THE Carrier Language

a brief introduction

William J. Poser

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Preface

This book provides an overview of the Carrier language – where it is spoken, by whom, and what it is like. It is not a reference grammar or a textbook but rather is intended to acquaint the reader with the general character of the language and with some particularly interesting aspects. It is intended to be accessible to the non-specialist reader: secondary school students, college and university students, those interested in local history and culture, tourists, and language buffs. Those interested in obtaining reference books or language learning materials may consult the sources listed under *Further Reading* and *Resources*.

Thanks are due in the first instance to the many Carrier speakers who have contributed their knowledge of their language: Russell Alec, Peter Alexi, John Alexis, Johnnie Anatole, Scotty Antoine, Josephine Austin, †Bruno Billy, Cora Boyd, Laura Boyd, Corinne Cahoose, †Peter Cahoose, Stanley Cahoose, Josephine Carter, John Casimel, †Wilfred Cassam, William Cassam, Matilda Chantyman, †Marvin Charlie, Violet Charlie, Catherine Coldwell, †Fraswe Denis, Nellie Dionne, Gloria Duncan, Pat Edmund, Mary Ellen Patrick, †Lewis Erickson, Edith Frederick, Margaret Gagnon, Helen George, Julie George, †Peter George, †Tom George, †Veronique George, George George, Sr., †Ernie Gouchie, Mary Gouchie, †Lizette Hall, Bob Hanson, Ileen Heer, †Casimel Jack, Christina Jack, †Donald Jack, Elizabeth Jack, Henry Jack, Janie Jack, John Jack, Mary-Anne Jack, †Steven Jael, Sr., Roger Jimmie, Arlene John, Edward John, Ernie John, Gracie John, †Lazarre John, Peter John, Mary John, Jr., Helen Johnnie, †Moise Johnnie, †Alec Johnny, Madeline Johnny, †Arthur Joseph, Charlie Turnbull Joseph, Morris Joseph, Walter Joseph Sr., Rita Ketlo, Jeanette Kozak, Bella Leon, Bertie Leon, Evelyn Leon, Gertie Leon, Liza Leon, Alan "Sh'boom" Louie, †George Louie, Zaa Louie, †Frank Martin, Mildred Martin, †Annie Mattess, †Bernadette McQuary, Jimmie Monk, Justa Monk, †Teresa Monk, John Monk, Jr., Elsie Morris, Kathy Morris, †Michel Morris, Freddie Murdock, Ivalie Murdock, Archie Patrick, Cathy Patrick, Dennis Patrick, Doreen Patrick, Josephine Paul, Abel Peters, Ken Peters, Minnie Peters, Simon Peters, †Harry Pierre, Leonard Pierre, †Lizette Pierre, †Rose Pierre, †Susie Pierre, Thomas Pierre, Yvonne Pierreroy, †John Prince, Lynda Prince, †Nick Prince, †Raymond Prince, Violet Prince, †Jimmy Quaw, †Mary Quaw, Raphael Quaw, Sam Quaw, †Stephen Quaw, †Benedict Roberts, Armand Sam, Lillian Sam, Helen Seymour, Vera Seymour, Eddie Sill, Gurney Sill, †Bernice Spicer, Leonie Spurr, Andrew Squinas, Helen Squinas, †Mack Squinas, Celestine Thomas, Karen Thomas, Rose Thomas, Sophie Thomas, †Evelyn Tom, Leona Toney, Jean Tremblay, Anne Troy, Piel West, and especially the late Mary John, Sr. and the late Robert Hanson.

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Déné Language Institute under whose auspices much of my research on Carrier has been done. The Carrier syllabic font was created by Chris Harvey.

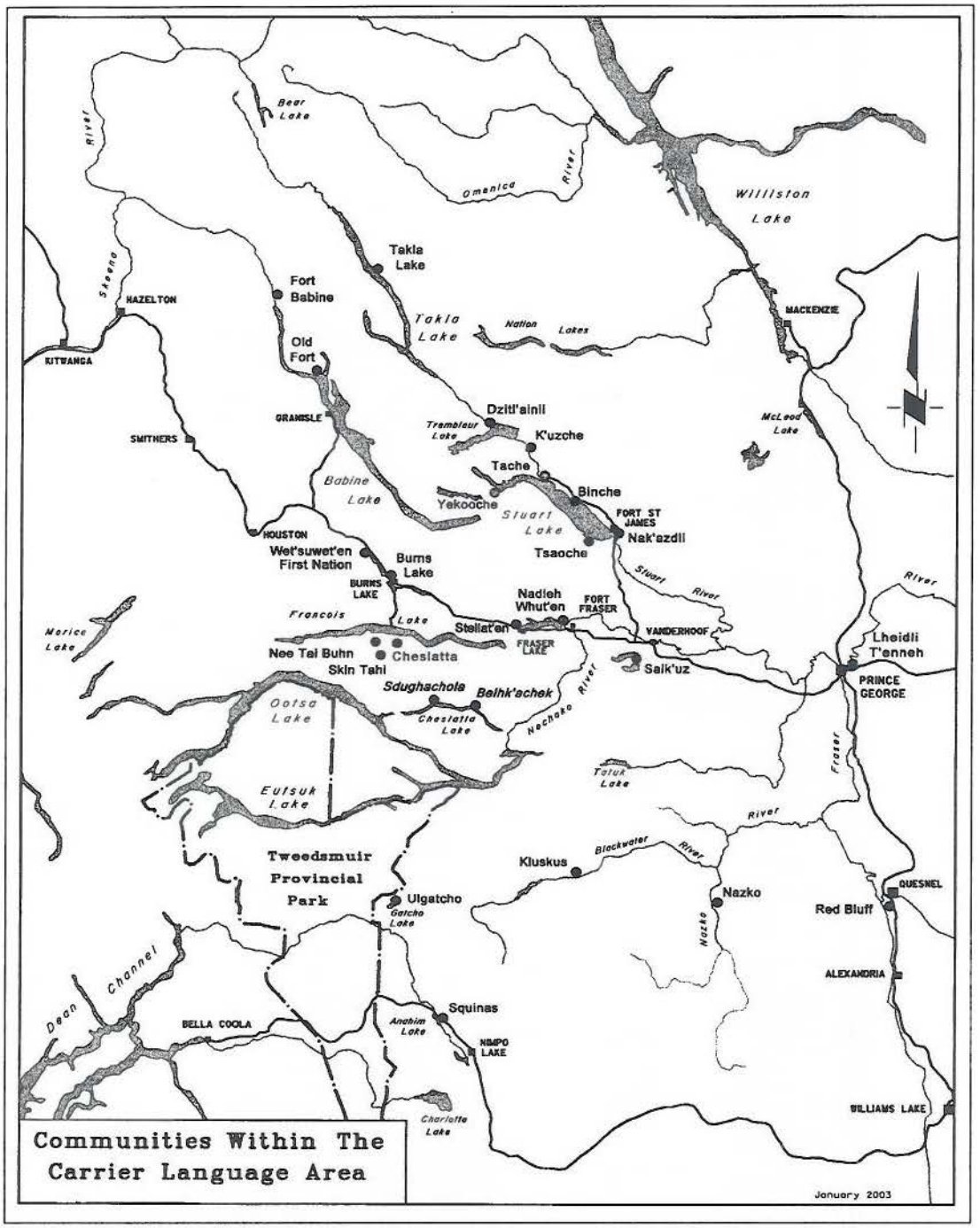
The Setting

The People and the Land

Carrier is the native language of much of the central interior of British Columbia, including the area along the Fraser River from north of Prince George to south of Quesnel, the Nechako Valley, the areas around Stuart Lake, Trembleur Lake, and Fraser Lake, and the region along the Blackwater River, west to the Coast Range, including the Kluskus Lakes, Ootsa Lake and Cheslatta Lake. In a broader sense, Carrier territory includes Babine Lake, Takla Lake, and the Bulkley Valley. Prince George, Vanderhoof, Fort Saint James, Fraser Lake and Quesnel are in Carrier territory. The centre of the region is at roughly 125° West, 54° North. Carrier territory is therefore below freezing a substantial part of the year. At Prince George, the capital of the North, which is generally somewhat warmer than many other parts of Carrier territory, the statistically expected date of the first frost is 2 September, that of the last frost, 4 June. The average winter temperature is -12°C (10.4°F). Annual snowfall averages 166cm (65.4in).

The Carrier region is for the most part sub-boreal forest, dotted with numerous lakes including, most prominently, Stuart Lake. There are numerous rivers, all ultimately draining into the Pacific, mostly via the Fraser River. The climate is continental, with cold winters during which the rivers and lakes freeze over and a short growing season. The area is hilly, with mountains of modest size. The Rocky Mountains form the eastern boundary of Carrier territory, but Carrier people are not very familiar even with their foothills due to the occupation of that area in recent times by the Cree and greater dependence upon fishing than upon hunting. The Coast Range falls mostly within Witsuwit'en territory and so lies to the West of Carrier proper, except in the south, where Ulkatcho Carrier people share the coast range with the Nuxalk.

The traditional Carrier way of life was based on a seasonal round, with the greatest activity in the summer when berries were gathered and fish caught and preserved. The mainstay of the economy was fish, especially the several varieties of salmon and trout, which were smoked and stored for the winter in large numbers.



Hunting and trapping of deer, caribou, moose, elk, black bear, beaver, and rabbit provided meat, fur for clothing, bone for tools, and sinew for sewing. Other fur-bearing animals, otter, lynx, wolf, marten, fisher, mink, ermine, muskrat and wolverine, were trapped to some extent, but until the advent of the fur trade such trapping was probably a minor activity. With the exception of berries and the sap and cambium of the Lodgepole Pine (Pinus contortus latifolia), plants played a relatively minor role as food, though Carrier people were familiar with and occasionally used a variety of edible plants. Plants are used extensively for medicine. Winter activity was more limited, with some

hunting, trapping, and fishing under the ice. Although Carrier people now participate in the non-traditional economy and buy much of their food, fish, game, and berries still constitute a major portion of the diet for many people.

Carrier people engaged in extensive trade with the coast along trails known as Grease Trails. The items exported consisted primarily of hides, dried meat, and mats of dried berries. Imports consisted of various marine products, the most important of which was *sleghe* "grease", the oil extracted from eulachons (Thaleicthys pacificus) by allowing them to rot, adding boiling water, and skimming off the oil. This oil is extremely nutritious and, unlike many other fats, contains desirable fatty acids. Other important imports were smoked eulachons and dried Red Laver seaweed (Porphyra abbottae Krish.). "grease" and smoked eulachons are still considered by many to be delicacies and are prized gifts from visitors from the west.

Endangerment Status

Today, only about 10% of Carrier people can speak and understand Carrier. These are for the most part elderly people though in a few communities the ability to speak Carrier extends down into middle age. Only a few, isolated younger people, mostly raised by grandparents, speak the language. No children are known to speak Carrier.

The decline in the use of the language is due to two factors. One, which affects minority languages around the world, is the pressure of a larger language. The important roles played by English, the language of business, government, and the educational system, made it increasingly necessary to learn and use English, and the availability of mass media only in English made English attractive to young people. The second is the attendance of most Carrier children at residential school beginning in 1919. There they were forbidden to speak their own language and taught that their traditional culture was backward if not satanic. As adults these children began to use Carrier less with each other and as parents began to speak English with their children rather than Carrier.

Efforts to teach Carrier to children who were no longer learning it at home began in the 1970s with the production by the Carrier Linguistic Committee of a variety of teaching materials. In 1988 the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council together with the College of New Caledonia and local school districts created the Yinka Déné Language Institute as a vehicle for research and promotion of Carrier language and culture.

Initial attempts to introduce instruction in Carrier into the public schools met with resistance and ignorance. Catherine Coldwell (better known as Catherine Bird), an early leader of language preservation efforts and a teacher and teacher of teachers herself, recounts a meeting with a school official who insisted that it would be impossible to teach Carrier because "You Indians don't have a language. It is just grunts." Many of the schools now teach Carrier as a second language at primary or secondary level but these programs do not result in the ability to speak Carrier. Carrier has also been taught at the university level but again without producing new capable speakers. Carrier is already on its deathbed and unless present trends are reversed will become extinct when the last current speaker dies.

Related Languages

Carrier is an Athabascan[1] language. Its closest relatives are Babine[2]-Witsuwit'en[3] and Chilcotin, the three forming a Central British Columbia group of languages clearly set off from the neighbouring Athabascan languages. Babine-Witsuwit'en is treated in the anthropological literature as a dialect of Carrier, often referred to as "Northern Carrier", and speakers identify themselves and their languages as "Carrier". However, the differences between Carrier proper and Babine-Witsuwit'en are sufficiently great that linguists regard them as distinct languages. The most important difference between the two is that Babine-Witsuwit'en has undergone a major restructuring of its vowel system. One result of this is that Carrier speakers unfamiliar with it find it much more difficult to understand than another dialect of Carrier proper. Another consequence is that the Carrier Linguistic Writing system does not adequately represent the vowels of Babine-Witsuwi'ten, for which a different writing system must be used.

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1 The spelling "Athapascan" has come to be the norm here in Canada but is a poor choice since the only correct pronunciation is with a [b], not a [p]. For a full explanation see Michael Krauss "The Name Athabaskan" in Peter L. Corey (ed.) *Faces, Voices & Dreams: A celebration of the centennial of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska, 1888-1988*. Sitka, Alaska: Division of Alaska State Museums and the Friends of the Alaska State Museum (1987), pp. 105-108, downloadable from: http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/docs/krauss_name_athabaskan.pdf.

2 Babine is also known by its native name, variously spelled "Nadot'en", "Nedut'en", and "Nat'ooten".

3 Witsuwit'en is also spelled "Wetsuwet'en" and "Wet'suwet'en". The use of <e> rather than <i> reflects a different spelling convention. The spelling with <t's> is a double error: this sound is standardly written <ts'>, and in any case the *ts* here is not glottalized. Both native speakers and linguists find it difficult to distinguish between [ts] and [ts'].

The Athabascan language family consists of three main branches. The Northern Athabascan branch, to which Carrier belongs, is spoken in northern British Columbia, the Yukon, southern and eastern Alaska, the Northwest Territories, and parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The other Northern Athabascan languages are: Ahtna, Tanaina, Deg Hit'an, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Lower Tanana, Tanacross, Upper Tanana, Northern Tuchone, Southern Tuchone, Gwich'in, Han, Kaska, Tagish, Tahltan, Beaver, Sekani, Slave, Dogrib, Chippewyan, Chilcotin, Babine-Witsuwit'en, Nicola, Tsuut'ina (Sarcee), and Tsetsaut.

The other two branches are spoken in the United States. The six Apachean languages, Navajo, Western Apache, Mescalero-Chiricahua Apache, Jicarilla Apache, Lipan Apache, and Plains Apache, are spoken in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and the far north of Mexico. The Pacific Coast branch, consisting of Kwalhioqua-Clatskanie, Upper Umpqua, Tututni, Galice-Applegate, Tolowa, Hupa, Mattole, Eel River, and Cahto, is or was spoken by small, scattered groups along the coast from the far north of California to the far south of Washington. Most of the Pacific Coast languages are now extinct.

