

**AN INTRODUCTION TO DENA'INA GRAMMAR:
THE KENAI (OUTER INLET) DIALECT**

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**Based on reference material by:
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Dedication

This grammar guide is dedicated to the 20th century children who had their mouths washed out with soap or were beaten in the Kenai Territorial School for speaking Dena'ina. And to Peter Kalifornsky, one of those children, who gave his time, knowledge, and friendship so others might learn.

Acknowledgement

The information in this introductory grammar is based on the sources cited in the "References" section but particularly on James Kari's draft of *Dena'ina Verb Dictionary* and Joan Tenenbaum's 1978 *Morphology and Semantics of the Tanaina Verb*. Many of the examples are taken directly from these documents but modified to fit the Kenai or Outer Inlet dialect. All of the stem set and verb theme information is from James Kari's electronic Dena'ina verb dictionary draft. Students should consult the originals for more in-depth descriptions or to resolve difficult constructions. In addition much of the material in this document was initially developed in various language learning documents developed by me, many in collaboration with Peter Kalifornsky or Donita Peter for classes taught at Kenai Peninsula College or the Kenaitze Indian Tribe between 1988 and 2006, and this document represents a recent installment of a progressively more complete grammar.

Anyone interested in Dena'ina language and culture owes a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. James Kari for his years of Dena'ina language research. More than any one person, he has kept a dying language from extinction. I would like to thank Dr. Kari for use of unpublished verb theme and stem set material and for reviewing earlier drafts of this document. Any errors are my own.

I would like to thank Dana Verrengia and Michael Christian who helped with many of the translations on which this document is based, and Ms. Verrengia for editorial review of this document.

Kenai Dena'ina language revitalization efforts would not have been possible without the vision and persistence of Alexandra "Sasha" Lindgren, Cultural & Educational Department Director of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. Ms. Lindgren understands that embedded in the words, stories and grammar of Dena'ina are timeless truths that are as much a part of the fabric of the Kenai Peninsula as are the mountains and the rivers.

Much more work needs to be done, but this grammar represents a resource for beginning and intermediate language learners.

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

This grammar is designed to assist in reading, writing, and speaking the Kenai dialect (Outer Inlet dialect) of the Dena'ina language. The Kenai dialect is one of five dialects of Dena'ina whose territory includes Cook Inlet, eastern Iliamna Lake and Lake Clark, the Stony River area, and the Upper Mulchatna River drainage (see Figure 1).

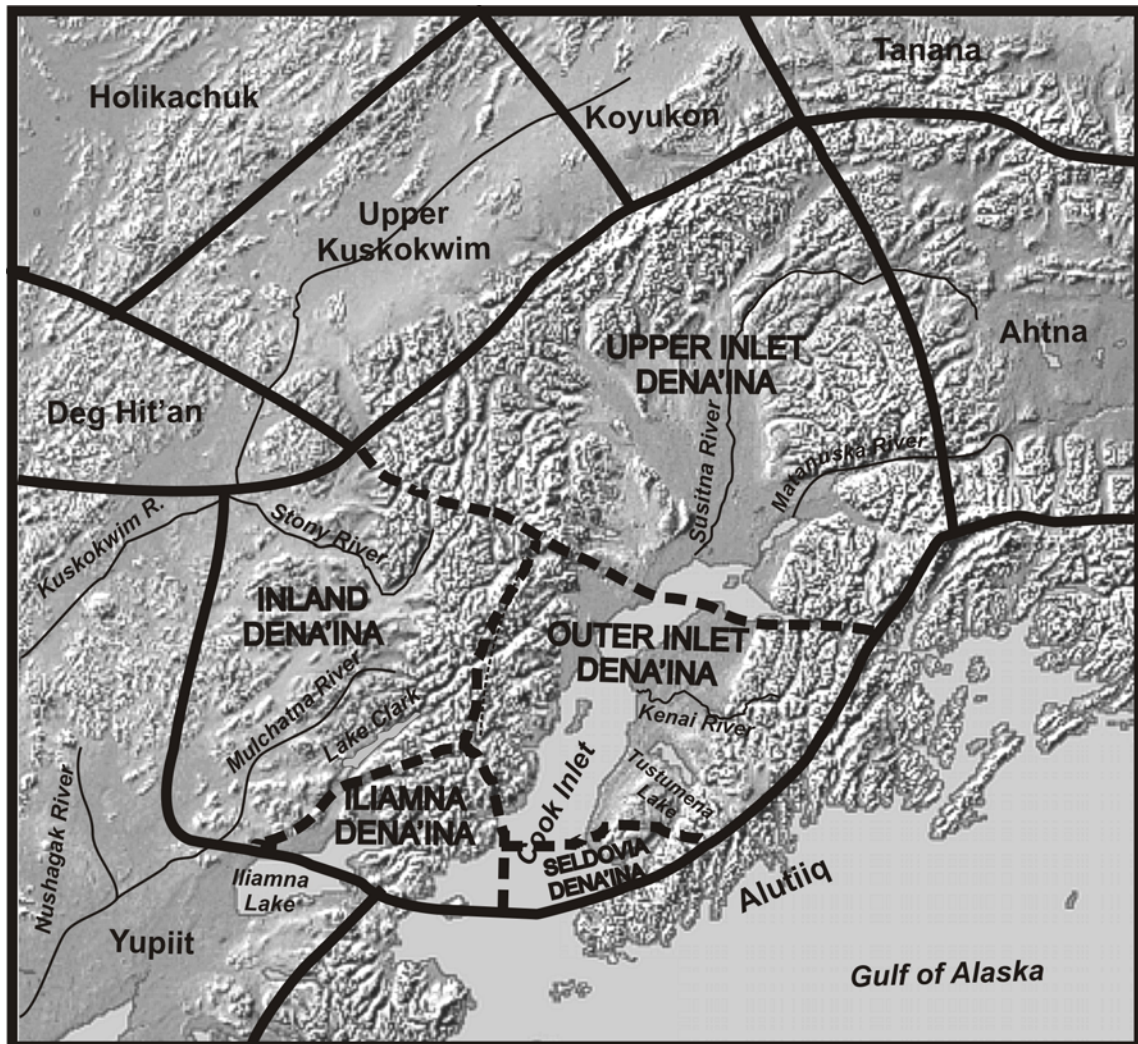


Figure 1. Map of Dena'ina Dialects. Outer Inlet is also called the Kenai dialect.

Today Dena'ina is one of the world's most endangered languages primarily because of three events. First, Russian colonizers came to Cook Inlet in the late 18th century and established three redoubts or merchant forts (Alexandrovsk (English Bay) in 1786, St. George Redoubt (Kasilof) in

1787 and St. Nicholas Redoubt (Kenai) in 1791) and a number of outlying posts: . Hostilities resulted in the Russian defeat by the Dena'ina and for the rest of Russian America the Kenai Peninsula was occupied by a small number of Russian traders and priests, usually less than ten. In 1838-39 a smallpox epidemic decimated the indigenous coastal populations from Southeast Alaska to Cook Inlet (Fall 1987), and during that horrific event half of the Kenai River Dena'ina died within two years (Fedorova 1973). The epidemic created a crisis of ideology. Traditional beliefs held that events happened for a reason and the reason often had to do with what one did, said, or thought. Guilt over the epidemic's cause would have been enormous and the Orthodox message that events happen because of God's will would have been psychologically comforting. Consequently, Church Slavonic replaced Dena'ina for some aspects of Dena'ina spirituality.

In 1882, after American purchase, large salmon canneries began to be built at the mouth of the Kasilof, and later Kenai, Rivers, and by 1900 canneries operated throughout mid and upper Cook Inlet. Cannery workers and fishermen came from many places and at least seventeen languages were spoken in Kenai in 1900, but the dominant language was the language of the workplace: English. If one wanted a job or fair dealings at the trading post one had to speak English and Dena'ina again eroded as the language of place. Because canneries were not constructed in Inland Dena'ina territory, the pressures of language loss were less severe than in the Kenai area and today most of the fluent Dena'ina speakers are from that area.

Perhaps the most severe event in language loss, and the only one purposefully undertaken to extinguish the language, occurred in the Kenai Territorial School and other territorial schools in south-central Alaska. As a matter of policy children were corporally punished for speaking their Native language in school. As a third grader, Peter Kalifornsky was beaten with a stick so badly he couldn't walk for three days for speaking Dena'ina. The policy was intended to acculturate Native children by extinguishing their traditional language and hence patterns of thought. It did not work and the result was a generation who grew up conflicted about their identity and in many cases ashamed of their heritage.

Throughout the early and mid-20th century the Dena'ina language fell increasingly into disuse particularly in Kenai where by 1970 less than ten speakers remained: among them Peter Kalifornsky, his half-sister Fedosia Sacaloff, and Bertha Monfor.

In the 1970s James Kari taught Dena'ina speakers Albert Wassillie of Nondalton and Peter Kalifornsky among others to use the Dena'ina writing system. Wassillie produced an Inland dialect conversational dictionary in 1979 and other materials before he died in the early 1980s. Working between 1974 and 1991, Kalifornsky became one of the most prolific and exceptional writers in the history of Native American literature writing in his indigeneous language. His works include *sukdu* (traditional stories), histories, translations, songs, poems and language paradigms initially published in smaller publications and compiled in *K'tl'egh'i Sukdu: Remaining Stories* (Kalifornsky 1991) which received a Book of the Year Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1992.

This grammar emphasizes the Kenai or Outer Inlet dialect Peter Kalifornsky spoke and wrote in and will assist language learners to read the Dena'ina in its original. There are two important reasons to read in the original. First, while the English translations endeavor to be accurate, they often do not capture the entire flavor of a passage. For example the third line of *Qadanalchin's Song*, what Peter Kalifornsky called my great great grandpa's homesick song, composed while the original Kalifornsky was in Fort Ross, California working for Russian traders about 1820 reads in English "But do your best in life." The Dena'ina is "Shesh t'qelani" which literally means, "live to enhance your breath and shadow spirit." "Breath" refers to health and "shadow spirit" roughly means "soul." So a richer translation would be, "Live to enhance your health and your soul." The phrase is as meaningful today as it was in 1820.

Grammar also gives insights into Dena'ina thought. For example, Dena'ina has a causative construction that, unlike English which expresses causality through the lexicon (words such as, "I caused..."), expresses causality through a grammatical construction changing a classifier within the verb to a ł. Few languages have a grammatical construction for causality. Since grammar is subconscious, causality would have been a reality embedded in the Dena'ina mind ratifying individual agency, in opposition to fatalism, in controlling one's life.

This grammar is divided into four sections. After this Introduction (Part I) is a short section on the sound system and how Dena'ina is written, (orthography), Part II describes the sentence, Part III describes word morphology, Part IV describes nouns and other non-verb parts of speech, Part V describes the verb, Part VI is a section on morpheme changes also called phonological changes, and finally, Part VII a model of verb formation. Because of the complexity of the grammar, it is impossible to write a lineal sequence that leads to understanding. Readers will have to move back and forth within the document making ample use of the table of contents to read or write a sentence.

Section References

Fall, James

1987 The Upper Inlet Tanaina: Patterns of Leadership Among an Alaskan Athabaskan People, 1741-1918. *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*, Vol 21.

Fedorova, Svetlana

1973 *The Russian Population in Alaska and California, Late 18th Century-1867*. Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press.

PART II. DENA'INA SOUND SYSTEM AND ORTHOGRAPHY

The Dena'ina writing system (orthography) was adapted to Dena'ina by James Kari and Michael Krauss in the early 1970s. The Dena'ina system is based on the Navaho writing system which was developed by John Harrington, Robert Young, William Morgan, and Oliver LaFarge in 1939.

The chart below is based on the manner and place the consonant sound is made in the mouth.

Dena'ina Consonants

Manner the Sound is Made		Place the Sound is Made								
		Front						Back		
		Bilabial	Labio-Dental	Alveolar	Lateral	Alveo-Palatal	Palatal	Velar, front	Velar, back	Glottal
Stops	Voiced	b		d	dl	dz	j	g	gg	'
	Aspirated			t	tl	ts	ch	k	q	
	Glotalized			t'	tl'	ts'	ch'	k'	q'	
Fricatives	Voiced		v		l	z	zh	ÿ	gh	
	Voiceless				ł	s	sh	x	h	h̃/hh
Nasals		m		n						
Glides	Voiced	w					y			
	Voiceless									

Definitions

Place

bilabial	articulation with the two lips
labio-dental	articulation with the upper teeth and bottom lip
alveolar	articulation at the ridge behind the teeth
lateral	tongue held tense and the air passes laterally
alveo-palatal	articulation between the alveolar ridge and palate
palatal	articulation at the palate, the roof of the mouth
velar	articulation at the back of the mouth
glottal	articulation in the throat

Manner

voiced	voice box is used
voiceless	voice box is not used
aspirated	a "puff" of air is released from a stop position
glotalized	air released from a glottal stop with tongue in "place" position
stops	air is stopped and let loose
fricatives	tongue touched a place and air "slides" by
nasals	air is forced out the nose
glides	tongue or lips makes a movement producing the sound

Dena'ina Vowels

	Front	Mid	Back
High	i		u
		e	
Low		a	

There are four vowels in Dena'ina: i, u, e, and a. Vowels are made with the tongue held in a certain position in the mouth with the sound produced in a resonant drum-like fashion. The above diagram represents the position of the tongue when the vowel sound is made. An "i" sound is made with the tongue held high and toward the front of the mouth (eeee). An "a" sound is made with the tongue held low and in the middle of the mouth (ahhh).

Vowel Lowering

The i, e, and u vowels are "lowered" when a back velar (see consonant chart), such as gg, q, q', gh, or h, either precedes or follows the vowel. Back velars are made when the back of the tongue articulates or touches the velar area toward the back of the roof of the mouth, consequently the following or preceding vowel is affected by lowering. Lowering means the tongue drops to a slightly lower position when the vowel is made. The "a" vowel is not affected by back velars because it is already at the lowest position.

Note that though the vowel may be lowered and could be represented by a different symbol, it is not written differently.

To hear the sounds pronounced go to *Kahtnuht'ana Qenaga* at this website and linked at either www.kenaitze.org or qenaga.org. The latter also has an extensive video description of Dena'ina sounds by Joan Tenenbaum.

<http://chinook.kpc.alaska.edu/~ifasb/>

<http://www.kenaitze-nns.gov/>

<http://qenaga.org/kq/index.html>

PART III. WORDS, MORPHEMES, AND SENTENCES

Morphemes: Free, Bound, and Zero (Ø)

Morphemes are combinations of one or more sounds that convey meaning. Words in any language are described by the concepts of free and bound morphemes. Dena'ina words, particularly the verb, are made up of bound morphemes. The term "morpheme" will be used throughout this document.

Free Morphemes

Dena'ina nouns and many other parts of speech consist of whole words or "free morphemes" meaning you can say or read them and they can be understood. *Dnigi* (moose) and *bejex* (caribou) are free morphemes.

Bound Morphemes

Bound morphemes are either suffixes added to the end of a word, or prefixes added to the beginning of a word, together called affixes. Affixes cannot be said by themselves but must be added to a word (or stem) in order to make sense.

For example the English word "learn" is a free morpheme—it is meaningful when said by itself. The bound morpheme "-ed" (English spelling) can be added as a suffix to mean past tense as in "he learned his lesson." If you forgot something and learned it again the bound morpheme "re-" can be added to the beginning as a prefix. The word now becomes "relearned":

re + learn + ed

(the + sign means a boundary between morphemes)

The "re-" and "-ed" are bound morphemes: they cannot be said by themselves and must be "bound" to a root word (free morpheme).

Dena'ina verbs are composed entirely of bound morphemes. Other words have prefixes or suffixes that are bound to a root word. The section on verbs will describe this further.

Zero (Ø) Morpheme

Frequently Dena'ina has no bound morpheme in a particular position, but the absence of a morpheme still conveys information to the speaker/listener/reader. The absence of a morpheme is called a zero morpheme and is written by the symbol "Ø."

The concept is similar to English where "call" is singular and "calls" is plural. The two forms can be written:

call + Ø = singular

call + s = plural

Words, Morphemes, and Sentences

"Call" has a zero morpheme indicating it is singular although we do not consciously think of it that way because the "rule" is subconscious. Similarly, Dena'ina speakers don't consciously think of morphemes as zero morphemes.

An example of a \emptyset morpheme are in the words "qeshnash" meaning "I am talking" and "qenash" meaning "he or she is talking." As morphemes they break down as follows:

qe + sh + nash = I am talking
 \emptyset + qe + nash = he/she is talking
 (in this document, the Dena'ina he/she is considered part of the
 outer subject pronouns)

In both cases "-nash" is a stem meaning "talking at a moment in time" and "qe-" is a prefix meaning "the act of talking is occurring." The pronoun "sh" (esh) refers to "I" while no morpheme, the zero morpheme (\emptyset), means he or she. In reading or writing it is important to keep track of zero morphemes particularly when decoding complex verbs.

Morphology

The study and analysis of morphemes is called morphology. English, and most European languages, are primarily composed of whole words (free morphemes) but Dena'ina, particularly the verb, is composed of bound morphemes that follow complex rules all of which are not completely understood. Consequently, the study and analysis of verb morphology is important in understanding Dena'ina. See the section on inflectional and derivational morphology in the verb section for more information.

Roots

The core of Dena'ina free and bound morphemes is a root. Kari's (n.d.) preliminary data indicates there are 1594 roots in Dena'ina. For example the root *ni* includes nouns, verbs, and other parts of speech having to do with "say" or "deem" which is the "tag" for *ni*. A root cannot be said by itself so it isn't a definable word rather an abstract category that various words fall into. Moreover, some nouns or verb themes do not have anything to do directly with the general meaning of the verb, consequently the term "tag" is used as a "definition." Following are some nouns and an adverb associated with the root *ni*. The root is underlined.

nouns

dli <u>ni</u>	varied thrush (lit. one that says cold)
beq'ech'et <u>ni</u> yi	wolf (lit. we say its tracks)
ch'qesh <u>ni</u> ha	chickadee (lit. one that say's <i>ch'qesh'</i>)
-eghud <u>ni</u>	advice, lesson (requires a possessive pronoun)

Adverbs

<u>ni</u> hdi (<u>ni</u> h)	and so forth
------------------------------	--------------

In addition to other nouns and parts of speech there are about 20 verb themes with *ni* as the root which will be covered in the verb theme section.

The Sentence

The Dena'ina sentence most often takes the following basic patterns. The ## symbol means a break between words in linguistic notation.

Subject ## object ## verb

The basic sentence is subject first, then object, with the verb as the final word in a sentence with variations described below. Subjects and objects are nouns or possessed pronouns. It is rare, however, to have both a subject and object in a sentence as nouns—usually one or the other, or both occur as pronouns. And, just as English speech does not stick strictly to a subject-verb-object format, variations in word order occur.

Variations

Subject ## verb

In some Dena'ina sentences the object is embedded in the verb as a pronoun or the sentence does not require an object.

Object ## verb

In some Dena'ina sentences the subject is a pronoun contained in the verb and the object is a noun.

Verb

In some Dena'ina sentences subjects and objects are embedded in the verb as pronouns or just a subject is embedded in the verb as a pronoun if an object is not needed.

Nouns

A few Dena'ina sentences consist solely of nouns or other parts of speech. Usually one or more of the nouns will have been derived from a verb stem.

Other components of a sentence:

In addition to nouns (subjects or objects) and verbs, a Dena'ina sentence may contain any of the following which will be described in the "Nouns and Non-Verb Parts of Speech" section.

Adjectives

Adverbs, Independent (also may be included in a verb)

Conjunctions and Particles

Demonstrative Pronouns

Directionals

Relative Suffixes and Enclitics, Non-Verb (also may be included in a verb)

Evidentials

Postpositions, Independent (also may be included in a verb)

The following sentence from Peter Kalifornsky’s “Putting up Fish” (Kalifornsky 1991:362) illustrates the use of a grid to analyze sentences and will be used to explain elements of Dena’ina grammar. The details will be explained in the remainder of this document so first-time readers should not be daunted by unfamiliar terminology.

Dena’ina: Tahbił tanełkiz. English: I set the net in the water.

	Object	Verb Prefix Morphemes					Inner Subject Pronoun	Classifier	Verb Stem
		Adverb	Gender	Mode/Aspect					
				trans- itional	mode	perfect ive			
Morphemes	Tahbił	ta	∅		ne	i	esh	ł	kiz
Morpheme Changes				n e and i deleted to avoid double vowels			sh deleted when followed by ł		
English	net (under water snare)	submerg ed in water	fabric- like object	Aspect: momentaneous Mode: perfect (past)			I	no transla tion	Place a fabric- like object in position, implies it lies in position Aspect: momentaneous Mode: perfect (past)

Theme: Gender + ł classifier + stem (kiz)

Theme Class: classificatory

Meaning: fabric-like object, flat, flexible object is in position

Stem Set: kits tag: classify fabric-like object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Continuative	kis	kiz	kiz	
Momentaneous	kis	kiz	kes	kis
Neuter	kiz/kits	kiz/kits	kiz/kits	kiz/kits
Progressive	kes	kis		
Reversative	kes	kiz/kits	kes	

PART IV: NOUNS AND NON-VERB PARTS OF SPEECH

Nouns

Nouns give a name to a thing or idea.

- Nouns function as the subject or the object of a sentence
- A complete list of nouns is in the *Dena'ina Topical Dictionary* by James Kari (2007)
- Nouns may have a prefix or suffix that indicates possession or may have a suffix that indicates a postposition as described below.
- Nouns can also be formed from verbs by the addition of a suffix. See "relative suffixes" in the section on verb suffixes.

Possession

Possession indicates close association with a(an)

- person (our mother)
- animal (his dog)
- place (your village)
- ownership/use of a thing (my snowshoes)

The possessor is indicated by either a proper noun (such as a person's name) or a possessive pronoun (my, your, his/her, our, their, etc.).

Possessed nouns fall into two categories:

- inherently (inalienably) possessed nouns such as relatives or body parts (my mother, my nose)
- and non-inherently (alienably) possessed nouns indicating something that you wouldn't necessarily own (my house)

Inherent Possession

- Inherent or inalienable possession indicates something everyone has or potentially has: words for relatives and body parts are common inherently possessed forms.
- Inherently possessed words consist of a prefix and a stem that must occur together, they are bound morphemes.
- For example:
 - shunkda (sh+unkda)
 - sh- = possessive pronoun meaning "my"
 - -unkda= possessed root meaning "mother"
 - English equivalent: my mother

Pronouns used with inherently possessed bound morphemes:

Pronoun	Meaning
sh-	My
n-	your (sg.)
be-	his/her
na-	our
h-	your (pl.)
qu-	Their
k'e-	someone's
de-	his/her own
deh-	their own
nił-	each other's

Relatives

Example	Morphemes	Meaning
shunkda	sh+unkda	my mother
nunkda	n+unkda	your (sg.) mother
bunkda	be+unkda	his/her mother
na'unkda	na+unkda	our mother
hunkda	h+unkda	your (pl.) mother
qunkda	qu+unkda	their mother
k'unkda	k'e+unkda	someone's mother
dunkda	de+unkda	his/her own mother
dehunkda	deh+unkda	their own mother
nił'unkda	nił'+unkda	each other's mother

Body parts

Example	Morphemes	Meaning
syes	sh+yes initial sh before y becomes s	my skin
nyes	n+yes	your (sg.) skin
beyes	be+yes	his/her skin
nayes	na+yes	our skin
hyes	h+yes	your (pl.) skin
quyes	qu+yes	their skin
k'eyes	k'e+yes	someone's skin
deyes	de+yes	his/her own skin
dehyes	deh+yes	their own skin
niłyes	nił+yes	each other's skin

Non-Inherent Possession

Unlike inherently possessed nouns which refer to something everyone has (mother, hand etc.), non-inherently (alienably) possessed nouns refer to something someone may or may not have (sled, gun etc.).

Non-Inherent Possession Indicated by a Proper Noun

- An example of a proper noun is someone's name.
- When the possessor is indicated by a proper noun, such as a person's name, -a or -'a is attached as a suffix to the possessed person, animal, place, or thing.
- If the last sound is a glottal stop, just *a* is used; if not 'a is used although Kenai dialect tends to use 'a more frequently in all cases. For example:
 - Example: Michael *ghelt'a* (ghelt+'a)
 - Michael = possessor noun
 - ghelt = noun meaning sled,
 - -'a is a suffix that indicates possession and is attached to the noun, in this case "sled" (note: the apostrophe (') does not indicate ownership as in English, but represents a glottal stop (see sound system).
 - English equivalent: Michael's sled.
 - Other examples:

Example	Morphemes	Meaning
Alice lugech'a	lughech'+a	Alice's gloves
Herman elgheji'a	elgheji+'a	Herman's moose hide boat
Mary neli'a	neli+'a	Mary's steambath

The possessive suffix ('a) cannot be applied to all nouns. A complete list has not yet been made. If the suffix 'a/a cannot be added to indicate possession, one of the prefixes described in the section below can be used instead.

