The "Durative" in Blackfoot: Understanding Imperfectivity

Joel Dunham
University of British Columbia, Vancouver

1. Introduction

The morpheme ȧ- in Blackfoot has properties suggesting that it is either an imperfective or a progressive marker. This paper makes the following three claims: first, ȧ- marks imperfectivity; second, imperfectivity has a modal component; and third, ȧ-prefixixed forms of inchoative statives in Blackfoot have a unique habitual ingestion into state meaning.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces the imperfective, the progressive and the durative. Section 3 through 6 argue respectively that a- is required for in-progress meaning, contains a modal component canceling the culmination entailment, is employed to express present habitual meaning and is compatible with stative predicates with a resulting habitual ingestion into state meaning. Finally, section 7 makes the argument that the imperfective in Indo-European languages (including German) has a modal component and concludes with the claim that Blackfoot ȧ- is imperfective.

2. Imperfectivity, Progressivity and Durativity

2.1 The Imperfective and the Progressive

There appears to be no clear consensus in the literature on what the terms "imperfective" and "progressive" mean or on the extent of their crosslinguistic validity. Comrie (1976) offers the classification in (1).

* My many thanks to my consultant and friend Beatrice Bullshields for her kindness and for sharing with me her language. I would also like to thank Lisa Matthewson, Hotze Rullmann, Martina Witschko, Shujun Chin, Amelia Reis Silva, Solveiga Arnoskaite, Sonja Thoma, Mario Chavez-Péon and Albertina Dunham for helping me to collect and understand the data, analyze and present it and for being language consultants for me. Research supported by SSHRC Standard Research Grants 410-2005-0875 (awarded to Hotze Rullmann and Lisa Matthewson) and 410-2006-2166 (awarded to Martina Witschko).

© 2007 by Joel Dunham
The hierarchical structure in (1) shows imperfectivity as a cluster of semantic properties, of which progressivity represents a subset. As codified in this structure, Comrie's (1976) discussion claims or suggests that imperfective forms express both in-progress and habitual meaning and are compatible with statives, whereas progressive forms express in-progress but not habitual meanings and are not compatible with statives. (Note that the equation of Comrie's *nonprogressivity* with compatibility with statives is my own interpretation of what he means by "nonprogressive"). Since the terminal nodes "nonprogressive" and "progressive" are grouped together under the node "continuous," figure (1) also implies that if an aspectual marker expresses habituality, it must then either have both *continuous* properties (i.e., compatibility with statives and in-progress meaning) or neither. That is, crosslinguistically we should observe an absence of aspectual forms which mark, for example, habitual and in-progress meaning but are not compatible with statives.

The progressive construction in English has been observed by Dowty (1979) and Landman (1992) to have a modal component which cancels the entailment of culmination of telic predicates. The *Imperfective Paradox* is the name given to the above observation, which may be illustrated by pointing out that an activity like *Mary was running* entails *Mary ran*, whereas an accomplishment like *Mary was baking a cake* does not entail *Mary baked a cake.*

Imperfectivity has been analyzed by Klein (1994) as denoting a subset relation between Reichenbach-ian reference (RT) and event (ET) times. Kratzer (1998) formalizes this insight as follows:

\[
\text{imperfective: } \lambda P_{\alpha, \beta, \gamma} \ldots \lambda t, \lambda w, \exists e ( t \subseteq \text{time(e)} \land P(e)(w) = 1 )
\]

'reference time included in event time'

However, unlike the case of the progressive in English, this elegant analysis of the imperfective lacks any reference to a modal component. In fact, Kratzer (2002) claims
explicitly, in contrast to data I have gathered, that the German imperfective-like simple past form lacks such a modal component.

