Inchoatives in Mainland Comox*
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1. Two previous studies of Comox[1] 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 (Hagège 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., stative 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-:

1)a. mə-mX̣'-əX̣   'getting calm (sea)'   — cf. maX̣' 'calm'
  b. pə-ps-əs   'getting numb'   —   pəs 'numb'
  c. ti-tih-ih   'getting bigger'   —   tih 'big'

—but it is also readily produced without Imperfective:

2)a. pəs-əs   'get numb'
  b. tih-ih   'get big'
  c. č'əp-əp-x̣ 'get dirty'   — cf. č'əpx̣   '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 (x̣ in č'əpx̣ is apparently not segmentable as a suffix).

2. The glosses of the roots in the examples I have ~~truly~~ 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 — ie of not being subject to judgements of rate.

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The adverb qəǰi 'still' (frequently in combination with a particle ʔut, of uncertain meaning) provides a test for durativity.[2] Verbs with the Imperfective prefix CV- can co-occur with qəǰi :

3)a. qəǰi ʔut x̣ʼə-x̣əčt   'He's still falling asleep'
  b. qəǰi ʔut huhuǰ-ut-as   'He's still finishing it up'
  c. qəǰi ʔut ʔi-ʔiɬtən   'He's still eating'

And so can derived statives (resultatives), formed by suffixing -it to CVC roots, otherwise by infixing -i- between the last two consonants of the non-stative form (cf. Beaumont 1973 for Sechelt) — x̣ʼiyčt below is formally irregular :

4)a. qəǰi ʔut x̣ʼiyčt   'He's still sleeping'
  b. qəǰi ʔut pəx̣-it   tə ɬ qʼəsnayʔ   'My shirt is still torn'
    tear-Stv   the my shirt

The corresponding unreduplicated or unstativized stems cannot co-occur with qəǰi :

5) a. * qəǰi ʔut x̣ʼəčt   (x̣ʼəčt 'he fell asleep')
   b. * qəǰi ʔut huǰ-ut-as   (huǰ-ut-as 'he finished it up')
   c. * qəǰi ʔut ʔiɬtən   (ʔiɬtən 'he ate')
   d. * qəǰi ʔut pəx̣ tə ɬ qʼəsnayʔ   (pəx̣ 'it tore')

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

6)a. qəǰi ʔut yuw   'it's still dry'   (~~yiɣam~~ yəɣ-aw 'get dry')
  b. qəǰi ʔut x̣ʼəqʷ   'it's still tough'   (x̣ʼəqʷ-əqʷ 'get tough')
  c. qəǰi ʔut x̣ʼəɬ   'it's still stiff'   (x̣ʼəɬ-əɬ 'get stiff')
  d. qəǰi ʔut qəx̣ tə ɬ čayiš   'my hand is still bruised'
    still ptc. bruised the my hand
                          (qʼəx̣-əx̣ 'develop a bruise')

The adverbs hahays 'slowly' and ⁺x̣'i? 'fast' (in examples below also x̣'i-mut 'real fast' with regular loss of /?/) provide a test for ongoingness. They seem generally acceptable with verbs denoting changes of state (hahays especially with Imperfective [CV-] verbs), but not so acceptable with derived statives:

7) a.   hahays   k'ʷa   qəᵊqkʷ-əm   tə   ?atnupil
      slowly   pte.   Impf-stop-Intrans.   the   car
      'The car slowly came to a stop' (qəkʷ-əm 'stop')

   b. *hahays k'ʷa   qəkʷ-i-m?   tə   ?atnupil
                        stop-Stv-Intrans.

8) a. x̣'i-mut   ɬak'ʷ   tə ç čayiš
      fast-very swell   the my hand
      'My hand swelled up real fast'

   b. ?* x̣'i-mut ɬak'ʷ-it   tə ç čayiš
                 swell-Stv

(qəkʷim? 'stopped' and ɬak'ʷ-it 'swollen' are perfectly O.K. in other contexts). This test needs to be applied with tact and caution, as it appears that x̣'i? at least can sometimes also mean 'in a very short time, ... was the case' (i.e., ~~it can mean other things~~ 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 x̣'i? (in the rate-specifying sense).