The following chart displays some basic Carrier words together with their counterparts in Babine-Witsuwit'en, Carrier's closest relative, Hupa, representing Pacific Coast Athabascan, and Navajo, representing Apachean.

English	Carrier[4]	Babine-Witsuwit'en	Hupa[5]	Navajo[6]
axe	tsetselh	tselh	mił-ch'ohłwal	tsénił
bird	dut'ai	dit'ay	k'iya:wh	tsídii
canoe	ts'i	ts'iy	me'dil	tsinaa'eeł

4 The Carrier writing system is explained in the next chapter. For now, note that <lh> represents the voiceless lateral fricative written ł in Hupa and Navajo. In all four languages, an apostrophe not immediately following a stop or affricate consonant represents glottal stop.

5 The Hupa words may be found in the *Hupa Language Dictionary* compiled by Victor Golla. Hoopa, CA: Hoopa Valley Tribal Council, 1996. 2nd edition. A colon marks a long vowel.

6 The Navajo words may be found in *The Navajo Language: a Grammar and Colloquial Dictionary* compiled by Robert W. Young and William Morgan, Sr. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. Long vowels are written double. Acute accent indicates high tone. A vowel with subscripted hook, e.g. *ą*, is nasalized.

English	Carrier	Babine-Witsuwit'en	Hupa	Navajo
dog	lhi	lhic	ɬing'	ɬééchąą'í[7]
eye	-na	-ne	-na:'	-náá'
fire	kwun	kwin	xong'	kǫ'
fish	lho	talok[8]	ɬo:q'	ɬóó'
foot	-ke	-kë	-xe'	-kee'
house	yoh[9]	yikh	xontah	kin
island	noo	nu	minahsto:y	------[10]
leaf	-t'an	-t'an	-t'ang	-t'ąą'
moccasin	kesgwut	këgwit	xo'ji-yech'ital	kélchí
mountain	dzulh	dzilh	ninis'a:n	dziɬ
rain	chan	can	na:nyay	niɬtsą́
rock	tse	tsë	tse	tsé
smoke	lhut	lhit	ɬit	ɬid
star	sum	sim	tsing'	sǫ'
tree	duchun[11]	dicin	king	tsin
water	too	to	-to'[12]	tó
wing	-t'a	-t'a	-ch'ile'	-t'a'

7 The original Navajo word for "dog" is *ɬíí'* which now means "horse, truck". *ɬéé́chąą'í* is a compound of this word and "excrement".

8 This is a compound of *ta,* the combining form of "water", and the original word for "fish".

9 The original meaning of *yoh* is "interior". The use of this word for "house" is an innovation of certain dialects of Carrier. Some dialects have *koo* for "house", and even the Stuart Lake dialect preserves the old Athabascan word in such compounds as *koonk'et* "at home".

10 Navajos live in an arid climate so there is no simple word for "island". Where necessary, they say *taɬkáa'di kéyah dah si'ánígíí* "land located on water".

11 This form is analyzable into a prefix *du* and stem *chun*. Compare, e.g. *chuntoh* "forest", literally "among the trees". The same is true of the Babine-Witsuwit'en form.

12 The independent word for water is *ta'na:n*, literally "what one drinks". The more basic form shows up in phrases meaning "X's water/juice" as *mito'*, where *mi* is the third person singular possessive prefix.

English	Carrier	Babine-Witsuwit'en	Hupa	Navajo
wolf	yus	yis	k'iɬ-na:dil	mą'iitsoh[13]

The similarity of many of these words should be evident, especially when differences in the writing system are taken into account. It is, however, important to note that such similarities do not by themselves establish that languages are descended from a common ancestor. A few similarities might occur just by chance. Linguists therefore look for **systematic** similarities between languages as evidence of historical relationship.

The table below compares a few Carrier words with their counterparts in Babine. One systematic difference is that the Carrier words all end in *z* whereas the Babine words, with the exception of the last one, end in *ts*. Leaving aside the last word for the moment, we can say that there is a regular correspondence between *z* in syllable-final position in Carrier and *ts* in syllable-final position in Babine. This correspondence is the result of a regular sound change. At some time in the past, in Carrier but not in Babine, syllable-final *ts* changed to *z*. One way that we know that the change was from *ts* to *z* in Carrier rather than from *z* to *ts* in Babine is that there is a second regular correspondence, namely *z* to *z*, exemplified by "shrew".

Carrier	Babine	Meaning
'az	'ats	outside
gooz	gguts	scale of fish
whuz	hots	over there
whuz̲k'uz	hozk'its	it is cold
-biz	-bits	aunt
'ilhiz	'elhits	forever
tsuz	tsits	firewood
dats'ooz	dets'uz	shrew

This is the sort of systematic relationship between languages that provides real evidence of a historical connection.

Many of the words above are *cognate* (derived from the same ancestral form), but some are not. Hupa, in particular, has a tendancy to innovate and replace old, unanalyzable words with phrases of transparent meaning. "axe" means "what one chops with", "bird" means "little one", "canoe" is "in it

13 Literally, "big coyote", where *mą'ii* "coyote" is literally "stinker".

they travel", "island" is "what water has surrounded", "moccasin" is "true shoe", where "shoe" is "what one steps into", and "wolf" is "they go around with something".

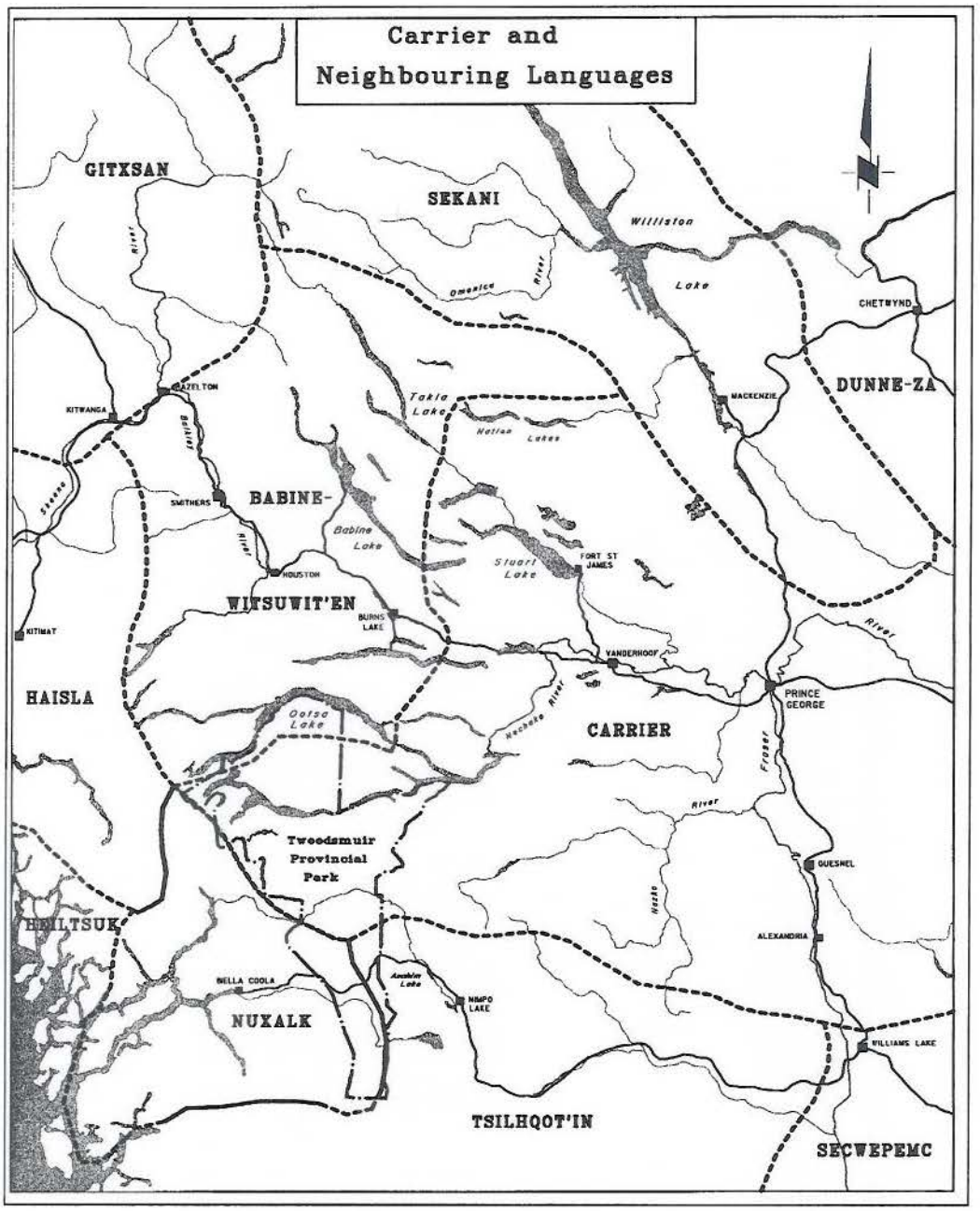
The Eyak language of Alaska is a sister to the Athabascan family as a whole. Tlingit in turn is a sister to Athabascan-Eyak. AET[14] has recently been shown by Edward Vajda to be related to the Yeniseian languages of Siberia. The family as a whole is known as Dene-Yeniseian. The AET languages are the only native languages of the Americas demonstrably related to languages of Asia.

Neighbouring Languages

To the north Carrier is neighboured for the most part by other Athabascan languages: Tahltan, Tagish, Kaska, Sekani and Beaver (Dunne-za). Carrier's Eastern neighbour was once Beaver, but the Beaver were displaced from this region by the westward expansion of the Plains Cree. To the southeast is Shuswap (Secwepemctsín), a Salishan language, and to the south, Chilcotin (Tsilhqot'in). To the northwest and west is Babine-Witsuwit'en.[15] In the Southwest, Carrier's neighbours are Haisla, a Wakashan language, in the Kitlope valley, and Nuxalk (Bella Coola) a Salishan language.

14 The AET family is also known as "Na-Déné". However, as originally proposed by Edward Sapir, Na-Déné also includes Haida, which is now generally considered to be unrelated.

15 The BC Ministry of Education map (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/images/map2.jpg) incorrectly lumps Babine with Carrier proper under the name Dakelh while treating Witsuwit'en as a distinct language. Babine and Witsuwit'en are much more closely related to each other than either is to Carrier proper. The source of the error is the fact that Babine people use the name "Dakelh" for themselves whereas Witsuwit'en people do not. Some other maps, e.g. the First People's Heritage Language and Culture Council map (http://maps.fphlcc.ca/), label Babine and Witsuwit'en separately, giving the false impression that they are distinct languages, again because these two very similar dialects have their own names. The UBC Musuem of Anthropology map (http://www.moa.ubc.ca/pdf/First_Nations_map.pdf) also incorrectly includes Takla Lake in Carrier proper; in fact, Takla people speak Babine.



Some of Carrier's neighbours, Babine-Witsuwit'en, Chilcotin, and Sekani, are related Athabascan languages, but others are completely unrelated, as different from Carrier as Japanese is from English. Here are some basic words in Carrier and three of its neighbours. As you can see, there is no similarity between the Carrier words and the equivalent words in Shuswap, Cree, and Gitksan. Hyphens indicate that the word cannot be used by itself and must have an appropriate prefix or suffix.

English	Carrier	Shuswap	Cree	Gitksan
axe	tsetselh	ṫemín	cîkahikanis	hagyootxw
bird	dut'ai	spipyúy7e	piyêsîs	ts'uuts'
canoe	ts'i	ṫye7	ôs	m'al
dog	lhi	sqéxe	atim	os
eye	-na	ckwṫústen	-skîsikw-	ts'a'a
fire	kwun	t7ikw	kotawân	lakw
fish	lho	swewll	kinosêw	hon
foot	-ke	sq̓wext	-sit-	miin
house	yoh	citxw	wâskahikan	wilp
island	noo	t.súnkwem	ministik	lixst'aa
leaf	-t'an	ptsekll	nîpiy	'yans
moccasin	kesgwut	sellts'7úl̓i	maskisin	ts'a'waxs
mountain	dzulh	sqeltús	waciy	sgan'ist
rain	chan	skllékstem	kimowanâpoy	wis
rock	tse	sxenx	asiniy	lo'op
smoke	lhut	q̓w7ex	kaskapahtewin	mi'in
star	sum	sekúseṅt	acâhkos	bil'ust
tree	duchun	tsrap	mistikw	gan
water	too	séwllkwe	nipiy	aks
wing	-t'a	skuwépstxen	-tahtahkwan-	k'aax
wolf	yus	mélemsṫye	mahihkan	gibuu

The Sound System and Writing

The vowel system of Carrier is very simple, with just six vowels, but it has 46 consonants. These 52 sounds are listed in Carrier alphabetical order in the following chart. The first column uses the Carrier Linguistic Committee spelling, the third column the International Phonetic Alphabet.[16]

CLC	Description	IPA
'	Glottal stop	ʔ
a	Low back unrounded vowel	a
b	Unaspirated bilabial stop	p
ch	Aspirated palato-alveolar affricate	tʃʰ
ch'	Ejective palato-alveolar affricate	tʃˀ
d	Unaspirated apico-alveolar stop	t
dl	Unaspirated lateral affricate	tl
dz	Unaspirated apico-alveolar affricate	ts
d̲z̲	Unaspirated lamino-dental affricate	t̪s̪
e	Mid front unrounded vowel	e
f	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	f
g	Unaspirated velar stop	k
gh	Voiced velar fricative	ɣ
gw	Unaspirated labio-velar stop	kʷ
h	Voiceless laryngeal glide	h
i	High front unrounded vowel	i
j	Unaspirated palato-alveolar affricate	tʃ
k	Aspirated velar stop	kʰ
k'	Ejective velar stop	kˀ
kh	Voiceless velar fricative	x

16 Audio examples of the sounds of Carrier are available from the Yinka Déné Language Institute web site: http://ydli.org. Charts of the IPA with audio are available at: http://web.uvic.ca/ling/resources/ipa/charts/IPAlab/IPAlab.htm.

CLC	Description	IPA
kw	Aspirated labio-velar stop	k^{hw}
kw'	Ejective labio-velar stop	k'^{w}
l	Voiced lateral approximant	l
lh	Voiceless lateral fricative	ɬ
m	Bilabial nasal	m
n	Alveolar nasal	n
ng	Velar nasal	ŋ
o	Mid back rounded vowel	o
oo	High back rounded vowel	u
p	Aspirated bilabial stop	p^{h}
r	Voiced alveolar approximant	ɹ
s	Voiceless apico-alveolar fricative	s
s̱	Voiceless lamino-dental fricative	s̪
sh	Voiceless palatal fricative	ʃ
t	Aspirated apico-alveolar stop	t^{h}
t'	Ejective apico-alveolar stop	t'
tl	Aspirated lateral affricate	tɬ
tl'	Ejective lateral affricate	tl'
ts	Aspirated apico-alveolar affricate	ts^{h}
ts'	Ejective apico-alveolar affricate	ts'
ṯs̱	Aspirated lamino-dental affricate	$t̪s̪^{h}$
ṯs̱'	Ejective lamino-dental affricate	t̪s̪'
u	Mid central unrounded vowel	ʌ
w	Labio-velar glide	w
wh	Voiceless labio-velar fricative	x^{w}
y	Voiced palatal glide	j
z	Voiced apico-alveolar fricative	z
ẕ	Voiced lamino-dental fricative	z̪

The sounds /p/, /f/, and /r/ are not native to Carrier but occur in loans from French and English.

