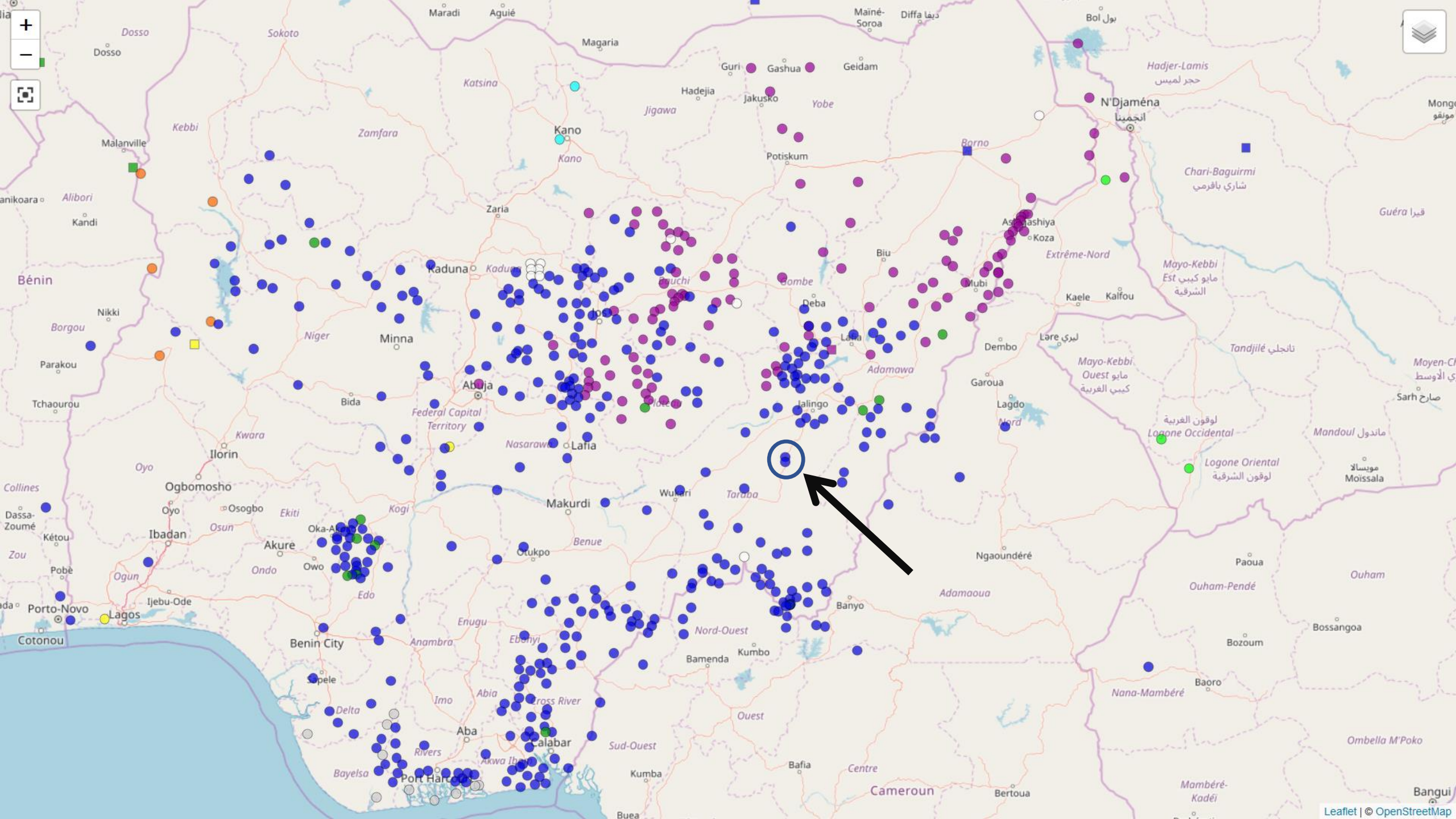


Tense, aspect and mood in Kam (unclassified Niger-Congo)

