

8. Progressive Imperfective (Excerpt from Eggleston, 2013)

The progressive imperfective form describes a present and continuous situation, translating as 's/he is (in the process of) doing it' or 'it's in progress'. An example progressive imperfective form is *yaa nagút* 's/he is walking along'. As compared to the basic imperfective form, which usually states a general truth about a situation, the progressive tends to emphasize that the situation is currently in progress. It can also mean 's/he is trying to do it', 's/he is beginning to do it', or 's/he is still doing it', depending on the verb. We will begin by looking at the structure of the progressive imperfective form and will then look at the variety of meanings this form can convey.

The progressive imperfective has four distinctive features. The first is a preverb (a required word which precedes the verb). The choice of preverb depends on the conjugation prefix (\emptyset -, *na*-, *ga*-, or *ga*-) used by the verb. The preverb options are *yaa*, *kei*, and *yei*. Verbs which use the \emptyset - and *na*- conjugation prefixes use the preverb *yaa* in the progressive; *ga* conjugation verbs use the preverb *kei*, and; *ga* conjugation verbs use the preverb *yei*. There are a few cases where *ga* conjugation verbs use the *yaa* preverb, but these generalizations hold true most of the time. Table 30 below summarizes the first feature of the progressive imperfective by giving examples of one verb from each of the conjugation prefix (CP) groups. Each verb is given in the imperative and progressive imperfective forms. The imperative form serves to show the conjugation prefix of the verb. Note which preverb each verb uses in the progressive imperfective.

Table 30. Progressive Imperfective Forms from each Conjugation Category

CP	Preverb	Imperative	Progr. Imperf
Ø-	<i>yaa</i>	<i>Shalahík!</i> 'Fill it!'	<i>yaa ashanalhík</i> 's/he's filling it'
<i>na-</i>	<i>yaa</i>	<i>Aadé nakoox!</i> 'Drive there!'	<i>aadé yaa nakúx</i> 's/he's driving there'
<i>ga-</i>	<i>kei</i>	<i>Galk'éi!</i> 'Improve it!'	<i>kei analk'éin</i> 's/he's improving it'
<i>ga-</i>	<i>yei</i>	<i>Káx gidatí!</i> 'Put it on!'	<i>káx yei ndatéen</i> 's/he's putting it on'

The second feature of the progressive imperfective is the presence of the *na-* conjugation prefix (regardless of the verb's regular conjugation prefix). Whether a verb belongs to the Ø, *na*, *ga*, or *ga* conjugation category, *na-* will always be present in the progressive imperfective form. The *na-* prefix occurs after any thematic prefixes and before the subject prefix. Note in the table above, the *na-* present in each of the forms in the progressive imperfective column, and where it occurs in relation to other prefixes. Due to regular contractions, the *na-* will sometimes drop its vowel, surfacing as *n-*, as in the final example in Table 17 above.

The third feature of the progressive imperfective is the classifier, which is always -I. The -I classifiers are: *sa-*, *s-*, *sha-*, *sh-*, *la-*, *l-*, Ø-, and *da-*. Sometimes the classifiers with vowels drop their vowels as a result of a contraction with a neighboring prefix. In the progressive imperfective, the classifier only drops its vowel under these conditions: 1) if the verb has the 3rd person object prefix *a-* 'him/her/it' OR the 4th person subject prefix *du-* 'someone'; AND 2) if the classifier is one of the following: *sa-*, *sha-* or *la-*. Two examples from the above table, both of which have the third person object prefix *a-* 'him/her/it' and the classifier *la-*, will serve to clarify. The examples from Table 30 above are given in (180) and (181) with hyphens between their component parts. The vowel that drops out is given with a line through it.

- (180) *yaa a-sha-na-la-hík* → *yaa ashanalhík* 's/he's filling it'
 (181) *kei a-na-la-k'éin* → *kei analk'éin* 's/he's improving it'

We know the underlying form of the classifier in these verbs is *la-* by comparing them to the same verbs with a first person subject *xa-* 'I'. In the case of a first person subject, the subject prefix *xa-* drops a vowel in this context, while the classifier *la-* retains its vowel. Compare the following examples with the ones just given above.

- (182) *yaa sha-na-xa-la-hík* → *yaa shanaxlahík* 'I am filling it'
 (183) *kei na-xa-la-k'éin* → *kei naxlak'éin* 'I am improving it'

The myriad contractions that take place in Tlingit could constitute a dissertation of their own. Please see the prefix combination chart for the prefix string *na-* in Appendix E for a complete list of all contractions involving the prefix *na-*, and therefore relating to the progressive imperfective form.

