Introduction to Part 4

The part-of-speech class for verbs typically include words that express actions, processes, and similar states (Schachter and Shopen, 2010:9). The most typical function of verbs is as predicates, as for *k’uta-* ‘gnaw’, *katu-* ‘catch’ and *manq’a-* ‘eat’, below:

(667)  
\[\text{Achakux} \ q'al \ isi-nak \ k'utanaqaskix.\]  
\[\{\text{achaku-x(a)} \ q'al(a) \ isi-nak(a)_{c} \emptyset \ k'uta-naqa-s.k(a)-i-x(a)\}\]  
\text{mouse-TOP all clothing-PL-ACC gnaw-DF-PROG-3SIM-TOP}  
‘The mouse is gnawing all the clothing.’

(668)  
\[\text{Katujwatayn} \ Qamaqix.\]  
\[\{\text{katu-jwa-tayn(a)} \ Qamaqi-x(a)\}\]  
\text{catch-CPL-3>3DIS Fox-TOP}  
‘Fox caught him.’ [MBF5.18]

(669)  
\[\text{Lijpach} \ tunas \ manq’antpaytxa.\]  
\[\{\text{lij(u)-pach(a)} \ tunas(a)_{c} \emptyset \ manq'a-nt(a)-pay(a)-t-xa\}\]  
\text{all-INCL c.pear-ACC eat-IW-MLT-1SIM-TOP}  
‘I ate all the cactus pears.’

The categories for which verbs (but not nouns) may be specified include tense, aspect, modality (TAM), mood, voice and polarity. The last two categories are not expressed in Aymara. TAM and mood are expressed morphologically. There is no recourse to syntax. There are no auxiliaries. While in some languages, TAM morphology may be used in NPs (e.g. book-PST ‘old book’, as described in Nordlinger and Sadler 2004), this never occurs in Aymara. Let us now examine these aforementioned categories individually.

Tense morphology indicates time relative to the moment of speaking. There are four tenses in Aymara: simple, future, remote past, and recent past. In Aymara person and tense is expressed together in a fused suffix. The vast majority of verbs are marked with some member of the person/tense paradigm, though there are a few exceptions. The person/tense paradigm may be seen as a matrix of a binary opposition of tense (past vs. non-past) and evidentiality (personal-knowledge vs. non-personal knowledge), as in Table 1. A complete analysis of tense is provided in Subsection 9.2.1 (page 406).
Aspectual morphology in Aymara is rather complex. While a complete analysis may be found in Subsection 9.1.5 (page 376), it is sufficient to note that this description differentiates between the five aspectual suffixes below as well as two derivational-like verbal suffixes that have aspectual functions, -t’a momentaneous and -tata inceptive. The tendency for a suffix to express aspectual meaning is often attested in the directional suffixes, as well. For example, the outward directional suffix -c’su can be said to convey completive aspect in some cases in which the typical outward movement, usually indicative of this suffix, is absent.

- fossilized intensifier (INT) -c’uki 9.1.5.1 (page 378)
- factive completive (FA.CPL) -chu 9.1.5.2 (page 379)
- completive (CPL) -wj(w)a 9.1.5.3 (page 380)
- non-completive (NCPL) -ka 9.1.5.4 (page 382)
- progressive (PROG) -s.ka 9.1.5.5 (page 385)

The nuances of these suffixes are explored in the relevant part of the grammar indicated in the table above. Still, some preliminary remarks regarding some of the ways in which aspectual suffixes form an obligatory part of the grammatical expression of certain constructions are in order. In a nutshell, the progressive -s.ka is necessary in the expression of a range of stative and dynamic predicate formations; the non-completive -ka is used together with the negative/interrogative phrase-final suffix -ti to express negation; and while the completive suffixes were not employed with regularity in any particular constructions (the suffix -c’chu is attested only rarely in the corpus), they are in complementary distribution with the non-completive -ka.

Mood morphology (described in Subsection 9.2.3 on page 427) is described together with evidentials and event modality. The category of mood is typically associated with the sentence. Aymara mood morphology is comprised of the past and present counterfactual mood paradigms. Some examples follow.