The Elaboration of Aspectual Categories: Central Alaskan Yup'ik

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Abstract

Central Alaskan Yup'ik provides a rich example of some kinds of elaboration that may develop in an aspectual system. It exhibits a lavish expansion of habitual categories that indicate various kinds of repetition of events over a period of time, as well as repetitive categories that identify events consisting of multiple sub-actions. It shows us, in addition, a less well known but flourishing mechanism by which aspectual systems may be elaborated: the extensive amalgamation of existing aspectual markers to yield new categories.

0. Introduction

Good progress has been made over the past quarter century in our understanding of the nature and evolution of aspectual systems. Much has been learned both about the kinds of aspectual distinctions that recur cross-linguistically, as detailed for example in Comrie 1976, and about the diachronic pathways along which aspectual markers tend to develop. Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994 present a rich chronicle of the kinds of lexical items that evolve into aspectual affixes and the subsequent evolution of their aspectual functions. At the same time, more detailed and sophisticated descriptions of individual languages are revealing just how varied aspectual systems can be. As more is learned about the range of systems that occur, we are coming to appreciate the variety of mechanisms underlying their development.

In what follows, an elaborate aspectual system will be described from Central Alaskan Yup'ik, a language of the Eskimo-Aleut family. Over 40 aspectual distinctions are encoded within the verbal morphology. A survey of some of the markers allows us to see the kinds of distinctions that can comprise a system, and a special mechanism by which such systems can be elaborated in polysynthetic languages.
Central Alaskan Yup'ik shares a basic morphological structure with all of the Eskimoan languages stretching across the Arctic, from Siberia to Greenland. Words are either inflectable (nouns and verbs) or uninflectable (particles). Inflectable words consist of a single root (traditionally termed a base), optional derivational suffixes (postbases), and an inflectional suffix complex (ending).

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Tense and aspect distinctions are all expressed by postbases. (The inflectional suffix complex consists of a mood marker and a pronominal suffix referring to the core arguments of the clause.) The tense system is relative rather than absolute. Tense markers situate events with respect to a reference point that may be either the moment of speaking or the moment under discussion. Within a narrative, for example, the past tense suffix -llru- indicates a time before the timeline of the narrative. Thus Yup’ik verbs with no tense marking will typically be translated as past tense in English when they are part of a narration of past events: the events they denote are simultaneous with the moment under discussion. The future tense suffix -cige- similarly indicates a time after either the moment of speech or narrative time. It is thus translated ‘will’ in some contexts but ‘would’ in others.

1. Some Yup’ik aspectual categories

Yup’ik is particularly rich in habitual distinctions, marking events that recur over a period of time. The Yup’ik material cited here comes primarily from Elizabeth Charles Ali, a Yup’ik speaker from Bethel in southwestern Alaska. Her brother, George Charles, has also provided material and helpful discussion. The glosses are those that have occurred in translations.¹

- lar- ‘customarily, regularly, usually, always’

Ayalartuq maa-ggun.
ayag-lar-tu-q maa-ggun
go-customarily-INTR.INDIC-3S this.way-VIALIS
‘He usually goes this way; he goes this way regularly, customarily.’

Ataucirrarmek nerlartua.
atauci-rrar-mek nere-lar-tu-q
one-just-ABL eat-customarily-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He usually eats just one.’
-tu- ‘regularly, generally, customarily, habitually, always’

Ayatuuq.
ayag-tu-u-q
go—customarily-INTR.INDIC.3s
‘Indeed he does go.’

Qanemcituluni-llu
qanemci-tu-lu-ni=llu
tell—customarily-SUBORDINATIVE.3s=too youth-former-3Rs/3.ABL
‘And she’s always telling stories about her youth.’

Nerlayaaquq
era-laryaaqe-u-q
go—usually-INTR.INDIC.3s work-intermittently-a.little-SUB.3s
‘He usually eats after working for just a little while …’
... kaigurattani.
... kaig-urar-tu-a-mi
... be.hungry-continue—customarily—CONSEQUENTIAL-3R.S
‘… because he is always hungry.’

