Interactions of Modality and Negation in Yami

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Yami (Ciriciring no tao)

- Ethnic population of appx. 4600
  Estimated 4400 native speakers
  (of varying proficiency)

- Malayo-Polynesian - Batanic
  Philippine-type language
  - V(S)O/ VO(S)
  - 4 Voices (symmetrical voice language)

- Descriptive grammars
  (Zhang 2000; Rau & Dong 2005; Rau & Dong 2018)
1. ya k<om>an so kasi o alikey a mehakay
   3SG.NOM <AF>eat OBL candy NOM small LK male
   ‘The little boy is eating candy.’

2. na i-akan no alikey a mehakay o among ya.
   1SG.GEN IF-eat GEN small LK male NOM fish DEM
   ‘The little boy is eating this fish.’
Expressions of Modality in Yami
Expressions of Modality in Yami

(Vondiziano, 2019)

System of modal verbs in Yami

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<td>apiaen</td>
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3. **ala** (a) ya (ra)na ni-m-oli
   MOD (LK) 3SG.NOM already PFV-AF-return.home,
   ‘He **might** have returned home.’

4. (ya*) (ni-*)m-anoyong (o) ko ka-ni-ma-vozow do takey.
   (3SG.NOM*) (PVF*)-AF-true.MOD (NOM) 1SG.GEN NML-PFV-AF-lost LOC mountain
   ‘I **really** got lost in the mountain.’

5. **apia** (o) ka-inom ko so ranom ya?
   may.MOD (NOM) NMZ-drink 1SG.GEN OBL water DEM.PROX
   ‘May I drink this glass of water?’
### Expressions of Modality in Yami

(Vondiziano, 2019)

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#### Systems encoding modality on the main verb

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<td>[VERB-PRO]</td>
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<td>medium P-EXT: suggestion</td>
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<td>medium P-INT: desire</td>
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</table>
6. ko k<om>an so kasi.
   1SG.NOM <AF>eat OBL candy
   ‘I’m eating candy.’ (present tense/progressive aspect)

7. k<om>an ko so kasi.
   <AF>eat 1SG.NOM OBL candy
   ‘I want/am going to eat candy.’ (future tense/intention)

8. na i-akan o among ya.
   1SG.GEN IF-eat NOM fish DEM
   ‘He’s eating this fish.’ (present tense/progressive aspect)

9. i-akan na o among ya.
   IF-eat 1SG.GEN NOM fish DEM
   ‘He must eat this fish.’ (necessity)
Deontic continuum

possibility  necessity

WEAK  STRONG

apia ‘may/can’

Irrealis structure

[VERB-PRO]

‘should’  ‘must’

Epistemic continuum

possibility  necessity

WEAK  STRONG

ala ‘may/might’  ala ‘probably’
Negative or affirmative?

10. ya ji N-ian si kaka do vahay namen!
   3SG.NOM NEG AF-exist NOM older.sibling LOC house 1EPL.GEN

‘My brother is not home’ (negative declarative)
OR
‘my brother IS home!’ (strong assertion – veridical modality)
Research questions

- How does Yami syntactically manage relative scope relations between negation and modality, how systematic or predictable are these structures?

- How does this help characterize modality as an internally coherent system in Yami and to what extent are negation and negative forms utilized to encode affirmative modal meanings?
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<td><strong>beken, tosya, ji abo, taon, cyaa</strong></td>
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Adapted from Rau & Dong (2018:149)
Negative forms in Yami

11. i.) ya ji a-ngay do ilaod.
   3SG.NOM NEG AF-go LOC PN
   ‘He’s not going to Taiwan.’ (negative declarative)

   ii.) ji ya a-ngay do ilaod.
   NEG 3SG.NOM AF-go LOC PN
   ‘He can’t go to Taiwan.’ (negative weak deontic modality = prohibitive)

12. ya abo o nirzpi ko.
   3SG.NOM NEG.exist NOM money 1SG.GEN
   ‘I have no money’

13. ta namen mi-walam.
   NEG.MOD 1PL.NOM AF-rest
   ‘We’re not taking a vacation.’ (Rau & Dong 2018:160)
Negation

- Reversal of the truth value of a proposition
  - (p) → (NEG (p))
  - (p) ‘Students love linguistics’
  - (NEG (p)) ‘Students do NOT love linguistics’

- Narrow-scope negation (MOD (NEG (p)))
  - Possible-not
  - Necessary-not

- Wide-scope negation (NEG (MOD (p)))
  - Not-possible
  - Not-necessary
Logical semantic equivalencies

- Possible-not = not-necessary
- Necessary-not = not-possible

- Double negation
  - Not-possible-not = necessary
  - Not-necessary-not = possible
De Haan (1997)

• Modal suppletion strategy
  - He must leave necessary (MOD (p))
  - He must not leave necessary-not (MOD (NEG (p)))
  - He need not leave not-necessary (NEG (MOD (p)))

• Negative placement strategy
  - Tā [kěyǐ] líkāi possible (MOD (p))
  - Tā [kěyǐ] bù líkāi possible-not (MOD (NEG (p)))
  - Tā bù [kěyǐ] líkāi not-possible (NEG (MOD (p)))
Weak deontic modality - permission

   MOD NML-go 3SG.GEN  
   ‘He may/can go.’  
   (MOD (p)) possible

15. **apia** ka-ji na ngay-an.  
   MOD NML-NEG 3SG.GEN go-NML  
   ‘He may not/can not go.’  
   (MOD (NEG (p))) possible-not

