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**Standard negation in Awa Pit: From  
synchrony to diachrony**

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**Abstract:** This study deals with clausal negation in Awa Pit, a Barbacoan language spoken in South America. By bringing together the data on negation from different varieties of the language, we present an analysis of synchronic patterns of negation marking. Based on the variation we suggest a number of innovations in the negation system, for which we put forward diachronic scenarios. Some innovations are likely to be contact-induced, whereas others are products of language-internal diachronic processes. The latter involve mechanisms associated with a classical ‘Jespersen Cycle’. However, Awa Pit offers us very non-classical Jespersen’s Cycles – at best. The case of Awa Pit is instructive as some of the scenarios that we suggest are likely to be relevant for other languages or language families.

**Keywords:** negation marking, diachrony of negation, standard negation, Jespersen’s Cycle, language contact, South American languages

## 1 Introduction

This paper deals with the dynamics of sentential negation marking in the Barbacoan language Awa Pit. By pulling together the relevant data from written materials available on this language, we encounter a puzzling variation in the system of negation, which can be largely attributed to dialectal differences. We take the variation as evidence of an ongoing change in the structure of negation marking in this language and we suggest a number of language-internal and external processes behind the change. First, there is a shift in the syntactic position of the original negation marker from a postverbal to a preverbal position. We discuss two possible scenarios for the change: one involving language contact and the other one related to a diachronic process known as a ‘Jespersen Cycle’ – although in Awa Pit the Jespersen Cycle ran in the reverse direction. Second, in one variety of Awa Pit spoken in Colombia, the emergence

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of a new negation marker can be observed. Although we support Curnow (1997) in his hypothesis on the possible origin of the new negation marker (namely, the lexical verb *ki* ‘do, happen’), we put forward a different diachronic explanation. Third, we raise the question whether yet another negative marker is truly negative in Awa Pit, and discuss its origin. This concerns the suffix *-ma*, ubiquitous as a negator all across South America (Payne 1990; Campbell 2012: 299). In Awa Pit, however, negation is only one of its functions.

Thus the aims of this case-study are at least two-fold. First, since no comparative work on negation has been undertaken so far for Awa Pit or any other Barbacoan language, this paper synthesizes the written data on negation in Awa Pit, presenting a comprehensive analysis of its negation marking system. Second, the data allow us to posit a number of diachronic processes and developments. It is very likely that some of the suggested scenarios are relevant to other languages in South America and beyond.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 sets the stage by first providing some terminological distinctions made in the study (2.1). It then gives a brief introduction into the language and the data sources used for the study (2.2). It finally presents an overview of the negation marking patterns and forms which are reported for different varieties of Awa Pit (2.3). Sections 3 to 5 focus on each of the three negation markers: *shi* (Section 3), *ki* (Section 4), and *-ma* (Section 5). In each of the sections a diachronic scenario for the synchronic distribution of negation is suggested. Section 6 concludes the paper.

## 2 Setting the stage

### 2.1 Terminology

A few terminological preliminaries are in order. First, the type of negation that this paper focuses on is ‘standard negation’ (Payne 1985), viz. the negation of main clause declarative sentences with an overt verbal predicate (Miestamo 2005). All other types of negation are referred to collectively as ‘non-standard negation’. These types vary from standard negation, and from each other, along several parameters, such as indicative vs. imperative mood, main vs. subordinate clause, verbal vs. non-verbal predicate. Non-standard negation types that are relevant in our discussion and that will be considered for comparative purposes are the negation of non-verbal predicates and constituent negation. Second, the expression of negation differs along various parameters. One is whether a negative clause is marked by one or more markers (see Dahl 1979;

Payne 1985; Miestamo 2005; *inter alia*). Another parameter is the position of the negation markers in a clause: it can be preverbal (i.e. preceding the verbal predicate), postverbal (i.e. following the verbal predicate), or double (i.e. embracing the verbal predicate). In cross-linguistic studies on negation two different approaches for comparison are found as to what kind of verb is taken as the ‘locus’ of negation marking, viz. the main verb or the auxiliary, when applicable (e.g. Dahl 1979, Dahl 2010; Miestamo 2005; Dryer 2013). However, the issue is not relevant for our discussion. Finally, negation markers can be morphologically bound or free (Dahl 1979: 81).

## 2.2 Language and data sources

Barbacoan is one of the many small language families of South America and it has five living members: Awa Pit (or Awa-Cualquer), Tsafiki, Cha’palaa, Guambiano and Totoró (Curnow and Liddicoat 1998: 384; Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 141). Map 1 shows their approximate geographic locations.



**Map 1:** Geographic location of Barbacoan languages (Hammarström et al. 2019, base map is provided by OpenStreetMap [openstreetmap.org]).

Among the Barbacoan languages, Tsafiki and Cha’palaa are genealogically closely related and form one group (South Barbacoan, geographically located in Ecuador), as do Guambiano and Totoró (North Barbacoan, spoken in Colombia). According to Geny Gonzales Castaño and Tulio Rojas, who work on the languages

of the Northern group, Guambiano and Totoró are varieties of the same language (Martine Bruil, p.c.). The level of relatedness of Awa Pit to either group is unclear to date. Curnow and Liddicoat (1998: 405) suggest that a closer relationship of Awa Pit to the Northern group is more probable; however, more recent attempts do not find enough evidence for this classification and treat Awa Pit as an ‘unclassified Barbacoan’ language, i.e. outside both the Northern and the Southern groups (Simeon Floyd, p.c.; Hammarström et al. 2019). Geographically, Awa Pit is spoken in south-western Colombia and northern Ecuador. Providing a reliable number of speakers of Awa Pit is a difficult issue, pointed out in a number of sources. As a consequence, the numbers vary to a great extent, from a few hundred to several thousand (see an overview in Obando Ordóñez 1992: 7–8; Curnow 1997: 4, 18). In general, the proportion of speakers is considerably higher in Colombia than in Ecuador (Obando Ordóñez 1992: 7–8; Curnow 1997: 4, 18; Martine Bruil, p.c.).

The way standard negation is expressed in the Barbacoan languages corresponds to the genealogical groupings. Negation markers are formally similar between the closely related language pairs: Northern Barbacoan (Guambiano and Totoró), on the one hand, and Southern Barbacoan (Tsafiki and Cha’palaa), on the other hand (the forms will be discussed in Section 3). In Awa Pit, negation marking shows formal correspondences to the negation markers of both Northern and Southern Barbacoan languages. However, the way negation is marked structurally is different. Both the Southern and the Northern Barbacoan languages use a postverbal negation strategy with a single negator realized as a suffix. Awa Pit, on the other hand, is the only language in the family for which double negation, with two negators embracing the verb, has been reported.

The information on the syntax and morphology of Awa Pit comprises four primary sources, which differ with respect to their focus or aim, and consequently the level of detail. The sources are as follows: Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985), Curnow (1997), Calvache Dueñas (2000), and Obando Ordóñez (1992). While the first three materials deal with a variety of Awa Pit spoken in Colombia, the latter one combines data on Awa Pit varieties both from Colombia and Ecuador. Many more linguistic materials exist on the Colombian variety of Awa Pit than on the variety spoken in Ecuador (Gómez Rendón 2010: 7). In what follows, we briefly introduce each of the sources, in chronological order.

The first source, Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985), is a pedagogical grammar (*gramática pedagógico-práctica*) of a variety of Awa Pit spoken in the Municipalities of Ricaurte and Barbacoas, Department of Nariño, Colombia. The data were presumably collected in the early 1980s. This source is not meant as a descriptive grammar of the language, the material is presented according to

conversational topics, providing examples, word lists, and drilling exercises. For our purposes the source is valuable in the sense that the reader is instructed on how particular aspects of the language, including negation, are expressed.<sup>1</sup>

The second source used for our analysis is a grammatical description by Obando Ordóñez (1992), which is an account of Awa Pit based on data collected in different areas both in Colombia and Ecuador (exact areas are unspecified in the source). The period of data collection and revision is 1984–1990. The source provides discussion of syntax and morphology, including aspects of negation marking.

The third source, Curnow (1997), is a grammatical description of a variety of Awa Pit spoken in the settlements of Pialapí and Pueblo Viejo, in the Municipality of Ricaurte, Department of Nariño, Colombia. Field data are from 1994. There is also an article by Curnow (2004-2005) focusing on a comparison of negation and interrogative markers in Awa Pit; however, the examples and analysis presented in the article are based on Curnow (1997), with no divergent arguments. Therefore, we use Curnow's grammar (1997) as the primary source among these two.

The fourth source, Calvache Dueñas (2000), is a grammatical sketch of a Colombian variety of Awa Pit. The source does not provide any further information on the location and period of data collection, unfortunately. Presumably, it is based (at least partially) on the author's MA thesis (Calvache Dueñas 1989), which focuses on the phonology of the language. Information on negation has been extracted from examples in the texts.