-naur— ‘customarily, habitually, usually, would’

Ayagnaurtuq
era-laryaaqe-u-q
go—usually-INTR.INDIC.3s
‘He would go by boat; he travels by boat.’

Merlaurtuq
mer-naur-tu-q
drink—usually-INTR.INDIC.3s hot-NOM-ABL
‘He would drink something hot.’

-aqe— ‘habitually, repeatedly, usually, always, constantly’

Ayagaquq
pavani
ayag-aqe-u-q
pav-ani
go—usually—INTR.INDIC.3s
‘He has always gone up there, away from the river; he would go there all the time.’

Mer’aquq
mer-aqe-u-q
drink—habitually-INTR.INDIC.3s
‘He would drink tea all day; he drinks tea all day long.’
-lgu- ‘always’

ayalguuq yuilqumun.
ayag-lgu-u-q yuilquq-mun
go-always-INTR.INDIC-3S wilderness-all

‘He always goes to the wilderness.’

ANELGQU UNUGGWI.
ANE-lgu-u-uq unuk-mi
go.out-always-INTR.INDIC-3S night-LOC

‘He always goes out at night.’

-qau(r)- ‘now and then’

Nasauluq maqivigmi qiarurqaqurtuq
nasauluq maqi-vik-mi qia-rur-qaqur-tu-q
girl steambath-place-LOC cry-poor.dear-now.and.then-INTR.INDIC-3S

‘The girl has been crying in the steambath [now and then] ...’

... ilulliqengami.
... ilulliqe-nga-mi
... feel.sorrowful-CONSEQUENTIAL-3R
‘... because she has been so sad.’

Nepaunani uitaqcarlria
nepa-naite-na-ni uite-aqe-yar-lria
noise-without-SUBORDINATIVE-3S remain-habitually-would-PARTICIPIAL.3S

‘She sits quietly, ...’

... cikmeqaqurlugluni.
... cikme-qaqurllugJu-ni
... close.eyes-now.and.then-poor-SUBORDINATIVE-3S
‘... closing her eyes now and then.’

-ngar- ‘chronically’

Taunalkuk iqlungartuq!
tauna-lkuk iqlu-ngar-tu-q
that-no.good lie-chronically-INTR.INDIC-3S

‘That one lies habitually!’

Tulukarucilleqam mantengartuq.
tulukaruq-cilleq-am mani-ngar-tu-q
raven-bad.old-worthless-EMPHATIC here-chronically-INTR.INDIC-3S

‘That despicable old Raven is making a habit of remaining here.’
-tar-  ‘tend by nature or mood to ... a lot’
Qetunra  alingtartuq.
qetunra-a alinge-tar-tu-q.
son-3s/3s afraid-a.lot-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘His son is always afraid.’

Ingna  angun takartartuq;
ingna  angun takar-tar-tu-q
over.there man respect-much-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘That man is shy, ...’

... aipawa  ilangcirtartuluni.
... aipaq=wa  ilangciq-tar-tu-lu-ni.
... spouse=EMPHATTC pay.attention-much-customarily-SUBORDINATIVE-3s
‘... while his wife is extroverted and talks easily to people.’

Some suffixes specify repetition.

-(t)ur-  ‘with purposeful repeated action’
Neq’ilurturtuq
neqe-liuq-tur-tu-q
fish-be.occupied.with-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3s summer-Loc
‘She always cuts fish during the summer.’

Merturtuq
mer-tur-tu-q
drink-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3s tea-ABL
‘He always drinks tea.’

-qur-  ‘repeated purposeful action’
Anqurtuq
ane-qur-tu-q
go.out-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3P fish-ABL.P
‘He moved the fish out (from where they were cut out to the fishrack)’

[The fish would be done for the entire winter, perhaps 200 pike, so that
repeated action would be necessary.]

Itqurtuqiter-qur-tu-q
enter-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3s cut.wood-ABL.P
‘He’s bringing in firewood.’
Itqurtuq pelatekamun.

ite-qur-tu-q pelatekaq-mun

move.in-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3S tent-ALLATIVE

‘He moved into the tent (with all the comings and goings of moving).’