The CLC writing system, developed by Summer Institute of Linguistics missionaries Richard and Shirley Walker together with a group of Carrier people in the 1960s, is designed to be typed on an English-language typewriter and to use letters and letter sequences with their English values as much as possible.

One unfamiliar sound is *lh*, which is similar to an English *l* but with no vibration of the vocal chords. It sounds somewhat like an *l* and a *th* (as in *thin*) pronounced together. This sound is very common in the languages of British Columbia but not in the more familiar European and Asian languages. It is the sound written *ll* in Welsh, as in the name Lloyd. It is also found in the Toi San (Tai Shan) 台山 dialect of Chinese, where, for example, it is the sound at the beginning of the number three 三.

One whole set of sounds is unfamiliar to speakers of European languages: t', ch', k', kw', ts', ts', and tl' are *ejectives*, which are produced using a source of air pressure not used in English or French. In English and French, the source of air pressure for speaking is always the lungs. We draw air into the lungs and then compress the lungs to raise the pressure of the air in the back of the throat above atmospheric pressure. For example, when we make a consonant like a [k], we first raise the back of the tongue until it touches the roof of the mouth and thereby closes off the oral passage. Then we use our lungs to raise the pressure of the air trapped behind the tongue. Finally, we pull the back of our tongue back down, away from the roof of the mouth, creating a little pop as the trapped air rushes out. Sounds produced using the lungs as the source of air pressure are said to be *pulmonic*.

Some languages use additional sources of air pressure. The one used in Carrier ejectives is the *glottalic* air pressure source. (This is why ejectives are also called "glottalized consonants".) The term *glottalic* means "of or pertaining to the *glottis*", the opening in the larynx through which air passes. We can close off the glottis by pressing our vocal chords together. Ejectives are made by closing the glottis, closing the vocal tract somewhere farther forward as we do when making sounds like pulmonic [p], [t], and [k], and raising the larynx. You may not be aware that you can do this, but you can. Since the air is trapped between the closure at the glottis and the closure farther forward, raising the larynx increases the air pressure. When the closure farther forward is released, a little pop is created just as with a pulmonic pressure source, but it sounds a bit different.

The glottis is also used to make the glottal stop. A glottal stop is a sound very much like [p], [t], [k], and so forth, only made using a closure at a different position. When we make a glottal stop, we press our vocal chords together and close off the glottis. If we use our lungs to increase the pressure of the air below the larynx and then pull our vocal chords apart and release the glottal closure, this creates a little pop.

The glottal stop sound is actually familiar to English speakers, but we are not aware of it. You can hear glottal stops in expressions like "Uh-oh!", which in IPA is [ʔʌʔo]. Glottal stops are automatically inserted at the beginning of every syllable that does not begin with a consonant. In English, therefore, the presence or absence of a glottal stop is not meaningful. No words are distinguished by the fact that one has a glottal stop that is absent from the other. In learning Carrier, an English speaker has two problems: he or she has to learn to hear whether or not a glottal stop is present, and what is most difficult, to learn not to insert glottal stops automatically.

In contrast to English, in Carrier the presence or absence of a glottal stop is meaningful. Some pairs of words that differ only in the presence or absence of a glottal stop are: *'a* "quickly" vs. *a* "yes" and *'uk'o* "fat" vs. *'uk'o'* "hunchback". In fact, the presence or absence of a glottal stop can make surprising differences in meaning. Compare:

goh 'u'alh "a rabbit is eating something"
goh u'alh "someone/something is eating a rabbit"

Whether or not there is a glottal stop at the beginning of the second word makes a considerable difference, especially to the rabbit.

Some sounds are familiar as such but occur in unfamiliar positions. In English, the sound [h] is found only at the beginning of syllables, but in Carrier it can occur both at the beginning and at the end of syllables.

The voiceless velar fricative, written *kh*, is the sound written *ch* in German words like *Bach*.

There is one other unusual set of sounds in Carrier. These are the lamino-dental sounds written *s̪, z̪, ts̪, ts̪'*, and *dz̪*. These are very difficult to distinguish from their apico-alveolar counterparts *s, z, ts, ts'*, and *dz*. The apico-alveolar sounds are made by bringing the tip of the tongue (the *apex*) close to or in contact with the alveolar ridge, the bony ridge behind the upper teeth. This forces the air to flow past the tip of the tongue. Lamino-dentals are made with the tongue in a slightly different position. The tip of the tongue is placed lower, behind the teeth, with the result that the lower boundary of

the air passage is not the tip of the tongue but the blade (*lamina*). Many Carrier speakers no longer have lamino-dentals but use an apico-alveolar articulation for all such sounds. In general, only elders preserve the distinction. An example of a pair of words differing only in that one has an apico-alveolar *s* while the other has a lamino-dental *s̲* is *yus* "wolf" vs. *yus̲* "snow".

Although most people who are literate in Carrier use the Carrier Linguistic Committee writing system, the first writing system used for Carrier was the system called *dulkw'ahke* ("frog feet"), known in English as the Carrier syllabics, introduced in 1885 by Father Adrien-Gabriel Morice.This writing system was inspired by the Cree syllabics but is almost completely different in detail.

Here is a chart of the syllabics labelled in the CLC system. Most represent a consonant together with the following vowel. Those in the same row have the same initial consonant; those in the same column have the same vowel. For example, the character < in the 1st column of the 2nd row represents *ha* since it is in the *h* row and the *a* column. The character ᑎ in the 5th column of the 7th row represents *do* since it is in the *d* row and the *o* column. The 1st row contains the vowels by themselves, with no preceding consonant.

C	a	u	e	i	o	oo	Isolated
0	ᐊ	ᐅ	ᐁ	ᐃ	ᐄ	ᐆ	
h	ᐸ	ᐳ	ᐹ	ᐻ	ᐽ	ᐿ	ᓂ
kh	ᐠ	ᐣ	ᐤ	ᐦ	ᐧ	ᐨ	ᕀ
gh	ᐊ	ᐅ	ᐁ	ᐃ	ᐄ	ᐆ	ᕁ
w	ᐯ	ᐱ	ᐲ	ᐴ	ᐵ	ᐶ	
wh	ᐫ	ᐭ	ᐮ	ᐰ	ᐱ	ᐲ	
d	ᑕ	ᑐ	ᑑ	ᑒ	ᑎ	ᑏ	ᑦ
t	ᑐ	ᑌ	ᑑ	ᑒ	ᑎ	ᑏ	
t'	ᑓ	ᑔ	ᑕ	ᑖ	ᑐ	ᑑ	
b	ᑲ	ᑳ	ᑴ	ᑵ	ᑶ	ᑷ	ᒧ

C	a	u	e	i	o	oo	Isolated
g	𖹠	𖹡	𖹢	𖹣	𖹤	𖹥	𖹦
k	𖹧	𖹨	𖹩	𖹪	𖹫	𖹬	𖹭
k'	𖹮	𖹯	𖹰	𖹱	𖹲	𖹳	𖹴
n	𖹵	𖹶	𖹷	𖹸	𖹹	𖹺	𖹻
m	𖹼	𖹽	𖹾	𖹿	𖺀	𖺁	𖺂
ng							𖺃
y	𖺄	𖺅	𖺆	𖺇	𖺈	𖺉	
j	𖺊	𖺋	𖺌	𖺍	𖺎	𖺏	
ch'	𖺐	𖺑	𖺒	𖺓	𖺔	𖺕	
l	𖺖	𖺗	𖺘	𖺙	𖺚	𖺛	𖺜
tl	𖺝	𖺞	𖺟	𖺠	𖺡	𖺢	
lh	𖺣	𖺤	𖺥	𖺦	𖺧	𖺨	𖺩
dl	𖺪	𖺫	𖺬	𖺭	𖺮	𖺯	
tl'	𖺰	𖺱	𖺲	𖺳	𖺴	𖺵	
z	𖺶	𖺷	𖺸	𖺹	𖺺	𖺻	z
dz	𖺼	𖺽	𖺾	𖺿	𖻀	𖻁	
s	𖻂	𖻃	𖻄	𖻅	𖻆	𖻇	s
sh	𖻈	𖻉	𖻊	𖻋	𖻌	𖻍	$
ch	𖻎	𖻏	𖻐	𖻑	𖻒	𖻓	
ts	𖻔	𖻕	𖻖	𖻗	𖻘	𖻙	
ts'	𖻚	𖻛	𖻜	𖻝	𖻞	𖻟	

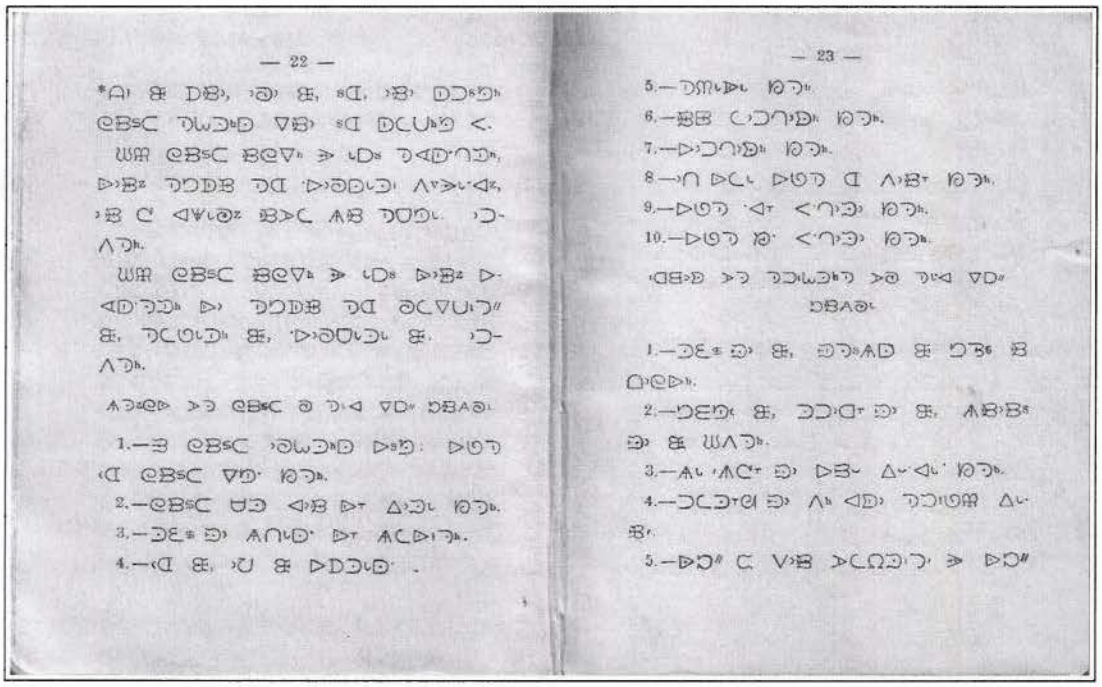
The characters with the same initial consonant have the same shape. The vowel is indicated by the orientation of the character together with the

presence of a vertical bar or dot, since there are six vowels but only four orientations.

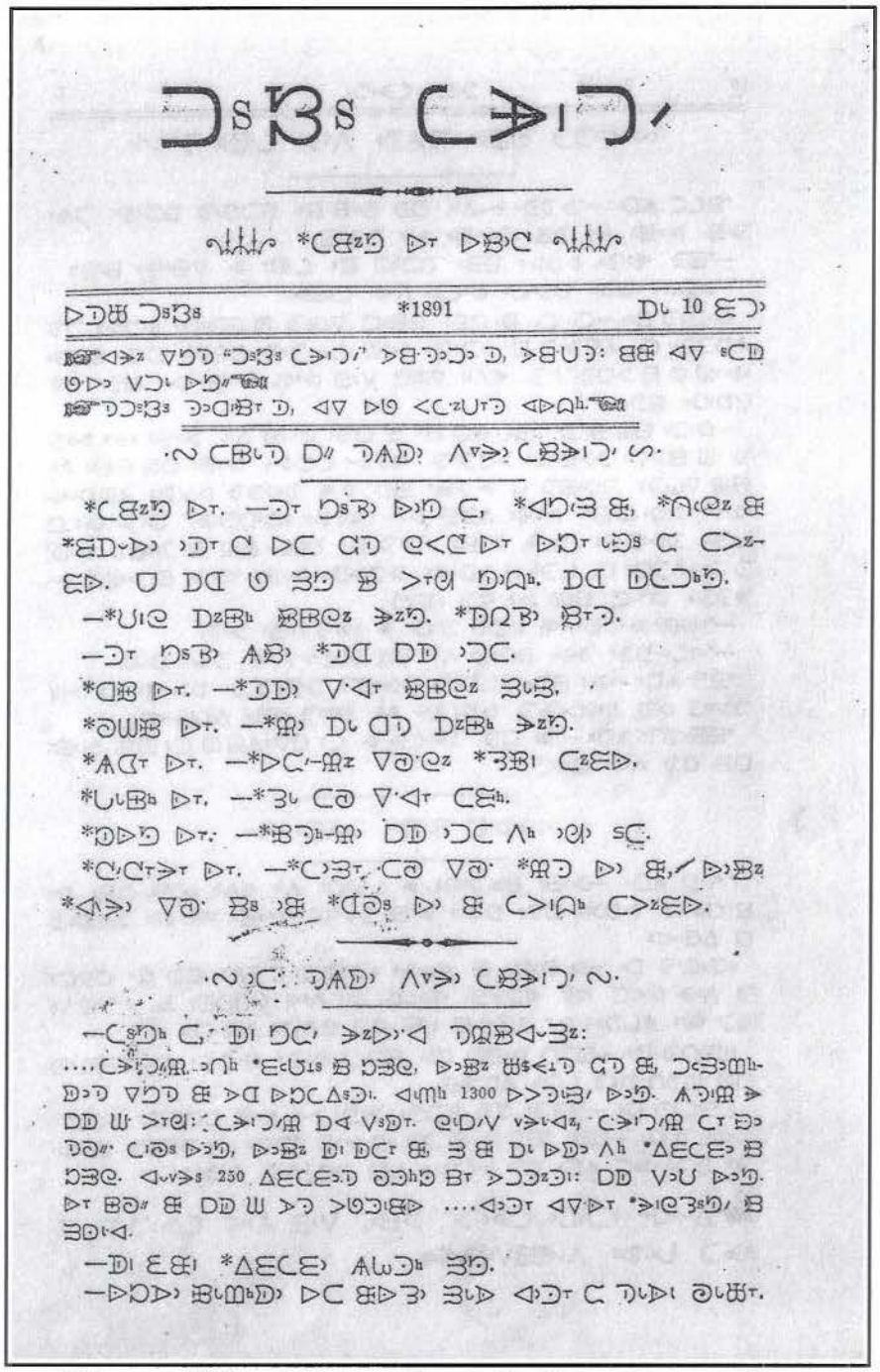
The characters in the last column stand for consonants by themselves, as at the end of a syllable. For example, the word *lhulh* "with each other" is written ᑐᒃ lhu-lh. The glottal stop is represented by a raised dot, not only at the end of a syllable but even when immediately preceding a vowel. For example, the word *'a* "quickly" is written ˙ᐊ.