Non-Inherent Possession Indicated by a Possessive Pronoun

- A possessive pronoun is attached as a prefix to the possessed noun.
- And "a" is added at the end of the word if it isn't already the ending.

For example:

Dena'ina: *shlugech'a*

sh = possessive pronoun meaning "my"

lugech = noun meaning "gloves"

`a = suffix meaning possession

Possessive Pronoun	Meaning
sh-	My
n-	your (singular)
be-	his/her
na-	our
h-	your (plural)
qu-	their
k'e-	someone's
de-	his/her own
deh-	their own
nił-	each other's

Example	Morphemes	Meaning
shlugech'a	sh+lugech'a	my gloves
nlugech'a	n+lugech'a	your (sg.) gloves
belugech'a	be+lugech'a	his/her gloves
nalugech'a	na+lugech'a	our gloves
hlugech'a	h+lugech'a	your (pl.) gloves
qulugech'a	qu+lugech'a	their gloves
k'elugech'a	k'e+lugech'a	someone's gloves
delugech'a	de+lugech'a	his/her own gloves
dehlugech'a	deh+lugech'a	their own gloves
nilugech'a	nił+lugech'a	each other's gloves

- In English possession with pronouns involves two words such as "my snowshoes." In Dena'ina possession with pronouns becomes one word, *shlugech'a* (sh+lugech'a) or "my gloves."
- When adding sh- (meaning my) to a word that begins with ł, s, sh, or h, the sound changes to its voiced counterpart; l, z, zh, or gh. See the section on "sound system" for further information.

For example dog is "ʔika" so "my dog" is "shlik'a," not "shʔik'a" (the ʔ changes to l).

if preceded by "sh"	Changes to
ʔ	l
s	z
sh	zh
h	gh

- In English the possessive pronouns "his" and "her" are different words. In Dena'ina the prefix "be-" stands for both "his" and "her"; you would know the difference from the context of the sentence or is purposefully ambiguous.

Relative Suffixes and Enclitics, (non-verb)

Relative Suffixes

Relative suffixes are attached to nouns or verbs and some are variations of directionals. See the verb suffixes for relative suffixes attached to the verb. Below are some often-used relative suffixes.

- en means "the person that" singular, for example adding -en to the verb "she sings" means "the person that sings"
- na means "the people that" plural, for example adding -na to "walked" means "the people that walked"
- i means "the thing that," for example adding -i to "flies" means "the thing that flies" or "airplane"
- t means "the place that"
- h means "at, to a general area"
- hdi means "then, next"

Enclitics

Enclitics are suffixes that follow nouns or verbs. See the section on enclitics in the verb section. Some enclitics that follow nouns include:

- da' in, during
- da question (see questions)

Postpositions, Independent

Postpositions are similar to English prepositions and include words like "among," "for," "to," and "with." They are called postpositions because they are normally after "or post" the noun and before the verb.

Postpositions are used in three ways:

- Independent postpositions following a noun:
Independent postpositions are free morphemes written as a separate word. For example:

Milni det "without water"
milni = water (noun)
det = without (postposition)

- Bound postpositions following a pronoun or noun:
Bound postpositions are preceded by a pronoun or noun (both are bound morphemes) and are said and written as one word.

Bound postpositions are also connected to areal nouns some of which are included in this section. Consult Kari 2007:331-335.

- Postposition within the verb:
Postpositions may be incorporated into the verb as a prefix described in the verb section

The following independent postpositions are from Kari (nd) and Tenenbaum 1978:191-222. Many can be used both independently and as bound morphemes to a noun or pronoun and that may be the rule for all postpositions.

Table 1. Independent Postpositions Following Nouns

Postposition	Meaning	Example	Meaning
∅	Null postposition	yek'elqat	he is feeding something to him
		yeyighiqat	he bought it from him
∅, a	Against, in contact with	shk'di'un	the sun is shining on me
		shdidu	he is sitting against me
adet	Without, lacking	milni adet	without water

aq'a	refers to the depression made by an object in soft ground or snow	k'itkeda aq'a	the marks left in the snow where a trap was set
at	On, in	ush at hch'asheldanituk'	he started off running in showshoes
buna, bunu	At the edge of	yusdi buna nastsut	she sat down beside the fire
ch'ih	Blocking, obscuring	ch'ih ninuk'niidał	close the curtains
det	Without, lacking, wanting	miłni det	without water
		ush det	lacking snowshoes
dughu	Due to, the reason	Yadi dughu?	What is the reason?
		yin dughu	due to him
dughu	Sarcastically toward	dughu nlan	he's a wiseguy
egh, ghe	By, to, at, about, in relation to, near, in front of (see ghe)		
eghyeh	Beneath, below		
eł, (see it)	With	dezhuni eł	with kindness
ghe, egh	By, to, at, about, in relation to (see egh)	Peter ghe ninyu	You came to Peter
		dilihi ghe shidghitqet	he asked me about hooligans
ghe'ut	At a place off from, nearby	bida ghun ghe'ut ghu san	his friend is standing out in the open
ghenes	In front of, next to, out from, facing	k'nuy'a qan ghenes	in front of beaver lodge
ghenich'en	Upriver from		
ghuda	Due to, because of	yinen ghuda q'angheshduk	because of him I went
		ełkuni ghuda k't'un nudnalyun	because of rain plants grew
hqegh	Behind	qenq'a hqegh	behind the house
huda	Due to, because of (see question words) Why, for what reason?	Ch'aduch' huda?	Why? For what reason?

	How come?		
hugh	Near	qenq'a hugh	near the house
		dnigi hugh	near the moose
ił, (see eł)	With	qayeht'ana ił łuq'u	with all the villagers
		qaniłch'eYi ił tanshu	I went with the wind
iqu, uqu	For, after, in search of, pointed at, aiming at	chik'a iqu łuhtgheshyuł	I'll go after wood
niłtu	For the purpose of	heyi niłtu	for the purpose of winter
		Yadi niłtu?	Why? How come? For what reason?
nubun	For in payment to	dingi nubun gheshtnu	I work for money
nunes	most		
qa	Subsisting on, living on	iyini qa chiyiyuq	he killed it with a gun
		Bejex qa gheshtdu	I lived off caribou
		łuq'a qa k'elqat	they live on salmon
qu	Due to, because of (see question words)	Ch'ada qu?	Why? For what reason? What for?
q'a	Lacking, wanting	guxi q'a ch'ghi'un	we almost finished the coffee
q'ach'	From, tied around object	tseldatnu q'ach'	from Soldotna
		yuq' q'ach'	from the sky
q'atl'u, q'atl'ugh	Back of, head of	ben q'atl'ugh	upper end of lake
q'aghdeq	Between	ch'wala q'aghdeq	between trees
q'es	Against, as leaning against	Mike ghun Albert q'es denltan	Mike is leaning against Albert
teh	among, between, during, in, through	dghili teh	among the mountains

Postpositions (non-verb)

		heyteh (hey+teh)	during the winter
tut'	Under flat object, between flat surfaces	ch'da tut' yinldush	I go under the blanket
		beyes tut' tsen	dark fish meat, under the skin
t'u, t'uda	By means of, with the support of, assistance of	chuggesh t'u zt'a'i	meat cooked on a spit or roasting stick
t'uh	Underneath, inside, as inside a tent or cache	elnen t'uh	under the ground (cache)
		esni t'uh	under the cottonwood
tl'egh	After, following, in place of	tuq'a tl'egh	after fishing
u	for, on behalf of	ts'itsatna u	on behalf of the ancestors
yagh'a	Belonging to, pertaining to, characteristic of	k'isna yagh'a	wine 'belonging to women'
yach'en	On the other side, behind a stationary object	nli' yach'en gheyut	he is walking behind the steambath
yesh, yeshquq'	Near, close by	hetl yeshquq'	near the sled
		ch'wala yesh	by the tree
Yich'a	More than, the most of	qut'ana yich'a ezhge nlan ha' dyuq	he became a better hero than the people
zhex	Right next to, beside	Pete ghun Albert zhex san.	Pete is standing beside Albert.

Independent Bound Postpositions

Independent bound postpositions are constructed with an object (O-) plus a postposition (O+postposition). The object is either a pronoun or a noun. Many are closely related to directionals.

The following pronouns are used with postpositions:

Table 2. Postposition Pronouns

Dena'ina	Meaning
sh-	me
n-	you (singular)
be- or ve-	him/her
ye-	it
dna- or na-	us
(n)h-	you (plural)
qe-	them
nił-	each other
hu	reflexive (ex: I hit myself)
de	indirect reflexive (ex: I threw it at myself)
k'e	indefinite object (ex: I walked to it)
qe ²	space/time/event
de	wooden object

For example:

Shet "with me"
sh- = me (pronoun)
-et = with (postposition)

Table 3. Independent Bound Postpositions

Object + postposition	Meaning	Example	Meaning
O-a	object spends time	ba (be + a) shan hghizet	he spent the whole summer day
	against, in contact with		
O-ahdyidehch'	on top of O, refers to a wooden roof	qenq'a ahdyidehch'	on top of the house

O-aliqa	O being icy from spray		
O-an	for O's temporary use		
O-aq'a	refers to clubbing O	Qaq'a nik'nilt'eq'.	He clubbed them all.
	refers to the depression made by an object in soft ground or snow	k'ilkeda aq'a	the marks left in the snow where a trap was set
O-at	on O, in O	nuti'at k'iqul'an	he goes hunting in the saltwater
O-aya	affecting O with an identifying mark		
O-bugh (O-vugh)	along the edge of O	tubugh	beach (lit. 'along the edge of water')
O-buna, bunu (O-vuna, vunu)	at the edge of O	yusdi vuna nastsut	she sat down beside the fire
O-chan	into the wind that is blowing in O's direction (upwind of O). <i>Always used with verb postposition O-i 'inside O'.</i>	Yechan yighelgguk.	He walked into his wind.
O-ch'	towards O, in the direction of O	Nach' gheyuł.	He's walking towards us.
		bench' (ben+ch')	to the lake
		dghilich' (dghili+ch')	to the mountains
O-ch'a, ts'a	from, away from O, out from O	Tubunen qch'a.	He is from Tyonek.
		yehch'a	from over there
O-ch'en	next to O, at O's side	k'izhagi vech'en gheli qeyłdazdlu	they had knives lying right next to him

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-ch'ih	obscuring O, as trees in front of a house, a scarf over the face	hch'ih q'u t'deshni	I lie (lit. 'I speak obscuring a fact')
O-de	down a hill (<i>always used with qe- spatial pronoun</i>)	hde tashjay	he started running downhill
O-degh	off of O, as in rolling or falling off	yedegh qak'dghidhiġen	he hobbled off him
O-det	without O, lacking O, wanting O	vinġi det t'edyuq	he was getting weak from thirst (lit. 'he became without water')
O-diġghu	opposite from, in reply to, exchanging, trading with	ch'udiġghu	opposite the sun, counter-clockwise; see adverb, chudeġ
O-dni	causing the disappearance of O, killing O	hdni hdaniġen	he killed them all off
O-du	in O's mouth; affecting O with the mouth, and by extension the voice, pertaining to the mouth	yedyduchet	he put it in his (another's) mouth
	eluding O, as an animal eluding a hunter	qeydu ghidaq	they got away from him
O-dubunu (O-duvunu)	at the edge of the mouth, i.e. the lips	shduvunu	my lips
O-dughu	sarcastically toward	Yedughu qenash.	He is talking sarcastically to him.
O-dukits'a	away from the end of the mouth of O		
O-duquq'	on the top of O, on the surface of O	tiduquq'	on top of the water
O-duq'	on top of O	denduq'	on top of the hill
O-egh	to O; near O; about O, as to sing about, cry about, tell about; possessed by O; by O, as in snared by O <i>(Used with themes of</i>	Nagh nduninyu.	You came in to us, welcome.
		Shegh zidu.	Sit by me.

Postpositions (non-verb)

		Qegh nuhqulnix.	They used to tell about it.
		Łik'a shegh qilan.	I have a dog.
		Shegh k'nast'in.	He stole from me.
		Nagh t'k'ilagh.	We caught something.
		Qunsha begh ighedlak.	Ground squirrels were snared by her.
		Łuq'a shegh dighilagh.	A fish swam in to me.
O-egh'uh	around O, out from O, in the area of O	qegh'uh hniqa tl'iik'ehghatchesh	way out from them they circled them
O-egh'ut	near O, a little ways from O	qegh'ut gu dultlet	he landed near them
		ey ghu hvegh'ut gu ki tu dezdu	there near them he was sitting on a bush
O-eghdech'en	above O (in altitude)	qeghdech'en eygu qalnigiq' dultlet	he landed above them on a rock
O-eghdeq	above O, as in off the ground, or in altitude, on land	qeghdeq hjengheltlet	he jumped over them in the space above
O-eghdeqch'	from or towards up above O		
O-eghdugh	downriver from O	naghdugh	downriver from us
O-eghkuh	downriver from O	naghkuhdna	people downriver from us
O-eghk'uch'en	across from O, on the other side from O, on the side away from O		

O-eghna	near O	qut'un qeghna	just breaking day (lit. 'near morning')
O-eghnehch'en	behind O	yeghnehch'en gu lu nastsut	she sat down behind him
O-eghnes	in front of, next to, out from	sheghnes ezdu	he lives near me
O-eghnich'en	upriver from O	naghnich'ent'ana	the people above us, upriver from us
O-eghtsih	below O in altitude on the ground		
O-eghtsit	below O in altitude on the ground		
O-eghyeh	underneath O	qeghyeh ey nuqeyghik'et'	they hung him below it
O-eł (O-eła; O-ł)	with O, to O, in both a relational sense of 'along with O', 'in association with O', 'affecting O', and also an instrumental sense of 'by means of O'	beł k'teltesi	A wrench (lit. 'the thing with which something is turned')
		neł nutgheshdyuni	let me go back with you
		sheł qinash	talk with me
O-ghenes	in front of, next to, out from	unhghenes	the next one over, beyond
O-ghes	around, outside of O	yeghes ch'anilagh	he swam around outside of him
O-ghu	for O's use, used in themes of giving	qeyghu k'niłkit	they dished out food for him
	near O, evenly spaced with O, aligned with O	shghunl'an	go my pace, keep up with me
O-ghuch'du	eluding O, as of game eluding the hunter		

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-ghulugh	at the edge of O	k'ghulugh	at the edge beyond which is unknown
O-i	in O, inside O, as inside a enclosure or closed container	vi nuhdıldaŋ	put wood in the stove (lit. 'put wooden objects in a closed container')
O-ich	refers to anger	vich'duhdazne'	he got mad
O-ich'a	more than O <i>Used with qualities, measurements, knowledge</i>	shich'a qit'ayenizenen	he is one who knows more than me
	out from inside O	yich'a dnalen	he flew out of it
O-idu	inside of O's mouth	Hidu k'dulen du?	Did you (pl) get food to eat?
O-iduch'a	out from inside O's mouth	shiduch'a seq' dalen	I burped
O-ighu	inside and through O	yighu tsi'itu'ut	he lay there with his head through it
	over the length of O	yighu nudiltlet	he kept jumping up and down on the full length of him
O-iniq'	behind O, in the back of O, <i>(used when O is stationary. The morpheme actually means 'O's back').</i>	qenq'a qiniq' gheyut	he walked behind the house.
O-iqa	up O, up a vertical surface	nini et diqa tl'ughilghel	he climbed up the tree behind the porcupine
O-iqu (uqu)	for O, after O, in search of O, pointed at O, aiming at O <i>Used with themes of hitting or throwing to mean 'try to hit, try to spear, etc.'</i>	shiqu kiyeni'ihzinda	you guys expect me (lit. 'have the end of your minds pointed at me')
O-iq'	the inside of O	nenchix niq'	the inside of your nose, your nostril
O-jaghch'en	in front of O		

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-jen	arcing over O	vejen nultlet qeyłni	they told him to keep jumping over it (hurdles)
O-ki	at, on, or affecting the end of O	veki nughetten	he was stunted by cold weater
O-kich'a	away from or off the end of O	yetsikich'ananiłchut'	she cut his head off again
O-k'	movement on the surface of O, as rubbing or wiping	vek' dinq'esh	wipe it (table)
O-k'u	away from O, off of O, as off the edge of a table, off a tree	qeyk'u k'dnałytit	they ran away from him
O-k'uch'	in the direction away from O, different from O	qevk'uch' k'inał'un	he turned his head away from them
O-la	referring to O's hand		
O-lach'a	from O's hand, used in themes of dropping or spilling	shlach'a tutcheh	I'll drop plural objects
O-laq'a	in O's palm, in O's hand	shlaq'a diłggat	give me a long wooden object
O-laq'ach'a	out of or from one's hand, out of the grasp of O	yelaq'ach'a yenilchesh	he jerked it out of her hand
O-lu	affecting O with or by means of the hand	nlu denghelen	I slapped you several times
O-lugh	holding an object together with O	shlugh k'inten	he me hold it
O-lut'uq'	on top of O's hand	shlut'uq' łkits	a paper is on top of my hand
O-ł	see Ø-eł		
O-li	referring to ice		

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-n'at	on the surface of, in an area	en'at (directional prefix)	off, in an area
O-na	referring to the eyes		
O-nagh	O being out of sight, refers to eyesight	hnagh denghighichan	They went further than he could see
O-naqa, niqa	around O, circling around O	hniqa tl'ik'ehghalchesh	they circled around them
O-naq'a	in O's eyes	shnaq'a qenghalch'ich'	I have sleep in my eyes
O-nghunu	around O, around a protruding O	ch'wala nghunu ch'agheyul	he's coming out from around a tree
O-ni	penetrating into O	veni di'eldets	I drilled into it a little ways
O-nił	pertaining to closeness of O, or a joining of two parts	shnił nighłchet	he squeezed me
O-niłch', niłch'a	in sight of O	yenilch' hch'anu'idyu	he came back in sight of him
		hniłch' huzyu	he came up in sight of it
O-niłtu (nułtu)	for O in the future, for the purpose of	heyi niłtu	it will be for winter, for the purpose of winter
O-niłtudeq	O lying between two points, two points on either side of O	beniłtudeq k'ilqeyi	it has a spreader stick in it from side to side (a filet of fish)
O-niq'	referring to the position of a nocked arrow		
O-nish	up against the face or front surface of O	chik'a shnish dnulchen	a piece of wood flew up and hit me in the face
O-nghunu	around O, around a protruding object	ch'wala nghunu ch'agheyul	he's coming out from around a tree

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-nu	resembling O, equivalent to O	chik'a venu yidałnazi	a stick as long is it
	on the rim of O	k'enu k'denghichet	he tied his bear gut parka on the rim of his bidarka
	on O as worn or hung on O, holding O or in contact with O	shnu dghichet	he turned me loose
O-nu'u	in O's eyes	shnu'u k'eljay	light is shining in my eyes
O-nubun	for in payment to	dingi nubun gheshtnu	I work for money
O-nuben	ridiculing, criticizing, influencing	shnuben qenash	he ridicules me
		yenuben chegh	he has influenced him to cry
O-nuch'a	off from being worn by O	nuch'a k'tgheshtggesh	I'll take my coat off
O-nugheł	in the presence of, in the view of	shnugheł	my view
		benugheł	his presence
O-nunu	back and forth, taking turns <i>Used with nił- reciprocal object pronoun</i>	niłnunu dehi nuquyil	they take turns walking down to the cache
O-nuqeł'i	out of O's sight	yenuqeł'i nughuljel	he paddled back out of sight of him
O-nut	draped over O	hnut diłkits	a cloth is hung over a pole or line
	hitting and going past O on both sides of O	shnut nuk'idilah	salmon go past me
O-nutset	before O's time, previous to O	nanutset k'ughun nił t'qul'an	they used to have wars with each other before our time

O-qa	subsisting on O, living on O	nini qa niłhdetix	they subsist on porcupine
	pertaining to or affecting O's feet	yeqa k'niłchut	she cut his foot off
O-qach'a	off of O's legs or feet	nqach'a k'zeldatł'	I took off you boots
O-qanghun	affecting O with the toe	yeqanghunłqix	he kicked it with his toe
O-qayiq'	in O's boots	shqayiq' dilya	put grass in my boots
O-qi	over the surface of O	hqı dghizełchin	I scattered objects around
O-qugh	as far as O, at the time of O, as much as O <i>usually used with qe²-space/time/event/abstract prounoun</i>		
O-q'	on the surface of O, on top of O	qalñiq' dultlet	he landed on a rock
		miłniq' (miłni+q')	on the water
	like O, copying O, in the language of O; in the manner or O	sheq' tiłchił	you pl. make something like me
		łuq'aq' (łuq'a+q')	in the manner of the salmon
O-q'a	a hole or depression in O or pertaining to O	hq'a tunuttech'	he put his head in the water hole
	on the side of O	niłq'a yegh yiditutł'	he stepped on both sides of him, i.e. straddled him
	lacking O, for O, for or into O's being, wanting O	yeq'a t'ent'a	he is wishing for it

Postpositions (non-verb)

		qeyq'a tazchagh	they started to cry for him
		yeq'a chegh	he keeps crying for it
O-q'a'i	missing O, falling short of O <i>When used with neuter verbs of length or dimension, expresses comparative size</i>	yeq'a'i niqadnułjih	he swung his fist and missed him
O-q'ach'	tied around O	quggıł beq'ach' qestkez	a snare was tied around him
O-q'ada	O being out of hearing	qevq'ada hdi'u	he couldn't hear them anymore
O-q'aghdeq	between O	ch'vala q'aghdeq k'ehdghituk'	they slid down between trees
O-q'atl'u, O-q'atl'ugh	back of, head of	tuq'atl'u	placename for Devil's Bay at head of Tustumena Lake
O-q'ayi	not enough, lacking, insufficient, short of	hq'ayi q'u nininyu	you went short of the destination
		hq'ayi niłnustkes	loose knot
O-q'es	against O	Mike ghun Albert q'es denltan	Mike is leaning against Albert
O-shhegh	O be frosted	veshegh dghighel	he's all frosted up
O-t	caught on O	vet k'i'eshsheq'	I snagged it (fish)
O-tu	among O	qenq'eya tu yeniłt'eq'	she slung it among the alders
O-teh	amongst O, through O	ch'vala the nugheyuł	he is walking amongst the trees

O-tehch'a	divided and together, away from and among O	niłtehch'a ch'itdah	good people and mean people divided themselves but we don't know if
O-tuh	tangled among O	niłtuh k'ghich'ik'i	string manipulating games in which string configuration represents animals
O-t'e, t'ey	behind an outer layer of O	va ht'eydiyit	you put a long object behind a rib in the canoe
O-t'ełeq'	between two layers	vava ya hdut'an ht'ełeq' ghu qech'a	he could see dryfish from out of the cracks (in the cache)
O-t'i	inside a place, such as a cache, steambath, etc.	ht'idulchet	he reached inside the hole
O-t'ich'a	out from inside a place	ht'ich'a yenigits'	she ripped it out of the hole
O-t'u	obstructed by O, stumbling over O, tripping on O	ht'u qadenghalen	he stumbled and fell
O-t'uda	with the support of O; By means of O; with the assistance of O	yet'uda gga'ilchet	he got up with the other's support
		k't'uda nugheyuł	he's walking hanging on to something
O-t'ugh	underneath a projecting surface as under a bed, under a riverbank	gest'ugh	under the bed
O-t'uh	underneath O, inside O as inside a tent or cache	nt'uh nitidigheshchił	I'll put it (ball) under you
O-t'uqa	obstructed by O, stumbling over O, tripping over O	ht'uqa denghalen	he stumbled and fell
O-t'uy	meeting O from ahead <i>Always requires de-semantic marker</i>	yet'uy duyul	he was walking towards him
		sht'uy dnazch'ey	I have a head wind

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-tl'egh	after O in time, or in space, as the place someone has left	htl'egh idi eġa qenq'a nihqini'un	after that they built a house
O-tl'i	catching up with, moving up to O from behind	shtl'i dazhch'ey	I have fair wind, wind is behind me
O-tl'u	referring to the buttocks or the behind, affecting O with the buttocks, behind in general	yetsl'uġqex	he sat on him hard
O-tl'ugh	behind O (stationary object)	tsitl'ugh ch'daltuni	pillow (lit. 'an enclosed object we have lying behind our heads')
O-tl'uyeh	following behind O (moving O)	qevtl'uyeh ch'tuyuni	let's go behind them
O-tsah	ahead of O in space, before O in time (in the future); preceding O	vetsah gu hvuch'ih tiq'ets' dnaz'ey	he saw the outline of a leaning tree against the twilight sky ahead of him
		yetsah gheyuġ	he walks ahead of him
O-tsas	after O in time	hluzhun tsas nuk'esdgheġ	it's half past ten
O-tsen	upon, over, encompassing, to affect O in a gang	qetsen besghiten	they ganged up on him
		qeytsen vesdghiten	they all went at it (food)
O-tsi	affecting O with the head	yetsi huk'denghetq'esh	he kept rubbing him all over with his head
O-ts'i	affecting O with the finger	vets'i elqey	I'm poking him with my finger
O-ts'ix	referring to the skin		
O-ts'ixch'en	next to O's skin		
O-u	for O, for O's sake, for O's benefit, in O's place; on behalf of O	chik'ish nu ch'tuġchiġ	we'll make a cap for you
		shu (sh+u)	for me
	apart from O, as separated from O	niġ'u niyenilu	he butchered it up (lit. 'he took the pieces apart from each other')

O-unyach'	away from O	ye'unyach' yet sheidaltuk'	he ran away from him with it
O-uqu (iqu)	for O, after O, in search of O, pointed at O, aiming at O <i>Used with themes of hitting or throwing to mean 'try to hit, try to spear, etc.'</i>	shuqu ghizhel	he hollered for me (e.g. he couldn't see me)
		buqu tiyush	go after him
		nuqu hnił'an	he is looking for you
O-usdet	without O, away from O; lacking O	na'usdet zdu	he is staying away from us
		be'usdet sht'a nidinchit	put it down away from him
		k'ghulugh usdet tsadi	let it be without end
O-ut	away from O, nearby O	quggił ghin ye'ut heytdenghałdatl'	she loosened the snare from him
		nagh'ut qiz'un	the house next door to us
O-yach'	on the other side away from O		
O-yach'en	on the other side of O, behind a stationary object	hyach'an yeh qenghunu tuvugh ch'a'ilgguk	on the other side around the point he came out on the beach
O-yagh'a	belonging to, pertaining to, characteristic of	suk qeyagh'a	old time, pertaining to the past
O-yan	only O, O alone	udi yan hch'aniyu	he alone started off
O-yich'a, (see ich'a)	more than, the most of	nayich'a qit'ayenizen	he knows better (more) than us
O-yiq'	into O	shyiq' dilya	put grass in my boots

Postpositions (non-verb)

O-zah, yaqah	ahead of	bezah shqilan	I am older than him
		nzah gheyuł	he is walking ahead of you
O-zagh	waiting for	nazagh t'int'a	wait for us
		nzagh tghesht'ał	I'll wait for you
O-zegh	awaiting	szegha t'int'a	he is waiting for me
O-zhex	right next to O, beside O	Pete ghun Albert zhex san	Pete is standing beside Albert

Demonstrative Pronouns

- Demonstrative pronouns are words like “this” and “that.”
- In narratives they often occur at the beginning of a sentence.

