Inchoatives in Mainland Comox
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1. Two previous studies of Comox have noted a pattern of reduplication of the second consonant of the root and the preceding vowel, meaning 'inchoative' or something of the kind, but label it marginal and no longer productive (Hagege 1981:119, Harris 1981:72). I think, however, that its low lexical and text frequency reflects heavy but systematic restrictions on the sort of thing it can attach to (viz. static roots), rather than arbitrary limitation to a small set of lexicalized forms. This pattern of reduplication (henceforth 'VC reduplication') comes up quite frequently as a translation of 'getting more and more ...', in combination with the Imperfective reduplication CV-:

1a. ma-\text{mx}'-\text{ax}' 'getting calm (sew)'  
   - cf. \text{ma}'x' 'calm'
   
1b. \text{pa}'-\text{ps}-\text{as}' 'getting numb'  
   - \text{pas} 'numb'
   
1c. \text{tih-ih} 'getting bigger'  
   - \text{tih} 'big'

-but it is also readily produced without Imperfective:

2a. \text{pa}s-\text{as} 'get numb'
   
2b. \text{tih-ih} 'get big'
   
2c. \text{t}'\text{ap}-\text{a}'\text{p}-\text{x}' 'get dirty'  
   - cf. \text{t}'\text{ap}'x' 'dirty'

As the last example shows, it is always the vowel and second consonant of the root that are reduplicated, even when the root has more than two consonants (\text{x} in \text{t}'\text{ap}'x; is apparently not segmentable as a suffix).

2. The glosses of the roots in the examples I have given already suggest that these roots are aspectually stative; this can be confirmed to some degree by syntactic tests. Following Holisky (1978), one would expect stative verbs to have the properties of being durative — predicating the situation as true over an interval of time greater than an instant — and of not being ongoing — i.e. of not being subject to judgements of rate.
The adverb qoįį 'still' (frequently in combination with a particle ʔut, of uncertain meaning) provides a test for durativity. Verbs with the Imperfective prefix CV- can co-occur with qoįį:

3a. qoįį ʔut ƛ'k-ƛ'k't 'He's still falling asleep'
b. qoįį ʔut ḵuq-ʔuq-as 'He's still finishing it up'
c. qoįį ʔut ʔiįįnam 'He's still eating'

And so can derived statives (resultatives), formed by suffixing -it to CVC roots, otherwise by infixed -i- between the last two consonants of the non-stative form (cf. Beaumont 1978 for Seselk):

- Kiįįt below is formally irregular:

4a. qoįį ʔut Kiįįt 'He's still sleeping'
b. qoįį ʔut qaix-it ʔa qasnyā? 'My shirt is still torn'

The corresponding unrepeated or unstativized stems cannot co-occur with qoįį:

5a. * qoįį ʔut ƛ'k't (ƛ'k't 'he fell asleep')
b. * qoįį ʔut ḵuq-ʔuq-as (ʔuq-as 'he finished it up')
c. * qoįį ʔut ʔiįįnam (ʔiįįnam 'he ate')
d. * qoįį ʔut qaix to ʔa qasnyā? (qaix 'it tore')

Roots that allow -VC reduplication are also acceptable with qoįį:

6a. qoįį ʔut yuwm 'it's still dry' (yuwm 'get dry')
b. qoįį ʔut ƛ'eq-ƛ'eq 'it's still tough' (ƛ'eq-ƛ'eq 'get tough')
c. qoįį ʔut ƛ'eq-ƛ'eq 'it's still stiff' (ƛ'eq-ƛ'eq 'get stiff')
d. qoįį ʔut qaix to ʔa qasnyā 'my hand is still bruised'
    still etc. bruised the my hand (qasnyā 'develop a bruise')
The adverbs hahays 'slowly' and *X'i? 'fast' (in examples below also X'i-mut 'real fast', with regular loss of /X/ ) provide a test for ongoings. They seem generally acceptable with verbs denoting change of state (hahays especially with Imperfective [CV-] verbs), but not so acceptable with derived stative:

7) a. hahays liwa qok'w-om to Patnunil
   slowly ptc. Impf-stop-Intrans. the car
   'The car slowly came to a stop' (qok‘w-om 'stop')

   b. *hahays liwa qok‘w-i-m? to Patnunil
      stop-Stv-Intrans.