Jakob Lesage (jakob.lesage@gmail.com)
+32479968126 (Belgium)
+2349063997819 (Nigeria)
CALL 2018, Leiden, 31-08-2018

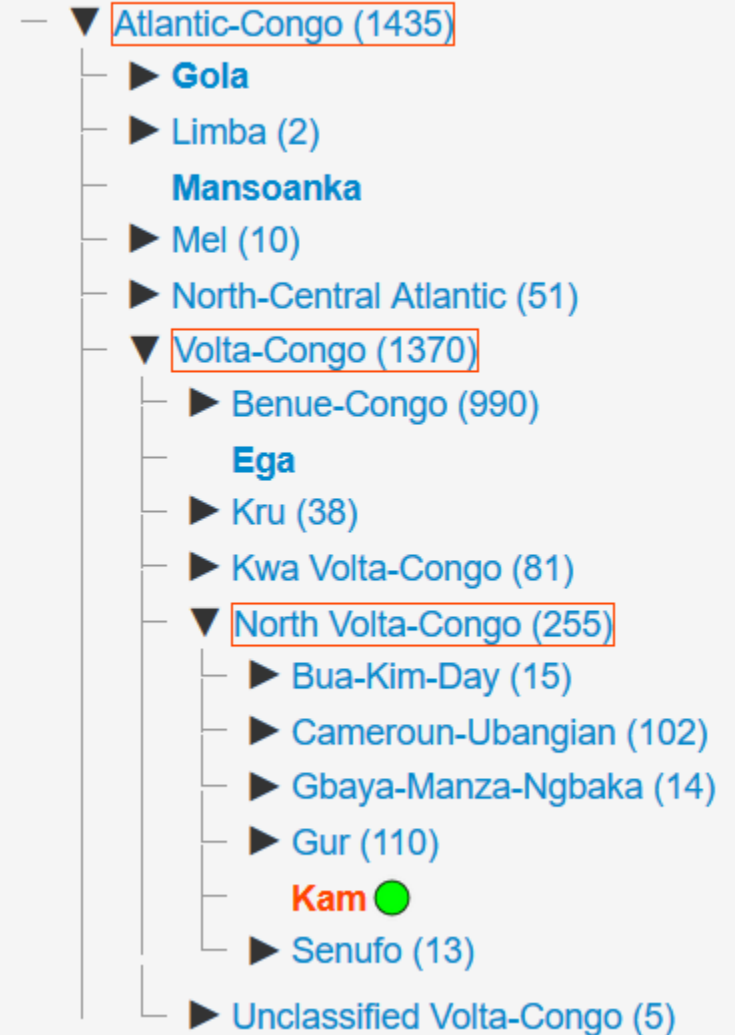


Kam (āṅwǎ̀m): some background



- Sub-level isolate of Adamawa(-Ubangi-Gbaya-Gur-...) (or North Volta-Congo), Niger-Congo ... ?
- Previously published research: practically nothing (about 150 words collected in Meek 1931 and in Kleinewillinghöfer 2015)
- This project: a grammar and lexicon (currently 1,350 items) of Kam, PhD project, third year just started.

Classification



The language and its speakers (nīŋwòm)

- Some 20,000-25,000 speakers in some 27 villages
- Identify with Jukun people (Kororofa kingdom)
- Close association with Jirim (Chamba Daka)
- Other groups in the environment
 - Mumuye (Adamawa)
 - Hausa and Fulani
 - Recently: Goza refugees from Borno (Glavda, Chadic)
 - Commercial: Tiv, Yendang, other groups from the area...
- Actual affiliation:
 - Benue-Congo?
 - Jukun?
 - Adamawa?
 - Other?
 - For now: Niger-Congo as a practical classification.