Tarciqurtuq.
tarci-qur-tu-q

bring.in-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3S

‘He keeps on winning.’

-a/-aa/-ar- ‘repeatedly’

Qavaraquq qutugluni qastuluni.
qavar-a-u-q qutug-lu-ni qas-tu-lu-ni

sleep-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3S snore-SUB-3S loud-much-SUB-3S

‘He is dozing off, snoring.’

Cenirtaayunqegtu-g atam.
ceniree-a-unqeg-tu-q-gguq atam.

visit-repeatedly-love-INTR.INDIC-3S=EVIDENTIAL see

‘You see, she loves to visit, and often.’

-rqu- ‘one after another, time after time’

Ayakuut.
ayag-rqu-u-t

go-one.after.another-INTR.INDIC-3p

‘They left one after another.’

Iqluquuq.
iqlu-qu-u-q

lie-one.after.another-INTR.INDIC-3S

‘He is telling lies.’

Other suffixes combine duration and repetition.

-tur- ‘repeatedly, for some duration’

Ayagturaruuq kuigkun.
ayag-tur-ar-tu-q kuik-kun

go-repeatedly-keep.on-INTR.INDIC-3S river-VIALIS

‘He always travels by way of the river; he would go and go and go.’

-mar- ‘for a while, more than once’

Keggmarai.
kegg-mar-a-i

bite-awhile-TR.INDIC-3S/3P

‘He is repeatedly biting them.’
Tutmarai.

tut-mar-a-i
step.on-repeatedly-INTR.INDIC-3S/3P
‘He is repeatedly stepping on them.’

Continuation can also be expressed with (g/t)ur(ar)-.

-(g/t)ur(ar)- ‘keep on, continue’

Ner'ur'tuq.
nere-ur-tu-q
eat-continue-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He keeps on eating.’

Noteworthy duration can be specified with durative suffixes -uma- and -rpakar-.

-uma- ‘to have been for a long time’

Ayauumaq.
ayag-uma-u-q
go-have.for.long-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He is gone, has been gone for a long time.’

Nerumaauq.
nere-uma-u-q
eat-long.time-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He ate, has been eating for a long time.’

-rpakar- ‘so long’

Aturpakarluni.
atur-pakar-lu-ni
sing-long-SUBORDINATIVE-3S
‘He sang for so long.’

Anglilli ayagpakarpaa!
anglilli ayag-pakar-paa
too much go-so.long-how
‘Oh how long he has been away!’

Particularly brief action can be indicated by momentaneous suffixes.

-(g)ar(ar)te- ‘briefly, suddenly’

Ayagartuq.
ayag-ar-tu-q
go-suddenly-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He left suddenly.’
Yurarartuq.
yurar-ar-tu-q
dance-suddenly-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘All of a sudden he began to dance.’
‘He danced for just a brief time.’

-qar/-qer- ‘briefly, merely, suddenly’
Ayakartuq.
ayag-qar-tu-q
go-suddenly-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘He just left and quickly at that, he fled.’

Teguqerluku.
tegu-ger-lu-ku
take-suddenly-SUBORDINATIVE-3s
‘He grabbed it.’

Basic present tense progressives are typically unmarked for tense or aspect, but one suffix can emphasize the progressive aspect of the event in progress.

-mciur(ar)- ‘a little at a time’
Neremciurtuq arnaq.
nere-mciur-tu-q arnaq
eat-a. little. at. a. time-INTR.INDIC-3s woman
‘The woman is eating a little at a time.’

Meremciunguatuq.
mer-mciur-nge-u-ru-tu-q
drink-a. little. at. a. time-begin-without.serious.purpose-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘He is beginning to drink; he is pretending to drink.’

Other suffixes focus on phases of events, their inception or completion.

-nge- INCEPTIVE
Kainguq.
kaig-nge-u-q
be.hungry-begin-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘He is getting hungry.’

Nernguq taryaqvarmek.
nere-nge-u-q taryaqaq-mek
eat-begin-INTR.INDIC-3s king.salmon-ABL
‘He is beginning to eat king salmon.’
-qataar- ‘begin slowly’

Ner’qataartuq waniwa.
nere-qataar-tu-q waniwa
eat-begin.slowly-INTR.INDC-3S now
‘He is going to slowly start eating.’