Because there is no straightforward way in which the varieties described by these authors can be identified and referred to (Martine Bruil, p.c.), we refer to them by the name of the authors.

There is currently an ongoing research initiative for a description of some grammatical aspects of a variety of Awa Pit spoken in Ecuador,<sup>2</sup> and this will also shed light on the way negation is marked in the Ecuadorian variety. In all, given the steady decrease in vitality of the Awa Pit language in both countries (cf. Curnow and Liddicoat 1998: 386), we take the already accumulated data on the language as an invaluable basis. It is clear that the data are suboptimal in

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<sup>1</sup> There is a pedagogical grammatical sketch (*gramática pedagógica*) of a variety of Awa Pit spoken in Ecuador by García et al. (2010). However, this material is of limited use for our purposes due to lack of information on negation; therefore, this source will be referred to only in passing.

<sup>2</sup> Martine Bruil (University of Leiden) is conducting field work with speakers of Awa Pit in Ecuador. We are grateful to her for sharing her preliminary observations on negation in this variety, which we mention in what follows when applicable.

some respects, but we will argue that they are rich enough to allow sensible hypotheses of language-specific and general relevance.

### 2.3 Overview of negation marking in Awa Pit

It is pointed out in Curnow (1997: 15) that grammatical accounts of Awa Pit show some differences. He specifies that while some differences are related to divergent analyses by different authors, others are due to dialectal variation:

It is clear that there are different dialects of Awa Pit, at least on the basis of pronunciation. [...] Equally, there may be some syntactic and morphological differences between dialects, although lack of data clouds this issue – perhaps the only clear example is the difference between an apparently complex and obligatory number cross-referencing system in some dialects (Lee Henriksen, p.c.) and the much simpler optional system found in the data for this study. (Curnow 1997: 15)

From a synthesis of data on negation given in different sources for the language, it becomes evident that the system of negation is yet another aspect that shows variation. Although the observed variation may in part be related to some limitations in either the data or the analyses, we assume that for the largest part the differences relate to dialectal variation and to language change.

Table 1 gives an overview of the negative markers and constructions as found in the four sources on the language.

First, all the sources report the negative marker *shi / chi / zhi / zi*.<sup>3</sup> However, while the markers are formally similar, their syntactic position relative to the verb – in the case of standard negation – shows considerable differences. And this begs for an explanation, which we pursue in Section 3. At this point, we just introduce the encountered variation.

In the variety of Awa Pit discussed by Calvache Dueñas (2000), all examples of clausal negation involve the single negative suffix *-zi*.<sup>4</sup> In this and other

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<sup>3</sup> The phonemic representations correspond to /ʃi/ (Curnow 1997: 47), /tʃi/ (Obando Ordóñez 1992: 163), /zi/ (Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez 1985: ix–x), and /zi/ (Calvache Dueñas 1989, 2000: 99). Curnow (1997: 29–31) discusses differences among the sources in the analyses of fricatives and affricates but also notes that some differences may be due to dialectal variation. Relevant for our purposes is the fact that these negation markers have a close correspondence in all the sources. We proceed using an orthographic representation in our discussion.

<sup>4</sup> The pedagogical grammar by García et al. (2010: 42), which we do not use for comparison due to the scarcity of information on negation, contains a remark that negation is expressed, similarly, by a verbal suffix *-zhi*.

**Table 1:** Summary of negation constructions in Awa Pit based on four sources.

Curnow (1997)	Obando Ordóñez (1992: 130)	Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985: 30,36,58)	Calvache Dueñas (2000: 104,108,109)
<b>Standard negation</b>			
1) <i>shi</i> [VERB]- <i>ma</i>	1) [VERB]- <i>chi</i> , 2) <i>chi</i> (...) [VERB]- <i>chi</i> , 3) <i>chi</i> [VERB]	1) [VERB]- <i>zhi</i> , 2) <i>zhi</i> [VERB]-( <i>zhi</i> ), 3) <i>zhi</i> [VERB]	1) [VERB]- <i>zi</i>
2) <i>shi</i> [VERB <sub>non-finite</sub> ] <i>ki</i>		4) [VERB]- <i>ma</i> (emphatic negation)	
<b>Non-standard negation</b>			
[CONSTIT] <i>shi</i> [NON-VERB.PRED] <i>shi</i> ( <i>ki</i> )	?	[CONSTIT] <i>zhin</i>	[CONSTIT](-) <i>zin</i>

varieties where the negator is realized as a suffix on the verb, the negator can be followed by other morphology, viz., a clause-final marker of conjunct / disjunct system (or egophoricity).<sup>5</sup> Examples in (1) illustrate the postverbal single negation strategy.<sup>6</sup>

5 These markers distinguish between speakers (1st person) vs. others (2nd and 3rd person) in statements, and between addressees (2nd person) and others (1st and 3rd person) in questions. A word of explanation is necessary here. First, these markers are analyzed and glossed in somewhat different ways in different sources: conjunct vs. disjunct markers (Curnow 2002), locutor vs. non-locutor (Curnow 1997; Calvache Dueñas 2000), and person markers (Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez 1985; Obando Ordóñez 1992). Whenever possible we have unified the glosses in the examples that follow, using the glosses ‘conjunct’ and ‘disjunct’ (thus following Curnow 2002). Second, as shown by Dickinson (2000: 389), San Roque et al. (2018) and Bruil (2017), this system should *not* be treated on par with a person marking system. San Roque, Floyd, and Norcliffe (2018: 2) refer to this linguistic phenomenon in general as ‘egophoricity’, which is defined as “the grammaticalised encoding of the personal or privileged knowledge or involvement of a potential speaker (the primary knower) in a represented event or situation”.

6 All abbreviations are to be found at the end of the paper.

Note, first, that the gloss for the aspect marker *-(m)tu* has been standardized for all varieties. Following Curnow (1997, 2002), this suffix is glossed as ‘imperfective’. The original glossing is as follows: ‘progressive’ in Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985), ‘aspect’ in Obando Ordóñez (1992), and ‘present durative’ in Calvache Dueñas (2000). Second, in examples (2–3, 5), the clause-final suffixes *-s* and *-sh* are both glossed as ‘person’ in the original materials. Although we attempt to unify glosses for the conjunct / disjunct markers throughout this paper, we cannot identify with confidence what these particular markers stand for in these varieties of Awa Pit. Therefore this gloss is left unchanged.

- (1) (a) *i-fim-tu-ʒi-s*  
 go-want-IPFV-NEG-CONJ  
 ‘I do not want to go.’ (Original: ‘No estoy queriendo ir’, ‘no quiero ir.’)  
 (Calvache Dueñas 2000: 109)
- (b) *awapit paran-tu-ʒi-s*  
 people word/speak-IPFV-NEG-CONJ  
 ‘I am not speaking Awa Pit (lit. the language of the people)’ (Original:  
 ‘No estoy hablando la lengua de la gente.’) (Calvache Dueñas 2000: 109)

In Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985: 30), the negative marker *zhi* is reported to be able to precede the verb as a free morpheme and to occur on the verb as a suffix. And, while the double exponence seems to be common, the preverbal use is noted to be sufficient. This is shown in (2).

- (2) *zhi sa-m-tu-(zhi)-s*  
 NEG make-CON-IPFV-NEG-PERS  
 ‘I am not doing anything.’ (Original: ‘No estoy haciendo nada.’)  
 (Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez 1985: 30)

Similarly, in Obando Ordóñez (1992: 130), it is reported that negation is marked by negator *chi* that “can precede the main verb as a free morpheme, or it can be attached to the verb as a suffix” (examples 3a-b). According to the author, *chi* can occur twice – preceding and following the verb. However, the example for the double-marking strategy may rather involve a one-word negative reply ‘No’ occurring clause-initially, followed by a Subject, Object and the Verbal predicate, with the latter marked by the negation suffix *-chi* (3c).

- (3) (a) *chi patam-tu-s*  
 NEG talk-IPFV-PERS  
 ‘I am not talking.’ (Obando Ordóñez 1992: 130)
- (b) *nu-ne kanta-ki-chi-sh*<sup>7</sup>  
 he-EMPH sing-BOR-NEG-PERS  
 ‘He does not sing.’ (Obando Ordóñez 1992: 130)

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<sup>7</sup> In Obando Ordóñez (1992: 130), the morpheme *-ki* is referred to as an ‘enclitic’ that is used with borrowed words, and it is glossed as ‘borrowing’. Although this gloss is not accurate with respect to the morpheme itself, it is presumably meant to indicate that the borrowed Spanish verb *canta* ‘sing’ occurs with the auxiliary *-ki*, which is used in different varieties of Awa Pit as an auxiliary with borrowings. Note that this occurrence of *-ki* is relevant for our discussion of negation and will be considered in more detail in Section 4.