9) a. * hahays   məx̣   ('[the sea] was slowly calm')
   b. * hahays   t'us-um   ('he was slowly quiet')
                quiet-Intrans.

10) a. * x̣'i?   tih   ('it was quickly large')

     b. * x̣'i?   k'ʷas tə   tihaya   ('the tea was hot fast')

          fast   hot   the   tea

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

9') a.   hahays   mə-mƛ'-əƛ'   '(the sea) slowly got calm'

     b.   hahays   t'us-us   'he slowly got quiet'

10') a.   x̣'i-mut   tih-ih   ' it got bigger fast'

     b.   x̣'i?   k'ʷas-astə tihaya   '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 ~~suggested~~ to be affixed with Intransitive -Vm (≠ Middle -?əm !) when not -VC-reduplicated, like t'us-um 'quiet' in (9-b) above; others in this class include məsqʷ-əm 'soft', ç'ukʷ-əm 'salty (?)'. Some other roots seem typically to occur with CVC- reduplication, e.g. šəm?šəm 'dry' (cf. ša?m-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 syntagmatic tests, seem not to be stative, yet have been recorded with -VC reduplication: kʷət '(come?) untied' / kʷu-kʷɬ-ət 'coming untied', ç'əx̣ 'fire is (goes?) out' / ç'ə-ç'x̣-əx̣ 'fire is going out', ƛ'əq' 'rot (rotten?)' / ƛ'ə-ƛ'q'-əq' 'rotting' (possibly some of these -VC forms are not really all that acceptable but were produced through overstrenuous 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 hahays 'slowly' and x̣'i? 'fast'

as in (9') and (10') immediately above, and by their unacceptability with qəǰi (unless Imperfectivized by CV-):

11) a. *qəǰi ʔut yigʲaw
    b. qəǰi ʔut yi-yʔg-aw   'it's still getting dry'
12) a. *qəǰi ʔut tih-ih
    b. ~~qəǰi~~ ʔut ti-tih-ih   'it's still getting large(r)'

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

13) X̣'i-mut qəx̣-əx̣-mut   'suddenly there's lots'
     fast-very many-Inch-very

or an increase in the degree of the state ('graduative'), 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 'graduative' understanding is made possible in part by the Imperfective aspect prefix CV-, and in part by the semantics of the roots involved. All the stative 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. (k'ʷihit) X̣'aqt tiʔi x̣apay   θu ʔ(ə)   tiyʔta
       more(?)   long   this stick   than   that
       'This stick is longer than that one' (X̣'aq-aq-t 'get long(er)')

    b. (k'ʷihit) tih   tiʔi   θu ʔ(ə)   tə paʔa k'ʷax̣ʷa
       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 Comox formation shares this component of meaning.[5]
There is, however, a possible test for Noncontrol/out-of-control:
namely, unacceptability as a complement of the verb xʷah-at
'tell him to ..., order him to ...'. Transitive verbs in complement
clauses to xʷah-at normally appear with the Control Transitive
(CTr) suffix -(V)t; when I proffered equivalent sentences
with Noncontrol Transitive (NTr) -əxʷ [6] instead, the native
speaker found them quite unacceptable.

15) a. xʷah-at-uɬ č t'uč'-ut-as tə gigaθ [7]
     tell-CTr-Past 1sgSubj shoot-CTr-3SubjSbrd.. the deer

   'I told him to shoot the deer'

   b. *xʷah-at-uɬ č t'uč'-əxʷ-as tə gigaθ
                              -NTr-

16) a. xʷah-at-uɬ č č'əč'xʷ-at-as
                     cut-CTr-3SubjSbrd

   'I told him to cut it'

   b. *xʷah-at-uɬ č č'əč'xʷ-əxʷ-as
                          -NTr-

On the whole, -VC-reduplicated forms do not seem too
acceptable in complements of xʷah-at;

17) a. xʷah-aθ-as-uɬ k'ʷas-aθut-an
     tell-CTr+1sgObj-3Subj-Past hot-Reflexive-1sgSubjSbrd

   'He told me to warm up'

   b. *xʷah-aθ-as-uɬ k'ʷas-as-an
                     hot-Inch-1sgSubjSbrd

But at least occasionally they do get accepted (though maybe not spontaneously produced):

(18) x̣ʷah-at-uł č   t'us-us-as
                       quiet-Inch - 3 subj Sbrd

'I told him to be (get) quiet'

Granting that sentences like (18) may be mere elicitational 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. Stative 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 Inchoative forms. (Inchoatives from roots denoting more probably controllable properties, like t'us-um 'quiet', p'əθ 'black/dirty', etc., may possibly be somewhat more acceptable as complements to x̣ʷah-at than Inchoatives from other stative 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 shaky.)

