Aspect, Tense, and Time Shifts in Tikar

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INTRODUCTION

This paper originated from a desire to identify and categorize the complex variety of particles and verbal affixes found in Tikar. The initial approach taken was to apply traditional concepts of tense, aspect, and mode, which led to the immediate discovery that these labels did not coincide with the natural syntactic groupings of verbal categories in Tikar. An inquiry into other Niger-Congo languages showed that while linguists are generally agreed on the definitions of tense, aspect, and mode, much shifting and overlapping of labels is found when the terms are actually applied. In an attempt to avoid the problem, some linguists have suggested that traditional labels be put aside and that grammatical categories be identified by their syntactic function. Welmers (1973: 344) formulated his 'verbal constructions' with just such an intent.

The term 'verbal construction' is thus designed to avoid the confusions and complications inherent in distinguishing categories such as tense, aspect, and mode. Some constructions, to be sure, may have specific reference to time, such as past; others may have specific reference to mode, such as conditional. But the forms or constructions of Niger-Congo languages do not fall into neat sets with different types of morphological structure.

Something like Welmers' 'verbal constructions' is needed to describe the grammatical elements of the Tikar predicate. This is evident from the number of verbal morphemes that are found in opposition in a single clause, and the inability to label any one of these morphemes as a category of tense, aspect or mode.

In this paper the predicates of similar clause types are examined in order to determine the morpheme categories that contrast in their syntac-

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tic function. Four such categories are found, each of which is assigned a letter to distinguish it from the others: Verbal Categories A, B, C, and D. In example (1), (a) illustrates a sentence with the four verbal categories represented; (b) shows the breakdown of morphemes in the predicate into these categories.

(1)  
a. *änän swaad ti ḍwum düm  
    chief-assembled-again-people-yesterday  
    'The chief assembled the people again yesterday.'

b. *swaad -i ti ḍwum düm  
   Verb Verbal Verbal Verbal Object Verbal
   Root Cat. A Cat. B Cat. C Cat. D

Categories A, B, and C will be discussed in the following sections. Category D, which consists of grammatical elements usually recognized as adverbs of scope and circumstance, will not be treated in this paper.

Before looking at the individual categories, however, two clarifications need to be made. One is that while four categories are contrastive in the Tikar clause, not all are obligatory elements of the clause. Only Category B obligatorily accompanies the basic verb form. Second, to restrict the data to a manageable size, only two major clause types are examined as a basis for this study, namely, declarative clauses with active verbs. It is still to be determined how the categories function in stative, imperative, conditional, and other clause types.

I. VERBAL CATEGORY A ('DERIVATIONAL AFFIXES')

Verbal Category A consists of the derivational affixes that can be combined with verb roots to form new stems. Four structural features are noted. The first is that most of these forms are suffixes which directly follow the verb root. One exception is the nominalized verb, which consists of a homorganic nasal prefix — low tone in isolation — preceding the verb stem. As the function of this nominalizing prefix is different from the other affixes, it is here considered a subcategory of A requiring separate study.

A second feature is that although all verb roots can be formed into new stems by the addition of one or more of the affixes, many combinations are in fact unattested, e.g., *šibši 'to cause to sing' from the verb root šib 'to sing', and the causative suffix -si.

A third feature is that derivation affixes have become fused with the verb root in many instances so that the stem is no longer separable into meaningful units. The -ti suffix of batti 'to stick to', for example, is recognizable as the physical change derivation, but the form *bati no longer occurs by itself.
The fourth feature is that the derivation affixes have variant forms depending on the phonemic shape of the verb. The variants are determined by the final phoneme, and in some cases, the medial vowel, of the verb root.

The function of Verbal Category A is to qualify the action of the clause in relation to its participants. The affixes provide information such as whether the subject caused the action or was affected by the action, whether the action was moving away from him or toward him, etc. A list of the derivation affixes appears in (2):

(2) a. -si causative  
  b. -ni subject as patient  
  c. -ti physical change  
  d. -li complement as patient  
  e. -ki repetitive  
  f. -i direction toward speaker  
  g. -o direction away from speaker  
  h. -ên group action  
  i. -i nominalized verb

1.1 Causative

The causative indicates that the subject is producing some effect on the object, or is causing the object to act. The suffix has two variants: -si and -nzi.

(3) a. kwe 'cry' + -si = kwesi 'cause to cry'  
  b. ôs 'wash' + -si = ôsisi 'wash (another person)'  
  c. lami 'pass' + -nzi = lamizi 'accompany'  
  d. kên 'go' + -nzi = kënsi 'direct, make go'

1.2 Subject as patient

When the verbal action reflects on the subject of the sentence, that is, when it describes the subject’s physical or mental disposition, the subject as patient derivation is used. The suffix has two variants: -li and -ni.

