THE PERFECTIVE–IMPERFECTIVE OPPOSITION IN KASHAYA

(with comparative comments on Southern Pomo and on Pomoan)

Robert L. Oswalt

INTRODUCTION. Many verb roots in Kashaya are innately PERFECTIVE and refer to an instantaneous act or to one moment in an act or event of longer duration. Other verb roots are innately IMPERFECTIVE and refer to a state or event or act of longer duration. Other verb roots are NEUTRAL to the distinction. Whatever the ASPECT of the verb root, it is always possible to derive from it a verb stem of the opposite aspect; in fact, as will be illustrated later, it is possible through a series of suffixes to switch successively more complex derivative stems back and forth between the two aspects.

INFLECTIONAL SUFFIXES. In addition to aspect manifested at the verb root level, and with many derivational suffixes, there are six inflectional suffixes that display aspect. Certain of these suffixes can be added only to perfective and neutral verbs; others only to imperfective and neutral. When added to neutral roots or stems, these inflectional suffixes determine the aspect of the final construct. The aspect of various verb roots and stems can be diagnosed by their privileges of occurrence with these inflectional suffixes, which are listed in 1–6 below. The unusual morphophonemic symbols used here and in later examples are defined at the end of the article.

1. Imperfective: ـین Simultaneous, Co-referential
2. Imperfective: ـهم Simultaneous, Dis-referential.
3. Perfective: ـیک Visual
4. Imperfective: ـیک Visual-Factual
5. Perfective: ـملا Performative-Perfective
6. Imperfective: ـلہلا Performative-Imperfective

Referential suffixes: The first two suffixes are part of the switch reference system (Oswalt 1983) and indicate that the state, event, or act denoted by the verb to which they are suffixed is simultaneous with that of the main clause of the sentence and the two verbs have the same agent (with ـین) or different agents (with ـهم). The most common translation in English is as a subordinate clause beginning with 'while'. Neither of these two suffixes can be added to a perfective verb stem; it is as if the act or event of the verb is too momentaneous for there to be a 'while' in which another act can take place. This point can be illustrated with the verb root گو- 'run' in two verb stems whose aspect is determined by the directional suffix:
7. ḏọ-ọd-ôn > mo:dun 'While running along, he . . . .
8. ḏọ-ọd-ôwem > mo:dem 'While he ran along, someone else . . . .
10. *Ḡọ-ôbiôc-ôwem > *mobi:cem 'While he ran away, someone else . . . .

In Examples 7 and 8, the verb stem is made imperfective by the suffix -ọd- 'along' and is thus quite compatible with the two suffixes meaning 'while'. In Examples 9 and 10, ḏọ-ôbiôc- 'run off, run away, start to run' is made perfective by the suffix, and is consequently incompatible with the two suffixes 'while'.

Visual suffixes: The other four suffixes, Numbers 3-6, are part of the evidential system (Oswalt 1986) and form finite verbs. These come in pairs such that one member of each pair can be suffixed only to perfective and neutral verb stems and the other only to imperfective and neutral stems.

11. *Ḡọ-ọd-ôyä > mo?y 'I just saw him run along.'
12. ḏọ-ôbiôc-ôyä > mobi:y 'I just saw him run away.'
13. ḏọ-ọd-ôwä > mo:n? 'I see him running along.'
14. *Ḡọ-ôbiôc-ôwä > *mobi:ô 'I see him start to run.'

Examples 11 through 14 illustrate the Visual pair, which indicate that the speaker knows the truth of what he is saying through direct visual evidence. The Visual-Perfective -ôyä applies only to completed acts or events seen by the speaker, usually those completed just before the moment of speaking, hence the translation with 'just' plus a past tense. This suffix is not compatible with the imperfective verb stem ḏọ-ôd-, hence Example 11 is unacceptable; but it fits well with the perfective verb stem ḏọ-ôbiôc-, and Example 12 is acceptable and common.

The Visual-Imperfective -ôwä applies to acts or events of longer duration, usually in progress at the time of speaking. This suffix I have also called the Factual or Visual-Factual, because it applies not only to events which the speaker may be watching but also to general truths, which are common knowledge (Examples: Fish swim. Horses eat grass.). The meaning fits well with the imperfective stem ḏọ-ôd-, hence 13 is a good sentence; but it conflicts with the perfective stem ḏọ-ôbiôc-, hence Example 14 is not good.

