Understanding Ecuadorian Siona Verb Classes

A synchronic and diachronic account

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(1) a. sa-i-hi. (-i verb)
go-IMPF-3S.M.PRS.ASS
'He is going.'
b. sa-a-hi. (non -i verb)
go-TRS-3S.M.PRS.ASS
'He is taking (it).'
c. sa-a-hä’-ki-a-bi. (bound verb)
go-TRS-FUT.NLZ-CLS:ANIM.M+COP-3S.M.PRS.ASS
'He is going to take it.'

Plan of the talk

1. (Socio)linguistic background
2. Presentation of the verbal portmanteau paradigms
3. Teasing apart the functions
4. The suffix -i as a middle voice marker?
5. A prosodic analysis of the verb classes
6. A possible origin of the suffix -i
7. Summary

1. (Socio)linguistic background

1.1. Who and where?
• Siona people
• Spoken in 6 communities in the province Sucumbios, Ecuador
• < 200 speakers
1.2. Linguistic affiliation

- Ecuadorian Siona is a Western Tukanoan language:

Figure 1: The Tukanoan family classification according to Chacón (to appear).
• Ecuadorian Siona, Colombian Siona and Ecuadorian Sekoya are a type of dialect continuum:

![Diagram showing the Siona-Sekoya dialect continuum](image)

Figure 2: The Siona-Sekoya dialect continuum

2. Presentation of the verbal portmanteau paradigms

The influencing categories:
• Subject agreement
• Clause-typing (& evidentiality)
• Tense
• Verb classes

2.1. Subject agreement

The expressed categories:
• Person
• Number
• Gender

(2)  a. kaa-ko.
say-3s.f.PRS.ASS
‘She says.’
Table 1: Subject agreement morphology (assertive, present tense, non -i verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person / number / gender</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>third person singular feminine</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third person singular masculine</td>
<td>-hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-ji</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Clause-typing (& evidentiality)

- Assertive
- Non-assertive:
  - Interrogative
  - Reportative
  - (Conjectural)
- Dependent

(3) a. kahka-hi. (Assertive)
    enter-3S.M.PRS.ASS
    'He is entering.' (I know it).

b. kahka-ki?
    enter-2/3S.M.PRS.N.ASS
    'Are you (M) / Is he entering?' (I am asking).

c. kahka-ki-já.
    enter-2/3S.M.PRS.N.ASS-REP
    'He is entering.' (I am told).

d. kahka-ki-na jåå-hi. (Dependent)
    enter-2/3S.M.PRS.DEP-DS
    see-3S.M.PRS.ASS
    'He sees (me(M)/you(M)/him) while I (M) am / you(M) are / he is entering.'

Table 2: Non-assertive subject agreement morphology (present tense, non -i verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person / number / gender</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second/third person singular feminine</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second/third person singular masculine</td>
<td>-ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-je</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Dependent subject agreement morphology (present tense, non -i verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number / gender</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular feminine</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular masculine</td>
<td>-ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>-hi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3. Tense

(4)  
a. duhta-bi. (Assertive)  
take.out-3S.M.PST.Ass  
‘He took (it) out.’  
b. duhta-i? (Interrogative)  
take.out-2/3S.M.PST.N.Ass  
‘Did you (M)/he take (it) out?’  
c. duhta-i-na jāā-hi. (Dependent)  
take.out-S.M.PST.DEP-DS see-3S.M.PRS.Ass  
‘He sees (me(M)/you(M)/him) after I (M)/you(M)/he entered.’

Table 4: Subject agreement morphology (non -i verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person / number / gender</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>third person singular feminine</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>third person singular masculine</td>
<td>-hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-jɨ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>third person singular feminine</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>third person singular masculine</td>
<td>-bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-wi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Non-assertive subject agreement morphology (non -i verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person / number / gender</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Second/third person singular feminine</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second/third person singular masculine</td>
<td>-ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-je</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Second/third person singular feminine</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second/third person singular masculine</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-de</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Dependent subject agreement morphology (non -i verbs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Number / gender</th>
<th>Same Subject</th>
<th>Different Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Singular feminine</td>
<td>-ko</td>
<td>-ko-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular masculine</td>
<td>-ki</td>
<td>-ki-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>-hi</td>
<td>-hi-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Singular feminine</td>
<td>-ni</td>
<td>-o-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular masculine</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-i-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>-de</td>
<td>-de-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4. Verb classes