- (c) **chi** José pala-ne kum-tu-**chi**-sh  
 no José plantain-EMPH eat-IPFV-NEG-PERS  
 ‘No, José is not eating plantain.’ (Obando Ordóñez 1992: 130)

Finally, in the variety of Awa Pit discussed by Curnow (1997), only the preverbal position of the negator *shi* is noted to be possible for standard negation, where *shi* “must appear directly before the verb” (Curnow 1997: 331). As can be observed from Table 1, in this variety the negator *shi* constitutes a part of a double-marking strategy: the verb is additionally either marked with the suffix *-ma* (example 4a) or it is followed by *ki* (example 4b).

- (4) (a) Santos=*na shi i-ma-y*  
 Santos=TOP NEG go-NEG-DISJ  
 ‘Santos did not go.’ (Curnow 1997: 332)
- (b) **shi** *i-t ki=na, pantalón pat-miz-tu-s*  
 NEG go-PFVPART NEG=TOP pants wash-INCEP-IPFV-CONJ  
 ‘If I don’t go (to Pueblo Viejo), I’ll wash my pants.’ (Curnow 1997: 279)

Having introduced the variation in the syntactic position of the negator *shi* / *zhi* / *chi* / *zi* in different Awa Pit varieties, let us now consider the two other markers of negation, viz. *-ma* and *ki*, as well as conditions of their use.

First, the negative marker *-ma* is also found in the variety discussed by Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985: 58). However, in that variety, the suffix *-ma* occurs as a single negation exponent and is described as carrying emphasis.<sup>8</sup> Example (5) illustrates its use.

- (5) *kail-ma-na-sh*  
 return-NEG.EMPH-FUT-PERS  
 ‘I won’t return.’ (Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez 1985: 56)<sup>9</sup>

In the variety discussed by Curnow (1997), the postverbal negative *-ma* always occurs in combination with the preverbal negator *shi* (as seen in 4a above), and it is not emphatic. Curnow (1997: 332) notes, however, that the suffix *-ma* is associated with the past tense, in the sense that no additional tense morphology is needed in cases where the reference is made to the past. Nevertheless, when

<sup>8</sup> Martine Bruil (p.c.) notes that a preliminary analysis of data of Awa Pit spoken in Ecuador suggests standard negation can be marked either solely by the suffix *-shi* or solely by *-ma*. However, specific conditions for the choice between them are still to be determined.

<sup>9</sup> This example is not translated in the original; the present translation is ours.

the suffix *-ma* is explicitly followed by the Future tense marker or the so-called ‘Necessitive’ mood marker, the sentence refers to future and it carries the meaning that an expected activity will not occur (example 6).

- (6) *akkwan shi a-ma-mpa-y*  
 many NEG come-NEG-NECESS-DISJ  
 ‘Many [students] won’t come.’ (Curnow 1997: 333)

Any type of verb, either active or stative, can occur in this construction; the exception is the positive copula *i* (Curnow 1997: 331).

Second, the postverbal element *ki* is found in a negation construction only in the variety described by Curnow (1997). As seen in (4b) above, the construction involves the lexical verb preceded by negator *shi* and followed by *ki*, which is analyzed as either a ‘negative auxiliary’ or a ‘negative copula’ in Curnow (1997: 299, 333–334). The lexical verb, which can be either active or stative, occurs in a non-finite form, either the Perfective Participle or the Imperfective Participle. The element *ki* can take tense specifications and it can take a marker from the conjunct / disjunct system, the occurrence of which is not limited to verbal elements (Curnow 2002: 623–624). The aspectual distinctions marked on the main verb and the tense specification carried by *ki* vary independently and meaningfully (Curnow 1997: 300). Curnow (1997: 334) notes the following:

The tense on the auxiliary indicates the reference time for which something is being claimed, and the non-finite form of the main verb either claims that at that reference time something is/was not in a state of having happened (Perfective Participle) or is/was not on-going or planned (Imperfective Participle).

Examples in (7) show an interplay of tense and aspect. In (7a) the time of reference is in the past and the state of the activity is on-going. In (7b) the time of reference is in the present and the activity is in a state of not having happened. In (7c) the time of reference is also in the present, and the activity is on-going.

- (7) (a) *palanca shi m̄il ki-ata-w*  
 shovel NEG have.IPFVPART NEG-PST-CONJ:SUBJ  
 ‘I didn’t have a shovel.’ (Curnow 1997: 334)
- (b) *Santos=na shi i-t ki*  
 Santos=TOP NEG go-PFVPART NEG  
 ‘Santos hasn’t gone.’ (Curnow 1997: 299)
- (c) *shi pana ki*  
 NEG be:standing.IPFVPART NEG  
 ‘She is not standing.’ (Curnow 1997: 334)

Except for the discussion in Curnow (1997), we do not have information on a relation between negation and other aspects of the grammar, such as tense or aspect.

In the following sections, we examine each of the three negation markers: (i) *shi / zhi / chi / zi*, (ii) *ki*, and (iii) the suffix *-ma*. For each of the negation markers we advance a hypothesis on its diachronic development.

### 3 The *shi / zhi / chi / zi* marker

All sources on Awa Pit report a negation marker with a closely corresponding form *shi / zhi / chi / zi*. This suggests that it is an old negation marker in the language. However, the diversity of its syntactic position relative to the verb is puzzling, raising the question on its initial position. We argue that the use of this negation marker following the verb is more conservative than its use preceding the verb. Three pieces of evidence point in this direction.

First, in three sources, postverbal *shi / zhi / chi / zi* is argued to occur as a suffix. It either follows the verb stem or follows the aspect marker – if the latter is present – and it can be followed by a conjunct / disjunct marker, which always occurs on the final constituent of the clause. In its preverbal use, however, the *shi / zhi / chi /* is a free standing particle.<sup>10</sup> In general, a tighter morphological association with the verb suggests an older structure (cf. Givón 2015: Ch. 1).

The second piece of evidence concerns the use of *shi / zhi / chi / zi* in non-standard negation, viz. constituent negation and negation of non-verbal predicates. As shown in Table 1, the negation marker *shi / zhi / chi / zi* is found following the constituent in all varieties of Awa Pit for which this type of data are available. This is particularly striking in the variety described by Curnow (1997), where standard negation requires the preverbal use of *shi* (Curnow 1997: 335). Example (8) illustrates constituent negation involving an adjective.

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**10** A reviewer asks whether this could be considered a result of degrammaticalization. Based on data that we have available, this case could potentially qualify as the ‘debonding’ type of degrammaticalization (Norde 2009: Ch. 6). Here the ‘severance’ parameter is satisfied, which is regarded as sufficient (Norde 2009: 232). However, no other parameters common to ‘debonding’ are fulfilled. As for the other types of degrammaticalization, viz. ‘deinflectionalization’ and ‘degrammation’ (Norde 2009), no evidence is found in the data.

- (8) *na=na tizh shi cuchillo kasa=yŋ*  
 1SG.NOM=TOP sharp NEG knife with=REST  
*kuzhu nak-ma-ta-w*  
 pig skin-COMP-PST-CONJ:SUBJ  
 ‘I skinned the pig with just a blunt (not sharp) knife.’ (Curnow 1997: 335)

Furthermore, in this variety of Awa Pit (Curnow 1997), the post-constituent use of *shi* is also found for the negation of some non-finite main clauses: either verbless copula constructions (9–10) or constructions with an Imperfective Participle (11–12). Negation of such clauses is marked simply by *shi* following the clause (Curnow 1997: 336).

- (9) *kwizha=na alizh shi*  
 dog=TOP fierce NEG  
 ‘The dog is not fierce.’ (Curnow 1997: 336)
- (10) *na=na inkal awa shi-s*  
 1SG.NOM=TOP mountain person NEG-CONJ  
 ‘I am not a mountain person (I am not an Awa).’ (Curnow 1997: 202)
- (11) *putsha awa tunya kum-tu shi*  
 white people rat eat-IPFVPART NEG  
 ‘The white people don’t eat rats.’ (Curnow 1997: 336)
- (12) *na=na mun pyan shi-s*  
 1SG.NOM=TOP name know.IPFVPART NEG-CONJ  
 ‘I don’t know [his] name.’ (Curnow 1997: 336)

The fact that the post-constituent position of negative *shi* is shared by all Awa Pit varieties and that the post-verbal position is shared by all varieties but one makes it more plausible that it has remained intact in the non-verbal domain, but has undergone a change only in the verbal domain (and only in some varieties), than the other way around. It involves fewer changes, if we take all data into account. Furthermore, for a cross-linguistic parallel, we can refer to the eastern Kiranti languages of Nepal where nominal and non-finite constructions show a more conservative pattern and keep their negation strategy intact (van der Auwera and Vossen 2017: 53, footnote 11).

