

13 Aspect

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13.1 Background Information and Observation

Ainu counts numerous markers for aspect and mood (e.g. Murasaki 1979; Tamura 2000; Bugaeva 2004; 2012). The language, however, has no dedicated markers to express tense, that is therefore unmarked as a verbal category. Generally, aspectual and modal constructions are formed periphrastically with the aspectual or modal marker following a notional verb, as it can be seen in the examples below. Aspectual or modal markers show different stages of grammaticalisation, so the morphological complexity featured by predicates that are marked for aspect or mood varies from case to case (e.g. Dal Corso 2020).

Example (1) shows *kusu ne*, expressing intentional mood in HA. This modal expression is made of the causal-final linker *kusu* and the copula *ne*. Example (2) shows *koyaykus* ‘not be able’, expressing incapability in SA. The modal verb *koyaykus* forms with the preceding notional verb a light verb construction (Dal Corso 2021, 188; see Lesson 7).

- (1) *Yakun ku-ye wa eci-nu-re kusu ne.*
if 1S.A-3S.O/say and 1S.A>2S.IO-3S.O/hear-CAUS INTN
‘if [so], I’m going to tell it and make you hear (= I’m going to tell you).’
(Tamura 1984, 18)

- (2) *Pirika nispa-utara ne yahka ray-ki* **koyaykus.**
be.good noble.man-COLL COP though 3P.A/3S.O/die-CAUS.NMLZ **SLV/VO/not.be.able**
'Even the noble rich men could not kill it.' (Pilsudski 1912, 240)

The above examples serve only as an illustration. In this lesson you will be focusing on aspect only.

→ *Consider this additional information...*

Although there exist no formal devices that have the primary function of expressing tense, Ainu is certainly not a tenseless language. In most cases, a predicate's relative tense reference (present, past, or future with respect to speech time) is clear from context or it may be indicated by the use of time adverbs. Furthermore, aspect has been often recognised as having semantico-pragmatic extensions to encode tense (e.g. Kindaichi 1931; Tamura 2000, 111; Dal Corso 2022). This means that the use of certain aspectual forms helps put separate events into a logical relation with each other and, by consequence, they highlight the temporal relation of said events. The same semantico-pragmatic extensions have been observed for evidentiality (Dal Corso 2018) (see Lesson 9). In Ainu, time reference (i.e. relative tense) is therefore essentially a by-product of the use of other verbal categories.

→ *Dataset 1 - Types of aspect*

Consider the following examples featuring three different aspectual forms of HA and SA. Examples not including aspectuals are also included for you to extrapolate the meaning of words. What are the three aspectual forms found in the dataset? What is the meaning of the words that constitute them? What type of aspect do they encode? Do you notice any morphological change among instances of the same aspectual form? Of what kind? How can you account for them? How do aspectual markers with the same function differ formally between HA and SA?

Set 1.1 (Hokkaidō Ainu)

1. *Tumunci kamuy umurek wa oka.*
'The evil gods were married.' (Tamura 1984, 20)
2. *Menoko suwe kor keraan pe ne.*
'When the woman [my wife] cooked it, it was delicious.' (Bugaeva 2004, 283)
3. *Cise kor kur soypeka omanan kor an.*
'The owner of the house was walking around outside.' (Bugaeva 2004, 319)
4. *Pista sanan wa ne tasiro ka isam.*
'I went down to the shore and that knife wasn't [there].' (Tamura 1985, 38)
5. *Nea o kur ka ray wa isam.*
'That man on board [of the boat] ended up dying (= died) too.' (Tamura 1984, 24)
6. *Areska wa an.*
'I had raised her.' (Bugaeva 2004, 307)
7. *Nea matnepo ramatu uk [...] hine ek kor an.*
'He took that young girl's soul [...] and was coming [back].' (Tamura 1985, 60)
8. *Aonaha anakne sumiyaki sisam ne hine okaan.*
'Our father is a Japanese coal-maker and we are (= live) [here].' (Tamura 1985, 8)
9. *Kamuy asurne anu kor okaan.*
'I was hearing it as a news [from] the gods.' (Tamura 1985, 22)
10. *Kunne tere wa okay akusu sirkunne.*
'As they were waiting for nightfall, it became dark.' (Bugaeva 2004, 178)

Set 1.2 (Sakhalin Ainu)

