

Questionnaire on Tense and Aspect in African Languages

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Introduction

This questionnaire seeks to establish a number of facts related to the encoding and interpretation of temporal relations in African languages. The specific goals of this exercise are (i) to establish if tense systems have clearly marked temporal boundaries (for example some languages mark hodiernal and hestiernal past/future) and thus determine what ‘remote/distant’ and ‘near/recent’ tenses mean; (ii) to establish if (and the extent to which) the present tense is distinguished from habitual and (present) progressive aspect; (iii) to determine the extent to which the tense/aspect system is intertwined with the encoding of the ‘persistence of the effects’ or lack thereof of a past situation (see example 1 below); and (iv) to determine the flexibility in the uses of particular tenses in a language.

Questionnaire

Translate all the sentences in this questionnaire into the specified language in accordance with the context given.

Specify the language into which you are translating here: _____

A1. The event or situation occurred today

a) Jack moulded a clay pot

Jon nattepe ebara

Jon na-ttep-e e-bara

John SM-mould-PFV CL-clay.pot

b) Mavuto went to the market

Mavuto nakkaye marise.

Mavuto na-kkay-e marise.

Mavuto SM-go-PFV market

c) Timothy insulted the man

Timotte najele áine ahu

Timotte na-jel-e áine ahu

Timothy SM-insult-PFV CL.man CL.DEF

d) Maureen closed the door

Maurin napege ganegen gagu

Maurin na-ppeg-e ga-negen gagu

Maureen SM-close-PFV CL-door CL.DEF

e) Jennifer combed her hair

Jénifa napeñee walol.

Jénifa na-peñe-e w-al-ol.

Jennifer SM-comb-PFV CL-hair-POSS

A2. The event or situation occurred yesterday (if the sentences are identical those in (A1), say 'same as above')

Same as above

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot
- b) Mavuto went to the market
- c) Timothy insulted the man
- d) Maureen closed the door
- e) Jennifer combed her hair

A3. The event or situation occurred two days ago (if the sentences are identical to those in (A2), say ‘same as above’)

Same as above

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot
- b) Mavuto went to the market
- c) Timothy insulted the man
- d) Maureen closed the door
- e) Jennifer combed her hair

A4. The event or situation occurs on a regular basis

- a) Jack washes his own spoons¹

Saak naposepos userol

Saak na-pos-e-pos u-ser-ol

Jack SM-wash-HAB-wash CL-spoon

- b) Mavuto goes to the market

Mavuto nakkayekkay marise

Mavuto na-kkay-e-kkay marise

Mavuto SM-go-HAB-go market

c) Timothy likes the man

Timotte namange áine ahu

Timotte na-mang-e áine ahu

Timothy SM-like-PFV CL.man CL.DEF

d) Maureen rides a bicycle

Maurin nateyeneteyen ebekkan

Maurin na-tey-en-e-tey-en e-bekkan

Mauree SM-run-CAUS-HAB-run-CAUS CL-bicycle

e) Jennifer draws pictures

Jénifa nakkaneakkan súfoto

Jénifa na-kkan-e-kkan sú-foto

Jennifer SM-make-HAB-make CL-picture

A5. The event or situation is currently ongoing

¹ 'dishes' replaced by 'spoons'

- a) Jack is washing his own spoons
 Saak umu n'epos userol
 Saak umu n' e-pos u-ser-ol
 Jack CL.COP CONJ CL-wash CL-spoon-POSS
- b) Mavuto is going to the market
 Mavuto umu n'ekke marise
 Mavuto umu n' e-kke marise
 Mavuto CL.COP CONJ CL-go market
- c) Timothy is speaking to the man
 Timotte umu n'elob ni áine ahu
 Timotte umu n' e-lob ni áine ahu
 Timothy CL.COP CONJ CL-speak PREP CL.man CL.DEF
- d) Maureen is riding a bicycle
 Maurin umu n'eteyen ebekkan
 Maurin umu n' e-tey-en e-bekkan
 Maureen CL.COP CONJ CL-run-CAUS CL-bicycle
- e) Jennifer is drawing pictures
 Jénifa umu n'ekkan súfoto

Jénifa umu n' e-kkan sú-foto
Jennifer CL.COP CONJ CL-make CL-picture

A6. The event or situation will occur later today

a) Jack will wash his own spoons²

Saak pan apos userol

Saak pan a-pos u-ser-ol

Jack FUT SM-wash CL-spoon-POSS

b) Mavuto will go to the market

Mavuto pan akke marise

Mavuto pan a-kke marise

Mavuta FUT SM-go market

c) Timothy will insult the man

Timotte pan ajel áine ahu

Timotte pan a-jel áine ahu

Timothy FUT SM-insult CL.man CL.DEF

² 'dishes' replaced by 'spoons'