(4) a. sô 'gather' + -li = sôli 'assemble'  
  b. dýi 'put upright' + -li = dýili 'stand straight'  
  c. lîn 'cut' + -ni = lînni 'be cut'  
  d. gwëm 'bury' + -ni = gwënni 'hide oneself'
1.3 Physical change

The physical change suffix indicates physical interaction between the subject and object, or a transformation of the subject or object to some new state or location. The suffix has two variants: -\(ti\) and -\(ndi\).

\(\text{(5) a. } bō & 'beat' \ + \ -\(ti\) = bō\(ti\) 'hit against something'\\ b. } ywe & 'strike' \ + \ -\(ti\) = ywe\(ti\) 'tear apart'\\ c. } ūn & 'cut' \ + \ -\(ndi\) = ūn\(ndi\) 'cut apart'\\ d. } se & 'scoot' \ + \ -\(ndi\) = se\(ndi\) 'displace'\)

1.4 Complement as patient

When the verbal action reflects on the complement of the sentence, whether it be a direct or indirect object, and describes some effect on that object, the complement as patient derivation is used. The suffix has 7 variants: -\(li\), -\(ni\), -\(mi\), -\(bi\), high tone, zero suffix (\(\emptyset\)), internal -\(e\).

\(\text{(6) a. } τæ & + \ -\(li\) = τæ\(li\) 'sew something'\\ b. } lin & + \ -\(ni\) = lin\(ni\) 'cut something'\\ c. } gwim & + \ -\(mi\) = gwim\(mi\) 'bury something'\\ d. } kæb & + \ -\(bi\) = kæb\(bi\) 'look for something'\\ e. } ci & + \ -\(\emptyset\) = ci 'do something'\\ f. } fæ & + \ -\(e\) = fæ 'give something'\\ g. } kpa & + \ -\(e\) = kpea 'help someone'\\ h. } lin & + \ -\(e\) = lemA 'pass by something'\)

1.5 Repetitive

The repetitive derivation signifies that the subject of the sentence repeats the same action a number of times. Variants of the suffix are: -\(kå\)', -\(ŋgå\)', -\(å\)', -\(lå\)', -\(nå\)', -\(må\)', -\(lå\)', -\(nå\)', -\(må\)', and -\(bå\}'. This derivation is also accompanied by an internal vowel change of e to i.

\(\text{(7) a. } ci & + \ -\(kå\) = cikå' 'do several things'\\ b. } län & + \ -\(ŋgå\) = lăngå' 'pass several times'\\ c. } yli & + \ -\(å\) = yila' 'accept several times'\\ d. } τæ & + \ -\(lå\) = tilå' 'sew several times'\\ e. } bæm & + \ -\(nå\) = binå' 'grasp several times'\\ f. } lamb & + \ -\(må\) = limå' 'cover several times'\\ g. } le & + \ -\(lå\) = lîbå' 'speak several times'\\ h. } lin & + \ -\(nå\) = linå' 'cut several times'\\ i. } gwim & + \ -\(må\) = gwimmå' 'bury several times'\\ j. } fæb & + \ -\(bå\) = fëbbå' 'harvest several times'\)
1.6 Direction toward speaker

If the speaker uses himself as point of reference and wishes to indicate that the verbal action is moving in a direction toward himself, the affix -i- is added to the final vowel of the verb stem. ⁶

(8)  
   a. bo + -i- = boi ‘hit (this way)’  
   b. lin + -i- = lin ‘cut (this way)’  
   c. gwimmiv + -i- = gwimmiv ‘bury something (this way)’  
   d. fe + -i- = fi ‘give (here)’  
   e. hën + -i- = hën ‘arrive (here)’

1.7 Direction away from speaker

If the verbal action moves away from the speaker, the direction away from the speaker suffix is used. The derivation has four variants, -o’, -no’, -mo’, and -bo’.

(9)  
   a. bo + -o’ = bo’ ‘hit (that way)’  
   b. fe + -o’ = fe’ ‘give (there)’  
   c. lin + -no’ = linno’ ‘cut (that way)’  
   d. gwimmiv + -mo’ = gwimmivmo’ ‘bury (there)’  
   e. fyæb + -bo’ = fyæbbo’ ‘harvest (that way)’

1.8 Group action

The group action derivation signifies that the verbal action is being carried out by two or more subjects engaged in the same activity. The suffix has 5 variants, -èni, -ni, -nèni, -mèni, and -bèni.

(10)  
   a. yìli + -èni = yìleni ‘like, accept one another’  
   b. bo + -ni = bôni ‘hit together’  
   c. lin + -nèni = linèni ‘cut together’  
   d. gwimmiv + -mèni = gwimmimmèni ‘bury together’  
   e. fyæb + -bèni = fyæbbèni ‘harvest together’

1.9 Cooccurrence of derivation affixes

Compound verb stems are found in Tikar when two or more derived suffixes are added to a single verb root.

