A grammar of Mundabli : a Bantoid (Yemne-Kimbi) language of Cameroon

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Verb morphology and the verbal complex

This chapter deals with the structure of the verb and the verbal complex, i.e. the verbal core and the elements that are closely associated with it like tense, mood and aspect markers, the bipartite negative marker, as well as, in the case of 1SG subjects, the subject marker (see §8.3). In the current chapter, the verbal core is mostly restricted to a single verb. Complex verbal cores or serial verb constructions are described in Chapter 9.

The current chapter contains descriptions of the verb stem and of verbal inflection (§8.1), the markers within the verbal complex (§8.2), the order of elements in the verbal complex (§8.3) and finally the constructions in which the markers are combined with verb stems, and their functions (§8.4 and §8.5).

8.1 Verb morphology

8.1.1 Segmental structure of the uninflected verb stem

Nearly all verbs in Mundabli consist of a bare monosyllabic stem. Stem syllables start in a consonant or a consonant glide sequence. Only nasal-consonant sequences are not attested word-initially in verbs. Verb stems may end in a vowel, a nasal or, in a few cases, the lateral glide **l**, thus representing nearly the whole range of attested syllable patterns. Table 8.1 contains examples of monosyllabic verb stems.

I am aware of only two bisyllabic verbs: **mwankə** 'forget' and **fuŋmu** 'help'. Whereas synchronically they cannot be decomposed into two morphemes, I

suspect that they were historically complex, consisting of two stems (**fʊŋmu**) or a stem plus a suffix (**mwankə**).

Verbs in Mundabli lack predicative concord or any other segmental inflections, although it is debatable whether preverbal pronouns and tense markers are phonologically bound or independent. Only the first person singular preverbal pronoun has the status of a nasal clitic which phonologically attaches to the first onset of the verbal complex.[1] There is no verbal derivation, except for derivation of the two non-finite verb forms, the infinitive (§8.1.4.1) and the ability verb form (§8.1.4.2). Some semantic concepts which are expressed by derivational affixes in Bantu languages and in other Bantoid languages are expressed by periphrastic constructions, such as reciprocal meaning, which is expressed by a derivational affix in the Grassfields language Bafut (Tamanji 2009: 109-126), or by serial verb constructions (see Chapter 9). Verbal inflection is marked by tone changes (see §8.1.2) and ablaut (§8.1.3).

8.1.2   Verb tone classes and tonal inflection of verbs

Each Mundabli verb belongs to one of three inflectional classes, henceforth referred to as verb tone classes[2] or simply tone classes (A, B and C). This is best illustrated with imperatives (Table 8.1). The tone of imperatives is always the same, whether they occur at the end of an utterance or not.

tone class	tone	example	gloss
A	LH	**găn**	'Go!'
		ɲə̌	'Leave!'
		dăŋ	'Cross (over)!'
		dʒyě	'Cook!'
B	M	**tʃū**	'Come!'
		yī	'Eat!'
		būŋ	'Pick up!'
		fwēn	'Clear (farm)!'
C	H	**yə́m**	'Sing!'
		yó	'Run!'
		kʊ́ŋ	'Hunt!'
		té	'Discuss!'

Table 8.1: Tone patterns of (monosyllabic) imperative verbs of tone classes A, B and C with examples

Some examples of imperative verbs are given in (200) and (201).

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[1]The first person singular preverbal pronoun does not attach to the onset-less preverbal negative marker **ā**.

[2]The verb tone classes were briefly mentioned in §2.1.3.

(200) bī mɨ̄ dzě gàn bǒ lā, yɛ̄ nǐm nɨ́ ā
     1PL CONSEC speak(b) go(a) CL2PP DAT COMP sit(a) IMP.PL COM
     mɔ̀ kwɛ́
     CL1.man CL3/7a.home_village

     'We are telling them: Stay and get married to a native man!'

(201) yɛ̄ gǎn kwó kɵ́ mɨ̄
     COMP go(a) enter(c) CL7/8.forest in

     '[She said]: go into the forest!'

Tonal patterns vary from construction to construction, with all verbs of a single tone class showing the same tonal pattern in a certain construction. In some constructions, the distinction between two or all three verb tone classes is neutralized; e.g. imperfective verbs of class B and C bear the same tone pattern (see Table 8.2) and in the future tenses (F1 and F2) the distinction between the tone classes is completely neutralized and verbs of all three verb tone classes bear the same tone (see §8.5.1.6 and §8.5.1.7).

The tone patterns of the imperfective verbs given in Table 8.2 are characteristic of utterance-final position. In non-final position, Class A verbs bear a mid tone rather than a mid-low falling tone. The tone patterns of verbs often depend, among other factors, on their position in the sentence, i.e. whether they are in sentence-final position or not.

tone class	tone	example	gloss
A	ML	dyà	'see'
B	H	wʉ́	'feel, hear'
C	H	kɛ́	'return '

Table 8.2: Tone patterns of imperfective verbs of all three verb tone classes in utterance-final position with examples

8.1.3   Ablaut in perfective vs. imperfective verb stems

Roughly a third of all verb stems have two segmental shapes: the perfective and the imperfective stem form. Most verb forms (including e.g., infinitives and imperatives) may be based either on the perfective or on the imperfective stem form. The habitual construction is the only construction which only allows the imperfective verb form.

Imperfective verbs are characterized by tonal patterns which distinguish them from perfective verbs and by ablaut. Verb stems may undergo ablaut in the imperfective, depending on their syllabic structure and on the vowels they contain. Ablaut is restricted to open syllable stems containing one of a

restricted set of vowels. In this section, an overview of the more regular alternations (see Table 8.3) should suffice. For more detail, the reader is referred to §3.3.5, where all alternations are described in detail.

perfective	imperfective	gloss
bǐ̄	bḭ̄	'exit' (a)
yǐ	yɨ́	'eat' (b)
kpǐ	kpɨ́	'die' (a)
tsǐ	tsɨ́	'spit' (b)
kù	kṵ̀	'clap' (a)
bú	bṵ́	'give birth' (c)
gwɔ̄	gwɔ̰̄	'grind' (a)
kwó	kwɔ̰́	'enter' (c)
byě	byæ̌	'crack groundnuts' (b)
dʒyè̄	dʒyǣ	'cook' (a)

Table 8.3: Regular ablaut in perfective/imperfective stems, repeated from Table 3.23

The perfective verb form is used without regard to the internal structure of the described action or event. In the absence of a preverbal marker, a perfective clause usually encodes perfect of recent past or perfect of result; see §8.5.1.2 for details. The imperfective verb form focusses upon the internal structure of the action or event.

Other constructions containing imperfective stem forms (e.g., the habitual construction 8.5.2.2) are described in §8.5.2.

8.1.4   Linear verb morphology (in non-finite verb forms)

Linear verb morphology, i.e. affixes on the verb stem, are restricted to non-finite verb forms, i.e. the infinitive and the prefixed verb form found in ability constructions.