8.1 Stem Variation in the Progressive Imperfective

The fourth and final feature of the progressive imperfective applies to the verb stem. All closed roots have short vowels with high tone in the progressive imperfective stem. In the examples below, (a) gives the theme and (b) gives the progressive imperfective form. Example (184a-b) is CVVC *na* conjugation ; (185a-b) is C'VC *na* conjugation, and; (186a-b) is C'VC' Ø conjugation. All have short high stems in the progressive imperfective.

- (184a) *ka-l-koox~ (na event)* 'for a container etc. to drain out, go dry'
 (184b) *yaa kanalkúx* 'it's draining out'
 (185a) *d-l-óok~ (Ø event; C'VC Hort/Pot)* 'for something to boil'
 (185b) *yaa nal.úk* 'it's starting to boil'
 (186a) *s-áat'~ (Ø state)* 'for S to make O cold, cool'
 (186b) *yaa nas.át'* 'it's getting cold'

The exception to the rule is verbs with invariable stems. Invariable stems never change, regardless of mode. Note however, there are three verb themes with invariable stems that have irregular progressive imperfective stem forms. These are illustrated in Section 15.2. The majority of verbs with invariable stems in Tlingit belong to the *ga* conjugation category (Leer, 1991). Following in (187a-189b) are a few examples of verbs with invariable stems, the theme given in (a) and both the progressive imperfective in (b).

(187a) *O-s-áax'w* (*ga state*) 'for O to be bitter; for O to be spicy hot'

(187b) *kei nas.áax'w* 'it's getting bitter'

(188a) *ku-l-góos'* (*ga state*) 'for the sky to be cloudy'

(188b) *kei kunalgóos'* 'it's getting cloudy'

(189a) *O-Ø-néekw* (*ga state*) 'for O to be sick; for O to hurt, be in pain'

(189b) *kei nanéekw* 's/he is getting sick'

Verbs with open roots require what is called the *n-stem* (Leer 1991) in the progressive imperfective. The *n-stem* has a long vowel with a high tone and has the suffix *-n*. For example, let's consider two of the verbs given in Table 30 above. In the imperative, we have *Galk'éi!* 'Improve it!' and *Káx gidatí!* 'Put it on!' Both of these verbs have open roots. In the progressive imperfective form, these are *kei analk'éin* and *káx yei ndatéen*, respectively. As was discussed in Chapter 7 for the perfective habitual, stems ending in *-aa* or *-oo* undergo apophony, changing their sound to *ei* with the addition of the *-n* suffix. (190a-193b) are a few examples, the theme given in (a), followed by the progressive imperfective in (b). (Note that the *CV̇V Imp/Hort/Pot* that belongs in the theme in (190a) has been omitted to save space). Note also the rounding of the consonants in the stems of (190b) and (191b) (*kw* and *x'w* respectively). Stems that end in *-oo* preserve the rounding of the vowel on the preceding consonant if the consonant is one which has a rounded counterpart in the consonant inventory (*k/kw*, *x/xw*, *g/gw* etc.) (Leer, 1991:167). (See Table 1 for the consonant inventory).

(190a) <i>O-S-s-koo^h~ (Ø event)</i>	'for S to know O'
(190b) <i>yaa anaskwéin</i>	's/he is beginning to know him/her, learn it'
(191a) <i>O-ka-S-s-x'oo~ (Ø act)</i>	'for S to nail O'
(191b) <i>aadé yaa akanasx'wéin</i>	's/he is nailing it on it'
(192a) <i>P-t~ <u>ku</u>-Ø-haa~ (Ø motion)</i>	'for the time to come for P'
(192b) <i>du eedé yaa <u>kunahéin</u></i>	'his/her time is coming'
(193a) <i>yan~ O-ka-l-gaa~ (Ø motion)</i>	's/he put up food'
(193b) <i>yánde yaa kanalgéin</i>	's/he is putting up food'

In Section 2.5 the variable postposition *-t~/-Ø~* is described in detail. The relevance of this to the present topic is that this postposition will always be *-dé(i)* in the progressive imperfective form. The vowel length in the postposition is dependent upon speaker dialect. The examples given just above illustrate this point. Note that in each of the final three pairs, a transformation takes place in the postpositional phrase from the perfective to the progressive imperfective: *át* becomes *aadé*; *du éet* becomes *du eedé*; and *yan* becomes *yánde*.

Table 31 below summarizes stem variation in the progressive imperfective where all open roots have the *n-stem* and all closed roots have short high stems.