Table 1 summarizes the properties of crosslinguistic imperfectivity and progressivity as gleaned from the above sources. Note that the "?" signifies the lack of consensus on whether there is a modal component in imperfectivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Progressive</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in-progress meaning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modal component</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual meaning</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compatible w/ states</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 The "durative" in Blackfoot

In the descriptive grammars of Blackfoot, ā- has been labeled "durative" (cf. Uhlenbeck 1938:175-77; Taylor 1969:300; Frantz 1997:32-34). Frantz (1997) says that ā- indicates an event is "on-going or continuous". He further notes (personal communication) that all the uses he has observed ā- being put to "describe processes or other events which can be seen as having at least some duration (including iterative)" and that ā- is seldom used with "true stative verbs", although we may note that only three verbs are labeled "stative" in Frantz's Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Affixes and Roots. Taylor (1969:300) states that ā- "means either that the action of the verb is actually in progress (the commonest meaning) or that the action occurs generally. Uhlenbeck has termed the former the durative aspect, the latter the iterative aspect."

2.3 Summary of the Properties of ā-

The morpheme ā- is a verbal modifier prefix (a preverb in Algonquianist terminology) and fieldwork has revealed it to have the following semantic properties. First, ā- is required when describing events that are ongoing while another occurs or during a salient reference time (in-progress meaning). Second, ā- cancels the entailment of culmination in telic predicates (modal component). Third, ā- is employed to express habitual or characteristic events (habitual meaning). Fourth, ā- is compatible with stative predicates where the resultant meaning is habitual ingestion into the state denoted by inherently inchoative statives (compatibility with statives; see Chin forthcoming). The following four sections will present the data and generalizations supporting my contention that ā- possesses the above four properties.

3. ā- Expresses In-progress Meaning

3.1 ā- Required to Express In-progress Meaning

ā- is required with accomplishments and activities in order to express that the event is in progress at a given reference time. In example (2a) the accomplishment o'taksinaaki
 prefixed with á- is compatible with the adverb anohk 'now' while the in (2b) the form prefixed with i- PAST is ungrammatical with anohk 'now'.

(2) a. nitáó'taksinaakj  anohk
    nit-á-o'tak-sinaaki  anohk
    1^{1}-DUR-round-draw  now
    'I'm drawing a circle right now'

    b. * nitsí'taksinaakj  anohk
       nit-i-o'tak-sinaaki  anohk
       1-PAST-round-draw  now
       Target: 'I'm drawing a circle now'

(3a) shows á- with an activity verb producing compatibility with anohk 'now' while (3b) shows that the bare form is ungrammatical with anohk 'now'.

(3) a. nitáíhpiyi  anohk
    nit-á-íhpiyi  anohk
    1-DUR-dance(vai)  now
    'I am dancing'

    b. * nitsspiyi  anohk
       nit-íhpiyi  anohk
       1-dance(vai)  now
       Speaker's Comment: that would mean 'I danced now'

(4a) shows that á- in the main clause with a punctual subordinate when-clause results in an in-progress interpretation; while in (4b), removing á- from the main clause results in a perfective interpretation and bars the in-progress interpretation.

(4) a. oto'toohsi  matönni  anná  John
    ot-o'too-hsi  matönni  ann-wa  John
    3-arrive-CONJ yesterday  DEM-AN.SG  John
    anná  Mary  áíhpiyi
    ann-wa  Mary  á-íhpiyi
    DEM-AN.SG  Mary  DUR-dance
    'Yesterday Mary was dancing when John came'

---

1 Guide to abbreviations: 1=first-person; 2=second-person; 3=third-person; 4=obviative third-person; 21=first-person plural inclusive; SG=singular; PL=plural; AN=animate; IN=inanimate; DUR=durative; PAST=past; DEM=demonstrative; CONJ=conjunctive; TITHM=transitive inanimate theme suffix; NEG=negation; PRO=‘attached pronoun’; NONAFF=nonaffirmative suffix; NONPAR=nonparticular; INT=intensifier; PAST.HAB=past habitual; SUBJ=subjective; INCH=inclothative; INV=inverse; (vai)=animate intransitive verb; (vii)=inanimate intransitive verb; (vta)=transitive animate verb; (vti)=transitive inanimate verb;
b. oto'toohsi matónni anná John
   ot-’too-hsi matónni ann-wa John
3-arrive-CONJ yesterday DEM-AN.SG John
   anná Mary ihpiiyí
   ann-wa Mary ihpiiyí
   DEM-AN.SG Mary dance