This writing system spread rapidly after its introduction in 1885 and was extensively used for several decades. A newspaper was published bimonthly from 1891 to 1894 in Fort Saint James and the Roman Catholic Prayerbook was published in 1904. Carrier people kept accounts and diaries in syllabics, wrote letters, inscribed tombstones, and left notes on trees in the bush. Usage began to decline in the 1930s. Today only a few people really use it but it is regaining popularity.

Here are two pages from the Prayerbook. The Ten Commandments begin three-quarters of the way down the lefthand page and end near the middle of the righthand page.



Here is the first page of the first issue of the newspaper ᑐˢᖘˢ ᑕᐳᐣᑐ Dustl'us Nawhulnuk "the paper that tells a story".



ᑐˢᖘˢ ᑕᐳᐣᑐ

*1891

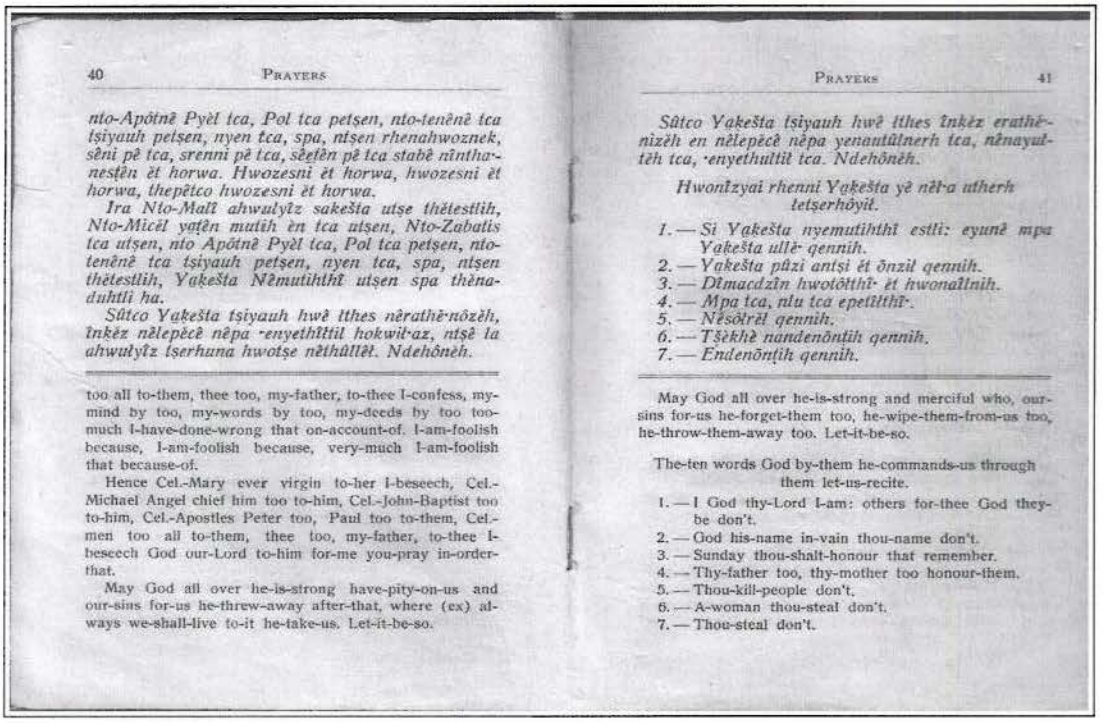
Here is one of the grafitti written on the wall of the fur warehouse at the Hudson's Bay post in Fort Saint James. It reads ᖳᙆᓐ ᓗᑐᓂˢ le-yo-n b-li-n-s "Leon Prince", the name of an important man known among Nak'a<u>z</u>dli people as *leyoncho* "big Leon".

In the photograph below, Peter Erickson holds his drum, originally made for his late father Lewis by the late Nick Prince, both of whom were grandsons of Leyoncho. The syllabics at the top read ᑕᓇᒉ ᓀᔭᐟ ᑕ ᙱᓀᐣ ᐊᔭᔮᐅ *tungule yalhduk te ts'iyane yoozilhts'ai* "when the drum speaks, everyone listens to it".

There is a third writing system for Carrier that is sometimes encountered. This is the writing system that Father Morice used in his scholarly publications. The third edition of the Roman Catholic Prayerbook, published in 1938, uses this same writing system. The Bishop decided that he did not like syllabics and ordered Father Morice to produce a new edition in his Roman-based scholarly writing system. As a result, many older Carrier people can read this writing system. However, Carrier people never wrote in this writing system and there are no publications in it other than the Prayerbook.

Because the work of Father Morice is the source of much of non-native people's knowledge about Carrier culture, other authors frequently cite words in this writing system. This is unfortunate since a naïve interpretation of this notation is likely to lead to pronounciations rather different from actual Carrier pronounciation. For example, in this notation the ejectives are written with subscript dots, e.g. ḳ = k'. *r* represents the voiced velar fricative written *gh* in the CLC system, *rh* its voiceless counterpart, written *kh* in the CLC system. *e* with no accent represents the vowel of English *but*, written *u* in the CLC system, while the vowel of English *bait*, written *e* in the CLC system, requires an acute accent: *é*.

Here are two pages of the 1938 Prayerbook. The first seven of the Ten Commandments are on the right-hand page. On both pages below the Carrier text is a rough word-by-word translation into English.



40 PRAYERS

nto-Apôtnê Pyèl tca, Pol tca petsen, nto-tenênê tca tsiyauh petsen, nyen tca, spa, ntsen rhenahwoznek, sêni pê tca, srenni pê tca, sêtên pê tca stabê nîntha-nestên èt horwa. Hwozesni èt horwa, hwozesni èt horwa, thepêtco hwozesni èt horwa.

Ira Nto-Malî ahwulyîz sakešta utse thêtestlih, Nto-Micêl yatên mutih èn tca utsen, Nto-Zabatis tca utsen, nto Apôtnê Pyèl tca, Pol tca petsen, nto-tenênê tca tsiyauh petsen, nyen tca, spa, ntsen thêtestlih, Yakešta Nêmutihthî utsen spa thêna-duhtli ha.

Sûtco Yakešta tsiyauh hwê tthes nêrathê·nôzêh, înkêz nêlepêcê nêpa ·enyethîltil hokwit·az, ntsê la ahwulyîz tserhuna hwotse nêthûllêt. Ndehôneh.

too all to-them, thee too, my-father, to-thee I-confess, my-mind by too, my-words by too, my-deeds by too too-much I-have-done-wrong that on-account-of. I-am-foolish because, I-am-foolish because, very-much I-am-foolish that because-of.

Hence Cel.-Mary ever virgin to-her I-beseech, Cel.-Michael Angel chief him too to-him, Cel.-John-Baptist too to-him, Cel.-Apostles Peter too, Paul too to-them, Cel.-men too all to-them, thee too, my-father, to-thee I-beseech God our-Lord to-him for-me you-pray in-order-that.

May God all over he-is-strong have-pity-on-us and our-sins for-us he-threw-away after-that, where (ex) always we-shall-live to-it he-take-us. Let-it-be-so.

PRAYERS 41

Sûtco Yakešta tsiyauh hwê tthes înkêz erathê-nizêh en nêlepêcê nêpa yenautûlnerh tca, nênayul-têh tca, ·enyethultit tca. Ndehôneh.

Hwonîzyai rhenni Yakešta yê nêt·a utherh letserhôyit.

1. — *Si Yakešta nyemutihthî estli: eyunê mpa Yakešta ullê· qennih.*
2. — *Yakešta pûzi antsi êt ônzil qennih.*
3. — *Dîmacdzîn hwotôtthî· êt hwonaîlnih.*
4. — *Mpa tca, nlu tca epetîtthî·.*
5. — *Nêsôtrêl qennih.*
6. — *Tsèkhè nandenôntih qennih.*
7. — *Endenôntih qennih.*

May God all over he-is-strong and merciful who, our-sins for-us he-forget-them too, he-wipe-them-from-us too, he-throw-them-away too. Let-it-be-so.

The-ten words God by-them he-commands-us through them let-us-recite.

1. — I God thy-Lord I-am: others for-thee God they-be don't.
2. — God his-name in-vain thou-name don't.
3. — Sunday thou-shalt-honour that remember.
4. — Thy-father too, thy-mother too honour-them.
5. — Thou-kill-people don't.
6. — A-woman thou-steal don't.
7. — Thou-steal don't.

Although Carrier was first written by native speakers in 1885, records of the language go back to 1793, when, on June 22nd, the explorer Alexander MacKenzie recorded 30 words in the Blackwater dialect, using the English alphabet to transcribe as best he could the unfamiliar sounds of an unfamiliar language. Even so, most of the words he wrote down are recognizable. For example, he wrote *coun* for *kwun* "fire" and *zah* for *tsa* "beaver".

Grammar

The grammar of Carrier is very different from that of English. Its syntax strikes English-speakers as "backwards", and it has a much more complex word-formation. At the same time, it omits some things that English speakers expect.

Syntax

The order of words in Carrier is quite different from English. Carrier is what linguists call a *head-final* language, that is, a language in which the fundamental element in a phrase, its head, is found at the end of the phrase.[17] Consider this sentence:

Sulhtus lhuztih be dunitsung taidut'as.
my-sister knife with moose meat she-is-cutting-it-into-many-pieces

"My sister is cutting up moosemeat with a knife."

In contrast to English, the verb *taidut'as* comes at the end of the sentence, following the direct object *dunitsung* "moosemeat". The verb also follows the phrase *lhuztih be* "with a knife". With very few exceptions, the verb must be the last word in the clause.

In the English prepositional phrase "with a knife", the preposition *with* precedes its object *a knife*. That is why words like *with* are called **pre**positions. In the Carrier phrase *lhuztih be* "with a knife", the word that means "knife" is the first word, *lhuztih,* and the word that means "with" is the second word, *be*. Carrier does not have prepositions; it has **post**positions. The head of a postpositional phrase, the postposition, comes at the end of the phrase.

We observe a similar order in complex sentences, that is, sentences containing two clauses. In the sentence:

Nusbe-un hoonust'i'.
I-swim-COMP I-like

"I like to swim." (more literally "I like that I swim")

17 Head-final languages may seem peculiar to English and French speakers, but they are actually very common. Some others are: Basque, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Punjabi, Tamil, and Turkish.

we have two clauses: the main clause is about liking something, and swimming is what I like. The main verb comes at the end, following the verb of the subordinate clause.

Where a subordinate clause is introduced by a subordinating conjunction (which linguists these days call a "complementizer"), in English the complementizer precedes the subordinate clause, while in Carrier it follows. In the example above, the complementizer is the suffix *-un*. Here is an example in which it is a separate word.

Nghoo doolhjut whuch'a tunaingus.
your-teeth they-decay lest you-clean

"Brush your teeth lest they decay."

The complementizer *whuch'a* follows the lower clause.

Another difference between Carrier and English is that in Carrier it is possible to leave out noun phrases if they are understood. In the example above about cutting up moosemeat, the verb has both an overt subject "my sister", and an overt object "moosemeat". In Carrier either or both can be omitted. If we are talking about my sister, we can leave out the subject noun phrase and say:

Lhuztih be dunitsung taidut'as.
knife with moose meat she-is-cutting-it-into-many-pieces

If we are talking about moosemeat, we can leave out the object noun phrase and say:

Sulhtus lhuztih be taidut'as.
my-sister knife with she-is-cutting-it-into-many-pieces

And if it is understood both that we are talking about my sister and about moosemeat, we can say:

Lhuztih be taidut'as.
knife with she-is-cutting-into-many-pieces

Indeed, if we don't need to say what she is cutting with, we can eliminate the phrase "with a knife" and strip the sentence down to just the verb:

Taidut'as
She-is-cutting-it-into-many-pieces.

A verb by itself can be a perfectly fine Carrier sentence.

Yes-No questions are formed by adding *eh* to the end of the sentence:

Ts'oodune neba hutijun
"The children are going to sing for us."

Ts'oodune neba hutijun eh?
"Are the children going to sing for us?"

In content questions, the question word does not have to move to the beginning of the sentence as in English but may stay in the same position as the corresponding phrase in the corresponding statement.

Doocha	mba	nts'eda'	wheinya?
again	your-father	where-past	he-set-off-walking

"Now where did your father go?"

Nouns

Nouns are inflected for possession by attaching possessive prefixes. Here are some of the forms of *yoh* "house".[18]

syoh	my house
nyoh	your (one person's) house
ooyoh	his/her/its house
neyoh	our house
nohyoh	your (two or more people's) house
buyoh	their house

Not all nouns take the same prefixes. Here are the comparable forms of *'utsung* "meat".

se'utsung	my meat
nye'utsung	your (one person's) meat
be'utsung	his/her/its meat
ne'utsung	our meat
nohye'utsung	your (two or more people's) meat
bube'utsung	their meat

18 There are some additional forms whose usage is too complicated to explain here.

Which nouns take which set of possessive prefixes is largely, but not entirely, predictable from what sound the noun begins with.

Some nouns change when possessive prefixes are added. For example, "dog" is *lhi* when unpossessed but *luk* when possessed.

sluk	my dog
nluk	your (one person's) dog
ooluk	his/her/its dog
neluk	our dog
nohluk	your (two or more people's) dog
buluk	their dog

There are quite a few nouns that **must** be possessed. That is, they cannot be used as separate words. They either have a possessive prefix or they are part of a larger word. Such nouns are said to be *inalienably possessed*.

For example, here are some of the possessed forms of "eyes".

sna	my eyes
nyuna	your (one person's) eyes
oona	his/her/its eyes
nena	our eyes
nohna	your (two or more people's) eyes
buna	their eyes

From these forms we can extract the stem *na* as the part that means "eyes". Furthermore, *na* occurs in compound nouns like *natoo* "tears", literally "eye water" and *nayoo* "eye drops", literally "eye medicine". However, if you want to talk about eyes without saying whose they are, you can't just say *na*. Instead, you have to use the indefinitely possessed form, *'una* "(someone's) eyes".

The inalienably possessed nouns consist of body parts like "eye" and kinship terms like "sister", plus a few others, such as "footprints, tracks". The stem is *k'oh*, as we can see in forms like *sk'oh* "my footprints" and *buk'oh* "their footprints", but if, for example, you want to say that you saw some tracks but don't know what kind they were, you cannot say *k'oh*; you have to say *'uk'oh*.