Table 31. Stem Variation in the Progressive Imperfective

Basic Stem Shape ↓	Ø	na, ga, ga
CVV	CVVn yaa anaxéin 'he is going along eating it' O-S-Ø- <u>x</u> aa~ (Ø act) 'for S to eat O'	CVVn yaa akanahéin 'she is going along planting it' O-ka-S- Ø-haa~ (na act) 'for S to plant O'
CVV ^h	CVVn yaa anaskwéin 'she is beginning to learn it' O-S-s-koo ^h ~ (Ø event; CVV Imp/Hort/Pot) 'for S to know O'	CVVn yaa natéin 'he's forever sleeping' S-Ø-taa ^h ~ (na act) 'for (singular) S to sleep'
CVVC	CVC yaa anasxúk 'he is drying it' O-S-s-xook~ (Ø act) 'for S to dry O'	CVC yaa anaxásh 'she is cutting it' O-S-Ø-xaash~ (na act) 'for S to cut O with knife'
CVVC	CVC kei anaswát 'she is raising him' O-S-s-wáat~ (Ø act) 'for S to raise O'	CVC yei analshát 'he is holding onto it' O-S-l-sháat~ (ga act) 'for S to hold, retain O'
CVVC'	CVC' yaa anas.át' 'he is chilling it' O-S-s-.áat'~ (Ø act) 'for S to make O cold'	CVC' yaa ana.ús' 'she is going along washing it' O-S-Ø-.óos'~ (na act) 'for S to wash O'

To summarize our discussion of the structural aspects of the progressive imperfective, another example verb from each conjugation prefix group is given below in Table 32. The verbs are given first in the perfective form and then in the progressive, for comparison. Note the four features we have discussed: 1) the preverb *yaa*, *kei*, or *yei*; 2) the presence of *na-* in all verbs, regardless of regular conjugation category; 3) the –I classifiers (Ø- and *da-* respectively), and; 4) the verb stem.

Table 32. Progressive Imperfective forms in each Conjugation Category

CP:	Perfective:	Progressive imperfective:
Ø-	<i>át has uwa.át</i> 'they walked there'	<i>aadé yaa has na.át</i> 'they are walking along there'
na-	<i>aagáa <u>ko</u>owashee</i> 's/he searched for it'	<i>aagáa yaa <u>kun</u>ashéen</i> 's/he is going along searching for it'
ga-	<i>wudihaan</i> 's/he stood up'	<i>kei ndahán</i> 's/he is (in the process of) standing up'
ga-	<i>awdigaan</i> 'it's sunny'	<i>yei andagán</i> 'it's getting sunny'

8.2 Semantics of the Progressive Imperfective

To better understand the possible range of meanings that the progressive imperfective can convey, some discussion of verb types is necessary. Remember that there are four main verb types in Tlingit: active, stative, eventive, and motion. Each verb type and its relationship to the progressive imperfective will be discussed in turn.

8.2.1 Active Verbs

One of the defining characteristics of active verbs is that they have basic imperfective forms, which provide the present tense meaning. A few examples are: *aḵ'awóos* 's/he is asking him/her; s/he asks him/her'; *dashóoch* 's/he is bathing; s/he bathes'; *ahées* 's/he is borrowing it; s/he borrows it'; and *at sa.ée* 's/he is cooking; s/he cooks'. Because the present tense meaning is supplied by the basic imperfective form, many active verbs, including the ones just given, do not have progressive imperfective forms. Remember that the progressive imperfective emphasizes that the situation described by the verb is 'in progress'. Pragmatically speaking, for some verbs, this emphasis is not useful or necessary, since the basic imperfective form adequately conveys the situation. In these cases, the

progressive imperfective form sounds awkward and unacceptable to fluent Tlingit speakers. An equivalent in English might be to say 'she's in the process of asking him', rather than simply saying 'she's asking him' or 'he's in the process of bathing', rather than 'he's bathing'. Although using English to guess at which Tlingit active verbs will have progressive imperfective forms is a bad idea because all languages are categorized differently.

When both the imperfective and progressive imperfective forms are acceptable for a given active verb, there sometimes seems to be overlap in meaning between the two. Some examples follow, with the imperfective given first and the progressive imperfective second: *aswáat/kei anaswát* 's/he is raising him/her/it'; *asxook/yaa anasxúk* 's/he is drying it'; and *aksakei/yei akanaskéin* 's/he is untangling it'. These verbs describe activities which require a significant amount of time, which may be the logic behind the use of the progressive imperfective as an equivalent to the basic imperfective.

A few other active verbs have progressive imperfective forms. These tend to give the meaning '(verbing) along' or 'going along (verbing)', and usually pertain to verbs which can be carried out while moving from one place to the next. Examples are given in the basic imperfective first, followed by the progressive imperfective: *al'eix* 's/he is dancing; s/he dances' / *yaa anal'éx* 's/he is dancing along'; *ast'eix* 's/he is trolling; s/he trolls' / *yaa anast'éx* 's/he is trolling along'; *aagáa kushée* 's/he is searching for it; s/he searches for it' / *aagáa yaa kunashéen* 's/he is going along searching for it'.