'Yesterday Mary (had already) danced when John came'
* 'Yesterday Mary was dancing when John came'

3.2 ᾳ- expresses more than just duration

The above data might be taken to indicate that ᾳ- simply forces the denotation of the verb to which it is prefixed to be an event with duration. In support of the claim that this is not the case but rather that ᾳ- is a species of imperfective in the broad sense where imperfective includes progressive, it is shown that when prefixed to an accomplishment verb it cannot be used to describe a perfective, i.e., a completed, event. The following data was elicited with the aid of video. Videos of the author making a flower or drinking water were played for the consultant. The (a) utterances are her descriptions of the event after its completion while the (b) utterances are her description of the event during the second playing of the video.

In the examples in (5), the accomplishment in the (a) form lacks the ᾳ- prefix (apiaistotaki) while that in the (b) form has it (apiaistotaki). The (a) form cannot be used to describe the situation that holds after the event displayed on the video has culminated. The (b) form, on the other hand, can be used to describe this situation.

(5) a. anna Joel á'pistotáki pisátsasski VF
    ann-a Joel á’p-istotaki pisát-sáisski
    DEM-AN.SG Joel around-make(vai) fancy-grow(vii)
    'Joel made a flower'
    Good after completion of flower  
    Bad during making of flower

b. anna Joel á'piaistotáki pisátsasski VF
    ann-a Joel á’p-á-istotaki pisát-sáisski
    DEM-AN.SG Joel around-DUR-make fancy-grow
    'Joel is (in the process of) making a flower'
    Bad after completion of flower  
    Good during making of flower

3.2 Summary

ᾳ- prefixed to an eventive verb (i.e., an accomplishment or activity) yields an in-progress interpretation (i.e., the ET is interpreted as a super-interval of an explicit or implicit RT) and never a perfective interpretation (i.e., where the ET is a sub-interval of the RT). It is
thus concluded that á- is a type of imperfective marker in the broad sense where the term subsumes progressivity.

4. **Á- Has a Modal Component**

That á- has a modal component that removes the entailment that a telic predicate must culminate, is shown by the fact that accomplishments without á- denote events that must have culminated, whereas accomplishments with á- denote events that may still be in progress.

In (6a), the form iyákoki matónni, meaning 'he put up his tipi yesterday', is prefixed by the morpheme i- (here labeled PAST) and it is ungrammatical to utter (6a) and then deny that the person in question finished putting up his tipi. In (6b), in contrast, the form ayákoki matónni, meaning 'he was putting up his tipi yesterday', is prefixed by á- and may be followed by stating that the tipi was not completely set up. The examples in (7) show the same pattern, but in that case the ungrammatical form is bare (i.e., is lacking both the i- and á- prefixes). This shows that the lack of a modal component is not peculiar to the i- prefixed forms but is common to the bare forms as well.

(6) a. * iyákoki matónni ki annohk sáákyákoki
    i-yáakokiyyi matónni ki annohk saaki-á-yáakokiyyi
    PAST-erect.tipi yesterday and now still-DUR-erect.tipi
    Target: 'he put his tipi up yesterday and right now he's still putting it up'

b. ayákoki matónni ki annohk sáákyákoki
    á-yáakokiyyi matónni ki annohk saaki-á-yáakokiyyi
    DUR-erect.tipi yesterday and now still-DUR-erect.tipi
    'he was putting up his tipi yesterday and right now he's still putting it up'

(7) a. * anná á’pisstotsim omi naapiyoyis
    ann-á a’p-istotsi-m om-yi naapiyoyis
    DEM-AN.SG around-build(vti)-TITHM DEM-IN.SG house
    ki sáákiya’páisstotsimmáí
    and still-around-DUR-build-TITHM-3S-PRO
    Target: 'he built that house and he is still building it'

b. anná á’paisstotsim omi naapiyoyis
    ann-á a’p-á-istotsi-m om-yi naapiyoyis
    DEM-AN.SG around-DUR-build-TITHM DEM-IN.SG house
    ki sáákiya’páisstotsimmáí
    and still-around-DUR-build-TITHM-3S-PRO
    'he is building that house and he is still building it'
Thus á- has a modal component: it removes the entailment – present in bare and i-
 prefixed forms – that the event denoted by a telic predicate has culminated. As a result, the
 Imperfective Paradox – claimed in subsection 2.1 for the English progressive and
 contested for various Indo-European imperfective forms – is present in á- prefixed forms
 in Blackfoot.

