



POSITIONALS IN YUCHI/EUCHEE¹

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The most substantial work on Yuchi was done in the late 1920's by Günter Wagner and published in the early 1930's. His 1934 sketch of Yuchi is, to date, the most complete description of this southeastern isolate. It is on this work that most current comparative and historical work is based, and certainly all work concerning positionals is drawn. Wagner did not arrange his sketch to highlight the idea or occurrences of positionals in the language, and indeed accredited some cases to homophony. Because of this, it has been thought (Watkins 1976) that positionals occurred in Yuchi only as noun classifiers, marking inanimates according to their inherent position, either sitting, standing, or lying. With a careful reading of Wagner, however, it becomes clear that he did find more occurrences of the phenomenon in the language. In this paper I will expand Wagner's findings by describing in detail the formation and uses of positionals in Yuchi. In doing so, I will also show that the positionals have a variety of syntactic and morphological functions in Yuchi, which are related by the idea of definiteness. The Yuchi data presented here is from my current fieldwork with Mr. William Cahwee of Glenpool, Oklahoma.

VERB SYSTEM

Main verbs

The three classificatory positions in Yuchi correspond to the verbs sit, stand, and lie.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|-------|
| (1) | <i>či</i> | sit |
| | <i>fa</i> | stand |
| | <i>e</i> | lie |

Readers familiar with the Yuchi positionals will immediately notice a difference in voicing between Wagner's transcription of the verb 'sit' and mine. 'Sit' is given with the voiced affricate, *dʒi*, by Wagner. However, all speakers today use a voiceless *či*. Aspiration, which is phonemic in Yuchi, appears to be optional today in the affricates. Because of this, *čʰi* and *či* occur in free variation with most speakers, although the unaspirated [č] enjoys higher frequency. I will use the unaspirated *či* throughout.

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The tribal name is spelled both Yuchi and Euchee within the community. For simplicity throughout this paper, I will use only one spelling from here on. I have chosen to use Yuchi as it is the form commonly found in existing literature.

Abbreviations used are as follows: 1s (first person singular), 3pl (third person plural), NY (animate, non-Yuchi), Nom (nominalizer), Poss (possessive pronominal), Comp (comparative), and ? (interrogative).

The verbs *či*, *fa*, and *'e* function as normal verb stems. The verb *či* 'to sit' can also be used to express 'to live somewhere.' The verb *fa* 'to stand' is also the verb 'to wear' as wearing is translated literally as 'he/she is standing inside of X.'

Locatives

The position verbs may also be used in the construction of locative expressions referring to both animates and inanimates. With animates, the position verb agrees with the position of the referent at the time of utterance.

- (2) a. *ša ako-či*
snake there-sit
'there's a snake (coiled)'
- b. *ša ako-'e*
snake there-lie
'there's a snake (uncoiled/slithering)'
- (3) a. *gont'e a-we-ša-či*
man there-3sNY-find(?)—sitting
'there's a man sitting there'
- b. *gont'e a-we-ša-fa*
'there's a man standing there'
- c. *gont'e a-we-ša-'e*
'there's a man lying there'

However, the use of the position verbs is entirely optional. In fact, they are only used to further clarify the referent or to specifically point out the referent's position. The locative expression is more commonly formed without the position verb, as in 4, and the position of the referent is unspecified.

- (4) *gont'e a-we-nʔ*
man there-3sNY-be
'there's a man'

For inanimates, the locative is formed with the position verb. The verb must agree with the inherent position of the object; in other words, it will take the same verb as is assigned as its classifier.

- (5) *ya ahe-fa*
tree over there-stand
'there's a/the tree over there'
- *ya-fa ahe-fa*
**ya-fa ahe*

*ya ahe

Example 5 can be translated as a nonspecific tree or a specific tree. The noun classifier-definite article may not appear on the noun, and the definiteness is inferred by context. We can therefore describe the inanimate locative phrase as in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Inanimate Locative Phrase with Positional

NP	locative-POSITION VERB
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Auxiliary Verbs

Yuchi has no auxiliary verb system today. However, there appears to be the remnants of an auxiliary system of the position verbs.² Wagner (1934: 351) analyzed Yuchi as having two past tenses, past imperfect *-dji(n)* and past perfective *-djinfa/-djinfa* with the past perfective 'corresponding closely to the English pluperfect.' I find these to be perfective aspect only. The Yuchi imperfective is not as close to the English pluperfect as Wagner indicated. The relationship between two events necessary for the pluperfect is not part of the Yuchi perfective aspect, although speakers may sometimes give a pluperfect translation in attempts to indicate an event or situation seen as a whole.