Assuming that the post-constituent position of the negator is the original one, patterns like (9–12) are likely to be residues of a transition stage. Initially the scope of this negation marker would have been limited to non-verbal (or

nominal) elements and its use in the verbal domain would be an extension. The negation marker would have spread to the verbal domain via constructions involving nominalizations and non-finite clauses. For example, non-finite main clauses like (11–12) are neither fully verbal nor nominal and could have served as a ‘bridging construction’ for the use of this negation marker with fully finite verbal clauses. An extension of the function from nominal to verbal negation has been argued for a number of Arawak languages, where the privative marker \*ma- expanded its scope to the verbal domain via denominal statives and stative predicates (Michael 2014: 280–281). The underlying rationale is that nominals and stative predicates share non-dynamic semantics and thus the nominal negation would have extended to non-dynamic stems more generally (Michael 2014: 281). We return to these non-finite main clauses in Section 4.3.

The third piece of evidence for the originally post-verbal position of the negator *shi / zhi / chi / zi* in Awa Pit comes from related Barbacoan languages. In all other languages of the Barbacoan family, the negation marking is postverbal and suffixal. Although the exact genealogical classification of Awa Pit relative to the Northern and the Southern Barbacoan groups is uncertain, the genealogical relatedness is not disputed (see Curnow and Liddicoat 1998), and we should thus take the way negation is encoded in the family into account.

In South Barbacoan (Tsafiki and Cha’palaa) and North Barbacoan (Guambiano and Totoró) negation is encoded exclusively by a single marker, morphologically realized as a suffix.<sup>11</sup> The exact form is different between the Southern and the Northern groups. In the Southern group, the negation marker is the suffix *-ti /-tu* in Tsafiki (Dickinson 2002) and the suffix *-tyu /-tya* in Cha’palaa (Vittadello 1988; Floyd 2010). Examples (13) and (14) show the use of the negative suffix in the Southern Barbacoan languages.

Tsafiki

- (13) *aman jun=bi=ri pura-i-ti-yo-ti-e*  
 now 3DL=LOC=FOC abandon-BECOME.GEN-NEG-CONJ-RP-DCL  
 ‘He said he didn’t stay there.’ (Dickinson 2002: 150)

Cha’palaa

- (14) *...negee-la-ba chu-tyu de-e-yu.*  
 ...SP:negro-COL-COM live-NEG PL-be-CONJ  
 ‘[...] (we) did not live with the negros.’ (Floyd 2010: 159)

<sup>11</sup> For Totoró we base ourselves on the description of one of the Nam Trik dialects by Gonzales Castaño (2014).

In the Northern group, the negation marker is the suffix *-m-/mu* in Guambiano (Vásquez de Ruiz 1988) and the suffix *-mi* in Totoró (Gonzales Castaño 2014). The use of these negative suffixes is shown in (15) and (16). Note that the form *-m-/mu/-mi* will be briefly considered again in relation with the Awa Pit negation marker *-ma* in Section 5.

#### Guambiano

- (15) *na ma-m-ən-tr-úr*  
 1PRO eat-NEG-INTRZ-PROSP-CONJ  
 ‘I am not going to eat.’ (Original: ‘No voy a comer.’) (Vásquez de Ruiz 1988: 134)

#### Totoró

- (16) *tap-misr-m-ik ki-n*  
 well-become-NEG-NMLZ COP.DISJ-DISJ  
 ‘He did not feel well.’ (Original: ‘Il ne se sentait bien.’) (Gonzales Castaño 2014: 95)

It is most likely that the negative form *chi / zhi / chi / zi* in Awa Pit and the negative suffixes *-ti/-tu* in Tsafiki and *-tyu/-tya* in Cha’palaa are reflexes of one proto-form. In fact, Curnow and Liddicoat (1998: 392) suggest the proto-form \**ti* based on Awa Pit and Tsafiki correspondences.

Summarizing, we argue that the original position of the negation marker *shi / zhi / chi / zi* in Awa Pit was post-verbal. This is still the case in the variety of Awa Pit discussed by Calvache Dueñas (2000). In the Awa Pit varieties described by Obando Ordóñez (1992), and Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985), however, we observe an ongoing shift of the syntactic position of the negation marker to the preverbal position: the double occurrence of *zhi / chi* is common in these varieties, but it is not necessary, and only the preverbal *zhi / chi* can be used to encode negation. Finally, the variety described by Curnow (1997) has lost the postverbal occurrence of *shi*, since the negation marker is always found in the preverbal position.

How could a shift in the syntactic position of a negation marker take place in the language? Two scenarios can be suggested.

First, it is possible that the change of the syntactic position of the negation marker has been influenced or reinforced by language contact. The most plausible candidate in this case is Spanish. Osborn (1969–1972: 219) notes that speakers of Awa Pit “still continue to communicate amongst themselves in their own language; but to outsiders they will insist that they speak no other language than Spanish. They insist on this even to people who they know are perfectly aware that it is not true”. It is also noted by Curnow (1997: 112) that “in

the data-collection region the everyday language of interaction within the community is Spanish” and that “all speakers of Awa Pit are also speakers of Spanish, to a greater or lesser degree”. Negation of verbal predicates in Spanish is preverbal and this could have influenced the introduction of the negation marker *shi* in the preverbal position.<sup>12</sup> Two points are relevant here. Firstly, that a change in a negation strategy can be contact-driven is supported by a few cases. For example, the isolate language Cofán spoken in Colombia and Ecuador has an optional and emphatic negative particle *ni* used in the preverbal position, in addition to the obligatory postverbal negative clitic =*mbi* (Fischer and Hengeveld forthcoming). According to Kees Hengeveld (p.c.), the use of the preverbal emphatic negative particle *ni* is an innovation influenced by Spanish. A similar development is found in the Nadahup language Hup spoken in the Vaupés region. In Hup, a negative construction with the postverbal negative suffix *-nɨh* can be made stronger (more emphatic) by adding the negative particle *næ* in the preverbal position (Epps 2008: 736). As Epps notes, both the form and the preverbal position of this emphatic negative particle are borrowed from an East Tukanoan language Tukano, spoken in the same area (2008: 736–737). Although it is a hypothesis still awaiting further research, this form in Tukano is itself a possible (older) borrowing from either Portuguese or Spanish, evidenced by a number of facts (i.e. the close correspondence in form and function, its preverbal position, which is unusual for the Tukanoan languages, the occurrence in other languages of the region) (Kristine Stenzel, p.c.; Patience Epps, p.c.). Although these cases involve an innovation both in form and pattern, in the case of Awa Pit, the change would concern only the pattern. Secondly, it is of interest to note that languages with an innovative use of a negation marker in preverbal position show areal clustering (Krasnoukhova and van der Auwera 2018). Among such areas is the northern part of Peru plus the Ecuador-Colombia border, where Awa Pit is found. Thus, it is not impossible that in Awa Pit the suggested process has been spurred by contact with other preverbal marking languages of the region.

Second, in general, languages prefer to mark negation as early as possible in the clause (Jespersen 1917: 5; Horn 1989 [2nd ed. 2001]). Preference for preverbal negation has been confirmed by a number of cross-linguistic studies (Dahl 1979: 91, Dahl 2010: 23–24; Dryer 2013; *inter alia*). South American languages, however,

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<sup>12</sup> Apart from Spanish, another candidate that could have influenced a shift to the preverbal negation strategy is Inga Quechua, where standard negation is encoded by the preverbal obligatory marker *mana* (besides the postverbal optional *-chu*, cf. Levinsohn 1974: 39–40). However, despite a few structural similarities and a number of lexical loans from Quechua in Awa Pit (cf. Curnow 1997: 18), there is no evidence for a change in negation due to Quechua.

are among the exceptions, as postverbal negation is the most common strategy across the continent (Dryer 2013; Muysken et al. 2014: 305–306; Vossen 2016: 320).<sup>13</sup> This does not mean, however, that South American languages are insensitive to this preference, and it is in this context that the so-called ‘Jespersen Cycle’ (term due to Dahl 1979: 88) could be relevant. This process was observed and described by Jespersen (1917), and Meillet (1912) before him. A classical version of a Jespersen Cycle encompasses the following development: a standard clausal negation gets reinforced by another word (often not negative in itself), but this word becomes negative with time, and ultimately pushes out the original negator. We will return to this classical version of a Jespersen Cycle in Section 4.3. However, the parameters in this diachronic process can differ cross-linguistically, giving us various ‘non-classical’ Jespersen Cycles (van der Auwera 2009). Specifically, the nature of the new word or element used for reinforcement can differ. Relevant for our discussion is the fact that a new element used for reinforcement can be a copy of the regular negation marker or the negative reply in the language. This variant has been argued for Brazilian Portuguese (e.g. Schwegler 1991; Schwenter 2006), Afrikaans (e.g. Roberge 2000), the Belgian Brabant dialect of Dutch (Pauwels 1958; Neuckermans 2008; Barbiers et al. 2009), Bantu languages (Devos and van der Auwera 2013) and Tacana (Guillaume 2017, forthcoming). A similar development could have taken place in Awa Pit, i.e. the clause-final negation marker would have been copied and used in addition to the regular negation marker for reinforcement in the preverbal position. After the initial stage, the emphatic meaning of the preverbal negative marker would be lost. In the following stage the older (postverbal) negation marker would become optional and then give way to the newly introduced preverbal negator as the sole exponent of negation. A noteworthy parameter is the direction of change. While in most languages mentioned above (all except Tacana) a copy of the negation marker was introduced for reinforcement after the verb, we argue that in Awa Pit (just like in Tacana) it was introduced before the verb. Thus, there is a reversed directionality. The latter phenomenon, referred to as a ‘Jespersen Cycle in reverse’, has been demonstrated in van der Auwera and

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<sup>13</sup> In Muysken et al. (2014: 305–306) the question is raised whether some typological features show a possible continental bias, by being significantly more present in South America than in the rest of the world. They test this on the data from the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (Dryer and Haspelmath 2013), checking 565 feature values. The result shows a number of features which are significantly overrepresented in South America. The highest score, in fact, was for the features related to postverbal suffixal negation. Besides South America, two other large areas with a high concentration of postverbal negation are New Guinea (Reesink 2002; Klamer et al. 2008; Vossen 2016: 121, 321) and the ‘Macro Sudan Belt’ (Güldemann 2007).



