Giving and taking in Chipewyan: The semantics of THING-marking classificatory verbs

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1. Introduction

A remarkable facet of GIVE (and TAKE) constructions in Chipewyan and, indeed, in all of its Athapaskan cousins, is the near absence of either a neutral or generic statement of giving. While there are no neutral or generic *acts* of giving in the realm of human interaction, there are languages whose way of expressing a particular instance of giving is fairly neutral and generic, as in the English, *I gave it to him*. Such a statement conveys nothing specific about the individual act such as the physical or abstract nature of the given object, the purpose behind the act of giving, the manner in which the bestowal took place, the immediacy of the interaction, the permanence of the transfer, or the psychological state of the human participants. In a language such as English, narrative context (or direct observation) are required to fill in many of the details that Chipewyan encodes explicitly. In Chipewyan,[1] most predications about the transfer of a THING from a GIVER to a RECIPIENT must obligatorily encode features about the animacy or shape/consistency of the transferred object, whether the transfer takes place in a moderated and deliberate or an abrupt and perhaps careless manner, and whether the transferred THING ends up being placed directly into the RECIPIENT'S hands or merely gets transported vaguely into his or her sphere of influence for what may be beneficial purposes or not. Not surprisingly, this last distinction, based as it is on where

the transferred THING ends up, tends to correlate semantically with an inference of temporary change of possession versus permanent change of ownership.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of any Athapaskan language with respect to issues being discussed in this volume is that there is no single verb stem of giving (or taking).[2] There are at least as many stems as there are conventionalized animacy/shape/consistency distinctions in the language. Afterall, one of the hallmark features of the entire family typologically is the presence of a THING-marking classificatory verb stem system. Typically, an Athapaskan language maintains about 8 or 9 such contrasts depending on the semantic relation being predicated. Semantically, these predicates range from expressions of object location, absolute motion of an object, object manipulation, and, of course, object transfer. Furthermore, there often exist in these languages parallel sets of classificatory verb stems for predications of object manipulation and transfer which, in addition to distinguishing physical attributes of the THING, encode something about the manner in which it was handled or transferred, i.e. either gently or forcefully. It remains an open question as to whether all these manner differences and the stem or prefixal changes they necessitate have effectively become lexicalized (in the same way that the English verbs *donate*, *hand*, and *toss* represent lexically distinct but semantically related alternatives for *give*) or whether they remain derivations on a set of verbal themes.

The morphosyntactic requirements of Chipewyan are such that transfer predications remain quite specific semantically, being as they are so thoroughly grounded in concrete experience. While there is some room for language play and metaphoric extension with respect to these constructions, statements about giving and taking in Chipewyan are overwhelmingly applicable only with sentient human participants and tangible transferred objects. One can neither be abstract nor generic when it comes to giving and taking since, for the most part, such actions are rigidly situated in the spatio-temporal domain. While this facet of Athapaskan languages alone makes them typologically noteworthy (although THING-marking verbs are not that unusual cross-linguistically[3]), it also makes them intriguing conceptually. The absence of either a schematic or an all-encompassing basic-level verb of giving or taking means that the coarsely-construed lexico-semantic category of transfer predications is populated exclusively by verbal hyponyms, or what George Miller has termed *troponyms*.[4] In short, it seems as if the language, through its rather elaborate encoding

requirements, exerts a subtle pressure on speakers to remain not only literal in their use of such predications, but also constrained in their usage and interpretation of them by the exigencies of real-world physical transfer. This point will be illustrated and discussed in detail in later sections of the paper. One of the stated purposes of this volume, through its many case studies of individual languages, is to impress upon readers the fact that giving and taking as human activities are experientially and cognitively basic yet interactionally complex and that, in turn, GIVE and TAKE constructions cross-linguistically tend to receive special and often complex coding paradigmatically. As I hope to demonstrate below, Chipewyan more than meets both these textual and typological criteria.

The organization of this paper is as follows. In Section 2, I provide a very schematic overview of the most salient elements of Chipewyan morphosyntax, especially as pertains to GIVE and TAKE constructions. In Sections 3 and 4, the composition and interpretation of literal GIVE constructions and literal TAKE constructions are exemplified and analyzed from a cognitive linguistics point of view, using terminology and notation from Cognitive Grammar (as formulated in Langacker 1987/1991a, 1991b and applied to GIVE and TAKE constructions in Newman 1996). In Section 5, I turn to pragmatic and figurative aspects of transfer predications in Chipewyan and other Athapaskan languages and, in Section 6, I make a few general observations about the language with respect to issues raised in this paper.

2.   An overview of Chipewyan morphosyntax

It is impossible to due justice to the morphosyntactic complexities of any Athapaskan language in a few short pages or in a paper of this type, focused as it is on a single set of constructions. Suffice it to say that there is near universal agreement among neophyte and seasoned linguists working on these languages that the Athapaskan verb is both a polysynthetic marvel and nightmare. This reaction is primarily due to the sheer number of morphemes which may be integrated into the verbal unit, but also because of the extensive tonal and morphophonemic alternations and assimilations, reductions, metatheses, and fusions that occur, as well as the rather commonplace elisions that take place in normal speech. Many of these are required to achieve a heavy/light syllable alternation, which is one way that inflectional differences are sometimes signalled in the verb system. There

is also a fair amount of suppletion in the language. Nevertheless, despite their complexity and their great geographical spread, Athapaskan languages are surprisingly similar compositionally and, indeed, one frequently hears about mutual intelligibility between speakers of, for example, Dogrib in the N.W.T. in Canada and Navajo in the southwestern U.S. Excellent overviews for individual languages which could reasonably be extrapolated to any of the others can be found in Young and Morgan (1987) for Navajo, Rice (1989) for Slave, and Kari (1990) for Ahtna. The most complete grammar of Chipewyan remains Fang Kue Li's amazingly thorough 1928 sketch. With Goddard (1912), Richardson (1968), and Carter (1975), these sources more or less exhaust the readily available grammatical descriptions of the language. In this section I confine the presentation to the most relevant aspects of Chipewyan morphosyntax applicable to the constructions under study.

2.1. *The verbal unit*

The basic word order in Chipewyan is SOV. In a ditransitive construction, it is SOXV. However, because the verbal unit typically features subject and object pronouns, a sentence could consist solely of a verb, in which case the order of mention of the verbal arguments becomes transposed when comparing between a full nominal and pronominal rendering of the same construction. This sequential contrast is illustrated in (1) for a typical act of giving. (For purposes of exposition, I have given an exploded version of the verb in (1a). The form in (1b) differs from (1a) only on the basis of the prenominal possessor of 'palm', *ye-* rather than *Aniyes*.) As discussed in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 below, the verb stem literally denotes the THING, or more precisely, the handling of the THING, in this case a bundled object or closed container:

(1) a. *keni   eritł'is-tili*
       Kenny   paper-pail
       S   O
    aniyes-tł'aghe-ye-į-ł-tá̧
    Agnes-palm-in-3SG:S-CLASS-PERF:**handle a closed container**
    X   S   V/O
    'Kenny gave Agnes the box.'

b. *ye-tł'aghe-ye-į-ł-tá̧*
   3SG:X-palm-(in)-3SG:S-CLASS-PERF:**handle a closed container**
   X   S   V/O
   'He gave it to her.'

The most salient feature of any Athapaskan language is the elaborate prefixal system within the verbal unit. The verb consists of a *verb theme* (the basic lexical entry) and some number of additional prefixes. The verb theme is comprised of a stem (it is the classificatory stems that are of particular interest in this paper), one of 4 classifiers (despite the rather infelicitous label, they express voice or valency alternations and may be realized by a zero morpheme), and any other prefixes (called *thematic prefixes*) which are obligatorily part of the lexical verb. As shown in (1), the leftmost prefixal elements within the verbal unit, the postposition and its object, encode RECIPIENT in GIVE constructions (and SOURCE in TAKE constructions). Any remaining prefixes are called *nonthematic* and these encode derivational and inflectional categories as diverse as subject and object pronouns, aspect, mood, a variety of adverbial notions, and any incorporated noun stems that may be required. The prefixes are more or less rigidly arranged to the left of the verb stem in the verbal unit and to the right of any (incorporated) postpositional phrase. Depending on the language, up to 23 different prefix categories have been posited, although most of the languages within the family exhibit only about 9-12 prefixal positions and Chipewyan is claimed to have 10 (depending on how one counts). A schematic template, such as the one given in Table 1, is commonly used to summarize the nature and order of the verbal prefixes.

The inclusion of the PP as a thematic prefix and, indeed, its independence or boundedness vis-à-vis the rest of the verbal unit is open to dispute, which is one reason that the postposition and its object are sometimes numbered 0 and 00 in a verbal template. In this paper, I will follow standard practice of writing them as if they were incorporated into the verbal unit. This template does not necessarily represent current thinking about Athapaskan verbal prefixes, but it serves our immediate expository needs. There has been extensive discussion in the literature about particular prefix functions and meanings, their separability and classification, metaclassifications (e.g. disjunctive vs. conjunctive prefixes), the templatic representation as a whole, and theoretical implications underlying such a

"slot/filler" approach to the Athapaskan verb. These issues are well beyond the scope of this paper. However, the expectation that certain prefix positions exist and should be filled, coupled with some robust phonological processes alluded to above, complicates the task of parsing and glossing elements within the verbal unit. For this reason, I will not identify individual morphemes for most of the example sentences I give in this paper.