5. Á- and Habitual Meaning

5.1 Á- Is Used to Express Present Habitual Meaning

To establish that á- is used to express habitual meaning with eventive verbs, examples
(8), (9) and (10) show an activity, an accomplishment and an achievement all prefixed by
á- and all expressing habitual feats or characteristic traits of a given individual.

(8) áa nitáó'tsis
áa nit-á-o'tsisii
yes 1-DUR-smoke(vai)
'yes I smoke'
Comment: Good response to kiikatayó'tsisiihpá? 'do you smoke?'

(9) oma ninaa áíssinaki matápi
om-wa ninaa á-sinaaki matápi-i
DEM-AN.SG man DUR-draw(vai) person-NONPAR
'that man draws people'

(10) nitáóhkooní'pi
nit-á-ohkooni-hp-yi
1-DUR-find(vti)-THIM-PL
'I find things'

In contrast, forms lacking á- cannot be used to express habituality. Examples (11) and
(12), show this for both the bare and i-prefixed forms.

(11) áa nitóó'tsis
áa nit-o'tsisii
yes 1-smoke
'yes I smoked'
* 'yes I smoke'

(12) aa nitsíikska's
áa nit-i-okska'si
yes 1-PAST-run
'yes I ran'
* 'yes I ran'
Thus á- is used to express present habitual meaning while bare and i-prefixed forms are not.

5.2 Past Habitual Meaning

Past habitual meaning for my consultant is expressed via the prefix aisaok(a)- (13). I have not found this morpheme in Frantz' dictionary or grammar; it is possibly morphologically complex and may contain á-. The possibility that other forms, such as the bare or i-prefixed forms, can express past habitual meaning has not yet been tested.

(13) nitáisoookaisimí
    nit-aisooka-simi
    l-PAST.HAB-drink
    'I used to get drunk'

Speaker's Comment: this implies that I do not drink anymore

As can be seen from the comment, this construction appears to have the same implicature as the English construction 'X used to VERB', i.e. that 'X does not VERB any longer'.

6. Compatibility with Statics

6.1 The Change and State Verb Class

A large number of stative-like predicates in Blackfoot appear to be inherently inchoative (cf. similar claims made for statics in Salish languages: e.g., in Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Bar-el 2005), Sencoten (Kiyota 2004) and St'át'imcets (Davis forthcoming:chap. 17)). Shujun Chin (personal communication) has termed such predicates Change and State (CAS) statics and has suggested they contain a BECOME predicate in their semantic representation. Chin finds evidence for CAS statics in the semantic patterning of several groups of verbs with the aspeutal prefixes á-, aaka-

'already', iksist- 'finish/stop' and saaki- 'still'.

With activities, aaka- produces a 'has already VERBed' perfect-like meaning, i.e., a past event with present relevance. (14b) shows that prefixing aaka- to the activity 'dance' results in the translation 'danced already' or 'has already danced'.

(14) a. anna Rafa ihpiyi
    ann-wa Rafa ihpiyi
    DEM-AN.SG Rafa dance
    'Rafa danced'

b. anna Rafa akaaihpiyi
    ann-wa Rafa aakaaihpiyi
    DEM-AN.SG Rafa AKAA-dance
    'Rafa danced already' (Shujun Chin forthcoming)

'Kafa has already danced'
(15b) shows that akaa- prefixed to the CAS stative 'be tall' results in both the past ingression into state reading 'he got tall' as well as the holds now reading 'he is tall now'.

(15) a. anna  Joel  iksspita
    ann-wa Joel  ik-sspita
    DEM-AN.SG Joel  INT-tall
    'Joel is tall'

    b. anna  Joel  akaaiksspita
    ann-wa Joel  akaa-ik-sspita
    DEM-AN.SG Joel  AKAA-INT-tall
    'Joel is tall now' (Shujun Chin forthcoming)
    'Joel got tall'

(16b) shows iksist- prefixed to an activity resulting in a stopped/finished VERBing reading.