Table 4. Demonstrative Pronouns

ghen	that
ghini (ghin)	that thing, those things, non-human and distant
gini (gin)	This thing, these things, non-human and close by
ghu	there, in the distance
ghunen (ghun, ghundi)	That person, human and distant
gu	here, nearby
gunen (gundi)	this person, human and close by
ghuna	those persons, human and distant
guna (gunadi)	these persons, human and close by

Examples	Meaning
ghini dghili	those mountains
gini eñnen	this earth
Qeshqa ghun	that chief
ghunen uniñni	that person calls
gunen qisen	this woman
gundi she’u	this is my wife
Dena’ina ghuna	those Dena’ina
gunadi	these ones
guna shdesnaqa	these people my parents

Conjunctions and Particles

Conjunctions are connecting words such as "and" or "but" used to link thoughts. Some conjunctions commonly used in English (such as "if") are not represented by individual words in Dena'ina, but are embedded in the verb.

The following table contains those Dena'ina conjunctions and particles that are individual words not embedded in the verb. Some are considered adverbs and are also included in that section, or occur as enclitics.

Table 5. Conjunctions and Particles

Dena'ina	Meaning	Comments
ch'u	and	can be used between two nouns or between two sentences, can also be used at the end of a sentence to indicate what comes next in a text
yethdi	and then, next	Usually at the beginning of a sentence
hq'u	but	
ki	More	often used at the beginning of a sentence or paragraph to mean, "there is more to the story"
k'u	also, too	
dach'	thus	
ighi	well, so	
du	"question"	"du" at the end of a sentence or expression turns it into a question.

Adjectives

- Adjectives describe nouns.
- Adjectives are not as common in Dena'ina as in English. Concepts expressed by English adjectives are usually embedded within the Dena'ina verb (for example "he is a fast runner" is one Dena'ina verb; t'ggulghiden).
- The adjectives below follow after the noun they describe and can be written as two words or the adjective may be attached to the noun (noun + adjective).

Table 6. Adjectives

Adjective	Meaning	Example	Meaning
ggwa	little, small	dghili ggwa	little mountain
		ik'a ggwa	little dog, puppy
		chuq'eya ggwa	little birch
		qenq'a ggwa	small house
-shla	little, small	idashla	little friend (euphemistic name for wolverine)
ka'a	big	dghili ka'a	big mountain (place name for Denali)
		dnigi ka'a	big moose
		qayeh ka'a	big village
		chada ka'a	big old man (euphemistic name for brown bear)

Adverbs, Independent

Adverbs are words that affect or clarify the way the action takes place and have two forms. Those listed here occur as a word outside the verb; adverbs can also be included in the verb as a verb prefix.

Below are some Dena'ina whole-word adverbs from Kari (2007:n.d.). The categories of time, quantity, location and direction and the "other" are not mutually exclusive. For example *ki k'ushta* means "no more" or "never again" the first definition can be thought of as an adverb of quantity and the second definition an adverb of time. If you don't find what you are looking for in one section, try another section.

Adverbs of Time

Temporal adverbs convey information about when the action or intent of the verb occurred.

Table 7. Adverbs of Time

Adverb	Meaning	Example	Meaning
ch'iteshnich	midnight	ch'iteshnich shegh niyu	he came to me at midnight
ch'qeyan	always	nunigi ch'qeyan	always fog
da'a	never		
dahdi (yedahdi, yedaqdi)	then at that time		
degghu	when		
elugh	not yet	elugh yeshegh	he has not yet hooked it
elughesht'a	late, for a long time	elughasht'a eztghesh'igh	I won't see him for a long time
eľdu	a long time		
hdi gheli	the first time, for the first time	hdi gheli	the first time, for the first time
hentq'u	suddenly, abruptly	hentq'u yedghichet	he let it go suddenly
heyi daghisedi	all year long		
hnu	while, meanwhile		
htsahda, htsatda, qtsahda	in the future		
htsast'a, ts'itsat	before, in the past, long ago	htsast'a qut'ana dnighelt'a	long ago there were lots of people
htsat	a while ago	htsat q'u nu'iju	he came a while ago
htse	previously		
huqedlan	slowly		
husht'a, husht'an	in a moment	helch' husht'a	darkness in a moment
husht'ada	later on		

hut'u	previously		
jan gu, q'udi	today		
jan qech'	sometime today, during the day	jan qech' gheshtnu	I worked all day
jan yach'	sometime today		
janiq', janiq'e	all day	janiq'e gheshtnuh	I worked all day
janq'u	nothing has changed, still	ełkun janq'u	it's still raining
janteh	daytime, during the day		
ki, kiq'u	again	hzila ki	morning mist again
ki k'usht'a	never again	qil gheli ki k'usht'a	really terrible never again
ki'it ch'u ki	now and then		
kih	later on, in the future	gini łuq'a kih niłtu	this fish is for later
kitsa	next	nen kitsa	you next
k'eldinteh	sometimes	yuq' hdaznet k'eldinteh	colorful sunrise sometimes
k'eldinteh hyanq'u	only occasionally		
k'ghulugh	the end of a span of time, eternity	k'ghulugh usdet tsadi	let it be without end
la'a	constantly		
lugh	long time	elugh tusyul	he won't go yet
łqenzi, hlenzi	unconscious	hlenzi cheł'an	I'm getting dizzy
nanutset	before our time, our history	Dena'ina nanutset	Dena'ina history
nazah	in the future		
niłghena	one after another, constantly	niłghena sht'a qenash	he talks repeatedly
niłghena q'u	one right after the other at regular intervals		
niłghena	repeatedly, at regular intervals, in rapid succession		
niłk'enteh	rarely		
niłnunu	taking turns		
niłt'en teh, niłteh	sometimes, occasionally		
nuytelqushch'u	every day		
q'edyeh q'u	a little while ago		
qendu (archaic)	in the past		
qezahda	in the future	qezahda yaghali gheli qitulaf	It will be really good in the future
qghenu	after, when, the other side of	iłyuts qeghnu	when it started to snow

quhlanh, quqlanh	slowly	k'ilqat quhlanh	you eat it slowly
q'esdu (archaic)	day before yesterday		
q'u	just now, now, stop, yet, enough, soon	sin chuna q'u	falling star just now
q'u idak'i	that's ok, all right (answer to "let's go")		
q'u ki tsa	once again, one more time	q'u ki tsa shegh zitan	lay by me once again
q'udi	now	yaghali q'udi	its good now
q'udi gu	right now	q'udi gu ezhi qilan	it's cold right now
q'udihdi	just now (previously)		
q'udi jani	today		
q'udishla	just about, right then (lit. little now)		
q'ushich'a	enough, that's all		
q'ushla, q'ushlaq'u	almost, nearly	q'ushlaq'u chijuq	he nearly got killed
suk gheli	in the old days, a long time ago		
suk ghu	long ago	ts'itsatna suk ghu...	the ancestors long ago...
shelteh	in a hurry, quickly	shelteh shel qilan	I'm in a hurry
taqun	the next day		
tets teh, tl'aq' teh	nighttime	tl'aq' teh ezhi yagheli tl'aq' qighila'	its cold at night it was nice last night
tl'adu	yesterday		
tl'adu qeyach'en tl'adu qegh'ut	day before yesterday		
tl'aq' teh (see tets teh)	nighttime		
tsa	first, awhile, a moment, exact time, place	luq'u Dena'ina tsa niñnuqadał; nen tsa	I hope all Dena'ina get together; you are next
tsa husht'a	pretty soon		
tsa husht'ada	in a while		
tsa'i	right now, let it be, how about it	q'u tsa'i	enough now, let it be finished
ts'iłq'a	at one time, once	ts'itsatna ts'iłq'a	a long time ago those ancestors..
ts'itsat, htsast'a, ughasht'a	before, in the past, long ago		
	hurry, quickly,	q'ıdu	hurry home

	early, soon	ughasht'a	
unhtsah	first (also quantity)	unhtsah gheli Kahtnu tunghanshnik	first I came to Kenai
yaghali (yagheli) gheli	really good	qezahda yaghali gheli qitulaf	really good in the future
yedahdi	at that time (see dahdi)		
yethdi	then, next	Yethdi qayeht'ana it luq'u suts'dultuk'.	Then, with all the villagers, we ate it all up.
yit	one day's travel		

Adverbs of Quantity

Adverbs of quantity specify amount or intensity of the action.

Table 8. Adverbs of Quantity

Adverb	Meaning	Example	Meaning
dutsek	entire, whole	qayeh detsek	the entire village
gheli	really	yuq qul gheli	the sky is really clear
jitggwa, jitggwaq'u	a little bit	jitggwaq'u qeghnalten	It froze a little
ki	more, another	ki heyi	another winter
ki k'ushta	no more, never again		
kishla	a little more	kishla luq'aka'a	a little more king salmon
kisht'a	a lot, many, too much	kisht'a bejex	a lot of caribou
ku'u, ke'u	more, again		
k'eldin	some, part		
k'idiki	too much, very	k'idiki k'q'uya	too much red salmon
k'iltinch'	plus, added to it		
luq'u	all, everything, everyone	Kahtnuht'ana luq'u	all the Kenai people
nutih	two times	nutih dghasdlin	200 (2 x 100)
qenunes	the most, more		
qich'a (I)	more, most (see other adverbs)	qich'a yaghali nlan	he is better, improved
shijenhqugh	enough	shijenhqugh k'ghelqet	I ate enough
tuq'ih	thrice	tuq'ih shatuniq'ash	cut it in three pieces for me

unhtsah, unhzah	first
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Adverbs of Location and Direction

Adverbs of location place the action and are closely related to directionals. See Kari 2007:336-341 and this document for Directionals.

Table 9. Adverbs of Location

Adverb	Meaning	Example	Meaning
chench'	toward a body of water	chench' ch'nudilen	he rolled down towards water
chudeł	counter-clockwise, opposite the sun	chudeł naqadazu	he walked counter-clockwise; see postposition diłghu
en gu	off, away from here, nearby		
n'e	in back, upstream	n'e hyanilchet	they pushed their caps back
n'ech' nahden	toward, from an upriver direction slanted	dun'ech' zdu	he is staying in the upstream direction
neggech'	to the upland, from water, from the lowland	neggech' yach'	up in the woods, that way
nes	out from center	nes yanilchet	he shoved it out (boat)
nich'qugh	halfway	nich'qugh niyilqet'	he ate half a fish
nunch', yunch'	across	yunch' dghili	the mountains across the inlet
qil'eh (ghil'i)	different place	qil'eh tiyush	go elsewhere
q'ench'	reverse, back from	un q'ench	come back (dog call)
q'es	alongside, beside	q'es qa'ilgguk	he jumped to one side
q'itdu	at home		
q'unch'	sideways, off-level, slanting, tilting, laterally, sagging	q'unch' daztun	it (cup) lays in its side
tin'e	upstream, against the current		
tl'eghnu	backwards, upside down	tl'eghnu naqaditgget	it is turning backwards
tl'eghen'e, tl'eghench'	backwards	tl'eghench' gheyul	he is walking backwards

ye'un	away, away from it	ye'un ti'ilgguk	he went out the door
yeh ghu	there, in the distance		
yun'e	in a general upriver direction		
yunit	at a specific place upriver, way in back	ch'ak'tniitunt yunit	valley is back there
	out in the distance, out in open water		
yus	way ahead, far off, towards a place by the perimeter, the boundary, outside of Alaska		
yuseh, yus	out towards the middle of a body of water, way out, outside of Alaska, bow of boat		
yus-hch'en, dus-hch'en	outer side, on the perimeter	dus-hch'en qaniltax	sleep on the outside

Other Adverbs

Other adverbs do not fit neatly in any of the above time/space categories.

Table 10. Other Adverbs

Adverb	Meaning	Example	Meaning
'en	out in the open, nearby	na'en ch'ghednu'	we are working outdoors
atnaga	I guess	atnaga ełkun	I guess its raining
chiqinik	thank you, thankful	begh chiqinik ełan	I am thankful to him
chisdi (tsisdi)	cleaned, polished	chisdi qilan	it is clean
ch'aduch'	what, how		
Adverbs that begin in ch' usually mean something perjorative			
ch'dik'uch'	differently	ch'dik'uch' nugheltał	he does things differently
ch'dik'ut	rarely, seldom		
ch'du	oddly, comical	ch'dunugheyuł	he walks funny
ch'ehden	sadness, depression		
ch'in-	lying	ch'inqiya	he is lying
ch'qeyan	always (always bad)		
ch'uqughit, ch'uqughuł	no good, lousy, poorly	chuqughuł idazq'en	the fire is burning poorly
dach'	thus, this way	Gu dach'	Here this way
dach'u	only, merely	dach'u ezdu	she is just sitting

daggeyi	friendly, with cheer		
daq'u	enough, stopping, don't do it, let it be, leave it alone, death	daq'u qizdlan	he died suddenly
deggech'	higher, upward, in an upward direction, above	deggech' tiyush	go up, go higher
deggech'i deq	the best, superior up, above	deggech'i t'qit'an	try your best, try harder
dezhun	without a spouse, unmarried, out of wedlock	dezhun zdu	he/she stays unmarried
dghiŋkeghch' duduch'	completely, entirely south wind		
elchun	politely	elchun ki tghiyuŋ	It's polite that you will go again
eldu	quit, give up		
en'ich'	poverty, poorly	quht'ana en'ich'	poor people
esdech'	separately, separate	esdech' nidinchit	set it aside
ghejashla	danger, dangerous	beghejashla qilan	he's dangerous
janq'u	still	janq'u beyich' qilan	he is still alive
guq'u	right here		
ggatgge	upright, right side up	Ggatgge yedaŋtuk'	He flipped them upright.
gheli	good		
hdiŋ'ahdi, hdiŋ'ahsht'a	finally, unexpectedly, by surprise	hdiŋ'ahdi shegh ninyu	you came to me by surprise
heŋ'i, qeŋ'i	secretly	qeŋ'i the qenash	he is whispering
hench'da	maybe	hench'da yaqech' tuniŋ	it may possibly happen that way
ighi	well, then	ighi! q'udigu neŋ htgheshnash	Well! I will talk to you now
iqech'di	in that way		
jitiq'u	with difficulty, barely	jitiq'u q'angheshduk	I barely made it
kiyi usdet	in addition to		
k'eniqu	in bride service for		
k'idet	Naked	k'idet nughebaŋ	he is swimming naked
lach' gheli q'u	completely, entirely, with all his might		
lach'u	truth, truly, it is true, certain	lach'u beŋ qilan	he is certain
laghu	a guess, surmise, it could be (similar to	shi laghu	am I the one

	'lay' I wonder if, but can be used with all pronouns, lay refers only to the speaker, I wonder		
lichen	nuisance, bothersome	lichen etan	I'm a nuisance
nahden	Sideways		
nda'ich	what, how		
nih, nihdi	etcetera, and so forth	ghun k'i nch'u nih t'desne'	that one never says anything at all
ni'i	equally	ni'idagheltal	they are equally wide
ni'u	separating, taking apart	ni'u ni'ilyu	it was butchered
ni'ghena	one after another, constantly	ni'ghena sht'a qenax	he talks repeatedly
ni'ghu	level surface, flat, evenly spaced	e'nen ni'ghu t'e'uq	I leveled the earth
ni'k'ech'	zigzag, back and forth	ni'k'ech' luhsheldaniituk'	he ran zigzag
ni'k'uch'	various, different, assorted	ni'k'uch quht'ana qilan	there are different people
ni'q'a, ni'q'ach'	both sides, both directions, double end		
nuht'e	blind	nuht'e nidalnen	he went blind
qech' (see yaqech')	since, thus		
qenadu, qenatq'u	silent, quiet		
qenteh	out in the village, among houses, visiting (lit. among the fires)	qenteh nugheyu'	he is going about visiting
qeyan, hyan	only, just	q'udikdi qenq'a qeyan qiz'un	now there is only a house
qilch', qilch'q'u	badly, wrongly, poorly	qilch'q'u ze'chin	I made it poorly
qich'a	from (see quantity adverbs)	qenek nuch'udnex q'itdu qich'a	we heard news from home
qit'a	it seems, it appears, I guess so, probably	tu'kuniq' qit'a	it seems that it will rain
qiz'unch	the right way, truth, laws	Qiz'unch' qenax	he giving a speech
qel'i, hel'i	hiding, hidden	qel'i z'un	it is hidden
qughesht'a, qughusht'a	well, nicely, excellently, thoroughly	qughesht'a nik'dalkit; qughesht'a dayesh	he put up food well; nicely wind cured (meat) - PK364-65

qushi	evidently	qushi t'dini'	that's why you're saying that
q'itdu	at home	q'itdu kanudanInen	I want to get back home
q'u	now (emphatic), stop, yet, enough, soon	heyi q'u nik'danlkit	I put up food for winter (emphasizing winter)
q'udi gu	right now		
q'ugheli	really, intensely	q'ugheli chegh	he is really crying
sheItun	in vain, for no reason	sheItun nagh inquI'an	we had an unsuccessful trip
shuqeI'i	quietly, in a whisper	shuqeI'i qenax	he is talking in a whisper
suk qeyagh'a	old time, old, thing, ancient, pertaining to the past		
tik'efi	wild	shlik'a tik'efi ezdIan	my dog turned wild
tiye	really	tiye qil	really bad
tl'ach'	crescent shaped, crescent moon	tl'ach' naz'un tl'ach' ilchi	his head is tilted crescent moon formed
tl'egheshch'	to the left		
tsah	first, ahead		
tsisdi (chisdi)	cleaned, polished	chisdi qilan	it is clean
ts'it	at once, in one place	ts'itsh't'a k'ghelqet'	I ate once precisely
ts'itghu	one way		
ts'itq'u	together, as one, both		
ts'iq'u	still	ts'iq'u denlghech	it is still boiling
ts'itnes	straight, neat, orderly, normal	ts'idnes zisan	stand straight up
udiyAn, yan	he, she alone, by oneself	shi yan, nayi yan	me alone, just us (2)
uhch'u	alone, one one's own	unch'u t'inesen	I leave it alone
un	come	un bedgheshni	I called him to come
undat	last	undat Iuhneshyu	the last time I walked around
yaghelich', yaghelisht'a, yaghelich'	nicely, well	yaghelich' hva ninuhdalen	it turned good weather on them again
yaghali	good	yada q'u net yaghali	whatever you like
yaqech'	thus, similarly, the same way	yaqech' ch'at'htuniI	it will be the same
yan, udiyan	he, she alone, by oneself	shi yan, nayi yan	me alone, just us (2)
yeghech'	below, downward, in a downward direction	yeghech' tdilchit	you reach down

yeh	there		
yet qetl'eghhdi	after that time		
yih, yeh, iyeh	one, one's own, by oneself	nen yih q'u	only you, yourself
yixkda	silly, comical	yixkda qenash	he talks funny

Evidentials and Emphatics

- Evidentials are words that emphasize the certainty of a statement.
- They usually appear at the end of the sentence.
- Evidentials don't easily translate directly into an English word and are sometimes translated as a phrase.

Table 11. Evidentials

Dena'ina	Meaning	Example	Meaning
shin'i	Used to emphasize a singular living person	shgguya shin'i	he <u>is</u> my son!
		Tulchina shin'i	I am Tulchina clan
shina'i	Used to emphasize a group of people; plural emphatic, refers to people	Kahtnuht'ana shina'i	the Kenai people live, the Kenai people exist
		Nulchina shina'i	The Nulchina people
		Utnuht'ana shina'i	they belong to the Ahtna
		Gujun dnayi shina'i łuq'u	Gujun is related to them all
shughu	Thus it is	shi shughu	I am the one
łu	it is said, it seems, apparently	Dena'ina łu k'eten hqghe'u ninya egh	The Dena'ina, they say, had some beliefs about the animals.
-sht'a	really, precisely (suffixed to nouns, demonstratives, or adverbs for emphasis)	yidi sht'a yizteł	he kicked him right in the mouth
shit	specific place or time		
lagu	I wonder		

Emphatics add emphasis

Table 12. Emphatics

Dena'ina	Meaning	Example	Meaning
shida	I am	Albert shi shida	I am Albert, this is who I am
		Dnayi shida	I am a person!
shi'i	non-human or inanimate	ggagga shi'i	it is a bear!
		hetł shi'i	what a sled!

Directionals

Dena'ina, like other Dené, have a directional system based on river flow: upstream, downstream, or across the stream. See James Kari's *Dena'ina Topical Dictionary* (2007:336-341) for a detailed description of the Dena'ina directional system. A reference summary of that work is provided here.

The directional system consists of a prefix, a root, and a suffix.

prefix + root + suffix

Directional Prefixes

ey-	unmarked
yu-	distant
du-	near, intermediate
qe-, he-, qu-	next to, adjacent
ts'i-	straight, directly
P+egh-	in the direction of P

Directional Roots

n'e, ni	upstream, in back (of a house, boat or enclosed space)
du, t'e	downstream
neq, ngge	upland, away from water, toward a rear wall
tsen	downland, toward water, toward a front wall
deq	up
yeq, yeh	down, below
nes	ahead, in front, toward a perimeter
`en, `u	out in the open, off, away
nun, yen	across

Directional Suffixes

Ø	toward
-ch'	towards; from
-h	in an area
-t	at, the place of

Example:

yunit
yu + ni + t

means: "at a place far upstream" (from a place name or from the place one is speaking from)

Other Grammatical Elements

Plurals, Non-Verb

Noun Plurals:

- na, -ina plural person suffix
Example: Nagh'ut dalts'**ina** neighbors, people living on the other side
The corresponding singular suffix would be -en
- en singular person suffix
Example: K'egh du**en** midwife (person who stays by someone); the corresponding plural suffix would be -ina
- qa, -ha, -yi plural suffix
Example: *lik'afa* (lik'a + qa) meaning dogs; *kitqa* meaning boys, and *t'adnaqa* meaning teenage girls.