As can be seen from an examination ·of Table 1, subject agreement prefixes precede the verb stem in position 8 and generally follow the thematic and aspectual prefixes within the verbal unit. If the DO is 3SG, then there would be an agreement prefix for it as well in position 4. The 3SG subject agreement prefix in position 5, called the *deictic subject*, is only required in special cases, usually involving indefinite subjects. As stated earlier, when the NP participants are represented pronominally, the sentence could consist minimally of the verb, as seen in sentence (1b). Li (1946:419) gave only one example of a completely pronominal GIVE construction in his sketch. I repeat it in (2) along with his exploded parse and gloss, but I have added numbers corresponding to the prefix positions given in Table 1:

(2)   *begháyéniɫtį* <
       be-ghá-yé-n(e)-i-ɫ-tį
       3SG:X-to-3SG:O-MOM-1SG:S-CLASS-PERF:**handle animate object**
       00-0-5-7-8-9-10
       'I have given her to him.'

As will be discussed in Section 3, due to the choice of postposition and postpositional object, *beghá*, this sentence carries with it a sense that this was a permanent transfer, as in the case of someone being given in marriage or a baby given up in adoption. Moreover, because of the particular choice of animate THING-marking verb stem, the transaction is marked as

Table 1. *A verbal template for Chipewyan (modified after Li 1946:410)*

00	0	1	disjunctive			#		conjunctive			
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
incorp.	P	local	iter-	incorp	DO	3SG:S	modal/	aspect	S	CLASS	stem
postpos.		& adv.	ative	noun	pron	pron	theme	pre-	pron		
object		pre-	pre-	stems			pre-	fixes			
pron.		fixes	fixes				fixes				

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being deliberate and controlled, as any decision to give someone away would normally be. These "extra senses" are not due to pragmatic inference. They result from very regular paradigmatic alternations available in the language for the encoding of transfer events. These sources of variation are laid out in the remaining subsections of this grammatical overview.

2.2. *The classificatory verb system*

There are 4 very general types of predicates in Chipewyan in which the verb stem refers to a class of objects participating in the event. These stems, called *classificatory verbs*, predicate events involving location, free fall or change of location, handling, and caused motion. The object specified in the verb stem of such a predication may refer to either the subject or direct object argument of the clause depending on the transitivity of the verb.[5] In a classic paper, Davidson, Elford, and Hoijer (1963) devised a taxonomy of classificatory verb stems in Athapaskan based on event type. Their classificatory verb types are shown in Table 2. These sets differ in form and meaning, but also on the basis of the number of THING categories distinguished.

Within each set, different predications are indicated by the addition of specific verbal prefixes or, in the case of transfer predicates under discussion here, on the choice of PP. Sets A and B are semantically and morphologically parallel. Sets C and D are different from both them and from each other. Set D uses still other criteria for classifying objects. Set C makes the fewest categorial contrasts and is distinguished from Set B primarily on the basis of *manner* of handling rather than *direction* of transfer. To a speaker of an Indo-European language, directionality seems like

Table 2. *The classificatory verb types (after Davidson et al. 1963:30-31)*

Set A:	neuter verbs ("locative verbs"; no movement; orientation of object at rest {*sit, lie, be in position, be in location*})
Set B:	verbs of handling, manipulation, continuing manual contact {*give, hand, take, put, handle, lower, pick up, bring, carry, misplace*}
Set C:	verbs of partially controlled action initiated by agent {*toss, throw, throw out/ dispose of, hang up, set down, drop, lose, push over*}
Set D:	verbs of free movement; movement independent of agent {*fall/tip over*}

the most salient difference between GIVE and TAKE predications. This is not the case in Chipewyan since GIVE and TAKE predications draw from the same inventory of classificatory verb stems (Set B). Clearly, directionality must be imputed from other morphosyntactic sources (i.e. the PP and other thematic prefixes).

As just stated, Sets B and C, of special interest for the purposes of this paper, do more than specify the nature of the object being handled. They also describe the nature of the *intent* involved in handling the object, e.g. whether it is a controlled or "partially controlled" action and whether the GIVER/TAKER is a willing participant throughout the transfer or serves merely as the starting point or goal of the transfer. This sociopsychological distinction in manner of handling is supposed to permeate the culture and the entire verbal lexicon, not just the classificatory verb system. Rushforth and Tatti (1980), in a paper on Bearlake Athapaskan (a dialect of Slave), base this thematic distinction on what they claim are two culturally relevant concepts, namely *séodʝt'é* and *séodʝt'é ʔíle*. These notions are difficult to translate, but the gist of the difference is between careful, controlled, deliberate, respectful, polite, humble, reserved, gentle, or concerned behavior and actions marked by rough or quick movement, or by a lack of care, reservation, or control. Though it may not seem so to non-Dene sensibilities, the latter is not necessarily considered to be negative in connotation and it would be wrong to polarize the two concepts. As I remarked in Section 1, the expression of a difference in manner may be enough to affect a different gestalt construal of the entire transaction. Eventually, such a contrast in construal may lead to a lexicalization of the difference. A few of these productive manner-changing inflections and derivations (e.g. *pass gently* vs. *pass roughly*) may have become conventionalized to the point that they now represent entirely distinct lexical items in the language, even though they may not necessarily signify a qualitatively distinct result (e.g. change in possession vs. change of ownership, the way that *loan* and *bestow* do in English), but only a quantitative difference in how the transaction was carried out (e.g. in gradualness vs. abruptness of action, the sort of difference that the English verbs *hand* and *toss* suggest).

2.3. *A taxonomy of THING types distinguished by the classificatory verb stem*

There are up to 9 THING types distinguished by the classificatory verb stem sets mentioned above. These verb stems are classified on the basis of a small set of perceptually or functionally salient features such as number, animacy, consistency/shape (e.g. compact/round, rigid/long, or flexible/flat) and constituency (e.g. a liquid, a granular heap, or some mushy matter). Rice (lecture notes) subsumes all of these constituency features under the rubric "containerfulness," which captures the pertinent distinctions nicely since liquids and mushy materials must be contained in a deep or closed container, such as a sack or a box, while granular objects or bundled objects can be contained in a shallow or open container, such as a plate or a canoe. The closed container category groups with other countable THINGS since the container is presumably more salient perceptually than its contents. A 10th classification is used with Set B and C verb types to indicate an unspecified THING or THINGS as well as THINGS being transferred for immediate consumption, such as food or cigarettes, regardless of their physical properties. As stated in Section 2.2, only predicates of transfer, manipulation and palpitation, motion, and orientation are expressed using the classificatory verb system. Perceptual predicates like SEE do not distinguish their 3rd person objects. For physical transfer predicates, the transferred THING (in the guise of a shape/material/animacy classifier) functions as the verb stem. When pronominalized, this verbal classifier is the only way in which the THING is expressed, as seen in sentences (1b) and (2). A list of the relevant THING categories in Chipewyan pertinent to this discussion of GIVE and TAKE constructions is given in Table 3 along with the abbreviations used for them in this paper and some sample denotata. Plurality renders void all animacy and shape distinctions but not those, obviously, for consistency and material, as they designate mass-like objects. In Table 4, I summarize the classificatory verb stem forms for the predications of interest in this paper (Sets B and C from Table 2) including stem variations (or conjugations) due to an IMPERFECTIVE/PERFECTIVE contrast.[6]

In some ways, the fact that GIVE and TAKE constructions exploit a classificatory verb stem system is the least interesting aspect of these constructions conceptually. Of greater significance for purposes of illustrating an interdependence between syntax and semantics is the fact that GIVE and

Table 3. *THING-types distinguished by GIVE- and TAKE-like verbs (after Richardson 1968:48-49; Carter 1976:25; and personal fieldnotes of the author)*

AO	ANIMATE OBJECTS: a baby, a person, a fish, a dog
RO	ROUND OR HARD/COMPACT OBJECTS: a ball, a radio, a coin, a pen-knife, one berry, one shoe, a ring
SO	STICK-LIKE OBJECT/EMPTY CONTAINER: a pen, scissors, a table, a chair, a key, a canoe, a car
FO	FLAT OR FLEXIBLE OBJECTS: a blanket, an article of clothing, a leaf, a pillow, a dollar bill
CC	OBJECT IN CLOSED CONTAINER/BUNDLED OBJECTS: a single large container (i.e. a box) and contents, a sack of flour, a pack of cigarettes, berries in a jar, a motionless train (in station)
PO	PLURAL OBJECTS: a plurality of any of the above categories; rope, eye-glasses, keys, antlers, firewood
OC	OBJECT IN OPEN CONTAINER: a pail of water, a plate of berries, tea in a cup, any food on a platter
MM	MUSHY MATTER: porridge, butter, mud
GO	GRANULAR OBJECT/OBJECT IN HEAP: an amorphous mass of, e.g. hay, grain, sugar, gravel
UO	UNSPECIFIED OR GENERIC OBJECT (for immediate consumption)

Table 4. *Some Chipewyan classificatory verb stem forms (after Davidson et al. 1963:35; Haas 1968:168; Carter 1975:96, 1976:26; Elford and Elford 1981:185; and personal fieldnotes of the author)*[7]

THING	GIVE/HAND/TAKE (Set B)		THING	THROW (Set C)	
	IMPF	PERF		IMPF	PERF
AO	-tɬ́	-tį	AO	-nɬ́	-na
RO	-ʔáih	-ʔą	RO	-shuɬ	-shel
SO	-tʃ	-tį	SO	-xéɬ	-xes
FO	-chuth	-chúdh	FO	-ʔar	-ʔar
CC	-ɬtʃ	-ɬtą	CC	-xel	-xes
PO	-le	-la	PO	-deɬ	-del
OC	-ká	-ką	OC	-niɬ	-nel
MM	-tɬé	-tɬe	MM	— —	— —
GO	-dzai	-dzáy	GO	-tsir	-tsir
UO	-chu	-chu	UO	-chu	-chu

TAKE share the same stem forms so that, by necessity, there is a regular interaction between the classificatory verb system and the other parameters of variation within the typical GIVE or TAKE construction, notably the many ways in which the RECIPIENT and SOURCE of transfer can be encoded.