8.1.4.1   The nasal infinitive prefix N- or circumfix N-...-n

The infinitive verb form is characterized by a specific tonal pattern (see §8.4.1) on the one hand and by a nasal prefix **N-** or circumfix **N-...-n** on the other. Either the perfective or the imperfective stem form can be the base for the infinitive. In both cases, verbs of Class A take a low tone and verbs of Class B and C take a mid-tone in non-final and a mid-low falling tone in utterance-final position. The nasal prefix or the preverbal part of the circumfix is homorganic with the initial consonant of the verb stem. The post-verbal part of the circumfix is an alveolar nasal. The choice between prefix and circumfix depends on the shape of the stem. Closed syllable stems only take a prefix. In open syllable stems, the choice between prefix and circumfix depends on the vowel quality;

see §3.1.2.3 for details. The occurrence of the circumfix **N-...-n** is restricted to open syllable stems ending in the vowels **i**, **ɨ**, **u**, **wo**, **ye**, **ə** or **ɔ**; see Table 8.4.

perfective	infinitive	gloss
yǐ	**ɲ-yì̄-n**	'eat' (b)
kpǐ	**ŋm-kpì̄-n**	'die' (b)
kū̀	**ŋ-kū̀-n**	'clap' (a)
kwó	**ŋ-kwò̄-n**	'enter' (c)
myé	**m-myè̄-n**	'lick' (c)
tʃyé	**ɲ-tʃyè̄-n**	'know' (c)
tsɨ́	**n-tsɨ̀-n**	'copulate' (c)
yə́	**ɲ-yə̀-n**	'climb' (c)
də̄	**n-də̀-n**	'see' (a)
yì̄	**ɲ-yì-n**	'bury' (a)
tsɔ̄	**n-tsɔ̀-n**	'show' (a)
sɔ̄	**n-sɔ̀-n**	'split' (a)

Table 8.4: Infinitives with circumfix, repeated from Table 3.5, §3.1.2.3

The letters in parentheses behind the glosses represent the three verb tone classes (A, B and C), see §2.1.3 and 8.1.2. All infinitives in 8.4 and 8.5 are based on perfective stems. In all other cases, i.e. when the root syllable ends in a different vowel, including **o** or **e** without preceding **w** and **y**, respectively, or when a coda is present, the infinitive is marked by a prefix, see Table 3.6.

perfective	infinitive	gloss
bǐ	**m-bì̄**	'exit' (b)
kū̀	**ŋ-kù**	'cry' (a)
kǎ	**ŋ-kà̄**	'fry' (b)
dzě	**n-dzè̄**	'say' (b)
yó	**ɲ-yò̄**	'run' (c)
fɔ̰́	**m-fɔ̰̀**	'tell' (a)
lṵ̄	**n-lṵ̀**	'bark' (a)
kyɛ́	**ŋ-kyɛ̀̄**	'look' (c)
mā̄l	**m-mā̄l**	'slide' (a)
yàm	**ɲ-yàm**	'yawn' (a)
bɔ́m	**m-bɔ̄m**	'agree' (c)
kúŋ	**ŋ-kū̀ŋ**	'hunt' (c)

Table 8.5: Infinitives with prefix, repeated from Table 3.6, §3.1.2.3

8.1.4.2   The prefix kə- on non-finite verbs expressing ability

Ability (or dynamic modality) is expressed by the use of a periphrastic construction involving the copula verb **dí** and a main verb with the prefix **kə-**. The current section deals only with the prefixed verb form. The complete construction and its functions are described in §8.4.2.

The prefix **kə-** is prefixed to the verb stem. The prefix always has the same shape, both segmentally and tonally. The tone of the stem is mid for Class A and superhigh for Class B. I have not found any examples of a Class C verb in this construction. However, this is probably due to insufficient data. Table 8.6 illustrates the tone patterns of ability verb forms belonging to the three verb tone classes.

tone class	tone	example	gloss
A	M	kə-bɔ̄ŋ	'call'
B	S	kə-dzě	'say'
C	ML	kə-bɔ̂m	'agree'

Table 8.6: Tone patterns of Class A, B and C ability verb forms

8.2   Tense markers and other preverbal markers

This section contains inventories and descriptions of tense markers (§8.2.1) and other markers which occur in the slot between subject and verb (§8.2.2).

8.2.1   Tense markers

Tense is marked by segmental tense markers, which immediately precede the verbal core (unless they are followed by a preverbal negative marker which separates them from the verbal core), and by tonal inflection of the verb stem. Mundabli has two future tenses (F1 and F2) and four non-future tenses (P0[3]-P3) (see 8.7). Only P0 lacks a segmental marker.

Table 8.7 contains only "true" tense markers. Other preverbal markers, such as the consecutive and the conditional markers, are described in §8.2.2.

The P2 marker has two realizations, **à** and **nà**, which seem to be in free variation. Due to low-tone spread (see §3.4.2), tense markers with an underlying superhigh tone, such as **fə́** P1 and **dí** F1 (see (202)), are realized with a low-high rising tone when preceded by a low tone (see (203)).

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[3]The label P0 is preferred over 'present', because (a) P0 does not always semantically represent present tense and (b) grouping it with the past tenses better reflects the different behaviour of the future vs. the non-future tenses with respect to tone.

tense	marker	label	period of time
P3	**kɜ̀**	remote past	a long time ago (from yesterday on)
P2	**à ∼ nà**	hesternal past	yesterday (or a few days ago)
P1	**fɜ̋**	hodiernal past	earlier today
P0	∅	present, immediate past	present
F1	**dǐ**	hodiernal future	later today
F2	**ká̄**	remote future	tomorrow or later

Table 8.7: Tense markers

(202) bɔ̌ dǐ táŋ   dʒǔ   yɛ̄ bɔ̌ lā   kpɨ̄
       CL2 F1 buy(b) CL9.goat COMP CL2 make(a) die(b)

   ◇'They will buy a goat in order to kill it.'

(203) à   dǐ yɜ́   ǐ   dʒɔ̄   b-ɛ́n   mɨ̄
       2SG.PVB F1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX in

   'You will go up on this bridge.'

Interestingly, superhigh markers are also realized with low-high rising tone when the tense marker starts the sentence and the subject follows the verb, as in (204); see §14.2.3 for details.

(204) fɜ̌ fɜ̋   ndɛ̀ kpɜ̋   ǐ   Ntí lā
       P1 give(b) who CL3/7a.money LOC Ntie DAT

   ◇'Who gave Ntie money?'

   A case of non-predictable tonal alternation is attested in the hodiernal past P1, where the tone of the tense marker depends on the position of the verb, i.e. whether it is in utterance-final position or not. The tense marker **fɜ̋**, which usually bears a superhigh tone, is realized with a high tone **fɜ́** when the verb is in utterance-final position, as in (205).

(205) wù fɜ́ gā̀n
       CL1 P1 go(a)

   'She went.'

   The interplay of tense markers and tonal inflection will be dealt with in §8.4, where the resulting constructions are described.

8.2.2   Other preverbal markers

This section deals with markers other than tense markers which are closely related to the verb. Some of these markers occupy the same slot as the tense markers, while others may co-occur with the latter. The discontinuous negation marker **ā...wɔ̄** forms a special case, as it embraces the verbal core.

Whereas negation is expressed in different ways depending on tense and other factors, the current section only deals with the canonical negation marker, i.e. with the discontinuous marker **ā ... wɔ̄**. Other negation strategies are dealt with in §8.5.3 and in §15.3. Table 8.8 contains a list of preverbal markers which occur in the slot between the subject and the object. The discontinuous negation marker is not included.

marker	gloss	function
kɔ́/kɔ̌	HAB	habitual
mī / mí	CONSEC	consecutive
tɔ́	VER.FOC	verum focus
kɔ̌	COND	conditional

Table 8.8: Non-tense preverbal markers and their functions

While tone and segmental structure of the conditional marker and the marker for verum focus are constant, the tone of the habitual and the consecutive marker may vary.