-umari- COMPLETIVE

Ayuumariuq tuai.
ayag-umari-u-q tuai
go-finish-INTR.INDC-3S finally
‘He has already gone.’

Merumaria kisneq.
mer-umari-a-a kisneq
drink-finish-TR.INDC-3S/3S broth
‘He has finished drinking the broth.’

Various other statives and perfects also exist. As can be seen from this sample, an impressive number of aspetctual categories have been grammaticized in the language.

2. Factors underlying the large inventory

We would not expect to find such an extensive inventory of aspectual markers within a language if they were as similar as their glosses might suggest. As we might expect, they differ in several ways.

There are of course semantic differences. The habitual suffixes -lar-, -tu-, -naur-, -aqe-, -lgur-, -qaqu(r)-, -ngar-, and -tar- indicate recurring events over a certain period of time. Repetitive suffixes -ar-, -qur-, -a(a)/-ar-, -rqu-, and -mar- describe an event consisting of repeated actions. The continuative -(g/t)ur(ar/-)- specifies continuation of an action. The duratives -uma- and -rpakar- focus on the length of time of an event, while the momentaneous -(g)ar(ar)/-te- and -qar- focus on brevity. Phasal suffixes such as the inceptive -nge- and completive -umari- focus on different parts of the event. Within these categories certain finer semantic distinctions are discernible. Among the habitual suffixes, differing degrees of frequency can be seen: -lgur- ‘always’ -naur- ‘usually’, -qaqu(r)- ‘now and then’. Mrs. Ali notes that the suffix -tu- ‘customarily’ can have a connotation of confirmation or insistence: ayatuuq ‘Yes indeed, he does go.’ The suffix -ngar- ‘chronically’ labels recurring action but implies a negative value judgment: iqlungartuq ‘he lies’. The habitual -tar- adds an underlying cause: ‘tend by nature or mood’. The repetitive suffix -tur(ar)/-ur(ar/-)-qur(ar)- indicates not only repetition but purposeful action. Mrs.
Ali explains that this suffix appears, for example, in the verb *neq'liurturatuq* ‘she always cuts fish [during the summer]’ because “putting up fish for the winter requires several purposeful actions. First the fish is caught, then it is brought back to the fish processing area, where it is cleaned, filleted, cut into strips, cut into ‘blankets’, salted, hung on the fishracks, dried, smoked, and finally put away.”

The suffixes differ in the lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic contexts in which they appear. The suffix -*tar-* appears only with roots expressing kinds of feelings, such as ‘feel shy or respectful’, ‘feel compassionate’, ‘feel curious’, ‘feel afraid’, ‘be ticklish’, ‘forget’, ‘laugh’, and a few others. Such contexts are of course associated with certain shades of meaning. The habitual suffix -*aqe-* is especially pervasive in narrative, occurring often in subordinative verbs, verbs describing events that are pragmatically connected over a certain stretch of discourse. Jacobson points out that the habitual suffix -*naar-* is used ‘on the main verb of a sentence having a subordinate verb in the contingent mood: *Unugaqtan matarqaarluni inarrnaurtuq*. ‘Whenever night fell, after he took off his clothes, he would go to bed.’ (1984:506).

In keeping with their status as derivational suffixes, the markers differ considerably in their productivity. Some appear with a wide variety of verbs and are easily combined with new ones, while others are barely productive if at all. Jacobson (1984) reports that -*ngar-* ‘chronically’, -*tur-* ‘for some duration / repeatedly’, -*mar-* ‘for awhile, more than once’, and -*a/-aa/-ar-* ‘repeatedly’ are no longer productive. Fortescue, Jacobson & Kaplan (1994) cite a suffix -*ter-* ‘repeatedly’ with cognates in other Eskimoan languages that appears in only one Yup’ik stem: *anerteqe-* ‘breathe, live’.