Plural of other Animate and Inanimate Nouns

Other animate and inanimate nouns are not pluralized but are made plural by the verb or would be understood to be plural from the context of the sentence.

Plurals Within the verb

- Certain verb stems called plural classificatory verbs, e.g. "classify plural objects" will classify the subject as consisting of multiple objects i.e. plural. (See "Gender" verb prefix position)
- The Distributive prefix may be used with neuter aspect verb stems. (See "Distributive" verb prefix position and Neuter Mode section)

Questions

English changes the word order to make a question. "You are sleeping." becomes "Are you sleeping?" in question form. Dena'ina adds the word "du" or in some cases "di" or "da" usually to the end of the sentence as an enclitic to make a question.

Yaghali du?	Is it good? (traditional greeting)
Shi du ghu?	Am I the one?
ki du k'tsendi?	more meat?
Yadi di?	What is that?
gini yadadi	What is this? How about this?
yada du uhu nqilya?	what are you looking for?
Ch'aduch' huda?	Why, for what reason?
yadi niġtu?	why, how come, for what reason, what's it for?

PART V: VERBS

Introduction

As with other Athabascan languages, the Dena'ina verb is among the most grammatically complex structures known in linguistics. A change in a prefix in one position can initiate a change in other positions—the rules are predictable but complex (see the Model of Verb Formation section). Moreover, the Dena'ina verb is not only a verb in the English sense of the term, indicating action or state of being, but contains a great deal of additional information such as who is involved in the speech event (pronouns) and a system to classify nouns as belonging to certain conceptual categories. A verb is frequently a sentence in itself. Because of this complexity readers of this document will have to page from section to section making ample use of the table of contents to understand the verb.

A Dena'ina verb consists of a stem preceded by up to nineteen prefixes and followed by two suffixes as described in Figure 2.

Disjunct Prefixes						#	Conjunct Prefixes											Stem	Suffixes		
							Outer Pronouns		Qualifiers					Conjugation Prefixes			Inner Pronouns		Classifiers	Relative Suffixes	Tense/Aspect Suffixes
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbial	Iterative	Incorporates	Distributive	Disjunct Boundary	Object Pronoun	Outer Subject Pronouns	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronouns			
														Transitional	Mode	Perfective					
i	i	d	d	d	d		i	i	i	i	d	d	i	i	d	d	d	i	d/i	d	d

Figure 2. Structure of a Dena'ina Verb. "d" indicates a derivational prefix/stem,"i" indicates an inflectional prefix.

Prefix Zones

Each prefix position has a function, for example, "inner subject pronouns" is a position that includes pronouns for "I," "you singular," and "you plural" that function as the subject of the sentence and to indicate who is present in the speech situation. Sometimes a given prefix will have a single morpheme that has two functions depending on the context, for example the transitional position figures in verb conjugation (tense/aspect) but can also

indicate that one of a number of possible acts are occurring if the semelfactive (one of a possible series) stem is used. In many cases a function necessitates two or more prefixes as is common with the mode/aspect prefixes. The morphemes associated with each prefix and their function are described in the conjunct and disjunct prefix positions sections.

The prefixes occur in a number of zones based on a concept developed by Kari (1989) and applied here to Dena'ina. Broadly the prefixes fall into conjunct prefixes nearest the stem and disjunct prefixes to the left of the conjunct prefixes separated by the # sign (see Figure 2). Zones for the conjunct prefixes include the inner subject pronoun (one prefix), conjugation prefixes (3) that figure in determining aspect and mode (tense), a set of six qualifier prefixes with various functions and, last, two outer prefixes that function as subject pronouns involving those not present in the speech situation and object pronouns, that receive the action of the verb. The disjunct prefixes form one zone.

Interrupted Synthesis

In most languages, words or affixes (prefixes or suffixes) with similar function adjoin one another. In English, for example, adverbs usually come after or just before the verb they modify. That is generally true of the Athabascan prefix zones described above for Dena'ina, however, it is not always the case and its structure was called "interrupted synthesis" by Edward Sapir (Kari 1989:425) meaning prefixes that perform similar functions are not necessarily in adjoining positions. The future tense, for example, is formed with a gh(e) in the mode position of the conjugation zone and a t(e) in the inceptive position of the qualifier zone four positions to the left and morphemes can be included between the two in any particular verb.

Inflectional and Derivational Prefixes

Because the Dena'ina verb relies heavily on prefixes in its construction it is important to understand the difference between inflectional and derivational prefixes.

An inflectional prefix or suffix does not change the nature or category of the word. In English adding "s" to the noun "car" changes it from singular to plural but it is still a noun meaning automobile, or adding "-ing" to "walk" changes it from present tense, "I walk..." to a present participle, "I am walking,"—it still means to move on foot.

A derivational prefix or suffix significantly changes the meaning or part of speech of the word. For example changing the suffix of the English "excitement" (excite+ment) to -able makes "excitable" (excite+able) changing the word from a noun to an adjective and is, by definition, derivational.

Derivational and inflectional prefixes are indicated in Figure 1. In Dena'ina the prefixes for subject, object, indirect object (object of the postposition) pronouns and negatives are inflectional prefixes. Changing the subject pronoun from "I" to "he" does not change the verb.

Derivational prefixes include mode/aspect conjugation prefixes and distributive, incorporate, gender, iterative, and inceptive prefixes. In each case addition of, or a change in, one of these prefixes causes a significant change in the meaning of the verb. Classifiers can be either inflectional or derivational.

Consequently Dena'ina is a very productive language readily capable of expressing nuanced meaning and subtly complex descriptions of actions and events. Inflectional and derivational morphology (study of morphemes) figures in the Dena'ina word formation process described the the last section. In the formation of a word derivational changes come before inflectional changes.

General Concepts of the Verb:

Verbs are structured around three elements:

What is happening—the meaning of the verb theme

When and *how* the meaning of the verb theme is happening as defined by morphemes indicating mode (or tense) and aspect

The theme, mode, and aspect information interact and are not lineal—one doesn't lead to the other. Readers will need to refer back and forth among the following sections to understand the concepts of theme, mode and aspect.

Verb Theme and Roots

Verb Themes are derived from roots, a concept introduced in an earlier section. The verb theme is the basic form of the verb that a Dena'ina speaker would have "in his/her head" and is the form of the verb that would be entered in a verb dictionary. Kari's(nd) preliminary data indicates there are 1411 themes in Dena'ina. Each root contains one or more themes which define the action and specify the prefixes that must accompany a stem. Note that these prefixes are obligatory, they must be used, are not contiguous, and are not always the same prefixes or any given theme. The theme always specifies a classifier and frequently specifies a gender or object prefix that must be used in the string of morphemes that becomes the verb. The prefixes are subject to further modification as the verb develops "in one's head" or in written form.

For example there are twenty themes for the root *ni*. The theme consists of a stem and obligatory prefix positions.

Three of the verb's 20 themes derived from the root *ni*:

Theme: d gender + Ø classifier + ni stem

Theme Class: operative

gloss: say, tell

Theme: du incorporate # d gender + Ø classifier + ni stem

Theme Class: operative-negative

gloss: be quiet

Theme: d adverb # d gender + Ø classifier + ni stem

Theme Class: operative

gloss: human, animal, inanimate object calls, makes noise

The first theme listed above is:

Theme: d gender + Ø classifier + ni stem

Theme Class: operative

gloss: say, tell

This means that from right to left the verb must contain:

- a stem selected from the stem set described below.
- a \emptyset classifier; classifier prefixes are defined in the conjunct prefix section
- A d Gender morpheme defined in the noun gender section of conjunct prefixes. In this case the d refers to actions of the mouth or speech
- A stem which means "say or tell", gloss, as in glossary, means definition.
- An operative theme class which specifies aspect and mode conjugation

As the verb develops, the morpheme of any given stem within a theme will be taken from a stem set specified for that root. All themes within a particular root will use the same stem set and all 20 themes within the root *ni* will use the same stem set. Kari's (nd) preliminary data indicates there are 541 roots that include a verb and therefore there are a like number of stem sets although many are rare.

The stem set for *ni* "say, deem" is listed below and specifies morphemes for aspect and mode, two concepts further explained in following sections; for now, mode is the equivalent of tense (imperfect is present, perfect is past, future is self-explanatory, and optative expresses an intent) and aspect expresses how the action occurs (durative, over a long time period, momentaneous, at the moment etc.). A root does not have a rigidly defined meaning so it's "definition" is described by the term "tag." The root's tag does not necessarily match the meaning of the theme, although in this case it does.

Stem Set: ni tag: say, deem

ASPECT	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
durative	ni	ni	nił	ni'
momentaneous	nix	ni	nił	ni
neuter	ni	ni	ni	nih
neuter-negative	ne'	ne'	ne'	ne'
transitional	nit	nit	nił	nih

A sentence containing a verb can be understood in terms of its theme. For example, the following sentence was written by Peter Kalifornsky as part of a verb paradigm for "calling" which he translated as "I called him to come."

Un bedgheshni = I called him to come

Theme: d gender + Ø classifier + ni stem

	Adverb	Object Pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject Pronoun	Classifier	Stem
				transitional	mode	perfective			
Morphemes	un	be	d		ghe	i	esh	Ø	ni
Morpheme changes						-- i deletes to avoid double vowels	sh e deletes to avoid double vowels		
meaning	come	him	perception of sound	perfect (past tense)			I		say, tell (call) mode: perfect aspect: durative

un come

be object pronoun, be, means *him, her, or it*. In this case the intent is "him"

theme element d gender designation refers to "perception of sound"

ghe+i perfect (past) mode or tense in agreement with the perfect (past) stem

esh subject pronoun, means "I"

theme element Ø classifier

theme element ni perfect (past) mode or tense and durative aspect stem for *ni*, selected from the stem set above. The durative aspect indicates the action happened over a period of time.

As the verb develops, morphemes of other prefix positions are added to the theme to complete the intended meaning. In this case an adverb (*un*), object pronoun (*be*), mode/aspect pronouns (*ghe+i*), and an inner subject pronoun (*esh*) are added to the theme elements: d gender, Ø classifier and the *ni* stem.

Final sound changes are then made following patterned rules called morpheme changes in this document and called phonological rules in other publications.

Theme Class Categories

Active and Neuter Themes

Verb themes fall into a number of categories that are broadly lumped into two general categories: active and neuter.

- A neuter verb theme is represented by aspects that have the general meaning that the action is completed or is a “to be” verb meaning it describes a state of being. A neuter verb has the same verb stem morpheme in the perfective and imperfective mode, is frequently used with adverbs or adjectives, and can have a modal variation described in the section on Neuter Verbs.
- An active verb theme is represented by aspects that indicate movement, moving to completion, something being made, or sounds. Active verbs have verb stem morphemes that are different in perfective and imperfective mode.

The theme categories are described in Table 13 (from Kari 1979, 2009). Each has grammatical characteristics expressed by the Primary Aspectual String (PAS) defined below which, in turn, categorize perception of action or results of action in the Dena’ina mind—schema in other words. All Dena’ina speakers would have similar subconscious categories of action and tend to think of actions, or states in common terms based on the theme class of the themes they use in everyday speech.

Most of the categorized themes are motion themes (32%) and, at the other end of the spectrum the two classificatory themes represent less than 2% of the total classified themes (unclassified themes were not included in this count). That, of course, does not mean they are unimportant.

Primary Aspectual String

Each theme category identified in Table 13 has an accompanying primary aspectual string (PAS) that specifies the primary imperfective (\emptyset , gh, n, z) and perfective (\emptyset , gh, n, z) modes that theme will take and the aspect (momentaneous, durative, neuter etc.) that is most commonly used with themes in a particular theme category (Kari 1979,2009). The terms mode and aspect are defined in following sections. Thus, by knowing the theme category a particular theme is in, one can predict which morphemes will most likely be used to make the imperfect or perfect mode and which aspect is the most likely one to use.

Table 13. Dena'ina Theme Class Categories and Primary Aspectual Strings (PAS) from Kari (1979, 2009).

Active Verbs	Neuter Verbs
<p>Motion (mot) 32% PAS: n imperfective, n perfective momentaneous aspect Meaning: themes of action or motion</p>	<p>Extension (ext) 5% PAS: n imperfective, gh perfective neuter aspect Meaning: something has come to be in a state that has a linear dimension</p>
<p>Motion- classificatory (mot-clas) >1% PAS: n imperfective, n perfective momentaneous aspect Meaning: motion or action themes utilizing classificatory noun genders</p>	<p>Stative-classificatory (stat-clas) 1% PAS: z imperfective, gh perfective neuter aspect Meaning: something has come to be in a certain state utilizing classificatory noun genders</p>
<p>Conversive (conv) 8% PAS: Ø imperfective, z perfective conclusive aspect Meaning: make something, change into something or some state</p>	<p>Stative (stat) 7% PAS: z imperfective, gh perfective neuter aspect Meaning: something has come to be in a certain state</p>
<p>Operative (Op) 17% PAS: Ø imperfective, z (gh) perfective durative aspect Meaning: perform an operation (e.g. wash one's hands)</p>	<p>Dimensional (dim) 5% PAS: d adverb #+gh imperfective, gh perfective+† classifier neuter aspect Meaning: something has come to have a certain attribute such as shape or color excluding linearity</p>
<p>Successive (suc) 7% PAS: Ø imperfective, z perfective semelfactive aspect Meaning: perform sequential or potentially sequential acts</p>	<p>Descriptive (desc) 12% PAS: n imperfective, gh perfective neuter aspect Meaning: something has come to have a certain condition: become hard, sharp, etc.</p>
<p>Onomatopoeic (ono) 6% PAS: d gender +Ø imperfective, d gender + gh perfective onomatopoeic or durative aspect Meaning: sounds or actions that mimic something in nature</p>	
<p>uncategorized (not included in %) (specific thematacized verbs)</p>	

Examples of each theme class category follow. Note the congruence between imperfective, perfective and aspect of the stem with the actual example. The motion verb example will have an *n* perfective and a momentaneous aspect as specified in Table 13 and so on.

Active Theme Category Examples

Motion (mot)

Primary Aspectual String: n imperfective, n perfective;
momentaneous aspect

Theme Example: Ø + datl' meaning: plural go
hnidatl': they arrived

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect			Class.	Stem
		Transitional	Mode	Perfective		
morphemes	qe		ne	i	Ø	datl'
morpheme changes	h qe changes to h at beginning of a word	ni e deletes to avoid double vowels				
meaning	they (plural, three or more)	perfect				arrived (walking) Mode: perfect Aspect: momentaneous

Theme: Ø classifier + datl'

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: plural go, walk; or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dił/dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Reversative	deł	datl'	deł	dił
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Motion- classificatory (mot-clas)

Primary Aspectual String: n imperfective, n perfective
momentaneous aspect

Theme Example: Object + Gender + Ø classifier + tun Meaning: handle elongated object (classificatory verb)

izin nitun he bought a gun

	Object (noun)	Outer Subject Pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class.	Stem
				Trans- itiona l	Mode	Perfect ive		
morphe mes	izin	Ø	Ø		ne	i	Ø	tun
morphe me changes				ni e deletes to avoid double vowels				
meaning	gun	he	gun	perfect				elongated object Mode: perfect Aspect: momentaneous

Stem Set: tun tag: classify elongated enclosed object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Customary	tish	tik	tish	
Momentaneous	tix	tun	tił	tix
Neuter	tun	tun	tił	tih
Perambulative	tił	tik	tish	
Progressive	tił	tun	tił	
Reversative	tih	tun	tih	

Conversive (conv)

Primary Aspectual String: Ø imperfective, z perfective
conclusive aspect

Theme example: object + ł classifier + chi (root)

yilchi he/she made it

	Object Pronoun	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class.	Stem
			Trans- itional	Mode	Perfecti ve		
morphe s	ye	Ø		Ø		ł	chi
morphe changes	yi e changes to i with Ø imperfective						
meaning	it	he/she	imperfect				make object Mode: imperfect Aspect: conclusive

chi (root) tag: make singular object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
conclusive	chi	chin	chił	chi/chix
momentaneous	chix	chin	chił	chix
negative	che	chil	chil	chi/chik'
neuter	chin	chi'	chił	chi

Operative (op)

Primary Aspectual String: Ø imperfective, gh perfective
durative aspect

Theme Example: Object+Ø classifier+ghun

Meaning: make, kill plural objects

yeghighun he made them

	Object Pronoun	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class	Stem
			Trans-itional	Mode	Perfective		
morphemes	ye	Ø		ghe		Ø	ghun
morpheme changes			ghi e changes to i before gh				
meaning	them	he	perfect				make plural objects mode: perfect aspect: durative

ghun (root) tag: make plural object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Futur e	Optative
durative	ghun	ghun/ghuh		
momentaneous	ghux	ghun	ghuł	ghun
repetitive	ghish	ghik	ghish	ghish
customary	ghish	ghik	ghish	ghish
neuter	ghen	ghen	ghik	ghek

Successive (suc)

Primary Aspectual String: i + Ø imperfective, z perfective
semelfactive Aspect

Theme Example: Object+Ø classifier+t'uts' Meaning: cut object

yizt'es he/she cut it once

	Object Pronoun	Outer Subject Pronoun	Conotative	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class.	Stem
				Trans- itiona l	Mode	Perfecti ve		
morphemes	ye	Ø	i		Ø		Ø	t'es
morpheme changes	yi e changes to i with Ø imperfect		i deletes to avoid double vowels					
meaning	it	he/she	indirect transitiv e?	imperfect				cut (it) once mode: imperfect aspect: semelfactive

t'uts' (root) tag: cut with edged tool

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Futur e	Optative
durative	t'us	t'us	t'us	t'is
distributive	t'us	t'uts'	t'us	t'is
reversitive	t'es	t'uts'	t'es	
momentaneous	t'us	t'uts'	t'es	t'us
semelfactive	t'es	t'es	t'es	t'es

Onomatopoeic (ono)

Primary Aspectual String: d + Ø imperfective, gh perfective
onomatopoeic or durative

Theme example: d+l classifier +ch'ich' Meaning: be a squeaky sound

delch'ich' it is squeaking

	Outer subject pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class.	Stem
			Trans- itional	Mode	Perf.		
morphemes	Ø	de		Ø		l	ch'ich'
morpheme changes							
meaning	it	perceptions of sound	imperfect				squeaky mode: imperfect Aspect: ?

ch'ich' (root) tag: squeaky sound

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
durative				
distributive	data not available			
reversitive				
momentaneous				
semelfactive				

Neuter Theme Category Examples

Extension (ext)

Primary Aspectual String: n imperfective, gh perfective
neuter aspect

Theme example: ∅ classifier + 'u (classificatory verb) Meaning: linear, elongated extends

dayin ni'u iron piece extends

	Subject (noun)	Gender	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class.	Stem
			Trans-itional	Mode	Perf.		
morphemes	dayin	∅		ne		∅	'u
morpheme changes			e becomes i with no inner subject pronoun				
meaning	iron	(such as a trap)	imperfect				linear extends mode: imperfect Aspect: Neuter

'u (root) tag: linear extends

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
durative	'u	'u		'u/'uh
neuter	'u	'u	'u†	'u/'uh
momentaneous	'ux	'u	'u†	
perambulative	'u†	'u	'u†	'u/'ux

Stative-classificatory

Primary Aspectual String: z imperfective, gh perfective
neuter aspect

Theme Example: Gender + Ø classifier + tun Meaning: elongated object is in position (classificatory verb)

izin ztun: gun is there

	Object (noun)	Gender	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class .	Stem
			Trans- itional	Mode	Perfecti ve		
morpheme s	izin	Ø		z		Ø	tun
morpheme changes							
meaning	gun	gun	imperfect				elongated object Mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Stem Set: tun tag: classify elongated enclosed object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Customary	tish	tik	tish	
Momentaneous	tix	tun	tił	tix
Neuter	tun	tun	tił	tih
Perambulative	tił	tik	tish	
Progressive	tił	tun	tił	
Reversative	tih	tun	tih	

Stative (stat)

PAS: z imperfective, gh perfective
neuter aspect

Theme example: Ø classifier + ta (classificatory verb) Meaning: recline, lay down

ztan he/she is lying down

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class .	Stem
		Trans- itional	Mode	Perfecti ve		
morpheme s	Ø		z		Ø	tan
morpheme changes						
meaning	he/she	imperfect				recline, lay down Mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Stem Set: ta tag: classify animate object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Momentaneous	tash	tan	taʃ	tish
neuter	tan	tan		
customary	tish	tik	tish	
continuative	ta	ta'	taʃ	tah

Dimensional

Primary Aspectual String: d Gender+gh imperfective, gh perfective+ʃ classifier
neuter aspect

Theme example: d Gender + ʃ classifier + kugh Meaning: be large

dghiʃkugh he/she is large

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class	Stem
			Transitional	Mode	Perfective		
morphemes	∅	de		ghe		ʃ	kugh
morpheme changes			e changes to i				
meaning	he/she	person	imperfect				animate object (person) Mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Stem Set: kugh tag: big

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
neuter	kugh	kugh	kugh	kugh
trans	kih/kigh	keh	kaa	keh
progressive	keh			

Descriptive (desc)

Primary Aspectual String: n imperfective, gh perfective
neuter aspect

Theme example: Gender + ∅ classifier +la Meaning: complement, is, exists
kiʃ nlan he is a boy

	Object (noun)	Outer Subject Pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Class.	stem
				Transitional	mode	perfective		
Morphemes	kiʃ	∅	∅		n(e)		∅	lan
Morpheme changes								
Meaning	boy	he	person	imperfect, neuter				be/are mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Root stem set: la tag: to be

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
neuter	lan	la'	lał, lah	
reversative	lah	lan	lah	lah
transitional	lah	lat	lah	lah

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs (Transitivity)

Transitive verbs require an object, either a direct object (I hit the **ball**) or an indirect object (I hit the ball to **him**) which are located in the prefix positions of the verb or as a noun in the object position of a sentence. Direct objects are found in the "object" prefix position and indirect objects are found in the "object of the postposition" prefix position.

Many transitive verbs are very general "handle a singular object" with the nature of the object defined by a morpheme in the gender classificatory prefix position.

Intransitive verbs do not have an object and are distinguished by being either singular-dual (referring to one or two) or plural, three or more. The intransitive verb "walk" for example has separate verb stems for "I walk" and "we (two of us) walk" versus "we (three or more) walk".

Transitive verbs can be changed to intransitive verbs through a passive construction. See the passive section and classifier prefix position.

Mode

Mode: When the action happens.

Mode means “mode of the verb” and includes two types of structures:

- Normal Modes refer to what is usually called “tense” and describe “when” the action happens. Normal modes are coded through the appropriate morphemes in the mode/aspect prefix positions (conjugation morphemes) and the stem. Tense modes are imperfect (present), perfect (past), and future represented by four types of imperfectives— \emptyset , z, n, gh—and four perfectives--gh, z, n, and \emptyset . The morphemes associated with each are in Table 14 (negative excluded) and will be further defined in this and following sections.
- The four modal variations including: neuter, inceptive, optative-intentional and negative. The morphemes associated with each are in Table 14 and will also be further defined in following sections.

Table 14. Summary of Morphemes that form Conjugation Patterns in various Mode Variations (negatives excluded). Used with appropriate stem.

	Disjunct Prefixes		Qualifier	Conjugation Mode/Aspect		
	Adverb	Distributive	Inceptive	transitional	Mode	Perfective
Imperfective \emptyset z n gh					\emptyset z n gh	
Perfective gh z n \emptyset				i	gh z n \emptyset	i i
Inceptive Future			t(e)		gh	
Optative Intentional			t(e)		gh	
Inceptive Imperfect			t(e)	i	\emptyset ,z	
Inceptive Perfect			t(e)	i	gh z	i
Neuter Singular	d				gh	n
Neuter Plural	d	n				
Neuter “to be”					i, n	

Imperfect Mode

- In imperfect mode the action was started and is continuing at the present time.
- Usually, for readability, the imperfective is translated into English as present tense--"we walk." It is often more accurate to translate the imperfect into English as "we are walking" rather than "we walk" because the action is continuing.
- An imperfect mode requires the imperfect form of the stem determined by the stem set and one of the imperfect prefix structures described below. The most probable choice of imperfective form is designated by the theme class the theme is in.