The habitual marker, which usually takes a superhigh tone, is realized with a rising tone when it follows a low tone subject (for an explanation, see §3.4.2). This is a purely phonological effect and completely predictable. In certain contexts however, the tone of the habitual marker is high rather than superhigh or rising, irrespective of the preceding tone. This seems to be the case whenever the habitual marker precedes a Class A verb, whether the latter stands in clause-final position or not (see (206) vs. (207)) and when it precedes a clause-final verb of Class B or C, as in (208) and (209). At the current stage, I cannot offer an explanation for this tonal alternation.

(206)   wù kɔ̌ kpē
        CL1 HAB soak(a).IPFV

        ◇'He frequently soaks [things].'

(207)   wù kɔ̌ kpē   ā   mī
        CL1 HAB soak(a).IPFV COM 1SG.NPVB

        ◇'He frequently soaks [things] with me.'

(208)   ŋgī   m-ɔ́   kɔ̌ dʒí
        CL6.water CL6-DET HAB be_cold(b).IPFV

        ◇'The water is usually cold.'

(209) ŋgī   m-ɔ́   kə́ sé
       CL6.water CL6-DET HAB be_hot(c).IPFV

      ◊'The water is usually hot.'

The second marker which shows a variable tone pattern, namely the consecutive marker, may bear either a mid tone (**mɪ̄**) or a high tone (**mɪ́**). In this case, the choice depends on the tense of the preceding tense marked clause. The marker bears a high tone **mɪ́** when the preceding clause is in P0 or P1 (cf. (258), P0) and a mid tone **mɪ̄** for all other tenses, namely P2-P3 and F1-F2 (see e.g., (256) for P3 and (257) for F1). More on the tone patterns of this and comparable constructions as well as on the consecutive tense marker can be found in §8.5.2.1 and §8.5.2.3.

The discontinuous marker **ā ... wɔ̄** is used to negate declarative clauses in the present/recent past tense P0. It embraces the verbal core, which often consists of a single verb (210). However, the discontinuous marker is not a circumfix. It embraces the verbal core, rather than just a single verb. Negation is treated in more detail in section §8.5.3.

(210) wɛ́, wū ā dɪ́ wɔ̄ gbɔ̄   kúŋ   ò
       INTERJ CL1 NEG be(b) NEG CL3.house house_backside.LOC INTERJ

      'Alas! She is not behind the house!'

8.3   Order of elements in the verbal complex

The verbal complex consists of the verbal core and the elements that are closely associated with it, like tense, mood and aspect markers, the bipartite negative marker, as well as, in the case of 1SG subjects, the subject marker. The verbal core consists of all subsequent verbs within a predicate. In serial verb constructions this may include several verbs. Multi-verb cores, i.e. serial verb constructions are dealt with in Chapter 9. The current section is mainly restricted to single verb phrases. The verbal core is represented as V in schemes presenting the verbal complex.

The order of the elements within the verbal complex is TAM–V, as in (211). In all examples in this section, the verbal complex under discussion is enclosed in square brackets.

(211) bī [à bī   yə́]   ntō~ntō   yɛ̄ bī lɔ̄
       1PL P2 exit(b) go_up(c) CL1/2.morning~RED COMP 1PL go_to_bush(a)
       fwɛ̃́n
       clear(b)

      'We got up in the morning in order to go to the field and weed.'

In negated main clauses, the verbal complex including negation markers, generally has the structure: TAM–NEG1–V–NEG2, i.e. the subject is followed by the TAM marker(s), which are in turn followed by the verb, embraced by the discontinuous negation marker (NEG1 + NEG2), cf. (212).

(212) wù [fɔ́ ā   gàn wɔ̄] dʒwō   ɲwɛ́n
       CL1 P1 NEG go(a) NEG CL1/2.stream today

       'She did not go to the stream today.'

However, the structure of negated clauses differs from the given scheme when the subject is in the first person singular and when tense and aspect are not marked segmentally. When no TAM marker is present, the preverbal 1SG pronoun procliticizes to the verb stem, following the first part of the negative marker, rather than preceding it: NEG1–1SG = V–NEG2, cf. (213).

(213) wù dzé   gàn nɪ́   lā yɛ̄,
       CL1 speak(b) go(a) CL1/2.mother.3POSS DAT COMP
       nɪ́,   [ā   n = dɪ́   wɔ̄] ā   mɔ̀nɔ̄
       CL1/2.mother.1POSS NEG 1SG.PVB = be(b) NEG COM CL1.male

       'The daughter will say to her mother: "Mother, I don't have a husband".'

8.4 Constructions involving non-finite verb forms

This and the following section (§8.5) deal with constructions in which segmental verb forms, tonal inflection and segmental markers interact. Both form and function of specific constructions are considered. The current section focuses on constructions with non-finite verb forms.

8.4.1 The infinitive

The segmental and tonal structure of the infinitive verb form has been described in some detail in §3.1.2.3 and §8.1.4.1. The infinitive verb form is derived from the canonical stem by means of a homorganic nasal prefix **N-** or a circumfix **N-…-n**, depending on the shape of the stem (see §8.1.4.1 for details).

Agreement in the post-verbal determiner in relative clauses (as e.g. in example (214)) shows that the infinitive is a deverbal noun of Class 1. The relative clause in (214) is enclosed in square brackets and the infinitive and the agreeing post-verbal determiner is underlined.

(214) [ŋ-kwō-n nǭ bī kɜ̀ kwó gān w-ɔ̄ mɪ́ŋ
INF-enter(c)-INF SUBORD 1PL P3 enter(c) go(a) CL1-REL 1SG.PP

gbɜ̀], wù bú mɜ́ à kpɜ̄ ŋgɪ̄ dɪ́ nā,
house.LOC CL1 ask(b) CS.QUOT.Q Q CL1.wife CL1;1SG.POSS be(b) where

wù bɔ̄ŋ mɛ̂ nɪ́ nàn fɪ̌ nā
CL1 call(a) CS.QUOT.Q;Q CL1.mother N. pass(b) where

'Just as we were entering my house, she asked where my wife was. She called out: "Where has Nan's mother gone?"'

Infinitives may describe an action or an activity, and they also occur as uninflected main verbs in certain constructions like e.g. the progressive construction (see §8.4.1.3).

The segmental affixes (i.e. prefix or circumfix) co-occur with specific tonal patterns. Only two different patterns are distinguished in the infinitive. The distinction between verb tone classes B and C is neutralized. Infinitives of Class A bear a low tone both in utterance-final and in non-final position, while those of Class B and C bear a mid tone in non-final position and a mid-low falling tone in utterance-final position. Table 8.9 gives an overview of the tonal patterns of the infinitive in non-final and in utterance-final position. The letter v in this table stands for 'verb'. Infinitive verbs form parts of various constructions which are described in the following sections.

verb tone class	non-final	final
A	v̀	v̀
B	v̄	v̂
C	v̄	v̂

Table 8.9: Tone patterns of the infinitive in utterance-final and non-final position, the contrast between Class B and C is neutralized

8.4.1.1 Infinitives as complements of 'start' and 'know'

A few verbs, like **yē** 'start' (a) in examples (215) and (216) and **tʃyé** 'know' (c) in (217), take an infinitive verb as their argument.[4]

(215) sèsǎŋ yē n-dà dʒɔ̄
CL9/10.spider start(a) INF-braid(a) CL8a.bridge

'The spider started to braid a bridge (with his rope).'