Vossen (2016) and Vossen (2016 *passim*) for a number of languages across the globe, among which South American languages.

As to the origin of the negation form *shi* / *zhi* / *chi* / *zi* nothing is known. Provided its post-verbal position in the clause is indeed the original one, it could have been a verbal element initially. Awa Pit is a strictly verb-final language, and, at least in the present-day language, no element at all can occur after the verb “unless phonetically set off with a pause” (Curnow 1997: 50). An origin in an existential construction with a meaning ‘not exist’ / ‘lack’ / ‘be absent’ is possible, too. In fact, the trajectory of existential negation developing into sentential negation is typologically common (Croft 1991; Veselinova 2014, 2015).

## 4 The *ki* marker

### 4.1 Overview of negative constructions with *ki*

As discussed in Section 2, the variety of Awa Pit recorded by Curnow (1997) has a construction for standard negation with a combination of two markers, viz. *shi* and *ki* (see examples 4b and 7 above). Let us first summarize the important points about the use of the construction.

First, Curnow (1997: 334) records that this construction involves a lexical verb in a non-finite form, which is either the Perfective or the Imperfective Participle. The negative element *ki*, which follows the lexical verb, can carry tense marking. The tense marking (if available) can then be followed by a conjunct-disjunct marker. Example (17) shows a negative clause with *shi* ... *ki*, which can be compared with a positive clause in (18).

- (17) *shi ayna-mtu*<sup>14</sup> *ki-s*  
 NEG cook-IPFVPART NEG-CONJ  
 ‘I am not cooking.’ (Curnow 1997: 334)

- (18) *na=na ku-mtu*  
 1SG.NOM=TOP eat-IPFVPART  
 ‘I am/was/will be eating.’ (Curnow 1997: 57)

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<sup>14</sup> With regard to the aspectual form *-(m)tu*, Curnow (1997: 57–58, 225) suggests a synchronic differentiation between (finite) Imperfective, on the one hand, and the Imperfective Participle, on the other, where the former has developed from the Imperfective Participle followed by a copula verb. We leave this question open and keep the original glossing.

When *ki* is in paradigmatic contrast with the positive copula *i* ‘be’, *ki* is regarded by Curnow (1997: 299, 333) as a ‘negative copula’, and otherwise a ‘negative auxiliary’.<sup>15</sup>

Besides marking standard negation (i.e. constructions involving a verbal predicate), the negative element *ki* can also occur in non-standard negation. Examples (19–20) illustrate negation of non-verbal predicates. For comparison, example (21) shows an affirmative non-verbal predicate clause.

(19) *ap kwizha=na p̄ina katsa shi ki*  
 my dog=TOP very large NEG NEG  
 ‘My dog is not very large.’ (Curnow 1997: 333)

(20) [*ashanpa=ta pyan-na*]=*na wat shi ki*  
 [woman=ACC hit-INF]=TOP good NEG NEG  
 ‘Hitting [one’s] wife is not good.’ (Curnow 1997: 266)

(21) *si=na p̄ina pul i*  
 firewood=TOP very dry be  
 ‘The firewood is very dry.’ (Curnow 1997: 77)

Curiously, as noted in Section 3, some clauses with non-verbal predicates can be negated simply by negator *shi* in clause-final position (compare 19–20 with 9–10). Although the difference is not clear, this variation could be indicative of a construction in transition (as will be discussed in Section 4.3).

In Section 3 we also suggested that the element *shi* (*zhi* / *chi* / *ʒi*) is likely to be an older negative marker in Awa Pit, since it is encountered in all the sources on the grammar of the language, as well as in related languages. The use of *ki* in negation constructions is thus far only found in the variety reported in Curnow (1997). We argue that *ki* is a new negative marker, at least in one variety of the language. Synchronically, *ki* also has other uses in the same variety, as we discuss below. Yet *ki* has a firm association with negation, shown by two following facts: (i) the element *ki* is an obligatory part of negative constructions with (non-finite) verbal predicates, and (ii) it is not found in the corresponding positives (as will be discussed in 4.2). It should be mentioned that the element *ki* cannot (yet?) be used on its own to express negation (Curnow 1997: 300, footnote 8): it has to be used in combination with *shi*. This is similar to various languages around the world with an obligatory double-marked negation strategy. In 4.3 we present a hypothesis as

<sup>15</sup> In all cases, however, Curnow (1997) glosses *ki* as ‘be.NEG’. We use the simplified gloss ‘NEG’ in this paper.

to how *ki* has become part of a negation construction. Before proceeding to our hypothesis on diachrony, we have to consider synchronic occurrences of *ki* in positive clauses first.

## 4.2 The multifaceted *ki*

All evidence suggests that the element *ki* has a verbal origin. It occurs clause-finally, where only verbs usually occur in Awa Pit (Curnow 1997: 50). And the negative element *ki* can carry tense specifications (as shown in example 7a).<sup>16</sup> Synchronically, besides being associated with negative constructions, the form *ki* is found as an active verb with the ‘do, happen’ semantics. As a verb, it has two functions: (i) it occurs as a main lexical verb, and (ii) it occurs as a (positive) ‘auxiliary’ in verbal compounds.

The use of *ki-* as a main verb with its literal meaning ‘do, happen’ is shown in examples (22–23). Note that these statements are non-negative.

- (22) *na=na an=kana ki-mtu-ata-w*  
 1SG.NOM=TOP this=like do-IPFV-PST-CONJ:SUBJ  
 ‘I did (like) this (demonstrating with hands).’ (Curnow 1997: 144)

- (23) [*an kih ku-ka=na,* *shi=ma ki-ni-zi*]  
 [this leaf eat-SIMULT=TOP] what=INTER do-FUT-DISJ  
 ‘If [one] eats this leaf, what will happen?’ (Curnow 1997: 273)

The second use of *ki* ‘do, happen’, namely, as a positive auxiliary in verbal compounds, is illustrated in (24–26). Example (24) shows the use of the auxiliary *ki* with a Spanish loan verb, whereas examples (25–26) illustrate fixed compounds.

- (24) *pala=kas shi kwa-t ki, trabaja ki-mtu*  
 plantain-ADD NEG eat-PFVPART NEG work.SP do-IPFVPART  
 ‘Having not eaten even a plantain, I am working.’ (Curnow 1997: 373)

- (25) *mizhaka=ma kal ki-ta-w?*  
 when=INTER work do-PST-CONJ:SUBJ  
 ‘When did you work?’ (Curnow 1997: 321)

<sup>16</sup> Although we are aware that cross-linguistically marking of tense is not restricted to the verbal domain (e.g. Nordlinger and Sadler 2004).

- (26) *nash-ka*                      *alu ki-ni-zi*  
 be:afternoon-when rain do-FUT-DISJ  
 ‘This afternoon it may rain.’ (Curnow 1997: 273)

According to Curnow (1997: 152), the majority of the compounds with *ki* are fixed<sup>17</sup> and non-productive, except for those involving Spanish verbs. Apparently any Spanish verb, at least any action verb, can be used in its basic form (3rd person singular present indicative) with *ki*.<sup>18</sup> The resulting compound verbs are always active. Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985: 20), as well as Obando Ordóñez (1992: 111), also mention the use of *ki* with Spanish loans (see example 3b above). However, Curnow (1997: 95) notes that the great majority of verbs in Awa Pit are simple verbs with a lexical meaning expressed by a single phonological and grammatical word. In this respect Awa Pit is quite different from other Barbacoan languages, where almost any verb takes an auxiliary resulting in a complex predicate (Dickinson 2002: 212, 284; Simeon Floyd, p.c.). At least synchronically, this is not the case for Awa Pit.