Performatives: The Performatives are also part of the evidential system and can be interpreted as meaning that the speaker knows the truth whereof he speaks either because he, alone or in a group, did, or is doing, the act himself. Thus the two are always translatable with first person forms 'I' or 'we'. With -mela, the perfective suffix of the pair, the act has been completed, often at or shortly before the moment of speaking, so that a translation with 'just' plus a past tense (as with -ôyä) is usually appropriate.
With the Imperfective -êela, the act is usually proceeding even as the speaker tells of it, thus a translation with an English present progressive tense fits well.

15. *mo-êd-mela  *monel-mela 'I just ran along.'
16. *mo-êbi-o-c-mela  mo:bicmela 'I just ran away.'
17. *mo-êd-êela  mo:del-a 'I am running along.'
18. *mo-êbi-o-c-wela  *mobicela 'I am running away.'

Since -mela and -êela differ only in the initial consonant, it is tempting to segment them into -ela as the Performative suffix and elements -m- and -ê-, signifying Perfective and Imperfective respectively. However, these suffix-initial consonants cannot be found with the same meaning in any other use in the language. The -m- occurs as several different suffixes, all imperfective, in contrast to the perfective use with -ela: -m- pluralizing morpheme for verbs; -m- Eessive, indicating location in one circumscribed area; -m- deriver of stative verbs from adjectives. Several of the suffixes illustrated here begin with -ê-, but there are also others with -ê- that have nothing to do with aspect. The segment -ê- has more the nature of a glide to separate preceding and following vowels rather than the nature of a full-fledged morpheme. Nevertheless, this -ê- is not fully predictable phonological, as there are instances, with other morphemes, in which the glide that separates vowels is -ê-.

NEUTRAL ROOTS: Some verb roots are known to be neutral or indifferent to the aspectual distinction and then the aspect of the completed verb form is fixed by the final inflectional suffix, if it is one of the six illustrated herein. Such a root is qowa- 'pack'.

19. qowa-q-mela  qowahmela 'I just packed (a suitcase).'
20. qowa-q-wela  qowaqala 'I am packing (a suitcase).'
21. *qowa-th-mela  *qowathmela 'I did not just pack.'
22. qowa-th-wela  qowathaela 'I am not packing.'

Both 19 and 20 are good sentences, with the determination of the aspect being assumed by the Performative suffix. In 21 and 22, the verb stem is made negative with -th- and then only the Imperfective of the Performative pair can be added. It seems that a denial that some act took place in a moment of time is subsumed under a denial that it took place over a period of time.

INDETERMINATE ROOTS. It is not possible to determine the status of some verb roots as they never occur without one of a pair of suffixes of contrasting aspect. Such a root is -kiê- 'restrain', which is illustrated below with the prefix bi- 'with both hands or arms':

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23. Perfective: bi-ki 모습-ci- 'grab (a fleeing cat) with both hands'

24. Imperfective: bi-ki 모습-ma- 'hold (a struggling cat) with both hands'

A set of examples of the switching back and forth in aspect can be made with the verb root posi- 'put or hold the hand (in some position specified by a directional-locational suffix)'. I have no example of this verb root occurring without some such suffix (and perhaps it cannot so occur) and thus it also is a root whose aspect is unknown.

25. Imperfective: posi-do-m- 'hold the hand out stationary in the air'

26. Perfective: posi-do-m-ci- 'put the hand out'

27. Imperfective: posi-do-m-ci-me'd- 'keep putting the hand out'

28. Perfective: posi-do-ma-ci- 'put the hand into (a hole)'

29. Imperfective: posi-do-ma-ci-i'd- 'keep putting the hand into'

No matter what the inherent aspect of a verb root, it can always be shifted by some derivational suffix. Suffixes which form imperfective stems are any of several kinds of reduplication, any of several pluralizers, -m- Essive, -d- Durative, certain directional suffixes, -th Negative. Suffixes which form perfective stems are any of several directionals and -c-, which I have called Semelfactive, but which has a wider range of uses than simply indicating a single act rather than a series -- it also enters as a component of several other suffixes.

The aspect of a root is often not apparent at first appearance: posi-ba- 'break, crack', as in posi-ba-w to crack with a round object (rock)', would, from this frequent initial translation, appear to be perfective; after all, what is more instantaneous than cracking a nut with a blow with a rock? However, the root is imperfective and is more closely translatable as 'breaking (with a series of blows)'. The perfective stem is derived from posi-ba- by the Semelfactive posi-Xa-c- (where the X indicates deletion of the laryngeal increment?), giving posi-ba-c- 'break with one blow'.