(11)  
   a. swn + -nzi causative + -o’ direction away from speaker  
   = swnnzo’ ‘introduce there’
b. *don + -nzi causative + -ëni* group action = *donzëni* 'leave behind'

c. *wa’ + -ka’* repetitive + -e- complement as patient = *wakea* 'keep coming from someplace'

d. *hwen + -ni’* repetitive + -i* direction toward speaker = *hwennoi* 'gather up this way'

Several restrictions as to cooccurrence are noted, however. Of the eight affixes listed in (2), -*si*, -*ni*, and -*ti* are mutually exclusive, as are also -*i*, -*o’*, and -*ëni*. The suffix -*li*, likewise, is not found cooccurring with -*ni* and -*ti*. -*ka’* may cooccur with any of the suffixes. The cooccurrence possibilities of Tikar verb stems are presented in Table 1. The order of affixes is shown by the vertical columns, and remains fixed in all instances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>causative subject as patient</th>
<th>repetitive</th>
<th>complement as patient</th>
<th>direction toward speaker</th>
<th>direction away from speaker</th>
<th>group action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-<em>si</em></td>
<td>-<em>ka’</em></td>
<td>-<em>li</em></td>
<td>-<em>i’-o’</em></td>
<td>-<em>ëni</em></td>
<td>-<em>i’-ëni</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-<em>ni</em></td>
<td>-<em>ka’</em></td>
<td>-<em>li</em></td>
<td>-<em>i’-o’</em></td>
<td>-<em>ëni</em></td>
<td>-<em>i’-ëni</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-<em>ti</em></td>
<td>-<em>ka’</em></td>
<td>-<em>li</em></td>
<td>-<em>i’-o’</em></td>
<td>-<em>ëni</em></td>
<td>-<em>i’-ëni</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. VERBAL CATEGORY B (‘TENSE-ASPECT’)

Verbal Category B is an obligatory element of the Tikar clause, as previously stated in the introduction. This feature, and other complexities in form and function, distinguish it markedly from the other verbal categories.
With respect to form, the members of Category B have different morphological shapes; some are free, others are bound. The form difference has a correlation in their syntactic positions: bound forms are suffixed to the verb root or stem, as in (12); free forms precede the verb as in (13). Only one member of Category B is present in a single clause, and these are underlined in the examples below:

(12) be fyounge be myi
    they-returned+Cat. B-behind-village
    'They returned back to the village.'

(13) Cùni ja joi kebbi
    Cùni-Cat. B-money-look for
    'Cùni is looking for employment.'

One bound form of Category B has been interpreted as a zero suffix, illustrated in (14). This analysis was preferred over assigning a meaning to the absence of any member of this category.

(14) mw3 wa 0 be
    child-get up+Cat. B-behind
    'The child goes back.'

With respect to function, the members of Verbal Category B seem to be readily identifiable with tense on the one hand, and with aspect on the other. A more thorough examination, however, reveals discrepancies that lead to the conclusion that neither one nor the other of these notions is completely sufficient to describe the semantic content of the forms. The discrepancies found in applying tense and aspect notions are discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2.

2.1 Tense

In terms of tense, the members of Category B can be divided into the following groupings: one removed past, four near pasts, three presents, one future, and one removed future. Table 2 illustrates the tense division of forms as they appear with the verb root yen 'see'. Category B members are underlined.

Table 2 serves the purpose of identifying the tenses that are usually associated with verbs, but at the same time it fails to distinguish each of the Tikar morphemes individually. Two forms are identically labelled 'he saw', another two 'he was seeing', and another two 'he sees'. It is evident that there is some further meaning component in the forms.

The indication of an additional component becomes clearer yet in sentences where the 'usual' tense, as given above, does not reflect the actual
### Table 2. Tense Division of Verbal Category B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Verb Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Removed Past</td>
<td>á yenn</td>
<td>'he had seen'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>á yennj</td>
<td>'he saw'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>á yennk</td>
<td>'he saw'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>á ìi ycn</td>
<td>'he was seeing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>á ìg ycn</td>
<td>'he was seeing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near Past</td>
<td>á ycn</td>
<td>'he sees'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>á ynnig</td>
<td>'he sees'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>á ìf ycn</td>
<td>'he is seeing'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>á yic ycn</td>
<td>'he will see'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>á yic ycn</td>
<td>'he will see'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, the sentence *M缓解n* translated by the 'usual' tense, means 'I knew (near past) him'. But the actual meaning is 'I know him', in the sense that 'I came to know him in the past, and continue to know him now'. The sentence *bè m缓解n ywíng pay*, given the 'usual' tense, is translated 'Before, I will fall'. It means, however, 'Before, I almost fell', or 'I was going to fall, but the action was not completed'. These examples suggest that the missing meaning component has something to do with aspect.

