Constraints on Source/Goal Co-Occurrence
In Carrier

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses a puzzling restriction on the combination of goal and source motion in Carrier verbs, offering a solution in terms of argument structure.

1.1. Restrictions on Source/Goal Combinations

In most languages it is possible to express the source and goal of motion in the same clause, as in the English “I walked from home to school”. In Carrier, an Athabaskan language of the Central Interior of British Columbia, this is not the case; two clauses are required. They may be joined by the complementizer hoh “while”, as in (1)-(2), or by the conjunction ūnk’ez “and”, as in (4)-(7).

(1) Tače ts’i hasya hoh Binče ts’i ṣya
Tachie PP I.walked.from COMP Pinchie PP I.arrived.walking
I walked from Tachie to Pinchie.

The data in this paper are in the Saik’áz (Stoney Creek) dialect, a member of the Fraser-Nechako subgroup of the Southern branch of Carrier. Although I have not checked every detail, the facts do not appear to be materially different in the Nak’albé/Dzin’albán (Stuart/Trembleur Lake) dialect to which most of the literature on Carrier is devoted. I am grateful to Dr. Mary John, Sr., OAC for the bulk of the data, and to the late Veronica George for example (20). The transcription used is phonemic North American IPA. Underscores distinguish lamino-dental fricatives and affricates from apico-alveolars.

The gloss “while” is only approximate. This complementizer is used in a broad range of situations in which the events of the two clauses overlap in time.

In several of the following examples the word ts’i is glossed “PP”. Although most often it can be glossed “to”, this is an underspecified directional postposition and when the verb calls for it may translate English “from”. Other abbreviations are: COMP = complementizer, 2 = 2nd person.

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I carried the fish from the kitchen to the dining room.

The school bus goes back and forth between Stoney Creek and town twice a day.

He came to earth from heaven.

He ran out of the house into the lake.

He dragged a moose out of the bush to the road with a snowmobile.

It is not necessary for the source and goal to be overt. The same phenomenon is observed in verbs in which one directional argument is expressed by means of an adverbial prefix. In (8) the goal is expressed by the prefix *ta “into liquid”*. The same verb may instead have a source argument, as in (9), but as (10) shows source and goal may not co-occur.

The little bird fell into the water.
The little bird fell out of its nest.

The little bird fell out of its nest into the water.

(Other orderings of the prefixes, viz. tabehalts’at and betahalts’at, do not improve this example.)

1.2. Specificity to Source/Goal Combinations

The constraint is specifically on the combination of source and goal. Other thematic roles are freely combined, as in (11)-(19).

source/instrumental/theme
(11) Yask’at nakes ?i be danı tinton tsi hayangaz.
    snowmobile it by moose bush PP he.dragged.it.out
    He dragged a moose out of the bush with a snowmobile.

goal/instrumental
(12) Dat’si be Čanlak ts’i tekel.
    his.own.canoe by Chunlac PP he.will.go.by.boat
    He is going to go to Chunlac in his canoe.

comitative/benefactive
    my.sister with.me uncle for we.2.are.working
    My sister is working with me for our uncle.

comitative/locative
(14) Fabian ?ink’ez Ernie bāl ?at’enbayoh
    Fabian and Ernie with.him shed
    ?et ?at’at’en.
    there they.are.working
    Fabian is working with Ernie in the shed.

comitative/testamentary
    Fabian and Ernie with.him before.us.2 they.are.working
    Fabian is working with Ernie in our presence.
comitative/instrumental

(16) Dagasyattak be bal yastak.
    telephone by with.him I.spoke
I spoke to him on the telephone.

theme/benefactive/instrumental

(17) Benenadaka be sba nanainezkai.
    sewing.machine by for.me he.sewed.it
She sewed it (torn shirt) for me with a sewing machine.

instrumental/testamentary/theme

(18) Nenaal @idne be lel z be dadent'az yayanyaz.
    before.us boy hammer by window he.broke.it
The boy broke the window with a hammer in our presence.

adversative/benefactive

(19) John s'ca hbatealtak.
    John against.me for.them he.will.speak
John will speak against me, for them.

The impossibility of combining source and goal is reminiscent of the restrictions on
the expression of motion and path and motion and manner pointed out by Talmy
(1985).

2. A Possible Morphological Account

Since many of the verbs involved contain adverbial prefixes that specify a source
or goal, a plausible hypothesis is that the constraint is morphological in nature.
Specifically, we might suppose that the constraint is simply the result of the inability
of more than one adverbial prefix to occupy the same slot.

Such a proposal would be problematic since there is actually more than one
position available for adverbial prefixes. This is illustrated by such examples as (9),
where there are two adverbial prefixes, be- “inside” and ha “out”. In any case, the
constraint is observed even in examples in which adverbial prefixes are not involved.
Consider (20), which has no mono-clausal equivalent.