8) a. X'i-mut tak‘w to $ Eayis
      fast-very swell the my hand
      'My hand swelled up real fast'

   b. *X'i-mut tak‘w-it to $ Eayis
      swell-Stv

(qok‘w-om 'stopped' and tak‘w-it 'swollen' are perfectly O.K. in other contexts). This test needs to be applied with tact and caution, as it appears that X'i? at least can sometimes also mean 'in a very short time, ... was the case' (i.e., besides specifying the rate at which the event itself takes place, it can also specify the amount of time between a given time and the time the event takes place); in this latter sense it is not so useful for distinguishing statives from non-statives. Insofar as there are clear results, however, roots allowing -VC reduplication do not combine with hahays or X'i? (in the rate-specifying sense).

9) a. *hahays mok’i (`[the see] was slowly cold')

   b. *hahays tu’s-um (`he was slowly quiet')
      quiet-Intrans.
10) a. *x'i? tikh ("it was quickly large")
    b. *x'i? k'as to tihay ("the tea was hot fast")

In each case in (9) & (10), the native speaker suggested replacing
the unreduplicated root with its -VC-reduplicated form (with a
without Imperfective):

9') a. hehays ma-m'-ək' (the sea) slowly got calm
    b. hehays t'u-wa (he slowly got quiet)
10') a. x'i-mut tih-ik (it got bigger fast)
    b. x'i? k'was-o-qa tihay (the tea got hot fast)

These tests indicate that roots which allow -VC reduplication
(and apparently no other roots) are basically stative. Some of these
stative roots need * to be affixed with Intransitive -VM
(≠ Middle -?əm !) when not -VC-reduplicated, like t'u-wa 'quiet'
in (9-b) above; others in this class include maq'-əm 'soft',
g'uk'-əm 'salty (?)'. Some other roots seem typically to occur with
CVC-reduplication, e.g. yam?yam 'dry' (cf. ək'-əm 'get dry'); as
this may be a stative formation, it is not yet clear that such roots
are basically stative. There are a few problem cases of roots which,
either from their glosses or from the syntactic tests, seem not
to be stative, yet have been recorded with -VC reduplication: kwat
(eme?) untied / kwu-bw-ət 'coming untied', ək'ox 'fire is (goes?) out' /
ək'-ək'ox 'fire is going out', xəq' rot (rotten ?) / xə?-xə'-əq' 'rotting'
(possibly some of these -VC forms are not really all that acceptable
but were produced through overzealous elicitation ?) At any rate, the
general pattern is quite clear.

3. As one might suppose from translations like 'get calm(er)',
'get hot', etc., -VC-reduplicated forms are not stative. This is "confirmed
by their ready co-occurrence with hehays 'slowly' and x'i? 'fast'
as in (9') and (10') immediately above, and by their unacceptability with qo'ji (unless Imperfectivized by CV-):

11) a. *qo'ji *but gi-gaw
   b. qo'ji but gi-gaw-ew "it's still getting dry"
12) a. *qo'ji *but tih-th
   b. * qo'ji *but tih-thih "it's still getting large(r)"

'Inchoative' seems a good gloss for the formaton; it denotes either an instantaneously assumption of the state designated by the root, as in (13),

13) wii-mut qex-ax-mut 'suddenly there's lots'
   fast-very mean-Inch-very
   ('gradative')

or an increase in the degree of the state, as in many of the earlier examples. I suspect that -VC can mean either thing with any of the roots it can attach to; and that the 'gradative' understanding is made possible in part by the Imperfective aspect prefix CV-, and in part by the semantics of the roots involved. All the static roots certainly identified so far seem to be gradable, denoting properties of which an entity can have more or less; a good many of them have been found in comparative constructions: 3

14) a. (níwikhit) x'aq-ti:zi xapay a1 2(a) tig?ta
    more(?) long this stick than that
    'This stick is longer than that one' (x'aq-aq-ti 'get long(er)')

   b. (níwikhit) til ti:zi a1 3(a) to pa?a k'waxwa
      more(?) big this than the one box
      'This (box) is bigger than the other box'

An ambiguity between 'be X' and 'be more X' may thus be implicit
in the root \(^4\) and carried over to the related Inchoative form ('become x' / 'become more x').

4. Carlson & Thompson (1982) and Kinkade (1982) have suggested 'out-of-control' as an appropriate gloss for -VC reduplications in various Interior Salish languages; it is not yet wholly clear to me whether the Comrie formation shares this component of meaning. There is, however, a possible test for Noncontrol/out-of-control: namely, unacceptability as a complement of the verb x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at 'tell him to ...', order him to ...'. Transitive verbs in complement clauses to x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at normally appear with the Control Transitive (CTR) suffix -(V)\textsubscript{t}; when I proffered equivalent sentences with Noncontrol Transitive (NTr) -\textsuperscript{o}x\textsubscript{w} instead, the native speaker found them quite unacceptable.