It is important to observe a few synchronic differences between the element *ki* – when part of a negative construction – as opposed to *ki* used as a lexical verb or as a (positive) auxiliary in verb compounds. First, both *ki* used as an active verb ‘do, happen’ and *ki* as a positive auxiliary can occur with the Imperfective suffix *-mtu*, as seen in examples (22) and (24). The negative element *ki*, on the other hand, cannot carry this marker (Curnow 1997: 317). While this may be motivated by the fact that *ki* in negative constructions is used with main verbs which are already marked for aspect (having non-finite Perfective Participle or Imperfective Participle form), this testifies to the differentiation of the uses of *ki*.

Second, the use of *ki* as an auxiliary in positive polarity clauses is only productive with Spanish loan verbs. All other uses of *ki* in positive polarity clauses are fixed (and some are lexicalized). The use of *ki* in negative polarity clauses is fully productive and is not restricted to any specific type of verbs (the only exception being the copula *i*, which cannot occur in any negative construction).

<sup>17</sup> Curnow (1997: 154) notes some cases of compound lexicalization (e.g. *ku ki* ‘dance’, with no word *ku* in present-day Awa Pit), as well as a shift in semantics of an original meaning (e.g. *kal* ‘difficult’ and *ki* ‘do’, resulting in present-day *kal ki* ‘to work’ rather than ‘to do something difficult’).

<sup>18</sup> Two points are in order. First, a reviewer points out that depending on stress the verb form may be a phonologically-adapted form of the infinitive, which is common for speakers of South American indigenous languages. Second, verb ‘do’ as auxiliary is not unusual cross-linguistically, as also noted in Curnow (1997: 156–157).

There is also evidence that negative *ki* is still verbal, showing that the marker has not diversified completely yet. First, *ki* can carry tense specifications, which are associated with verbs in Awa Pit. In principle, the fact that the negative element *ki* is able to carry tense is not rare cross-linguistically. For instance, this resembles standard negation constructions in Evenki (Nedjalkov 1994), as well as many Uralic languages. In these languages, the negation marker is a negative verb which carries some or all verbal categories (e.g. tense or person) and the lexical verb appears with a reduced or non-finiteness distinction (Miestamo 2005: 81–82; Miestamo et al. 2015: 12, 17). In Awa Pit, however, the negative *ki* carries tense but no person marking. Second, the negation of verbal compounds (recall that the majority of verbal compounds are formed by *ki* as the second grammatical word) is expressed by *shi ... ma* splitting a compound (Curnow 1997: 153). The fact that all encountered cases of negated compound verbs (in Curnow’s description) involve *shi ... ma* (see 27–28 below) and never the *shi ... ki* can be explained on the assumption that the two functions of the *ki* element have not diversified enough to co-occur in one clause.

(27) *alu shi ki-ma-y*

rain NEG do-NEG-DISJ

‘It didn’t rain.’ (Curnow 1997: 153)

(28) *an perol=na pina katsa, impuhs=ta=na alcanza shi*

this pot=TOP very big fireplace=in=TOP fit NEG

*ki-ma-mpa-y*

do-NEG-NECESS-DISJ

‘This pot is too big, it’s not going to fit on the stove.’ (Curnow 1997: 312)

Table 2 summarizes differences and similarities between the three functions of *ki*.

The verb *ki* ‘do, happen’ is also found in other languages of the Barbacoan language family. The protoform \**ki-* for the verb ‘do’ has been noted by Curnow and Liddicoat (1998: 392) as an exact correspondence between Awa Pit, Cha’palaa and Tsafiki. In Cha’palaa and Tsafiki, the verb *ki-* ‘do’ occurs both as a main lexical verb and as a (positive) auxiliary, the latter being very common. For example, the majority of action verbs occur with the verb *que / qui*<sup>19</sup> ‘do’ as auxiliary (Moore 1979: 57–59). Dickinson’s (2002: 150) extensive analysis of complex predicates in Tsafiki gives *ki-* ‘do, make’ as one of so-called

<sup>19</sup> Note that the spelling given in Moore (1979) is in Spanish, where *que* and *qui* represent /ke/ and /ki/ respectively.

**Table 2:** Similarities and differences between three occurrences of *ki*.

<i>ki</i> ‘do, happen’ lexical verb	<i>ki</i> ‘do, happen’ auxiliary verb	<i>ki</i> as part of a negation construction
–	Occurs mainly with Spanish loan verbs.	Occurs with any verb, except for the positive copula <i>i</i> ‘be’, which cannot occur in any negative construction.
Productive	Non-productive, occurrence in fixed (lexicalized) expressions.	Productive
Takes the Imperfective aspect suffix <i>-mtu</i>	Takes the Imperfective aspect suffix <i>-mtu</i>	Cannot take the Imperfective aspect suffix <i>-mtu</i>
Can carry tense	Can carry tense	Can carry tense
Always clause-final	Always clause-final	Always clause-final

‘generic verbs’ or verb class markers, which typically follow a coverb from a large open class. Generic verbs are the second element in complex predicates and carry all tense-aspect-mood markers. Likewise, in Cha’palaa, the verb *que / ke / ki* ‘do’ is a lexical verb, which is used productively as auxiliary with active verbs (Vittadello 1988: 92; Floyd 2010: 109).

In the Northern Barbacoan language Guambiano, there is the auxiliary element *kəp* with its allomorphs *kə-* / *ku-* / *k-* (Vásquez de Ruiz 1988), but it is glossed as ‘be’ (*ser* in Spanish) in the source material. A comparative list of auxiliaries by Rivet (1941: 23) offers a number of auxiliary forms for Guambiano and its close relative Totoró: *ku, go, gə, ge, ke, kə, gi*. However, their exact semantics is not clear.

### 4.3 Suggested development

We start by mentioning that Curnow (1997: 300) suggests that “historically the negative construction with *ki* was biclausal, with a complement clause being subordinated to a negative copula, synchronically still *ki*”. Curnow also proposes an alternative analysis, which he briefly mentions in a footnote: “An alternative is that this *ki* is in origin the active verb *ki* ‘happen, do’; in this case the structure would perhaps have meant ‘it didn’t happen that ...’” (Curnow 1997: 300, footnote 9). While we support the diachronic link between the negative element *ki* and the lexical verb ‘do, happen’ suggested by Curnow (1997), we propose a somewhat different development. We present the suggested development divided in three stages.

*Stage I:* We argue that *ki* started in a negative construction as a lexical verb ‘do, happen’ used for reinforcement of the (negative) statement. This could have been ‘useful’ during the stage when the negative marker *shi* began to shift from its original postverbal position to its present preverbal one. Here we can draw a parallel with languages that have undergone the process of a classical Jespersen Cycle noted in Section 3. The case of the negative marker *pas* in French is particularly instructive here. Originally, this element *pas* is a lexical item meaning ‘step’, which came to be used as emphazier after the verb (possibly first a motion verb), in addition to the preverbal negator *ne*, yielding a meaning like ‘I will not come even a step’. In the course of time, the French *pas* ‘step’ started to lose its emphatic effect and began to partake in marking the negative meaning through contamination by the genuine negative marker (Jespersen 1917; Meillet 1912; van der Auwera 2009). This is what we see in present-day French, where negation is expressed with *ne ... pas*. The idea that *pas* has turned into a truly negative element is even stronger when we look at colloquial French, where negation can be expressed solely by the postverbal *pas*. Thus French is a textbook example illustrating that a negation marker can descend from an originally positive lexical item. Another instructive example is the case of the Eastern Kiranti languages of Nepal. It is argued in van der Auwera and Vossen (2017) that the origin of the postverbal negative marker is the (positive) Tibeto-Burman copula ‘be’, that was originally used for reinforcement. van der Auwera and Vossen (2017: 47) suggest that a postposed copula could have started syntactically “either as an afterthought or a copula taking scope over the preceding proposition, the latter then probably appearing as a nominalization”. The form of the copula is still found as a true copula in languages outside of Eastern Kiranti, but in the Eastern Kiranti languages it became a negative marker through semantic reanalysis.

Parallel to the Eastern Kiranti case, that ‘happen’ would serve as an emphatic element is not implausible. In Awa Pit a construction could have originally been one of the following, demonstrated with pseudo-English in (29–30).<sup>20</sup>

(29) The dog not chasing the cat happens.

(30) The dog not good, happens.

The fact that non-finite main clauses do exist in Awa Pit (as shown in 11–12 above) allows us to suggest that both constructions (29–30) are permitted

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<sup>20</sup> We use sentences analogous to van der Auwera and Vossen (2017: 47).

syntactically, and that *ki* could have been added as a regular lexical verb for emphasis and not necessarily as an auxiliary from the start.

*Stage II:* The verb *ki* ‘do, happen’ used in a negative construction loses its emphatic color. It becomes associated with negation through contamination by the negative marker *shi*, which is always overtly present to mark negation. In parallel with the semantic bleaching of *ki* as emphasizer, a syntactic reanalysis of *ki* would take place: from a lexical verb, syntactically an adjunct, into a (negative) auxiliary or copula.