(20) Dabez ike yilcut ?ink'ez yatezgaz
    her.mother.in.law her.feet he.took.it and he.began.to.drag.it
    hoh nyak hax at'i ?et ni:nningaz.
    COMP over.there they.reside there he.dragged.it.to.a.terminus
She took her mother-in-law’s feet and dragged her over there
to where they were staying.

(20) comes form a story about a prophet named Boba. While camped with
her son, daughter, and daughter-in-law, Boba died. Her body was wrapped up

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in preparation for cremation and put across the fire from their camp. One day, after she had been dead for a week, her daughter-in-law noticed her body moving, brought the body back to their camp, and revived her. Later, they took her back to Nadleh (Nautley) village where she remained alive for a month and made many prophecies. Some are interpreted as predicting the coming of horses, trains, white people, noodles, and old age pensions.

Whereas \textit{niningaz} contains the adverbial prefix \textit{ni- “to a terminus”}, \textit{yatezgaz} contains no adverbial prefix. Its components are: \textit{y(\Lambda)- “3s disjoint object”, t-“inceptive”, ez “perfective” and g\textunderscore\textit{\text{A}} “drag”}. The source in the situation results from the interaction of the meaning of the verb “drag” and the inceptive. The constraint is therefore not on morphological structure.

### 3. Level of Representation

The evidence we have so far considered does not specify the level of representation to which the constraint applies. In particular, it leaves open the question of whether it applies to a true semantic representation or to argument structure. There is evidence that the latter is the case.

The constraint applies only to thematic roles that are syntactically visible. Sources that are incorporated into the verb do not count for the purpose of this constraint. Some body parts may be incorporated into the verb. Such incorporated nouns may not be modified and are otherwise not available to the syntax. In (21) \textit{nak'e “eye socket”} is incorporated into the verb “to flow”. An additional piece of evidence that it is incorporated is that the form used in contexts other than such incorporations is \textit{nak'et}.5

\begin{equation}
(21) \quad X_{\Lambda z} \quad \text{snak'ehaindli.} \\
Pus \quad \text{it.eye.socket.flows.out.of.me} \\
Pus \text{ is flowing out of my eyes.}
\end{equation}

An example in which such an incorporated source co-occurs with an explicit goal is (22).

\begin{equation}
(22) \quad Y_{\Lambda n} \quad \text{\$abal k'\text{\Lambda}t \text{uzek” uzahayandli.}} \\
\text{carpet onto his.saliva it.mouth.flows.out.him} \\
\text{He is drooling onto the carpet.}
\end{equation}

The expression “he is drooling” literally means “his saliva is flowing out of his mouth”. The verb is “to flow”, with the incorporated postposition \textit{ha “from, out”},

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5 Since body parts are inalienably possessed one cannot really speak of a free form. However, “eye socket” actually does have a free form of sorts since it also means “lenticel on birch bark”, which is not inalienably possessed.
and the incorporated noun za “mouth”. In this case the object marker is the third person singular u. One piece of evidence that “mouth” is incorporated is that za is not the normal form of mouth. Except in such incorporations, “mouth” is -zek. The reason that the goal may be mentioned in (22) is that the source is not syntactically visible, just as in English, a source “mouth” is implicit in “to drool” but is neither overtly nor syntactically present.

Notice that in (20) we had to appeal to an implicit source, which appears to contradict the claim just made about (22). My suggestion is that there is a difference between “drag” and “drool”. In “drag”, although the source may not be explicitly expressed, it is part of the argument structure of the verb. That is, there is an agent that does the dragging, a theme that is dragged, a source from which it is dragged, and a goal to which it is dragged. In contrast, “drool” has no source role at the appropriate level of representation.

4. The Thematic Structure of Carrier Motion Verbs

I suggest that the restriction on co-occurrence of source and goal in Carrier verbs is not arbitrary but is the result of a general property of the thematic structure of Carrier motion verbs. My proposal is that Carrier motion verbs are never neutral; they always describe motion with respect to some reference point. By default, this is a goal. Morphology may further specify this goal or may change it into a source, but it may not add reference points.

Evidence for this proposal may be found by examining the simplest, most neutral possible Carrier motion verbs, namely verbs with no meaningful thematic prefixes in the progressive aspect. Such progressive forms are used to describe what at first glance appears to be pure motion with no reference point. For example, if you call someone on your cell phone from a boat and he or she asks you how you are travelling, you would say: askel “I am going by boat”. This consists of the progressive aspect stem kel and the first person singular subject prefix s; the is epenthetic.6

Nonetheless, even such verbs have an intrinsic orientation to a destination. Thus, (23), in which the verb is combined with a destination, is grammatical, but (24), with an origin rather than a destination, is ungrammatical.

(23) Tače ts’i hekel.
    Tachie PP they.are.going.by.boat
    They are en route to Tachie by boat.