15) a. x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at-\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{t}} \& t\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{g}}-ut-as  
   tell-CTR-Past 1sgSubj  short-CTR-3Subj\textsubscript{b}rd ... the dear  
   I told him to short the dear

   b. *x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at-\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{t}} \& t\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{g}}-\textsuperscript{o}x\textsubscript{w}-as to qig\textsuperscript{a}\textsubscript{t}  
   -NTr-

16) a. x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at-\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{t}} \& \textsuperscript{o}x\textsubscript{w}-at-as  
   cut-CTR-3Subj\textsubscript{b}rd

   'I told him to cut it'

   b. *x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at-\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{t}} \& \textsuperscript{o}x\textsubscript{w}-\textsuperscript{o}x\textsubscript{w}-as  
   -NTr-

On the whole, -VC-reduplicated forms do not seem too acceptable in complements of x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at:

17) a. x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at-\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{\textsc{th}}}-as-\textsuperscript{u\textsubscript{t}}  
   tell-CTR-1sgobi-3Subj\textsuperscript{b}rd  but - Reflexive 1sg Subj\textsuperscript{b}rd

   'He told me to warm up'

   b. *x\textsuperscript{w}ah-at-\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{\textsc{th}}}-as-\textsuperscript{a\textsubscript{\textsc{th}}}  
   -NTr- 1sg Subj\textsuperscript{b}rd
But at least occasionally they do get accepted (though maybe not spontaneously produced):

(8) xaw-at-un & tus-un - as quiet-Indic - 3subj3rd

'I told him to be (get) quiet'

Granting that sentences like (8) may be more elicitation glitches and that Inchoatives have Noncontrol force, it is still not perfectly clear that this force is provided by the reduplication rather than by the root. Static roots mostly code things that the subject is unlikely to have much control over, practically speaking — his size, his bodily sensations, etc. So it may be that these roots are themselves marked as Noncontrol (or 'out-of-control', whatever the distinction is) and pass that marking on to the related Inchoation forms. (Inchoatives from roots denoting more probably controllable properties, like tus-un 'quiet', p'di 'black/dirty', etc., may possibly be somewhat more acceptable as complements to xaw-at than Inchoatives from other static roots, which would support my suggestion that it is the root that is responsible for whatever Noncontrol force an Inchoative has; but data on this point is still quite sketchy.)

Another reason I hesitate to class -VC reduplication as 'out-of-control' is that it contrasts with the much more blatantly Noncontrol suffix -iy’s; glosses of this formation tend to explicitly bring out a Noncontrol sense, unlike the rather bland glosses associated with Inchoatives.

19) a. miq'-iy’s 'something accidentally gets in liquid' (miq' - 'dip')
   b. kiwas-iy's 'like if you got burned from the stove' (kiwas - 'hot')
   c. bib-iy’s '(you’re digging and) all of a sudden the ground gives way' (bib - 7um 'dig')
While the above examples are Noncontrol in the sense of lacking a volitional agent, I have one possible example of the 'difficulty' case too (cf. Thompson (1979) for these two major varieties of understandings of Noncontrol forms):

20) gah-i_y̥: 'get lifted up' - (e.g.) raising a boat (on a lever) - the boat goes up + up - when it's there, you put a block under it and it's gah-i_y̥: now' (gah-t 'lift it')

I have few examples of the %uah-at test applied to -i_y̥: verbs, as the specificity of their glosses hardly made it worthwhile to bother; but as far as I can tell, -i_y̥: is, unsurprisingly, Noncontrol by this test too: (21) was rejected as a possible way of saying 'I told him to get dirty'.

21) *%uah-at-ut & p'BD-i_y̥: as
black/dirty -i_y̥: 3Sih5kh

The aspectual properties of -i_y̥: have not been tested, but from its glosses it appears to form inchoatives when added to stative roots (as (19) showed, it can be added to other kinds of roots too) - at any rate it seems unlikely to be stative.

5. The properties of -VC reduplication in formations other than simple intransitives are not yet thoroughly understood. The only such forms in which I have much data are lexical-suffix derivatives and transitive derivatives.