*Stage III:* This stage witnesses a differentiation of *ki* used in negative clauses from the verb *ki* in positive clauses. We observe this process today. The differences of *ki* in the positive and negative clauses – observed synchronically – are captured in Table 2 above. While the element *ki* cannot yet function as a sole marker of negation (Curnow 1997: 300, footnote 8), cross-linguistic evidence suggests that it may develop into one in the future (with the colloquial French ‘VERB *pas*’ as the case in point).

Having proposed a general course of development, we now zoom in on the following issue. The existence of two types of negative constructions with *ki* in present-day Awa Pit begs for an explanation. To reiterate the details, in verbal clauses, we have the negation marker *shi* and the element *ki* embracing the verbal predicate. In non-verbal clauses, on the other hand, both the negative marker *shi* and *ki* follow the predicate, and *ki* is not always present. Although it will remain a conjecture, the following scenario could be suggested as an explanation.

The negative element *ki* was introduced first in verbal clauses, like the one in (29) with pseudo-English. We suggested in Section 3 that the position of the negation marker *shi* was originally postverbal and that the change to preverbal position was an innovation. Thus, it is possible that the verb *ki* ‘do, happen’ was added for reinforcement in verbal clauses when the negation marker *shi* had shifted to preverbal position. The slot originally used for the negation marker was now ‘vacant’. This postverbal *ki* would then undergo the development schematized above (viz., lexical emphasizer *ki* ‘do, happen’ → negative auxiliary → an emergent negation marker). Thus, we have a syntactic construction with the preverbal negative *shi* and the postverbal element *ki*. Based on analogy from verbal clauses, *ki* starts to be used in non-verbal clauses, where the negator *shi* remained in its original, clause-final position. For example, it is not clear if there is any (semantic) difference between clauses like (9) and (19), repeated below as (31) and (32). In the first case, negation is marked solely by *shi* clause-finally, while in the second one, it is marked by both *shi ki* clause-finally.



- (31) *kwizha=na alizh shi*  
 dog=TOP fierce NEG  
 ‘The dog is not fierce.’ (Curnow 1997: 336)
- (32) *ap kwizha=na pina katsa shi ki*  
 my dog=TOP very large NEG NEG  
 ‘My dog is not very large.’ (Curnow 1997: 333)

This variation is suggestive of a more recent development and that the negative construction with an added clause-final *ki* has not become fully grammaticalized yet. Although we do not have direct evidence for *ki* to be a newcomer in negative non-verbal clauses, we can suggest the following train of thought. Constructions like the one in (31) are regarded by Curnow (1997: 336) as the ones where the negation marker *shi* scopes over the preceding non-verbal predicate. Constructions like the one in (32) are noted to have the negator *shi* being placed before the verb, in this case the “negative copula *ki*” (Curnow 1997: 333). However, the latter analysis is problematic: the fact that constructions with only *shi* (like 31) are possible suggests that the negation marker *shi* has its scope over the preceding non-verbal predicate in both cases.<sup>21</sup> Thus, we propose that the clause-final *ki* (like in 32) was added to a clause that is already negative, due to analogy from constructions with verbal predicates where *ki* was already used on a regular basis.

The alternative to this scenario is that *ki* was used with both types of clauses from the start, and that the negation marker *shi* would have changed position from postverbal to preverbal position only with verbal predicates. However, this scenario would not give us any plausible explanation as to why we observe variation in the negation of non-verbal predicates. We therefore hypothesize that

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<sup>21</sup> There are also examples of constituent negation in Curnow (1997) that involve the use of positive copula *ka-* ‘be permanently’ (see *a* and *b* below). Importantly, these constructions are analyzed by Curnow as the negative marker *shi* following the constituent being negated and not negating the positive copula. This analysis is in line with our analysis of (32).

- (a) *ap shi ka-y*  
 my NEG be:permanently-DISJ  
 ‘It is not mine.’ (Curnow 1997: 335)
- (b) *ap shi-∅*  
 my NEG-DISJ  
 ‘It is not mine.’ (Curnow 1997: 335)

Note that the disjunct markers  $\emptyset$  and *-y* are phonologically determined: in these cases, *-y* occurs after /a/, while  $\emptyset$  is found after /i/ (cf. Curnow 2002: 622).

the introduction of *ki* happened first in verbal clauses and that occurrences like the one in example (32) are later innovations.

Summarizing, although the verb *ki* cannot mark negation on its own yet, we are likely to deal with a newly emerging negative marker. This is indicated by the following evidence: (i) *ki* is an obligatory part of the syntax of negative constructions with a (non-finite) verbal predicate, (ii) *ki* in negative constructions can be differentiated from *ki* in positive polarity constructions in that *ki* cannot occur with the Imperfective aspect suffix, whereas the lexical verb and *ki* as auxiliary in a positive polarity clause can; and (iii) in negative constructions *ki* is fully productive, whereas *ki* used in positive clauses is non-productive and occurs mainly with Spanish loan verbs.

If our hypothesis is correct, then the lexical verb *ki* ‘do, happen’ can be regarded as a source for negative markers. However, note that Jäger (2013), in his cross-linguistic study on periphrastic *do*-constructions, claims that “[n]o language could be attested in which negation is directly encoded by a ‘do’-auxiliary”, adding further that this “suggests that even when used as a ‘dummy’ ‘do’-auxiliaries retain residual assertiveness, which blocks direct encoding of negation”. Thus, the case of Awa Pit is possible counter-evidence to this observation.

## 5 The enigma of *-ma*

As we saw in Table 1, two varieties of Awa Pit have another marker associated with negation, namely the suffix *-ma*. In the variety described in Curnow (1997), the negative suffix *-ma* is always used in combination with the negation particle *shi* (see example 4a). This construction is used for reference to an activity in either past or future. Curnow (1997: 332) states that the suffix *-ma* combines the semantics of negation with the semantics of past tense, since this type of construction does not take any additional Past morphology. It can refer to the future only with an additional marking for either Future tense or Necessitive mood. Besides encoding negation and past, the morpheme *-ma* has two other functions in this variety of Awa Pit, and both are semantically linked to past as well. One function is marking polar questions with reference to past tense, and the other function is to mark Completive aspect (Curnow 1997: 233, 323, Curnow 2004-2005). The suffix *-ma* as a Completive aspect marker “focuses on that period of time when an action could be said to be completed” (Curnow 1997: 233). Example (33) illustrates the occurrence of suffix *-ma* as a polar interrogative marker, while (34) shows a Completive aspect marker *-ma* on the verb.

- (33) *izh-ma-s?*  
 see-Q.PST-CONJ  
 ‘Did you see [it]?’ (Curnow 1997: 323)
- (34) *shi=ma*<sup>22</sup> *ki-ma-zi?*  
 what=INTER do-COMP-DISJ  
 ‘What happened?’ (Curnow 1997: 317)

Thus the suffix *-ma* is argued to carry out at least three functions in this variety of Awa Pit, viz. negation and past, completive aspect, and polar interrogation and past (cf. Curnow 2004-2005).<sup>23</sup> Curnow (1997: 332) notes that there may be a historical link between the Completive aspect marker and the negative Past marker *-ma*, since the latter also “implies that the activity did not go to completion”. Curnow (1997: 332) also briefly mentions that “synchronically there are clear formal differences” between the Completive aspect marker and negative past marker *-ma*. However, it is not evident from the discussion and available examples what the differences are. In fact, it is instructive to raise the question of whether *-ma* is indeed negative in this variety of Awa Pit, and if so, to revisit the question of its origin.

With respect to the status of *-ma* as a true negative marker in this variety, no clear morpho-syntactic differences between the verbal suffix *-ma* in negative and in positive polarity clauses are observed. For example, compare example (35) showing a positive clause with a Completive aspect marker *-ma*, and examples (36–38) with the negation suffix *-ma*. Note that the glosses for the *-ma* morphemes in these examples are adopted from Curnow (1997). Besides, it cannot be deduced from the examples that the verbal suffix *-ma* is negative on its own, since it co-occurs obligatorily with the negation marker *shi* in the same construction.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Note that Curnow (1997: 323) differentiates between the interrogative clitic *=ma* and the polar interrogative suffix *-ma*, which he notes to be historically related.

<sup>23</sup> A reviewer justly points out that this is not necessarily a single marker. This is indeed in line with Curnow (1997) and Curnow (2004–2005), who argue that synchronically these are different markers. However, the partial overlap in semantics suggests a diachronic connection.

<sup>24</sup> It is, of course, possible that a marker is negative but can only encode negation as part of a double negation construction (e.g. *ne* VERB *pas* in standard French, *hani* ... VERB-*ti* in La Paz Aymara (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 268, 292), *mana* ... VERB-*chu* in Chachapoyas Quechua (Pineda-Bernuy 2014: 99), among many other languages). In some cases, however, we have either synchronic or diachronic evidence for the negative semantics of the markers involved.