(24) *Tače x_w ts’a hekel.
    Tachie from they.are.going.by.boat
    They are en route from Tachie by boat.

6 In this form the progressive aspect is marked only by the stem. The progressive aspect prefix e seen below in the third person plural form hekel is realized only when preceded by a prefix belonging to the class known to Athabaskanists as conjunct prefixes.
A similar observation may be made regarding the “handling verbs”. The handling verbs are a set of verbs used to describe handling of objects of various types. They form the basis for one of the several systems of noun classification in Carrier. Handling verb roots merely indicate the type of object handled. The precise way in which the object is handled is determined by the prefixes added to this root. In (25) we have a number of examples of verbs for handling two-dimensional flexible objects. In each case, comparable verbs exist for handling other classes of objects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(25) Some Handling Verbs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>behanaiteśas</td>
<td>he is going to take it out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daidateśas</td>
<td>he is going to hold it up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daγaidateśas</td>
<td>he is going to hang it up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huk’weitaićas</td>
<td>he is going to put it on (the table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huk’wenayitaćas</td>
<td>he is going to put it back on (the table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanaitesas</td>
<td>he is going to bring it back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sγaitesas</td>
<td>he is going to give it to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naiteśas</td>
<td>he is going to carry it around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tateśas</td>
<td>he is going to bury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tateśas</td>
<td>he is going to submerge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nateśas</td>
<td>he is going to put on the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaiyatetelčas</td>
<td>he is going to bring it ashore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When a handling verb root is used with no thematic prefixes, it means “carry object to”, as exemplified in (26).

(26) Tsetsel tsazbayoh ts’i yeʔal.
   axe woode shed PP he.is.bringing.it
   He is bringing the axe to the woodshed.

Here the verb *yeʔal* is the progressive aspect of the verb for handling single default objects. It contains two overt prefixes. One is the singular disjoint reference third person object marker *γ*. The other is the progressive aspect marker *e*. The third person singular subject marker is merely a requirement that there be a vowel in a certain position; this requirement is satisfied by the progressive aspect marker. The verb contains no prefixes that indicate the direction of motion, and as we have seen, the postposition *ts’i* is directionally neutral. The fact that the motion is to the woodshed must therefore be the result of the default thematic role.

Further evidence for a default directional role comes from the system of directional prefixes. Carrier has a number of prefixes that are usually translated as specifying motion in a certain direction. These include the following:
A striking fact is that there are no comparable prefixes with opposite meanings, such as "out of a hole", "out of liquid", "away from the ground". Instead, these meanings are expressed by combining one of the "into" prefixes with the prefix ha "from, out of". This is exemplified by (28)-(33).

(28)  t’aadesd’atan  
I put (long rigid object) into my pocket

(29)  t’Ahadesd’atan  
I took (long rigid object) out of my pocket

(30)  tayantan  
he put it (long rigid object) into liquid

(31)  tahayantan  
he took it (long rigid object) out of liquid

(32)  dadelge  
he inserted his finger

(33)  dahadelge  
he withdrew his finger

This suggests that there is no inherent directionality to these prefixes. The appearance thereof results rather from the fact that the direction argument of motion verbs defaults to a goal. The prefix ha, which explicitly marks the argument a source, may be used to over-ride and reverse the default.

Further evidence of the lack of intrinsic directionality is provided by (34)-(36), all of which refer to wearing clothing on the torso, such as pants, shirts, dresses and skirts.

(34)  čaimant’asas  besasda  
jeans  I.am.wearing  
I am wearing jeans.
(35) čaimantl’asas benasja  
    jeans  I.put.on  
    I put on jeans.

(36) čaimantl’asas behanasja  
    jeans  I.took.o®  
    I took o® jeans.

(34) literally means “I am sitting within” and contains the postposition be, the incorporated counterpart of the independent postposition bet. Here it clearly has no directionality to it. (35) literally means “I walked within”. It consists of the same incorporated postposition with the underlying verb the verb ya “for one person to walk on one pair of limbs”. be is now associated with a goal argument. (36) literally means “I walked out of”. It has the same components as (35) with the addition of the prefix ha, which has the effect of converting the goal argument into a source. These examples show that be has no intrinsic directionality. When part of a stative verb it has no associated directionality. When part of a motion verb it becomes associated with a goal unless the default is over-ridden by the use of ha, in which case the goal is replaced by a source. The other clothing verbs, the dual and plural verbs for wearing clothing on the torso and the verbs for wearing clothing on the hands, the feet, and the head, all have the same structure and make the same point about the semantics of be.

5. Conclusion

In Carrier, it is impossible for the source and goal of motion to be specified in the same clause. This constraint applies at the level of argument structure. This results from the fact that Carrier motion verbs have a single directional argument position. This is a goal by default, but may be changed into a source by suitable morphology.

References


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