- d) Maureen will ride a bicycle
Maurin pan ateyen ebekkan
Maurin pan a-tey-en e-bekkan
Maureen FUT SM-run-CAUS CL-bicycle

- e) Jennifer will draw pictures
Jénifa pan akkan súfoto
Jénifa pan a-kkan sú-foto
Jenifer FUT SM-make CL-picture

A7. The event or situation will occur tomorrow (if the sentences are identical to those in (A6), say ‘same as above’).

Same as above

- a) Jack will wash his own dishes
b) Mavuto will go to the market
c) Timothy will insult the man
d) Maureen will ride a bicycle
e) Jennifer will draw pictures

A8. The event or situation will occur the day after tomorrow (if the sentences are identical to those in (A7), say ‘same as above’)

Same as above

- a) Jack will wash his own dishes
b) Mavuto will go to the market

- c) Timothy will insult the man
- d) Maureen will ride a bicycle
- e) Jennifer will draw pictures

* If your language has other forms of marking future time over and above those indicated in A6 – A8, please indicate and provide examples following the pattern above.

In addition to *pan* which expresses a general future, Eegimaa uses another future marker, *ban*, to indicate that the event expressed by the verb is about to happen.

a) Uññil wawu pan gujow

U-ññil wawu pan gu-jow

CL-child CL.DEF FUT SM-walk

‘The children will go’

b) Uññil wawu ban gujow

U-ññil wawu ban gu-jow

CL-child CL.DEF FUT SM-walk

‘The children are about go’

c) Fatu pan ássil gattaw

Fatu pan á-ssil ga-ttaw

Fatu fut SM-cook CL-lunch

‘Fatu will cook lunch’

d) Fatu ban ássil gattaw

Fatu ban á-ssil ga-ttaw

Fatu fut SM-cook CL-lunch

‘Fatu is about to cook lunch’

e) A-sodali ahu pan axaleni’

A-sodali ahu pan a-xal-en-i’

CL-soldier CL.DEF FUT SM-leave-CAUS-PASS

‘The soldier will be released’

f) A-sodali ahu ban axaleni’

A-sodali ahu ban a-xal-en-i’

CL-soldier CL.DEF FUT SM-leave-CAUS-PASS

‘The soldier is about to be released’

A9. The event or situation was ongoing at the said time

a) Jack was washing spoons when we arrived

No niçix me Saak o n’epos user

No ni-çix me Saak o n’ e-pos u-ser

when SM-arrive DEP Jack PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-wash CL-spoon

b) Mavuto was going to the market when we met him

No jiemor me ni Matuvo o n'ekke marise

No ji-em-or me ni Matuvo o n' e-kke marise

when SM-meet-RCM DEP PREP Matuvo PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-go market

- c) Timothy was speaking to the man when Sam left

No Sam akkay me Timotte n'elob ni áine ahu

No Sam a-kkay me Tímotte n' e-lob ni áine ahu

when Sam SM-leave DEP Timothy CONJ CL-speak PREP CL-man CL.DEF

- d) Maureen was riding a bicycle when we saw her

No nijugol me o n'eteyen ebekkan

No ni-jug-ol me o n' e-tey-en e-bekkan

when SM-see-OM DEP PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-run-caus cl-bicycle

- e) Jennifer was drawing pictures before we arrived

Bala jiçix me Jénifa o n'ekkan súfoto.

Bala ji-çix Jénifa o n' e-kkan sú-foto.

before SM-arrive Jennifer PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-make CL-picture

A10. The event or situation had just come to pass at the said time

- a) Jack had just spoons the dishes when we arrived

No jiçix me Saak o n'ejju eban epos user wawu.

No ji-çix me Saak o n' e-jju e-ban

when SM-arrive DEP Jack PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-begin CL-finish

e-pos u-ser wawu.

CL-wash CL-spoon CL.DEF

- b) Mavuto had gone to the market when we left

No jikkay me Mavuto o n'ejju ekke marise

No ji-kkay me Mavuto o n' e-jju e-kke marise

when SM-leave DEP Mavuto PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-begin CL-do market

- c) Timothy had spoken to the man that morning

Tímotte nalobene ni áine ahu babujom.

Tímotte na-lob-en-e ni áine ahu ba-bu-jom.