Most Carrier nouns have no distinct plural form. *yoh* can mean "house" or "houses" depending on context. With very limited exceptions, the only nouns that have distinct plural forms are those that refer to people or dogs. Thus we have *dune* "person", *dunene* "people", *dakelh* "Carrier person", *dakelhne* "Carrier people", *lhi* "dog", *lhike* "dogs", *ts'eke* "woman", *ts'ekoo* "women".

Even nouns that have a plural form do not necessarily use it when referring to more than one person.

Where objects naturally come in pairs it is possible to indicate explicitly that you are referring to only one of the pair by adding the suffix *-k'uz* "half, one of two parts", e.g. *ndi snak'uz* "this one eye of mine". It can also be added to names of fish and animals, e.g. *musdoosk'uz* "a side of beef". As a separate word, *'uk'uz* means "a half", or in reference to money "50 cents".

Postpositions

Carrier postpositions are inflected.[19] In most cases, the postposition is used by itself if its object is a noun but is inflected if its object is a pronoun. Such postpositions cannot follow a pronoun. An example is the postposition *ba* which means "for, on behalf of". Here its object is a full noun "doctor".

Nghun-un	ts'eke	yoobeduyun	ba 'ut'en.
that	woman	doctor	for she-works

"That woman works for the doctor."

but when the object is the pronoun "them", we get the inflected form *buba*.

Nghun-un	ts'eke	buba	'ut'en.
that	woman	for-them	she-works

"That woman works for them."

It is ungrammatical to put *ba* after the pronoun *'enne* "they, them". The following sentence is ungrammatical:

Nghun-un	ts'eke	'enne	ba	'ut'en.
that	woman	them	for	she-works

"That woman works for them."

The inflected forms of postpositions are made in essentially the same way as the possessed forms of nouns.

19 Inflection of postpositions is unusual, but there is a European language that inflects prepositions in a similar way, namely Irish, where we have such forms as *dom* "for me", *dúinn* "for us", *duit* "for you", etc.

Verbs

Here are some of the forms of the verb "to eat". The chart consists of eight blocks of nine forms. The imperfective is similar to the English present tense, the perfective similar to the English past tense. The optative is similar to the subjunctive in languages like French and German. It can be used by itself: for example, *'uts'oo'alh* can mean "let's eat". It is also used in a variety of subordinate clauses, e.g. *'uts'oo'alh hukwa'ts'uninzun* "we want to eat", literally "we want that we should eat".

	Affirmative			Negative		
	Singular	Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural
Imperfective						
1	'us'alh	'it'alh	'uts'u'alh	lhe'zus'al	lhe'zit'al	lhe'ts'us'al
2	'in'alh	'uh'alh	'uh'alh	lhe'zin'al	lhe'zuh'al	lhe'zuh'al
3	'u'alh	'uhu'alh	'uhu'alh	lhe'us'al	lhe'hus'al	lhe'hus'al
Perfective						
1	'is'al	'at'al	'uts'an'al	lhe'us'ulh	lhe'it'ulh	lhe'ts'i'ulh
2	'an'al	'ih'al	'ih'al	lhe'in'ulh	lhe'uh'ulh	lhe'uh'ulh
3	'an'al	'uhan'al	'uhan'al	lhe'i'ulh	lhe'hi'ulh	lhe'hi'ulh
Future						
1	'utis'ulh	'utat'ulh	'uzti'ulh	lhe'tuzis'ulh	lhe'tuzat'ulh	lhe'ts'utis'ulh
2	'utan'ulh	'utih'ulh	'utih'ulh	lhe'tuzan'ulh	lhe'tuzih'ulh	lhe'tuzih'ulh
3	'uti'ulh	'oti'ulh	'oti'ulh	lhe'tis'ulh	lhe'hutis'ulh	lhe'hutis'ulh
Optative						
1	'oos'alh	'ot'alh	'uts'oo'alh	lhe'zoos'al	lhe'zot'al	lhe'ts'oos'al
2	'on'alh	'ooh'alh	'ooh'alh	lhe'zon'al	lhe'zooh'al	lhe'zooh'al
3	'oo'alh	'uhoo'alh	'uhoo'alh	lhe'oos'al	lhe'hoos'al	lhe'hoos'al

Within each block, the nine forms are marked for different subjects, that is, who is eating. The rows represent the three grammatical persons:

1. first person – the speaker is included

2. second person – the addressee is included
3. third person – neither the speaker nor the addressee is included

The columns represent the three grammatical numbers:

1. singular – one person
2. dual – two people
3. plural – three or more people

The first form in the table, *'us'alh*, therefore means "I am eating". The form below it, *'in'alh*, means "You (one person) are eating", while the form to its right, *'it'alh*, means "The two of us are eating". Notice that the dual and the plural are only different in the first person, so within each block there are actually only seven different forms.

As this chart shows, negation is marked on the verb. The first form in the Negative column, *lhe'zus'al*, means "I am not eating". It is not necessary to use a separate word like English "not".The glottal stop that appears at the very beginning of the affirmative forms above and just after *lhe* in the negative forms is actually an object marker. It marks the unspecified object, used when the object of a transitive verb is not expressed by a noun phrase and is not a pronoun. When the object is a pronoun, other object markers are used. Thus, we have forms like *su'alh* "it is eating me", *nyu'alh* "it is eating you (one person)", *ne'alh* "it is eating us", "*yu'alh* "it is eating him".

Many Carrier verbs take prefixes that reflect the shape of the subject or object. There are four main categories, marked as follows:

n	round
d	stick-like
wh	saliently areal or spatial, or an extent of time
unmarked	generic – everything else

When the verb is intransitive (has no object), these prefixes reflect the shape of the subject:

lubrot nunulat	a ball is floating around
duchun nudulat	a log is floating around
yoh nuwhulat	a house is floating around
t'et nulat	a young woman is floating around

When the verb is transitive (has an object), these prefixes reflect the shape of the object:

lubrot mba oonasket	I bought you a ball
tuz mba oodasket	I bought you a cane
yoh mba hosket[20]	I bought you a house
naih mba osket	I bought you some clothes

The verb "to eat" takes the shape classifier prefixes. The forms in the table above are generic. For each of them there is a corresponding form for round things, stick-like things, and (in theory – actual examples are hard to come by) areal things, e.g. *'unus'alh* "I am eating something round", *'udutan'ulh* "you (1) are going to eat something stick-like".

Carrier verbs also distinguish a variety of *aspects*. Aspect has to do with how an event unfolds in time but not with when it takes place, which is a matter of *tense*. One of the aspects that can be marked on the verb is *habitual aspect*. If a verb is in the habitual aspect, it means that the verb describes a typical occurrence of a habitual event. For example, if you tell someone that when you got up this morning you went to the bathroom and urinated, you would use the habitual aspect, assuming that like most people urinating is something that you regularly do every day when you get up. On the other hand, if you tell someone that you gave a urine sample when you went to the doctor you would not use the habitual aspect, assuming that like most people you do not routinely visit the doctor and give a urine sample. If you were an athlete who is tested for drugs every day, you would use the habitual aspect to describe giving a urine sample.

Similarly, in the case of eating, if I call you on the telephone and you tell me that you are eating lunch, when you told me that you were eating you would say *na'ust'alh*, which is the habitual form corresponding to *'us'alh*. If, however, your eating is not part of a regular meal, you would not use the habitual aspect.

With some verbs it is possible to make a causative form, meaning "to cause to V". In the case of "to eat", causative forms such as *se'ulh'alh* "he is causing me to eat something" are equivalent to forms of English "to feed".

If we take just the possibilities discussed so far for marking of subject, object, indirect object, negation, tense, mood, aspect, and noun class, we can compute that the verb "to eat" has at least 73,228 forms, yet these do not

20 The *h* here is the areal prefix. *wh* becomes *h* immediately preceding the vowels *o* and *oo*.

exhaust the possibilities. For example, it is possible to derive a whole set of words meaning "to eat to or past satiation", that is, "to eat oneself sick" or "to glut oneself".[21]

The verb that we chose to illustrate the basics of Carrier conjugation , "to eat", is in some ways a very simple verb. The part that means "to eat" is just the last syllable, *'alh* in the imperfective affirmative. As with many other verbs, the stem changes a bit with the tense, negation, and aspect, e.g. to *'al* in the perfective affirmative and to *'ulh* in the perfective negative. Otherwise, the different forms are distinguished by what prefixes are attached to the stem. Moreover, all of the prefixes have some grammatical function.

Not all verbs have such a simple structure. Here is the imperfective affirmative paradigm of "to speak".

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	yasduk	yailduk	yats'ulhduk
2	yailhduk	yalhduk	yalhduk
3	yalhduk	yahulhduk	yahulhduk

It has the stem *duk*, but that is not all there is to it. In addition to grammatical prefixes, such as the subject markers, "to speak" begins with *ya*. This *ya* is not a prefix of the usual sort since it has no meaning of its own – it is an inherent part of the verb like the stem.

Most of the forms above also have an *lh* just before the stem[22]. This *lh* is what linguists call the *valence* prefix. Verbs may have no valence prefix, or they may have an *lh*, an *l,* or a *d* in this position. The valence prefix does play some grammatical role. For example, there are quite a few pairs of verbs in which changing the valence prefix of an intransitive verb to *lh* makes it transitive, e.g. *too dunulmulh* "water is boiling" vs. t*oo dunulhmulh* "he is boiling water". However, in general it is not possible to predict a verb's valence prefix using grammatical information – you just have to know that a

21 Bednesti Lake, at the halfway point on Highway 16 between Prince George and Vanderhoof, is from the Stony Creek Carrier phrase *bet ne̲sdai,* which means "he glutted himself on char".

22 Actually, at a more abstract level of analysis, all of the forms of "to speak" contain an *lh*. In certain forms, however, it does not appear as such because of the influence of adjacent prefixes. For example, in the first person singular, when the subject marker *s* comes together with the valence prefix *lh*, the result is the loss of the valence prefix. In the first person dual, the subject marker, which is underlyingly *id*, combines with the *lh* to make *il*.

certain meaning is expressed by a certain stem with a certain valence prefix as well, possibly, as other unpredictable "prefixes" like the *ya* of "to speak".

In the imperfective affirmative forms above the prefix *ya* is separated from the valence prefix and stem by the subject markers. The future negative paradigm of the same verb, meaning "I am not going to speak", etc., is given below. In this case, not only the subject markers but the future tense markers and the negative markers intervene between *ya* and the valence prefix.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	yalhtuzisduk	yalhtuzalduk	yalhts'utilhduk
2	yalhtuzalhduk	yalhtuzilhduk	yalhtuzilhduk
3	yalhtilhduk	yalhotilhduk	yalhotilhduk

In sum the Carrier equivalent of the English infinitive "to speak" is not a word but the knowledge that we must use the stem *duk* with the valence prefix *lh* as well as *ya* at the very beginning. The various grammatical markers go inside of this discontinuous "infinitive".

Another interesting feature of the Carrier verb is that the subject markers do not all go in the same place. If we analyze a simple verb such as "to eat", we can extract a set of subject markers that looks like this:

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	s	id	ts'
2	in	h	h
3	V	hV	hV

The final /d/ of /id/ may interact with the beginning of the verb stem as it does in "to eat" where /d/ + /'/ become /t'/, or it may disappear entirely. The V in the 3d person forms indicates that a vowel must be present in this position but that what vowel it is is governed by rules that we will not go into here.

Consider now the imperfective affirmative paradigm of "to dance":

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	nusdaih	nidaih	ts'unudaih
2	nindaih	nuhdaih	nuhdaih
3	nudaih	hunudaih	hunudaih

The familiar subject markers are present, but if you look carefully, they are not all in the same place. The first person singular marker /s/, the first person dual marker /i(d)/, the second person singular marker /in/ and the second person duo-plural marker /h/ all follow the /n/, but the first person plural marker /ts'/ and the third person duo-plural marker /h/ precede it.

Deriving Nouns from Verbs

Many nouns are derived from verbs. There are three fully productive ways of doing this. First, nouns meaning "the person, people, or thing that does such-and-such" are made by adding the suffixes *-un*, *-ne*, and *-i* respectively to the third person singular form of the verb. For example, from *nudaih* "he is dancing" we can derive *nudaih-un* "dancer" and *nudaih-ne* "dancers". If there were a machine that danced, we could call it a *nudaih-i*. A more realistic example is *nut'o-i* "airplane", literally "thing that flies around", from *nut'o* "it flies around".

Second, one can add the suffix *-un* to a verb to obtain a noun meaning "the place where V". For example *'uhu'alh-un* "dining room" is literally "the place where they eat". *yoobeooket-un* "pharmacy" is literally "the place where he sells medicine".

Third, nouns meaning "that by means of which V" are derived by attaching the prefix *be-* and optionally adding the suffix *-i*. For example, a carpenter's plane is a *be'dugelh*, literally "that by means of which it is planed". The corresponding active verb is *yudughelh* "he is planing it". Similarly, "vehicle" is *benuts'ugoo-i* "that by means of which one drives around", from *nuts'ugoo* "one drives around". Some such nouns are internally conjugated rather than possessed as nouns. "my vehicle" is *benusgoo-i* "that by means of which I drive around", "your (one person) vehicle" *beningoo-i* "that by means of which you drive around".

Vocabulary

Carrier divides the world up in a way that is often very different from what English does. Although there are many Carrier words whose meaning corresponds closely to that of an English word, there are also many cases in which an English word has no exact Carrier equivalent, or a Carrier word has no exact English equivalent. In this chapter we look at a few interesting aspects of the Carrier lexicon.

Kinship Terms

The Carrier kinship system is quite different from that of English: it makes distinctions that English does not make and lumps together relationships that English distinguishes. For example, in Carrier "grandmother" is -t*soo*, but the same term is applied to your grandmother's sisters. "grandfather" is -*tsiyan*, but the same term is applied to your grandfather's brothers. In other words, Carrier does not distinguish grandmothers from great-aunts or grandfathers from great-uncles. The same is true in the opposite direction. You are your grandmothers' and grandfathers' -*chai,* but you are also your great-aunts' and great-uncles' -*chai*. Carrier does not distinguish "grandchild", "grand-niece" and "grand-nephew". Similarly, there is no distinction between "daughter-in-law" and "nephew's wife"; both are -*yas'at.* "son-in-law" and "niece's husband" are both -*ghundan.*

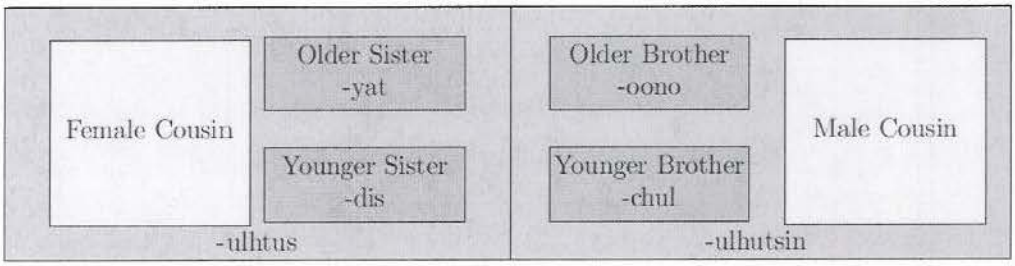
On the other hand, Carrier makes distinctions among aunts and uncles that English does not make. There are two words for "aunt": -*bizyan* "paternal aunt" (father's sister or father's brother's wife) and -*ak'i* "maternal aunt" (mother's sister or mother's brother's wife). Similarly, there are two words for "uncle": -*tai* "paternal uncle" (father's brother or father's sister's husband) and -*z'e* "maternal uncle" (mother's brother or mother's sister's husband).[23]

Carrier also refers to children differently depending on whether the parent under discussion is the father or the mother. If you are talking about a man , "his son" is *ooye',* while if you are talking about a woman, "her son" is *ooyaz.* "his daughter" is *ootse'*, "her daughter" *ooyats'e.* If you are talking about a couple's child you can use either term: "their son" can be either *buye'* or *buyaz*, "their daughter" either *butse'* or *buyats'e.*

23 All dialects have two terms for uncle and two for aunt, but which term refers to which aunts and uncles varies from dialect to dialect.