2.4. *Chipewyan postpositional phrases*

As can be seen from the verbal template in Table 1, the left-most constituent within a Chipewyan verb may be a postposition or a postpositional phrase. As was mentioned in Section 2.1, there is quite a bit of indeterminacy as to the permeability of the postposition-verb boundary. Some postpositions clearly get integrated into the verb-prefix complex and others do not. For the post-positional phrases under consideration in this paper, i.e. those that mark RECIPIENT in a GIVE construction or SOURCE in a TAKE construction, my consultants' intuitions suggest that the postpositional phrase has been incorporated into the verb complex as a bound component regardless of whether the postpositional object is pronominal or not. Postpositions, themselves, can be inflected in Chipewyan in a way identical to one kind of nominal inflection: They take possessive morphology. Thus, pronominal possessors of nouns, shown in (3), and postpositional pronominal objects, shown in (4), are morphologically identical. Some Athapaskanists (notably Li 1946:403) have referred to postpositions as *relational* or *local nouns* for this reason.

(3) a. *se-ke*
1SG-foot
'my foot'

b. *ne-ke*
2SG-foot
'your foot'

c. *be-ke*
3SG-foot
'his/her foot'

d.[8] *ye-ke*
3SG-foot
'his/her foot'

(4) a. *se-k'e*
1SG-on
'on me'

b. *ne-k'e*
2SG-on
'on you'

c. *be-k'e*
3SG-on
'on him/her'

d. *ye-k'e*
3SG-on
'on him/her'

The PPs in (5) and (6) represent the conventional ways of coding the oblique NPs which denote, respectively, RECIPIENT and SOURCE of transfer in Cold Lake Chipewyan GIVE and TAKE constructions. Note that the "underlying" forms in (5c) and (6b) are rather complex, involving as they do a possessed postpositional object, 'in my palm' or 'out of (in) my palm'. These nearly always contract in rapid speech, with the postposition often dropping out completely along with the last syllable of 'palm', *setł'a(ghe)*. Likewise, *segha* along with the all-purpose benefactive marker, *-ba-* as in *seba* 'for me', often contract to *sa*.

(5)   a.   *se-gha > sa*
            1SG-to
            'to me'

       b.   *se-ts'en*
            1SG-towards
            'towards me'

       c.   *se-tł'aghe-ye > setł'aa*
            1SG-palm-in
            'in my palm'

(6)   a.   *se-ghą-há*
            1SG-from-out
            'out from me'

       b.   *se-tł'aghe-ye-há > setł'aahá*
            1SG-palm-in-out
            'out of (in) my palm'

2.5. *Summary of the relevant semantic distinctions*

Those aspects of Chipewyan morphosyntax most relevant for a discussion of GIVE and TAKE predications have now been presented. I have described how THINGS and RECIPIENTS/SOURCES get encoded and have mentioned how the overall construal of the manner in which a transfer event is carried out may be reflected in the choice of THING-marking stem. The semantic distinctions coded in transfer predicates include (i) the physical nature of the THING, (ii) the manner of the handling, (iii) the direction of the transfer, (iv) the endpoint or starting point of the transfer (i.e. someone's hands or the whole person), and (v) the immediacy or directness of the interaction. By selecting from among these components, a speaker can draw attention to or invite an inference about the permanence of the transfer and/or the willingness of the initial possessor (either the GIVER or the SOURCE in a TAKE construction) to part with the THING. Despite (or perhaps because of) the many obligatory distinctions it makes, these constructions are necessarily detailed in terms of information about

the underlying event and the psychological state of the human participants. For this reason, an expression of giving or taking cannot be schematic nor can aspects of the ACT be left unspecified to any real degree. No doubt, Chipewyan does not encode, either overtly or covertly, many semantic categories which are relevant in other languages and cultures. It also resists figurative applications of these constructions, an issue I address in Sections 5 and 6. In the next two sections, the morphosyntactic components presented here are integrated as I piece together the essential semantics of Chipewyan transfer predications.

3.   Chipewyan GIVE constructions

As has been exemplified by Newman (1996) and the other papers in this volume, languages differ greatly depending on which aspects of transfer events they encode as well as on any other aspects of these fundamental human interactions which might also get elaborated. In English GIVE constructions, the GIVER, the THING, the RECIPIENT, and the ACT itself are coded by the Subject, the DO, the IO, and the verb, respectively. In Chipewyan, there may be no morphosyntactic separation of the ACT and the THING being given. If the ACT is construed as an immediate and direct change of possession as in the case of handing something to someone, the RECIPIENT'S palm is mentioned as the oblique object. If the ACT is construed as a more permanent transfer, in the case of a change of ownership, for example, the RECIPIENT is mentioned by name or pronoun as the object of a different postposition. In both of these cases, however, the variant of the THING-marking stem is dependent on whether or not the ACT is being carried out in a deliberate and controlled manner. The choice of postposition (there are three possibilities) and postpositional object (there are two) interacting with one of two THING-marking verb stem series conspire to provide a particular interpretation for a specific act of giving. In Table 5, I summarize the most salient semantic distinctions brought about by or associated with the three types of PPs. All of these forms represent options for coding a RECIPIENT. These options are still available in the Cold Lake dialect, but elsewhere, *begha* 'to him/her' is either the default way or the only way to mark RECIPIENT. *Logically* speaking, if there are 3 postpositional markings for RECIPIENT and 18 stem choices for THING

Table 5. *Semantic distinctions associated with choice of RECIPIENT-marking PPs in GIVE constructions*

Form/Gloss	Sem. Role?	Contact	Duration	S's Manner	Stem Set
(a) *betł'agheye* 'in his/her palm'	GOAL	direct	temporary	controlled ('hand')	B
(b) *begha* 'to him/her'	RECIPIENT	indirect	permanent	controlled ('give')	B
(c) *bets'en* 'towards him/her'	DIRECTION	indirect	(neutral)	uncontrolled ('throw')	C

(2 series of 9 classificatory verb stems in order to signal a controlled or uncontrolled manner of handling), plus one additional stem to mark the handling of non-specific THINGS or items of immediate use to the RECIPIENT, there should be 55 different ways of giving in Chipewyan. Nevertheless, *experientially* speaking, there are not so many degrees of freedom when it comes to expressing individual acts of giving. In actuality, the language closely reflects the limitations of bodily and physical experience as well as the normal constraints of social interaction. My consultants felt comfortable in producing only about 20-24 forms and, even so, changed the gloss and the PP for several of those items. As can be seen in Table 5, the PP forms (a) *betł'agheye* 'in his/her palm' and (b) *begha* 'to him/her' both correlate with controlled transfer or *handing/giving* in Chipewyan and only appear with stems from Set B. In point of fact, they are in complementary distribution with form (c), *bets'en* 'towards him/her', the PP used most commonly with stems of Set C to signal uncontrolled transfer or *throwing* in Chipewyan. Taken together, they represent a continuum of contact between GIVER and RECIPIENT, from direct physical contact in (a), to indirect and beneficial contact in (b), to indirect and potentially antagonistic contact in (c). They also represent a continuum of contact between THING and RECIPIENT, from temporary or inconsequential possession in (a), to significant and lasting ownership in (b), to mere change of possession again in (c), although of possibly longer duration than that implicit in the PP in (a). Table 6 summarizes my consultants' intuitions about both the possible forms as well as the lexical gaps for all the fully pronominal THING-MANNER-RECIPIENT conjugations of the schematic phrase, *I TRANSFERRED X TO HIM*. Forms in the lefthand column represent controlled

versions of GIVE, while those in the righthand column indicate uncontrolled GIVE. Despite the non-occurrence of certain forms, Chipewyan allows for a considerably richer set of expressions both in terms of number of collocations and their semantic content than all the possible combinations of the English, *I {gave/handed/threw} {it/them/something} to him*. The examples and glosses in Table 6 form the basis of the discussion in Sections 3.1-3.3.