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[4]Like the English verb 'know', the verb **tʃyé** is used to express both acquaintance and knowledge or ability, albeit the former is much more frequent.

(216) tō   dǿm lā bɔ̌ yē   n-dzʊ̀ŋ,   bɔ́ ā
       CL7/8.day certain DAT CL2 start(a) INF-quarrel(c) CL2 COM
       neighbor   wū
       CL1.neighbor CL1;3SG.POSS

       'One day they started quarrelling, her and her neighbor.'

(217) mī̄   nǭ   m=bǐ   w-ɔ̄   ǐ dʒwēn kú
       1SG.NPVB SUBORD 1SG.PVB=exit(b) CL1-REL LOC Missong village.LOC
       ɲí=tʃyé   n-dzē   ɲɔ̄   ɲdʒàn
       1SG.PVB=know(c) INF-speak(b) CL8a.language Mundabli

       'I, who I am from Missong, speak Mundabli.'

8.4.1.2 Infinitives as heads of preposed relative clauses, used to express simultaneity

Infinitives also surface in a subordinating construction used to express simultaneity. In this construction, an infinitive modified by a relative clause containing its finite equivalent precedes the main clause, as in (214) and (218). Agreement on the relative clause-internal determiner **wɔ̄** shows that infinitives belong to Class 1.

(218) [m-mù-n   nǭ   mǎnfrè kà̀ mǔ fǐ bī w-ɔ̄
       INF-take(a)-INF SUBORD M.   P3 take(a) pass(b) exit(b) CL1-REL
       tʃɔ̌m   w-ɔ́ ɲwɛ́n], Dǎn ā nTǔŋ sɛ́n tʃú kɔ́ Pɛ́
       CL3/7a.axe CL3-DET now   D. COM T.   then come(b) hold(c) P.
       ɲwɛ́n
       now

       'Just as Manfred took out the axe now, Dan of Ntung came and held Pe now.' (lit.: Taking that Manfred took out the axe, ...)

8.4.1.3 Infinitives in the progressive construction

The infinitive verb form also forms part of the progressive construction. The progressive is expressed periphrastically and combines the finite auxiliary **fǎ**, which may be translated as something along the lines of 'be occupied', with the relevant infinitive verb form, introduced by the preposition **ā** 'with', as in (219). The auxiliary is realized as **fǎ** with a LH rising tone when it is preceded by a low tone (see §3.4.2 for an explanation).

(219) [nǐ   wū   kà̀ fǎ   ā n-ɲwɔ̄m
       CL1.mother CL1;3SG.POSS P3 be_occupied(b) COM INF-stir(b)
       ɲām]
       CL8a.fufu

       'Her mother was stirring fufu.'

The progressive can be combined with any of the tenses. In such cases, the tense marker precedes the auxiliary, as in (220), where the remote past tense marker **kə̀** directly precedes the auxiliary **fɑ́** (here realized as **fǎ**).

(220) nɪ́   wū   kə̀ [fǎ   ā   n-ɲwɔ̄m]
       cl1.mother cl1;3sg.poss p3 be_occupied(b) com inf-stir(b)
       ɲām
       cl8a.fufu

       'Her mother was stirring fufu.'

Note that in progressive SVCs, only the first verb in the sequence is in the infinitive; see (221).

(221) ntsŏŋkwɪ́n w-ɔ̄   ywó gàn nɪ̀m ʃì   kpān wū-dzú
       cl1/2.owl cl1-det run(c) go(a) sit(a) go_down(a) cl3.tree cl3-other
       wɔ̄, wù   [fǎ   ā   n-kyɛ̄   kwō   ʃì]
       on cl1.pvb be_occupied(b) com inf-look(c) enter(c) go_down(a)
       nɪ́ŋ   wù   lɛ̄   k-ɔ́   kɪ́
       cl7.thing cl1.pvb make(a).ipfv cl7-det cl7.npvb

       'The owl went and sat down in another tree. It was looking down on what he [the child] was doing.'

In order to negate the progressive, the auxiliary **fɑ́** is negated with the common discontinuous marker **ā ... wɔ̄** (see (222)). Otherwise, the construction is the same as when not negated.

(222) wù   ā   fǎ   wɔ̄ ā   n-ʃì̠
       cl1.pvb neg be_occupied(b) neg com inf-go_down(a).ipfv

       ◇'He is not going down.'

8.4.1.4 Infinitive as the object of its finite equivalent, for contrastive verb focus

The infinitive can be the object of its own finite equivalent, as in (223). This construction encodes verb focus.

(223) dzɔ̄   yī-dzú   y-ɔ́   kə̀ bō   m-bō̠,
       cl10.houses cl10-other cl10-dem.dist p3 burn(b) inf-burn(b)
       y-ɛ́n   tá   kwà   dɪ́ ŋ-kwà
       cl10-dem.prox ver.foc break(a) be(b) inf-break(a)

       'The other houses BURNT DOWN, these ones BROKE.'

Usually, the finite verb is directly followed by the infinitive, as in **bō̠ m-bō̠** in (223). The construction **kwà dɪ́ ŋ-kwà** in the same example, with a copula

intervening, is rare. In many examples, the post-verbal adverb **mě** 'only' occurs between the finite and the infinite verb, see (224) and (225).

(224) tō   bí-lō   à   mwē   mě   m-mwè
       CL7/8.day CL8-all 2SG.PVB be_sad(a) only INF-be_sad(a)

       'Every day you are only sad.'

(225) ắnā   wù kə̀ fǫ̌ bī   gān áná,   kpé   w-ɔ̄
       like_that CL1 P3 tell(a) go_out(b) go(a) like_that CL1.woman CL1-DET
       kpī̄   mě   ŋ-kpī̄-n
       die(b) only INF-die(b)-INF

       'Immediately when she was reporting like that, the woman died on the spot.'

8.4.1.5 Infinitive inside adverbial phrase for emphasis

Example (226) is the only instance in my data of an infinitive verb being introduced by the adverbializer **ắ**. In this example, the adverbial phrase follows a sequence of the finite equivalent of the infinitive and the verb **fǐ** 'pass'.

(226) dɔ̄   w-ɔ́   ʃíŋ   fǐ   ắ   n-ʃĩŋ
       CL3a.beans CL3a-DET fill/be_full(c) pass(b) ADVLZ INF-fill/be_full(c)

       'The beans still filled up [the pot].'

8.4.1.6 Infinitive as subject or object

The infinitive may be an argument of the verb, describing the action typically connected with the equivalent finite verb.

(227) wù   kɔ̀ŋ   n-sɔ̄̃
       CL1.PVB love(a) INF-swim(b)

       ◊'S/he likes swimming.'

(228) m-bɔ̀ŋ   ā   lì   wɔ̄
       INF-read(a) NEG be_strong(a) NEG

       ◊'Reading is not difficult.'

8.4.2 The ability construction with auxiliary and prefixed main verb

The ability construction contains another non-finite verb form which only occurs in this construction. The non-finite verb in this case consists of the verb stem with the prefix **kə̄-**. It is introduced by the auxiliary **dǐ** 'be'; see (229) and (230).