Tense, aspect, and modality

- Tense = temporal location of an event (sequence of events relative to the time of utterance or relative to one another)
future, past, present
- Aspect = internal structure of an event
completion, rhythm, duration, frequency
- Mood = factuality of an event (Narrog 2005, 2012)
desire, certainty, conditionality, capability
- Both ‘verbal’ categories – marked on or around verbs – and ‘clausal’ ones (also in non-verbal clauses)

TAM expressions in clauses

- Syntactic make-up of (simple) verbal clauses:

S	rì (PROG)	\bar{V}	à (PF) āyì (RES)	V				hìn (NEG)	yī (Q) kà (COND)
S	rì (PROG)	\bar{V}	` (FUT)	V	O	V (FUT)?	à (PF)	hìn (NEG)	yī (Q) kà (COND)
S	kī (NEG)	V			O			gà (NEG)	

- No verbal TAM marking in non-verbal clauses (existential, presentative, nominal and adjectival predication, possession)

Five minutes of everything

	Marked on or around verb	Marked in clause or sentence
Five minutes of Mood	(1) Imperative mood (tone)	(4) Interrogative mood (<i>yī</i>) [Conditional mood (<i>kà</i>)] (5) 'desire' (<i>wùrì°</i>) [Ability (<i>màsī</i>)]
Five minutes of Aspect	(2) Progressive aspect (<i>rì_</i>) (3) Resultative aspect (<i>_āyì</i>) (6) Perfective aspect? (<i>_à</i>)	[Durative (repetition)] (6) Perfective aspect? (<i>à</i>)
Five minutes of Tense	[Non-future tense (unmarked)] (7) Future tense (<i>_tone</i>) (7) Future tense (reduplication)	(7) Future tense (repetition)

(1) Imperatives

- S role not necessarily expressed
- Tonal marking: ‘non-imperative’ (M) vs. imperative (lexical tone) mood

Declarative (Perfective) → M-M

ā jērī nūŋ à
2SGlook bird PF
‘You look at the bird.’

Imperative with M tone

nūŋ mīsī!
drink again

Imperative → Lexical tone (L-L)

jèrì nūŋ!
look bird
‘Look at the bird!’



shutterstock.com · 459954160

Imperative with either tone

mēl! or mèl!
swallow

(1) Imperatives: negation

- bipartite negation construction: *kī ... gā*; ~~separate melody?~~

kī *nīm* *gā!*
NEG eat NEG
'Don't eat!'

(*nīm* = L underlyingly; M tone spread)

nyò *kī* *wōs* *ù* *gā.*
2PL NEG forget 3SG NEG

'(The person that told the story,) don't you forget him!'

(*wōsī* = L-M underlyingly, M tone spread + rightward shift/push of underlying L tone)

(2) Progressive aspect

- Form:

- Preverbal *rì* morpheme: S + *rì* + V (*rì* is also comitative)

àwū *rī* *mò̄m* *fàg*
3SG PROG laugh laugh
'He is laughing.'

- 1st and second person: low tone pronouns *ṅ* and *à*

à *rì* *m̄m* *fāg*
2SG.PROG PROG laugh laugh
'You are laughing.'

(2) Use of progressive aspect construction

- Imperfective

gàgī *āmìrā* *nyā* *rī* *sìn* *sìsìrà* *gī* *yì°?*
what sibling 2SG.POSS **PROG** do now what Q
'What is your brother doing right now?'

- Habitual

kō *kī* *bīrī* *mìnā,* *ñ* *rì* *nyēb* *fōg* *àkàptì°*
? TEMP time that **1SG.PROG** **PROG** go farm morning
'I usually go to the farm in the morning.'

- Topicalization of an event

ū rī dìn ù fōk, ū yīb ū ā
 3SG **PROG** meet 3SG farm 3SG ask 3SG PF
 'As he met him on the farm, he asked him (about it).'

- Intention?

nyò dōg nyī nìm-ī hìn kà, nyò rì nyēbī mākàrànta hìn?
 2PL see thing eat-NLZ NEG COND 2PL **PROG** go school NEG
 'If you don't see food, won't you go to school?'

- Volitive/dynamic modality construction

ḥ *rì* *wūrī* *màn*
1SG.PROG PROG accept oil
'I need oil.' (My oil is finished.)

kòm *ā,* *ì* *rì* *wūrī* *kìbà* *tām* *à*
place PROX 1PL PROG accept COMP grow PF
'We want this place to grow.'