As far as I can tell, lexical suffixes (in particular, body-part suffixes) tend not to affect the aspectual class of the forms they are added to; stative roots with body-part suffixes constitute stative verbs, while inchoatives with body-part suffixes still act as inchoatives.
22) a. pos-aʔayaxan  "(his) upper arm is numb"
    ruru- Upper.arm

   b. pos-2s-aʔayaxan  "(his) upper arm got numb"
    -Incl-

(The aspirant tests confirm these judgments.) Similarly, body-part
suffix derivatives of non-stative roots seem to be non-stative. 9

23) a. takiʔ-qaʔa
    swell-knee
    'knee swelled up'  (tak-"swell")

   b. dʔur- aʔayaxan
    heal-
    'upper arm healed'  (dʔur- 'heal')

   c. ʔat-ʔaʔayaxan
    'get cut on upper arm'  (ʔat- 'cut it')

Transitive derivatives are formed from most stative roots and Inclinations
by means of CTR -(V)k (and NTR -2xw), rather than by Causative -se-ns-stu-.
As far as I can now tell, the pattern is for CTR to take the form -at
after -VC reduplication (vs. -t after lexical suffixes10, -Vt [VC vowel of root]
after most roots with non-schwa vowels): tih-ih-at 'make it big', ʔaʔat-ʔat
'make it stiff', etc. (Cf. NTR tih-iʔ-axw, etc.) It is not clear
that -VC makes any semantic contribution at all to these forms: in
some cases corresponding transitives without -VC have not been recorded, in
others they have been rejected: *ʔaʔat- seemed notably worse than
ʔaʔat- and in one case the -VC-less transitive has a different sense
than the -VC transitive: ʔiʔat- 'do him a good turn' vs. ʔaʔat- 'make it
good' 11 (ʔiʔt- 'good'). And for some stative roots transitives with and without
-VC seem to exist without obvious difference in meaning: ʔaʔat- 'make it
long', ʔaʔt-at 'make it long/stretch it out' (ʔaʔt- 'long'). By the
ʔiaʔ-at test, -VC does not contribute any noncontrol force to the transition as a whole:

24) a. ʔiaʔ-at-ud  $ tih-iʔ-at-as  'I told him to make it big'
   b. ʔiaʔ-at-ud  $ ʔaʔat-ʔat-as  'I told him to make it long'

There may be something subtle going on that I haven't caught yet; or combinations
of root + VC + Transitive may simply be the normal way of transitioning stative roots
(with a few lexical exceptions). At any rate, -VC has not been found in transitive verbs or
lexical-suffix formations except with stative roots.
7. To sum up, we've seen that in Comox, -VC reduplication forms inchoatives from stative roots and only from stative roots (with perhaps a few marginal exceptions); it may, in addition, have a mild Noncontrol nuance, although this is not certain. Even in complex forms, it occurs only with stative roots; but within these heavy restrictions, -VC shows up in a reasonably regular way.

Footnotes

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1 Comox is a Central Coast Salish language, its major dialect division is that between the (Vancouver) Island dialect, described in Harris 1981, and the Mainland dialect, described in Hagey 1981 and in various published and unpublished papers by John Davis. My orthography is intended to be autonomous phonemic, essentially matching the analysis in Davis 1971 with a few cosmetic changes (notably /iy, uw/ for what he transcribes sometimes as /ii, uu/, sometimes /ay, aw/). Note that /s/ = [tæ]; /i, u/ are often mid; /a/ is [ɛ, e] after palatals; /o/ varies considerably in quality according to the neighboring consonants, in some environments merging with /i/ or /u/. Stress falls on the initial syllable of the word (even in reduplicated forms). Some morphophonemic alternations: /ʃ, ʃ/ → /y, w/ except syllable-initially; /o/ is lowered to /a/ invariably before /ʔ, h/; and sometimes before other consonants in open syllables (conditioning - perhaps lexical - uncertain); certain instances of apparent loss or insertion of /ʔ/ are not well understood.

Grammatical abbreviations: 1sg = first person singular, 3 = third person, CTr = control transitive, Impf = Imperfective, Indic = Inclusive, Inobj = Intransitive, NTr =
Non-control transitivizer, Obj = object, ptc. = particle (in case I don't want to bother finding a precise gloss), Subd = subordinate, Stv = stative, Subj = subject.

2 Actually it may be more accurate to say that gojí cooccurs with imperfective predicates (perfective = situation or event is completed at the time for which the sentence is evaluated for truth), rather than with durative predicates, if durativity is defined independently of the time for which the sentence is evaluated. As imperfective predicates are necessarily durative, however (though perfective predicates are not necessarily non-durative), this subtlety probably doesn't matter much for my present purpose of making a rough-and-ready division of the lexicon.

3 The native speaker consulted on this point would accept sentences like (14-a, b) without k'wihit, but tended not to produce them spontaneously.