Table 6. *Ways of GIVING: Variations on the theme* I TRANSFERRED X TO HIM

Thing		Deliberate/Controlled Action	Forceful/Uncontrolled Action
(7)	a.	*betł'aghiłtį* 'I handed PERSON to him'	*
AO	b.	*beghanjłtį [banjłtį]* 'I gave PERSON to him'	*
	c.	*yets'enjłtį* 'I gave PERSON to him (unwillingly)'	*
(8)	a.	*betł'aghiʔą* 'I handed ROUND THING to him'	*
RO	b.	*beghaniʔą* 'I gave ROUND THING to him'	*
	c.	*	*bets'eyishel* 'I threw RO at him'
(9)	a.	*betł'aghitą* 'I handed STICK THING to him'	*
SO	b.	*beghanitą [banitą]* 'I gave STICK THING to him'	*
	c.	*	*bets'eghiłxes* 'I threw SO at him'
(10)	a.	*betł'aghiłchúdh* 'I handed FLAT THING to him'	*
FO	b.	*beghaniłchúdh [baniłchúdh]* 'I gave FLAT THING to him'	*
	c.	*	*bets'eghiʔar* 'I threw FO at him'
(11)	a.	*betł'aghiłtą* 'I handed CLOSED CONTAINER to him'	*
CC	b.	*beghaniłtą [bąniłtą]* 'I gave CLOSED CONTAINER to him'	*
	c.	*	*bets'eghiłxes* 'I threw CC at him'

(continuation)

Thing	Deliberate/Controlled Action	Forceful/Uncontrolled Action
(12) a.	*betł'aghila* 'I handed THINGS to him'	*
PO b.	*beghanila[banila]* 'I gave THINGS to him'	*
c.	*	*bets'eghiłdel* 'I threw PO at him'
(13) a.	*betł'aghikạ* 'I handed OPEN CONTAINER to him'	*
OC b.	*banikạ* 'I gave OPEN CONTAINER to him'	*
c.	*	*bek'eghinel [bek'inel]* 'I dumped OC on him'
(14) a.	*	*
b.	*	*
MM c.	*	*bek'intłe* 'I dumped MM on him'
(15) a.	*	*
b.	*	*
GO c.	*	*
(16)[9] a.	*betł'aghichu* 'I handed SOMETHING to him'	?
UO b.	*beghanichu* 'I gave SOMETHING to him'	?
c.	?	?

Alternate combinations of postpositional phrases, controlled vs. uncontrolled stem forms, and THING-classifying vs. generic stem forms all conspire to distinguish specific instances of transfer in Chipewyan. Even so, the semantics of GIVE and TAKE constructions are only partially motivated by the meanings of the component parts (the same THING-marking stem, afterall, is used in predications as diverse as GIVE, HAND, TAKE, BRING, CARRY, PICK UP, and MISPLACE). They also arise from the overall construct itself, that is, from the particular *composite* form created from the component parts, and its applicability as an expression to a real-world event that is capable of being reasonably achieved.

An examination of Table 6 quickly reveals the absence of some forms

(or at least my consultants' reluctance to produce certain forms and my inability to find such forms cited anywhere in the literature) as well as the inclusion of some idiosyncratic glosses. A discussion of the paradigm's gaps, glosses, and semantic entailments is taken up in the next few subsections.

3.1. Handing/passing vs. giving

A comparison between the (a) and (b) forms in (7)-(16) in Table 6 shows that the only difference between giving and handing in Chipewyan resides chiefly in the choice of postposition and postpositional object: A whole person in the case of GIVE and the person's palm in the case of HAND. There is also the presence of the momentaneous prefix, *-n(e)-*, in the (b) forms, which may be more thematic than modal. Since this prefix is optional in other conjugations, I will assume it contributes little to the overall predications *lexically*. Otherwise, both the verbal morphology and the range of application are identical. And, importantly, both forms are manifestations of "controlled" giving — a deliberate and careful ACT on the part of the GIVER. Nevertheless, there are some distinguishing semantic features which follow from the use of the two forms. For example, the choice of PP signals something about the immediacy of the ACT and, as such, may invite an inference of either direct or indirect physical contact between the GIVER and RECIPIENT. To illustrate, one cannot use the English form *I handed it to him* or the appropriate Chipewyan counterpart *betł'aghitạ* (9a) to mean 'I gave it (a car) to him'. Likewise, the "palm" form strongly invokes a reading that suggests a temporary change of possession rather than a more permanent change of ownership. Thus, we get an application of (7a) if a baby was handed to someone to hold for a short time, while (7b) can only mean that a baby was given up for adoption or a woman was given away in marriage. These are much more permanent types of transfer which do not reduce the ACT to a single episode of physical contact. Moreover, there is a strong sense that the RECIPIENT significantly benefits from the transfer in the "person" form of the construction, even though *-gha-* 'to' is not the regular postposition for marking benefactives in Chipewyan (*-ba-* 'for' is). On the other hand, the "palm" form, *-tł'agheye* 'in palm', has a very limited distribution as an incorporated PP. It is used literally for the motion of objects into and out of someone's hands (e.g. FALL, DROP, etc.). As it happens, one can be even more direct with respect to physical

transfer than is suggested by the conventionalized (a) forms. Although the utterances *setł'aanełchúdh* 'hand it (FO) to me' and *setł'agheyenínłchúdh* 'place it (FO) in my hands' use the same PP and classificatory stem, there is nevertheless a semantic contrast.

For many reasons, it is difficult to say which form of GIVE is more basic conceptually, the "palm" or the "person" form. In some sense, they each involve particular elaborations or profiles on a very schematic base. Indeed, the verbal base conveys nothing more than the handling of a certain type of object. As shown in the image-schematic diagrams in Figures 1 and 2 (which feature a rather collapsed Cognitive Grammar notation in the style of Newman 1996), both the "palm" and "person" forms of giving add different kinds of meanings to the overall controlled GIVE predications. The sphere of control superimposed on the GIVER in Figures 1 and 2 is meant to convey that the ACT is deliberate. The control domain surrounding the RECIPIENT in Figure 2 suggests that this participant assumes control (as in long-term possession or ownership) of the transferred THING (which in all of the diagrams represents a stick-like object). In Figure 1, which denotes an act of handing, the RECIPIENT'S palm (the Active Zone for the goal of transfer) is profiled as it is an explicit part of the predication, but there is no control domain indicated since the possession is assumed to be quite temporary and not especially beneficial. These elaborated or profiled aspects of GIVE are absent from predications about uncontrolled giving, often glossed as *throwing*. I turn to these next. Note, first, that there are two lexical gaps amongst the forms for controlled giving, for handling granular objects (GO) and mushy matter (MM). According to my consultants, the fact that a heap of sugar or a glob of butter, for example, would probably not be handled directly means that they would not usually be transferred to someone else unless in a container, in which case they would be designated metonymically by way of the appropriate container classificatory stem form, CC or OC. These gaps in the morphological paradigms are quite understandable, mitigated as they are by gaps in the realm of normal social interaction.

3.2. *Giving vs. throwing*

Attention should now be directed to contrasts between the (b) and (c) forms in examples (7)-(16) of Table 6. These represent controlled and uncontrolled
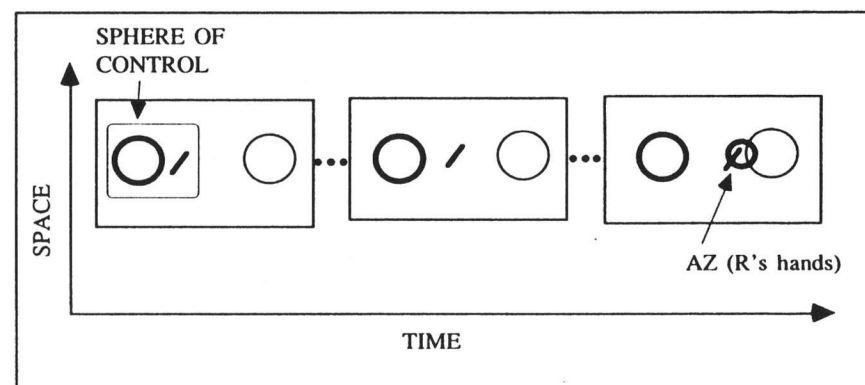
Figure 1. *Controlled giving-I. The spatio-temporal domain of* HAND STICK-LIKE OBJECT (SO) *in* RECIPIENT'S palm *showing profiled Active Zone with domains of control superimposed*
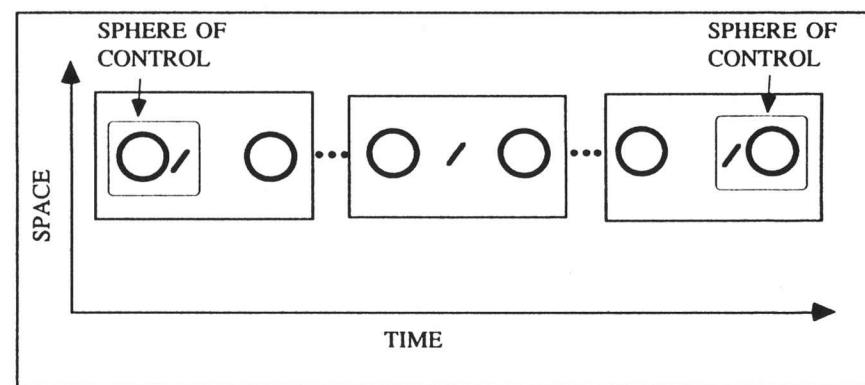