### 2.2 Aspect

Aspect is broadly defined as a grammatical category that describes a kind of verbal action, especially with respect to the passage of time. It is common to speak of the progressive aspect, and its opposite, the punctiliar aspect; or of the accomplished aspect, and its opposite, the unaccomplished aspect. For each of these, it is usual for a single label to correspond to a particular form. Tikar Category B members can likewise be assigned aspectual notions, but the difference lies in that they are characterized by **multiple semantic components**. These include: (a) action that is accomplished or action that is unaccomplished; (b) action that is in progress or not in progress (progressive vs. punctiliar); (c) action with an ongoing effect or without such an effect (resultative vs. terminated); and (d) action removed from the 'now' by intervening events, or action where intervening events are not pertinent.

How the semantic components are combined in each Tikar form is given in Table 3. The forms of Verbal Category B are listed in the lefthand column. Each form is then identified as to whether it is accomplished (+), or unaccomplished (−); progressive (+), or non-progressive (−); resultative (+), or non-resultative (−); or removed (+). The barred sign (♯) signifies a semantic component not relevant to a particular form.
Table 3. Multiple Semantic Components of Category B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Progressive</th>
<th>Resultative</th>
<th>Removed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ϕ</td>
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<td>-i</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.2.1. The unaccomplished, non-progressive, non-resultative morpheme -ϕ signifies action that is viewed as punctiliar, but not as yet completed. It has no ongoing effect on the subject of the clause, or the action that follows. In terms of tense, this aspect is usually equated with present, but a relative present that may be placed into the past or into the future.

(15) le shim mè yë³
    they-dig-plural-pit
    ‘They dug pits.’

(16)  가능성 danh ku’ myi
      peace-enter-also-village
      ‘Peace came to the village.’

2.2.2. The accomplished, non-progressive, non-resultative morpheme has four variants, -ni, -mi, -bi, and -i. It signifies action that has been completed, action that is viewed as punctiliar, and action that has no ongoing effect on the subject of the clause, or on the subsequent action. Very often the subject has left the scene where the action took place. In terms of tense, this form is usually equated with past.

(17) a shibbi ñib
    she-sang-song
    ‘She sang a song (but now is no longer singing).’

(18) ñib yëf mwen
    woman-delivered-child
    ‘The woman delivered the child.’

2.2.3. The unaccomplished, non-progressive, resultative morpheme -me
signifies action that is not as yet completed, but seen as punctiliar, and having an ongoing effect. In terms of tense, this form is usually equated with present.

(19) Ṽwakwak kwam̄wem naun nden
phantom-come out-beside-field
'A phantom appears beside the field (with a continuing effect on those who see it).'</n(20) wu nann me ijÃ£ sea
you-climb-trunk-palm tree
'You climb the palm tree (and are at the top).'</n
2.2.4. The accomplished, non-progressive, resultative morpheme has four variants, -nâ, -ná, -bá, and -á. It signifies action that has been completed, is seen as punctiliar, and has an ongoing effect. In terms of tense, this form is normally equated with past.

(21) män limmâ amn
I-knew-him
'I know him' (accomplished in the past and carried through to the present).

(22) à këmnâ ke Yaoundâ
de-went-to-Yaoundâ
'He went to Yaoundé (and is still there).'</n
2.2.5. The accomplished, removed morpheme also has four variants, -ne, -me, -be, and -e. It signifies an action that has taken place and other events have intervened between the time of completion and the present. In terms of tense, this form is usually equated with past.

(23) njépënpn ndâ ë lë kwe à yile mwi kpo 'ntwâ
youth-certain-was-there-he-like-drink-alcohol-much
'There once was a youth who liked to drink alcohol too much.'</n(24) à yëno vëmë' li ëtwâ à yile këm hôt she
she-saw-suffering-thus-because-she-wanted-not-do-work
'She had suffered thus because she didn't want to work.'</n
2.2.6. The unaccomplished, removed morpheme ywimë signifies action that has not taken place, though it is (or was) expected to occur. Other events are expected to take place before the action, or have taken place since the action was supposed to have occurred. The tense associated with this form is usually future.

(25) wu yë mën ké wu ywimë fyënnî?
you-will-stay-or-you-will-return?
'Will you stay or will you return (after staying for awhile)!'
(26) *be mūn ywímg pyí*  
before-I-will-fall  
‘Before, I almost fell (but the action was not completed).’

2.2.7. The unaccomplished, progressive, non-resultative morpheme *ye* signifies an action that is expected to take place. There is no ongoing effect on the subject of the clause, nor on the actions that follow. The tense normally associated with this form is future.

(27) *bwi* *ye ji dín*  
we-will-eat-for nothing  
‘We are going to eat without stopping.’

(28) *ā yē nōn kwe āgyīn lē*  
he-will-stay-there-day-three  
‘He will stay there three days.’

2.2.8. The accomplished, progressive, non-resultative morpheme *bi* signifies an action that is completed, but was in progress for a certain time. The action has no ongoing effect. The tense usually associated with this form is past.

(29) *myōn bi dyīm dyīmmi ke nden*  
his wife-was-cultivation-cultivating-at-field  
‘His wife was cultivating in the field (but is no longer there).’