There are three verb classes:
- Non-\textit{i} verbs
- \textit{i} verbs
- Bound verb(al suffix)e(s)

2.4.1. The \textit{i} verbs

The \textit{i} verbs have a suffix \textit{i} in present tense:

- Present tense:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Present tense:
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{a.} \textit{ä-i-hi.} (\textit{i} verb)
\begin{enumerate}
\item eat-IMPF-3S.M.PRS.ASS
\item ‘He is eating.’
\end{enumerate}
\item \textit{b.} \textit{moo-hi.} (non-\textit{i} verb)
\begin{enumerate}
\item fish-3S.M.PRS.ASS
\item ‘He is fishing.’
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

- Infinitives:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Infinitives:
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{a.} \textit{ä-i-je.}
\begin{enumerate}
\item eat-IMPF-INF
\item ‘To eat.’
\end{enumerate}
\item \textit{b.} \textit{moo-je.}
\begin{enumerate}
\item fish-INF
\item ‘To fish.’
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

- Nominalizations:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Nominalizations:
\begin{enumerate}
\item jude \ textit{da-i-sih-ki-ni} jää-wi. \textit{then come-IMPF-NLZ.PST-CLS:ANIM.M-OBJ see-OTH.PST.ASS}
\item ‘Then I saw the one who had come’
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

- Serial verb constructions:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Serial verb constructions:
\begin{enumerate}
\item tu-i-jää-ki-na \textit{follow-IMPF-see-S.M.PRS.DEP-DS}
\item ‘He was following and watching (her)...’
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
The -\(i\) verbs have different morphology in past tense from the non -\(i\) verbs:

(9) a. tu-ju’i
   sit.on.top.of.something-3S.M.PST.ASS
   ‘He sat on top of (it).’

   b. ti-o-bi.
   sit.on.top.of.something-CAUS-3S.M.PST.ASS
   ‘He put it on top of something.’

2.4.2. The bound verb(al suffixe)s

This is a very small class consisting of:
- -\(a\): copula
- -\(si\): future suffix

It only has present tense morphology:

(10) a. ba’-i-hi.
   be/live-IMPF-3S.M.PRS.ASS
   ‘He is.’

   b. ba-a-hi.
   be/live-TRS-3S.M.PRS.ASS
   ‘He has (it).’

   c. ba-a-ha’-ki-a-bi.
   be/live-TRS-FUT.NLZ-CLS:ANIM.M-COP-3S.M.PRS.ASS
   ‘He will have (it).’

2.4.3. A summary

Table 7: Subject agreement morphology in assertions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person/ Gender/ Number</th>
<th>Assertions</th>
<th>bound verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non -(i) verbs</td>
<td>-(i) verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>3S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3S.M</td>
<td>-hi</td>
<td>-hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>-ji</td>
<td>-ji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>3S.F</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>-ko’i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3S.M</td>
<td>-bi</td>
<td>-h(V)i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>-wi</td>
<td>-i’i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Subject agreement morphology in non-assertions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person/ Gender/ Number</th>
<th>Questions &amp; Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non -i verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>2/3S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/3S.M</td>
<td>-ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td>-je</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>2/3S.F</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/3S.M</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td>-de</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Subject agreement morphology in dependent verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Number/ gender</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non -i verbs</td>
<td>-i verbs</td>
<td>Non -i verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.M</td>
<td>-ki</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td></td>
<td>-hi</td>
<td>-hi /-bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>S.F</td>
<td>-ni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.M</td>
<td>-i-na</td>
<td>-ki-na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td></td>
<td>-de-na</td>
<td>-te-na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Teasing apart the grammatical functions

Historically, the portmanteau suffixes in Ecuadorian Siona are probably not portmanteau suffixes.