- (6) a. *badole næ-si:-le di-tsa-ʃen*
 last night not-good-Comp 1s-sleep-imperfective
 'I didn't sleep well last night'
- b. *tikale yuštaæ we-yapp-ʃenfə*
 gravel road 3plNY-spread-perfective
 'They put gravel on the road'

The realizations of the perfective aspectual suffixes correspond phonologically to the position verbs. The past imperfective is marked by the suffix *-ʃen(n)*, strikingly similar to *-či*, or *-dji* as recorded by Wagner earlier this century. The past perfective is *-ʃenfə* and *-ʃenfwa*, a possible combination of sit and stand. As the aspectual suffixes occur as the right-most element of the verb, except for the interrogative enclitic and the relative pronoun (see below), they are in the position one would expect to find an auxiliary in a head first language, only attached to the verb instead of being free morphemes. If these are historical positional auxiliaries, then the use of positionals in Yuchi falls even more neatly into the patterns exhibited in Siouan positionals.

NOUN SYSTEM

Yuchi classifies nouns first by animacy. Animates include animals and humans, and inanimates are plants, trees, and non-living things. Humans are further classified according to tribal membership, i.e. Yuchi and non-Yuchi, and Yuchi's are then classified according to

²This was pointed out to me by Dr. T. Dale Nicklas (personal communication).

Table 1 Noun Class Assignments

	-či 'sit'		-fa 'stand'		-e 'lie'	
(9)	yaštadek'a u šiš'i	'chair' 'rock' 'pile/bag or trash'	ya yadas'i	'tree' 'door'	s'æ sta yudaka	'field' 'snow on the ground' 'log'
(10)	a. r'o fa kasoso k'ondi	'potato' 'bullet' 'book' 'meat'			nana š'uni	'river' 'vine'
	b. pač'a gowəni nak'a	'sack/burlap sack' 'shawl/blanket' 'dress'			t'ini got'i yohi	'string' 'ribbon' 'sinew' (GW:
(11)	a.		ču	'bed'	ču	'boat'
	b. dzeta	'block ice'			dzeta	'ice covering ground'
	c. yadida	'drum'	yadida	'barrel'		
	d. dowəni	'my spirit'			dowəni	'my shadow'
(12)	a. dzetapa nənək'a	'my strength' 'truth'	gowəni	'spirit' (GW: 322)	k'alagoyun dzodi	'sickness' (GW: 322) 'my name'
	b.				yujiha gowedini k'ayule yakweni	'Yuchi language' 'fable' 'song'
(13)	a.		stəkəni	'ladder (upright)'	stəkəni	'ladder (on ground)'
	b.		s'æteteni	'broom (upright/ in use)'	s'æteteni	'broom (on ground)'
	c.		sink'ačuni	'nail (sticking up in a board)'	sink'ačuni	'nail'
(14)	a. *k'aso got'ini sink'ačučuni	'pencil' 'hammer'	*k'asoso got'ini *sink'ačučuni	'pencil (upright) hammer (up)'	k'asoso got'ini *sink'ačučuni	'pencil' 'hammer'
	b. kasoso	'book'	*k'asoso	'book (on shelf)'	*k'asoso	'book'
	c.		ya	'tree'	*ya yudaka	'fallen tree' 'log'

'sit,' 'stand,' and 'lie.' As can be seen, *-či*, sitting position, can be extended to objects of roundish shape or having no distinct shape. Anything small and able to be held in the hands falls into this category. Many new objects are assigned to this class. As such, *-či* appears to be more inclusive than *-fa* and *-e*, and therefore somewhat of a default category. For the classifiers *-fa* and *-e*, shape is a more salient characteristic. Standing, is extended by association with tall (vertical), thin shaped objects. This class appears to have fewer members than the other classes. Finally, lying is extended to include objects of long (horizontal), thin shape. Both *-fa* and *-e* share the trait 'thin.'

In many cases, due to homophony and polysemy in the language, the classifier becomes the distinguishing feature between two words, and is the salient feature to clarify meaning. Some of these are given in 11 in Table 1.

Abstract nouns appear to be arbitrarily assigned. Many of them are assigned to the default category *-či*. Whether or not these were at one time non-arbitrary, or metaphorically assigned, is not clear. What is clear from the examples of nouns associated with speech is that there may be some semantic groupings, as shown in 12. This lead will be investigated further as more data is collected.