(16) a. anna  Rafa  ihpiyi
    ann-wa Rafa  ihpiyi
    DEM-AN.SG Rafa  dance
    'Rafa danced'

    b. anna  Rafa  ikstsihpiyi
    ann-wa Rafa  iksist-ihpiyi
    DEM-AN.SG Rafa  finish-dance (Shujun Chin forthcoming)
    'Rafa finished/stopped dancing'

(17b) shows iksist- prefixed to the stative sspita 'be tall' allowing either an interpretation where the state stops holding – 'he quit BEing tall' – or an interpretation where the transition into a state stops occurring – 'he quit GETting taller'.

(17) a. anna  Joel  iksspita
    ann-wa Joel  ik-sspita
    DEM-AN.SG Joel  INT-tall
    'Joel is tall'

    b. anna  Joel  ikstssspita
    ann-wa Joel  iksist-sspita
    DEM-AN.SG Joel  finish-tall (Shujun Chin forthcoming)
    'Joel quit being tall'
    'Joel quit getting taller'

Data such as these lead Chin to conclude that some Blackfoot stative verbs are inherently inchoative.
6.2 Habitual Ingression Into State (HIS) With CAS Statives

The prefix á- can also affix to CAS statives, resulting in what I call the Habitual Ingression into State (HIS) meaning. That is, á- + CAS STATIVE means 'X gets STATE (all the time, whenever Y does Z, etc.)'

The data in examples (18-20) are typical of the behaviour of á-prefixes CAS verbs. Example (18) shows the bare form expressing the holds now meaning, while in (19) and (20) the á-prefix form áisspita expresses the HIS meaning.

(18) Anna Joel iksspita (Shujun Chin forthcoming)
    ann-wa Joel ik-sspita
    DEM-AN.SG Joel INT-tall
    'Joel is tall'

(19) Anna Joel aisspita
    ann-wa Joel a-sspita
    DEM-AN.SG Joel DUR-tall
    *'Joel is tall'
    'Joel gets tall'
    Context offered: this can be said in a context where every morning Joel magically gets tall and then shrinks again every night.

(20) nitáisspita óyiiniki ó'sohksista'pi
    nit-á-sspitaa oyii-ýiniki á'o'tsohksista'p-yi
    1-DUR-tall eat(vai)-1SG.SUBJ pill-IN.SG
    'I get tall when I eat a pill'

However, now we have the challenge of explaining why the á- + CAS STATIVE form is not used to express the holds now meaning. In order to account for this, I tentatively propose that since the holds now meaning is already expressed by the bare form the á-prefixed form is blocked from expressing that meaning.

6.3 Are There Plain Statives in Blackfoot?

Chin (personal communication) also conjectures that some states may be Plain States (PS), i.e., states without a BECOME predicate causing inherent inchoativity. Such states should not, therefore, generate the HIS meaning when combined with á-. In fact, we do find a class of stative predicates for which the HIS interpretation does not occur with á-, as shown in (21) and (22) below.

(21) kitsiksikai'koowan
    kit-sik-ika-ikowan
    2-black-foot-young.being
    'you are a Blackfoot'
The "durative" in Blackfoot

(22) * kitáísiksik'koowan
kit-á-sik-ika-ikowan
2-DUR-black-foot-young.being
Target: 'you become a Blackfoot'
Context offered: imagine someone like Grey Owl is continually
pretending to be a Blackfoot person

The observant reader will notice that sikskik'koowan appears to be an individual-
level state. Kratzer (1995) argues that individual-level states lack a Davidsonian spatio-
temporal argument. The form in (23) shows that the prefix it- 'then/there', which could be
considered to introduce such a Davidsonian argument explicitly, is incompatible with
siksikai'koowan, thus strengthening the claim that this predicate is individual-level.