The root posi-bul- 'gather several things together' might seem to require enough action to be imperfective, but it is perfective, meaning 'gather (acorns) with one quick sweep (of the arms)'. The imperfective can be formed with the Durative suffix: posi-bul-a-o-d- 'be gathering'.

The root posi-bul- requires an instrumental prefix and, though of phonemic form similar to the preceding root, it is imperfective, meaning 'be removing a series of objects'. To indicate removal of one object the proper allomorph of the Semelfactive must be affixed: posi-bul-ci-

A verb root of meaning similar to the preceding is posi-chi-st- 'remove from inside something', but posi-chi-st- is perfective and is
more completely defined as 'remove one thing from inside something'. An imperfective form can be made with the pluralizer -X-, which simply indicates the deletion of ○ in -○iti-. to give -○iti- 'remove several from inside something'. This removal of several objects need not be simultaneous (as was the gathering of objects with ○○ulu-) but can be successive, hence the action takes place over a period of time sufficient for the verb stem to be imperfective.

It might be noted that, besides the aspectual difference between these two roots, there is a connotative difference: -○iti- applies more to removal from loose containment and -ulu- more from tight containment.

In the mid-1960s, when I started intensively to collect verbs for the Kashaya dictionary, I had filing cards printed with about 35 grammatical points to check for each verb root, including checking whether the root, stripped of all derivational suffixes, occurred with -mela or -wela, and with -νn and -wem. By this means I hoped to make a formal classification of all verb roots as perfective, imperfective, or neutral. As the evidence grew, it became apparent that some roots that had seemed to be firmly ensconced in one aspectual class, could, in certain rare semantic contexts, appear with the opposed aspectual suffixes, and thus their classification would have to be changed to neutral. Nevertheless, there were many roots that remained persistently perfective or imperfective. Because of the slippage in the the assignment of some roots, I decided to the reduce the formality of the classification to one suggested primarily by the way the English translation is couched: For example, 'be breaking' is imperfective, 'take a drink' is perfective. The fuzziness in the classification of some roots is much less apparent in derived stems, in which the aspect is determined by the suffixes.

COMPARATIVE COMMENTS ON SOUTHERN POMO AND OTHER POMOAN LANGUAGES:

In the following, the names of the Pomoan languages are abbreviated: PP (Proto-Pomo), Ps (Southern Pomo), Pk (Kashaya), Pc (Central Pomo), Pn (Northern Pomo), Pne (Northeastern Pomo), Pe (Eastern Pomo), and Pse (Southeastern Pomo). (Citations other than for Pk and Ps are from Oswalt 1976.)

All of the points discussed above for Pk have been investigated in Ps as well -- there are some similarities and some major differences:

Referential suffixes. Ps concurs with Pk in the incompatibility of perfective verb stems with the two suffixes meaning 'while'. Examples will be cited with one of the roots used previously: Pk -○iti-, Ps -○iti- 'remove one thing from inside'. In the Plural Act form: Pk -iti-, Ps -○iti- 'remove several things from inside'. The prefix ma- in both Pk and Ps means 'with the sole of the foot'.
In Examples 30 and 31, in both Ps and Pk, the suffixes 'while' are not acceptable, as the verbs are perfective. In Examples 32 and 33, in both Ps and Pk, the pluralized, and thus imperfective forms, fit with the 'while' suffixes.

As an historical note, it might be observed here that there are no known cognates in other Pomoan languages to Pk -wem, Ps -wen. There are reflexes of a PP *-yn in Pc, Pn, and Pe; but, as a subordinator, Pn -yn is used no matter the relative timing of the subordinate and superordinate verbs.

Visual suffixes: In the case of the visual suffixes, Ps, in contrast with Pk, does not have the differentiation into paired perfective and imperfective suffixes. The expected -ya does not occur at all; the function of both aspects is performed by the cognate of the Pk imperfective -ya.

The differentiation within Pk of visual evidence and performative evidence between suffixes on the basis of aspect is somewhat anomalous in that the other evidential domains are not thus split; the morphemes for auditory, inferential, and quotative evidence can be suffixed equally freely to perfective and imperfective stems. Thus, it is possible that it is within Pk itself that the differentiation into two visual evidentials was innovated. Nevertheless, a suffix *-ya existed in Proto-Pomo as is attested by cognates in other Pomoan languages: Pc -ya, Pn -ye ~ -y, Pe -ya ~ -a 'indicative mode'. Pse -ya perfective and -ya visual.