Timothy SM-speak-PST-PFV PREP CL.man CL.DEF DEF-CL-morning

- d) Maureen had ridden a bicycle for three months

Maurin nateyenene ebekkan butum gueñ gúffaji

Maurin na-tey-en-en-e e-bekkan bu-tum gu-eñ gú-ffaji

Maureen SM-run-CAUS-PST-PFV CL-bicycle CL-quant CL-month CL-three

- e) Jennifer had drawn pictures before we arrived

Jénifa nakkanene súfoto bala jjiçix

Jénifa na-kkan-en-e sú-foto bala ji-çix
 Jennifer SM-make-PST-PFV CL-picture before SM-arrive

A11. The event or situation will be ongoing at the said time

a) Jack will be washing his clothes when we arrive home

Wolal n'eçix pan tox Saak o n'epos wañol

Wolal n' e-çix

PRN.1ST.PL CONJ CL-arrive

pan tox Saak o n' e-pos w-añ-ol

FUT find Jack PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-wash CL-cloth-POSS

b) Mavuto will be going to the market in the morning

Ni bujom babu pan tox Mavuto o n'ekke marise

Ni bu-jom babu pan tox Mavuto o n' e-kke marise

PREP CL-morning CL.DEF FUT find Mavuto PRN.3rd.SG CONJ CL-go market

c) Timothy will be speaking to the man starting tomorrow

Ujox ni bujom Tímotte pan nihi alob ni áine ahu

U-jox ni bu-jom Tímotte pan nihi a-lob ni áine ahu

SM-hold PREP CL-morning Timothy FUT HAB SM-speak PREP CL.man CL.DEF

The verb *ejox* which literally means ‘hold’ is used in Eegimaa to convey a variety of meaning. It can be used for such mental verbs as ‘assume’, ‘think’ ‘figure out’. It can also be used to mark a starting point of an ongoing action.

- d) Maureen will be riding a bicycle from next week

Ujox fiyyay fafu fajaweul me Maurin pan nihi ateyen ebekkan.

U-jox fi-iyay fafu f-a-jaw-e-ul me
CL-hold CL-week CL.DEF CL-REL-go-PFV-DER DEP

Maurin pan nihi a-tey-en e-bekkan.

Maureen FUT HAB SM-run-CAUS CL-bicycle

- e) Jennifer will be drawing pictures until you return

Jénifa pan akkan súfoto ikki uçigul

Jénifa pan a-kkan sú-foto ikki u-bbañ

Jennifer FUT SM-make CL-picture until SM-return

B1. The event or situation occurred today (assume the information in brackets to be true at the time of speaking).

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot (*The pot still exists*)

Saak nattepe ebara

Saak na-ttep-e e-bara

Jack SM-mould-PFV CL-clay.pot

- b) Mavuto went to the market (*Mavuto is at the market*)

Mawuto nakkaye marise

Mavuto na-kkay-e marise

Mavuto SM-go-PFV market

- c) Timothy insulted the man (*The man is angry*)

Tímotte najele áine ahu

Tímotte na-jel-e áine ahu

Timothy SM-insult-PFV CL.man CL.DEF

- d) Maureen closed the door (*The door is closed*)

Maurin nappege ganegen gagu

Maurin na-ppeg-e ga-negen gagu

Maureen SM-close-PFV CL-door CL.DEF

- e) Jennifer combed her hair (*The hair looks kempt*)

Jénifa napeñee walol

Jénifa na-peñe-e w-al-ol

Jennifer SM-comb-PFV CL-hair-POSS

- B2. The event or situation occurred today (assume the information in brackets to be true at the time of speaking. Note: if the sentences are identical to those in (B1), say ‘same as above’).

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot (*the pot is broken*)
 Saak nattepene ebara
 Saak na-ttep-en-e e-bara
 Jack SM-mould-PST-PFV CL-clay.pot
- b) Mavuto went to the market (*Mavuto has since returned from the market or gone to another place*)
 Mawuto nakkayene marise
 Mawuto na-kkay-en-e marise
 Mavuto SM-go-PST-PFV market
- c) Timothy insulted the man (*Timothy has since apologized and the man has forgiven him*)
 Tímotte najelene áine ahu
 Tímotte na-jel-en-e áine ahu
 Timothy SM-insult-PST-PFV CL.man CL.DEF
- d) Maureen closed the door (*The door is open*)
 Maureen nappogene ganegen gagu
 Maureen na-ppeg-en-e ga-negen gagu
 Maureen SM-close-PST-PFV CL-door CL.DEF
- e) Jennifer combed her hair (*The hair is dishevelled*)
 Jénifa napeñeene walol

Jénifa na-peñe-en-e w-al-ol

Jennifer SM-comb-PFV CL-hair-POSS

- B3. The event or situation occurred yesterday (assume the information in brackets is true at the time of speaking. Note: if the sentences are identical to those in (B1/B2), say ‘same as above’).