(23) ? kitsitsiksikai'koowan matónni
kit-í-t-sik-ika-ikowan matónni
2-then-black-foot-young.being yesterday
'you were a Blackfoot yesterday'
Speaker's Comment: 'Maybe (you could say that) if someone adopted you.
But nobody would normally say that.'

In fact, there is a logic to correlation between stage-level and CAS statives: since
individual-level statives denote more permanent properties that cannot easily come to
repeatedly hold of a given individual, they would be averse to the iterative HIS
interpretation normally bestowed by á-. Whether there are in fact stage-level non-CAS
statives in Blackfoot is an empirical question that I leave to future research.

6.4 Summary

The suffixation of á- to CAS statives has been shown to result in HIS meaning.
Furthermore, the hypothesis that the use of the bare form blocks the á-prefixed form from
expressing the holds now meaning can be used to predict the incompatibility of á- with
individual-level non-CAS statives. Since an individual cannot "habitually ingress" into a
permanent individual-level state and since the holds now interpretation is unavailable for
á-prefixed forms, there are no interpretations left for á-prefixed individual-level non-
CAS statives to express.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Modality in Imperfectivity

As discussed above, the presence of a modal component cancelling culmination
entailments in imperfectives has been contested (see Kratzer 2002). I present data to
support the claim that the French imparfait, the Spanish imperfecto and the German
imperfective-like simple past all possess such a modal component. Examples (24) and
(25) make the claim for French and Spanish.
(24) Jean mangeait cette sandwich mais il ne
John eat-IMPF DEM sandwich but he NEG
l'a pas fini-
it-AUX NEG finish-PP-AGR
'John was eating that sandwich but he didn't finish it' – French *imparfait

(25) Él construisa un-a casa pero no la acabó
he build-IMPF DET-AGR house but NEG it finish-1SG.PST
'He was building a house but he did not finish it' – Spanish *imperfecto

The data cited by Kratzer (2002) to argue against a modal component in the
German imperfective-like simple past (26) is instead indicative, I suggest, of the lexical
aspectual properties of the verb *verspeisen 'eat up, consume'. According to my
consultants, if this verb in (26a) is replaced by another, such as *essen 'to eat', then
cancellation of the entailment that the event has culminated may be effected by (26b)
afterswards.

(26) a. Wieland saß damals (gerade) im Gasthaus und *verspeiste einen Hummer
 'Wieland was sitting in the pub then and was consuming a lobster.'

b. # Er hätte bestimmt mehr als nur ein par Bissen gegessen, wenn ihm ein
übereifriger Kellner night den Teller weggenommen hätte
 'He would certainly have eaten more than a few bites if an over-zealous
waiter hadn't taken his plate away.'

The French, Spanish and German data support the claim that imperfective forms
in these languages possess a modal component. In light of the fact that this claim was
only contested for German (Kratzer 2002), we have evidence to support the broader claim
that imperfectivity in general possesses a modal component.

7.2 Blackfoot â- is Imperfective

Table 2 summarizes the properties, garnered from fieldwork and the literature, of
crosslinguistic progressivity, imperfectivity and Blackfoot â-. The rightmost two
columns show that Blackfoot â- patterns like an imperfective and not like a progressive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Progressivity</th>
<th>Imperfectivity</th>
<th>Blackfoot â-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* in-progress meaning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* modal component</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* habitual meaning</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* compatible w/ states</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ (HIS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Note that the corresponding perfective forms (Fr: *Jean a mangé cette sandwich mais il ne l'a
pas finie; Sp: *El construyó una casa pero no la acabó) are ungrammatical.
The three claims from section 1 have now been supported. The data have shown that i) á- marks imperfectivity; ii) imperfectivity possesses a modal component; and iii) inchoative stative verbs in Blackfoot result in a unique habitual ingestion into state meaning for á-prefixed forms.

7.3 Discussion and Avenues of Future Research

Any attempt at a more explanatory analysis of imperfectivity via a unification of its various semantic properties must begin with observations of possible parallels between them. In this spirit, I put forward some intriguing parallels and discuss their implications for future research.