The motivation within Ps for the abandonment of a *-ya evidential is perhaps from an overload on the -y. Most Pomoan languages, including Ps, have a Passive -ya. In addition, within Ps, reflexes of the the Perfective suffix *-c- and the -Reflexive *-c'- of an earlier stage in Pomoan, through regular change in syllable-final position, both become -y. The falling together of so many common suffixes of the shape -y(a) could have caused such confusion with the diverse meanings, that it was clearer simply to drop the use as an evidential and expand the imperfective form to serve for stems of either aspect.

Performative suffixes: As not-so-clearly identifiable cognates to the Pk suffixes -mela and -wela, there are the Ps first person suffixes -yn'a and -yl'a. The sound changes are great, as is typical of the endings of Ps words, and full parallels cannot be
cited with other examples. Nevertheless, there are partial parallels, close enough to posit the following sequence of changes in the suffixes as they appear after a verb stem ending in a vowel:

34a. *-mela > *-mla  Alternate syncope -- the rule in Ps.
34b. *-mla > *-mna  Spread of nasalization -- partially paralleled.
34c. *-mna > -na   The first of two consonants (usually when the first is a stop) often becomes length of the preceding vowel.

The closest parallel to this series of changes would be when a nominalized verb in the object case (*-al in an earlier stage, Pk -al, Ps -an) is joined with an enclitic 'where' (=li in Pk and Ps).

An example can be given with a verb stem used earlier:

35. Pk cu-?ba-wa-l =li > cu?bawál li 'where (she) is cracking (acorns)'.
36. Ps cu-?ba-wa-n =li > cu?bawani 'where (she) is cracking (acorns)'.

The best reconstruction is in accord with the Pk form; the sequence of development in Ps of the pertinent area would be as follows:

37a. *-al=li > *-an=li  Syllable-final *l always converts to n.
37b. *-an=li > *-an=ni  Spread of nasalization.
37c. *-an=ni > -a:ni   First of two consonants becomes length of the preceding vowel.

The course of the conversion of a suffix *-wela, in its form after a vowel, to Ps -l:a can also be postulated, although there are no precise parallels:

38a. *-wela > *-wla  Alternate syncope.
38b. *-wla > *-l:a   Gemination of the consonant cluster. Not understood are the conditions under which gemination occurs rather than conversion of the first consonant to length of a preceding vowel.

Other than the above derivations, there is, to my knowledge, no connection between the Ps suffixes -v:na and -v:la and any other forms in Pk or Pomoan. Cognate to Pk -wela is Pc -wla, a first person form. and thus a *-wela can be reconstructed, but only for this trio of the three most closely related of the Pomoan languages (which I have designated PWSF Proto-Western Branch, Southern Group of Pomo, Oswalt 1976): In any case, I was never able to elicit a firm distinction in Ps between -v:na and -v:la on the basis of aspect. Whether this closeness in meaning between the two existed when Ps had a full community of speakers or has come into existence only recently because of the moribund nature of the language is no longer discoverable. It should be noted that in no Pomoan language is the category of person well-developed in the verb.
A comparison of the use of the Pk and Ps suffixes will be given with noncognate verb roots of the same meaning:

39. Pk cohtoc-'mela > cohtoc'-mela, 'I am leaving.'
40. Pk *cohtoc-́wele > *cohtocéla 'I am leaving.'
41. Ps ho:li-גדלna > ho:li:na, 'I am leaving.'
42. Ps (?) ho:li-גדלa > (?) ho:li:l:a. This has been both accepted and rejected several times.

Both the Pk form in 39 and the Ps form in 41 are used as a formula to be said by someone taking leave; a simple announcement at the moment of departure: 'I am leaving (right now).' In Pk, cohtoc- 'leave, depart' is perfective, and cannot be used with the imperfective -wele. The semantically parallel Ps verb, in this formulaic use, normally appears as in 41. As for 42, there was uncertainty on the part of the speakers on whether it is acceptable.