(30) *bwaum bi kān ywi kwe*  
people-were-not-death-cry  
‘The people were not crying over the death.’

2.2.9. The unaccomplished, progressive, resultative morpheme *ta* signifies an action that is in progress, not yet completed, and has an ongoing effect. It also indicates an action that is usual procedure, or a statement of general truth. The tense is normally present.

(31) *mūn tē mwi*  
rain-is-raining  
‘It is raining.’

(32) *bwa* *tgwē bi lē nge' da*  
we-are-corn-plant-with-wood  
‘We plant corn with a stick.’

2.2.10. The accomplished, progressive, resultative morpheme *be* signifies an action that is completed, but was in progress for a certain time. The action has an ongoing effect on the subject of the clause, or the subsequent action. In terms of tense, this form is usually equated with past.

(33) *bwi* *be wi bwi nwi* *bwen*  
we-were-war-throw-because-children
‘We were fighting because of our children’ (and a description of the fight follows).

(34)  Mèndèa tòn ne hàlikà’ ñe màkk ku’ yon
Bandam-this-(focus)-since-was-stay-also-it
‘This Bandam is the same since it was founded.’

2.3 The function of Verbal Category B in discourse

The complexity of Category B has been seen in its diversity of morphological shapes and positioning in relation to the verb stem, and again in the difficulty of satisfactorily defining it in terms of tense or aspect. A third complexity deserves analysis, how the members function in grammatical units larger than the clause or simple sentence. Unlike the other verbal categories, whose members remain invariable on any grammatical level, Category B members interrelate in a specific way in discourse. To discuss this interrelation in the most convenient way possible, it is easiest to revert to time terminology and to refer to Category B forms by their ‘usual’ tense, as described in sec. 2.1. The phenomenon of interrelation, which is here referred to as ‘time orientation shifts’, is readily seen in narrative discourse.

The first independent clause in a discourse establishes the time of the narrative events in relation to the speaker’s real time. A narrative about past events begins with the verb stem plus one of the past tense forms. A narrative about future events begins with a verb stem plus one of the future forms. After the initial sentence, the time orientation shifts and the entire story is told in the present tense (verb stem plus one of the Category B present tense forms), as if it were in actual progress.

(35)  Time shift from past to present tense.
shilb ndo’ ñe kävé le ñt mbam ngàm.
woman-certain-was-there-and-she-is-person-old
bwiàt kà shë ñ le mìn le bon bi kennài
others-then-say-with-her-that-they-(focus)-go
ągà’ kàbbi, à bùnnà ɔ mìn.
wood-look for, she-refuse-(emphasis)

The free translation, given with ‘usual’ tenses, is as follows:

There (once) was a woman and she is already old. The others say to her that they go look for wood. She refuses.

In (35), the initial independent clause sets the action as taking place sometime in the past. The time orientation then shifts to the story time, which
becomes present tense. The woman is old. Others tell her to do something and she refuses.

(36) Time shift from future to present tense.
   *kwa\n se \bwi' y\w\ne k\n n Yaound\n d\n b\n wi' y\w\ne y\w\n nun time-(focus)-we-will-go-Yaound\n d\n -we-will-things-
   f\n \n e\n a shikpon. \b\n w\n i' ke \n m\n n prepare-morning, we-put-(emphasis)

The free translation with 'usual' tenses follows:

When we will go to Yaoundé, we will get our things ready in the morning. We put (them aside).

The first sentence sets the time of the trip to Yaoundé and the preparation of baggage as a future event. Two future verbs are noted, the first belonging to a dependent clause that modifies the following independent clause. The time orientation shift takes place after the independent clause and subsequent actions are related as if they were actually taking place. The verb 'put' is in the present tense.

Events that follow each other in chronological order in the narrative are all in present tense. This succession is shown in a sample translated from a Tikar story:

(37) She places the pot in the sun. She begins to wait. The sun shines in (the pot). She closes the pot. She lifts it. She goes into her room.

When events do not follow in chronological sequence, as for example, when they are told in reverse order, those events that precede the narrative time are in past tense. Example (38), taken from another Tikar story, shows reverse order of events.

(38) His mother-in-law dies. Before, she suffered very much.

Events that will take place at a point future to the narrative time are in future tense:

(39) Her thought tells her that the sun will shine in the pot . . .

Time orientation shifting is also found on grammatical levels between clause and discourse, namely, the episode and the complex sentence. Its occurrence on these levels results in the embedding of a second shift within the one that took place at the beginning of the narrative. Two examples of embedded shifts are given in (40) and (41).
(40) mlib nds' be kwe... inf3kâ' yon saku' nun shé ø woman-certain-was-there... thought-her-only-her-say le nywo' ni ywime ku' d'wun kpon nun ke kôm that-sun-(focus)-will-also-shine-night-in-at-pot nun le nun9 tâ wo'. ë limmi ø kan kë... in-and-she-is-warming she-knows-not-that...

