**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 SA and SP is not based on any known semantic criteria (Meira 2000b). Rather, verbs derived via the detransitivizer \**ət(e)-*/*e-* (Meira et al. 2010) end up in the SA category, while almost all other intransitive verbs are SP (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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | SA | SP |
| 1 | \**w-* | \**uj-* |
| 2 | \**m-* | \**əj-* |
| 1+2 | \**kɨt-* | *\*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 1SA \**w-* in Tiriyó and Akuriyó, and as evidenced by the *kɨt͡ʃ-* ~ *k-* ‘1+2SP’ 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, the old SA 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-* ‘1SA’.

(1) Hixkaryána (Derbyshire 1985: 188, 209) a. *k-ratano* ‘I wept’

b. *kɨ-kɨtano* ‘I rushed’

c. *ɨ-tono* ‘I went’

(2) Arara (Alves 2017: 153)

a. *k-omomɨlɨ* ‘I entered’

b. *k-onkulɨ* ‘I ascended’

c. *w-ebɨnɨ* ‘I came’

(3) Tiriyó (Meira 1999: 293–294)

a. *t-əturu* ‘I talked’

b. *t-əənɨkɨ* ‘I slept’

c. *w-əepɨ* ‘I came’

(4) Yukpa (Meira 2003)

a. *j-otɨrɨ* ‘I stayed’

b. *jɨ-nke* ‘I slept’

c. Ø-*to* ‘I went’

(5) Carijona (Koch-Grünberg 1908: 79; Guerrero-Beltrán 2016b: 70, 2016a: 5)   
a. *j-ehɨhəhjai* ‘I fight’

b. *j-ejae* ‘I come’

c. *wɨ-təe* ‘I go’

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(ɨ)-*. 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. \**ɨtə(mɨ)* ‘to go’

d. \**(ət-)jəpɨ* ‘to come’

e. \**ɨpɨtə* ‘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 conservativism 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 1SA 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 SA verbs were different from normal SA 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 SA verbs.

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