

Irregular first person inflections in Cariban converging factors for morphological (dis-)similarity

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Proto-Cariban is reconstructed as having an untypical split-S system, where the division between S_A and S_P is not based on any known semantic criteria (Meira 2000b). Rather, verbs derived via the detransitivizer $*\partial t(e)/e-$ (Meira et al. 2010) end up in the S_A category, while almost all other intransitive verbs are S_P (Meira 2000b). The category of verbs is primarily identified via the person marking prefixes they take (Table 1).

Table 1: Proto-Cariban split-S person marking

	S_A	S_P
1	$*w-$	$*uj-$
2	$*m-$	$*\partial j-$
1+2	$*kit-$	$*k-$
3	$*n-$	$*ni-$

Many Cariban languages have modified this system, introducing new person markers (Gildea 1998: 80–84, 90–92). These innovations most likely happened via lexical diffusion, as suggested by Meira (2000a) for the switch of 1>3 $*t-$ and $1S_A$ $*w-$ in Tiriyo and Akuriyó, and as evidenced by the $kitj-$ ~ $k-$ ‘1+2 S_P ’ variation attested in Werikyana (Spike Gildea, p.c.). Of interest are new prefixes which did not spread completely, leaving over a small group of verbs with synchronically irregular inflection patterns, remnants of old S_A markers. This is illustrated in (1–4), where (a–b) show verbs with regular marking, and (c) shows verbs with irregular marking – reflexes of Proto-Cariban $*w-$ ‘1 S_A ’.

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| <p>(1) Hixkaryána (Derbyshire 1985: 188, 209)</p> <p>a. <i>k-ratano</i> ‘I wept’</p> <p>b. <i>ki-kitano</i> ‘I rushed’</p> <p>c. <i>i-tono</i> ‘I went’</p> | <p>(3) Tiriyo (Meira 1999: 293–294)</p> <p>a. <i>t-aturu</i> ‘I talked’</p> <p>b. <i>t-æniki</i> ‘I slept’</p> <p>c. <i>w-æpi</i> ‘I came’</p> |
| <p>(2) Arara (Alves 2017: 153)</p> <p>a. <i>k-omomili</i> ‘I entered’</p> <p>b. <i>k-onkuli</i> ‘I ascended’</p> <p>c. <i>w-ebini</i> ‘I came’</p> | <p>(4) Yukpa (Meira 2003)</p> <p>a. <i>j-otiri</i> ‘I stayed’</p> <p>b. <i>ji-nke</i> ‘I slept’</p> <p>c. <i>Ø-to</i> ‘I went’</p> |
| <p>(5) Carijona (Koch-Grünberg 1908: 79; Guerrero-Beltrán 2016b: 70, 2016a: 5)</p> <p>a. <i>j-ehihəhjai</i> ‘I fight’</p> <p>b. <i>j-ejae</i> ‘I come’</p> <p>c. <i>wi-tæ</i> ‘I go’</p> | |

Interestingly, of 18 investigated person marker extensions affecting intransitive verbs, the 6 extensions leaving such irregular verbs all introduced $1S_{(A)}$ markers. Three of these innovative markers are reconstructible to intermediate proto-languages: Proto-Parukotoan $*k-$, Proto-Waiwaian $*k-$, and Proto-Tiriyoan $*t-$. The other three are found in single extant languages: Akuriyó $k-$, Carijona $j-$, and Yukpa $j(i)-$. Besides some language-specific irregular verbs, the six innovations show considerable overlap in what verbs they did not affect (6).

- (6) Proto-Cariban verbs with multiple irregularly inflected reflexes
- a. **a(p)/eti* ‘to be’
 - b. **ka(ti)* ‘to say’
 - c. **itə(mi)* ‘to go’
 - d. **(ət-)jəpi* ‘to come’
 - e. **ipitə* ‘to go down’

Using Bybee’s (1985) network model of morphology, I show that some cases of incomplete extension can be argued to be due to lexical connections based on morphology (presence vs absence of the detransitivizing prefix), while the distribution of others reveals phonological connections between verbs with innovative markers (*e-* and/or *ə-*initial vs others). While no semantic connections have emerged as relevant, many of the resistant verbs are high frequency verbs, a factor predicting conservatism in Bybee’s model. In fact, most cases of resistant verbs are predicted simultaneously by three factors: morphological connections, phonological connections, and frequency. Thus, while the network model offers attractive explanations for the (non-)spread of innovative 1S_A markers, these predicting factors strongly overlap in many of the investigated cases of extension. This in turn is largely due to the fact that the most high-frequency S_A verbs were different from normal S_A verbs already at the level of Proto-Cariban, since they did not contain the detransitivizing prefix **ət(e)-e-*, and were therefore morphologically and phonologically distinct from normal S_A verbs.

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