Figure 2. *Controlled giving-II. The spatio-temporal domain of* GIVE SO TO RECIPIENT *with domains of control superimposed*
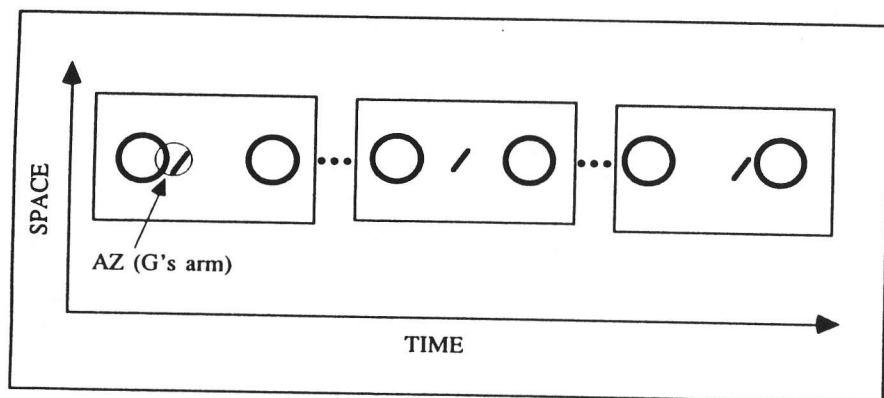
Figure 3. *Uncontrolled giving. The spatio-temporal domain of* THROW SO *towards* RECIPIENT *showing unprofiled Active Zone but no domains of control superimposed*

acts of giving, respectively. In both cases, the postpositional object representing the RECIPIENT designates a whole person, but beyond a shared direction of transfer, the similarities end there. First of all, the two postpositions come with their own sets of associations and entailments. As mentioned earlier, *-gha-* 'to' is the all-purpose RECIPIENT-marking postposition. In rapid speech, it often contracts with its pronominal object rendering it superficially identical to the all-purpose benefactive marker *-ba-* 'for' and perhaps a bit semantically ambiguous with it as well. Speakers reconstruct the following constructions variously: *banejen* [< *beghanejen*] 'sing to him' or [< *bebanejen*] 'sing for him', and *satutenele* [< *seghatutenele*] 'haul some water to me' or [< *sebatutenele*] 'haul some water for me'. On the other hand, *-ts'en* 'towards' is an all-purpose directional marker and is used in such predications as *sets'eyaighiłti* 'he scolded me', *sets'egha* 'he's coming towards me', and *bets'ędakwidighá* 'I pointed a finger at him.'

The *GIVE X to SOMEONE* forms in (b) in (7)-(16) communicate something about a very deliberate and beneficial act. Again, the diagram in Figure 2 in which the entities representing GIVER and RECIPIENT are both enclosed in spheres of control is meant to suggest that both participants are conscious of the ACT and that both are willing participants in it. By contrast, the diagram in Figure 3 lacks any designation of these spheres

of control, indicating that neither the GIVER nor RECIPIENT is fully engaged in the activity, that there is a general lack of deliberation, no obvious benefit to the RECIPIENT, or that the GIVER is unwilling to part with the THING.

Furthermore, there may be an implicit Active Zone in the guise of the GIVER'S arm since the overall ACT is construed as being quite force-dynamic. Over a number of separate occasions, my consultants gave me a range of possible glosses for the (c) forms. To take but one example, a form like *bets'eghiłdel* (in which the perfective PO stem, *-del*, designates something like a set of keys) generated the following glosses: 'I gave them to him unwillingly', 'I gave him the damn keys', or 'I threw them at him'. For its controlled "whole person" counterpart, *beghanįla*, I always got the gloss 'I gave them to him' with the comment that it sounded permanent as if the RECIPIENT was given a set of car keys to go with a new gift car. One interesting mix of the two stems occurred during my data collection. The DIRECTION- or GOAL-marking postposition, *-ts'en* 'towards', was coupled with the controlled AO stem form, *-tį*, a few times, as can be seen in (7c). The gloss was invariably something like 'I gave her to him (in marriage) unwillingly'. Otherwise, any attempt to elicit an uncontrolled or forceful form of *GIVE/THROW an AO* produced no acceptable utterances.

One final comment about uncontrolled giving or *throw* forms in Chipewyan. Other than lexical gaps already mentioned for transferring animate beings, as shown in (7), and the infelicity of transferring granular objects of any kind or in any manner, as shown in (15), there are gaps or at least irregularities with respect to choice of PP for other kinds of transfer. When it comes to forceful transfer or transfer in an uncontrolled manner of substances in an open container (usually liquids) or items which have the consistency of mushy matter, speakers have a difficult time producing the potential forms or inventing appropriate use contexts. These gaps and irregularities are indicated by the forms and nonforms in (13) and (14), respectively. While one cannot physically *throw* granular or globular items to someone, one can *dump* or *pour* them on another individual. Chipewyan duly records this physical possibility by coupling the uncontrolled stem forms for OC and MM with a postpositional phrase headed by *-k'e* 'on'. These are just two more examples of many which demonstrate that Chipewyan GIVE constructions are literal in every sense of the word. Giving directly to someone is a form of *handing*, which requires explicit mention

of the RECIPIENT'S palm, while giving in an uncontrolled manner is not really like *giving* at all. It is more like an agitated gesture of *throwing* or *dumping*, depending on the nature of the THING being transferred. Moreover, certain types of items cannot be transferred either gently or roughly due to physical limitations (**HAND/GIVE/THROW a heap*) or societal pressures brought about by human decency or the conventions of normal interpersonal relations (**THROW a person*).

3.3. *Non-specific giving*

In addition to the 9 shape/animacy/constituency classificatory stems forms discussed above, there is also a generic THING classificatory stem form for verbs of giving and taking. By no means, though, could we say that this classificatory stem is used for generic ACTS of giving or taking. Rather, it is used when a particular type of giving is involved, either transfer of something for immediate use or consumption by the RECIPIENT (in which case the referent of the THING is clearly understood from context) or in certain cases of metaphorical taking (an issue taken up in Section 5.2). For most speakers, the generic stem form is -*chu*, a near cognate with the FO stem, -*chúdh*. An expression like *saniłchu* 'give me some of it' or 'give me some' strongly suggests a request for something to eat, drink, or smoke. However, on a number of occasions, some of my consultants produced the RO stem form, -*Ɂą*, to designate an unknown, unspecified object, as in *Ɂasi baniɁą* 'I gave him something (singular)'. This is the preferred generic stem form in Navajo (according to Ken Hale, personal communication) and, perhaps not surprisingly, in ASL as well. A small, compact, hard, possibly round object makes for an awfully prototypical THING perceptually and conceptually. Therefore, it stands to reason that the canonical form should become the default. It is not clear whether the -*Ɂą* forms in Chipewyan or their RO counterparts in Navajo and other Athapaskan languages also convey a sense of transfer for immediate use the way that -*chu* does.

3.4. *The semantics of giving in Chipewyan*

This section has concerned itself with answering an unstated set of questions, but ones which each of the papers in this volume tries to address for a particular language or set of languages: What are the key aspects of the most typical situation involving GIVE? What constitutes the basic frame? What aspects of giving can be or are elaborated? As we have seen, the short answer to these questions is that there is no "most typical" situation of giving, or rather, there are dozens of typical situations of giving.[10] Richardson (1968:49) states that "[i]t is probably immaterial whether these [nine classificatory verb stems] are considered as nine verbs, or as one verb with nine stems". I would have to disagree. Not all of the stem forms are fully productive constructionally in Chipewyan, nor do they necessarily maintain a stable gloss across all THING categories. Inherent properties of physical objects and the contingencies of real-world transfer either permit, rule out, or uniquely flavor any one of the nine potential "types" of giving in this language.

The basic ACT of giving in Chipewyan focuses on the relation between the THING and the RECIPIENT. Accordingly, there are a number of subparameters affecting the way in which they get encoded that have morphosyntactic and semantic repercussions, i.e. what type of THING is being handled, whether it is being transferred for immediate use or not, and whether the RECIPIENT is elaborated as a whole being or as the possessor of the palm into which the transferred THING is placed. While always elaborated as a whole being, the GIVER may be designated as acting in either a controlled or uncontrolled, gentle or rough, and by implication willing or unwilling manner. As we shall see in the next section, the parameters of variation that color TAKE expressions in Chipewyan induce a different set of inferences.

4.   Chipewyan TAKE constructions

Superficially, a striking aspect of TAKE constructions in Chipeywan is that they are formed from the same set of classificatory verb stems as the GIVE/HAND constructions. The directionality of the transfer, therefore, is not implicit in the verb stem as it is in English, but must be read off the PP and the presence of the thematic prefix, -*rí-*. The controlled/uncontrolled opposition depends primarily on the choice of PP rather than on the verb stem set or the verbal theme, as in the case of GIVE constructions. The semantic distinctions and entailments brought about by the choice of PP are summarized in Table 7. We will explore these and other dimensions of

Table 7. Semantic distinctions associated with choice of SOURCE-marking PPs in TAKE constructions

	Form/Gloss	Sem. Role?	Duration	X's Intention	S's Manner
(a)	*setł'agheyehá* 'out of my palm'	SOURCE	(neutral)	willing	controlled ('take')
(b)	*seghahá* 'out from me'	POSSESSOR	permanent	unwilling	uncontrolled ('snatch')

variation for TAKE constructions below. But as a prerequisite to this discussion, one should first examine the forms in Table 8, where I present a full paradigm of controlled (in the lefthand column) and uncontrolled (in the righthand column) TAKE constructions to complement the forms given in Table 6 for GIVE.