4 Cf. a well-known analysis of English gradable predicates whereby big is taken to mean 'bigger than some contextually-appropriate standard'.

5 Note, too, that even in the languages discussed by Carlson & Thompson and Kinkade, one probably has to say more about the semantic effect of -VC than simply that it marks 'out-of-control'. Judging by their examples and translations and some of their remarks in the text, -VC often contributes an inchoative sense like that sketched in §3 above, when added to the appropriate type of root; and it evidently typically reduces valence, eliminating the Agent argument of roots that also allow a Patient argument. (As should be obvious from these remarks, Interior Stylish -VC is added to a much wider semantic range of roots than is Cape -VC.)
6 -mu- before object suffixes and Passive -in (cf. Davis 1978); this is the Comox reflex of the NTr morpheme (usually something like -na- or -(a)-) found elsewhere in Coast Salish.

7 Complements of x'ah-at have - subject person/number marked by the subordinate subject suffixes -an 1sg, -anw 2sg, -as 3, -at 1pl, -ap 2pl, rather than the subject clitics *en can 1sg, *enw kanw 2sg, *ø 3, *et vcat 1pl, *etp 2pl. (Transitive verbs mark 3Subj. by -as in main clauses as well.) Cf. Davis 1978.

8 One thinks of semantically somewhat similar suffixes in Interior languages: Thompson -iyx, Cowichan -ilx, etc. Incidentally I am not perfectly sure -iyx is the best transcription for the Comox suffix, it sometimes sounds more like it ought to be -ix (phonetically often [xi]).

9 An oversimplification. Some body-part suffixes ending in vowels or have static forms involving addition or insertion of a glottal stop. So far the following have been found to behave thus:

i) a. -iq'xan 'knee', stv. -iq'xan?
   b. -a?yaxan 'upper arm', stv. -a?yaxan?
   c. -owam 'side', stv. -owam?
   d. -a?wo-yam 'toe', stv. -a?wo-yam?
   e. -iq'un?ya 'finger', stv. -iq'un?ya?
   f. -a?ana 'ear', stv. -a?ana
   g. (?) -a?na 'side of neck', stv. -ana?

(Allomorphy of the suffix for 'hand, lower arm' is not fully understood. -uy- appears before - ?am Middle: g'okw-uy-?am 'wipes (g'okw-) one's hands'; -uya? appears only word-finally, and -a?ya? appears word-finally and elsewhere. This may be another suffix with static glottalization. For glottalization in other sorts of statics, note g'okw-im? 'stopped'
in ex. (7-6) above, I don't know yet whether the pattern will turn out widespread.) On the other hand, -ṣan 'foot/leg' has a stative form -ṣ-an (the phonetic distinction [-ṣan] [un-stv.] / [-ṣin] [stv.] is slight but present, I believe); and some suffixes ending in resonants do not seem to have special stative forms: -ṣi'an 'side', -ṣi'an 'head', -ṣan 'mouth', -ṣi'an 'lips'. The stative forms of lexical suffixes that have them produce stative verbs from non-stative roots (confirmed by expected tests):

ii) a. ḫak-wa?i-qa? 'his knee is ('still') swollen'
   b. xāw-a?yaxin-ʔ 'his upper arm is healed'
   c. ʔax-t-a?yaxin-ʔ 'still') have cut an arm'

In some cases, lexical suffixes without special stative forms appear to be ambiguous between stative and non-stative interpretations when added to non-stative roots. Stative roots, as seen from (22-a) and other examples (e.g. ḫah-iq?u?a 'have a sore knee') do not allow the special stative forms of lexical suffixes, although the resulting word comes out stative. (Now have stative lexical suffixes been noted with Inchoatives.)

10 Before which final (ʔ) of lexical suffixes is lost. ḥās-a?yaxin-ʔ 'punch him in the (upper) arm' (ḵās-t 'punch it'), ḥās-t-ʔ 'punch him in the leg' (ḵān- 'foot/leg').

11 The underlying form of the root is //ʔiʔ//, in ṭiʔ, ṭiʔ-t, jāʔ syllable-finally (cf. fn. 1) and //j// is fronted (giving phonetic [ʔeyʔ, ʔeyʔ]); in ṭiʔ, jāʔ-ʔ, //j// remains because syllable-initial, and a → a before /ʔ/. (//ʔiʔ// counts as a single consonant [glottalized resonant ʔ] for purposes of reduplication; why /ʔ/ rather than /ʔ/ should appear in the reduplication-syllable is not clear.)
Bibliography