Same as B1

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot (*The pot still exists*)
- b) Mavuto went to the market (*Mavuto is at the market*)
- c) Timothy insulted the man (*The man is angry*)
- d) Maureen closed the door (*The door is closed*)
- e) Jennifer combed her hair (*The hair looks kempt*)

- B4. The event or situation occurred yesterday (assume the information in brackets is true at the time of speaking. Note: if the sentences are same those in (B3), say ‘same as above’)

Same as B2

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot (*the pot is broken*)
- b) Mavuto went to the market (*Mavuto has returned from the market or gone to another place*).
- c) Timothy insulted the man (*Timothy has since apologized and the man has forgiven him*)
- d) Maureen closed the door (*The door is open*).
- e) Jennifer combed her hair (*The hair is dishevelled*).

- B5. The event or situation occurred the day before yesterday (assume the information in brackets is true at the time of speaking. Note: if the sentences are identical to those in B3/B4, say 'same as above').

Same as B1/B3

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot (*the pot still exists*)
- b) Mavuto went to the market (*Mavuto is at the market*)
- c) Timothy insulted the man (*The man is angry*)
- d) Maureen closed the door (*The door is closed*)
- e) Jennifer combed her hair (*The hair looks kempt*)

- B6. The event or situation occurred the day before yesterday (assume the information in brackets is true at the time of speaking. Note: if the sentences are identical to those in B3/B4, say 'same as above').

Same as B2/B4

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot (*the pot is broken*)
- b) Mavuto went to the market (*Mavuto has returned from the market or gone to another place*)
- c) Timothy insulted the man (*Timothy has since apologized and the man has forgiven him*)
- d) Maureen closed the door (*The door is open*)
- e) Jennifer combed her hair (*The hair is dishevelled*)

* If your language has other forms of marking past situations over and above those indicated in B1 – B6, please indicate and provide examples following the pattern above.

- C1. Using the same verb forms you chose for A1 state if it is possible to say that the event

took place yesterday or the day before yesterday.

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot yesterday/the day before yesterday

Jon nattepe ebara figen/figenum

Jon na-ttep-e e-bara fi-gen /fi-gen-um

John SM-mould-PFV CL-clay.pot CL-yesterday/CL-yesterday-ANT

See the comment below.

- b) Mavuto went to the market yesterday/the day before yesterday

Mavuto nakkayene marise fi-gen/fi-gen-um

Mavuto na-kkay-e marise fi-gen /fi-gen-um

Mavuto SM-go-PST-PFV market CL-yesterday/CL-yesterday-ANT

Comment: Here the morphemes –en is used because we are assuming that Mavuto has returned from the market. However, if Mavuto is still at the market, meaning that when Mavuto went there the day before she did not return till the time the sentence is uttered, it would not be appropriate to use -en and only -e would be used.

- c) Timothy insulted the man yesterday/the day before yesterday

Timotte najele áine ahu figen /figenum

Timotte na-jel-e áine ahu fi-gen /fi-gen-um

Timothy SM-insult-PFV CL.man CL.DEF CL-yesterday/CL-yesterday-ANT

- d) Maureen closed the door yesterday/the day before yesterday

Maurin nappege ganegen gagu figen /figenum

Maurin na-ppeg-e ga-negen gagu fi-gen /fi-gen-um

Maureen SM-close-PFV CL-door CL.DEF CL-yesterday/CL-yesterday-ANT

- e) Jennifer combed her hair yesterday/the day before yesterday

Jénifa napeñee walol fi-gen /fi-gen-um

Jénifa na-peñe-e w-al-ol fi-gen /fi-gen-um

Jennifer SM-comb-PFV CL-hair-POSS CL-yesterday/CL-yesterday-ANT

- C2. Using the same verb forms you chose for A2 and A3 state if it is possible to say that the event took place today.

Yes, it's possible to use the same verb forms with an event happening today. It's all about how the event is viewed by the speaker. If it's viewed as a complete whole, the morpheme *-e* is attached to the end of the verb.

