome subject pronouns: ani ('I'), api ('you'), atim ('we'), and apimu ('ye'). This suggests that in Piman varieties there was a strong attraction of subject, perfect and future clitics toward the conjunction and front of the clause. It remains to integrate this observation with the notion of AUX in Uto-Aztecian (Steele, 1979) and in universal grammar (Akmajian, Steele and Wasow, to appear).

Conclusion

It has been long known from Indo-European studies to more recent work that a case system is usually equivalent to fixed word order. Word order variability, both in languages with relatively fixed word order and in so-called free word order languages must be viewed as functional. Recent work in syntax has suggested that discourse factors can account for much of this variability. The expression "free word order" shows a syntactic bias; from a pragmatic point of view, the particular order a clause takes in a "free word order" language is not free.

We have seen that variability in modern spoken Piman is sensitive to discourse factors. We have also seen that song Piman has a rigid syntax; it is also functional. A relatively rigid syntax in songs is used to foreground the semantic content of the song. The rigid order is also characteristic of ritual Piman speech (Underhill, 1946:34).

One might speculate that the function of variability in Nevome word order will show some similarity to the function of word order in modern spoken Piman. A study remains to be done on this matter. The overall picture, however, is one of Piman being originally sensitive to syntactic functions and becoming more sensitive to pragmatic functions. This has consequences for the writing of grammars and the study of how language change occurs. In a shift from syntactically governed word order to more pragmatically sensitive word order, one must posit social selectional factors that operate during the unattested stage (d) sketched above at the beginning of this paper. Ultimately, it must be recognized that people change grammars; grammars don't change people.

Notes.

1. The Piman language is a member of the Tepiman branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family. It consists of Pima Alta (Papago and Pima dialects) of southern Arizona and Pima Bajo in central Sonora, Mexico. The term Nevome refers to colonial Pima Bajo (ca. 1630-1657) known from documents. The term Piman will be used here in a more restricted sense to refer to modern Papago and Pima dialects. The term song Piman will refer to modern Papago and Pima song language.
2. Abbreviations include the following: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, A = adverbial, COND = conditional, DET = determiner, EVID = evidential, FUT = future, IMP = imperative, IMPERF = imperfective, NON-FUT = non-future tense, O = object, OPT = optative, PASS = passive, PERF = perfective, pl. = plural, Q = question, S = subject, sg. = singular, SUBN = subordinate and V = verb.
3. Inclusion of texts from Russel (1908) would have been desirable. Further study of Piman song syntax is merited, and would certainly include this wealth of material as well as the more recent materials of Bahr and others.
4. Piman (modern spoken Piman, Pima Bajo and Nevome) lack specialized third person pronouns; demonstratives are used for this.

Table I Modern Pima Bajo data from Hale (1966).

	<u>Transitive</u>		<u>Intrans.</u>		<u>Stative</u>	
	V-	X-	V-	X-	V-	X-
number	17	174	13	123	23	39
percent	4.3	45	3.3	31.6	6	10

There is a total of 389 examples in the sample that were counted, with a total of 100.2%. Interrogative and imperative clauses were not counted; equational, possessive, essive and impersonal clauses/ predicates were also not counted. V- is verb or stative initial and X- is other initial.

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