One interesting aspect of the kinship system is that there are two different ways to refer to brothers and sisters. One way is very specific: you have to indicate whether you are talking about your older sister or younger sister, older brother or younger brother, e.g. *syat* "my older sister", *sdis* "my younger sister", *soono* "my older brother", *schul* "my younger brother". The other way is broader. Not only does it not distinguish between older and younger, it doesn't distinguish between siblings and cousins. *sulhtus* can mean "my sister", older or younger, but you could also be talking about your female cousin. Similarly, *sulhutsin* could mean "my brother", older or younger, but you could also be talking about your male cousin. The relationship among the brother and sister terms is shown below.

Note that there are no words for "cousin" or even for "male cousin" and "female cousin". You can use *-ulhtus* and *-ulhutsin* to refer to cousins, but these words do not mean "female cousin" and "male cousin" since they also include sisters and brothers.



Place Names

Here are the names of some of the major places in the area.

Lheidli	Prince George
Lhtakoh	Fraser River
Nadlehbun	Fraser Lake
Nak'al	Mount Pope
Nak'albun	Stuart Lake
Nak'alkoh	Stuart River
Nak'azdli	Fort Saint James

Lheidli is underlyingly a verb form meaning "they flow into each other" and so as a noun means "confluence". It refers to the fact that Prince George is where the Nechako and Fraser Rivers meet. *Lhtakoh* means "rivers within each other" and refers to the fact that due to the difference in the amount of

sediment in the two rivers, the waters of the Nechako and the Fraser are visibly distinguishable for some distance after the two meet.

Fraser Lake is literally "(salmon) run lake". *Nadleh* , which by itself is the name of Nautley village at the west end of the lake, means "(fish) run" and *bun* is the short form of "lake", which as a separate word is *bunghun* or *bunk'ut*. This is not the only place named after the run of fish. Mount Milligan is called *Shuz Nadloh* "wooded mountain where they (Arctic grayling) run".

The major features of the Fort Saint James area are all named after Mount Pope. Mount Pope itself is called *Nak'al*. Stuart Lake is "Mount Pope Lake", the Stuart River "Mount Pope River". There are two explanations for Nak'azdli. Fort Saint James is the point at which the Stuart River emerges from Stuart Lake. As a separate word, the origin of a river is a *tizdli*, underlyingly a verb meaning "it begins to flow". As a suffix, this takes the form *zdli*. When *zdli* is added to *Nak'al* the final *l* of *Nak'al* is deleted in order to eliminate the impermissible sequence of consonants *lzdl*, resulting in *Nak'azdli*. The other explanation is that it is a contraction of the phrase *'utnak'a bulh tizdli* "it flowed with the arrows of the non-Athabascan Indians", after a raid in which the enemy shot so many arrows that the outlet of the lake teemed with them.

Many places are named after the river whose mouth is located at that point. For example, *Tsaooche* (Sowchea) is the point at which Tsakoh (Beaver Creek) enters Stuart Lake. Similarly, *Yekooche* (Portage) is where Yekoh enters Stuart Lake. *Binche* (Pinchie), meaning "river mouth in the middle of the lake", is where Pinchie Creek enters Stuart Lake. *Tache* (Tachie) simply means "river mouth" and is located where *Duzdlikoh* (Tachie River) enters Stuart Lake.

Carrier place names usually describe some feature of the place. This is true not only of major places such as those mentioned above but of minor places. For example, a boggy spot along the old trail from Stony Creek to Nautley (now Telegraph Road) is called *Ts'alk'et* "Diaper Moss place" after the Diaper Moss (Sphagnum capillaceum, called Common Red Sphagnum Moss by biologists) that grows there. Diaper moss is significant because it is used to absorb babies' waste, to clean wounds, and for menstrual pads. Moreover, a Carrier person knows that where *ts'al* grows, Labrador Tea (*Ledum groenlandicum, 'uyak'unulh'a* in Stony Creek dialect, *ludi musjek* in Stuart Lake dialect) is also likely to be found.

Place names occasionally refer to an event that occurred there. For example, a place on the north shore of Tachick Lake is known as *yuscheduṣtan* "wolf tail hangs" after an incident in which a wolf was killed there and the corpse hung in a tree. In contrast to English, places are rarely named after people. When they are, they are always minor places, named after someone who lived there. An example is *William ṣugi* "Dry William Lake" (along Highway 16, 10km west of Fort Fraser), which is named both in Carrier and English after a non-native man who had a cabin there.

Carrier and English place names do not always correspond straightforwardly. The creek that links Nulki Lake to Tachick Lake is called *Ṣaik'uẓkoh* "Stony Creek Creek" in Carrier, while the creek that runs from Tachick Lake into the Nechako River is called *Khelhkoh*. In English the two are treated as a single creek and both parts are known as "Stony Creek".

Expressing Gratitude

There are several ways to say "thank you" . For casual thanks people say *musi*, a loan from French *merci*. However, on more formal occasions or to express deeper gratitude, the traditional words are used. These words are verbs and indicate who is giving thanks (one person or more than one person) and who is receiving thanks (one person or more than one person). In the chart below, the first form, *snachailya*, means "I thank you (one person)", while the fourth form, *nenachalhya*, means "we thank you (more than one person)".[24]

	you (1)	you (2+)
I	snachailya	snachalhya
We	nenachailya	nenachalhya

The forms above are used to thank someone for what he or she has done. To give thanks for what someone has said, a different verb is used.

	you (1)	you (2+)
I	snachadindlih	snachaduhdlih
We	nenachadindlih	nenachaduhdlih

24 In some dialects there are six forms rather than four because there is a distinction between "the two of us thank you" and "the three or more of us thank you".

Among other things, this is how you say "no, thank you". When you refuse what someone has offered you, you aren't thanking them for giving you something but you are thanking them for making the offer.

Classificatory Verbs

Carrier has no verb "to give", no verb "to pick up", no verb "to put down", and no verb "to carry around". That does not mean that it is impossible to express these ideas. Rather, for each such English verb there is a whole set of verbs, each appropriate for handling a certain type of object. Here are the words meaning "he is going to give me" for different types of objects.

non-plural generic object (chair)	sghati'alh
non-plural n-class object (ball)	sghanta'alh
non-plural d-class object (name)	sghaduta'alh
non-plural wh-class object (house)	sghaoota'alh
plural generic objects (chairs)	sghatililh
plural n-class objects (balls)	sghantalilh
plural d-class objects (names)	sghadutalilh
plural wh-class objects (houses)	sghaootalilh
uncountable objects (sugar)	sghatidzih
n-class uncountable objects (berries)	sghantadzih
d-class uncountable objects (toothpicks)	sghadutadzih
long rigid object (canoe)	sghatitelh
d-class long rigid object (stick)	sghadutatelh
body (dog)	sghatilhtelh
contents of open container (cup of tea)	sghatikalh
two-dimensional flexible object (shirt)	sghatilhchus
mushy stuff (mud)	sghatitloh
liquid (water)	sghatilhdzo
hay-like (hay)	sghadutalhdzo
fluffy stuff (down)	sghantalhdo

There are 11 major categories, each associated with a different verb stem. There are a total of 20 different forms since some of the major categories are further subdivided into the categories marked by the shape classifiers.

Carrier does not have eleven completely different verbs for each type of handling. Rather, it has a set of eleven verb bases that are used for handling different types of objects. For any type of object, the appropriate verb for a certain kind of handling is constructed by adding the appropriate prefixes to the verb base for the category. Here are examples of various types of handling of two-dimensional flexible objects, such as shirts.

behanaitilhchus	he is going to take it out
didutalhchus	he is going to hold it up
dughaitalhchus	he is going to hang it up
k'italhchus	he is going to put it on (the table)
k'unaitalhchus	he is going to put it back on (the table)
k'unaitilhchus	he is going to take it off (the table)
sanaitilhchus	he is going to bring it back
yughatilhchus	he is going to give it to her
yughutilhchuz	he is going to lend it to her
nutilhchuz	he is going to carry it around
'atilhchus	he is going to bury it
tatilhchus	he is going to submerge it
natilhchus	he is going to put it on the ground
yayutilhchus	he is going to bring it ashore

There are actually four systems of classificatory verbs. The one we have introduced is for "controlled" handling. There is another system, with ten categories, for "uncontrolled" handling (for example, tossing someone something rather than handing it to him). The third system, with eleven categories, is for expressing location. The fourth system, with just four categories, is for "inherent motion", such as falling.

Number-Restricted Verbs

Several common verbs are restricted in the number of their subject or object. Here, for example, is the imperfective affirmative of "to walk around on one pair of limbs". At first glance, it looks very odd since there are three different stems: *ya*, *'as,* and *dilh.*

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1	nusya	nit'as	nuts'udilh
2	ninya	nuh'as	nuhdilh
3	nuya	nuhu'as	nuhudilh

What is going on is that Carrier does not actually have a verb meaning "to walk on one pair of limbs", although it is possible to cobble together a paradigm with that meaning. Carrier actually has three different verbs: "for one to walk on one pair of limbs", "for two to walk on one pair of limbs", and "for three or more to walk on one pair of limbs". Another meaning expressed by different verbs in the three numbers is "to sit". In contrast, "to walk on all pairs of limbs" is expressed by just two verbs, one for one or two, the other for three or more. The same pattern is found with "to kill", but for the object. There is a verb "to kill one or two beings" and another verb "to kill three or more beings".

Demonstratives

Corresponding to the English words "this, that, these, and those" Carrier has nine forms:

	human singular	human plural	non-human
this near me	ndun	ndun-ne	ndi
that near you	nyoon	nyoon-ne	nyoo
that away from us both	nghun-un	nghun-ne	nghun-i

As is typically the case in Carrier, there is no distinction of singular and plural for non-humans. Thus, *ndi* means both "this" and "these". For human beings (and also dogs, which for grammatical purposes in Carrier count as human) there is such a distinction. Carrier also has a three-way distinction

among "this near me", "that near you", and "that away from us both" in contrast to the English distinction between "this near me" and "that away from me". This kind of three-way distinction is not uncommon. Some other languages that have it are Spanish (*ese* vs. *este* vs. *aquel*), Japanese *(kono* vs. *sono* vs. *ano*) and Korean (*i* vs. *ko* vs. *cho*).

Chiefs and Clans

The English word "chief" corresponds to two Carrier words. Elected band and tribal council chiefs are called *dayi*, a loan from the trade language Chinook Jargon that ultimately derives from the Nuuchanulth (Nootka) word [ta:ji:] "elder brother, senior". Traditional "hereditary chiefs" are called *'uza*. There are also more specific terms: *duneza'* for men, *ts'ekeza'* for women, and *s̲kiza'* for children selected to become *'uza*. The *'uza* are notables in the clan system perhaps more accurately termed "nobles" than "chiefs".

A person becomes *'uza* by virtue of being given a noble "name", comparable to a title such as "Viscount Norwich". The term "hereditary chief" is a misnomer ; such positions are not truly hereditary in that no one automatically inherits a name when its previous holder dies or gives it up. Names belong to clans, so the new holder must be a member of the same clan. It is also considered desirable, but not strictly necessary, for a new holder to be in the direct line of descent from the previous holder. Even a direct descendant in the appropriate clan can take a name only with the approval of the clan leaders.

Most Carrier communities recognize from two to five clans. There are traditionally five clans, but in some communities some clans have merged. In the Stuart Lake area the five clans are named: *lusilyoo*, *lhts'umusyoo*, *tsayoo*, *kwunbawhut'enne (*or *granton)*, and *lohjuboo*. The *tsayoo* clan is effectively merged into *lhts'umusyoo*. Each clan has one or more symbols known as *'unutsi* "crests". Only members of the clan are entitled to wear clothing with the clan's crest. In English, the clans are often referred to by the associated crest. For example, people refer to *lusilyoo* as the "Frog Clan" and *lohjuboo* as the "Bear Clan". Strictly speaking, however, these are not the true clan names.

Clan membership is normally inherited from one's mother. Outsiders, whose mothers do not belong to any clan, are occasionally adopted into a clan. In rare cases someone is transferred from his or her birth clan to another clan, a process referred to in English as "crossing the floor".

A "Grand Chief" is not a chief in either sense. This is an honourary title given to a person of prominence in the community. For example, Grand Chief Edward John, long a member of the Task Group of the First Nations Summit, served as chief of the Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council from 1984-1988 and as chief of Tl'azt'en Nation from 1990-1992 but has not been an elected band or tribal council chief since 1992. He holds the *'uza* name *'Ukailch'oh* (often written Akilech'oh) in the *Lhts'umusyoo* clan, but that is not what makes him "Grand Chief". The title of "Grand Chief" was given to him by Tl'azt'en Nation in honour of many years of service to the community and in recogntion of the prominence he has attained as a leader. A "Grand Chief""is referred to as *dayicho* "big *dayi*", but this term is ambiguous out of context in that it can also be used to refer to the chief of a tribal council as distinct from a band chief.

Idioms

Carrier has many idiomatic expressions. A few examples are:

Carrier	Literal Meaning	Idiomatic Meaning
datsan suzgwut	a crow bit me	I've got a stitch in my side (from running)
bulh suzilhghi	sleep has killed me	I'm exhausted due to lack of sleep
nut'i suzilhghi	pulling has killed me	I'm exhausted due to exertion
oodzi nalts'ut	his heart fell down	he had a heart attack
kwuntoh nuya	he goes around among the fires	he is always visiting

The Structure of the Lexicon

As we have seen, a large number of different verbs can be derived from a Carrier verb root. This, together with the fact that there are several means of deriving nouns from verbs, results in Carrier having a lexicon whose structure is rather different from that of English. In languages like English, whose ability to derive new words from existing bases is relatively modest, the lexicon is rather like a department store. Just as a department store has a large number of products immediately available, so English has a large

number of words already formed. The Carrier lexicon is more like a machine shop. There aren't many products available for immediate use, but if you know what you are doing, you can make whatever you need.