'There was a woman... (first time shift). Her thought tells her that the sun will shine in the pot at night (second time shift) and she is warming herself (return to first shift). She does not know that...'.

The first shift takes place at the beginning of the discourse, and the story time becomes present tense. The second shift takes place within a complex sentence; the present tense is projected to the time when the sun will be shining. The action of the woman warming herself is present with respect to the sun shining. The next sentence, however, returns to the time orientation of the main story events; the verb 'know' follows the verb 'tells' in chronological story time and is therefore present tense.

(41) nywo' soudë mûn këndô kô yèm hwasî ke Nyemboya... day-sunday'I-went-uncle-my-greet-at-Nyemboya... bôi' fyonni ø be myi ntwi' be mûn shë nun we-return-back-village-because-before-I-said-him le mûn yë mun fyonni dyë be Kimmi. bôi ben ø myi... that-I-will-I-return-today-back-Bankim we-arrive-village...

'Sunday I went to greet my uncle in Nyemboya... (first time shift). We return back because before, I said to him that (second time shift) I will return today back to Bankim (return to first shift). We arrive in the village...'.

The first time shift is again at the beginning of the discourse, where the previous Sunday's actions are now told as present happenings. The verb 'return' follows the chronological sequence of the story. The verb 'said' is past in relation to the story time. The second shift occurs within a complex sentence; the present is projected back to the point when 'I' was in the process of speaking, and the following verb 'return' becomes a future event. The final sentence in the example returns to the orientation of the first shift; the verb 'arrive' follows the verb 'return' in the chronological sequence of the story.
2.4 Verbal Category B and serial verbs

Up to this point in the discussion, no explanation has been offered as to why the forms of Category B are of two morphological shapes: bound and free. It is interesting to note that this diversity is not uncommon to Bantoid languages of Cameroon, and one suggestion made is that the free forms may have evolved historically from verbs. In Tikar there is evidence that the free members of Verbal Category B may be 'petrified' forms that once belonged to the restricted set of modal/aspectual/modifying verbs that occurred initially in serial constructions. These 'modal' verbs still function in the language, and include such members as 'to begin', 'to finish', 'to be able', 'to fail', 'to add', 'to refuse', 'to come', 'to go', 'to go out', and 'to know'. The parallel between free Category B members and 'modal' verbs becomes apparent in a comparison of clause type formulas. (Abbreviations: S (subject), V (verb), Vm ('modal' verb), IO (indirect object), O (direct object), Cat. A (Verbal Category A), Cat. B (Verbal Category B), Cat. C (Verbal Category C), and Cat. D (Verbal Category E).)

The clause type with the minimum verbal construction, verb root plus Cat. B, can be illustrated by the formula: \( S + [V + \text{Cat. B}] \pm \text{IO} \pm O \).

\[
\begin{align*}
(42) & \quad S & V + \text{Cat. B} & \text{IO} & O \\
& \quad mun & fā & bōl' & jī \\
& \quad she & gave & us & food \\
(43) & \quad bī & bōn & mun \\
& \quad they & catch & him \\
\end{align*}
\]

In both examples above, the form of Cat. B is bound, \( -d \) in the first sentence and \( -o \) in the second. When a free Cat. B form is present it precedes the verb and the formula becomes: \( S + \text{Cat. B} \pm \text{IO} \pm O + V \).

\[
\begin{align*}
(44) & \quad S & \text{Cat. B} & \text{IO} & O & V \\
& \quad bē & ta & vēnē' & yenni \\
& \quad they & are & suffering & seeing \\
(45) & \quad ā & yē & wā & swum-nds' & cī \\
& \quad he & will & you & thing-certain & do \\
& \quad 'He will do something to you.'
\end{align*}
\]

A secondary clause type in Tikar is predicated by two verbs. The first is one of a limited set that are here called modal verbs; the second may be any verb. The formula of this clause type is: \( S + [V + \text{Cat. B}] \pm \text{IO} \pm O + V \pm \text{Cat. A} \).
The modal verb occurs with the Category B member in this type of construction. In (46), it is -Φ; in (47), -me.

The modal verb may also be accompanied by a free Category B form in which case the clause formula is: + S + Cat. B ± IO ± O + [V{\text{\text{\text{\text{}}}m}} + Cat. A] + [V ± Cat. A]

(46) S [V{\text{\text{\text{\text{}}}m}} + Cat. B] IO O [V ± Cat. A]
mun kyin mgbè nwi
I come beer drink
‘I have come to drink beer.’

(47) bs kemie bon nge’ kæbbi
they go them wood look for
‘They go to look for wood themselves.’

(48) S Cat. B IO O [V{\text{\text{\text{\text{}}}m}} + Cat. A] [V ± Cat. A]
ts komndi lon
they are them add call
‘They are calling them again.’