(3) Resultative aspect/derivation

- Event is construed as a resulting state. This can be viewed as an instance of adjectivization.
- $\bar{V} + \bar{ay}\bar{i}$

àwū kpāt-āyi
3SG tire-RES
'He is tired.'

gìmsī 'tear' → *gīm-āyi* 'torn'

- Resultative vs. perfective

Resultative

àwū vē? *āyi*
3SG die RES
'He is dead.'

vs.

Perfective

àwū *vē?* *ā* *āsà?* *ō*
3SG die PF year DIST
'He died that year.'

(4) Polar interrogatives

- Optional particle *yī*? (Conflicting intuitions + tones)

m̄ *pī* *dìn* *nyò* *kādà* *(yī)?*
1SG come meet 2PL well (Q)?
'Did I meet you well?'

ā *dō?ī* *mpwò* *mī* *à* *yī,* *Bàbàngìdà?*
2SG see monkey certain PF Q Babangida
'Did you see any monkeys, Babangida?'

- Without *yī*: either no audible difference, or falling tone becomes level

àyī tōr
3PL fall.FUT.Q
'Will they fall?'

àyī tōr
3PL fall.FUT
'They will fall.'

(5) Need and desire: *wùrì*°

- (*rì*) + *wùrì*° + N

<i>ṅ</i>	<i>rì</i>	<i>wūrī</i>	<i>màn</i>
1SG.PROG	PROG	accept	oil

'I need oil.' (My oil is finished.)

or (*rì*) + *wùrì*° + *kìbà* + complement clause

<i>kòm</i>	<i>ā,</i>	<i>ì</i>	<i>rì</i>	<i>wūrī</i>	<i>kìbà</i>	<i>tām</i>	<i>à</i>
place	PROX	1PL	PROG	accept	COMP	grow	PF

'We want this place to grow.'

<i>ṅ</i>	<i>rì</i>	<i>wūrī</i>	<i>kībā</i>	<i>ṅ</i>	<i>nūṅ</i>	<i>ṅtām</i>	<i>m̄</i>
1SG	PROG	accept	COMP	1SG	drink	medicine	1SG.POSS

'I have to take my medication.'

(5) Need and desire: some comments

- *wùrì*° is a regular verb with a very broad meaning: ‘accept, love, desire, need, like’
- Typically, a progressive aspect construction (see later) is used. But this is only obligatory in on case so far:

<i>à</i>	<i>rì</i>	<i>wūrī</i>	<i>nā</i>	<i>nī?</i>
2SG.IPF	IPF	accept that	thing?	

‘Do you accept this?’ (when bargaining)
(03-05-2018, elicitation)
- *kìbà*° is elsewhere translated as ‘when’, ‘since’, ‘because’, but never very clearly → what is its meaning and function?

(6) Perfective aspect

- Postverbal particle/clitic *à*

<i>àwū vē?</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>āsà?</i>	<i>ō</i>
3SG die	PF	year	DIST

'He died that year.'

- Following the first verb in a series of verbs

<i>ìkà ñkà</i>	<i>tōr</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>pè</i>
thenthunder	fall	PF	come

'Then, thunder fell down.'

- Following the second verb in a series of verbs

<i>àyī</i>	<i>pē</i>	<i>bēn</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>jì</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>dībī</i>	<i>kà,</i>
3PL	come	say	PF	?	COMPL	be	here

‘When they came and said now that it (the food) is here...’

- Following all verbs in a series of verbs

<i>àyī</i>	<i>sī</i>	<i>kūb</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>jòr</i>	<i>à.</i>
3PL	then	drop	PF	descend	PF

‘... they (the children) raced down.’

- Following the patient role

<i>nyā</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>sīn</i>	<i>à,</i>	<i>fēb</i>	<i>tā?ī</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>à</i>
thing.PROX	2SG	do	PF	anger	happen	1SG	PF

'The thing you did, it made me angry.'