Table 15. Imperfect Mode

	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
	Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
gh imperfective		gh				imperfect form of the stem
n imperfective		n				
z imperfective		z				
∅ imperfective	(i)	∅				

- Together with the stem, the various imperfective forms have the following meaning:

∅ imperfective	generally means the action is moving toward completion
gh imperfective	
n imperfective	associated with motion verbs, or often determined by use of an adverb usually in the momentaneous aspect
z imperfective	generally means the action is static, or the action is moving toward a static condition

- As with other prefixes, the mode/aspect prefix morphemes are subject to morpheme changes

The following sentence illustrates imperfect mode with a Ø imperfective.

Ch'qenash We are talking

	Outer subject	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect			Classifier	Stem
			transitional	mode	perfective		
Morphemes	ch'e	qe		Ø		Ø	nash
Morpheme changes							
Meaning	we (two, because of singular verb)	act of speaking	imperfect				speak, talk mode: imperfect Aspect: Repetitive

Theme: qe + Ø classifier + stem

Theme Class: Optative-Repetitive

Meaning: singular talk, speak

Stem set: ya tag: speak

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ya	ya	ya	Ya
durative	nax	Yał	nax	nax
momentaneous	ya	yał		
neuter	Ya'	Ya'		
repetitive	nash	nak	nash	nash

Perfect Mode

- In the perfect mode the action was started and completed in the past.
- Usually the perfect mode is translated into English as past tense, for example, "we walked," however, in many cases "we had walked" would be more accurate.
- A perfect mode requires the perfect form of the stem determined by the stem set and one of the perfect prefix structures described below. The most probable choice of perfective form is designated by the theme class the theme is in.
- The perfect mode is further subject to morpheme changes.

Table 16. Perfect Mode

	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
	Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
gh perfective		gh	i			Perfect morpheme of the stem set
		gh				
n perfective		n	i			
z perfective		z				
	i	z				
∅ perfective	i	∅				

The perfective forms have the following characteristics:

- gh perfective: most common perfect structure used in most aspects
- n perfective: often used with motion verbs when the action has achieved a terminal state, often required by use of an adverb, usually momentaneous aspect
- z perfective: generally means the action has achieved or been put in a static state
- ∅ perfective: used in all transitional themes

Following is an example of a perfect mode with an n perfective

nich'nidatl' we (three or more) walked to a place

	Adverb	#	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect			Class.	Stem
				transitional	Mode	Perfective		
morphemes	ni		ch'e		ne	i	∅	datl'
morpheme changes			e deleted following a consonant that is preceded by a morpheme boundary		e deleted preceding a vowel			
meaning	to a specific place		we plural, (three or more)	perfect				Walked Mode: perfect Aspect: Perambulative Plural

Note: "ni" in adverb section requires an n perfective (ne+i) and is a motion (theme class) verb

Theme: ∅ + datl'

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: plural go, walk or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dił/dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Reversative	deł	datl'	deł	dił
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Future

- The future mode is the same as the English future tense; the action has yet to happen.
- It takes the form of a future stem, a "ghe" in the mode position and a "t(e)" in the inceptive position.
- If the theme includes an i in either the conative or semelfactive position, the "i" will also occur between each morpheme boundary.

Table 17. Future Mode

Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
					Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
(i)		t(e)			(i)	ghe				Future morpheme of the stem set

For example:

Ch'etudeł We will walk

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Inceptive	mode/aspect			Class.	Stem
			trans- itional	mode	Perfective		
morphemes	ch'e	te		ghe		∅	deł
morpheme changes		e changes to u and ghe deletes if a consonant and an "e" (Ce) precede a mode "ghe" and if there is no inner subject pronoun					
meaning	we	future	future				will walk Mode: future Aspect: Momentaneous

Theme: ∅ + datl'

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: plural go, walk or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dił/dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Reversative	deł	datl'	deł	dił
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Example of "i" insertions with future mode

iditighetił I will find a bag

	Conative	Gender	Inceptive	Mode/Aspect		Inner Subject Pronoun	Class.	Stem
					Mode			
morphemes	i	de	te		ghe	esh	ł	tił
morpheme changes		i inserted because of conative "i"; e deleted to avoid double vowels	i inserted because of conative "i"; e deleted to avoid double vowels			sh deletes preceding ł		
meaning	indirect transitive i.e. find (action directed toward the stem)	actions of the hand involving a tool or instrument	future	future		I		handle a bag or object Mode: future Aspect: Momentaneous

Theme O+ł+tun

theme Class: stative-classificatory

Meaning: handle a bag or (object)

Stem Set: tun

tag: classify elongated, enclosed object

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Customary	tish	tik	tish	
Momentaneous	tix	tun	tił	tix
Neuter	tun	tun	tił	tih
Perambulative	tił	tik	tish	
Progressive	tił	tun	tił	
Reversative	tih	tun	tih	

Modal Variations

Several variations of mode exist including optative-intentional, neuter, inceptive, and negative.

Optative-Intentional Mode

The optative-intentional mode expresses an intent to do something or movement toward something and is structured by a progressive stem, "ghe" in the mode position and "t(e)" in the inceptive position. In the last case, the "te" does not refer to future tense, but "inceptive" as in "I'm beginning to..." or "I intend to..."

Table 18. Optative-Intentional Mode

Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
			Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
te				ghe				Progressive

For example:

nuch'tutdaŋ ni let's walk back

	Iterative	Outer Subject Pronoun	Future/ Inceptive	Mode/Aspect		Class.	Stem	Relative suffix
				Mode				
morphemes	nu	ch'e	te	ghe		∅	daŋ	ni
morpheme changes		e deleted following a consonant and preceding a morpheme boundary	e changes to u and ghe deletes; if a consonant and an "e" (Ce) precede a mode "ghe" and if there is no inner subject pronoun			∅ changes to d because of nu interative; d changes to t		
meaning	implies "we've come, and now will go back"	we plural (three or more)	inceptive "begin to"	optative			Plural walk mode: progressive Aspect: Momentaneous	expresses intent

Theme: ∅ + dat'

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: plural go, walk, or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Reversative	deł	datl'	deł	dił
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Inceptive Mode

The inceptive construction means “beginning to” in the imperfect and perfect modes and forms the future tense described above.

Imperfect Inceptive

The imperfect inceptive mode includes a “t(e)” in the Inceptive position and a “Ø” or “z” morpheme in the mode/aspect position

Table 19. Imperfect Inceptive

Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
			Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
t(e)			i	Ø z				imperfect stem

For example,
ch'tedał “We are starting to walk”

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Future Inceptive	Mode/Aspect			Class.	Stem
			Transitional	Mode	perfective		
morphemes	ch'e	te	i	Ø		Ø	dał
morpheme changes	e deleted following a consonant and preceding a morpheme boundary		i deletes to avoid double vowels				
meaning	we plural (three or more)	inceptive “begin to”	imperfect inceptive				plural walk mode: imperfect inceptive Aspect: Momentaneous plural

Theme: Ø + datl'
Theme Class: motion
Meaning: plural go, walk, or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Perfective Inceptive

The perfect inceptive includes a "te" in the Inceptive position, a perfect stem, and a perfective in the mode/Aspect position.

Table 20. Perfect Inceptive

Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
			Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
t(e)			i	ghe z	i			Perfect

For example
ch'tazdatl'

We started to walk

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Future Inceptive	Mode/Aspect			Class.	Stem
			Transitional	Mode	Perfective		
morphemes	ch'e	te	i	z		∅	datl'
morpheme changes	e deleted following a consonant and preceding a morpheme boundary	consonant + e (Ce) precedes a z mode, e changes to a	i deletes to avoid double vowels				
meaning	we plural (three or more)	inceptive "begin to" "start to"	perfect inceptive				walked mode: perfect inceptive Aspect: Momentaneous plural

Theme: ∅ + datl'

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: plural go, walk, or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Reversative	deł	datl'	deł	dił
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Neuter Modal Variation

Neuter verbs take a different construction if they are singular or plural and there are two special cases, "i/a" neuter verbs and "to be" neuter verbs. Neither singular/plural nor "to be" neuter aspect verbs take the mode/aspect structure listed above.

Singular Neuter Verbs (one or two)

- singular stem
- a "d" in the disjunct adverbial position
- a "ghe" in the mode position
- gh perfective in perfect mode
- and an "n" in the perfective position
- morpheme changes: the "n" is deleted before "esh" or "eh" inner subject pronouns, or "d" or "l" classifiers

Table 21. Singular Neuter Verb

Disjunct Prefixes				Conjunct Prefixes								Stem				
Object of Dactyloctenion	Postposition	Adverbial	Iterative	Incorporate	#	Outer subject pronoun	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Mode/ Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
											Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
		d										ghe	n			singular

Example:

dghełkugh I am big

	Adverb	#	Gender	Mode/Aspect		Inner Subject Pronoun	Class.	stem
				mode	perfective			
Morphemes	d		∅	ghe	n	esh	ł	kugh
Morpheme changes				e deleted to avoid double vowels	n deletes before esh (or ł classifier)	sh deleted before ł classifier		
Meaning	neuter		person	imperfect, neuter		I		be big mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Theme: Gender + † classifier + stem

Theme Class: dimensional

Meaning: be big, large, tall, high, great in quantity or volume

Stem Set: kugh, kegh

tag: be big

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
neuter	kugh	kegh/kugh	kegh/kugh	kegh/kugh
progressive	keh	keh	keh	keh

Plural Neuter Verbs (three or more)

- plural stem
- "d" in the disjunct adverbial position
- "n" in the Distributive plural position
- a plural subject pronoun (we, they, you pl) in either the inner subject or outer subject pronoun position
- gh perfective in perfect mode

Table 22. Plural Neuter Verbs

Object of Dactyloaction	Postposition	Adverbial	Incorporate	Distributive Plural	#	Outer subject pronoun	Mode/ Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
							Trans- itional	Mode	Perfective			
		d		n		(plural pronoun)				(you plural pronoun)		plural

Example:

den'ełkugh you (3 or more) are big

	Adverb	Distributive Plural	#	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Cla ss.	stem
					tra ns	mo de	pe rf			
Mor- pheme s	d	n		∅		∅		eh	†	kugh
Morph eme chang es	e inserte d to differe ntiate from "dn"	glottal stop is inserted before "eh"						h is deleted when it precedes a †		
Meani ng	neuter			person	imperfect, neuter			you, plural (3 or more)		be big mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Theme: Gender + † classifier + stem
 Theme Class: dimensional
 Meaning: be big, large, tall, high, great in quantity or volume

Stem Set: kugh, kegh tag: be big

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
neuter	kugh	kegh/kugh	kegh/kugh	kegh/kugh
progressive	keh	keh	keh	keh

"To be" Neuter Verbs

Singular Neuter "to be" verbs

In "to be" verbs such as those with the stem *-'an, -lan* the neuter mode morpheme is "i" in the perfective position except in 3rd person singular (he/she) where it remains "n." (see Tenenbaum 1978:111)

Table 23. "To be" Neuter Verbs

Conjunct Prefixes							Stem		
Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Future/Inceptive	Negative	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
				transitional	Mode	Perfective			
						i n third person singular subject pronoun (he/she)			

The full complement of "lan" "to be" verbs follow; all based on the following imperfect neuter stem.

Theme: (complement) Gender + Ø classifier + stem
 Theme Class: descriptive
 Meaning: be (to be)

stem set: la tag: be

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
neuter	lan (le')	la'	lał, lah	
reversative	lah	lan	łah	lah
transitional	lah	lat	lah	lah

ezhi ełan I am cold first person singular

	Object	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Class	stem
			trans	mode	perfective			
Morphemes	ezhi	∅			i	esh	∅	lan
Morpheme changes					i deletes to avoid double vowels	sh + l becomes ł		
Meaning	cold	person	imperfect, neuter			I		be/are mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

ezhi inlan you are cold second person singular

	Object (noun)	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Class	stem
			trans	mode	perfective			
Morphemes	ezhi	∅			i	n	∅	lan
Morpheme changes								
Meaning	cold	person	imperfect, neuter			you		be/are mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

ezhi nlan he/she is cold third person singular

	Object (noun)	Outer Subject Pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Class.	stem
				trans	mode	perfective		
Morphemes	ezhi	∅	∅			n	∅	lan
Morpheme changes								
Meaning	cold	he/she	person	imperfect, neuter				be/are mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

ezhi ch'ılan we are cold first person plural

	Object (noun)	Outer Subject Pronoun	Gender	Mode/Aspect			Class.	stem
				trans	mode	perfective		
Morphemes	ezhi	ch'e	∅			i	∅	lan
Morpheme changes		e deletes when a consonant + e (Ce) is preceded by a morpheme boundary						
Meaning	cold	we	person	imperfect, neuter				be/are mode: imperfect Aspect: neuter

Negatives

Negatives (no, not) can be made in several ways. In some cases negatives have their own stem set.

K'usht'a negates the sentence. In addition *k'usht'a* combines with negative structures in the verb involving the "z" negative prefix. Negative suffixes without *k'usht'a* also negate a sentence. The structure includes three forms:

- imperfect or future mode negative, or customary aspect
- perfect mode negative, or stative imperfect aspect
- suffix negatives and negative imperatives

Imperfect or Future Mode, or Customary Aspect Negative

Use *k'usht'a* (Kenai) with a z prefix in the negative position.

Table 25. Negative Imperfect or Future or Customary Aspect

Noun	Conjunct Prefixes								Stem
	Outer subject pronoun	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Mode/Aspect			Classifier
						Transitional	Mode	Perfective	
k'usht'a				(te)	z		ghe		Imperfect or Future

example: progressive negative

k'usht'a zgheshyul I am not walking

	Noun	Negative	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Class.	Stem
			transitional	Mode	Perf.			
morphemes	<i>k'usht'a</i>	z		ghe		esh	∅	yul
morpheme changes			e deleted to avoid double vowels					
meaning	not	not	imperfect			I		walking Mode: optative Aspect: progressive Singular Verb

Theme: ∅ classifier + (y)u stem

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: singular (one or two) *go(es), *walk(s)

Stem Set: (y)u tag: Singular go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Continuative	yu	yu		
Customary	yix	yik	yix	
Durative	jush	ju	juł	
Distributive	yu	yu		
Momentaneous	(y)ush	yu	yut/yux	yish
Perambulative	yul	duk	dush	dush/dish
Persistent	yuh	yuh		
Progressive	yut/yit			yul
Repetitive	yux/dux	yuk/duk	yux/dux	yix
Reversative	yuh	yu	yuh	yuh

example: Future negative

k'usht'a tezheshyul I will not walk

	Noun	Future/ inceptive	Negative	Mode/Aspect		Inner Subject Pronou n	Class.	Stem
					Mode			
morphemes	k'usht'a	te	z		ghe	esh	∅	yul
morpheme changes				e deleted to avoid double vowels				
meaning	not	future	not	future		I		walk Mode: Future Aspect: Momentaneous Singular Verb

Theme ∅ classifier + (y)u stem

Theme Class motion

Meaning: singular (one or two) *go(es), *walk(s)

Stem Set: (y)u

tag: Singular go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Continuative	yu	yu		
Customary	yix	yik	yix	
Durative	jush	ju	juł	
Distributive	yu	yu		
Momentaneous	(y)ush	yu	yut/yux	yish
Perambulative	yul	duk	dush	dush/dish
Persistent	yuh	yuh		
Progressive	yut/yit			
Repetitive	yux/dux	yuk/duk	yux/dux	yix
Reversative	yuh	yu	yuh	yuh

example: Future negative
k'usht'a qetezgheshnak' I will not speak

	Noun	Thematic	Inceptive	Negative	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Class.	Stem
						Mode				
morphemes	k'usht'a	qe	te	z		ghe		esh	∅	nak'
morpheme changes					e deleted to avoid double vowels					
meaning	not	act of speaking	future	not	future			I		speak Mode: Future Aspect: Durative Singular Verb

Theme: qe + ∅ classifier + stem
Theme class: operative
Meaning: singular talk, speak

Stem set: ya, na tag: singular talks

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ya	ya	ya	Ya
durative	nax	Yał	nax/ nak'	nax
momentaneous	ya	yał		
neuter	Ya'	Ya'		
repetitive	nash	nak	nash	nish

Perfect Mode or Stative Aspect Imperfective Negative

Use *k'usht'a* with an 'i' prefix in the transitional mode/aspect position.
No other perfective morpheme such as *ghe* is used.
Note: a glottal stop is inserted between the transitional "i" and subject pronoun "esh" or "eh."

Table 26. Negative Perfect Mode or Stative Aspect Imperfect

		Conjunct Prefixes						Stem		
Noun	Outer subject pronoun	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
					Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
k'usht'a				∅	i	∅	∅	` (glottal stop) before esh or eh		Perfect

Example: Perfective Negative

K'usht'a teshyul I did not leave

	Noun	Future/ inceptive	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Class.	Stem
			Trans- itional	Mode	Perfective			
morphemes	k'usht'a	te	i			esh	∅	yul
morpheme changes			i deleted to avoid double vowels					
meaning	not	inceptive ("begin to")	perfect			I		walk/leave Mode: Perfect Aspect: Momentaneous Singular Verb

Theme: ∅ classifier + (y)u stem

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: singular (one or two) *go(es), *walk(s)

Stem Set: (y)u tag: Singular go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Continuative	yu	yu		
Customary	yix	yik	yix	
Durative	jush	ju	juł	
Distributive	yu	yu		
Momentaneous	(y)ush	yul /yu	yuł/yux	yish
Perambulative	yuł	duk	dush	dush/dish
Persistive	yuh	yuh		
Progressive	yuł/yił			
Repetive	yux/dux	yuk/duk	yux/dux	yix
Reversative	yuh	yu	yuh	yuh

Suffix Negatives and Negative Imperatives

Suffixes may be used in the verb to negate or reverse action (see also section on suffixes) and may be used in an emphatic form of negative called a negative imperative similar to English "Don't run!"

- relative suffix "-u", reversing the action of the verb
- relative suffix "-igu" expresses the desire that the event not take place
- when the relative suffix "-u" or "-igu" is used with the outer subject pronoun "ch'e", the pronoun means "one"

Table 27. Negative Suffixes or Negative Imperatives

Prefixes							Stem	Suffixes		
Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Mode/Aspect	Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	relative	tense/aspect
										u igu

Negative Imperative using the relative suffix *-igu*

Ch'qenashigu Don't talk (one shouldn't talk, repeatedly)

	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Class.	Stem	Suffix
			transitional	mode	perfective			
Morphemes	ch'e	qe		∅		∅	nash	igu
Morpheme changes	e deletes when a consonant +e precedes a morpheme boundary							
Meaning	one	act of speaking	imperfect				speak, talk mode: imperfect Aspect: Repetitive	not

Theme: qe + ∅ classifier + stem

Meaning: talk, speak, singular

Stem set: ya tag: speak, talk

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ya	ya	ya	Ya
durative	nax	Yał	nax	nax
momentaneous	ya	yał		
neuter	Ya'	Ya'		
repetitive	nash	nak	nash	nish

K'ushda plus du Negative

In Inland dialect a negative imperative can be formed by using the "n'ch'u" (Inland negative) in front of the verb and "du" after it. The same construction may occur in the Kenai dialect in which case the negative would be formed by placing the negative "k'usht'a" in front of the verb and "du" after it.

K'usht'a qeya du don't talk!

	Noun	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect			Classifier	Stem	enclitic
			trans- itional	mode	perfec- tive			
Mor- phemes	k'usht 'a	qe		∅		∅	ya	du
Morphe me changes								
Meaning	not	act of speaking	imperfect				speak mode: imperfect Aspect: momenta neous	question

Theme: qe + ∅ classifier + stem

Theme Class: operative

Meaning: talk, speak, singular

Stem set: ya, na tag: singular talks

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ya	ya	ya	Ya
durative	nax	Yał	nax	nax
momentaneous	ya	yał		
neuter	Ya'	Ya'		
repetitive	nash	nak	nash	nish

Aspect

Introduction

Verb Stems occur in categories called aspect which convey information about how the action happens. Aspect works in concert with mode (tense) to give a full dimension of the action in terms of how and when the action or state of being occurs. For example if the action is happening at a moment in time, the momentaneous aspect is used requiring the momentaneous form of the stem and corresponding momentaneous prefix morphemes in the mode/aspect positions. If the action is something that has happened over a long period of time, the durative aspect is used requiring a durative stem for that verb and durative prefix morphemes in the mode/aspect positions.

The aspect categories are listed below. Many are rare: the most common are in bold.

Table 28. Dena'ina Stem Aspect Categories. The most common are indicated in bold. Adapted from Kari (1990) and Tenenbaum (1978)

Aspect	Definition
Conclusive	indicates closure or conclusion of an action
Continuative	a series of punctual actions, or actions in a series
Customary	actions which are done regularly over a span of time or at a certain time of day
Distributive	a series of actions performed one at a time and separated by a period of time (he lifted them up one at a time)
Directive:	?
Durative	actions over a prolonged period of time.
Metamorphic-Reversative	signifies the transfer of something or someone into another state or stage
Momentaneous	actions occurring at a single moment in time
Neuter	refers to adjective-like qualities such as color, or characteristics of a person (pretty) or of a shape (long)
Onomatopoeic	refers to animal-like actions
Perambulative:	movement without a direct location goal; "here and there" or as would be done while hunting
Persistive	actions that persist over time
Progressive	motion which is continuous or non-directional
Repetitive	unanalyzable repeated actions
Semelfactive	a single act out of a possible series
Seriative	discrete actions performed in a series
Stative	signifies the object is at rest in a particular place
Successive	?
Transitional	verbs expressing transition into a certain condition (for example "becoming beautiful")

Aspect is coded for in two ways. The choice of morphemes from the stem set indicate which aspect is intended. In the stem set below "nash" indicates repetitive aspect and "ya" indicates momentaneous aspect in imperfect mode. Some morphemes are the same, "ya" for example, occurs in several places in this stem set. The distinction as to which aspect is intended is usually made by the morphemes in the mode/aspect prefix positions. Alternatively, the aspect would be understood from the speaking situation. See Mode/Aspect Prefixes for further information about aspect.

Stem set: ya Meaning: talk, speak (singular)

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ya	ya	ya	Ya
durative	nax	Yał	nax	nax
momentaneous	ya	yał		
neuter	Ya'	Ya'		
repetitive	nash	nak	nash	nish

Stem Sets and Suffixation Patterns for CV and CVC Stems

Stem sets are identified for particular roots. A root will have a single stem set for a verb and contain one or more verb themes. All the verb themes rely on the same stem set for that root. (see verb theme)

Root

→ Stem Set

→ Theme(s)

For example the root ba (tag: swim) has the following stem set:

Stem set (partial) Root: ba, tag: swim

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ba'	ba'	ba'	ba'
conclusive	ba	ba'	ba'	bah
momentaneous	bax	ban	bał	bał
perambulative	bash	bak	bash	bash
progressive	bał			

Themes

∅ classifier + ba

Meaning: swim on the surface

Object + n + ∅ classifier + ba

Meaning: swim after the object

Object + † classifier + ba

Meaning: carry the object while

swimming

All of the themes draw from the same stem set depending on the aspect or mode required.

The morphemes that make up a particular stem set can follow a pattern, called a suffixation pattern in which suffixes are added to the root (stem). One pattern exists for stem that consist of a consonant and a vowel (CV), and another pattern for consonant-vowel-consonant stems (CVC).

For example Table 29 shows the morphemes for the momentaneous aspect for CV stems: -ba, -chi, -'i, -qa, and -q'u for the imperfect, perfect and future mode. Note that in all cases the "x" is added as a suffix to the stem in imperfect, "n" is added in perfect, and "ł" is added in future.

CV, consonant-verb, momentaneous aspect

suffixation formula: -x (imperfect) -n (perfect) -ł(future) -ł (optative)

Table 29 Consonant-Verb (CV) Suffix Patterns

Stem	Tag: (tag)	-x	-n	-ł
		Imperfect	Perfect	Future
ba	swim	bax	ban	bał
chi	make sg obj	chix	chin	chił
'i	sneak	'ix	'in	'ił
qa	go by boat	qax	qan	qał
q'u	arrowhead	q'ux	q'un	q'uł

Stem Sets and Suffixation Patterns

CV Suffixation patterns can be regular and predictable but sometime irregular as they are for the ya stem used in the example above.

CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) suffixation patterns have not been entirely analyzed for Dena'ina.

Theme Formation Process

Causatives

- A causative is a theme formation process that means “to cause something to be.”
- When a direct object already occurs in the object position, a second object pronoun is not sequenced as is normal for two direct objects (see object pronouns) but is moved to the left of the disjunct positions.

Table 30. Causative Construction

	Disjunct Prefixes			Conjunct Prefixes	Stem				
	Object of Postposition	Postposition	#	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Mode/Aspect	Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem
2nd object pronoun moves here				if occupied, 2nd object moves to left of disjunct prefixes				†	

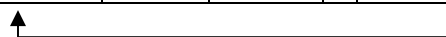


object movement

For example: Shnuk’elqat, He’s feeding me something (Tenenbaum 1978)
The “she” (me) object pronoun would ordinarily be to the right of the disjunct boundary and sequenced with the “k’e” (something) pronoun. But in causative construction, the “she” pronoun moves to the far left because the object pronoun position is already occupied by the k’e (“something”) object pronoun and the “she” is attached to an implied postposition (∅=something).

Shnuk’elqat He’s feeding me something (He’s causing me to be fed)

	Object Pronoun	Post position	Iterative	#	Object Pronoun	Gender	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect	Class.	Stem
							Mode			
morphemes	she	∅	nu		k’e	∅	∅	∅	l	qat
morpheme changes	sh								classifier changes to † making it causative	
meaning	me	something	repeated action		something	pieces of meat, dry fish (food)	he	imperfect		eat mode: imperfect Aspect: momentaneous



object movement

Theme: Object + Gender + I classifier + stem (qet')
 Theme Class: operative
 Meaning: eat (object)

Stem Set: qet' Tag: slip, eat

ASPECT	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
durative	qat	qet'	qat	qat
momentaneous	qat	qet'	qeł	qat
neuter	qet'	qet'	qet'	qet'
progressive	qeł			
reversative	qet	qet'	qet	qet
transitional	qat	qat'	qeł	qat

Comment: note that the durative stem variation is irregular (from Kari nd)

Passive

In a passive construction, a transitive verb, one that takes an object, is changed to an intransitive verb with no object. The object is deleted and the classifier changes as follows:

Ø classifier changes to d classifier

‡ classifier changes to I classifier

Passive construction is derivational in that it changes the structure of the verb.

Verb Stems

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffix							
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Verb stems, technically stem suffixes, contain information about

- What is happening—the meaning of the verb theme
- When it is happening--mode (or tense) of the verb
- How it is happening—verb aspect or mode variations

Verb stems are bound morphemes, they must have one or more prefixes attached to be meaningful.

Stem Set

Stem information is contained in a dictionary entry called a “stem set” described in the beginning of the verb section. The stem set specifies which morphemes are to be used for any given mode or aspect. Partial example of the stem set for “eat”:

ASPECT (how)	MODE (when)			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
momentaneous	qat	qet'	qeł	qat
durative	qat	qet'	qat	qat
neuter	qet'	qet'	qet'	qet'
transitional	qat	qat'	qeł	qat

Singular and Plural Verb Stems

- Dena'ina contains both singular and plural intransitive verbs: "singular" means "one or two" while plural means "three or more."
- Below are partial stem set examples of singular/dual and plural verb stems for "walk."

Stem set: (y)u tag: walk, goes, singular or dual

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
momentaneous	(y)ush	yu	yuł	yu
Continuative	yu	yu		
Repetive	yux	yuk	yux	yix
Customary	yix	yik	yix	

Stem set: datl' tag: walk, goes, plural, three or more

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dił
durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił
reversitive	deł	datl'	deł	dił

However, Kenai Dena'ina does not seem to rigidly hold to the singular/plural differentiation as do other dialects.

Prefix Positions

Introduction

Nineteen prefix positions precede the stem. They are divided into conjunct prefixes, next to the stem, and disjunct prefixes, to the left of the conjunct prefixes. Figure 3 identifies the sequence of the morphemes and the principle morphemes associated with each position.

Prefixes are selected first by the obligatory prefixes indicated by the theme with additional prefixes added following a word formation order outlined in the last section.

The pages that follow this section explain each prefix.

Disjunct Prefixes							Conjunct Prefixes													Stem	Suffixes	
							Outer Pronouns		Qualifiers					Conjugation			Inner Pronoun		Classifier		Stem	Relative (nominalizer)
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbials		Iterative	Incorporates		Distributive	#	Object Pronoun	Outer Subject Pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun		
																	Transitional	Mode	Perfective			
sh n(e) be ye dna h qu qe qbe/ qev nił hu k'e de	See Text	chi ch'a ch' ch'i ch'u d da de di diqi du des gga hu hyu ja jan ki ke kni łqi'i łqi łuh łu naqa ndu ni	nik'u nił nish niqa nu qa qe qit'a q'a q'ez qi'i shi shtu shu shut ski su ta taq'a ti tu tik'u t'e t'i tsen ts'i t'i	nu	a 'a qa qan beł qen ben qena bes ges chi q'es chish ses chut sheł del shich du suy dleq' ta dli tets' dzas ti hał tsa heł tu hetł tlegh hyish tl'it jesh tl'u ka tsegħa kaja ves lu veł ken yeni k't'un yitsa ł nchix nu'u	n	# disjunct boundary	sh n Ø h dna /na q hu nił qu/h k' qe, qu be qb/qev y qev q	Ø ch' q ₁ qe ₂ k' y	qe	i	d n dn q p n Ø	t(e)	z	gh z	I	Ø gh n z	i n	esh ni eh	Ø ł ł d	en na i t	ni u igu ch'

Figure 3. Structure of the Dena'ina Verb with Principle Morphemes.

Conjunct Prefixes

Conjunct prefixes are next to the stem (conjunct) and contain information about mode/aspect prefixes, gender, and other types of prefixes. Every verb theme must have at least one conjunct prefix, the classifier, attached to it. The verb theme specifies which conjunct or disjunct prefixes must be attached to a particular stem.

Classifier Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes				#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes					
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Table 31. Classifiers

Morpheme	Meaning
∅	No equivalent meaning
l	
ʔ	
d	

- Classifiers do not have a meaning that could be translated but function grammatically, and possibly are a remnant of an earlier structure that classified action. Classifiers are obligatory, meaning they have to be included for the verb to make sense.
- The four classifiers are ∅, l, ʔ, and d. The ∅ symbol means there is no morpheme to represent "classifier." See section on morphemes.
- Often transitive verbs take a ʔ classifier and intransitive verbs take a ∅ classifier, but this is not always the case.
- Use of a ʔ classifier in some themes change it to a causative. See causative section for details.

Conjunct Prefixes/Classifiers

- in the following instances the Ø and † classifiers will change to d and l classifiers respectively. Presence of:
 - “nu” iterative prefix
 - “hu” reflexive prefix (he cut himself) or if the action is such it implies reflexivity
 - “ni†” reciprocal (we gave each other gifts)
 - Passive construction (a transitive verb with an object is changed to an intransitive verb with no object)

Table 32. Classifier changes required by iterative, reflexive, reciprocal or passive construction.

Original classifier		result
Ø	changes to	d
†	changes to	l
l	does not change	l
d	does not change	d

Inner Subject Pronoun Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes			
Object of Postposition	Postposition	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
			Distributive	Incorporate	Iterative	Adverbs						Transitional					

- esh* = I (the speaker)
n or *i* = you (singular, one listener)
eh = you (plural, several listeners)

The inner subject pronouns identify the individuals present in the speech situation.

esh, "I" pronoun (first person singular)
 In some narratives "esh" or "I" is said from the point of view of the person in the story.

n or *i*, "you" singular pronoun (second person singular)

- "You" is *n* when
 - it is the initial sound in the word,
 - is preceded by the disjunct boundary (#)
 - it is preceded by a conjunct prefix that begins with a vowel
- "You" is *i* when
 - it is preceded by a prefix that consists of a consonant and a vowel (Cv) or when it is not preceded by a disjunct boundary.

eh, "you" plural pronoun, (third person plural)

When used with a singular stem, *eh* means "you two"; when used with a plural stem *eh* means three or more.

The Ø subject pronoun prefix (he, she, it) is sometimes included as an Inner Subject Pronoun. I have placed it in the Outer Subject Pronoun position because those pronouns include those not present in a speech situation. It would be inappropriate to refer to "he" for example, if he were standing next to you. Either way the pronoun is a "null" or "zero" morpheme so there is no actual speech sound made.

Mode/Aspect Prefixes

Disjunct Prefixes					#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes					
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode	Perfective					

Mode/aspect morphemes consist of three prefix positions called the perfective, mode, and transitional and function in conjugation forming the various Ø, gh, z, and n imperfectives and perfectives discussed above.

A stem morpheme in imperfect mode and durative aspect must have the imperfect morphemes for durative aspect in the stem/aspect position. In addition the transitional position morphemes can function independently as describe in that section.

The future and optative progressive modes do not vary according to aspect. The imperfect and perfect require different combinations of prefixes according to which aspect is used as described in the table below. There are four sets of morphemes in this position as defined below:

Ø-Imperfective and Ø perfective

The Ø symbol means there is no morpheme in the mode prefix position. $i+\emptyset$ imperfective* contains no morpheme, and Ø perfective is $\emptyset+i$ (i in the perfective position). Though it is not spoken it is useful to write it when drafting verbs to remember the mode/aspect and stem agreement.

*The *i* is deleted when it is preceded by a conjunct prefix, so the *i* only is used when it is the initial sound of a verb.

z-imperfective and z-perfective

Z imperfective (z) and perfective (i +z) has to do with the action being in the process of reaching a static or stable state (z imperfective) or having achieved a static or stable state (z perfective).

n-imperfective and n-perfective

N-imperfective is the n(e) morpheme and n-perfective include ne+i morphemes. The n-imperfect/perfect has to do with the action being completed in the momentaneous aspect with respect to a point in time or space. These mode prefixes are usually determined by use of an adverb which requires an n imperfect or perfect and is described in the adverb morpheme list below.

gh-imperfective and gh-perfective

The ghe-imperfect is used in most neuter themes. The gh-perfective, gh(e)+i is used in aspects in which the action occurs over time, durative, customary, etc., but can occur in the momentaneous aspect.

gh-progressive

The gh progressive is used with an optative stem to indicate progressive optative aspect. Gh occurs in both the imperfect and perfect form.

Table 33. Imperfect and Perfect Mode/Aspect Morphemes.

Aspect	Mode					
	Imperfect			Perfect		
	Trans- itional*	Mode	Perfective	Trans- itional	Mode	Perfective
Continuative**	i	∅			ghe	i
				i	z	
Conclusive	i	∅		i	z	
Customary**	i	∅			ghe	i
Durative	i	∅			ghe	i
	i	∅		i	z	
Momentaneous	i	∅			ghe	i
	i	∅			z	
		z			z	
		n			ne	i
	i	∅			∅	i
Neuter**		gh			ghe	i
Neuter		ne			ghe	i
		z			ghe	i
Repetitive	i	∅			ghe	i
Semelfactive	i	∅		i	z	
					∅	i
Transitional	i	∅		i	∅	
					ghe	i
Stative		z			ghe	i
Seriative	i	∅			ghe	i
Progressive		gh			ghe	i
Metamorphic- Reversative	i	∅			ghe	i
				i	z	
Successive	i	∅			?	
Perambulative		?			?	
Onomatopoetic**	i	∅			ghe	i

* The *i* is deleted when it is preceded by a conjunct prefix, so the *i* only is used when it is the initial sound of a verb.

**The following aspects require additional prefixes:

- *Continuative Aspect*: requires the additional use of the *n* distributive prefix.
 - *Customary Aspect*: often takes the *nu* iterative prefix.
 - *Neuter*: requires a "d" adverb in the imperfective, and a "ʔ" classifier in the perfective
 - *Onomatopoeitic*: requires the use of a "d" gender.
-
- Because Dena'ina does not permit two vowels in a row, the *ghe+i* form will result in either the *e* or *i*, usually *i*, being deleted from the verb (in some instances the *ghe* is deleted as defined in the morpheme changes section).
 - Use of certain adverb prefixes will require *ghe*, *z*, *ne*, or \emptyset , in the mode/aspect position, see adverb section.

See "Other Modal Variations" for structures that involve the Mode/Aspect position.

The stem mode and aspect morpheme must agree with the mode/aspect prefix position morphemes and vice versa. In the example below the stem "-*dleq'*" is from the stem set for "laugh," and indicates the momentaneous aspect and perfect mode (tense). From the chart above the momentaneous aspect takes the *ghe+i* perfect form in the Mode/Aspect prefix positions. The bold morphemes indicate the agreement that must occur between the stem and the Mode/Aspect prefix position.

nk'**gheshdleq'**

I laughed

	Distributive Plural	#	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner subject Pronoun	Class .	Stem
				transitional	mode	perfective			
Morphemes	n		k'		ghe	i	esh	∅	dleq'
Morpheme changes				i drops avoiding double vowels			e drops avoiding double vowels		
Meaning	repeatedly		Has to do with laughing ?	Perfect			I		Laughed Mode: Perfect Aspect: Momentaneous

Theme: k + ∅ classifier + stem
Theme class: successive

Stem Set: dleq' Tag: laugh

ASPECT	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
momentaneous	dlih	dleq'	dleh	Dlih
Durative	dlih	dleq'	dlih	Dlih
Customary	dlih	dlih		

Future

ghe in the mode/aspect prefix position

AND

t or te in the Inceptive prefix position
(see future mode for more details)

Optative

The optative tense means the action of the verb is desired or moving toward completion such as "I want to swim."

The progressive aspect is used with the Optative-Intentional mode variation described above, and ghe in the mode position in both the imperfective progressive and perfective progressive. See Optative-Intentional Mode for more details.

The following sentence illustrates imperfect mode with a gh progressive:

Ch'udeł we are walking

	Outer Subject Pronoun	Mode/Aspect ghe			Class.	Stem
		Transitional	Mode	Perfective		
morphemes	ch'e		ghe		∅	deł
morpheme changes	e changes to u and ghe deletes if a consonant and an "e" (Ce) precede a mode "ghe" and if there is no inner subject pronoun					
meaning	we (plural, three or more)	imperfect				walking Mode: imperfect Aspect: progressive Plural Verb

Theme: ∅ classifier + stem (datl')

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: plural go, walk; or plural fish swim

Stem Set: datl' tag: Plural go

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
Durative	dał	datl'	dał	dił/dał
Distributive	dał	datl'	dał	dał
Momentaneous	dał	datl'	deł	dił/dał
Perambulative	deł	datl'	deł	deł
Progressive	deł			
Reversative	deł	datl'	deł	dił
Semelfactive	deł	deł		

Transitional Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes						#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes			
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Transitional morpheme = i

The transitional morpheme is used to convey information about perfect or imperfect mode as described in the mode/aspect section above.

This morpheme also combines with the semelfactive aspect stem morpheme to mean "one out of a possible series." If a semelfactive "i" is used it causes other consonant + vowel morphemes to change their vowel to "i" also. For example, from Peter Kalifornsky's story Making Snowshoes describes prying up the front of the snowshoe during construction:

bak'nitightsex You will pry it up (once)

	Object of pp	postposition	Object pro.	gender	Incep.	Trans.	mode	Subject Pro.	Class.	Stem
Morphemes	Be-	-a	k'e	ne	t	i	ghe	i	∅	tsex
Morpheme Changes	b e deletes to avoid double vowels		k' e deletes before conjunct prefix	ni e changes to i because of semelfactive		i deletes to avoid double vowels	e deletes to avoid double vowels			
English	It	exerting force against Object	something	rope-like object	Future	one out of a possible series ;	future	you		Move elongated object quickly, Mode: Future Aspect: semelfactive

Theme: Object + Gender + ∅ classifier + stem, tsey

Theme Class: motion

Meaning: *move *elongated, *pointed O quickly; nature causes O (ice, clouds) to *move

Stem set: tsey, tsex tag: move elongated object quickly

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Progressive
Momentaneous	tsax	tsey	tsex	
Perambulative	tsex	tsey	tsex	tsix
Successive	tsex	tsex	tsex	tsex
Repetitive	tsex	tsex	tsex	tsex
Customary	tsix	tsix	tsey	tsex
Semelfactive			tsex	

Thematic Prefix (a)

Disjunct Prefixes						#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes			
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Gh Thematic

- Ghe in the position to the left of the mode/aspect generally indicates a number of small, similar actions of a similar type.
- Ghe is in most themes involving working, boating, water, or freezing.

Ze thematic

- Found in the theme "to put up fish" exact meaning unknown.

Example of gh thematic:

ghgheshtnu' I worked

	Thematic	Mode/Aspect			Inner Subject Pronoun	Classifier	Stem
		Transitional	Mode	Perf			
Morphemes	gh		ghe	i	esh	d	nu'
Morpheme changes		I deletes to avoid double vowels			e deletes to avoid double vowels	d changes to t	
Meaning	a number of similar actions	perfect			I		worked mode: perfect Aspect: neuter

Theme: gh + d classifier + nu stem

Theme Class: operative

Meaning: work

Stem set: nu Tag:: good luck signs, sources of good luck

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
durative	nu'	nu'	nu'	nuh
momentaneous	nux	nu'	nuł	
Neuter	nu	nu'	nu'	nuh

Negative Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes				
Object of Postposition	Postposition		(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
												Transitional	Mode					

z = the action of the verb is negated

This morpheme signifies negation of the verb but is not used in all negative structures. See section on negatives under modal variations for the complex details of forming negatives.

Inceptive Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes				#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes					
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Future

The future tense requires a "t" in this position. In many situations an "e" is inserted, making "te" and:

- "ghe" in the Mode/Aspect position
- a future stem

Note: in all dialects other than the Kenai (Outer Inlet) dialect, the Inceptive prefix position is to the left of the Noun Gender position.

Inceptive, Conditional, Subjective, time/space extension, throwing "t(e)" of the Future Inceptive position is used in the following constructions:

- Inceptive, to indicate the start, or intent to start, an action
 - Imperfect inceptive: te combined with an imperfect stem
 - Perfect inceptive: te combined with a perfect stem and a z+i mode/aspect prefix
 - Progressive inceptive: t combined with a future/progressive stem means "starting to..." (no ghe as in the future tense)
- Conditional: The Inceptive is used in a conditional construction (if he would have...; if she could have...)(Tenenbaum 1978:106)
- Subjective: The Inceptive is used in "so he could..." verbs
- Extension in time and space: t (e) in this position signifies an extension in time or space (Tenenbaum 1978:36)
- Throw: Used with classificatory verbs to indicate throwing (cause an object to move through space). Ø imperfect, i +z perfect and an † classifier.

Noun Gender Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes			#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes						
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

The use of a prefix in this position defines the noun it refers to (subject or object) as being in a certain category or thought of in a certain way. Thus, the verb defines the noun. Some verb themes require a prefix in this position termed "Gender" in the theme. There are two types: Semantic Class Markers and Classificatory gender prefixes. In addition "d" gender prefixes plays an important part in some verb themes.

Table 34 identifies the semantic class markers in the gender position.

Table 34. Semantic Class Markers

Prefix	Meaning
d(e)	water
	fire, light, the sun
	actions of the hand involving a tool or instrument
	actions of the foot
	actions of the head and eyes
	refers to the mouth or voice
	perceptions of sound
	actions involving wood, paper, or grass
	visual or tactile perceptions, including color
	mental perceptions and actions usually having to do with awareness or knowledge
n(e)	refers to the face or surface of the head
	rope-like object usually sinew or rawhide
	birds or airplanes
	round objects
	feelings, unusual mental states, judgments
	refers to travel by boat or vehicle
dn (dene)	refers to internal qualities
	strong sound, taste or tactile perception
	physical or metaphorical protrusion or forwardness
	heaviness or density
q	rock
	areas, situations

Subject as in "I said to myself" use the de prefix.

- Often these are used with the "hu" reflexive object pronoun but many times the "de" alone refers to reflexivity.
- These themes usually have the "l" classifier.
- According to Kari, cited in Tenenbaum 1978:155, Proto-Athabaskan "da" sometimes appears as the de reflexive morpheme.
-

Object of the Postposition morphemes

"D(e)" can also function as the object of postpositions (see object of postpositions).

De (da) Reflexive Morpheme

Verbs that are reflexive, meaning the action is reflected back on themselves.

D insertion

"D" is inserted with certain classificatory stems, for example following a "z" perfective. See Tenenbaum (1978:141)

Classificatory Verbs

Certain verbs called "classificatory verbs," usually translated as "is" or "are" in English, classify the action of the noun into one of several categories. In this case the classificatory verb on the left of the following table is paired with the appropriate gender prefix along the top margin.

Table 35. Classificatory Verbs with Gender Prefixes. From Kari: 2005.

	Classificatory verb	Gender Prefixes				
		∅	d	n	dn	q
1	Single compact object; `u	ball, trap, hat, sun, beaver lodge	egg, song, word	berry, bread, roe, coiled rope, head	rock, ring, mirror, box, whetstone	house, plot of land, situation, weather
2	Elongated object; tun	needle, sled, boat, bow, gun	pole, plate, cane, quill, pencil stick	dentalium necklace	mirror	--
3	Enclosed object; ʔtun	knife, full sack, rolled sleeping bag	pillow, mattress, lake	sack of berries, flour or fish eggs	box of rocks	q+d ravine, valley
4	Fabric-like object; kits	blanket, net, paper, open sleeping bag, empty sack, skin without hair	skin with hair, fur, caribou mat	--	--	--
5	Object in open vessel; qu	sugar, water in container	eggs or wood chips in bucket	berries or roe in container	rocks or coal in bucket	--
6	Animate object; ta	person, dog, doll, crucifix	--	--	--	--
7	Food; kit	piece of meat, dry fish	beaver's food pile	roe	--	--
8	Mushy object; tlaq'	mud, rotted food, wet cloth, butter	wet tea leaves	fish eggs (not in container)	--	pile of refuse, area of soft ground
9	Plural objects; lu	traps, boots, dogs	eggs, plates, cups, words, tobacco, songs, waves	sg. uncoiled rope, pl. coiled ropes, beads, berries, roe, snare	rocks, whetstones, boxes	houses, objects over area, freight
10	Multiple objects; chuq'	sand, glacier ice	chips of wood	berries	rocks	earth, clouds

Thematic Prefix (b)

Disjunct Prefixes					#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes				
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Thematic prefixes in this position are required when talking or writing about certain subjects. For example if the stem involves "talking" a "qe" thematic prefix must be used in this position. No other thematic prefixes are known to occur in this position.

qe thematic refers to talking or speech

Example

qenash he or she is talking

	Outer subject	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect			Classifier	Stem
			Transitional	mode	perfective		
Morphemes	∅	qe		∅		∅	nash
Morpheme changes							
Meaning	he or she	act of speaking	imperfect				speak, talk mode: imperfect Aspect: Repetitive

Theme: qe + ∅ classifier + stem

Theme Class: operative

Meaning: singular talk, speak

Stem set: ya tag: singular talks

ASPECT ↓	MODE			
	Imperfect	Perfect	Future	Optative
continuative	ya	ya	ya	Ya
durative	nax	Yał	nax	Nax
momentaneous	ya	yał		
neuter	Ya'	Ya'		
repetitive	nash	nak	nash	Nish

Outer Subject Pronoun Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes							
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

With the exception of “we” (which can be a collective “we” and therefore include persons not present), pronouns in this position refer to individuals not present in the speech situation or to abstractions or to nonhumans acting upon humans.

Outer subject pronouns are the subject of the action of the verb, or can function as the object of the verb (direct object), see the Outer pronoun section that follows.