(49) a ye bin’ kyin simmea
he will us come trample
‘He will come and trample us.’

It is significant that verbs with their bound Cat. B forms and the free Category B forms are found in the same positions in the clause. Of greater importance, however, is the fact that both undergo the same tone changes when they follow subjects belonging to different noun classes. Verbs with a low tone infinitive in isolation become high tone after all noun classes except Noun Class 1, and free Category B members that are low or rising tone also become high following those same classes. (Note that in the exampless, high tone is unmarked.)

(50) a. a wöli kän
he (noun class 1) can go
b. ndbó wöli kän
antilope (noun class 3) can go
c. a ywime kän
he (noun class 1) will go
d. ndbó ywime kän
antilope (noun class 3) will go

The initial syllable of both the verb wöli and the Category B form ywime remain low following the noun class 1 a. They become high following the noun class 3 ndbó.
Final evidence for a verbal origin of some Category B forms is the homophony between \( \dot{b} \)i and \( \dot{b} \)e, and the accomplished, progressive forms of the active verb \( \dot{b} \)e 'to be'.

\[(51) \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \dot{b}i \ n\ddot{a}m & \quad \text{He was in the field (and is no longer there).} \\
& \quad \text{he-was-field} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \dot{b}i \ n\ddot{a}m \ f\ddot{e}j\ddot{i} & \quad \text{He was preparing the field (but no longer).} \\
& \quad \text{he-was-field-prepare}
\end{align*}
\]

\[(52) \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{ci} \ be \ m\dddot{b}y\ddot{i} \ \text{mun} & \quad \text{The tarsier was in the road (and is there).} \\
& \quad \text{tarsier-was-road-in} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{ci} \ be \ m\dddot{b}y\ddot{i} \ n\ddot{a}m \ \text{f\ddot{y}o\ddot{m}ni} & \quad \text{The tarsier was returning along the road from the field.} \\
& \quad \text{tarsier-was-road-field-return}
\end{align*}
\]

The other Category B forms, \( \text{yw\dot{w}ne} \), \( \text{ye} \), and \( \text{tu} \), cannot be traced to any existent verbs.

3. VERBAL CATEGORY C ('ADVERBIAL MODIFIERS')

The third grammatical category that modifies the verbal action consists of a group of morphologically free forms that directly follow Category B and precede the obligatory direct or indirect object. Up to three members of Category C may appear in a single clause, and in such instances the order is not fixed, although alterations may indicate a slight change of meaning.

In terms of function, Category C serves to qualify the verbal action with respect to the preceding or following verbal action. The most frequent forms are listed in (53).

\[(53) \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ti} \quad \text{'again', } & \quad \text{lo} \quad \text{‘contrary to expectation',}^{12} \quad \text{ku} \quad \text{‘also', } \quad \text{suku} \quad \text{‘just/only', } \quad \text{f\ddot{e}} \quad \text{‘in contrast to', } \quad \text{fe} \quad \text{‘right now', } \quad \text{s\dddot{e}j\ddot{i}} \quad \text{‘first', } \quad \text{pw\ddot{e}t\ddot{t}i} \quad \text{‘quickly', } \\
& \quad \text{kt} \quad \text{‘usually/often'}. 
\end{align*}
\]

3.1. The particle \( \text{ti} \) indicates an action that is a repetition or a continuation of a former action.

\[(54) \]
\[
\text{m\ddot{u}n \ k\dddot{u}m\ddot{u}d\ddot{i} \ ti \ s\dddot{a}n\ddot{m}z\ddot{i}} & \quad \text{I explained again.} \\
\text{l-add-again-explain}
\]

\[(55) \]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\ddot{t} \ w\ddot{e}j \ ti \ ku'ke \ m\dddot{w}a\ddot{m} \ \text{nk}\ddot{e}m} & \quad \text{He went again beside the elder.} \\
& \quad \text{he-went-again-also-beside-person-old}
\end{align*}
\]
3.2.  *lo'* indicates an action that takes place in spite of circumstances that suggest another action as more likely to occur.

(56)  mën bënnë *lo'*
I-arrived-contrary to expectation
'I have come (contrary to what was expected).

(57)  a bo *lo'*
it-was-contrary to expectation-thus
'It was like that, contrary to expectation.

3.3.  *ku'* indicates an action that supplements another action.

(58)  à tà *ku'*dyi
he-is-also-standing
'He is standing also.'

(59)  wù ni *ku'*ọ̀kyìn
you-are-also-foreigner
'You are also a foreigner.'

3.4.  *suku'* indicates that no alternative actions are possible, or attempted. A single course of action is presented.

(60)  bë *suku'*më plè saàbbi
they-were-only-plural-clothes-washing
'They were just washing the clothes.'

(61)  mën yë *suku'*yili
I-will-only-agree
'I will only agree.'

3.5.  *fër'* indicates an action that is carried out in the contrary sense to a previous one, or contrary to an intended action.