A reconstruction of the paradigms:

- *p > h (Chacón, to appear).
- VgV > VØV
- Vowel harmony

Table 10: A reconstruction of assertive subject agreement morphology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person/ Gender/ Number</th>
<th>Assertions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non -i verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-a and -si</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>3S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3S.M</td>
<td>-pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>-ji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>3S.F</td>
<td>-go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3S.M</td>
<td>-bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>-wi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ This morphology is only found for questions and not for reports.
Table 11: A reconstruction of non-assertive subject agreement morphology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person/ Gender/ Number</th>
<th>Questions &amp; Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non -i verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>2/3S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/3S.M</td>
<td>-ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>-je</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>2/3S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/3S.M</td>
<td>-ki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>-je</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: A reconstruction of dependent subject agreement morphology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Number/ Gender</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non -i verbs</td>
<td>-i verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>S.F</td>
<td>-ko</td>
<td>-i-go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.M</td>
<td>-ki</td>
<td>-i-gi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>-pi</td>
<td>-i-bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>S.F</td>
<td>-ni</td>
<td>-i-bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.M</td>
<td>-ni</td>
<td>-i-bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>-ni</td>
<td>-i-bi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Teasing apart the grammatical functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Expressed by?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject agreement</td>
<td>Different morphemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause-typing</td>
<td>• Different morphemes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Different division of subject agreement suffixes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional morphology (REP marker -jä &amp; DS marker -na)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>• Morphophonemic process: Fortis - Lenis contrast of the consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional morphology (-i with present tense -i verbs &amp; -'i with past tense -i verbs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Verb classes)</td>
<td>• Morphophonemic process: Fortis - Lenis contrast of the consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional morphology (-i with present tense -i verbs &amp; -'i with past tense -i verbs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remark: Tense & verb classes interact!

Tense was probably historically marked by suffixes that prevented the following consonant from leniting. There is evidence that such suffixes existed from Eastern Tukanoan languages:

---

2 This morphology is only found for questions and not for reports.
Barasana

(11) a. baá-ri?
    eat-INT
    'Did he eat?' (Gomez-Imbert, 1997, p. 299, glosses & translation are mine).

b. baá-bet-ri?
   ↓
   baá-be-ti?
   eat-NEG-INT
   'Didn’t he eat?' (Gomez-Imbert, 1997, p. 300, glosses & translation are mine).

4. The suffix -i as a middle voice marker?

Different analyses of the verb classes in the Western Tukanoan languages:
- Koreguaje: Regular verbs (non -i verbs) versus regular verbs (-i verbs) (Cook and Criswell 1993, pp. 53-55).
- Colombian Siona: the suffix -i marks the middle voice (Wheeler 1987, pp. 144-147).
- Ecuadorian Sekoya: the suffix -i marks the middle voice (Johnson and Levinsohn 1990, pp. 58-60).

Arguments in favor of the middle voice analysis:
- The -i verbs often have a lower degree of transitivity than non -i verbs (also observed by Farmer, 2011 for Māihã): ba’ije ‘to live / to be’, saije ‘to go,’ daije ‘to come,’ hũije ‘to die,’ mĩije ‘to ascend’ and wiije ‘to fly.’
- The -i verbs often have transitive (-a) or causative (-o) counterparts:

(12) a. ã-i-je
    eat-IMPF-INF
    'to eat'

b. ã-o-je
    eat-CAUS-INF
    'to feed'

(13) a. mĩ-i-je
    ascend-IMPF-INF
    'to ascend'

b. mĩ-a-je
    ascend-TRS-INF
    'to take something up'

c. mĩ-o-je
    ascend-CAUS-INF
    'to make someone ascend’
Arguments against the middle voice marker analysis:

- not all verbs with a lower degree of transitivity are -i verbs:

(14) a. kwëne-je
    dry.oneself-INF
    ‘To dry oneself’

  b. kwën-a-je
    dry.oneself-TRS-INF
    ‘To dry something / someone’

(15) a. hiji-je
    break-INF
    ‘to break (intransitive)’

  b. hij-o-je
    break-CAUS-INF
    ‘to break something’

- Not all -i verbs display a low degree of transitivity.

(16) Amo së’se-de wa-ha’i.
    Amo wild.boar-OBJ kill-3S.M.PST.ASS
    ‘Amo killed wild boar.’