Up to three (theoretically more) prefixes can be used in this position and are in the relative order (exceptions occur):

∅ - ch’e - k’e - qe₁ -qe₂ - ye

∅ he, she, it
The ∅ symbol means there is no morpheme, but the absence of the morpheme signifies “he, she, or it” which would be understood from the context of the sentence if a distinction was necessary. ∅ third person singular pronouns are often included in the Inner Subject Pronouns position but are included here because this set of pronouns refers to people not present in the speech situation.

ch’e- we or “someone” when the identity is not known or cannot be seen

- in singular stems this means “we two”
- means “one” when the suffix “-a” is at the end of the verb.
 - ch’eqenashigu, “don’t talk” or “one shouldn’t talk” (a negative imperative)
- changes to ts’e- when a “t” “t’” or “d” (alveolar consonant) occurs preceding or following this morpheme

Outer Subject Pronouns

- k'e subject or object meaning "something"
- often used with transitive verbs in which the "something" is known from the context of the sentence
 - k'et'us "she's splitting fish"
 - sometimes used thematically but the rules are not worked out
 - k'e combined with hu- object pronoun and an I classifier means "pretend to be"
- qe-1 they,
- can also mean "someone" if the person is seen but not known
 - may be the subject or object
 - with singular stems this means "two"
 - they is the third person plural in intransitive verbs or transitive verbs, the exception: where a third person singular object (him, her) is used in which case "qey" refers to both subject and object
 - related to the plural of nouns for people and dogs
 - lik'aqa = dogs
- qe-2 abstract entity, abstract area, abstract thing, abstract space/time
- may be the subject or object of the verb
- ye- nonhuman subject
- used when a nonhuman acts upon a human
 - used when a nonhuman acts in conjunction with a human or humans
 - animal nouns do not have plurals, so the pronoun also has only one form (singular)
 - requires use of the third person object pronouns normally used with first and second person subjects not the set normally used with third person subjects. (Tenenbaum 1978:69)

English Person/Plurality Pronouns		
Person	Singular/Plural	English Pronoun
first	singular	I
second	singular	you
third	singular	he, she
first	plural	We
second	plural	you
third	plural	they

Object Pronoun Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes				
Object of Postposition	Postposition		(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
	Adverbs											Transitional	Mode	Perfective				
	Iterative																	
	Incorporate																	
	Distributive																	

Object pronouns receive the action of the verb (direct object) in transitive verb stems (transitive means the verb includes an object of the action). Pronouns in this position can function as the subject of passive verbs.

Used with all subject pronouns

- she me (the speaker)
- ne you (singular) (the listener)
- dna us/we (na when it is the first part of the word)
- h you (plural) (nh in non-Kenai dialects)

Third Person Object pronouns (him, her, them) used with first or second person subjects: I, you sg., you pl., we

- ∅ him or her used with all subject pronouns except "ye" non-human subject
- be him or her used only with when the subject pronoun is non-human, ye
- qbe (qev) them used with non-3rd person subject

Object pronouns used with third person subjects: he, she, they

- qu (qe) them
- ye him, her, it: used only when the subject pronoun is he or she (3rd person singular)
- qey them (used with 3rd person plural subject, they) in this case qey carries the meaning of both the subject and object "they saw them" and no other outer subject pronoun is used

Other

- hu himself, herself reflexive pronoun (changes classifier, see classifier page)
- nił "each other" reciprocal pronoun (changes classifier, see classifier page)

Note: the outer subject pronouns k'e and qe₂ can function as object pronouns

Disjunct Prefixes

Disjunct prefixes are separated from conjunct prefixes by the # sign and include noun-like incorporates, adverbs and other information that is normally not required but adds detail, nuance or color to the sentence.

Distributive Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes					#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes						
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect	Transitional	Mode	Perfective	Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect

n = indicates plurality in certain verb themes

The distributive prefix morpheme means plural subjects in neuter aspect and some stative aspect verbs, and distributive plural active verbs. See Plurals and Neuter mode.

Plural (3+) verbs with neuter aspect require the n distributive with plural pronouns (e.g. "they").

Continuative aspect frequently employs the n distributive prefix.

Incorporate Prefixes

Disjunct Prefixes					#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes				
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect	Transitional	Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
														Mode	Perfective						

Incorporates are derived from nouns and incorporate noun-like information into the verb. The following list is from Tenenbaum (1978), Kari nd, and from Kalifornsky 1991; it is likely there are others.

Table 36. Incorporates from Tenenbaum (1978).

Morpheme	Meaning	Comment
Incorporates involving the body		
chi/tsi	head, movement or position	often used with de semantic class marker referring to "head"
chish	knees	
da	oral noise (not speech)	often used with qa adverb and de gender
del	blood	
du	has to do with the mouth or speech	often used with de semantic class marker referring to mouth or voice
jesh	lap	
ka	belly	refers to lying prone, on all fours, or an upside-down container
kaja/ka	tail	
kaq'	ribs	
lu	hand	
qeyu	wisdom/intelligence	
tsa/sa	head, movement or position	
nchix	nose	
nu'u	eyes	
qa	foot	often used with de semantic class marker referring to foot
q'es/q'esh	neck	
ses/se	skin	
shich	breath	
tl'u	buttocks, underside of a container	
yeni	mind	
Other incorporates		
'a	lair, den	refers to night bear hunting

ben	lake	
chegh/chegha	cry	
chuł	east wind	
dleq'	laugh	
dli	to be cold	
dzas	pole as in poling a boat	
ges	jerk up and down	
hał	pack or load	
hetl	sled	
heł	evening, dusk, darkness	
hyish	mirage	
ka/kah/k'ah	herd of animals	
ken	wooden pieces	
k't'un	leaves	
ł	days	
qan	house, dwelling	
qen	fire, sparks, heat, burn	
qena	words, talk	
sheł	running	
suy	sand	
ta	water (used in compounds as in underwater)	
tets'	walking cane	
ti	water in a container	
tu	water	
tlegh	oil, grease	
tl'ił	rope	
tsa	rock	
tsegha	war or fighting	
tsi	head	
ves/bes	action of a gang	
vet/ł (beł)	sleep	
yitsa	bark (as in dog's bark)	

Iterative Prefix

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes							
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

nu- iterative prefix

The nu iterative prefix is used:

- to refer to repetition of an action.
- reversal of motion. For example "he came back" implies the person had gone and now is coming back
- or it refers to completing an action.

The nu iterative prefix is required with the Customary aspect.

Use of the iterative prefix requires a change in the \emptyset and † classifier as indicated below.

Original classifier	iterative classifier
\emptyset	d
†	l
l	l
d	d

Adverbial Prefixes

Disjunct Prefixes				#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes					
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Adverb or adverbial prefix morphemes provide information about direction or location, adjective-like qualities, relationships of actions among others as identified in the tables below. Adverbs may also occur separately in a sentence before a verb. For additional adverbs see Kari (2007) and the section above on “stand alone” adverbs.

Directional adverbial prefixes in the momentaneous aspect require specific imperfect and perfect morphemes as described below. Other adverbs use the regular imperfect and perfect prefixes defined for that aspect (see aspect/mode prefixes).

Table 37. Directional Adverbial Prefixes and Imperfect and Perfect morphemes. From Tenenbaum (1978:176-187)

Adverb Morpheme	Imperfect prefix morpheme	Perfect prefix morpheme	Meaning
ch'	∅	i + ∅	down an inclined plane, in an inclined direction
ch'a	ne	ne + i	out; from being hidden to being exposed
da	∅	ghe + i	into an open container as used in classificatory verb
da	ne	ne + i	out of an open container, used in classificatory verb
de	stative aspect only		off the ground, on a raised surface
des	∅	ghe + i	into the fire
di	∅	ghe + i	into an enclosed container, used in classificatory verb
diqi	∅	ghe + i	up through smokehole
du	z	z	onto a raised horizontal surface
du	z	z	hung up (on a fish pole, clothesline)
gga	ne	ne + i	up from a lying position
hu	∅	z	reaching the top (mountain)
hu	∅	gh	up from or out of a low or enclosed

			place
hu	∅	ghe + i	into pieces, in many places
jan or ja	∅	ghe + i	in half
ki	∅	ghe + i	at or to the end of something
ke	∅	z	in an upriver direction
kni	∅	ghe + i	into the snow
łqi'i or łqi or qi'i	∅	ghe + i	hidden; into a hidden position
łuh			see "nu"
naqa/niqa	ne	ne + i	to the beach or to higher ground from the water
naqa/niqa	∅	z	around; in a circular curved direction
ni	ne	ne + i	to a point of rest; to a specific point
ni	∅	ghe + i	penetrating into
nił	∅	ghe + i	into chunks or large pieces
nił	∅	z	together (two objects or surfaces being aligned or intersecting)
nik'u	∅ ∅ ne	ghe + i i + ∅ ne + i	out in a horizontal direction
nik'u	∅ ne ∅	∅ ne + i ghe + i	up from a point of rest; into the air
nish	∅	ghe + i	in a downriver direction
ndu	ne	ne + i	into the house or dwelling
nu, łuh	ne	ne + i	around, here and there nu used with imperfect and optative łuh used with perfect and future
nu	∅	gh	down, towards the ground; from in the air to a point of suspension
nu	ne	ne + i	across, spanning an area
nu	∅	ghe + i	hung up on something, wore clothing
qe	∅	ghe + i	down the mountain or hill
q'a	ne	ne + i	mentally or psychologically penetrating
q'ez	∅	ghe + i	past halfway
ski	∅	ghe + i	under a tree
su	∅	ghe + i	into the mouth
shtu	ne	ne + i	away; off to some unspecified and unknown place; lost; "off in the woods"
ta	ne	ne + i	submerged in water
taq'a	∅	ghe + i	to the flats from the mountain
ti	ne	ne + i	out of a house or dwelling
tik'u	ne	ne + i	out in the woods
tu	∅	ghe + i	into or onto the surface of the water
tu	ne	ne + i	up the beach; up an incline up a hill
tu	z	z	up from the water's edge; up to higher ground; up the mountain
tu	ne	ne + i	in the nose
t'e	∅	ghe + i	partially underneath an outer layer

t'i	∅	ghe + i	into an enclosed place (not a dwelling)
tsen	∅	i + ∅	down to the beach, (e.g. from a house)
ts'i	?	?	straight

Table 38. Adjective-like Adverbial Prefixes (Tenenbaum 1978:187-8)

Adverb Morpheme	Meaning
Modify the meaning of qualities expressed by neuter verbs	
ch'	Abnormal and culturally devalued state or quality
ch'u	Bad
Shi	Enough (quantity)

Table 39. Action adverbial Prefixes (Tenenbaum 1978:189-90)

Adverb Morpheme	Meaning
Chi	Play
Chi	Death, illness
Chi	Worry
ch'i	Slow
De	Wash
Du	Tie
Hyu	Pay
Qa	Noise (frequently used with incorporate "du(da)" mouth, voice)
qit'a	Mental awareness
q'a	Sew
Shu	be full from eating
t'i	Fast

Table 40. Other Adverbial Prefixes, (Tenenbaum 1978:190-1)

Adverb Morpheme	Meaning
d	Indicates that the aspect is neuter or transitional; Before a conjunct prefix beginning with a vowel the "d" becomes t'
t'e	Thus; means "to say" when preceding a direct quotation; also used with "do" or "be"; lends itself to euphamisms

Postposition Prefixes

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes							
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
															Transitional	Mode					

Postpositions are something like English prepositions and include words like "among," "for," "to," and "with."

There are three types of Postpositions:

- Independent Postpositions are free morphemes written as one word and are described in the Independent postposition section above.
- Bound postpositions have a pronoun prefix and postposition written as one word and are described in the Independent section above.
- Postpositions incorporated into the verb as a prefix are described in this section. Each has an object (object + postposition) and occur to the far left of the disjunct prefixes. In the following descriptions the O in "O-xxx" refers to object of the postposition described in the next section.
- Areal nouns can also be used as an object of the postposition. See Kari 2007:331-335.

Table 41. Postposition Prefixes from Kari (nd), Tenenbaum (1978: 191-222), and Kalifornsky (1991).

"O" refers to "object of the postposition" defined in the following section

Postposition	Meaning	Example	Meaning
O-a	On O, against O, in contact with O, up to and touching O, exerting force (as pulling or pushing) on O;	yanitchet	he pushed on her, he woke her up
		chashga shadanila	lend me cups
	In O, being an open container of any type; Out of O, out of an open container, boat, for O's temporary use	na'a titkun	it will rain on us
		Object spends time	shatetshghizet

O-ahdyidehch'	on top of O, refers to a wooden roof	qenq'a ahdyidehch'	on top of the house
O-aliqa	O being icy from spray		
O-an	for O's temporary use		
O-aq'a	refers to clubbing O	Qaq'a nik'nilt'eq'.	He clubbed them all.
	refers to the depression made by an object in soft ground or snow	k'ilkeda aq'a	the marks left in the snow where a trap was set
O-at	on O, in O	nuti'at k'iqul'an	he goes hunting in the saltwater
O-aya	Affecting O with an identifying mark	bayaqidghighe'an	I marked it
O-bugh (O-vugh)	along the edge of O	tubugh	beach (lit. 'along the edge of water')
O-buna, bunu (O-vuna, vunu)	at the edge of O	yusdi vuna nastsut	she sat down beside the fire
O-chan	into the wind that is blowing in O's direction (upwind of O). <i>Always used with verb postposition O-i 'inside O'.</i>	Yechan yighelgguk.	He walked into his wind.
O-ch'	towards O, in the direction of O	Nach' gheyuł.	He's walking towards us.
		bench' (ben+ch')	to the lake
O-ch'a, ts'a	Away from O, out from O <i>Thematized in verbs of motion with qe-, the place/time pronoun to mean 'start off, leave'.</i>	Niłch'aqilgguk.	They walked away from each other.
O-ch'en	next to O, at O's side	k'izhagi vech'en gheli qeyłdazdlu	they had knives lying right next to him
O-ch'ih	Blocking, obscuring	shch'ihghiyu	he blocked my way
O-de	Down a hill <i>Always used with qe-spatial pronoun</i>	hdetashjay	he started running downhill
O-degh	off of O, as in rolling or falling off	yedegh qak'dghidhilen	he hobbled off him

Postposition Prefixes

O-det	without O, lacking O, wanting O	vinli det t'edyuq	he was getting weak from thirst (lit. 'he became without water')
O-dni	Causing the disappearance of O, killing	hdnihdaniŋen	he killed them all off
O-du	In O's mouth, affecting O with the mouth and by extension the voice, pertaining to the mouth; sometimes used in such verbs as 'deceive', 'teach', 'make believe'	yedyduchet	he put it in his (another's) mouth
		nduk'dnayesh'ugh	I was making believe
	Eluding O, as an animal eluding a hunter	qeydughidaq	they got away from him
O-dubunu (O- dubunu)	at the edge of the mouth, i.e. the lips	shdubunu	my lips
O-dukits'a	Away from the end of the mouth of O	bedukits'a k'neltuts'	I unscrewed it (a jar lid)
O-duquq'	on the top of O, on the surface of O	tiduquq'	on top of the water
O-duq'	on top of O	denduq'	on top of the hill
O-egh	To O, near O, around O, in front of O <i>The meaning of this postposition approaches a purely relational quality if all occurrences of it are seen as one morpheme. See following examples of meaning.</i>		
	Through O, as into and passing through	hyeghk'daniŋguk	they shoved a spear through him
	Hung on O <i>Usually used with the de- wooden object pronoun</i>	deghdghiŋkits	a fabric is hung, e.g. on a tree, stump, peg
O-egh'uh	around O, out from O, in the area of O	qegh'uh hniqa tl'ik'ehghalchesh	way out from them they circled them
O-egh'ut	near O, a little ways from O	qegh'ut gu dultlet	he landed near them
		ey ghu hvegh'ut gu ki tu dezdu	there near them he was sitting on a bush
O- eghdech'en	above O (in altitude)	qeghdech'en eygu qalnigiq' dultlet	he landed above them on a rock
O-eghdeq	above O, as in off the ground, or in altitude, on land	qeghdeq hjengheltlet	he jumped over them in the space above
O-eghdeqch'	From or towards up above O	nqeghdeqch' nuyeshdyuda nhech' tgheshzhel	when I come back I'll holler at you guys from up above you

O-eghdugh	Downriver from O	naghdugh	downriver from us
O-eghkuh	downriver from O	naghkuhdna	people downriver from us
O-eghk'uch'en	Across from O, on the other side from O, on the side away from O	ni'eghk'uch'en	across from each other
O-eghna	near O	qut'un qeghna	just breaking day (lit. 'near morning')
O-eghnehch'en	Behind O	yeghnehch'en gu tu nastsut	she sat down behind him
O-eghnich'en	Upriver from O	naghnich'ent'ana	the people above us, upriver from us
O-eghtsih	Below O in altitude on the ground	qeghtsih nihdi ni'hdanitun	they stayed overnight somewhere below there
O-eghtsit	Below O in altitude on the ground	ves denl'lut qeghtsit htghaznik	they went below a caved-in bank
O-eghyeh	Underneath O	qeghyeh ey nuqeyghik'et'	they hung him below it
O-eł (O-eła; O-ł)	with O, to O, in both a relational sense of 'along with O', 'in association with O', 'affecting O', and also an instrumental sense of 'by means of O'	beł k'teltesi	a wrench (lit. 'the thing with which something is turned')
		neł nutgheshdyuni	let me go back with you
		sheł qinash	talk with me
O-ghes	around, outside of O	yeghes ch'anilagh	he swam around outside of him
O-ghu	For O's use <i>Used in themes for giving a gift, giving courage, giving food, water, etc.</i>	qeyghuk'ni'kit	they dished out food for him
		yeghuyniqun	she gave him a cup (of water)
		yeghudit'a	they use it
	Near O, evenly spaced with O, aligned with O	shghunl'an	go my pace, keep up with me
O-ghuch'du	eluding O, as of game eluding the hunter	shghuch'du qine'	I can't kill anything
O-ghulugh	at the edge of O	k'ghulugh	at the edge beyond which is unknown
O-i	In O, inside O, as inside an enclosure, or a closed container as a box, bag,	binuhdi'dał	Put wood in the stove (lit. put pl. wooden objects in

	oven, etc.		a closed container)
O-ich'	Refers to anger	bich'duhdazne'	he got mad
O-ich'a	more than O <i>Used with qualities, measurements, knowledge</i>	shich'a qit'ayenizenen	he is one who knows more than me
	out from inside O	yich'a dnalen	he flew out of it
O-idu	Inside of O's mouth	Hiduk'dulen du?	Did you get food to eat? (lit. 'did something fall in your mouth?')
O-iduch'a	Out from inside O' mouth	shiduch'a seq' dalen	I burped
O-ighu	inside and through O	yighu tsi'itu'uf	he lay there with his head through it
	over the length of O	yighu nudiltlet	he kept jumping up and down on the full length of him
O-iniq'	behind O, in the back of O, (used when O is stationary. The morpheme actually means 'O's back').	Qenq'a qiniq' gheyuf.	He walked behind the house.
O-iqa	Up O, up a vertical surface, used with themes of climbing <i>With climbing trees, stairs and other wooden objects the de- wooden object gender pronoun is used.</i>	diqatl'ughilghel	he climbed up (the tree)
O-iq'	the inside of O	nenchix niq'	the inside of your nose, your nostril
O-jaghch'en	in front of O		
O-jen	Arcing over O, as in jumping over, walking over a mountain, etc.	bejen nultlet qeylni	they told him to keep jumping over it (hurdles)
O-ki	At, on, or affecting the end of O	vekinughetten	he was stunted by cold weather
		niłkinqeydnałqun	they sewed them end to end

O-kich'a	away from or off the end of O	yetsikich'ananičhut'	she cut his head off again
O-k'	movement on the surface of O, as rubbing or wiping	vek' dinq'esh	wipe it (table)
O-k'u	Away from O, off of O, as off the edge of a table, off a tree	qeyk'uk'dnaŋyt	they ran away from him
O-k'uch'	In the direction away from O, different from O	qevk'uch'k'inaŋ'un	he turned his head away from them
O-la	Referring to O's hands		
O-lach'a	From O's hands, used in themes of dropping or spilling	shlach'atutcheh	I'll drop plural objects
O-laq'a	In O's palms, in O's hands. <i>Literally refers to the concavity of the hand. Used with classificatory verbs of handling to mean 'give' and 'requiring'</i>	shlaq'adiŋgat	give me a long wooden object
O-laq'ach'a	out of or from one's hand, out of the grasp of O	yelaq'ach'a yeničhesh	he jerked it out of her hand
O-lu	affecting O with or by means of the hand	nlu denghelen	I slapped you several times
O-lugh	Holding an object together with O, as when two people hold a board to be sawed; on behalf of O	shlughk'inten	help me hold it
O-lut'uq'	On top of O's hand	shlut'uq'k kits	a paper is on top of my hand
O-ŋ, eŋ, eŋa	With O, to O, in both a relational sense of 'along with O', 'in association with O', 'affecting O', and also an instrumental sense of 'by means of O'	neŋ nutgheshdyuni	let me go back with you
O-li	Referring to ice		
O-na	Referring to the eyes		
O-nagh	O being out of sight, refers to eyesight	hnagh denghighichan	they went further than he could see
O-naqa (niqa)	Around O, circling around O	qatuldeŋi niŋtu naqadetazdatl'	the moose started to go in a circle, preparing to lie

			down.
O-naq'a	In O's eyes	shnaq'aqenghelch'ich'	I have sleep (dried mucus) in my eyes
O-ni	Penetrating into O	beni di'eldets	I drilled into it a little ways
O-niř	Pertaining to closeness to O, of a joining of two parts	shniřnghičhet	he/she squeezed me
O-niřh'a, O-niřh'	In sight of O, usually used with verbs of motion	chaqenq'a hniřh'aniyu	she came in sight of the smokehouse
O-niřtu (nuřtu)	for O in the future, for the purpose of	heyi niřtu	it will be for winter, for the purpose of winter
O-niřtudeq	O lying between two points, two points on either side of O	beniřtudeq k'ilqeyi	it has a spreader stick in it from side to side (a filet of fish)
O-niq'	Refers to the position of a nocked arrow, i.e. an arrow set in the bowstring ready to shoot.	k'niq'nuk'ghiyel	he nocked an arrow
O-nish	Up against the face or front surface of O	chik'a shnishdnulchen	a piece of wood flew up and hit me in the face
O-nghunu	around O, around a protruding object	ch'vala nghunu ch'agheyuř	he's coming out from around a tree
O-nu	Resembling O, equivalent to O	chik'a benuyidařnazi	a stick as long as it (some object)
		bi'a benuyelkugh	his son was a big as he was
	On the rim of O	k'enuk'denghichet	he tied his bear gut parka on the rim of his bidarka
		On O as worn or hung on O, holding O or in contact with O	nnuk'itggash
		shundghichet	he turned me loose
O-nu'u	in O's eyes	shnu'u k'eljay	light is shining in my eyes
O-nuch'a	Off from being worn by O	nuch'ak'tgheshtggesh	I'll take my coat off
O-nuqel'i	out of O's sight	yenuqel'i nughuljel	he paddled back out of sight of him
O-nunu	back and forth, taking turns <i>Used with niř- reciprocal object pronoun</i>	niřnunu dehi nuquyiř	they take turns walking down to the cache

O-nut	Draped over O, as a cloth over a line or pole	hnutdiłkits	a cloth is hung over a pole or line
	Hitting and going past O on both sides of O, as water rushing around a rock	shnut nuk'idilah	salmon go past me
O-nutset	before O's time, previous to O	nanutset k'ughun nił t'qul'an	they used to have wars with each other before our time
O-qa	subsisting on O, living on O	nini qa niłhdetix	they subsist on porcupine
	pertaining to or affecting O's feet	yeqa k'niłchut	she cut his foot off
O-qach'a	Off of O's legs or feet	nqach'ak'zeldatl'	I took off your boots
O-qanghun	Affecting O with the toe	yeqanghunłqix	he kicked it with his toe
O-qayiq'	in O's boots	shqayiq' dilya	put grass in my boots
O-qi	Over the surface of O	hqidghizelchin	I scattered objects around
O-qugh	as far as O, at the time of O, as much as O <i>usually used with qe²-space/time/event/abstract prounoun</i>		
O-q'	on the surface of O, on top of O	qałnigiq' dultlet	he landed on a rock
		miłniq' (miłni+q')	on the water
	like O, copying O, in the language of O; in the manner or O	sheq' tiłchił	you pl. make something like me
		łuq'aq' (łuq'a+q')	in the manner of the salmon
O-q'a	a hole or depression in O or pertaining to O	hq'a tunuttech'	he put his head in the water hole
	on the side of O	niłq'a yegh yiditul'	he stepped on both sides of him, i.e. straddled him
	lacking O, for O, for or into O's being, wanting O	yeq'a t'ent'a	he is wishing for it
		qeyq'a tazchagh	they started to cry for him
		yeq'a chegh	he keeps crying for it