One property of a lexical/grammatical system of this type is that the basic units may be very abstract. Languages like Carrier at first glance seem to be crazily specific because they have words meaning things like "give them a long rigid object" and "fall in a distributed fashion into water". Such very specific words, however, are made up of pieces that themselves may be quite abstract. The verbs of giving, for example, are based on roots each of which means "to handle an object of such-and-such a type in a controlled manner".

This property is not limited to the classificatory verb system. The verbs "to weed the garden", "to pluck a chicken", "to pull stumps", "to snap a stick in two", "to pick flowers", and "to scrub clothes on a washboard" are all based on the same root, whose meaning is something like "to make an abrupt motion".

Adaptation to Innovation

Contact with Europeans and Chinese brought many new things and ideas to the Carrier world, as has the rapid development of technology over the past two centuries. Carrier has responded to the need for vocabulary for new things in several ways. In some cases, it has borrowed words from other languages.

The great majority of loans are from French, due to the fact that most of the fur traders were French speaking, as were the Roman Catholic missionaries. Loans from French include *ludab* "table" (la table), *luglos* "bell" (la cloche), *lugli* "key" (la clé), *lizas* "angel" (les anges) and *lubeshi* "sin" (la péché). Words borrowed from French almost always include the French article, which Carrier-speakers did not realize was not an intrinsic part of French nouns.

A few loans are from Cree, due to the fact that the Cree moved West ahead of the Europeans, with whom they had contact before the Carrier did. Loans from Cree include *sooniya* "money, precious metal" (from Plains Cree *sôniyâw*) and *musdoos* "cow" (from Plains Cree *mostos* "cow", originally "buffalo"). There is one loan from Spanish: *mandah* "tarpaulin, heavy canvas", from Mexican Spanish *manta* "coarse cotton cloth", introduced by the Mexican pack train men who arrived with the Cariboo Gold Rush of 1858.

A more common response than borrowing has been to make use of the language's existing resources. In some cases, this has meant shifting or extending the meaning of existing words. Thus, *k'a* originally meant "arrow" but now means "rifle shell". *'ulhti'* originally meant "bow" but now means "gun". *hoot'ukw* "leech" now also means "noodles".

In other cases, new terms have been formed using the rules of Carrier grammar. "chopsticks", for example, are *duchun be'ts'u'alh* , a phrase meaning "sticks by means of which one eats". "mustard" is *ts'oodunetsan* "children's feces", presumably after the colour and texture rather than the taste. Many tools, machines, and utensils are named after their function. A cooking pot is a *be'udliz* "that by means of which things are stewed". A screwdriver is a *be'adughus* "that by means of which it is rotated". A microwave oven is an *'a benulwus* "that by means of which it is warmed quickly".

When a Carrier term is developed for something new, it does not always correspond straightforwardly to the English term. An example is "lawyer", which in Carrier is not "expert in law" or "person whose profession is law" but "person who speaks for" or "person who speaks against". "my lawyer" is *sba yalhduk-un* "the one who speaks for me", "their lawyer" *buba yalhduk-un* "the one who speaks for them". *sch'a yalhduk-un* "the one who speaks against me", is the prosecutor if I am the defendant in a criminal trial, the lawyer for the other side in a civil case. The closest thing to the English word "lawyer" is *dune ba yalhduk-un* "one who speaks for people". Of course, this could also refer to a representative who is not a lawyer, a spokesperson, agent, or press officer, so these terms only mean "lawyer" in context.

Dialects

Carrier has a number of dialects. The dialect that we have described up to now is the Stuart Lake dialect, spoken by members of the Nak'azdli, Tl'azt'en, and Yekooche bands. Because Fort Saint James has been the centre for missionary activity, both by Roman Catholics and more recently by evangelical Protestants, it is also the dialect in which religious materials and most other publications in Carrier are written.

The other dialects of Carrier proper belong to the Southern Carrier dialect group, which in turn is divided into two groups. One, the Fraser-Nechako group, consists of the dialects of the Cheslatta, Stellako, Nautley, Stony Creek, and Lheidli T'enneh bands. The other, the Blackwater group, consists of the dialects of the Ulkatcho, Kluskus, Nazko, and Red Bluff bands. These dialect groupings make sense in light of the traditional way of life. The dialects follow the major watercourses, reflecting the fact that long-distance travel was traditionally mostly by canoe.

One way in which the dialects differ is in details of pronunciation. For example, the Southern dialects frequently have /e/ where the Stuart Lake dialect has /i/.

	Stuart Lake	Southern Dialects
always	'ahoolhyiz̲	'ahoolhyez̲
char	bit	bet
day	dzin	dzen
to be long	-yiz̲	-yez̲
to stew	-liz	-lez
summer	shin	shen

The dialects also differ in having quite different words for some things. Some common words that are different in the Stuart Lake dialect and the Southern dialects are listed below. For concreteness, Stony Creek is used to exemplify the Southern dialects.

Stuart Lake	Stony Creek	English
lhuztih	tes	knife
kechub	tsunts'alh	spoon
ts'oodun	skui	child
yuntumai'	'ilhtsul	low bush blueberry
ts'itel	landooz	cottonwood tree
techus	telhjoos	mink
'ulhguk	dats'ooz	mouse
kwulai'	skwunlai	five
whunizyai	lanezi	ten
'us'alh	'usyi	I am eating something
lubrot	nukuk	ball
lubret	nawhulnuk	priest

In the last two cases, the dialects differ because the Stuart Lake dialect has borrowed a word from French while Stony Creek has a native Carrier word. Such differences between dialects due to taking words from different sources are not uncommon. In most dialects eulachon oil is called *sleghe,* but in Ulkatcho and Cheslatta it is called *tl'enaghe*, where the first part, *tl'ena*, is a loan from a North Wakashan language, most likely Heiltsuk (Bella Bella). Similarly, in most dialects eulachons are called *slelho* or something similar, but in these two dialects they are called *sbootih*, a loan from Nuxalk (Bella Coola). The distinctive Ulkatcho and Kluskus family names *Cahoose*, *Capoose*, *Cassam*, *Sill*, *Squinas*, and *Stilas* are also loans from Nuxalk.

There are also a variety of grammatical differences among Carrier dialects. For example, the prefixes used to mark possession of nouns differ from dialect to dialect, as do the categories of possession. This can be seen in the chart below which compares possessive forms in three dialects. Stony Creek distinguishes first person dual from first person plural possessors (with the first person dual the same as the second person duo-plural), while Stuart Lake and Lheidli do not.

Meaning	Stuart Lake	Stony Creek	Lheidli[25]
my house	syoh	syoh	syoh
your (1) house	nyoh	nyoh	nyoh
his house	ooyoh	ooyoh	buyoh
our (2) house	neyoh	nahyoh	neyoh
our (3+) house	neyoh	neyoh	neyoh
your (2+) house	nohyoh	nahyoh	nahyoh
their house	buyoh	hubuyoh	hubuyoh

Dialects also differ in their grammatical rules. For example, consider what happens when we make the first person singular of a verb with the *l* valence prefix. In the Stuart Lake dialect, the two prefixes fuse into *z*. The third person singular forms below show us that these verbs have an *l* valence prefix. The Stuart Lake first person singulars fuse first person singular subject marker *s* with valence *l* to yield *z*. In the Southern 1s forms the outcome is *lhu*. (In Babine-Witsuwit'en, it is *gl*.) The dialects differ in the rule governing what happens when two prefixes come together.

Meaning	3s (both)	1s (Stuart Lake)	1s (Stony Creek)
rest	nalyis	nazyis	nalhuyis
cough	dulkwus	duzkwus	dulhukwus
be pregnant	ulchan	uzchan	ulhuchan
be red	dulk'un	duzk'un	dulhuk'un

Some dialects have rules that others do not. As we discussed above, the second person singular subject marker is basically /in/ in all dialects. However, in the Blackwater dialects, in word-initial position, the /i/ is lost.

Meaning	Stony Creek	Ulkatcho
eat	inyi	nyi
eat something	'inyi	'inyi
dance	nindaih	nindaih
sing	injun	njun

25 In Lheidli dialect, "house" is *koo* and *yoh* means "building" .

The Raven and the Deer

This is a traditional story as told by the late Robert Hanson. We give the story first in Carrier, then in English translation, and then in Carrier with word-by-word glosses.

Datsancho 'ink'e Yests'e

'Uda' datsancho tube ooye'ilts'ul inle'. Khuntsul yests'e tilh'en. Datsancho yuzih nat'o 'ink'e: "Yests'e, sba whuts'odutni. Sulh nuhoolyeh?" ni. Yests'e "dugwe'," yulh yatilhduk. dzulhk'uz tot'as 'ink'e 'et nuholyeh." ni Datsancho. Dzulhk'uz whehan'az. Dzulhk'ut whuts'un yo honilh'en. "Yests'e, dilk'un!" ni Datsancho. Huwuhudloh. "Datsancho, dilhgus!" ni Yests'e. Doochaza huwuhudloh. 'Et 'awet "Yests'e, nkechun dalhjut lhe'unt'oh!" ni Datsancho. Huwuhudloh. Yests'e tube whuts'udutni. 'Et 'uyulhni: "Datsancho, nyun n'untalkuk-i in'alh!" Datsancho tube hunilch'e! Yests'e dzulh k'ubeyutilhtal. Nalts'ut-un 'et dazsai. 'Et Datsancho yo whet'o. Nyo yests'e yan'al. Datsancho yests'e yanus 'uyoonli. 'Aw ooyelhe'ilts'ul.

The Raven and the Deer

Once the raven was very hungry. Suddenly, he spotted a deer. The raven flew down beside him and said: "Deer, I am bored. Will you play with me?" The deer answered: "Alright." "Let's go to the mountaintop and play there" said the raven. They went up to the top of the mountain. From the mountaintop they looked down. "Deer, your skin is red!" said the raven. They laughed. " Raven, your skin is black!" said the deer. Again they laughed. Then Raven said, " Deer, your legs look rotten!". They laughed. Deer was not happy with this insult so he said, " Raven, you eat garbage!" Raven got very angry. He kicked the deer off the mountain. He died where he landed. Raven went flying down, down, down where he feasted on deer meat. The raven outsmarted the deer and is no longer hungry.

Datsancho 'ink'e Yests'e
raven and deer

'Uda' datsancho tube ooye'ilts'ul inle'.
long ago raven very he-is-hungry it-was

Khuntsul yests'e tilh'en.
suddenly deer he-spotted

Datsancho yuzih nat'o 'ink'e:
raven beside-him he-flew-to-the-ground and

"Yests'e, sba whuts'odutni. Sulh nuhoolyeh?" ni.
deer for-me it is boring with-me you-play he-said

Yests'e "Dugwe'," yulh[26] yatilhduk.[27]
deer okay with-him he-said

"Dzulhk'uz tot'as[28] 'ink'e 'et nuholyeh."
mountain top let-us-two-go and there let-us-two-play

ni[29] Datsancho. Dzulhk'uz whehan'az.
he-said raven mountain top they-two-set-off

26 Carrier and English do not always agree on which adposition (a cover term for preposition or postposition) to use. In English, verbs of speaking usually take "to", but in Carrier some such verbs take "with".

27 This is a form of the verb "to speak", not the usual verb "to say". A more literal translation would be something like "he spoke for just a moment", but the true meaning is hard to convey in English. This form is related to "he spoke" in the same way that "he spotted" is related to "he looked at".

28 This is the first person dual of the optative affirmative of "for two to walk on one pair of limbs" in the inchoative aspect. A literal translation would be: "let's the two of us start walking on one pair of limbs". It is an example of the use of the optative to suggest doing something and of the fact that Carrier is very precise in describing motion: whether it is on-going, starting, stopping, etc. Deer do not walk on one pair of limbs, so strictly speaking this verb is inappropriate. It is used because deer and ravens do not move in the same way – this verb is the default verb for describing motion. Note also that deer do not normally trigger the use of non-singular subject marking, which is generally reserved for people and dogs. However, in this story the deer and the raven act like human beings.

29 Quotations are an exception to the rule that the verb comes at the end of its clause. It is common for the subject to follow the verb of saying as it does here.

D̲z̲ulhk'ut whuts'un[30] yo honilh'en.
mountain top from-areal downward they-look-at-areal[31]

"Yests'e, dilk'un!" ni Datsancho. Huwuhudloh.[32]
deer you (1)-are-red said raven they-laughed

"Datsancho, dilhgus!" ni Yests'e.
raven you (1) are black he-said deer

Doochaza huwuhudloh.
once-again they-laughed

'Et 'awet "Yests'e, nkechun dalhjut lhe'unt'oh!"
then now deer your (1)-leg it-has-decayed it-looks-like

ni Datsancho. Huwuhudloh.
he-said raven they-laughed

Yests'e tube whuts'udutni[33].
deer really he-is-unhappy

'Et 'uyulhni: "Datsancho, nyun[34] n'untalkuk-i in'alh!"
then he-said raven you garbage you (1)-eat

Datsancho tube hunilch'e! Yests'e d̲z̲ulh k'ubeyutilhtal.
raven really he-got-angry deer mountain he-kicked-him-off

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30 This is the combination of the postposition *ts'un* with the areal object marker. The mountain top is treated as an area not as a single point.

31 This is a nice example of noun classification in the object of a verb. With a generic object, "they looked at" would be *hunilh'en*. Because what is looked at is an area, the areal form of the verb is used.

32 "they laughed" in its simplest form would be *hudloh*. *huwuhudloh* really means "they laughed at it". It includes the incorporated postposition *ghu* "at" with the areal object prefix *whu*. *whughu* becomes *huwu* as the result of several grammatical rules.

33 This is literally "he dislikes" with areal object, which is the expression for being unhappy. Similarly, to be happy is literally "he likes" with areal object.

34 As we have mentioned, a separate pronoun like *nyun* "you (1)" is unnecessary in Carrier. The subject of "to eat" is perfectly clear from the use of the 2nd person singular form of the verb. The pronoun is used here for emphasis, to contrast the raven, who eats garbage, with others, including the deer, who do not.

Nalts'ut-un[35] 'et dazsai.
where-he-fell-to-ground there he-died

'Et Datsancho yo whet'o.
there raven downward he-set-off-flying

Nyo yests'e yan'al.
down-there deer he-ate-it

Datsancho yests'e yanus 'uyoonli[36].
raven deer than-him he-is-clever

'Aw ooyelhe'ilts'ul[37].
not he-is-not-hungry

35 *nalts'ut* means "he fell to the ground". The suffix *-un* is the locative relativizing suffix. It turns "he fell to the ground" into "where he fell to the ground".

36 This is an example of the Carrier comparative construction. Comparisons of the "greater than" type make use of the postposition *-anus* "greater than". *yanus* consists of the combination of this postposition with the third person singular disjoint reference object marker *y*. "He is cleverer than him" is literally something like "he is clever greater than him." There is also a postposition for comparisons of inferiority: *-k'elh'ih*. "He is less clever than him" is: *yuk'elh'ih 'uyoonli*.

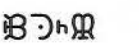
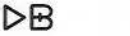
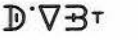
37 This is the negative form of "he is hungry". The word *'aw* "not" is not strictly necessary but is used here for emphasis.

