

The grammar of fear in Ese'eja

Ese'eja (Takanan) is an Amazonian language spoken by around 1500 people in Peru and Bolivia. Besides the expected lexical resources like 'be afraid / scared of', 'scare X', etc., this language exhibits three grammatical devices to express fear. The first one, an apprehensional epistemics marker (Lichtenberk 1995), belongs to the obligatory tense/mood category.

- (1) *Ijya-ka-'io-chana-mi!*
eat-3A-TEL-APPR-2ABS
'(Watch out) he might eat you! (the devil, who whistled last night).'

The second one is a 'lest'-clause subordinate marker (Dixon 1977).

- (2) *Banco wana-nahe [kachina e-nobi-ki-ji kuanije].*
bench(Sp) lay-PAS chicken(Sp) NMZ-enter-GO_TO_DO-NMZ LEST
'I laid the bench so that the chicken do not get in.' {elicited}

The third one is a postposition, called 'aversive'.

- (3) *E-sho'i dokuei'ai=yajaho towaa-'io-nahe ena=wasije.*
NPF-child stag=AVERSIVE jump-TEL-PAS water=ALL
'The child jumped into the water for fear of the stag.' {EpFWA.048}

'Fear' morphemes are attested in many other languages of the world, apparently to the exception of Africa. Their systematic investigation may have been impaired by the great variety of existing terms to refer to them: apprehensives (Aikhenvald 2003; Epps 2008), admonitives (mostly in Cariban languages, as in (Meira 1999; Cáceres 2011)), boulomaic (Rescher 1968, 24–26), 'certainty', 'prediction' or 'warning' (Derbyshire 1979, cited in Palmer 1986, 119), evaluative (Palmer 1986, 119), *lest*-clauses (mostly in Australian languages, as in (Dixon 1977) and (Austin 1988)), monitive (optative) (Shipley 1964, 46–52, cited in Mithun 1999, 171), monitory (Shopen 2007, 315), negative purpose marker, *objurgatif* (objurgative?) (Queixalós 2000, 297ff.), prevent(at)ive, timitive (Palmer 2001, 131; Lichtenberk 2008) or volitive of fear (de Reuse 1988). Note that Ese'eja's sister languages do not seem to have such morphemes.

In some languages, the 'fear' morphemes have raised questions about their polysemy or syntactic dependency (main clause or subordinate marker). The three distinct 'fear' markers in Ese'eja may help to solve this issue as they highlight the necessity to set apart distinct functions in the semantic continuum. For example, only the apprehensional epistemics marker *-chana* in (1) expresses the speaker's attitude, and hence a warning to the hearer. The two other morphemes can refer to the speaker's fear only if the main event is marked by the imperative mode, otherwise, they refer to the fear of the main verb's agent.

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