1. *Oha kemihi pateh [...] pon nay neeno an teh netopakihhi isam.*
‘There was only his blood [...] [flowing] like a little river and his corpse was not [there].’ (Pilsudski 1912, 110)
2. *‘Ehankeno ‘an pe ka ‘emuyke kehke wa cokoko wa ‘isam.*
‘[In the confusion of the battle, the monster] ended up breaking and felling even all the things (= the trees) around.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 396)
3. *Soyta oka utah temana kihci kusu okayahci?*
‘How were the people outside doing?’ (Dal Corso 2021, 193)
4. *‘Onnewrah ramrenkayne uyna wa eyhoh.*
‘He picks up eagle’s feathers as he wishes and sells them.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 363)
5. *Hosipihci nukarahci kusu neeroh hekacita kanna sapahci.*
‘Since they saw them returning, those boys went back down [to the village].’ (Dal Corso 2021, 260)
6. *‘Otakata ‘ampene ruwehehcin maake teh an.*
‘[The animals] had clearly left their footprints on the beach.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 309)
7. *Kemaha ka ‘okore tuyteh wa ‘isam.*
‘Even her legs ended up falling off.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 350)
8. *Susucayteh‘orowa hemata rusasoma rahki kusu an.*
‘Some kind of straw bundle was hanging from the willow’s limbs.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 254)
9. *‘Ahciutah na henkeutah na ‘okayahci.*
‘There were both old women and old men.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 384)
10. *Tumi kihci kusu suy taata sapahci.*
‘They went down there again to make war.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 254)
11. *Nah kii yayne ‘ampene pakakara teh ‘an.*
‘She acted [[like] so and eventually she got completely crazy.’ (adapted from Dal Corso 2021, 347)

13.2 Research

Now look at this other dataset and also read the examples from other languages given after it, which you will need for the third and last activity of this lesson.

→ *Dataset 2 - Functional overlap and semantic differences*

Consider the following examples that feature two more aspectual markers of HA and SA respectively. Are there other markers in the two varieties that are similar in function to the new ones introduced here? How would you explain this variety of forms to express the same (or a similar) function? Are there any uses of aspectual markers that remain difficult to account for given the data provided?

Set 2.1 (Hokkaidō Ainu)

1. *Apepasuy kor wa a wa ...*

‘He took fire-chopsticks and sat down and ...’ (Bugaeva 2004, 141)

2. *Atuy oarsat wa isam.*

‘The sea dried up completely.’ (Bugaeva 2004, 339)

3. *Areska wa an.*

‘I had raised her.’ (Bugaeva 2004, 307)

4. *Ray’an wa an a ayne ...*

‘I had [almost] died and then...’ (Bugaeva 2004, 159)

5. *Kumonrayke a.*

‘I have worked.’ (Bugaeva 2012, 495)

6. *Tani sikeruraan okere.*

‘I finished moving the luggage already.’ (OS 1979, line 87)

7. *Hosipi wa isam.*

‘[The uncle] went away (= returned).’ (Bugaeva 2004, 124)

8. *Tu tamasay kukor wa kan.*

‘I have gotten two necklaces.’ (adapted from Bugaeva 2012, 495)

9. *Nea o kur ka ray wa isam.*

‘That man on board [of the boat] ended up dying (= died) too.’
(Tamura 1984, 24)

10. **Kumonrayke wa an.*

‘I have worked.’

11. *Orowa uwerankarap’an okere wa ...*

‘Then we finished greeting each other and ...’ (Bugaeva 2004, 259)

12. *Akor cise aokere hine ...*

‘I finished my house and ...’ (OS 1981, line 1940)

13. *Opitta arayke wa isam.*

‘We killed off all [of them].’ (Bugaeva 2004, 178)

14. *Kucasoy pak arkian a korka ...*

‘We had reached the outside of the hunting hut, but ...’ (Bugaeva 2004, 192)

15. *Tumunci kamuy umurek wa oka.*

‘The evil gods were married.’ (Tamura 1984, 20)

Set 2.2 (Sakhalin Ainu)

1. *‘Ehankeno ‘an pe ka ‘emyuke kehke wa cokoko wa ‘isam.*

‘[In the confusion of the battle, the monster] ended up breaking and felling even all the things (= the trees) around.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 396)

2. *Ciseorowano pa numa ea.*

‘Smoke was rising from the house.’ (Pilsudski 1912, 99)

3. *Hekaci’ihunkeh ‘ehci ike ‘ekokahci ‘an.*

‘They ate the baby boy’s placenta and they had gotten sick from it.’
(adapted from Dal Corso 2021, 255)

4. *Wen poro nii sineh wahka tura makan ‘an.*

‘A huge tree had come up with the water.’ (Dal Corso 2021, 367)

5. *'Ipe 'okore 'anee hemaka.*
'We finished eating all the food.' (Dal Corso 2021, 379)
6. *'Otakata 'ampene ruwehehcin maake teh an.*
'[The animals] had clearly left their footprints on the beach.'
(Dal Corso 2021, 309)
7. *Sine sukuh aynu tata an ea kusu an.*
'One young man was [standing] there.' (Pilsudski 1912, 122)
8. *Neya 'emus kara hemakahci.*
'They finished making that sword.' (Dal Corso 2021, 263)
9. *Omantene hemaka teh tani asin.*
'Eventually he stopped and at last went out.' (Dal Corso 2021, 403)
10. *Kemaha ka 'okore tuyteh wa 'isam.*
'Even her legs ended up falling off.' (Dal Corso 2021, 350)
11. *Monimahpo 'omayehe'enkaskewa 'ahte teh 'an.*
'Someone had hung [their loincloth] above the young woman's futon.'
(Murasaki 1989, 3)
12. *Uncionne inkaran koh suke ea.*
'When I looked towards the fire, [my wife] was cooking.' (Pilsudski 1912, 134)
13. *Henke kayki 'ampene 'emuyke sinka hemaka.*
'Even the old man ended up being tired.' (Dal Corso 2021, 374)
14. *Henke tani 'isam weepkere utah nuu teh 'an.*
'The people had heard the rumor that the old man eventually died.'
(Dal Corso 2021, 366)

Examples from Other Languages...