Another difference among seemingly similar suffixes is dialectal. As noted by Jacobson (1994:128), the suffixes -*lar-* and -*ta-* have essentially the same meaning: ‘regularly, generally, customarily, usually, often’. Both occur with a wide variety of verbs. Jacobson reports, however, that -*tu-* occurs more frequently in certain dialects (Nelson Island, Nunivak, Hooper Bay Chevak), giving for example, *yuratuq* ‘he (regularly) Eskimo-dances’ instead of, or as an alternate to, *yuralartuq*.

We know that the most common sources of grammatical affixes are independent words. Within the Eskimo-Aleut family, however, it is not generally possible to recover the lexical sources of suffixes. Most of the modern Yup’ik aspectual suffixes are reflexes of forms that were already aspectual suffixes in Proto-Eskimo, with essentially their present meanings, as can be seen in the impressive Comparative Eskimo Dictionary by Fortescue, Jacobson, & Kaplan (1994). Some of their ranges of meaning do suggest earlier root sources. The suffix -*nge-*
serves as an inceptive after verb roots (nere-nge- ‘eat-begin’), but contributes the meaning ‘acquire’ after noun roots (angya-nge- ‘boat-acquire’). Its concrete meaning with noun roots suggests an origin as a verb root. The meanings of a number of other aspectual suffixes suggest origins in adverbials, such as -lgu- ‘always’ and -qarte- ‘briefly, suddenly’. Because of the profusion of adverbial suffixes in the language, it is not a simple matter to delineate the aspectual system. Such suffixes as -tur- ‘repeatedly’ seem relatively aspectual, -qar- ‘briefly’ somewhat less so, and -llag- ‘suddenly and surprisingly’ even less.

The Yup’ik inventory of suffixes is enormous. In his magnificent dictionary, Jacobson (1984) lists over 450 postbases (derivational suffixes) alone. The affixation of so many markers, each serving to derive certain lexical items, may have facilitated the enrichment of the aspectual system. As derivational suffixes, the aspect markers take on certain shades of meaning from the stems with which they cooccur, like -tar- ‘tend by nature or mood’ with verbs of feeling. Their status as derivational suffixes has contributed to the enrichment of the inventory as well in another way as well.

3. An alternative route to new distinctions

As derivational suffixes, many of the aspectual markers illustrated above can cooccur within single verbs. Some examples of cooccurrence can be seen below.

**Akngiaturalria**

akngir-a-turlria
be.in.pain-repeatedly-continually-PARTICIPIAL.3s see.
‘See, he continues to be in pain.’

**Piuamalria**

piug-a-mar-lria
walk-repeatedly-awhile-PARTICIPIAL.3s
day-big
‘She walked around all day long (here and there).’

**Uitaurarturalria.**

ute-aurar-tur-a-lria
remain-continue-DURATIVE-repeatedly-PARTICIPIAL.3s
‘He continued to stay still.’

**Ner’eqcaararturalria.**

nere-qcaar-tur-a-lria
eat-try.with.difficulty-continually-repeatedly-PARTICIPIAL.3s
‘He continues to eat with difficulty.’
Ayalegularpakar-paa!
ayag-ler-lar-pakar-paa
go-willfully-regularly-so.long-how
‘Oh how often he goes away, and for so long!’

Ayaumalartuq.
ayag-uma-lar-tu-q
go-long.time-customarily-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He customarily goes for long periods of time.’

Ayaumanaurtuq.
ayag-uma-naur-tu-q
go-long.time-customarily-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He would be gone for a long time.’

Utaqauralala--llru--ut.
utaq-aura-la--llru--u-t
wait-continue.long-customarily-PAST-INTR.INDIC-3P
‘They used to keep on waiting.’

(parenants waiting for child to return from boarding school)

Such cooccurrence is the diachronic source of a large number of aspectual categories. Within a number of modern markers, certain components can be discerned. Jacobson (1984) analyzes them as single markers synchronically, sequences that would be selected by speakers as units for new derivation. The analysis is convincing; meanings of the complex forms often do not coincide precisely with the semantic sums of their parts, the components show invariant ordering, and they often exhibit idiosyncratic patterns of phonological fusion. Examples of such complex markers can be seen below.