4.1. *Giving vs. taking*

Given that the controlled GIVE/HAND constructions and all of the TAKE constructions share the same classificatory verb stem set (Set B, the "handling object" set), it would be natural to assume that TAKE in Chipewyan is the simple semantic converse of GIVE, since the locus of the difference in directionality of transfer appears to reside in the PP. This is not really the case since the general kinds of elaborations or inferences available for GIVE constructions are not necessarily encoded in TAKE constructions, either explicitly or implicitly. While the potential range and form of stem variations are identical between controlled GIVE and TAKE, there are types of THINGS which resist being taken in Chipewyan. Thus, as far as TAKE being the semantic converse of GIVE goes, there are both similarities and differences. In some sense, the morphological differences between controlled and uncontrolled *giving* (e.g. as exemplified by (8b) *beghani?a* 'I gave RO to him' and (8c) *bets'eyishel* 'I threw RO at him' or 'I gave the damn thing (RO) to him') are much greater than those between controlled *handing* and controlled *taking* as exemplified in (8a) *betł'ághi?a* 'I handed RO into his palm' and (18a) *setł'ahaii?a* 'He took RO from my palm'. While the first pairing (between controlled and uncontrolled giving) preserves the basic identity and configuration of the participants, it also involves a stem change as well as a change in postposition. The second

Table 8. Ways of TAKING: Variations on the theme HE TRANSFERRED X FROM ME

Thing	Deliberate/Controlled Action	Forceful/Uncontrolled Action
(17) a.	*setł'aháyeghiłti* 'He took PERSON from my hand'	*
AO b.	*	*seghahayerelti* 'He snatched AO from me'
(18) a.	*setł'ahaii?a* 'He took ROUND THING from my hand'	*
RO b.	*	*seghaháyerę?a* 'He snatched RO from me'
(19) a.	*setł'áháyeghita* 'He took STICK THING from my hand'	*
SO b.	*	*seghahayeręta* 'He snatched SO from me'
(20) a.	*setł'áhaiłchúdh* 'He took FLAT THING from my hand'	*
FO b.	*	*seghaháyeręlchúdh* 'He snatched FO from me'
(21) a.	*setł'aéhayeręlta* 'He took CLOSED CONTAINER from my hand'	*
CC b.	*	*seghaháyerelta* 'He snatched CC from me'
(22) a.	*setł'aháila* 'He took THINGS from my hand'	*
PO b.	*	*seghaháyeręla* 'He snatched PO from me'
(23) a.	*setł'aehaika* 'He took OPEN CONTAINER from my hand'	*
OC b.	*	*seghaháyeręka* 'He snatched OC from me'
(24) a.	*	*
MM b.	*	*
(25) a.	*setł'aahayidzay* 'He brushed GRANULAR THINGS from my hand'	*
GO b.	*	*
(26) a.	*	*
b.	*	*seghayiłchu* 'He snatched UO from me'
UO		

pairing (between controlled handing and taking), primarily involves only a realignment of the participants signalled by the difference in postposition. In GIVE constructions, the subject is the initial possessor (GIVER/THROWER) and the final possessor (RECIPIENT) is the object of the oblique. In TAKE constructions, the initial possessor (SOURCE) is the oblique object, while the final possessor (TAKER) is the subject. This realignment notwithstanding, the verb stem is the same and in both cases, the postpositional object is one of the participant's palm. The semantic difference in directionality seems to depend entirely on the postposition. However, TAKE constructions are also distinguished by the presence (though not always recognizable in surface form) of a verbal prefix, -rí-, clearly thematic in function, and therefore considered part of the lexical verb. This modal or thematic prefix, which Li (1946:415) describes as denoting "a local relationship" of some kind, has uncertain meaning, but it tends to co-occur with many locatives signifying relations like -ni- 'up', -há- 'out', and -yé- 'in'. It is present (though sometimes invisible) in predications denoting both controlled and uncontrolled taking. Whereas the difference in RECIPIENT-marking postposition in the two controlled GIVE constructions correlated with a difference in postpositional object (whole person vs. person's palm) but no difference, obviously, in terms of control, this profiled whole vs. profiled active zone contrast is chiefly responsible for signalling uncontrolled vs. controlled *taking*. One usually places or removes items from another's *hands* in a careful and controlled way. However, giving or taking from *a person* suggests a more careless, less direct, or potentially adversarial act. These differences are diagrammed in Figures 4 and 5.

4.2. Taking vs. snatching/stealing

Just as we saw in the case of the GIVE paradigms, an examination of Table 8 reveals that there are gaps in the inventory and some idiosyncratic glosses which invite one to make certain inferences. The clearest inference comes from the controlled set, which my consultants felt constituted an ACT no more profound than the simple removal of an object from someone's hands. As far as general taking is concerned, the only points worth mentioning are that THINGS constituted as globular or granular (MM or GO) cannot be taken, presumably because they cannot be handled directly. One of my consultants was able to come up with a plausible scenario which
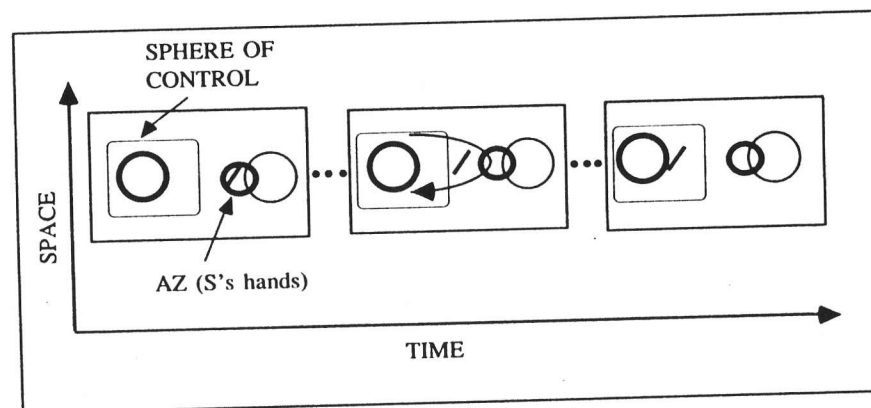

Figure 4. *Controlled taking. The spatio-temporal domain of* TAKE SO *from* RECIPIENT'S palm *showing profiled Active Zone with domains of control superimposed*
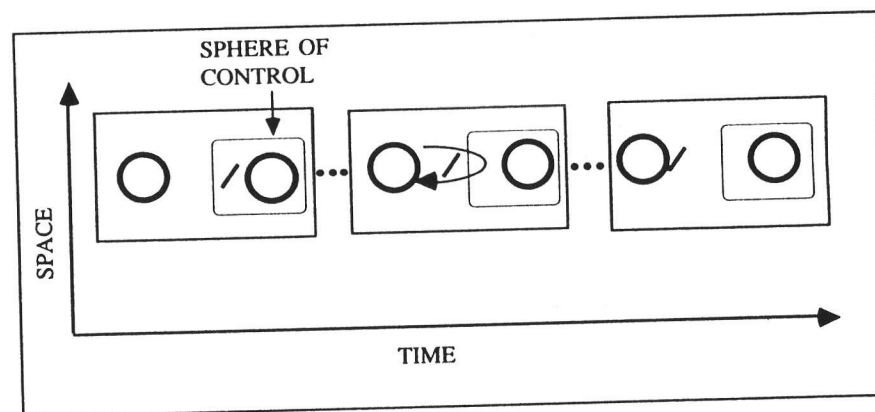

Figure 5. *Uncontrolled taking. The spatio-temporal domain of* TAKE/SNATCH SO *from* RECIPIENT *with domains of control superimposed*

would render (25a) somewhat viable, but with a gloss like 'He brushed GO (e.g. a pinch of salt or a dusting of flour) from my hand'. An uncontrolled form with the postposition -*ghą* 'from' is not acceptable at all. In the controlled column, we also find a gap for the expected form in (26a) 'He took something from my hand'. This gap could be due to the 1st person oblique object and my consultants' strong feelings that one cannot be unaware of the identity of something lifted from one's hands. For ACTS of uncontrolled or forceful variants of *taking*, 'snatch' was my consultants' favorite gloss. In English, *snatch* carries with it an implication of direct removal from someone's hands or someone's immediate possession. While a sentence like *That thief just snatched my purse* is perfectly felicitous in English, a sentence like *Someone snatched my car* is not. This difference is apparently not relevant in Chipewyan if we assume 'snatch' is indeed the most appropriate gloss ('steal' was considered too strong as the emphasis is on an action done quickly rather than on a serious offense). Significantly, the 'snatch' series does not co-occur with the SOURCE'S palm as the Active Zone for that participant's construal, so in this way it is unlike its purported English counterpart. In all cases, my consultants added comments like: *This was done against my will*, *It feels like a theft in progress*, or *He took it from me for himself and he doesn't want me to have it*. With the AO stem in (17b), the only context that came to mind was stealing someone else's spouse, surely an uncontrolled and forceful ACT.

4.3. *Non-specific taking*

With TAKE as with GIVE, we again see an interaction between the feasibility of real-world activities and their linguistic expression. While it is possible to take an unspecified THING from someone, it does not appear to be morphosyntactically acceptable in Chipewyan to take it from the person's hands (palm) directly. When the THING is coded by the all-purpose verb stem, -*chu*, the SOURCE must be represented as a whole being.