(229) m̀m, ắ ɲ=tʃyé wɔ̄ yɛ̄ bɔ́ dɨ́ kə̄-gān ā
      INTERJ NEG 1SG.PVB=know(c) NEG COMP CL2 be(b) ABIL-go(a) COM
      byɛ̄ ɔ̀
      CL7a.foot EMPH

      'I didn't know that they can still travel by foot.'

(230) wù dɨ̆ kə̄-dő bɔ̀
      CL1 be(b) ABIL-stay(b) FRUST

      'She cannot sit still.'

The tone of the verb stem in this construction is mid for Class A verbs (229) and superhigh for Class B verbs (230). I have not found any examples of Class C verbs in this construction.

The ability verb form is not adjectival (otherwise, it would take an agreement prefix). However, the prefix in the ability verb form is always **kə̄-**. The verb form is not nominal either, as it can take an object argument, as e.g. in (231).

(231) n=dɨ́ kə̄-fɔ̰̄ dʒī wá lā yɛ̄ ā
      1SG.PVB=be(b) ABIL-report(a) CL9.road 2SG.PP DAT COMP 2SG.PVB
      gān də̄ wān w-ā yɛ̄
      go(a) see(a) CL1.child CL1-2SG.POSS QUOT.Q

      'Can I show you the way, so that you [can] go see your child?'

The ability construction generally expresses dynamic modality, i.e. ability in the sense of the internal ability or willingness to do something (as in (229) and (230)). However, e.g. in (231), the ability construction is used in a deontic sense, when the spider is asking the woman for permission to show her the way to where her child has gone.

8.5 Constructions involving finite verb forms

The current section deals with the combination of TAM markers and verb morphology. It contains descriptions of constructions involving tense markers (§8.5.1) and other preverbal markers (§8.5.2), considering both form and function of such constructions. Both of these sections contain a description of the relevant verb tone patterns followed by individual descriptions of form and function.

8.5.1   Tense marking constructions

8.5.1.1   Verb tone patterns of tense marking constructions

This section is meant to give an overview of verb tone patterns attested in the various tenses. Subsequent sections simply refer back to this summary.

The tone pattern of a perfective verb depends on its tone class and (among other things) on its tense. Mundabli has six tenses, two future tenses f1-f2 and four non-future tenses p0-p3. §8.2.1 contains an overview of the segmental markers and the meaning of the tenses. The functions of individual tenses are treated in more detail in §8.5.1.2-§8.5.1.7. In connection with the tenses, three combinations of tone patterns are attested: one for the future tenses (f1-f2) one for p0-p2, and one for the distant past p3. Within each of these tense ranges, a verb of a specific tone class always bears the same tone. Table 8.10[5] contains an overview of the tone patterns attested across the tenses. The table also contains a column with the tense markers in order to illustrate possible effects of these markers on the tonal pattern of verbs.

tense	tense marker	non-final			final		
		A	B	C	A	B	C
p0		L	S	H	ML	LH	H
p1	**fə́**	L	S	H	ML	LH	H
p2	**à~nà**	L	[LH]	H	ML	LH	H
p3	**kə̀**	LH	M	H	ML	LH	H
f1	**dɨ́**	H	H	H	H	H	H
f2	**kâ**	H	H	H	H	H	H

Table 8.10: Segmental tense markers and tone patterns of final and non-final perfective verbs of tone classes A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2)

To start with the least complicated case, in the future tenses, f1-f2, the distinction between the three verb tone classes is completely neutralized, and all verbs bear a high tone. In p0-p2, each verb tone class is assigned two tone patterns, depending on the position of the verb within the clause. In non-final position, Class A verbs are realized with a low tone, Class B verbs with a superhigh tone, and Class C verbs with a high tone. In utterance-final position, Class A verbs are realized with a mid-low falling tone, Class B verbs with a low-high rising tone, and Class C verbs with a high tone. Finally, in p3 the verb tone patterns in utterance-final position are the same as in the other past tenses for all three verb tone classes (see Table 8.10). However, the tonal patterns of non-final p3 verbs of Class A and B differ considerably from those of non-final verbs in the other past tenses. Non-final Class A verbs bear a low-high rising tone instead of a low tone, as in p0-p2. Non-final Class B verbs, which bear a

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[5]Tone pattern in square brackets may be phonetic, and thus different from underlying patterns.

superhigh tone in the other past tenses, bear a mid tone in P3. Only Class C verbs carry a high tone in P3, just like in the other past tenses.

As Table 8.10 shows, the division into three tense combinations above is not completely water-tight. The tone pattern combination in P2 actually differs from those in P0-P1 because Class B verbs bear a low-high rising tone rather than a superhigh tone, in non-final position. This could be due to the influence of the preceding low tone P2 marker **à∼nà**, which causes the underlying superhigh to be realized as low-high rising tone, as implied by the square brackets around the rising tone, which indicate that the rise is phonetic, (see (232)).

(232) wù   à tʃǔ   ɲántɔ̄
         CL1.PVB P2 come(b) yesterday

        ◇'He arrived yesterday.'

However, there is a problem with this explanation: the corresponding negative verb form also bears a low-high rising tone. In this case however, the explanation with the rising tone caused by the low-toned marker does not work, because in this case, the low-toned tense marker is separated from the verb by the mid tone negative marker **ā**; see §8.5.3.1 for details. The fact that the negative verb form has an underlying rising tone suggests that the same is the case for the affirmative verb. In this case, the rise cannot be explained, and P2 should be assigned its own characteristic combination of verb tone patterns, even if it deviates only slightly from those of P0-P1.

Tone patterns of negated verbs are generally the same as those of the corresponding non-final affirmative verb forms. Only in P3 are the tone patterns of negated Class A and B verbs not the same as those of the corresponding non-final affirmative verbs. In P3, negated verbs of Class A and B bear a low and a low-high rising tone, respectively, instead of a low-high rising and a mid tone, like the non-final affirmative verb forms; see Table 8.11. For a detailed treatment of negation, see §8.5.3.

verb tone class	A	B	C
non-final affirmative	LH	M	H
negated	L	LH	H

Table 8.11: Tone patterns of non-final affirmative perfective verbs and of negated perfective verbs in P3

As pointed out above, the tonal identity of affirmative and negative Class B verbs in P2 is rather surprising. It suggests that affirmative Class B verbs also have an underlying low-high rising tone in P2, and that P2 should be assigned its own combination of tone patterns.

8.5.1.2 P0 (present/immediate past) constructions without a segmental marker

The absence of a segmental tense marker in combination with the verb tone pattern characteristic of P0-P2 (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs referring to actions or events which either took place directly before the time of the utterance, as in (233), or which are a precondition for the state of things at the time of the utterance.

(233) ń̀=də̀   fì-lăpìn   ŋgɔ̌ f-ɔ́   lā, yòŋnì
       1SG.PVB=see(a) CL19-plastic_bag upon LOC-DET DAT thank
       k-ɑ̌̃
       CL7-2SG.POSS

       'I've seen the plastic bag. Thank you!'

(234) bɔ̀m   tăn   n-tsɔ̀   dʒī   dzɔ́ŋ~dzɔ́ŋ wú
       CL9.antelope refuse(b) INF-show(c).IPFV CL3.road good~RED   CL1.PP
       lā
       DAT

       'The antelope refused to show her the right way.'