-laryaaqe- ‘usually but not now’
-lar- ‘customarily’ + -yaaqe- ‘in vain’

Ayalaraaquq
ayag-laryaaqe-u-q
go-usually.but.not.now-INTR.INDIC-3S
this.way-VIALIS
‘Indeed, he usually goes this way.’

Tuai’gg calilaryaaqe-ria
lua=ggga cali-laryaaqe-ria
well=because work-usually.but.not.now-PARTICIPIAL.3S
here
‘Well, it’s because he usually works here...’
... tauggam wani-rpak cataituq.
... tauggam wani-rpak ca-ite-u-q
... however here-large thing-lack-INTR.INDIC-3S ‘... but he’s gone today.’

-ner- ‘habitually a lot’
-neq- NOMINALIZER + -tu- ‘have much’
Yurarnertuur-atam
yurar-ner-utu-q=atam
dance-habitually.a.lot-INTR.INDIC-3S=look! woman
‘The woman always dances a lot.’

[...] qavanertuum
[...] qavar-ner-tu-a-mi
[...] sleep-habitually.a.lot-CONSEQUENTIAL-3R.s
‘[That man travels constantly, but his son never goes] because he always sleeps too late.’

-nerkite- ‘habitually a little’
-neq- NOMINALIZER + -kite- ‘have little’
Ayanerkitu-g
ayag-nerkite-tu-q=guuq
go-habitually.little-INTR.INDIC-3S=EVID see that.one
‘You see, that man rarely travels, travels very little.’

Mer’nerkiturllugtuq
mer-nerkite-tur-llug-tu-q
drink-habitually.little-continuously-poor-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He could only drink (weakly) a little at a time,...’
... igessciigali
... ige-te-ciigate-a-mi
... swallow-cause-unable-CONSEQ-3Rs
‘... because he could not swallow.’

-rr- ‘constantly’
-rlak- ‘major’ + -nginar- ‘merely, with no attendant complications’
Ayarrlainalartuq
ayag-rrlainar-lar-tu-q
go-constantly-habitually-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He travels constantly.’
"Quit making noise!", he said.

-qaq- ‘now and then, intermittently’
-qar- ‘briefly’ + -aq- ‘usually, repeatedly, habitually’

Angun ayakaluni
angun ayag-qaq- lu-ni
man go-intermittently-SUBORDINATIVE-3S
‘The man would travel now and then . . .’

... carrani unitealuki.
... ca-rraq-ni unite-aq- lu-ki.
... thing-few-3R/3P leave-habitually-SUBORDINATIVE-/3P
‘... leaving his few possessions behind.’

-(g)aur(ar)- ‘continue over a long period of time’
-a- ‘repeatedly’ + -(g/t)ur(ar)- ‘continue over a period of time’

Uitaratruq.
uita-aurar-tu-q.
stay-continue-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He is staying still.’

Aqmegauratruq.
aqume-gaur-tu-q
sit-continue-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘She is continuing to sit.’

-yaurciique- ‘start and continue’
-yaurte- ‘learn to, get used to, be able’ + -ciq- FUTURE

Ayagyaurciiquen cam ilini.
ayag-yaurciique-u-ten cam ilini
go-start.and.continue-INTR.INDIC-2S some sometime
‘You will begin to travel sometime.’

Qanrucaurciiquq atataku.
qanrute-yaurciique-u-q atataku
talk-start.and.continue-INTR.INDIC-3S tonight
‘He will start talking tonight.’
-nrir- ‘no longer, stop’
-nee- NOMINALIZER + -ngir- ‘remove’

Nerinirituq.
neri-nrir-tu-q eat-stop-INTR.INDIC-3S
‘He has stopped eating.’

A number of markers have developed from fusion with negatives.

-yuite- ‘never, habitually not’
-yu- ‘customarily well’ + -ngite- ‘not’

Ayagyuituq tamaavet.
ayag-yuite-u-q tamaa-vet
go-never-INTR.INDIC-3S that-ALLATIVE
‘He never goes that way.’

Mer’yuitugg atam saayumek.
mer-yuite-u-q=gguq atam saayug-mek
drink-never-INTR.INDIC-3S=EVID see tea-ABL
‘You see, he never drinks tea.’