<i>ī</i>	<i>vērī</i>	<i>wàn</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>sīrī</i>
IMPRS	kill	king	PF	away

'The king was killed.'

<i>àwàn,</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>vēr</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>sīrī</i>
king	IMPRS	kill	3SG	PF	away

'The king was killed.'

- Following the last role/NP of the clause: location ...

<i>ḥkà</i>	<i>yī</i>	<i>tòr</i>	<i>pè</i>	<i>līb</i>	<i>bēr</i>	<i>à</i>
thunder	leave	fall	come	head	tree	PF

'Thunder fell on the tree.'

- theme ...

<i>nyī</i>	<i>yō</i>	<i>dòḥ</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>tūs</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>w̃òm</i>	<i>à</i>
people	PL	lowlands	PROX	show	3SG	Kam	PF

'The southern people taught him Kam.'

- Is it sometimes optional?

ū *ŋm̄gbāb* *ū* *kī* *bùn*
3SG shoot 3SG INSTR arrow
'He shot him with an arrow.'

wō *gbēbī* *cǐ* *gbàn*
dog beat child female
'The dog bit the girl.'

àbōŋō *fà?ī*
life close
'She died'

(7) Future tense

- Different constructions, but functional differences are not clear
 - Partial reduplication
 - Floating L tone after verb
 - Repetition of the verb

(7) Future 1: partial reduplication

ā *zūzzūbā* *dùddò?ò* *kòm* *gōmnātī* *yì°?*
2SG steal:FUT? see:FUT place government Q
'Would you ever steal from the government?'
(session_286, elicitation)

nyì *ngwàb* *ngwāb* *vìvvē?ī* *yī* *wè,* *àlēng* *mī*
people all all die:FUT leave here sun INDEF
'Everybody will die some day.'
(05-06-2018, elicitation)

ḡm̄ *gbīḡmgbàḡ*
1SG arrive:FUT
'I will arrive'
(24-04-2018, elicitation)

(7) Future 2: floating L tone after verb

àwū *kīm* *m̀fàm* (cp. *àwū* *kīm* *m̄fàm* *à*)
3SG eat meat
'He will eat meat.'
(whatsapp session, elicitation)

ū *b̄b* *dàm* *à* *kà,*
3SG come.out menstrual.blood PF COND
ā *dēb* *nyì* *zīrāk* *yāg.*
2SG buy **thing:FUT** soup carry

'When she starts menstruating, you will buy and carry soup ingredients.'
(session_076, text)

(7) Future 3: repetition of the verb

ì ***cūgī*** *nyág* ***cùgì*** *līb* *lākùmè*
1PL **do** work **do** head book
'We will work on a book'

̀ntī *yīb* *ū* *à:* “*àw̃à, àw̃a*”, “*m...*” “*ī* *lū* *lù.*”
snail ask 3SG PF friend friend m... 1PL sleep sleep
'The snail said: “friend, friend, we will sleep.”'

àwū ***dūbì*** *tām* ***dùbī***
3SG **write** message **write**
'He will write a message.'
(05-06-2018, elicitation)

Summary

	Marked on or around verb	Marked in clause or sentence
Mood	(1) Imperative mood (tone)	(4) Interrogative mood (<i>yī</i>) [Conditional mood (<i>kà</i>)] (5) 'desire' (<i>wùrì°</i>) [Ability (<i>màsī</i>)]
Aspect	(2) Progressive aspect (<i>rì_</i>) (3) Resultative aspect (<i>_āyì</i>) (6) Perfective aspect? (<i>_à</i>)	[Durative (repetition)] (6) Perfective aspect? (<i>à</i>)
Tense	[Non-future tense (unmarked)] (7) Future tense (<i>_tone</i>) (7) Future tense (reduplication)	(7) Future tense (repetition)

Issues to investigate further

- à marker: perfective aspect, or other function(s)? How do I tease these apart?
- A bunch of functionally similar (?) future tense constructions
- Adverbial modifiers of tense, aspect, mood, evidentiality, mirativity