4.4. *The semantics of taking in Chipewyan*

On the whole, the range of application and depth of meaning differences seem much more limited in the case of TAKE as opposed to GIVE constructions. Perhaps there is a conceptual explanation (i.e. the relative sali-

ence of GOAL-directed activity or motion [GIVE] compared to SOURCE-oriented events [TAKE], perhaps there is a linguistic explanation (i.e. the tendency for verbs to more regularly subcategorize for GOALS rather than SOURCES or the fact that SOURCES are generally more overtly marked than GOALS), perhaps it is merely a typological fact about Chipewyan or Athapaskan languages in general. Nevertheless, in addition to marking the SOURCE, GOAL, and direction of transfer, TAKE predications do indeed signal something about (i) the physical nature of the THING, (ii) the manner of handling (either controlled or uncontrolled), and (iii) certain attitudes held by the human participants (i.e. their willingness to give up or take the THING). Items (ii) and (iii) derive from the post-positional coding of the SOURCE (postpositional object) as a "palm" or a "whole person". To reiterate a point made earlier, it seems that the least interesting aspect of GIVE and TAKE predications in Chipewyan is that they obligatorily encode physical properties about the THING. The social interactional and psychological dynamics of transfer are just as important linguistically and may even be rarer typologically.

5. Pragmatic and figurative aspects of Chipewyan transfer predications

Having now reviewed morphosyntactic aspects of literal GIVE and TAKE constructions in Chipeywan, relying as they do on a classificatory verb stem system, we might well ask what the *grammatical* function of such a system is, beyond elaborating semantically a specific instance of giving or taking — which seems to be the only way one can formulate GIVE and TAKE constructions in Chipewyan. Moreover, based on extensive discussion and exemplification in Newman (1996) about the metaphorization and grammaticalization undergone by these constructions cross-linguistically, we might also wonder about such a system's capacity for metaphorical and/or grammatical extension. I address these two issues below.

5.1. *Literal intrasentential and discourse uses*

In his 1991 functional comparison of classificatory verb constructions in Bearlake and Mescalero Apache, Rushforth discusses three separate use

categories for these types of predications: (i) literal intrasentential uses, (ii) literal intersentential (discourse) uses, and (iii) non-literal uses. Intra-sententially, the classificatory verb stems appear to have an anaphoric or, at the very least, an agreement-marking function for the verb's most salient argument, especially when the THING is represented elsewhere in the clause as a full NP. Intersententially, the THING-marking verb stems appear to have a pronominal function. In both capacities, the system does allow for disambiguation in cases where multiple possible referents for the stem are present. Afterall, the stem does not necessarily describe intrinsic prop-erties of the THING it refers to, but rather the THING'S immediate con-dition with respect to the utterance or discourse context. For example, a blanket can be folded into a fairly flat configuration (thereby necessitating the FO stem in a GIVE or TAKE construction). It could also be rolled up tightly (triggering the RO stem) or tied up in a bundle (requiring the CC stem). Other real-world objects like money, tobacco, paper, and certain foods can also assume different configurations and consistencies depending on their use in particular contexts. Rushforth gives the following paradigm for the giving or handing of *lidí* 'tea' in Bearlake, depending on its imme-diate condition (i.e. either loose in a dry form as in a box or a teabag or in liquid form as in a cup or a pot):

(27) a. *lidí seghánį'a*   'Give me (**a single box or bag of**) tea.'
      b. *lidí seghánįchu*   'Hand me (**a single box or bag of**) tea.'
      c. *lidí seghánįle*   'Give me (**boxes or bags of**) tea.'
      d. *lidí seghánįwa*   'Hand me (**boxes or bags of**) tea.'
      e. *lidí seghánįka*   'Give me (**a shallow/open container of**) tea.'
      f. *lidí seghánįhge*   'Hand me (**a shallow/open container of**) tea.'
      g. *lidí seghánįhxo*   'Hand me (**some, a handful of loose**) tea.'
      h. *lidí seghánįhtį*   'Give me (**a deep/closed container of**) tea.'
      i. *lidí seghánįhxe*   'Hand me (**a deep/closed container of**) tea.'

(Bearlake, Rushforth 1991:254)

These examples illustrate a point that Carter (1976:30) makes in his analy-sis of Chipewyan classificatory verb stems, which bears repeating here:

The Chipewyan classificatory verb system does, indeed, classify the concrete objects which are the referents of certain Chipewyan nouns, but this classification includes information outside of the objects themselves. The system classifies the object in its phy-sical and social context, talking into consideration whether or not the object is in a con-tainer or is with other objects, or whether or not the object is intended for immediate use. The Chipewyan classificatory verb system reflects a taxonomy, not of objects, but of *situations* involving concrete objects. The shape, texture, and number of objects, whether or not they are contained, the intention of the speaker vis-à-vis the objects, as well as whether the object is sitting, falling, being handled, sought after, thrown, etc., — these are all aspects of the situation being classified when a speaker of Chipe-wyan selects a verb stem [emphasis mine].

It seems, then, that in the trade-off between conventional or intrinsic values of a THING versus contextual informativeness, the latter will pre-vail when it comes to the selection of a classificatory verb stem to desig-nate the object handled or transferred. Elsewhere in his paper, Rushforth illustrates with a set of narratives how classificatory verb stems allow these languages to map semantic and grammatical relationships both within and across sentences. He claims that their main function is "to aid in anaphoric resolution" by keeping track of verbal arguments, especially in sentences lacking overt nominals as long as certain descriptive conditions are met (1991:57). I have not examined any Chipewyan texts in detail, so can pro-vide no examples from my own study of the language. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how a classificatory verb system can aid in the cause of verb agreement and textual coherency. In this regard, they are very much like any of the more familiar nominal classifier systems which mandate a cer-tain type of grammatical dependency in the syntax in service of providing listeners with pragmatic cohesion devices for ease of processing. It is also clear that the "semantic co-occurrence restrictions" between THING and verb stem are not inherent, but contingent. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect violations of these restrictions under special circumstances.

5.2. *Figurative uses*

There is some limited capacity in Chipewyan for figurative application of constructions with THING-marking verb stems (i.e. puns, jokes, and meta-phorical extensions involving selectional restriction violations between stem

classifier and physical referent). However, for both puns and metaphors, only the THING component of a handling predication is reconstruable in a non-literal way. The nature of handling predications in Athapaskan languages is such that they necessarily involve object transfer between *humans*. It is unlikely that Chipewyan would ever develop extended usages such as *I gave the table a coat of paint*, or *That boring lecture gave me a headache*, or *I'm giving you 10 minutes to pack your bags and leave*. Part of the problem is the ever overt coding of the path to the RECIPIENT or from the SOURCE through the postposition. Of course, the biggest obstacle is no doubt the fact that there really is no verb of giving or taking in Chipewyan, only a set of verb stems for *handling* specific types of objects. Perhaps this is why it was so difficult to elicit examples of non-literal uses of giving and taking from my consultants, although I suspect that they engage in spontaneous word play all the time. They invariably catch many double-entendres I unwittingly produce through poor pronunciation or misplaced tones. Moreover, humor plays an important part in the culture and many verb forms are open to multiple (and often comical) interpretations. I can report on a few examples in the literature of figurative uses of GIVE and TAKE constructions in both Navajo and Chipewyan.

Rushforth (1991) explains an oft-cited example documented by Edward Sapir involving a purportedly spontaneous pun in Navajo. The pun revolved around an inherent ambiguity in the Navajo lexical verb, *no-ho-ni . . . aa* (RO), which could mean either 'to decide on a matter' or 'to put it down'. At a contentious tribal meeting, a leader asked for a decision to be made. A crippled man, who realized that as an invalid his bunched-up and hunched-over body could be construed as either an animate thing (AO) or a solid compact object (RO), asked to be picked up. The one who picked him up recognized the potential word play and punned: *Where am I to put it (RO) down?/What shall be decided?* The pun rests on the fact that abstract objects such as words, a decision, an issue, a plan, or an idea, which would normally be ineligible for expression with a classificatory verb stem, can be used metaphorically in some situations and, in those situations, they receive classification as RO.

This type of metaphorical extension is also weakly possible in Chipewyan. While one cannot give one's word in this language, one's word can be taken (i.e. one's word can be accepted or believed, as is also the case in English). Thus, we have the following forms using not the RO classificatory stem, but the generic one (UO):

(28) a. *beyatiye*   *heschu*
      3SG:word   1SG:S:IMPF:UO
      'I am taking his word.'

    b. *seyatiye*   *hilchu*
      1SG:word   3SG:S:PERF:UO
      'He took my word.'

In other Athapaskan languages, RO is the default THING classifier for discourse elements and ideational objects. It may also be the case in Chipewyan, but I have no examples in my corpus to confirm this.

Finally, Carter (1976:29) cites the case of an obscene joke he inadvertently made when he tried to use the unspecified, immediate use THING form, *-chu*, with an overt animate NP. The sexually suggestive form is given in (29a) and a more neutral version in (29b). These are his forms and I am not able to give them a proper gloss, not recognizing parts of the forms and not having verified them with any of my consultants.

(29) a. *nake*   *t'sekwas*   *seréchu*
      two:things   girls   1SG:S . . . UO
      'Give me two girls (for sexual purposes).'

    b. *nadene*   *t'sekwas*   *seréle*
      two:people   girls   1SG:S . . . PO
      'Give me two girls.'

I might add that part of the "objectification" implicit in (29a) comes not just from the choice of non-specific classificatory verb stem, but from the fact that he referred to the girls with a cardinal number used for counting inanimate objects rather than people. He ended up requesting two girl *things* for immediate consumption.