(62)  wù fyi fër'le fà'jì
you-follow-in-contrast to-with-hand-food
'You follow to the right (in contrast to the intention to go left).'

(63)  à shè fër'be
he-cross-in-contrast to-back
'He recrossed back.'

3.6.  The particle *fe'* indicates an action to be done first, or right away, which will lead to or result in succeeding actions.

(64)  bòyn lan *fe'*më dweb nàdö'
you-outdoor-right now-plural-man-certain
'You've outdone certain men right now.'

(65)  n'dweb kpaen *fe'*lë
man-tied-right now-net
'The man ties the net at this time.'
3.7. The particle seti indicates an action that is first of a series of related actions.

(66) mwen ti seti myin ye nji twombi
child-is-first-teeth-which-bottom-grow
'A child grows his lower teeth first.'
(67) mn n seti mun ji fe
he-is-first-me-food-give
'It's him who first gave me food.'

3.8. pwéti indicates an action that requires little time to be completed.

(68) mhn yè ku' pwéti bòn
I-will-also-quickly-arrive
'I will also arrive quickly.'
(69) mn bò pwéti kimma
he-not-quickly-get well
'He will not get well quickly.'

3.9. ki indicates an action that is habitual.

(70) bò be ki ñwak' pèa
they-were-usually-wood-sharpening
'It was their custom to sharpen the sticks.'
(71) bò kiny ki wi dvi fe kammi mèn
they-come-often-war-throw-here-times-many
'They came often to make war here.'
and verbs used in serial constructions also give support to the proposal that the forms may have derived historically from verbs.

NOTES

1. Tikar is spoken by some 15,000-20,000 people in the west-central region of Cameroon in the central and north-west provinces. It is classified as 'Bantoid' by Richardson (1957) and as belonging to the Bantoid group of Benue-Congo by Williamson (1971). The dialect from which examples were taken for this paper is that spoken in Bankim, in the sub-division of Banyo. This paper is based on field work done in Bankim from November 1974 to February 1977, and from July 1978 to May 1979. Published material on the Tikar language is extremely limited to date. The most significant work is the monograph by Hagèö (1969), in which he compares a variety of phonological and grammatical features of Tikar with those of Mbum.

2. Tikar is in a transition stage between two phonemic systems, one involving fewer contrastive vowels and more contrastive final consonants than the other. Transcription in this paper (a) reflects the language as presently spoken, overlapping both phonemic systems; and (b) follows the orthographic rules developed for the writing of Cameroonien languages, and adopted by COLATI (Comité de langue tikaar); see Jackson and Stanley (1977, 1978). Tones are marked as follows: low ('), rising ('), falling (''); high tone is unmarked. Glottal stop is indicated by an apostrophe ('). It only occurs finally; if anything is added to a word with a final glottal stop, the glottal stop is lost.

3. Adverbs of scope are defined here as those which identify the 'site' of the verbal action, and are obligatory to complete the meaning of the verb. The term originated with Hale, who called them both 'scope' and 'site' (1973-8). Adverbs of circumstance are optional elements that predicate the clause.

4. Hagèö identified 5 of these derivational affixes, of which he gives variant forms for the causative and repetitive. The list here is an attempt to give a complete inventory of the form and number of variants, and it is noted that the variants given by Hagèö differ significantly from those confirmed by my research.

5. There is no phonetic difference between the li/ni variants of this derivation and the homophonous li/ni variants of the Complement as patient derivation. The participants and sentence order are sufficient to determine which derivation is indicated. For convenience in distinguishing between these derivations, -ni is used to refer to the Subject as patient derivation while -li is used to refer to the Complement as patient derivation.

6. Note that as a general rule, e + V = V.

7. Welmers (1973:351) calls a verbal action with ongoing effect 'completive'; and verbal action without ongoing effect 'experiential'. Houls (1967:202) calls the ongoing effect 'résultatif' and action without effect 'terminatif'. Houls' terminology was adopted in this paper.

8. Time orientation shifting parallels what Grimes (1975:231) calls 'displacement of time'.

9. Two 3rd person singular pronouns, ñ and ñm, and two 3rd person plural pronouns ñ and ño, are found as sentence subjects. Non and ño are also object pronouns. A description of the Tikar pronoun system is found in Stanley (1979).

10. Givón (1971:146) gives evidence of such links in Bantu languages. The main purpose of his article, however, is to suggest that Bantu suffixes might also have been derived from verbs. Chia (1978) writes that tense and aspect in Koso, a Grasslands language of West Cameroon, are verbs with 'reduced morphological shapes'.

11. Tikar serial verbs have probably derived from embedding; see George (1975).

12. This particle proved particularly hard to define because of its use in a wide number of contexts. Hagèö identified it as an adverb meaning 'entirely, at any price' (1969:33). The more common rendering, however, is 'contrary to, or in excess of, what one normally expects'.
REFERENCES


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