At least two active verbs in the progressive imperfective are preferred with the adverb *yeisú* and give the meaning 'still (verbing)'. These are: *yoo has x'ali.átk* 'they are conversing' as compared to the progressive imperfective: *(yeisú) yaa has x'anal.át* 'they are still conversing'; and *sh kalneek* 's/he is telling a story' as compared to: *(yeisú) aadé yaa sh kanalník* 's/he is still getting to the point'.

And finally, for another active verb, the progressive form gives the meaning 'beginning to (verb)': *gáax* 's/he is crying' and *kei nagáx* 's/he is beginning to cry'.

8.2.2 Stative Verbs

Stative verbs in Tlingit also have basic imperfective forms, and most, but not all, describe a particular state of being. Given that general meaning, these verbs in the progressive imperfective form produce the meaning ‘getting to be (that way)’. Examples are given in Table 33.

Table 33. Stative Verbs in the Progressive Imperfective

<u>Imperfective</u>		<u>Progressive Imperfective</u>	
<i>kayagéi</i>	‘it’s big’	<i>yaa kanagéin</i>	‘it’s getting big’
<i>si.áax’w</i>	‘it’s sour’	<i>kei nas.áax’w</i>	‘it’s getting sour’
<i>kuligóos’</i>	‘it’s cloudy’	<i>kei kunalgóos’</i>	‘it’s getting cloudy’
<i>si.áat’</i>	‘it’s cold’	<i>yaa nas.át’</i>	‘it’s getting cold’
<i>lidzée</i>	‘it’s difficult’	<i>kei naldzéen</i>	‘it’s getting difficult’
<i>yak’ei</i>	‘it’s good’	<i>kei nak’éin</i>	‘it’s getting better’
<i>lináalx</i>	‘s/he’s rich’	<i>kei nalnáalx</i>	‘s/he’s getting rich’
<i>yanéekw</i>	‘s/he’s sick’	<i>kei nanéekw</i>	‘s/he’s getting sick’

Not all stative verbs have progressive imperfective forms. A few examples of stative verbs without progressive imperfective forms are: *tuli.aan* ‘s/he is kind’; *yéi kwdzigéi* ‘they’re small’; and *yéi aya.óo* ‘s/he is wearing it’.

8.2.3 Motion Verbs

The progressive imperfective is used most widely with verbs that describe motion. Since motion verbs as a category do not have basic imperfective forms, most use the progressive imperfective form to describe a motion in progress. For example: *yaa nagút* ‘s/he is walking along’ and *yánde yaa nahú* ‘s/he is wading ashore’. Examples from this category are endless as most motion verbs have a progressive imperfective form. A select few are given below, first in the perfective and then in the progressive imperfective.

- (194a) *át kuwatín* 's/he traveled there'
 (194b) *aadé yaa kunatín* 's/he's traveling there'

- (195a) *yan akawligáa* 's/he put up food'
 (195b) *yánde yaa akanalgéin* 's/he is putting up food'

- (196a) *kut wujixeex* 's/he ran away'
 (196b) *kut kei nashíx* 's/he is running away'.

8.2.4 Eventive Verbs

Many eventive verbs in Tlingit describe an event that takes place instantaneously. For the most part, it is not useful to discuss the process of the event. In these cases, no progressive imperfective form exists. Here are a few examples, given in the perfective: *aawa.oo* 's/he bought it'; *aawasháat* 's/he caught it'; and *aawat'ei* 's/he found it'. There are however, some eventive verbs which don't describe instantaneous events, and for which it may be useful to discuss the process of the occurrence. In this case, the progressive imperfective form is used. A few examples are: *iwlich'éx'w* 'you're dirty' / *yaa inalch'éx'w* 'you're getting dirty'; *ashawlihík* 's/he filled it' / *yaa ashanalhík* 's/he's filling it'; and *wudishán* 's/he's old' / *yaa ndashán* 's/he's getting old'. A few other eventive verbs in the progressive imperfective give the meaning 'starting to (verb)'. Two examples are: *wuduwanúk* 'it blew; it's blowing (of wind)' / *yaa ndunúk* 'it's starting to blow'; and *wudli.úk* 'it's boiling; it boiled' / *yaa nal.úk* 'it's starting to boil'.

8.3 Negative Progressive Imperfective

The negative progressive imperfective is much less common than the affirmative. It is a relatively cumbersome thing to say, with little practicality – in few contexts does one need to say 's/he is not in the process of doing it' (as opposed to the simple negative imperfective 's/he's not doing it'). In attempting to collect the negative progressive form for verbs in this resource at the outset of my research, it quickly became evident that this is not a form that speakers use with any frequency. While there may be isolated incidents in

which one would require the negative progressive imperfective form, the overall utility of this form seems very low, and thus was not collected for this project.