English (Germanic, UK)

(examples from van Lambalgen, Hamm 2005, 90-6)

Know

Push

Push a cart

Reach the top

Build a house

Flash

Verbs in any given language differ strikingly one from the other not only with regards to their pronunciation, syntactic valency, etc., but also with regards to the **type of event(s)** they denote – i.e. their **core semantics**. Events in the real world do not have all the same properties: some can be prolonged, some cannot, some subsume a change of some kind, some others do not. The English verbs above serve to illustrate the verb classes usually distinguished in languages according to the properties of the denoted event. The verb ‘know’ is here an example of a **state verb** – it denotes a type of event which subsumes no change nor is initiated by a force of some kind. The verb ‘push’ alone is considered an **action (in the narrow sense) verb** – it denotes a type of event initiated by a force (e.g. someone starting a motion) but is subsumes no change whatsoever. In the predicate ‘push a cart’, on the contrary, the verb ‘push’ is an **action (in the wide sense) verb** – it denotes a type of event that is initiated by someone and that subsumes some kind of change (in this case, a change of position in the place where the cart is). The verb ‘reach’ in ‘reach the top’ is called an **achievement verb** – it denotes a type of event subsuming a change that happens suddenly and that usually implies 1) that the situation present before (here someone’s being on their way to the top), which culminates with the sudden change, ceases to exist and 2) the achievement of a new state of things (here being at the top of some place). ‘Build’ in ‘build a house’ is referred to as an **accomplishment verb** – it denotes a type of event initiated by someone, that subsumes some kind of change (here the house being built), that culminates (gradually) with a change (the finished house), and ends with the achievement of a new state of things (a house where before there was nothing). Finally, ‘flash’ is referred to as a **semelfactive verb** – it denotes a type of event that only has a culmination, but lacks a force that initiates it, a resultant state, and any kind of change. These are the six classes of **Aktionsart** outlined by van Lambalgen, Hamm (2005), which include the four classes originally distinguished by Vendler (1967). Defining the *Aktionsart* of a predicate is useful to understand its **incompatibilities with certain categories or lexical items** (e.g. time adverbs, aspect, number, definiteness, ...) that, with their function or semantics, affect the internal structure of the event. It is important to remember that the *Aktionsart* of verbs that are synonymous in different languages may be very different – that is, not all languages **perceive events the same way**. Moreover, one verb of a language may belong to **more than one Aktionsart class**, depending on the type and semantics of its arguments and adjuncts.

Japanese (Japonic, Japan)

Chawan-ga *koware-te* *iru.*
teacup-NOM break.TE be

‘The teacup has/is broken.’

Intended meaning: * ‘The teacup is breaking.’

Hito-ga *kōhī-o* *nonde* *iru.*
person-NOM coffee-ACC drink.TE be

‘A person is drinking coffee.’

Intended meaning: * ‘A person has drunk coffee.’

One category that is found to **interact closely with *Aktionsart*** is aspect. In various languages certain types of aspect cannot be used with predicates/verbs belonging to certain *Aktionsarten* because the properties of aspect are **incompatible with the event structure** denoted by the predicate/verb. In Japanese the verb *kowareru* ‘break’ is a static (instantaneous) verb, which means that the event of breaking is perceived as not possibly having a duration – a teacup is either broken or it is not. On the contrary, *nomu* ‘drink’ is a dynamic verb as it denotes an event with a duration – the event persists all the time a person takes to drink and finish coffee. The auxiliary form *-te iru* is employed in Japanese to express both progressive and resultative aspect. **The reading as one or the other** is decided on the basis of the *Aktionsart* of the predicate. Japanese shows a case where an aspectual form can be used with different *Aktionsarten* and takes different readings, but in many languages it can be the case that a certain aspectual form is simply **completely unacceptable**.

13.3 Analysis and Description

Describe, in no less than 300 words, the HA aspectual markers *wa an/okay* and *wa isam*, and the SA aspectual markers *teh an* and *wa isam*. Draw from the examples in Set 1 and Set 2 where needed.

- What is the internal semantics and the function(s) as aspectuals of these expressions? How would you define them?
- What are the differences with the expressions obtained with *a* in HA and *an/ea* in SA, and with *okere* in HA and *hemaka* in SA?
- Can you account for the use of double aspect? What is suggested by these examples? What remains difficult to explain? Be specific about problematic cases.
- What issues should be addressed to have a better understanding of aspect in Ainu?