O-q'a'i	missing O, falling short of O <i>When used with neuter verbs of length or dimension, expresses comparative size</i>	yeq'a'i niqadnułjih	he swung his fist and missed him
O-q'ach'	tied around O	quggił beq'ach' qestkez	a snare was tied around him
O-q'ada	O being out of hearing	qevq'ada hdi'u	he couldn't hear them anymore
O-q'aghdeq	between O	ch'vala q'aghdeq k'ehdghituk'	they slid down between trees
O-q'es	against O	Mike ghun Albert q'es denltan	Mike is leaning against Albert
O-shegh	O be frosted	veshegh dghighel	he's all frosted up
O-t	Caught on O	betk'i'eshsheq'	I snagged it (fish)
O-teh	amongst O, through O	ch'vala the nugheyuł	he is walking amongst the trees
O-tehch'a	Divided and together, away from and among O (divided themselves)		
O-tu	Among O	qenq'eya tuyenit'eq'	she slung it among the alders
O-tuh	Tangled among O	niłtuhk'ghich'ik'i	string games in which string configurations represent animals
O-t'e	Behind an outer layer of O		
O-t'i	Inside a place, such as a cache, steambath, etc.	ht'idulchet	he reached inside the hole
O-t'ich'a	Out from inside a place	ht'ich'ayenigits'	she ripped it out of the hole
O-t'uda	with the support of O; By means of O; with the assistance of O	yet'uda gga'ilchet	he got up with the other's support
		k't'uda nugheyuł	he's walking hanging on to something
O-t'ugh	underneath a projecting surface as under a bed, under a riverbank	gest'ugh	under the bed
O-t'uh	underneath O, inside O as inside a tent or cache	nt'uh nitidigheshchił	I'll put it (ball) under you
O-t'uqa	obstructed by O, stumbling over O, tripping over O	ht'uqa denghalen	he stumbled and fell
O-t'uy	meeting O from ahead <i>Always requires de-</i>	yet'uy duyul	he was walking towards him

	<i>semantic marker</i>		
O-tl'egh	after O in time, or in space, as the place someone has left	htl'egh idi efa qenq'a nihqini'un	after that they built a house
O-tl'i	catching up to O from behind	htl'isheldatuk'	he caught up to them, ran up to them
		shtl'idazhch'ey	I have fair wind (tail wind)
O-tl'u	referring to the buttocks or the behind, affecting O with the buttocks, behind in general	yetl'uŭqex	he sat on him hard
O-tl'ugh	behind O (stationary object)	tsitl'ugh ch'daltuni	pillow (lit. 'an enclosed object we have lying behind our heads')
O-tl'uyeh	following behind O (moving O)	qevtl'uyeh ch'tuyuni	let's go behind them
O-tsah	ahead of O in space, before O in time (in the future); preceding O	vetsah gu hvuch'ih tiq'ets' dnaz'ey	he saw the outline of a leaning tree against the twilight sky ahead of him
		yetsah gheyuŭ	he walks ahead of him
O-tsas	after O in time	hluzhun tsas nuk'esdgheŭ	it's half past ten
O-tsen	upon, over, encompassing, to affect O in a gang	qetsen besghiten	they ganged up on him
		qeytsen vesdghiten	they all went at it (food)
O-tsi	affecting O with the head	yetsi huk'denghetq'esh	he kept rubbing him all over with his head
O-ts'i	affecting O with the finger	vets'i elqey	I'm poking him with my finger
O-ts'ix	referring to the skin		
O-ts'ixch'en	next to O's skin		
O-u	for O, for O's sake, for O's benefit, in O's place; on behalf of O	chik'ish nu ch'tuŭchiŭ	we'll make a cap for you
		shu (sh+u)	for me
	apart from O, as separated from O	niŭ'u niyenilu	he butchered it up (lit. 'he took the pieces apart from

			each other')
O-unyach'	away from O	ye'unyach' yet shetdahtuk'	he ran away from him with it
O-uqu (iqu)	for O, after O, in search of O, pointed at O, aiming at O <i>Used with themes of hitting or throwing to mean 'try to hit, try to spear, etc.'</i>	shuqu ghizhel	he hollered for me (e.g. he couldn't see me)
		buqu tiyush	go after him
		nuqu hni'an	he is looking for you
O-usdet	without O, away from O; lacking O	na'usdet zdu	he is staying away from us
		be'usdet sht'a nidinchit	put it down away from him
		k'ghulugh usdet tsadi	let it be without end
O-ut	away from O, nearby O	quggit ghin ye'ut heytdenghaldatl'	she loosened the snare from him
		nagh'ut qiz'un	the house next door to us
O-yach'	on the other side away from O		
O-yach'en	on the other side of O, behind a stationary object	hyach'an yeh qenghunu tuvugh ch'a'ilgguk	on the other side around the point he came out on the beach
O-yan	only O, O alone	udi yan hch'aniyu	he alone started off
O-zhex	right next to O, beside O	Pete ghun Albert zhex san	Pete is standing beside Albert

Object of the Postposition Prefixes

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes			
Object of Postposition	Postposition	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
											Transitional	Mode					

An object of the postposition receives the action of the postposition.

- Objects of the postpositions are either connected to the postposition and written as one word or are incorporated into the verb.
- They function as an Indirect object (I hit the ball to him.)
- With a few differences they are the same as prefixes for possessed nouns or object pronouns.

she- me
 ne- you (sg.)
 be- him/her/it (use with non-third person subject)
 ye- him/her/it (use with third person subject)
 dna- us
 h- you (pl.)
 qu- them
 qe- we

Used with all subject pronouns

she me
 ne you (singular)
 dna us
 becomes "na" when it is the first part of the word which is almost always; the vowel of this morpheme is not deleted when followed by another vowel, "y" is inserted before "i", a glottal stop or "v" before "u", and a glottal stop before a "a" following "e" (schwa) is deleted
 h you (plural) (nh in non Kenai dialects)

Used with first or second person subjects: I, you sg., you pl., we, or when the subject pronoun is non-human ye.

be him or her
 qbe/qev them

Object of the Postposition Prefixes

Object pronouns used with third person subjects: he, she, they

- qe₁ them
- ye him/her used only when the subject pronoun is he or she (3rd person singular)
- qey them (used with 3rd person plural subject, they) in this case qey carries the meaning of both the subject and object of the postposition "they carried water for them" (they and them both signified by "qey")

Other

- hu himself, herself reflexive indirect object, "by herself," "with himself" (changes classifier)
- de indirect reflexive indirect object, "he hit himself in the head"
- nił "each other" reciprocal indirect object (changes classifier)
- k'e something, he walks over something, he walks over it
- qe₂ space/time/event, they walked to a place
- de wooden (paper, grass) object, hang the rifle on a tree

Areal nouns can also be used as an object of the postposition. See Kari 2007:331-335

Suffixes

Relative (Nominalizer) Suffixes

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes						
Object of Postposition	Postposition	Adverbs	Iterative	Incorporate	Distributive	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/ Aspect	Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
														Transitional						

Relative suffixes give noun-like (nominalizer) qualities to the verb.

en means "the person that" singular, for example adding "en" to the verb "she sings" means "the person that sings"

na means "the people that" plural, for example adding "na" to "walked" means "the people that walked"

i means "the thing that," for example adding "i" to Dena'ina verb theme for "flies" means "the thing that flies" or "airplane"

t means "the place that"

h means "area that"

Tense/Aspect Suffixes

Disjunct Prefixes		#	Conjunct Prefixes										Stem	Suffixes			
Object of Postposition	Postposition	(Disjunct boundary)	Object Pronoun	Outer subject pronoun	Thematic	Conative	Noun Gender	Inceptive	Negative	Thematic	Mode/Aspect		Inner subject pronoun	Classifier	Stem	Relative	Tense/aspect
											Transitional	Mode					

-ni expresses the desire or intention the action of the verb take place

-ch' means "the way that..."

-a expresses the desire that the action expressed in the verb not take place
when used with "ch'e" outer subject pronoun changes "we" to "one"

-igu (u) expresses the desire that the event not take place

Note: -a and -igu (u) are one of several ways negatives are formed. See section in Negatives for more information.

PART VI. MORPHEME CHANGES

Often morphemes change because of a particular sequence of sounds or because of structural features required by the grammar. The former are normally called phonological changes or sound changes. The major morpheme changes are described below.

Morpheme Structure	Change to:	Explanation
General Morpheme changes		
Double vowels	one vowel deletes, usually the first vowel	Dena'ina does not permit double vowels (diphthongs) (except <i>q'ua</i> good-bye and <i>aa' yes</i>)
<i>gh + eh</i>	<i>ih</i>	
two <i>ghe</i> morphemes in sequence	first <i>ghe</i> changes to <i>ghi</i>	
an "e" that is lowered to a schwa is followed by a consonant	e is deleted unless the consonant is a classifier	e is lowered in spoken Dena'ina when it precedes or follows a back velar: <i>gg, q, q', gh, or h</i>
<i>qe</i> preceding a consonant	<i>q</i> changes to <i>h</i> and <i>e</i> is deleted	variations, analysis incomplete
initial <i>sh</i> before <i>y</i>	<i>sh</i> becomes <i>s</i>	
<i>gh</i> at the start of a word	changes to <i>h</i> in some cases	
<i>t</i> before <i>sh</i>	<i>t</i> deletes	
<i>sh + l</i>	becomes <i>ʃ</i>	
consonant plus e (Ce) is preceded by a morpheme boundary	<i>e</i> is deleted	
a vowel follows a word or disjunct boundary	glottal stop is inserted	
the morpheme <i>dna</i> is at the start of a word	<i>dna</i> become <i>na</i> . The vowel of <i>na</i> is not deleted before a following vowel. These rules apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>y</i> is inserted before <i>i</i> • a glottal stop or <i>v</i> before <i>u</i> • a glottal stop before <i>a</i> • if followed by <i>e</i> the <i>e</i> is deleted 	
d changes to t		
<i>d</i> adverb morpheme (neuter or transitional) occurring before a conjunct prefix beginning	<i>d</i> changes to <i>t</i>	

Morpheme changes

in a vowel		
conditions uncertain: <i>d</i> preceding a vowel, voiceless consonant, or nasal?	<i>d</i> changes to <i>t</i>	In Ahtna <i>d</i> changes to <i>t</i> before an aspirated or voiceless consonant. Some Dena'ina <i>d</i> change to <i>t</i> before some nasals (<i>n</i>)
Morpheme changes involving possessed nouns		
if the noun to be possessed ends in a glottal stop	only <i>a</i> is added, not 'a (glottal stop + a)	adding 'a would make two glottal stops in a row
<i>sh</i> (my) before a noun starting with <i>t</i> , <i>s</i> , <i>s</i> , or <i>h</i>	sound changes to the voiced counterpart; <i>l</i> , <i>z</i> , <i>zh</i> , or <i>gh</i> .	<i>t</i> → <i>l</i> <i>s</i> → <i>z</i> <i>sh</i> → <i>zh</i> <i>h</i> → <i>gh</i>
Morpheme changes involving negatives		
<i>z</i> negative prefix before a <i>t</i> or <i>l</i> classifier	<i>z</i> is deleted	
<i>z</i> negative prefix before a consonant or <i>d</i> classifier	<i>z</i> changes to <i>s</i>	
<i>e</i> , <i>i</i> , <i>u</i> vowel after a back velar (<i>gg</i> , <i>q</i> , <i>q'</i> , <i>gh</i> , or <i>h</i>) and before <i>z</i> negative	no vowel lowering	does not affect written Dena'ina since vowel writing system is phonemic, not phonetic
Kush'ta + <i>z</i> negative prefix, and perfect mode (<i>i</i> perfect mode morpheme) preceding a <i>d</i> or <i>l</i> classifier	<i>i</i> is not deleted before <i>d</i> or <i>l</i> classifiers a glottal stop is inserted when "esh" ("I" pronoun) or "eh" ("you" plural pronoun) follows the <i>i</i> perfect mode/aspect marker	Tenenbaum 1978:113
Kush'ta + <i>z</i> negative prefix, and perfect mode (<i>i</i> perfect mode/aspect marker) preceding an <i>esh</i> (I) or <i>eh</i> (you pl)	glottal stop is inserted between the two vowels (<i>i</i> and <i>esh</i> , or <i>i</i> and <i>eh</i>) <i>i'esh</i> ; <i>i'eh</i>	
Morpheme changes involving neuter verbs (ghe + n mode/aspect)		
<i>n</i> preceding "esh" ("I" pronoun) or "eh" ("you" plural pronoun)	<i>n</i> is deleted	
<i>n</i> preceding <i>d</i> or <i>l</i> classifiers	<i>n</i> is deleted	
Neuter verb exceptions: 'i and 'a, and variations with "to be" verbs: see neuter verbs		
Morpheme Changes involving Prefix Positions		
if a consonant and an "e" (Ce) precede a mode "ghe" and if there is no inner	the <i>e</i> changes to <i>u</i> (Cu) and <i>ghe</i> is deleted	

subject pronoun		
<i>i</i> occurs alone in a conjunct prefix in the inceptive, conaitive, transitional or future	all morphemes that end in a vowel, change that vowel to an <i>i</i>	
<i>nu</i> iterative prefix is preceded by a prefix containing <i>a</i>	<i>nu</i> changes to <i>na</i>	
<i>nu</i> iterative follows a prefix consisting of a consonant and a vowel CV and when the following prefix contains a lowered <i>e</i>	<i>u</i> of <i>nu</i> can be optionally deleted	<i>e</i> is lowered when it precedes or follows a back velar
<i>ch'e</i> (we, outer subject pronoun)	changes to <i>ts'e-</i> when a <i>t</i> , <i>t'</i> or <i>d</i> (alveolar consonant) occurs preceding or following this morpheme	optional (Tenenbaum 1978:63)
<i>n</i> gender as initial morpheme of a verb	<i>n</i> deletes	
Morpheme changes involving inner subject pronoun prefix		
<i>esh</i> precedes <i>t</i> or <i>l</i> classifier	<i>sh</i> is deleted	<i>l</i> classifier changes to <i>t</i>
<i>esh</i> precedes a back velar (<i>gg</i> , <i>q</i> , <i>q'</i> , <i>gh</i> , or <i>h</i>)	<i>esh</i> becomes <i>es</i>	
<i>eh</i> (you pl) precedes <i>l</i> or <i>t</i> classifiers	<i>h</i> is deleted	
"eh" (you pl) is preceded by "ghe"	changes to "ih"	
Morpheme changes involving mode/aspect prefix positions		
<i>i</i> + Ø Ø perfective <i>i</i> = transitional Ø = mode	<i>i</i> is deleted when preceded by a conjunct prefix	The only time <i>i</i> is used is when it is the initial sound of a verb.
an <i>i</i> preceded by a vowel plus consonant prefix (VC)	a glottal stop is inserted between the <i>i</i> and the vowel	
consonant + "e" (Ce) precedes "ghe" and the next morpheme to the right is a classifier (no inner subject pronoun)	<i>e</i> changes to <i>u</i> resulting in consonant + <i>u</i> (Cu) and "ghe" deleted	applies to all modes including optative
<i>ghe</i> followed by a vowel	<i>e</i> is deleted	
<i>ghe</i> + <i>i</i> is followed by "esh" ("I" pronoun) or "eh" ("you" plural pronoun)	<i>i</i> is deleted	<i>e</i> is also deleted to avoid double vowels
<i>gh</i> + <i>eh</i>	becomes <i>ih</i>	
<i>ghe</i> + <i>i</i> perfect preceding <i>d</i> or <i>l</i> classifier	<i>i</i> is deleted	

when <i>z</i> precedes the inner subject pronoun "esh" (I)	<i>z</i> changes to <i>y</i>	The exception is if <i>sh</i> of "esh" has already been deleted before a <i>t</i> or <i>l</i> classifier
when a consonant + <i>e</i> (Ce) precedes a "z" mode prefix	the <i>e</i> changes to <i>a</i> (Ca)	
with a <i>z</i> mode prefix, and an outer subject or object pronoun that ends in "e" ne, ghe, or ze imperfective and no inner subject pronoun	<i>e</i> changes to <i>i</i>	exception: <i>ch'e</i> also appears to change in the \emptyset imperfective when paired with <i>z</i> perfective as in the conversive Theme Category
<i>z</i> mode prefix precedes an <i>l</i> or <i>t</i> classifier	<i>z</i> is deleted	
<i>z</i> mode prefix precedes a <i>d</i> classifier	<i>z</i> changes to <i>s</i>	
a consonant + <i>e</i> (Ce) precedes "ne"	the <i>e</i> becomes <i>a</i> (Ca)	
<i>ne</i> + <i>i</i> preceding "esh" ("I" pronoun) or "eh" ("you" plural pronoun)	<i>i</i> is deleted	<i>e</i> is also deleted to avoid double vowels
<i>ne</i> + <i>i</i> precedes <i>d</i> or <i>l</i> classifier	<i>i</i> is deleted	
<i>ne</i> is preceded by a lowered vowel and precedes a classifier	<i>ne</i> is deleted	vowels <i>e</i> , <i>i</i> , and <i>u</i> are lowered (tongue is lowered) in spoken Dena'ina when they precede or follow a back velar: <i>gg</i> , <i>q</i> , <i>q'</i> , <i>gh</i> , or <i>h</i>
<i>ne</i> prefix: vowel follows a consonant and precedes a morpheme boundary and another vowel	<i>e</i> of <i>ne</i> is deleted	
<i>ne</i> + <i>i</i> mode morphemes follows a disjunct boundary or is the initial morpheme in a verb	<i>ne</i> is deleted, <i>i</i> is retained	
<i>ne</i> + <i>i</i> is preceded by a conjunct prefix consisting of consonant + <i>e</i> (Ce) and followed by a classifier	<i>ne</i> is deleted, <i>i</i> is retained	
<i>t</i> or <i>l</i> classifier follow "esh" ("I" pronoun) or "eh" ("you" plural pronoun)	<i>sh</i> of "esh" or <i>h</i> of "eh" are deleted	applies to <i>ne</i> mode markers, perhaps others

PART VII. MODEL OF VERB FORMATION

Introduction

In the early 1990s James Kari (1990, 1992) published a model of Ahtna word formation the core of which applies to all Athabascan languages. As applied to Dena'ina the concept is diagramed as a flow chart in Figure 3. The "flow" is important because any given element of a Dena'ina verb may cause changes in other elements. To perform an operation, say add an inflectional pronoun before an inceptive derivation is done may result in a confused sentence. The model also provides the basis for dictionary entries.

The model is not a model of how the brain works. In actuality brains are capable of an astounding array of interconnectedness and any given verb is probably a result of complex feedback loops. The model is a way to understand grammar and, if theme classes and roots are also schema, a way to understand Dena'ina verbal thought.

Schema

The concepts root and theme class are abstract categories that organize the theme and all subsequent operations and can be considered "schema," that is a mental representation of the world organized categorically through which the external world and inner thought is filtered. In this case the schema are verbal, meaning theme class categories are categories or action or state of being. To understand Dena'ina schema is to understand the Dena'ina mind.

Verb Theme

Formation of a verb begins with a verb theme which is a string of morpheme categories (gender, stem etc.). As defined above, a verb theme is a lexical (dictionary) entry for a verb that includes a note on its transitivity (transitive or intransitive) the thematic prefixes that are a required part of the theme, it's root (stem set) and which theme class it is a part of.

A secondary verb theme form can be added to the theme with the addition of either a causative, gender or incorporate noun prefix or prefixes. Unlike the verb theme elements, these are not obligatory and are added or not (\pm) according to the desired meaning of the verb.

The resultant string sets the stage for the next set of modifications.

Base

Derivational morphology is defined in a previous section and means, in the case of Dena'ina, that prefixes or elements of the stem are added which change the nature of the word. The primary derivational change to the string is to add mode/aspect conjugation for tense (mode) and aspect through various imperfectives, perfectives, future or optatives and their variations and selection of the proper stem morpheme from the stem set including suffixation patterns. Other derivational prefixes may be added at this stage

of word development including post-aspect derivations, inceptive; super-aspect derivations, customary or distributive; and a set of non-aspect derivations: iterative, passive, gender or incorporation. The latter are in addition to those required by the theme. Unlike mode/aspect conjugation and stem aspect insertion, the post, super, and non-aspect insertions are not obligatory and are added if the intent of the sentence requires it.

The result is a base which is a string that adds to the theme, mode/aspect conjugation, stem aspect, and potentially other derivational prefixes.

Underlying Form

Inflectional prefixes are added to the base and are of two types. Negative insertion adding one of the various forms of negatives and pronoun insertion, either inner subject pronouns or outer subject pronouns and/or object pronouns. These prefixes are inflectional because adding a negative or a pronoun does not fundamentally change the nature of the verb.

The resulting string is called the underlying form and in this document is expressed on a verb grid as the term "morphemes."

Post-Inflectional Lexicon

Kari calls the final changes post-inflectional lexicon and are of two types. Verb suffixes may be added that, for example, nominalize the verb to function as a noun ("it is walking" becomes "the thing that walks"). Last are the complex sound (phonological) changes describes as morpheme changes in this document that result in the expression of the spoken or written word.

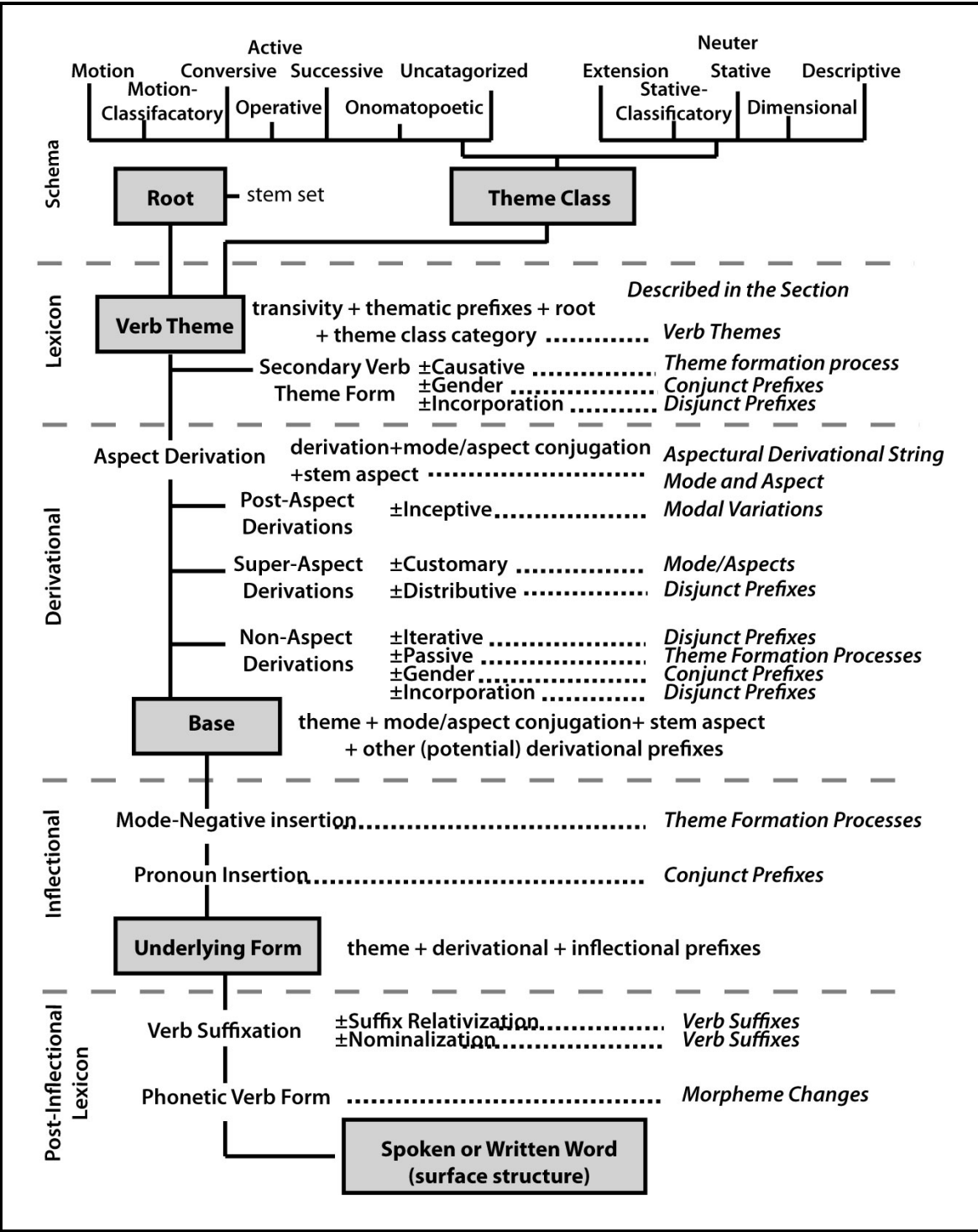


Figure 4. Model of Dena'ina Word Formation, adapted from Kari (1990, 1992).

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