

The “derivational” effect of grammatical aspect on stative roots in Maa

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Maa (Eastern Nilotic) is an aspect language, first in the sense that verb roots fall into stative versus what I call dynamic (i.e. non-stative) classes, shown by the range of different (sub)sets of morphology that they can carry: stative roots generally cannot take directional suffixes, while dynamic ones can; statives cannot take the progressive *-ita* as seen in (1), while dynamic roots can; statives cannot take middle or antipassive suffixes, while dynamic transitive roots can; but statives can take the morphological inchoative *-u(n)*, while dynamic roots cannot.

- (1) a. **/?edɔr-ita* (for ‘It is in the process of becoming red.’)
3.be.red-PROG
b. **epir-ito* (for ‘It is getting fat.’)
3.be.fat-PROG

On top of lexical aspect, Maa has three morphological aspect (or aspect-like) categories: **unmarked**, in which case the lexical aspect of the root is simply understood; **progressive** (PROG), which as just noted can be added to dynamic roots but not statives; and **perfect(ive)** (PF), which can be added to both dynamic and stative roots. (This last morphological category has been claimed to express both perfect and perfective situations, so the term “perfect(ive)” is intentional; König 1993, Payne 2015). These are the dominant distributional restrictions between morphological and lexical aspect. However, this paper argues that even though statives are widely claimed to be incompatible with progressive morphology (cf. Van Valin 2006), the Maa progressive, as well as the perfect(ive), can coerce or derive dynamic (i.e. non-stative) stems.

First, though the **progressive** is normally rejected with stative roots as in (1), the combination has surfaced on rare occasions to yield an atelic sense of ‘try to be/do X’ or change-of-state ‘inchoativity’ in others. For instance *gol* ‘be hard, strong, courageous, difficult’ normally describes static conditions as in (2), but the ‘try to’ activity and inchoative effects of the progressive are seen in (3); most statives disallow allow this.

- (2) a. *Káke egól ilónito.* ‘The hides are hard’ (e.g. for sleeping on)
but 3.be.hard hides
b. *Ígōl táatá.* ‘You (sg.) are strong/courageous today.’
2.be.hard today

- (3) *Egol-ító.* ‘S/he is trying to be strong’ (eg. when bereaved). /
3.be.hard-PROG ‘S/he is getting (physically) stronger.’

Secondly, with stative roots **perfect(ive)** morphology productively yields a perfect(ive) inchoative or achievement (Van Valin 2006) stem. Since the stative root itself describes what could be a resultant or achieved endpoint of a dynamic process, I suggest that the inchoative function of the perfect(ive) actually profiles the more dynamic change-of-state portion of an event or process, which then leads to a state.

- (4) a. *é-tó-dór-ó* ‘It has become red.’
3-PF-be.red-PF
b. *ká-tí-pór-ō* ‘I have grown/gotten fat.’
1sg-pf-be.fat-pf

Such uses of the morphological progressive and perfect(ive) are essentially derivational in that they dramatically change the properties of the stem in terms of further morphology that the verbs can or cannot take.

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