- a) Jack moulded a clay pot today

Saak nattepe ebara jama

Jon na-ttep-e e-bara jama

John SM-mould-PFV CL-clay.pot today

- b) Mavuto went to the market today

Mavuto nakkaye marise jama

Mavuto na-kkay-e marise jama

Mavuto SM-go-PST-PFV market today

- c) Timothy insulted the man today

Timotte najele áine ahu jama

Timotte na-jel-e áine ahu jama

Timothy SM-insult-PFV CL.man CL.DEF today

- d) Maureen closed the door today
 Maurin nappege ganegen gagu jama
 Maurin na-ppeg-e ga-negen gagu jama
 Maureen SM-close-PFV CL-door CL.DEF today

- e) Jennifer combed her hair today
 Jénifa napeñee walol jama
 Jénifa na-peñe-e w-al-ol jama
 Jennifer SM-comb-PFV CL-hair-POSS today

C3. Using the same verb forms you chose for A5 state if it is possible to say that the event will occur tomorrow/the day after tomorrow/next week.

No. the form *umu* which is used in A5 denotes that the event expressed by the verb is happening at the time of speaking.

- a) Jack will wash his own dishes tomorrow/the day after tomorrow/next week
 *Saak umu n'epos wañol gajem/gájimenum/fiyyay fafu fájaweul me
 Saak umu n' e-pos w-añ-ol gajem/gájim-enum/
 Jack CL.COP CONJ CL-wash CL-cloth-POSS tomorrow/tomorrow-POST
 fi-yyay fafu f-á-jaw-e-ul me
 CL-week CL.DEF CL-REL-go-PFV-LOC DEP

- b) Mavuto will go to the market tomorrow/the day after tomorrow/next week

*Mavuto umu n'ekke marise gajem/gájimenum/fiiyyay fafu fájaweul me

Mavuto umu n' e-kke marise gajem/gájim-enum/

Mavuto CL.COP CONJ CL-go market tomorrow/tomorrow-POST

fí-iyyay fafu f-á-jaw-e-ul me

CL-week CL.DEF CL-REL-go-PFV-LOC DEP

b) Timothy will insult the man tomorrow/the day after tomorrow/next week

*Timotte umu n'ejel ni áine ahu gajem/gájimenum/fiiyyay fafu fájaweul me

Timotte umu n' e-jel ni áine ahu gajem/gájim-enum/

Timothy CL.COP CONJ CL-speak PREP CL.man CL.DEF tomorrow/tomorrow-POST

fí-iyyay fafu f-á-jaw-e-ul me

CL-week CL.DEF CL-REL-go-PFV-LOC DEP

c) Maureen will ride a bicycle tomorrow/the day after tomorrow/next week

*Maurin umu n'eteyen ebekkan gajem/gájimenum/fiiyyay fafu fájaweul me

Maurin umu n' e-tey-en e-bekkan gajem/gájim-enum/

Maureen CL.COP CONJ CL-run-CAUS CL-bicycle tomorrow/tomorrow-POST

fí-iyyay fafu f-á-jaw-e-ul me

CL-week CL.DEF CL-REL-go-PFV-LOC DEP

e) Jennifer will draw pictures tomorrow/the day after tomorrow/next week

*Jénifa umu n'ekkan súfoto gajem/gájjimenum/fiyyay fafu fájaweul me

Jénifa umu n' e-kan sú-foto gajem/gájjim-enum/

Jennifer CL.COP CONJ CL-make CL-picture tomorrow/tomorrow-POST

fí-yyay fafu f-á-jaw-e-ul me

CL-week CL.DEF CL-REL-go-PFV-LOC DEP

- C4. Using the same verb forms you chose for A7 state if it is possible to say that the events will take place today and translate each sentence with the intended meaning in mind.

Yes, the form *pan* which is used there to indicate future can be used here.

- a) Jack will wash his own dishes today

Saak pan apos wañol jama

Saak pan a-pos w-añ-ol jama

Jack FUT SM-wash CL-cloth-POSS today

- b) Mavuto will go to the market today

Mavuto pan akke marise jama

Mavuto pan a-kke marise jama

Mavuta FUT SM-go market today

- c) Timothy will insult the man today

Timotte pan ajel áine ahu jama

Timotte pan a-jel áine ahu jama

Timothy FUT SM-insult CL.man CL.DEF today

d) Maureen will ride a bicycle today
Maurin pan ateyen ebekkan jama
Maurin pan a-tey-en e-bekkan jama
Maureen FUT SM-run-CAUS CL-bicycle today

e) Jennifer will draw pictures today
Jénifa pan akkan súfoto jama
Jénifa pan a-kan sú-foto jama
Jenifer FUT SM-make CL-picture today