Comparative Pomoan. It has not been (and perhaps cannot be) shown that the Pk system of aspectually opposed pairs of inflectional suffixes exists in any other Pomoan language. Nevertheless, at the derivational level, the prime suffixes that form perfective and imperfective stems in Pk have cognates in all the other Pomoan languages. When the key consonants alone are considered (there is some variation in accompanying vowels), and these consonants are taken in their basic form (that manifested in syllable-initial position before a vowel), then they are in regular sound correspondence and are as laid out in 43-45. In syllable-final position the correspondences may still be regular but are considerably more complex. For example, before word boundary, the perfective suffix becomes Pk -г', Ps -г, Pс -ч'. In no other Pomoan language are the developments more diverse than in Pk, where the basic -ч- may surface, depending on the following consonant, as чь, ч', y, h, ?, or : (length of the preceding vowel).

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What is labelled Perfective here is a prime component of what I have elsewhere (Oswalt 1976) called the Semelfactive, as well as of several perfective directional suffixes; the Imperfective here is a principal ingredient of the Durative, Habitual, Continuative, and of several imperfective directional suffixes; the Essive indicates a steady state or condition, or an event or act in a restricted or somehow delimited location, and is also a component of several imperfective directional suffixes.
MORPHOPHONEMIC SYMBOLS:

☐ A syllable void of segmental phonemes; it pertains only to the operation of rules for alternating vowel length and for accent placement.

○ Alternating vowel length: long in some environments, short in others.

Û Vowel whose quality is determined by the preceding consonant; it is 0 (zero) after a vowel.

à Vowel a after a consonant; 0 after a vowel.

û Vowel i after a consonant; 0 after a vowel.

â Vowel a before consonants; 0 before word juncture.

û Glide w after a vowel; 0 after a consonant.

X Causes deletion of a preceding laryngeal increment and of ʊ. It is itself void of segmental phonemes.

The underlying morphophonemic representations of some examples have been simplified to cover only the alternations that come up in the citations.

REFERENCES


Occasional Papers On Linguistics

Proceedings of the 1990 Hokan-Penutian Languages Workshop, Held at the University of California, San Diego, June 22-23, 1990.

Department of Linguistics
Southern Illinois University
at Carbondale
OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON LINGUISTICS

Number 15

Papers from the

1990 Hokan-Penutian Languages Workshop

Held at

University of California, San Diego

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Department of Linguistics
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois

Library of Congress Catalog Number
90-085532
PREFACE

The 1990 meeting was the twentieth anniversary of the First Hokan conference, which met at the University of California, San Diego. From time to time, the conference has met with other groups such as the Penutian conference and the Uto-Aztecan conference. It now regularly meets with the Penutian conference.

The conference is again indebted to Margaret Langdon and the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, San Diego, for hosting the conference. Our thanks are also due to the various graduate students who took care of the numerous details such as supplying the endless coffee.

The papers in this volume appear in the same order as they did on the program at the conference. Unfortunately, a few of the presenters were not able to send in a paper for publication. All of the papers in the volume except the last one were presented at the 1990 meeting.

In 1983, 1984, and 1985, very few of the presenters sent in their papers for publication. In 1986, a few papers from each of these years were assembled into a single volume. Werner Winter sent his 1983 paper in so early that the editor lost it in the files, and Winter's paper was omitted from the 1986 volume. It is now egg-on-the-face time for the editor. Winter's paper is included in this volume as the last paper. Mea culpa.

Arrangements have been made with Coyote Press, P.O.B. 3377, Salinas, CA 93912, 408-422-4912, to reprint the various Hokan and Hokan-Penutian conference volumes. Dr. Gary S. Brechini of Coyote Press has told me that he will try to keep all the volumes in print. I have just sent him part of the original manuscripts and will be sending him the rest of the manuscripts very shortly. Only a very few of the original publications are still available. Please see the list at the end of the volume for details on the few remaining original volumes. I do not know how long it will be until Coyote Press will begin issuing reprints of the backissues.

James E. Redden

Carbondale, December 1990

Historical Note: The proceedings of the First Hokan conference were edited by Margaret Langdon and published by Mouton. I have edited all the other volumes of proceedings except those of 1986 and 1989, when I was in Africa. The 1988 and 1989 volumes of proceedings were edited by Scott Delancey in the series published by the Department of Linguistics at the University of Oregon. Please do not request these two volumes from me. Please address orders for the 1988 and 1989 volumes to: Department of Linguistics, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. I hope that Scott will be willing to publish the Hokan-Penutian volumes regularly, when I retire in a few years.

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