So far, the Yuchi noun classifiers are behaving exactly as we expect a classification system to behave. However, there are some exceptions to this tidy picture. I have found three nouns which are able to be assigned two separate classifiers depending on their position at the time of the reference. These are 'ladder', 'broom', and 'nail', and shown in 13. Speakers do not have a preferred marker for these items. All have thin shapes, either tall or long, and are therefore assigned to both *-fa* or *-e*. All have the ability to stand upright, and are often found in such a position. When, however, they are not in an upright position, it does not change the nature of the item. Notice that the nouns in 14 are semantically possible candidates for being able to change category, but are ungrammatical if dually assigned. 'Pencil' and 'hammer' are not usually found upright unless they are in hand (a component of *-či*), 'book' can be upright on shelves, but is not necessarily always tall/long or thin, and ya 'tree' becomes *yadaka* 'log', encoded as a new lexical item once it has fallen.

Possession

The classifiers are necessary in the formation of the possessive noun phrase. Possession of inanimate objects, including body parts, is formed by the prefixation of the appropriate possessive pronominal and the suffixation of the assigned classifier (see 4(a)).

- (15) a. *dí-tʰo-či*
my-face-sit
- b. *dí-či-fa*
my-eye-stand
- c. *didzo-k'aso-łi-ni-'e*
my-paper-scratch-Nom-lie
'my pencil'

Once the classifier is assigned, we do not expect it to change in the possessive expression, but again there is some flexibility in the system when referring to body parts. For example, a nose is generally sitting on the face.

- (16) *di-damp'i-či*
my-nose-sit

However, changing the classifier for body parts can be a source of humor to speakers as they can use a marked form in order to point out the characteristics of a person and by doing so poke fun at him. When asked what my nose would be, Mr. Cahwee responded laughingly that he guessed it would be *damp'ifa* (i.e. nose-stand). Similarly, *di-damp'i-e* is also possible, yet marked. Other variable body parts include the mouth and blood, and perhaps others. Blood (in the body *-fa*, clotted *-či*, or on the ground *-e*) may be a similar situation to the distinctions between ice (11) or tree and log (9). Like the definite article, the classifier used in the formation of the possessive is found at the end of the NP, as shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3 The Possessive Noun Phrase

possessive PN - STEM - (nominalizer) - classifier

Ordinals

The classifiers are used in the creation of ordinal numbers. The cardinal number is suffixed with the classifier agreeing to the head noun. The cardinal numeral one, *hir'e*, has a suppletive ordinal.

- (17) *te* *štaha'ę-či*
mulberry first-sit
'the first mulberry'

- (18) *yadas'i* *nowę-fa*
door two-stand
'the second door'

**yadas'i-fa* *nowę-fa*

Notice that with the addition of a possessive NP, the classifier must still appear at the end and only the end of the complete NP:

- (19) *dzo-yuhe* *štaha'ę-či*
1sPoss-house first-stand
'my first house'

*dzo-yuhe-či štaha'ę-či
 *dzo-yuhe-či štaha'ę

The NP including an ordinal number is summarized below.

Figure 4 Ordinal Number NP

{ (possessive PN) } { (negative) }	-	STEM - (nominalizer)	NUMERAL-classifier
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Relative Pronoun

The relative pronoun is the noun classifier suffixed to the end of the verb of the relative clause, thus showing the subordination of the verb and specifying its relationship to the noun it is modifying.

- (19) a. *ya* *aso-ta-ǰen-fa* *abe-do-fɔ*
 tree (aso)-show-past-that(stand) today-I-cut down
 'I cut down today the tree that I showed you'
 **ya-fa aso-ta-ǰen-fa abe-do-fɔ*
- b. *k'asoso* *ayo-gwa-či* *nǣ-hi-do-da*
 book 2s-talk about-that(sit) not-it-I-know
 'I don't know the book (that) you're talking about'
- c. *s'ǣ* *ayo-gwa-'e* *nǣ-di-n'e*
 field 2s-talk about-that(lic) not-I-see
 'I can't see the/which field you're talking about'

The data in 19 shows that, once more, the classifier is suffixed to the end of the complete NP, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 NP with Relative Clause

{ (poss PN) } { (neg) }	-	STEM - (nominalizer)	(NUMERAL)	VP- classifier
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Demonstrative Pronouns

Yuchi has two sets of demonstratives, *ne=* and *le=*, corresponding to the English 'this' and 'that'. *Ne=* and *le=* never occur as free morphemes, but must be suffixed with a classifier or the plural marker, as seen in 20. I am indicating this relationship by the double-bar notation.