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

(19) a. miq'-iyš   'something accidentally gets in liquid'   (miq'- 'dip')
     b. k̓ʷas-iyš 'like if you got burned from the stove'   (k̓ʷas 'hot')
     c. θiq-iyš   '(you're digging and) all of a sudden
                    the ground gives way'   (θiq-ʔam 'dig')

While the above examples ~~are~~ are Noncontrol in the sense of lacking a volitional agent, I have one possible example of the 'difficulty' sense too (cf. Thompson (1979) for these two major varieties of understandings of Noncontrol forms):

20) qah-iyš   '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 qah-iyš now' (qah-t 'lift it')

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

21)   *xʷah-at-ut č   p'əθ -iyš -as
                      black/dirty -iyš - 3subj 5bsd

The aspectual properties of -iyš 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 on which I have much data are lexical-suffix derivatives and transitive derivatives.

      As far as I can tell, lexial 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~~ still act as Inchoatives.

22) a. pəs-aʔyaxan   '(his) upper arm is numb'
     numb - (upper) arm

  b. pəs-əs-aʔyaxan   '(his) upper arm got numb'
     -Inch-

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

23) a. ɬakʷ-iqʷɬa   '(his) knee swelled up'   (ɬakʷ 'swell')
     swell - knee

  b. x̣ʼup-aʔyaxan   '(his) upper arm healed'   (x̣ʼup 'heal')
     heal -

  c. čʼət-aʔyaxan   'get cut on upper arm'   (čʼət-t 'cut it')

Transitive derivatives are formed from most stative roots and Inchoatives by means of CTr -(V)t (and NTr -əxʷ), rather than by Causative -sxʷ ~ -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 suffixes[10], -Vt [V = vowel of root] after most roots with non-schwa vowels): tih-ih-at 'make it big', x̣ʼət-ət-at 'make it stiff', etc. (Cf. NTr tih-ih-əxʷ, 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: *x̣ʼət-t seemed notably worse than x̣ʼət-ət-at, and in one case the -VC-less transitive has a markedly different sense than the -VC transitive: ʔiy-t 'do him a good turn' vs. ʔaʔy̓-ay̓-at 'make it good'[11] (ʔiyʔ 'good'). And for some stative roots transitives with and without -VC seem to coexist without obvious difference in meaning: x̣ʼaq-aq-t-at 'make it long', x̣ʼaqt-at 'make it long/stretch it out' (x̣ʼaqt 'long'). By the xʷah-at test, -VC does not contribute any Noncontrol force to the transitive as a whole:

24) a. xʷah-at-uɬ č̓ tih-ih-at-as   'I told him to make it big'
   b. xʷah-at-uɬ č̓ x̣ʼaq-aq-t-at-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 transitivizing 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.

<u>7</u>. 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, ~~in this been stative~~ it occurs only with stative roots: but within these heavy restrictions, -VC shows up in a reasonably regular way.

Footnotes

[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 Hagège 1981 and ~~various published by~~ in various published and unpublished papers by John Davis. My orthography is ~~to~~ 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 /s̓/ = [t̪θ̪]; /i, u/ are often mid; /a/ is [ɛ, eə] after palatals; /ə/ 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: /j̓, g/ → /y, w/ except syllable-initially; /ə/ 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 transitivizer, Impf = Imperfective, Inch = Inchoative, Intr = Intransitive, NTr =

Noncontrol transitivizer, Obj = object, ptc. = particle (in case I don't want to bother finding a precise gloss), Sbrd = subordinate, Stv = stative, Subj = subject.