- Various -i verbs do not have a transitive or a causative counterpart
- The -i verbs seem to represent the underived forms of a specific set of verbs, because not one of them has an unmarked counterpart without the -i marker:
Table 14: A non-exhaustive overview of verbs and their ‘valency changing’ morphology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-i</th>
<th>-Ø</th>
<th>-a</th>
<th>-o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>daije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>daajje</td>
<td>daoje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to come’</td>
<td>‘to bring’</td>
<td>‘to wander around’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>miaje</td>
<td>mioje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to ascend’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to take something up’</td>
<td>‘to make someone ascend’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>saaje</td>
<td>saoje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to go’</td>
<td>‘to take’</td>
<td>‘to let go / to send’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba’ije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>baajje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to be / to live’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to have’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ãije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>ãoje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to eat’</td>
<td>‘to feed’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>tioje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to sit on top of something’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to put something on top of something’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weeje</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>weoje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to lie down in a hammock’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to lay someone down in a hammock’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wiije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>wioje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to get up / to fly’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘to wake up / to start’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hũije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to die’</td>
<td>‘to die’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kũ’ije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to bite’</td>
<td>‘to bite’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waije</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘to kill’</td>
<td>‘to kill’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The suffix -i is absent from another category of derived verb stems, a category which does not involve valency change. This concerns a non-productive reduplication process in Ecuadorian Siona that derives pluractionals from -i verbs:
5. A prosodic analysis of the verb classes

I analyze the -i verbs as monomoraic verb roots that need additional morphology to satisfy bimoraic minimality.

Various strategies:
• Present tense

(21) 

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\sigma \\
\sigma \\
\sigma \\
\mu \\
\mu \\
\mu \\
\hline \\
 b & a & ? & i \\
 ba'-i-hi \\
 be-IMPF-3S.M.PRS.ASS \\
 'He is.' \\
\end{array}
\]
Past tense:

(22)

\[ \sigma \]
\[ \mu \]
\[ \sigma \]
\[ \mu \]
\[ b \]
\[ a \]
\[ h \]
\[ k \]
\[ o \]

bah-ko
be-3s.f.pst.n.ass
‘Is she?’

Counterfactuals:

(23)  
  a. āh-ti-da’-wi.
      eat-ep-cft-oth.pst.ass
      ‘I / you (S) / you (PL) / they would have eaten.’
  b. bah-ti-da’-wi.
      be-ep-cft-oth.pst.ass
      ‘I / you (S) / you (PL) / they would have lived/been.’
  c. sah-ti-da’-wi.
      140-ep-cft-oth.pst.ass
      ‘I / you (S) / you (PL) / they would have gone.’

6. A possible origin of the suffix -i

The -i was possibly an imperfective suffix.

There is a suffix -i in Kubeo that has a very similar function:

Eventive

(17)  
  a. da-bi.
      come-3m
      ‘He came.’ (Chacón, 2009, section 1.1)³.
  b. da-i-bi
      come-st-3m
      ‘He is coming.’ (Chacón, 2009, section 1.1).

³ The glosses are adapted to mine.
Stative

(18) apu hedewa-kobe-i ’dū-bi.
Alfonso outside-hole-LOC stand-3M
‘Alfonso is standing by the door.’ (Chacón, 2012, p. 277).

Ecuadorian Siona (and the other Western Tukanoan languages) may have had a similar system.

Changes that the system may have undergone:
- Loss of the stative/eventive distinction
- The loss of -i with bimoraic verbs
- The maintenance with the monomoraic verbs in order to satisfy prosodic bimoraic minimality.
- The shift of stative verbs to other verb classes. (There are stative verbs in the -i verb and non -i verb class).

The lower degree of transitivity of the -i verbs can be explained by the fact that the bimoraic verbs (the non -i verbs) contained the derived bimoraic transitive and causative stems. The transitivizing suffix -a and the causative suffix -o satisfy the bimoraic minimality constraint.

This reconstruction also provides an explanation for the deviating bound verb morphology that resembles the past tense morphology: This verb class is the remains of the stative verbs.

7. Summary

- Tense was probably first marked by suffixes.
- These suffixes left the morphophonological marking of tense (fortis / lenis contrast).
- The suffix -i was probably one of the suffixes involved in marking tense, marking eventive verbs that were inherently perfective as imperfective.
- The suffix -i was only maintained with the monomoraic verbs in order to maintain their prosodic bimoraic minimality.
- The bound verbs may be the remains of the stative verb class.

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9. Abbreviations

2  second person
3  third person
ANIM animate
ASS assertive
CAUS causative
CLS classifier
COP copula
CTF counterfactual
DEP dependent
DS different subject
EP epenthetic
F future
FUT future
IMPF imperfective
INF infinitive
INT interrogative
LOC locative
M masculine
N.ASS non-assertive
NEG negation
NLZ nominalizer
OBJ object
OTH other
PL plural
PLUR plurational
PRS present
PST past
REP reportative
S singular
ST stative
TRS transitivizer

10. References