All things being equal, the potential for metaphorical, metonymic, or otherwise non-literal use of the classificatory verb system appears to be fairly limited in Chipewyan. Examination of a larger corpus including textual materials or more extensive probing of my consultants might reveal further examples of figurative language use along these lines. My discussions with other Athapaskan scholars suggest that beyond the construal of words and thoughts as concrete objects, there is not much in the way of productive figurative extension involving the classificatory verb system.

6. Some concluding remarks about giving and taking in Chipewyan

Why does Chipewyan feature such a rich inventory of forms for GIVE and TAKE constructions, yet tolerate such limited expressive application of those forms? I would like to speculate a bit and suggest that linguistic factors rather than conceptual ones are responsible for keeping these predications so overwhelmingly literal in terms of their usage. Because of its unusual phonological inventory and phonotactic requirements,[11] the language has long managed to impede lexicalization through external borrowing. The near absence of foreign loanwords attests to the fact that the language is resistant to infiltration from without.[12] It also seems resistant to grammaticalization from within. By grammaticalization, here, I do not mean any of the end-stage processes whereby lexical items become grammatical devices. There are certainly many areas of Chipewyan morphosyntax that illustrate the effects of long-term grammaticalization of this sort. Rather, I mean those early-stage processes whereby lexical items get extended metaphorically into new semantic or conceptual domains. According to Bybee et al. (1994), metaphoric extension is one of the initial mechanisms of grammaticalization and it usually affects whole collocations, allowing constructions to be interpreted in new ways or be applied to new conceptual fields.

Part of this resistance to grammaticalization may stem from the fact that there are, relatively speaking, very few verb stems in the language. This fact should make the stems *vulnerable* to grammaticalization or at least to metaphorical processes. However, the basic lexical verb or verb theme is really a combination of a verb stem and some fixed number of thematic prefixes. The inventory of derivational and inflectional prefixes and their combinatorial power when integrated with verb themes is extensive. Perhaps because of all the morphophonemic processes affecting the verbal unit (depending on the presence or absence of particular prefixes), speakers have quite enough to cope with — second language learners of Chipewyan certainly do — keeping straight all of the possible conjugations and derived forms of a verb. Indeed, speakers find it quite taxing to generate even a partial paradigm for a single modal or aspectual conjugation of a verb.[13] As it happens, the most thorough dictionary of an Athapaskan language, Young and Morgan's colloquial dictionary of Navajo, consists mainly of verbal paradigms. Compounding, incorporation, and relativization

are the main devices for creating new words in the language, or at least new nominals, the only part of the lexicon that seems to permit vocabulary growth through relexicalization.[14] One could take the speculation a bit further and suggest that the not insignificant requirements of regular inflection and word formation in Chipewyan keep any grammaticalization pressures in check, especially for expressions of giving and taking. Of course, the fact that so many aspects of the physical ACT of transfer are explicitly and productively coded in GIVE and TAKE constructions probably makes it hard for speakers to suspend any of the usual interpretations that these collocations invoke, thus allowing them to be rendered unanalyzable or more idiomatic.

In terms of semantic change, the language seems more susceptible to semantic neutralization than relexicalization or grammaticalization. Some dialects of Chipewyan no longer have a productive contrast between the two postpositional phrases for marking RECIPIENT in GIVE constructions, *set'agheye* 'in my palm' and *segha* 'to me'.[15] In Cold Lake Chipewyan, this opposition carries with it a sense of *handing* vs. *giving*, of temporary vs. permanent transfer, and of immediate person-to-person contact vs. indirect interaction. As these semantic distinctions are left to pragmatic inference in dialects which have lost the contrast, the entire complex of GIVE constructions could eventually collapse and giving and taking might eventually become construed in a more schematic, less troponymic way. One could well imagine that through contact and interference with Cree, French, English, and other languages which do not maintain an extensive classificatory verb system, the number of classificatory distinctions might very well diminish, if not disappear entirely in favor of an all-purpose THING marker, such as the UO marker, *-chu*, or the RO marker, *-ʔą*. It is already the case that speakers under the age of 40 tend to have trouble producing or interpreting some of the conjugations, especially since not all of the 4 sets of classificatory verb stem predicates use the same forms nor make the same number of contrasts. One can only hope that the experiential basicness of object transfer between individuals, the semantic salience of the component parts for Chipewyan speakers, and the high frequency of GIVE and TAKE constructions in statements about human interaction are enough to maintain the postpositional opposition and a fully intact classificatory verb system for expressions of giving and taking in this language.

Abbreviations used in glosses

s= subject; o= direct object; x= oblique object; p= postposition; MOM= momentaneous aspect; for further abbreviations, see list on p. vi.

Notes

1.   I am describing the dialect of Chipewyan spoken in Cold Lake, Alberta, deemed to be fairly conservative since it preserves a number of phonological, morphosyntactic, and semantic distinctions missing from the more northern dialects. I thank Nora Matchatis, Rose Foote, Shirley Cardinal, and most especially Valerie Wood for their time and intuitions. I hope I have not mistranscribed or misrepresented their fascinating language too badly.

2.   Keren Rice, Leslie Saxon, Ken Hale, and Chad Thompson provided helpful discussion about Athapaskan during the writing of this paper. I express gratitude to each of them. Thanks also to an anonymous reviewer whose comments helped me to clarify certain points.

3.   Signed languages feature pronominal classificatory systems involving specialized hand shapes which distinguish entities on the basis of animacy, shape, and function. These are often co-articulated with signs for certain activities or relations and so could be analyzed as a type of THING-marking inflection on a verb stem. ASL and Athapaskan languages make strikingly similar classificatory distinctions (cf. Phyllis Wilcox's paper, this volume). THING-classifying verbs are even prevalent in English. To take but two obvious examples, weather expressions such as *It rained last night* or any of the denominal and ever delightful lexical innovations made by young children and discussed by Bowerman (1978) such as *I crackered my soup* or *She's ballerening* could be construed as THING-marking verb stems. (Of course, collocations like these are also quite productive in the adult language, e.g. *He faxed me the map* or *Let's box those books.*)

4.   Miller (1991:228-235) proposes "troponymy" as a semantic relation between a verb which denotes a basic-level action and any verb which conflates that action and manner. Thus, *limping* would be a troponym for *walking*. Of some concern in this paper is how to determine whether productive manner inflections end up producing new troponyms (conceptually distinct lexical items) in the language.

5.   In Cognitive Grammar terms, we could say that the most salient event participant becomes the profile determinant of the entire predication. This point will be elaborated on in Sections 3 and 4.

6.   I have not included stem variants for a third category, FUTURE, usually called OPTATIVE. (Many of the traditional grammatical labels in Athapaskan linguistics are used in an unconventional way.)

7.   No two sources give the same forms or even necessarily distinguish them on the basis of IMPERFECTIVE and PERFECTIVE (or even FUTURE/OPTATIVE) inflections. These forms should be taken as representing approximations at best.

8.   This second 3rd-person category represents the so-called *be-/ye-* opposition. Athapaskan languages use this as a switch reference device to distinguish 3SG non-subject NPs (*be-*) in a clause with a 1st or 2nd person subject and 3SG non-subject NPs (*ye-*) in a clause containing another 3rd person subject or object. The *ye-* form has been called the "disjoint anaphor" or the "4th person noncoreferential object pronoun" for this reason.

9.   The UO (unspecified object) classificatory stem for predications from Set B, *-chu*, appears to be cognate with the FO (flat/flexible object) stem, *-chúdh*.

10.   Perhaps, significantly, traditional Chipewyan culture has no concept of unilateral "gifting" — presenting someone with some unspecific thing as a favor or token of affection. The giving of gifts was historically a reciprocal act.

11.   The phonemic inventory, in addition to some velars and perhaps a glottal or laryngeal stop, includes only two seldom-used bilabials (/m/ and /b/) but approximately 22 consonants in the dental-alveopalatal range.

12.   Haas (1968) gives some examples of French loanwords as transformed into Chipewyan. Even proper nouns tend to undergo semantic reconfiguration in Athapaskan languages rather than phonological adaptation. To mention just a few noteworthy examples of some Navajo sobriquets given in Young and Morgan (1987:812b): *Dágháilchįįh* 'He Smells His Moustache' (Adolf Hitler), *Nahaljíʃd* 'Moves Around Squatting' (the wheelchair-bound Franklin Delano Roosevelt).

13.   Just to give a flavor of the extensiveness of the inflectional possibilities for a Chipewyan verb, there are 4 persons, 3 numbers, 3 aspects, 3 tenses, 5 modes, and up to 4 voice/valency alternations. Some of these select for particular morphological variants of the stem in addition to triggering a wide range of derivational prefixes.

14.   A few products of these word-formation processes include *yałteyi* 'a priest' (lit. 'one who speaks'), *eritł'isnet'į* 'TV' (lit. 'picture that is looked at'), *ts'ichoghdeltai* 'airplane' (lit. 'big boat which flies'), *deneyuhedaredli* 'monkey' (lit. 'the one that imitates a man'), and *béschonéné tthot'iné* 'American' (lit. 'big knife land people'). More examples can be found in Haas (1968:169).

15.   This is apparently the case for Bearlake, as well, if we take Rushforth's glosses for (27) at face value. They all involve the same PP.

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