2 Actually it may be more accurate to say that qəʔi coocurs with <u>imperfective</u> 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 Salish -VC is added to a much wider semantic range of roots than is Comox -VC)

6 -nu- before object suffixes and Passive -m (cf. Davis 1978); this is the Comox reflex of the NTr morpheme (usually something like -nəxʷ ~ -n(u)-) found elsewhere in Coast Salish.

7 Complements of xʷah-at have subject person/number marked by the subordinate subject suffixes -an 1sg, -axʷ 2sg, -as 3, -at 1pl, -ap 2pl, rather than the subject clitics č ~ čan 1sg, čxʷ ~ čaxʷ 2sg, ∅ 3, št ~ čat 1pl, čap 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, Coeur d'Alene -ilš, etc. Incidentally I am not perfectly sure -iyš is the best transcription for the Comox suffix; it sometimes sounds more like it ought to be -iyiš (phonetically often [ɪiš]).

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

i) a.   -iqʷɬa   'knee',   stv.   -iqʷɬaʔ
    b.   -aʔyaxan   'upper arm', stv.   -aʔyaxanʔ
    c.   -əwəm   'side',   stv.   -əwənʔ
    d.   -aʔwə-žən   'toe',   stv.   -aʔwə-žənʔ
    e.   -iqʷ-uʔya   'finger',   stv.   -iqʷ-uǰaʔ
    f.   -aʔana   'ear',   stv.   -aʔaʔna
    g.(?) -aʔna   '(side of) neck', stv. -anaʔ

(Allomorphy of the suffix for 'hand, lower arm' is not fully understood. -uy- appears before -ʔəm Middle: ɋ'əkʷ-uy-ʔəm 'wipe (ɋ'əkʷ-) one's hands'; -uǰaʔ appears only word-finally; and -uʔja appears word-finally and elsewhere. This may be another suffix with stative glottalization. ~~Or the there is~~ — For glottalization in other sorts of statives, note qəkʷ-imʔ 'stopped'

in ex. (7-b) above. I don't know yet whether the pattern will turn out widespread.) On the other hand, -šən 'foot/leg' has a stative form -š-i-n (the phonetic distinction [-šən] (non-stv.) / [-šin] (stv.) is slight but present, I believe); and some suffixes ending in resonants do not seem to have special stative forms: -igan 'side', -iqʷan 'head', -qen 'mouth', -uθən 'lips'. The stative forms of lexical suffixes that have them ~~stative~~ produce stative words from nonstative roots (confirmed by aspectual tests):

ii) a. ɬakʷⁱʷ -iqʷɬa-ʔ   '(his) ~~knee~~ knee is ('still') swollen'

  b. x̌'up - aʔyax̌an-ʔ   '(his) upper arm is healed'

  c. č'ət-aʔyax̌an-ʔ   '('still') have cut on arm'

In some cases,
~~Stative tt, however,~~ ∧ lexical suffixes without special stative forms appear to be ambiguous between stative and non-stative interpretations when added to nonstative roots. Stative roots, as seen from (22-a) and other examples (e.g. ʔah-iqʷɬa 'have a sore knee') do not allow the special stative forms of lexical suffixes, although the resulting word comes out stative. (Nor have stative lexical suffixes been noted with Inchoatives.)

¹⁰ Before which final /n/ of lexical suffixes is lost: x̌əs-aʔyax̌a-t 'punch him in the (upper) arm' (x̌əs-t 'punch it'), x̌əs-š-t 'punch him in the leg' (-šən 'foot/leg').

¹¹ The underlying form of the root is //ʔə͜y̌//; in ~~ʔiy̌~~ ʔiy̌ʔ, ʔiy̌-t, y̌→y syllable-finally (cf. fn. 1) and //ə// is fronted (giving phonetic [ʔey̌ʔ, ʔey̌t]); in ~~ʔaʔy̌ay̌-at~~ ʔaʔy̌ay̌-at, //y̌// remains because syllable-initial, and ə→a before /ʔ/. (// ʔy̌ // counts as a single consonant [glottalized resonant ʔ] for purposes of reduplication; why /a/ rather than /ə/ should appear in the reduplication-syllable is not clear.)

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