   NEG.MOD NML-go 3SG.GEN  
   ‘He may not/can't go.’  
   (NEG (MOD (p))) not-possible

17. **ji** ya a-ngay do ilaod.  
   NEG 3SG.NOM AF-go LOC PN  
   ‘He may not/can’t go to Taiwan.’  
   (NEG (MOD (p))) not-possible [irrealis structure]

18. **ji** **apia** ka-angay mo!  
   MOD MOD NML-go 2SG.GEN  
   ‘You can definitely go!’  
   (MOD (MOD (p))) very possible
Strong deontic modality - obligation

19. pi-vazay-in na. CAU-work-PF 3SG.GEN ‘He must do it.’ (MOD (p)) necessary

20. [ji na] pi-vazay-a. [NEG 3SG.GEN] CAU-work-PF ‘He must not do it.’ (MOD (NEG (p))) necessary-not [irrealis structure]

21. ala ji na pi-vazay-a. MOD NEG 3SG.GEN CAU-work-PF ‘He needn’t do it.’ (NEG (MOD (p))) not-necessary
Strong deontic modality - obligation

   [MOD NML-NEG 3SG.GEN] go-NML
   ‘He may not/can not go.’
   (‘He’s permitted to not go.’)

   (MOD (NEG (p))) possible-not

23. [ala ji na] pi-vazay-a.
   [MOD NEG 3SG.GEN] CAU-work-PF
   ‘He needn’t do it.’
   (‘It’s possible that he must not do it.’)

   (NEG (MOD (p))) not-necessary
Weak epistemic modality - possibility

24. **ala** ya **m-ian do vanwa.**
   **MOD** 3SG.NOM AF-exist LOC beach
   ‘He may be at the beach.’
   (MOD (P)) possible

25. **ala** ya **ji** N-ian do vanwa.
   **MOD** 3SG.NOM **NEG** AF-exist LOC beach
   ‘He may not be at the beach.’
   (MOD (NEG (p))) possible-not

26. **ta** iyan **na do vanwa.**
   **NEG.MOD** PF.exist 3SG.GEN LOC beach
   ‘He can’t be at the beach.’
   (NEG (MOD (p))) not-possible

27. ya **ji** N-ian do vanwa.
   3SG.NOM **NEG** AF-exist LOC beach
   ‘He’s **not at** the beach.’
   (NEG (p)) negative declarative
28. ya ji N-ian do vanwa ori ya.
   3SG.NOM MOD AF-exist LOC beach DEM.MED DEM.PROX
   ‘he must be at the beach.’ (MOD (p)) necessary

29. ji abo ka-ian do vanwa.
   MOD NEG.exist NML-exist LOC beach
   ‘He must not be at the beach.’ (MOD (NEG (p))) necessary-not

30. N/A
   (NEG (MOD (p))) not-necessary
Double negation –
deontic necessity, commissives

31. no m-ai do Pongso am ya abo ka-ji mi-yakan so libangbang a.
when AF-come LOC PN TOP 3SG.NOM NEG.exist NML-NEG AF-eat OBL flying fish FSP
‘When you come to Lanyu, you can’t not eat fish.’

32. marahet ka-ji na ngay-an.
NEG.MOD NML-NEG 3SG.GEN go-NML
‘He can’t not go.’

33. ji abo ka-ji na ma-pivaray-an sia.
MOD NEG.exist NML-NEG 3SG.GEN AF-do-NML 3SG.NOM
‘He definitely won’t not do it.’

34. ji abo ka-ji ko angsem-an so mata mo.
MOD NEG.exist NML-NEG 1S.GEN raw.neat-NML OBL eye 2S.GEN
‘I will definitely eat your eyes raw.’
Epistemic continuum in Yami

- *possibility* → *necessity* → *absolute certainty*

**Weak**
- *ala* ‘may/might’
- *ala* ‘probably’

**Strong**
- *EMP ji* ‘must’

**Asserted**
- *EMP ji* ‘IS, DOES, DO’
Deontic continuum in Yami

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{possibility} & \quad \text{necessity} & \quad \text{commissive} \\
\text{WEAK} & \quad \text{STRONG} & \quad \text{ASSERTED} \\
\text{apia ‘may/can’} & \quad \text{IRREALIS STRUCTURE} & \quad \text{DOUBLE NEGATION} \\
\text{‘should’} & \quad \text{‘must’} & \quad \text{NEG...ji} \\
\text{‘must’} & \quad \text{‘shall/will’} & \\
\end{align*}
\]
Conclusion

• Strict MOD-NEG ordering in VP – must rely on modal suppletion to manage scope.

• Weak ends of the modal spectrum are more predictable and systematic than the strong ends.
  • Narrow-scope follows linear order
  • Wide-scope employs semantically negative modal
  • Strong deontic borrows from weak deontic patterns via semantic equivalence
  • Strong epistemic borrows from the assertion end of the spectrum

• Yami encodes affirmative, strong modality using negative morphosyntax (emphatic *ji* and double negation).
Future research

• Restricted interpretation of EMP ji
• Beyond the sentence level – discourse and pragmatic expressions of modality.
• Cross-linguistic comparison of modal systems in other Philippine languages – working towards a typology of modality in Philippine.
Selected References


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