Example (233) is taken from a spontaneous conversation. The speaker was looking for a plastic bag and uttered the sentence when she finally found it. The sentence refers to an action that has taken place in the immediate past and is still relevant in the present. In this construction, it thus fulfills functions that are commonly assigned to perfect verb forms, namely the perfect of recent past and the perfect of result (Comrie 1976: 56ff). Example (234) is taken from a story which is set in the distant past tense. However, the present tense is used for stylistic reasons. Within the framework of the story, the example may refer to something that is taking place within the context of the story's time frame or that had taken place just before the utterance.

8.5.1.3 P1 (hodiernal past) constructions with the P1 marker fɔ̌̃

The marker **fɔ̌̃** in combination with the verb tone pattern characteristic for P0-P2 (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs which refer to actions or events that have taken place on the same day, i.e. the hodiernal past tense, but not immediately preceding the utterance, as in (235) and (236).

(235) yɛ̄ wɛ́   fɔ̌̃ gàn twǒ   kpē
       COMP CL1/2.sibling.1SG.POSS P1 go(a) carry(b) CL3.pot
       tǐ   wú-mbɛ̌̃ w-ɔ́
       CL1.father.1SG.POSS CL3-twin CL3-DET

       '[She said]: my siblings went and carried my father's twin pot.'

(236) wù fə́ gàn
       CL1 P1 go(a)

'She went.'

The first example (235) is taken from a story. When the mother comes back from the farm in the evening, the smallest child tells her what her siblings have done in the afternoon. The second example (236) is taken from a conversation and is a response to the claim: "She [the researcher] did not go to the stream today". The tone of the P1 marker is always high when nothing follows the verb, as in (236) (see also §8.2.1 and Table 8.12).

8.5.1.4 P2 (nonhodiernal past) constructions with the marker à~nà

The marker **à** or **nà** occurs in combination with the tone pattern character-istic for P0-P2 (see §8.5.1.1). The two forms (**à** and **nà**) seem to be freely interchangeable. The P2 marker in combination with the P0-P2 tone pattern marks verbs which refer to actions or events that have taken place either on the preceding day (see example (232)), or earlier, as in (237), but are per-ceived by the speaker as relatively recent (in contrast with events marked as P3).

(237) nɨ́   à tʃŭ bɨ́ f-án   kpɨ̄   pǎ fə́n
       CL1.mother.3POSS P2 come(b) exit(b) PROX-here CL9/10.death Pa F.
       ŋgɔ̀
       upon

'His mother came here for the death of Pa Fan.'

The elicited example in (232) refers to an event that took place on the preceding day, as shown by the temporal adverbial **ɲántɔ̄** 'yesterday'. Example (237), which is part of a conversation, refers to an event that took place weeks before the conversation. The distinction between P1 and P2 is clear-cut, with P1 only referring to actions or events which have taken place on the same day, and P2 only referring to actions or events which have taken place at least one day earlier. The distinction between P2 and P3, however, is blurry. Sometimes the same action/event can be referred to either by a P2 verb or by a P3 verb, depending on its perception by the speaker as relatively recent or relatively long ago. Thus, the English sentence 'He arrived last week.' can be translated with a P2 clause, as in (238), or with a P3 clause, as in (239), depending on the perception of the speaker.

(238) wù   à tʃŭ   kpɔ́   wū-dzú w-ɔ́   ŋgɔ̀
       CL1.PVB P2 come(b) CL3/7a.week CL3-other CL3-DET upon

◇'He arrived last week.'

(239)   wù   kə̀ tʃū   kpɔ́   wū-dzú   w-ɔ́   ŋgɔ̀
        CL1.PVB P3 come(b) CL3/7a.week CL3-other CL3-DET upon

        ◇'He arrived last week.'

A phrase in P2 looks slightly different when the subject is in the first person singular. In this case, the 1SG preverbal pronoun is procliticized to the P2 tense marker **à**∼**nà** as well as to the first verb, as in (240).

(240)   n=nà   n=də̀   wù   f-án   ɲántɔ̄
        1SG.PVB=P2 1SG.PVB=see(a) CL1.NPVB PROX-here yesterday

        ◇'I met him here yesterday.'

Example (240) is taken from Dahl's TAM questionnaire (Dahl 1985). It is the answer to the question 'Did you meet my brother here yesterday [as expected]?'.

8.5.1.5   P3 (distant past) constructions with the marker kə̀

The preverbal marker **kə̀**, which usually (in the perfective) occurs in combination with the P3 tonal pattern (see §8.5.1.1), marks events which took place relatively long ago, i.e. at least a few days before the utterance, but often months or years before.

(241)   Pɛ́ kə̀ wě   fɨ́n áná   fyə̀fyà
        P. P3 breathe(a) there like_that IDEO

        'Pe was breathing there like this: fyafya.'

(242)   kpé   dzū   kə̀ dī   fɨ́n
        CL1.woman CL1.certain P3 be(b) there

        'There once was a woman.'

Example (241) is part of a report of an event that took place less than a week before the utterance. However, the speaker is using the distant tense, P3. Example (242) is taken from a story and refers to something that happened long ago (if it happened at all). P3 is never used to refer to actions or events of the same day. However, the choice between P2 and P3 often depends on the subjective perception of the speaker; see §8.5.1.4 for details.

8.5.1.6   F1 (hodiernal future) constructions with the F1 marker dɨ́

The marker **dɨ́** in combination with the F1-F2 tone pattern (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs referring to events or actions which will take place later on the day of the utterance, i.e. F1. As shown in §8.5.1.1, the distinction of verb tone classes is completely neutralized in the future tenses and all verbs are realized with

a high tone. The position of the verb, i.e. whether it is utterance-final or not, does not play a roleeither. All perfective verbs are realized with a high tone in both future tenses. This is shown for F1 verbs of all three tone classes in (243)-(245).[6]

(243) n=[dɪ̌   tsɔ́   ʃí]   dʒī   dɛ̀   nǭ
      1SG.PVB=F1 show(a) go_down(a) CL3.road CL9/10.place SUBORD
      wān   w-ā   dɪ̌   f-ɔ́
      CL1.child CL1-2SG.POSS be(b) LOC-REL

      'I will show you the way to the place where your child is.'

(244) bɔ́ [dɪ̌ táŋ]   dʒǔ   yɛ̄   bɔ́ lā   kpɪ̄
      CL2 F1 buy(b) CL9.goat COMP CL2 make(a) die(b)

      ◇'They will buy a goat in order to kill [it].'

(245) à   [dɪ̌ yɔ́]   ɪ́ dʒɔ̄   b-ɛ́n   mɪ̄
      2SG.PVB F1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX in

      'You will go up on this bridge.'

    Examples (243) and (245) represent direct speech quotations, taken form a narrative. Both refer to actions that are to be carried out immediately after the time of utterance. Example (244) is elicited and also refers to something that will take place on the day of the utterance.

8.5.1.7 F2 (non-hodiernal future) constructions with the F2 marker ká̃

The preverbal marker **ká̃** in combination with the F1-F2 verb tone pattern (see §8.5.1.1) marks verbs referring to events or actions which will take place after the day of the utterance, i.e. on the next day or later. As pointed out earlier (§8.5.1.1 and §8.5.1.6), the distinction of verb tone classes is completely neutralized in the future tenses, and all verbs are realized with a high tone. This and the function of F2 are shown in (246)-(248).

(246) bī [ká̃ dɔ́]   nǭ   ndʒɔ́m   ká̃ fyɛ́   ná ndʒān   kú
      1PL F2 see(a) SUBORD CL8.things F2 turn(c) as Mundabli home.LOC
      f-án
      PROX-here

      '[...] we will see how things will be changing here in Mundabli.'