Mini-Dictionary

Here is a small dictionary containing some of the most common and most culturally important Carrier words. Some words not included here will be found in the main text where particular types of vocabulary are discussed.

airplane	nut'o-i	ᑐᑌᐅ
ant	'adih	ᐧᐊᑐʰ
arm	'ugan	ᐧᐅᕮᑫ
axe	tsetselh	ᖱᖱᒐ
baby	chalhts'ul	ᕋᒐᖱᒪ
bad, it is	ntsi'	ᑫᖱᐧ
bannock	banuk	ᑕᑐᐟ
basket (small)	telh	ᑎᒐ
basket (large)	chalhyal	ᕋᒐᕒᒪ
bat (animal)	'ut'az	ᐧᐅᑕz
bay	tl'oh	ᒧᒪʰ
beaver	tsa	ᖱ
bed	lili	ᑫᑫ
bee	ts'ihna	ᖰʰᑕ
beer	hawus	<ᐳs
big, it is	ncha	ᑫᕋ
birch	k'i	ᖰ
bird	dut'ai	ᑐᑕᐅ
black, it is	dulhgus	ᑐᒐᕆs
black bear	sus	ᕆs
blue, it is	duldzan	ᑐᒪᒡᑫ
blueberries	mai	ᕮᐅ
board	dzihtel	ᒡʰᑎᒪ
boss	moodih	ᒪᑫʰ
bread	liba	ᑫᑕ
bug	goo'	ᗯᐧ
butter	musdoosghe	ᕆsᑌsᐅ
butterfly	tsangwelht'ah	ᖱᑫᐟᐳᒐᑕʰ
canoe	ts'i	ᖰ

cap	ts'oh	ᙢʰ
cariboo	whudzih	ᗒᘐʰ
Carrier person	dakelh	ᑕᗷᒃ
cat	boos	ᗻs
chair	kw'uts'uz̲da	vᗒᙢzᑕ
char	bit	ᗡᵀ
chicken	lugok	ᘁᙅᐟ
church	lugliz	ᘁᐟᘐz
clan crest	'unutsi	·ᐅᘁᙢ
clothing	naih	ᑕᐅʰ
coffee	lugafi	ᘁᕮɥᐅ
cottonwood	ts'itel	ᙢᗡᑊ
cow	musdoos	ᗾsᑌs
coyote	chuntulhi	ᙢᓄᗪᘐ
cricket	nulhdai	ᘁᒃᑕᐅ
deer	yests'e	ᘉsᙢ
doctor	yoobeduyun	ᑀᗡᘁᘉᓄ
dog	lhi	ᘐ
doorway	dati	ᑕᗡ
downstream	nda'	ᓄᑕ·
dragonfly	nuk'atun	ᘁᗢᗪᓄ
drum	tungule	ᗪᑌᐅᘐ
eagle, bald	ts̲ibalyan	ᙢᗡᑊᕮᓄ
ears	'udzo	·ᐅΩ
elk	yezih	ᘉᘐʰ
eulachon fish	slelho	sᘐΩ
eulachon oil	sleghe	sᘐᐅ
eyes	'una	·ᐅᑕ
father	'uba	·ᐅᗡ
feathers (breast)	ts'uz	ᙢz
fire	kwun	ᕀᗒᓄ
fireweed	khas̲	ᐊs
fish	lho	Ω
fish eggs (roe)	'uk'oon	·ᐅᙅᓄ

fisher	chunihcho	
flower	'indai	
fly (insect)	'us̲ ɬs̲z	
foot	'uke	
fork	be'ooget	
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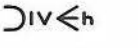
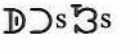
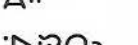
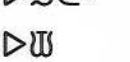
frog	dulkw'ah	
fur press	bedustl'us	
God	Yak'us̲da	
good, it is	nzoo	
goose	khoh	
grandfather	'utsiyan	
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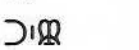
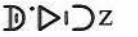
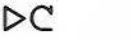
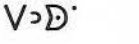
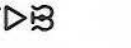
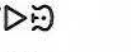
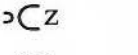
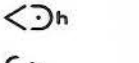
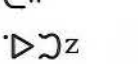
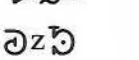
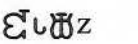
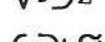
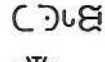
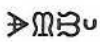
grass	tl'o	
green, it is	dults'o	
grizzly bear	shas̲	
gun	'ulhti'	
hair of head	'uts̲igha'	
hammer	be'ulduz	
hand	'ula	
happy, he is	hoont'i'	
head	'uts̲i	
heart	'udzi	
heavy, it is	ndaz̲	
hello	hadih	
here you are[38]	nah	
hide (animal skin)	'uzuz	
horse	yez̲tli	
house	yoh	
how?	nts'en'a	
hummingbird	tl'alhchooz̲	
husband	ki	
important, it is	diz̲ti'	

38 This is what you say when you hand someone something.

ice (over a surface)[39]	tun	ᗪᓄ
ice (piece)	lhum	ᒉᓯ
ice skates	benuts'uzoot	ᗷᒉᔓᑌᖶ
jacket	dzoot	ᔆᖶ
kidneys	'uts'uz	ᑉᐅᔓz
knife	lhuztih	ᒉzᗪʰ
kokanee	gesul	ᕮᕮᑊ
Labrador tea	ludi musjek	ᒉᑉ ᕮsᘐᐟ
lake	bunghun	ᗷᑌᐳᓄ
land	yun	ᘉᓄ
language	khuni	ᐅᑉ
leg	'ukechun	ᑉᐅᗷᔓᓄ
light, it is	ndza'	ᓄᑫˑ
liver	'uz̲ut	ᑉᐅᒉᖶ
lodgepole pine	chundoo	ᔓᓄᑌ
long, it is	nyiz̲	ᓄᘉz
loon	dadzi	ᑕᔆ
love me, you (1)	sk'eintsi'	sᔓᗷᐅᓄᔓˑ
love you (1), I	nk'essi'	ᓄᔓsᕮˑ
loves me, (s)he	sk'entsi'	sᔓᓄᔓˑ
lungs	'udis	ᑉᐅᑉs
lynx	wa$̲$i	ᐸᕮ
mallard duck	t'acho	ᑐᗐ
man	dune	ᒉᗫ
marten	chunih	ᔓᑉʰ
meat, dried	'ut$̲$ungi	ᑉᐅᔆᑌᐅ
medicine	yoo	ᘁ
milk	lilet	ᒉᒉᖶ
mink	techus	ᗪᔓs
mitts	bat	ᑐᖶ
money	sooniya	ᗯᑉᘓ
moose	duni	ᒉᑉ
mosquito	ts'ih	ᔆʰ

39 That is, on a lake, river, or road.

mother	'uloo	·ᐅᑌ
mountain	dz̲ulh	ᒉᑌ
mouth	'uz̲e	·ᐅᒉ
mustard	ts'oodunetsan	ᖳᑐᑎᖴᓯ
narrow, it is	ndat	ᓯᑕᐟ
no	'awundooh	·ᐊᐳᓯᑌᕼ
nose	'unintsis	·ᐅᒉᓯᖳs
okay	dugwe'	ᑐᐟᐳ·
one (generic)	'ilho	·ᐅᘐ
otter	tsis	ᖳs
owl	mus̲dzi	ᖵsᒉ
paddle	chus	ᖳs
pants	tl'as̲u s̲	ᒪᖵs
pepper	sulhts'i	ᖵᑌᖳ
please hand me	de'	ᑎ·
police officer	neilhchuk-un	ᑎᐅᑌᖳᐟ–ᐅᓯ
poplar	t'ughus	ᗪᐅs
porcupine	duch'ukw	ᑐᘁᕀ
potatoes	lubudak	ᑘᗪᑕᐟ
priest	lubret	ᑘᓗᖇᐅᖶ
quickly	'a	·ᐊ
rabbit	goh	ᙅᕼ
rain	chan	ᖳᓯ
red, it is	dulk'un	ᑐᐞᖳᓯ
river	'ukoh	·ᐅᙅᕼ
road	ti	ᑎ
robin	s̲oh	ᙅᕼ
rock	ts̲e	ᖳ
rope	tl'oolh	ᒪᖷᑌ
Ruffed grouse	'utsut	·ᐅᖳᖶ
salt	lisel	ᑘᖵᐞ
saskatoon berries	k'emai'	ᖳᕮᐅ·
saw	bedugut-i	ᗷᑐᖵᖶ–ᐅ
screwdriver	bene'dughuz-i	ᗷᑎ·ᑐᐅz–ᐅ

seagull	besk'i	
shaman	duyun	
shirt	dzoot'an	
shoes	kegon	
short, it is	ndukw	
sick, he is	nduda	
skirt	luzook	
skunk	hoonliz	
slowly	nanilhtsa	
small, it is	ntsool	
smoke	lhut	
snake	tl'ughus	
snow, blowing	tsil	
snow, on ground	yus	
snowshoes	'aih	
soapberries	ningwus	
sockeye salmon	talo	
socks	ketul	
song	shun	
soup	tazul	
spear	daget	
spider	whusotsung	
spoon	kechub	
spruce	ts'oo	
squirrel	tsaluk	
stomach	'ubut	
store	be'ooket-un	
student	hodul'eh-un	
strawberries	'indze	
sucker (fish)	goosbai	
sugar	soogah	
table	ludab	
tasty, it is	ulhki	
tea	ludi	

teacher	hodulh'eh-un	ᐱᑐᒃᐅᕼᐅᑲ
territory	keyoh	ᐷᘁᕼ
three (generic)	ta	ᑕ
tree	duchun	ᑐᙢᑲ
trout	duk'ai	ᑐᙣᐅ
two (generic)	nanki	ᑕᑲᙣ
upstream	noo'	ᑌ·
very	tube	ᗪᗫ
wall	sih	ᔓʰ
water	too	ᑌ
what?	di	ᑐ
when (non-past)?	nkede	ᑲᙣᑐ
when (past)?	nkeda'	ᑲᙣᑕ·
where?	nts'e	ᑲᙢ
Whiskey jack	goozih	ᗯᑐᕼ
white, it is	lhyul	ᒃᘁᐞ
who?	mbe	ᑫᗫ
why?	diha	ᑐᐸ
wide, it is	ntel	ᑲᗪᐞ
wife	'at	·ᐊᖮ
willow	k'edli	ᙣᖘᑐ
window	dadint'aẕ	ᑕᑐ·ᑲᑕz
wine	ts'ekootoo'	ᙢᙣᗯᑌ·
wing	'ut'a	·ᐅᑕ
wolf	yus	ᘁs
wolverine	noostel	ᑌsᗪᐞ
woman	ts'eke	ᙢᙣ
woodpecker	duchundult'o	ᑐᙢᑲᑐᐞᑫ
yellow, it is	dultl'us	ᑐᐞᖘs
yes	a	ᐊ
young man	chilh	ᙢᒃ
young woman	t'et	ᗫᖮ

Who Speaks What

The following table gives the primary language and in some cases major dialect group spoken by each band in the Carrier region. It is not uncommon for people to speak languages in addition to their own band's primary language. For example, many Carrier speakers from the Northwest end of Stuart Lake can speak Babine.

Alexandria First Nation	Chilcotin
Burns Lake Band	Carrier (Fraser-Nechako)
Cheslatta Carrier Nation	Carrier (Fraser-Nechako)
Hagwilget Village	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Witsuwit'en)
Kwadacha (Fort Ware)	Sekani
Lake Babine Band	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Babine)
Lheidli T'enneh	Carrier (Fraser-Nechako)
Lhoosk'uz (Kluskus)	Carrier (Blackwater)
Lhtakoh (Red Bluff)	Carrier (Blackwater)
McLeod Lake Indian Band	Sekani
Moricetown Indian Band	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Witsuwit'en)
Nadleh Whut'en (Nautley)	Carrier (Fraser-Nechako)
Nak'azdli (Necoslie)	Carrier (Stuart Lake)
Ndazko (Nazko)	Carrier (Blackwater)
Nee-Tahi-Buhn	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Witsuwit'en)
Skin Tayi	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Witsuwit'en)
Stellat'en (Stellaquo)	Carrier (Fraser-Nechako)
Saik'uz First Nation (Stony Creek)	Carrier (Fraser-Nechako)
Takla Lake First Nation[40]	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Babine)
Tl'azt'en Nation	Carrier (Stuart Lake)
Ulkatcho First Nation[41]	Carrier (Blackwater)
Wet'suwet'en First Nation (Broman Lake)	Babine-Witsuwit'en (Witsuwit'en)
Yekooche (Portage)	Carrier (Stuart Lake)

40 Takla people historically spoke both Babine and Sekani, but few Sekani speakers remain. Some Takla people could also speak Gitksan, but the use of this language too has died out except for the occasional use of a few Gitksan phrases on formal occasions by members of certain families.

41 Although Carrier is the primary language, many Ulkatcho people also speak Chilcotin.

Further Reading

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Resources

The Yinka Déné Language Institute is an organization devoted to Carrier language and culture. It offers a variety of publications and materials including dictionaries and illustrated children's books. Information about these, and about the language and culture, is available at the YDLI web site: http://ydli.org. Some materials may be downloaded at no cost from the web site.

Yinka Déné Language Institute.
646 Stony Creek Road
Vanderhoof BC V0J 3A1 Canada
250-561-5848, local 5460 (telephone)
250-561-5874 (FAX)
webmaster@ydli.org

A variety of materials are available from the Carrier Linguistic Society (formerly the Carrier Linguistic Committee):

Carrier Linguistic Society
Box 928
Fort Saint James, BC V0J 1P0 Canada

The Quesnel Museum hosts the Footprints in Stone web site, which contains information about the history and culture of Blackwater Carrier people in a choice of English, French, and Carrier (Nazko dialect):

http://www.quesnelmuseum.ca/Museum%20Website/

About the author

Bill Poser received a B.A. in Linguistics (with Classics) from Harvard College in 1979 and a Ph.D. in Linguistics (with Electrical Engineering) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1985. He was a member of the Linguistics department at Stanford University from 1983–1994 and of the First Nations Studies department of the University of Northern British Columbia from 1994–1998. He has also taught for the College of New Caledonia, the University of Arizona, the University of British Columbia, the University of New Mexico, the University of Pennsylvania, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Northern Arizona University, Swarthmore College and Simon Fraser University, and has worked for the ATR Automatic Interpreting Telephony Laboratory in Osaka and the Linguistic Data Consortium in Philadelphia.

He has been studying the Carrier language since 1992. He is a Research Consultant to the Yinka Dene Language Institute and has worked for YDLI, various bands, and the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council. From 1999–2001 he was Acting Executive Director of YDLI.

Within linguistics his particular areas of interest are phonetics, phonology, writing systems and the methodology and history of historical linguistics. In addition to Carrier and other languages of British Columbia, he is interested in the languages of Northeast Asia, especially Japanese. He is one of the founding co-editors of the Northwest Journal of Linguistics (www.sfu.ca/nwjl).

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