-yuirute- ‘no longer
-yu- ‘customarily well’ + -ngirute- ‘no longer’

Ayagyuirutuq maaggun.
ayag-yuirute-u-q maa-ggun
go-no.longer-INTR.INDIC-3S this.way-ALLATIVE
‘He no longer goes this way.’

Mer’yuirutuq kuviamek.
mer-yuirute-u-q kuviaq-mek
drink-no.longer-INTR.INDIC-3S coffee-ABL
‘He no longer drinks coffee.’

-ksaitelar- ‘never have’
-ksaite- ‘not have yet’ + -lar- ‘customarily’

Ayaksaitelartug avavet.
ayag-ksaitelar-tu-q ava-vet
go-never-INTR.INDIC-3S out.there-ALLATIVE
‘He has never gone out there.’

Nereksaitelartuq tamakunek.
neri-ksaitelar-tu-q tamaku-nek
eat-never-INTR.INDIC-3S those-ABL.PL
‘He never eats those things.’
-nanrir- ‘stop forever, cease, no more’
-na- ‘in order to’ + -nrir- ‘no longer’

tuai taquq tagenanrirtuq.
tuai taq-u-q tage-nanrir-tu-q
well quit-INTR.INDIC-3s go-up-cease-INTR.INDIC-3s
‘So, he has stopped, he will no longer go inland.’

Calinanrirtuq maani.
cali-nanrir-tu-q maa-ni
work-cease-INTR.INDIC-3s here-LOC
‘She is no longer working here.’

Like the simplex markers, the aspect markers formed from the amalgamation of suffixes can cooccur with other aspecual suffixes.

Qavanerkiturlugtuq
qavar-nerkite-tur-llug-tu-q
sleep-habitually.little-continuously-poor-INTR.INDIC-3s
... arenasagacuaq.
... arnaq-yagaq-cuaq
... woman-dear.little-little
‘The dear little old woman usually sleeps very little.’

Kaigrlinalartuqam tulukaruk.
kaig-rllainar-lar-tu-q=am tulukaruk
hungry-constantly-habitually-intr.indic-3s=EMPH raven
‘Raven is constantly hungry, asking for food.’

As can be seen, the inventory of Yup’ik aspecual markers has been substantially increased by the amalgamation of sequences of existing suffixes. A similar process involving other affixes in Greenlandic is described in Fortescue (1980). The fusion may have been facilitated by the extensive polysynthesis of the language, in particular the derivational status of the aspecual markers. As derivational suffixes, the markers not only cooccur, they are also committed to memory as parts of lexical items. Both Mrs. Ali and Mr. Charles frequently comment on whether or not they have heard particular combinations of roots and aspect markers, even specifying just when they heard them, rather than simply judging them as grammatical or ungrammatical. Particularly interesting is the fact that sequences of suffixes may take on an identity as simplex markers in their own right, independently of the roots with which they are lexicalized.
4. Conclusion

Central Alaskan Yup’ik provides a rich example of some kinds of elaboration that may develop in an aspectual system. It exhibits a lavish expansion of habitual categories that indicate various kinds of repetition of events over a period of time, as well as repetitive categories that identify events consisting of multiple sub-actions. It shows us, in addition, a less well known but flourishing mechanism by which aspectual systems may be elaborated: the extensive amalgamation of existing aspectual markers to yield new categories.

Note

Examples are presented here in the practical orthography developed by the Alaskan Native Language Center and in use throughout the region. There are plain stops p, t, k, q (IPA [p, t, k]), voiced voiced fricatives v, l, y, g, r [v or w, l, y, g, r]; voiceless fricatives v, l, y, g, r, r [l, y, g, r]; voiceless nasals m, n, ng [m, n, ng], and voiceless labio-velars respectively, and ur and urr voiced and voiceless labio-velars. Fricatives are automatically devoiced adjacent to a stop or voiceless fricative, so this voicelessness is not represented in the orthography. Prime vowels i, u, and a have their approximate IPA values except that they are lowered adjacent to uvulars. Orthographic e represents schwa [ə].

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