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[6]In (245), the hodiernal future marker **dɪ̌** (F1) is realized with a low-high rising tone due to low-tone spread (see §3.4.2).

(247) bɔ̄ [kâ ɲwán] bǐ   ndʒān lɔ̄ nɔ̨́   [bɔ̄ *feed*
       CL2 F2 beg(b) 1PL.PP Mundabli DAT SUBORD CL2 feed
       tɔ́m   swɔ̄m   ã́   bī-lɔ̄]
       CL7/8.palm_villager CL7/8.palm ADVLZ CL8-all

       'And they will be begging things from us, the Mundabli, because they
       [the Mundabli] will feed all the people in this Mbanga area.'

(248) ã́nɣ́ nɪ́ŋ   bī nɪ́ŋ   k-ɔ́   kǐ, bī [kâ kán]   kǐ
       any CL7.thing 1PL want(c) CL7-DET CL7 1PL F2 have(c) CL7

       'Anything we want, we will have it.'

Examples (246)-(248) are taken from accounts of speakers in which they were asked to give their opinion on what life might look like in the Mundabli village 50 years into the future. All three refer to a distant (and in this case imagined) future. Another example of F2, taken from a conversation is (249).

(249) bɔ̌ kâ mú ʃí   ā   bɔ̌
       CL2 F2 take(a) descend(a) COM CL2

       'They shall bring them down.'

In (249), the speaker claims that a boy from the village will bring his siblings down to his place once he is old enough to build a house.

8.5.1.8 Overview of tense markers and verb tone patterns in all tenses

This section gives an overview of the segmental tense markers and the verb tone patterns connected with them. Table 8.12 contains example sentences containing perfective verbs of all three verb tone classes in all tenses (P0-P3 and F1-F2), in utterance-final and in non-final position. All examples given in Table 8.12 are elicited.

tone class	position	tense	example	gloss
A	final	P0	**bī kpɛ̄**	We just soaked.
		P1	**bī fɔ́ kpɛ̄**	We soaked (earlier today).
		P2	**bī à kpɛ̄**	We soaked (yesterday).
		P3	**bī kɐ̀ kpɛ̄**	We soaked (long ago).
		F1	**bī dɪ̌ kpé**	We will soak (later today).
		F2	**bī kɑ̂ kpé**	We will soak (after today).
	non-final	P0	**bī kpè gɛ̄**	We just soaked corn.
		P1	**bī fɔ̃́ kpè gɛ̀**	We soaked corn (earlier today).
		P2	**bī à kpè gɛ̀**	We soaked corn (yesterday).
		P3	**bī kɐ̀ kpě gɛ̀**	We soaked corn (long ago).
		F1	**bī dɪ̌ kpé gɛ̀**	We will soak corn (later today).
		F2	**bī kɑ̂ kpé gɛ̀**	We will soak corn (after today).
B	final	P0	**bī yǐ**	We just ate.
		P1	**bī fɔ́ yǐ**	We ate (earlier today).
		P2	**bī à yǐ**	We ate (yesterday).
		P3	**bī kɐ̀ yǐ**	We ate (long ago).
		F1	**bī dɪ̌ yí**	We will eat (later today).
		F2	**bī kɑ̂ yí**	We will eat (after today).
	non-final	P0	**bī yí ɲām**	We just ate fufu.
		P1	**bī fɔ̃́ yí ɲām**	We ate fufu (earlier today).
		P2	**bī à yǐ ɲām**	We ate fufu (yesterday).
		P3	**bī kɐ̀ yī ɲàm**	We ate fufu (long ago).
		F1	**bī dɪ̌ yí ɲām**	We will eat fufu (later today).
		F2	**bī kɑ̂ yí ɲām**	We will eat fufu (after today).
C	final	P0	**bī yíŋ**	We just built.
		P1	**bī fɔ́ yíŋ**	We built (earlier today).
		P2	**bī à yíŋ**	We built (yesterday).
		P3	**bī kɐ̀ yíŋ**	We built (long ago).
		F1	**bī dɪ̌ yíŋ**	We will build (later today).
		F2	**bī kɑ̂ yíŋ**	We will build (after today).
	non-final	P0	**bī yíŋ gbɔ̀**	We just built a house.
		P1	**bī fɔ̃́ yíŋ gbɔ̀**	We built a house (earlier today).
		P2	**bī à yíŋ gbɔ̀**	We built a house (yesterday).
		P3	**bī kɐ̀ yíŋ gbɔ̀**	We built a house (long ago).
		F1	**bī dɪ̌ yíŋ gbɔ̀**	We will build a house (lat. tod.).
		F2	**bī kɑ̂ yíŋ gbɔ̀**	We will build a house (aft. tod.).

Table 8.12: Elicited example of verb-final and non-verb-final simple clauses containing perfective verbs of verb tone classes A, B and C, in all tenses (P0-P3 and F1-F2)

8.5.2 Constructions with preverbal markers other than tense markers

This section deals with constructions involving preverbal markers other than tense markers. Section 8.5.2.1 deals with the verb tone patterns in these constructions. The constructions are described in detail in §8.5.2.2-§8.5.2.5.

8.5.2.1 Verb tone patterns of constructions with markers other than tense markers

Not all constructions are given equal attention in this section. The presence of the verum focus marker, for example, has no influence on the form of the verb or the tense marker. Therefore, the verum focus construction (see §8.5.2.4) is not treated here at all. Due to a lack of data, the tone patterns of conditional verbs are not treated either, so that this section is restricted to the tone patterns of imperfective verbs, tonal variation in the habitual marker and the tone patterns of consecutive verb forms. Imperfective verbs, which feature in habitual constructions are also commonly used in other constructions, without the habitual marker.

In finite imperfective verbs, the distinction between Class B and Class C is neutralized. Class A verbs bear a mid-low falling tone in utterance-final position and a low tone in non-final position, as in (250).[7] Class B (cf. (251)) and Class C (cf. (252)) imperfective verbs always bear a high tone. Note that in perfective stems, the high tone is associated with verbs of Class C (see Table 3.16).

(250) wù   kǒ   lyà   ǎ   ntō
       CL1.PVB HAB   go_to_bush(a).IPFV ADVLZ CL1/2.morning

       'He goes to the bush at night'

(251) yī   kǒ́ bán   ǎ   mí   ŋgɔ̀
       CL3/7a.moon HAB shine(b).IPFV ADVLZ 1SG.PP upon

       'the moon shines on me, [...].'

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[7]The habitual marker bears a superhigh tone **kǒ́** (cf. (251)), but is realized as **kǒ** (cf. (250)) with a low-high rising tone when preceded by a low tone. This is due to a regular process of low tone spread in which a superhigh tone is realized as low-high rising when preceded by a low tone (see §3.4.2 for details).

(252) wù fyá   bílúŋ   ɲwɔ́m   b-ɔ́   lā ɑ̋
      cL1 give(b).ipfv cL8.suffering cL2.children cL2-det dat advlz
      mɔ̀~mɔ̀, gē ɲwɔ́m   nɪ̋   kɜ̀ wù kɜ́
      one~RED be_there cL2.children cL1.mother however cL1.pvb hab
      tʃyé   bɔ̀
      know(c).ipfv frust

'She made those children suffer, not knowing that they were her sib-
lings.'

When the verb stands in utterance-final position, a Class A verb bears a
mid-low falling tone (see (253)).

