Variable affix ordering and Multiple Exponence in Rarámuri: parsability, semantic scope, and selectional restrictions in an agglutinating language

Gabriela Caballero (gcaballe@berkeley.edu)
University of California, Berkeley

Research on the principles underlying affix ordering has provided solutions for the analysis of typologically diverse languages. For Bantu and Athabaskan languages, it has been proposed that principles such as semantic compositionality and templatic restrictions interact in different degrees to shape affix sequences (Rice 2000, Hyman 2002, Paster 2005). Through novel data obtained through field research, this paper documents morphologically complex constructions of an agglutinating, understudied language, Rarámuri (Tarahumara), and shows that although semantic scope determines some of the attested variable affix patterns, it is parsability and selectional restrictions, *not* templatic constraints, that underlie Rarámuri suffix combinatorics and exponence.

Rarámuri is a Uto-Aztecan language with a complex, mostly suffixing verbal morphology, and a rich derivational apparatus (with three transitivizers, a causative, and four applicatives). The relative order of affixes in the verbal template conforms to principles of cognitive relevance (Bybee 1985), with more relevant, less-productive affixes closer and more phonologically fused to the stem than outer, inflectional suffixes. The order of Rarámuri suffixes also conforms to Complexity Based Ordering: less parsable suffixes (with weaker, less salient junctural boundaries) are ordered before more parsable ones (Hay 2002, Hay & Plag 2004).

The relative parsability of affixes is directly correlated with their ability to display Multiple Exponence (ME), a phenomenon of apparently redundant marking of morphological markers with no parallel semantic recursivity (*ko'á-**r-ti**-ma*, eat-**Caus-Caus**-Fut.sg, 'he will make her eat'). Specifically, ME in Rarámuri targets less parsable sufixes that, due to their weak junctural boundaries, are increasingly opaque and reanalyzed as part of the stem. In addition, suffixes that are equally parsable present an interesting deviation from their linear relative ordering: certain pairs of suffixes can be variably ordered (specifically, causative and applicative, causative and associated motion, desiderative and associated motion, and desiderative and auditory evidential). Semantic compositionality is clearly involved in determining some of these permutations (e.g. *kochi-**nári-ri**,* sleep-**Desid-Caus**, 'she makes him want to sleep' vs. *kochí-**r-nari**,* sleep-**Caus-Desid**, 'she wants to make him sleep'). This parameter, however, cannot account for the full range of affix permutation data: desiderative and auditory evidential can be variably ordered despite the fact that they do not hold any scopal relations (e.g. *wikará-**n-chan**-a,* sing-**Desid-Ev**-Pres, 'it sounds like they want to sing'; *atís-**cha-nare**,* sneeze-**Ev-Desid**, 'it sounds like they want to sneeze'). Instead, the ordering is determined by stem-based selectional restrictions: vowel-final stems subcategorize for the Desid-Ev order, while consonant-final stems subcategorize for the Ev-Desid order.

This paper adds another case to a growing collection of examples of languages with variable affix ordering (Quechua (Muysken 1988), Upper Necaxa Totonac (Beck 2007), Yup'ik (Mithun 2000)), and dispenses altogether with arbitrary ordering principles (such as templates) in favor of factors such as semantic compositionality, selectional restrictions and parsability to explain the morphologically complexity of an agglutinating language.