7.3.1 Parallels Between Habituality and Other Imperfective Properties

First consider the possible parallel between habitual and in-progress meaning in that an event is viewed "from an internal perspective" under both these interpretations. Under the habitual interpretation, it might be claimed that the event is temporally larger and more complex, consisting of several iterations, whereas under the in-progress interpretation, the event is temporally shorter and is simple. Consider a Romance language like French where the imparfait expresses both past in-progress and past habitual meanings.

(27) Dave courrait
'Dave was running'
'Dave used to run'

A second parallel exists between habitual and in-progress interpretations in that the former, like the latter, appears to have a modal component. Consider that one may truthfully say of an individual X that 'X VERBs' even if 'X VERBed' is not true for any time t. For example Bob sells linguistics books is true if Bob owns a bookstore where linguistics books are on the shelves even if Bob has never sold a book on linguistics. The fact that my Blackfoot consultant often translates á- + EVENTIVE constructions with an English modal is further suggestive of a modal aspect to habituality.

(28) nitáòhkooni'pi
maatáákists
nit-á-ohkooni-hp-yi
maatáák-ists
1-DUR-find(vti)-TíTHM-PL
potato-IN.PL
'I find potatoes'
'I can find potatoes'

Thus we have a second parallel between habitual and in-progress meaning: just as Jim is building a house can be uttered without certainty that Jim will ever finish the house, so too Bob sells linguistics books can be uttered without certainty that Bob has ever actually sold a linguistics book.
A third parallel is visible between habitual meaning and stative predicates (cf. Carlson & Pelletier 1995) as both have a characterizing function. The habitual he kills is more or less synonymous with the stative predication he is a killer. In fact, in Blackfoot both of these meanings would be expressed using the same á-prefixes form (29).

(29) áñ'iki
á-i'ñiki
DUR-kill(vai)

'he kills' OR 'he's a murderer'

One approach to understanding the parallel between habitals and statics would be to call them generics and analyze them as "bare predicates" denoting strongly homogeneous properties of individuals (see Rothstein 2004 where strongly homogeneous properties are defined as necessarily holding of an individual at any subinterval of the interval at which they are claimed to hold).

To summarize, we have the following suggestive parallels. First, both habitual and in-progress meaning can be understood as denoting an "internal view of a situation". Second, both habitual and in-progress meaning appear to have modal components. Third, both habituality and stative predications characterize individuals.

7.3.2 Summary and Next Steps

Concerning the parallel between habitual (or characterizing) interpretation and statives, Carlson and Pelletier (1995:12) state that "if the language under consideration has a linguistic form which excludes static predicates, as the progressive in English does, this form will typically exclude characterizing interpretations as well." The Blackfoot data on á– specifically its compatibility with habitual meaning and with statives – support the complementary corollary of this claim: compatibility with statics is coupled with presence of habitual meaning. This further suggests that an emphasis on the parallel between habituality and stativity (as discussed above) would be on the right track towards an explanation of why these interpretations are coupled in imperfectivity. It is also worth noting that no evidence has been found either for or against the predictions of Comrie's (1976) taxonomy (see (1) above) – contra Carlson and Pelletier (1995) – which allows for (i) habitual constructions without static compatibility and (ii) static-compatible constructions without habitual meaning.

Finally, I would like to emphasize – drawing on the Blackfoot data, the Indo-European data above and the generalizations from the literature – that the property of canceling the entailment that an event must come to its natural endpoint is part and parcel of the semantics of both progressivity and imperfectivity. This suggests that a logical connection between the "internal view of a situation" (common to both imperfectivity and progressivity in their in-progress interpretations and also discussed above as a way of thinking about habituality) and the modal component (also suggested above to be a common thread between in-progress and habitual meaning). Whether the Kleinian (1994) RT ⊆ ET analysis combined with a more nuanced account of lexical aspectual
The "durative" in Blackfoot categories can generate this modality or whether a rethinking of the standard imperfective analysis is in order is a question I leave to future research. One clear implication, however, is that since the modal component is common to both imperfective and progressive forms, possession of this property should not be criterial in classifying a morpheme as one or the other.

References


Department of Linguistics
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V6T 1Z1

dunham@uwinnipeg.ca