- (35) *pina amta pit-ma-ti-s*  
 very at:night sleep-COMP-PST-CONJ  
 ‘I fell asleep very late.’ (Curnow 1997: 231)
- (36) *alu shi ki-ma-y*  
 rain NEG do-NEG-DISJ  
 ‘It didn’t rain.’ (Curnow 1997: 153)
- (37) *an perol=na pina katsa, impuhs=ta=na alcanza shi*  
 this pot=TOP very big fireplace=in=TOP fit NEG  
*ki-ma-mpa-y*  
 do-NEG-NECESS-DISJ  
 ‘This pot is too big, it’s not going to fit on the stove.’ (Curnow 1997: 312)
- (38) *say-kikas shi say-ma-s*  
 look:for-CONCESS NEG look:for-NEG-CONJ  
 ‘Although I looked for [it], I didn’t find [it].’ (Curnow 1997: 332)

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that this variety of Awa Pit has prohibitive suffixes *-man* ‘prohibitive plural’ and *-mun* ‘prohibitive singular’. However, while these markers share the morpheme *-m-* and the function of negation, there is no sufficient data to consider their possible historical relation.<sup>25</sup>

We do find possible evidence that *-ma* is negative in itself from another variety of Awa Pit, the one described by Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez (1985).<sup>26</sup> In that variety, the suffix *-ma* can be a sole exponent of negation. The suffix is noted to encode negation with emphasis (Henriksen and Obando Ordóñez 1985: 58). Another source, Calvache Dueñas (2000: 109), reports *-ma* only as a plural negative prohibitive, which can be thus a different morpheme. Yet other potentially relevant data come from the related Northern Barbacoan languages Guambiano and Totoró. Standard negation is encoded by the

<sup>25</sup> A cross-linguistically common source for prohibitives is a grammaticalization of a negator and a (positive) imperative marker (van der Auwera 2006: 14). However, in Awa Pit imperative markers are *ti* (in singular) and *tayη* (in plural), at least synchronically (cf. Curnow 1997: 243). Data from the related language Cha’palaa support the observation on a possible source for prohibitives: in Cha’palaa it combines the negator *-tyu* and a positive imperative marker *-de* (Simeon Floyd, p.c.). This is probably the case for Guambiano too, where the prohibitive postverbal element *matá* is noted by Vásquez de Ruiz (1988: 136) to contain the negator *-m-*. However, we do not find any further clues for the origin of the prohibitive marking in Awa Pit. <sup>26</sup> And this is also the case for the Ecuadorian variety of Awa Pit, which is currently analyzed by Martine Bruil (p.c.). However, specific conditions of its occurrence are still to be determined.

postverbal suffix *-m/-mu* in Guambiano (Vásquez de Ruiz 1988) and the postverbal suffix *-mĩ* in Totoró (Gonzales Castaño 2014).

Assuming that Curnow's *ma* is indeed negative, several scenarios could be suggested for this variety of Awa Pit.

- (i) The negative marker developed from the Completive aspect marker. Thus, we support Curnow (1997: 332) on the assumption that the Completive aspect marker and the negative past marker *-ma* are historically related. However, we build further on this assumption by suggesting a direction of the development and a mechanism as to how the change could have happened. The fact that the allegedly negative marker also indicates past tense can be taken as the main piece of evidence here. The completive aspect marker could turn 'negative' through contamination by the 'genuine' negative marker in this language variety.<sup>27</sup> It could have been further reinforced by contact with (non-related) languages that also have negator *-ma*.<sup>28</sup>
- (ii) The variety of Awa Pit described in Curnow (1997) retained a negative morpheme *-m/-ma* from Proto-Barbacoan, possibly coupled with language contact among the Barbacoan languages. As pointed out in Epps et al. (2013: 211–212), the assumption that languages split from an ancestral language and develop independently thereafter is “a convenient starting point”, but is untenable, since “sister-languages and dialects continue to reside side by side, allowing regular contact and transference among their speakers”. The scenario of retention / contact among the Barbacoan languages could be supported by the existence of different *-m/-ma/-mĩ /man* forms semantically connected to negation (either standard negation or prohibitive) in three varieties of Awa Pit and in the related Northern Barbacoan languages. However, we would not be able to explain why this suffix would also encode the past tense, unless in these related languages the negative *-m* also combines negative and past tense meaning. We have not found evidence for this so far.
- (iii) *-ma* was borrowed from unrelated languages. The negative morpheme *ma* (or similar morphemes) has been reported among the widely widespread traits in South America (Payne 1990: 77, also noted in Curnow 1997: 332;

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<sup>27</sup> The process of contamination, viz. turning a semantically-neutral element into a negative one, has been attested in languages world-wide (van der Auwera 2009); and this is also the process that was suggested in Section 4.3 for the now-negative element *ki*.

<sup>28</sup> We thank both reviewers for pointing out that a combination of factors could have played a role. One reviewer also notes that forms with a possible dual or multiple origin are especially likely to be retained in languages that are in contact.

Campbell 2012: 299; Krasnoukhova and van der Auwera under review; *inter alia*).<sup>29</sup> However, again, the link to the past tense would need to be explained, unless the donor language would also have *-ma* that combines semantics of negation and past tense.

Summarizing, we can only provide a tentative answer for the origin of the allegedly negative suffix *-ma* in the variety of Awa Pit described in Curnow (1997). Based on the few pieces of evidence discussed above the first scenario seems more plausible, viz. the suffix *-ma* as a negation marker is a (language-internal) innovation in this Awa Pit variety, possibly further reinforced by language contact. We agree with Curnow (1997: 332) on his assumption that the negative marker *-ma* could have originated in the Completive aspect marker, and we propose that this marker would become associated with negation through contamination by the genuine negation marker *shi*. Finally, as mentioned already, it may well be the case that multiple factors worked in tandem to result in the picture we observe today.

The question of *-ma*, a ubiquitous marker associated with negation in South America, is worth exploring further on a case by case basis. Based on our tentative answer for one variety of Awa Pit, it can be suggested that languages could have ended up with *-ma* in their negation system through multiple pathways.

## 6 Conclusion

In this study, we presented an analysis of the negation system in the Barbacoan language Awa Pit, from both a Barbacoan and a wider typological perspective. Although the data are suboptimal for some Awa Pit varieties, the overall data are robust enough to interpret these data in terms of a number of innovations and to suggest processes that may have led to those.

First, based on the synchronic variation in the position of the negator *shi* / *chi* / *zhi* / *zi* relative to the verb in different varieties of Awa Pit, we argued that the postverbal position is the original one. For a shift to the preverbal position two scenarios are suggested here to be possible. Under one scenario, the shift

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<sup>29</sup> The wide occurrence of the negative morpheme *-ma* (or a similar form) is not limited to the South American continent, being found in many languages around the world (Campbell 2012: 299). While its wide occurrence could be related to a number of factors, the fact remains that this morpheme is deeply rooted as a negation marker in a number of South American language families (e.g. Panoan, Takanan, Tukanoan and Quechuan).

could have been driven by contact with Spanish. Under the other scenario, the shift to the preverbal position is a result of a language-internal diachronic process, i.e. Jespersen Cycle ‘in reverse’, not widely known, but proposed elsewhere.

Second, we argued that one Colombian variety of Awa Pit (Curnow 1997) is developing a new negation marker, viz. *ki*, which has its origin in the lexical verb ‘do, happen’. Based on synchronic data, we proposed its diachronic path. This development is instructive from a typological perspective, since a ‘do’ verb as a source of negation marking has been hitherto unattested (Jäger 2013).

Third, we raised the question whether the marker *-ma*, associated with negation (and Past tense), is indeed negative in the Colombian variety of Awa Pit described in Curnow (1997). We could only give a tentative answer: negation marker *-ma* is likely to be a language-internal innovation. Originating in the Completive aspect marking (Curnow 1997: 332), it could have become associated with negation through contamination by the negative marker *shi*, and further reinforced by contact with languages that use *-ma* as a negator.

More generally, the case-study of Awa Pit negation is instructive as some of the developments are likely to be relevant to other languages of the continent and beyond.

## Abbreviations

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
ACC	accusative
ADD	additive marker
BOR	borrowing
COL	collective
COM	comitative
COMP	completive aspect
CON	connector
CONJ	conjunct
CONCESS	concessive
CONSTIT	constituent
COP	copula
DCL	declarative
DIR.OBJ	direct object
DISJ	disjunct
DL	distal
EMPH	emphatic
FOC	focus
FUT	future

GEN	generic
IPFV	imperfective aspect
IPFVPART	imperfective participle
INCEP	inceptive aspect
INF	infinitive
INTER	interrogative marker
INTRZ	intransitivizer
LOC	locative
NECESS	necessitive mood
NEG	negative
NMLZ	nominalization
NOM	nominative
NON-VERB.PRED	non-verbal predicate
PERS	person
PFVPART	perfective participle
PL	plural
PRO	pronoun
PROSP	prospective aspect marker
PST	past
Q	question marker
REST	restrictive marker
RP	reportative
SG	singular
SIMULT	simultaneous
SP	Spanish loan
SUBJ	subject
TOP	topic marker

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