- (20) a. 'this' *ne=č̣i* 'that' *le=č̣i*
 ne=fa *le=fa*
 ne=e *le=e*
 **ne*
 **le*
- b. 'these' *ne=ha* 'those' *le=ha*
 **ne*
 **le*

Since demonstratives always have a definite referent, it is not surprising that the formation of the demonstrative in Yuchi requires the noun classifier, which, as seen above, makes the noun definite. The demonstrative can be independent, as in 21 and 22. It should be noted that if the speaker does not know the class of the object he/she is asking about in 21, then *wigæ neč̣i* is the default question.

- (21) *wigæ ne=č̣i/fa/e*
 what this=sit/stand/lie
 'What's this?'
- (22) *nɔnɔ dze'e nʕ-le* *le=e ho-to:-le*
 creek water-lie see-? that=lie it-deep-Comp
 'See the creek?' 'That's real deep!'

When the demonstrative is used to modify a noun, the word order is not what we expect in a head first language. The demonstrative appears before the noun. This is typical of all the languages of the Southeast, with the exception of Choctaw-Chickasaw (Nicklas n.d.). Since we have consistently seen the classifier suffixed to the end of the noun phrase, we expect to find two classifiers in a demonstrative NP: one used in the formation of the demonstrative and the other at the end of the phrase, as the demonstrative NP is by nature definite. This is exactly what we find.

- (23) *ne=fa ya-fa æ:-le*
 this-stand tree-stand big-comp.
 'this tree is real big!'
 **ne=fa ya æ:-le*

The NP with the demonstrative can be seen in Figure 6:

Figure 6 Demonstrative NP

DEM=classifier	STEM - (nominalizer) - classifier
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Interrogative Pronoun 'which'

The formation of interrogative pronoun 'which' is parallel to the formation of the demonstrative. Since 'which' requires the selection of a specific referent, i.e. which one of a set group, the interrogative must be attached to a classifier. The interrogative *wa=* is a bound morpheme.

- (24) *wa=či/fa/e?*
 which-sit/stand/lie
 'which one?'

**wa*

The word order, unlike the demonstrative, is head first. Therefore, the classifier of the interrogative is the right-most suffix of the NP, the position in which we expect to find classifier of a definite NP. This being the case, the classifier used in the formation of the interrogative pronoun assumes the role of both marker for the pronoun and marker for the definite NP. The head of the NP cannot be marked for definiteness.

- (25) *ya wa=fa aiyo-gwa*
 tree which-stand (ai)2s-talk about
 'Which tree are you talking about?'

**ya-fa wa=fa aiyogwa*

It is appropriate to point out that the interrogative pronoun 'what', *wigæ*, cannot take a classifier since it is by nature non-referential. This can be seen in the speakers' judgements below.

- (26) *wigæ nɛ-n'e*
 what 2s-see
 'What are you looking at?'

**wigæ=či nɛ-n'e*

The selective interrogative NP follows the expected pattern, as shown in Figure 7:

Figure 7 Interrogative PN 'Which'

STEM - (nominalizer)	wa=classifier
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Conclusion

The position verbs in Yuchi are sit *či*, stand *fa*, and lie 'e. They can be used in locative expressions and may be the historical source of the perfective aspectual suffixes. The position verbs become the noun classifiers. The classifiers typically represented the inherent position of the referent corresponding to the appropriate position verb, but this classification has been extended to the idea of shape. As seen, the classifiers are used for a variety of morphological and syntactic functions besides noun classification. They are the definite article and the relative pronoun. They are used in the formation of the possessive, ordinal numerals, demonstratives, and the interrogative pronoun 'which'. These all are part of a system to convey definiteness (Baron and Fritz 1982: 99). It appears that whenever there is referentiality, the NP must be marked for the features animate/inanimate, and in inanimate the position 'sit', 'stand', or 'lie'.

The classifier is always the right-most element of the NP. Sentences are ill-formed if the classifier occurs anywhere else in the NP, with the exception of the demonstrative whose construction must include an appropriate classifier. A summary of the Yuchi inanimate definite noun phrases is given below.

Figure 8 Summary of Yuchi Definite Inanimate Noun Phrases

	DEM=classifier
(negative)-	N - (nominalizer) - classifier
(possessive PN)-	N - (nominalizer) - classifier
DEM=classifier	N - classifier
	N NUMERAL - classifier
	N WHICH=classifier
	N VP - classifier

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