(253) wù kɜ́ kpɛ̂
      cL1 hab soak(a).ipfv

      ◇'He frequently soaks [things].'

In certain contexts, the tone of the habitual marker is high rather than
superhigh or rising, irrespective of the preceding tone. For details, see §8.5.1.

Consecutive verbs also have their own specific tone pattern.[8] The tonal
pattern of verbs introduced by a consecutive marker is different from that
of the preceding tense marked clause. Table 8.13 gives an overview of the
utterance-final verb tone patterns of perfective consecutive verbs across the
tenses and compares them with the tone patterns of non-consecutive verbs.

tense	marker	A	B	C
non-consecutive				
p0		ML	LH	H
p1	fɔ̋	ML	LH	H
p2	à~nà	ML	[LH]	H
p3	kɜ̀	ML	[LH]	H
f1	dɪ̋	H	H	H
f2	kɑ̂	H	H	H
consecutive				
p0	mɪ́	L	LH	H
p1	mɪ́	L	LH	H
p2	mɪ̄	M	S	HM
p3	mɪ̄	ML	LH	H
f1	mɪ̄	L	S	H
f2	kɜ́ mɪ̄	L	S	H

Table 8.13: Tone patterns of final perfective consecutive verbs in all tenses
(p0-p3 and f1-f2)

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[8]See §8.5.2.3 for the function of consecutive verbs.

The tone of the consecutive marker depends on the tense of the preceding tense-marked clause. The marker bears a high tone (**mɨ́**) when the preceding clause is P0 or P1 (cf. (258), P0) and a mid tone (**mɨ̄**) when for all other tenses, namely P2-P3 and F1-F2 (see e.g. (256) for P3 and (257) for F1). For more on consecutive constructions, see §8.2.2 and §8.5.2.3.

8.5.2.2 The marker kɔ̋ and the habitual aspect construction

The preverbal marker **kɔ̋** in combination with the imperfective verb form and its characteristic tonal and vocalic patterns (see §8.5.2.1 and §8.1.3, respectively) marks habitual aspect. The marker is found in constructions like those in (254) and (255). The habitual marker does not co-occur with a tense marker, i.e. its use is restricted to the unmarked present tense (P0). The habitual construction is the only construction which requires the imperfective verb form.[9]

(254) wù   kɔ̌ lyà   ɑ̋   ntō
       CL1.PVB HAB go_to_bush(a).IPFV ADVLZ CL1/2.night

       'He [regularly] goes to the bush at night.'

(255) bə̄   ʃə̄   bə̄   fyē   nə̄   bə̄   kɔ̋
       IMPERS want(a).IPFV IMPERS learn(a) SUBORD IMPERS HAB
       lǣ   ná ŋkà
       make(a).IPFV as CL6.corn_beer

       'We want to learn how one makes corn beer.'

The use of the habitual construction with the habitual marker **kɔ̋** and the imperfective verb, as in (254) and (255), implies that an action is carried out regularly or constantly over a longer period of time.

8.5.2.3 The marker mɨ̄/mɨ́ and consecutive constructions

The consecutive tense marker **mɨ̄/mɨ́** occurs in the same slot as the regular tense markers. It cannot co-occur with the latter. A sequence of one or more consecutive clauses always follows a tense-marked clause in a clause chain. The consecutive tense marker expresses the fact that the events or actions described in the individual clauses take place in the chronological order corresponding to the order of the clauses. The subsequent clauses may have the same subjects (as in (256) and (257)) or they may have different subjects (see (258)).

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[9]In other tenses, habitual semantics are either expressed periphrastically or they are conveyed by the imperfective verb form alone, as in F1 and F2.

(256) kpé   dzū   kə̀ dī   fɨ́n   [...] kpé
       CL1.woman CL1.certain P3 be(b).P3 PROX-there? [...] CL1.woman
       w-ɔ̄   mī   dzě   ɲwɔ́m   bɔ́   b-ɔ́   lā
       CL1-DET CONSEC say(b).CONSEC CL2.children 3SG.POSS CL2-DET DAT
       yɛ̄
       COMP

       'There once was a woman. [...] The woman said to her children: ... '

(257) à   dɨ̌ yə́   ɨ́   dʒɔ̄   b-ɛ́n   mī, à   mī
       2SG.PVB F1 go_up(c) LOC CL8a.bridge CL8a-DEM.PROX in   2SG CONSEC
       gàn   də̀   gbɔ̄   wān   wā   sè,
       go(a) see(a) CL3.house CL1.child CL1-2SG.POSS house_front.LOC
       bə̄   nàn   tsə̀   fɨ́n
       IMPERS decorate(a) CL7/8.grass_bundle there

       'You will go up on this bridge. You will then go and see that a grass
       bundle is fixed to the frontside of your child's house.'

(258) ɲwɔ́m   nɛ̃́   tʃű   yɛ̄ bɔ́ nīm ā   wà,
       CL2.children mother.2POSS come(b) COMP CL2 live(a) COM 2SG
       à   mɨ́   mù   bɔ̌, à   mɨ́   gɨ̌   yɛ̄ dɨ̌
       2SG.PVB CONSEC take(a) CL2 2SG.PVB CONSEC put(b) COMP be(b)
       mfɔ̄   y-ã́
       CL9.slave CL9-2SG.POSS

       'Your siblings have come to stay with you and you take them and make
       them your slaves.'

In (258) and (257), the actions or events described by the clauses marked
by a consecutive marker follow those in the preceding clause in a temporal
sequence. But the relation is not always one of chronological order, cf. (256).
This can also be seen in the elicited example (259) where the first clause
contains the subordinator **nə́** 'as, when' and the temporal relation is one of
simultaneity rather than sequence.

(259) bɔ́   kə̀ dī   nə́ ʃī   mī bɔ́   mī   tăŋ
       CL2.PVB P3 be(b) as CL9/10.market in CL2.PVB CONSEC buy(b)
       dʒǔ
       CL9.goat

       ◇'When they were at the market, they bought a goat.'

The future consecutive is often used to give polite instructions. In this
function, the consecutive clause most commonly follows a conditional clause
(260), but it may also follow an F1 or F2 clause (257), or an imperative clause
(261).

(260) ká   mū bí   sɨ́   yí-ǹdē   *or* yī-kpɔ̄n
      COND CL6 germinate(b).COND CL9/10.day CL10-four or CL10-five
      à   mɨ̄   mū   kɛ́   bɨ́   yá   mű, ā
      2SG.PVB CONSEC take(a) return(c) go_out(b) go_up(c) CL6a 2SG.PVB
      mɨ̄   gwɔ̀
      CONSEC grind(a)

      'When it [the corn] has germinated for four or five days, you remove
      it and grind [it].'

(261) yɛ̄   gǎn   tsē   mɨ̄   ā   ntső̃m mū-ŋ-gɛ̄~ŋ-gɛ̄
      COMP go(a) find(a) 1SG.NPVB with CL6a-soil CL6a-N-be_red~RED
      à   mɨ̄   tʃű   fő̃   ndá   lā   yɛ̄   m=mɨ̄
      2SG.PVB CONSEC come(b) give(b) 1SG.PP DAT COMP 1SG.PVB=CONSEC
      myé   mùn-dzɔ̀ŋ~dzɔ̀ŋ
      lick(c) CL6a-good~RED

      '...: Go and find me some red soil! Then you will come and give [it] to
      me so that I will then lick the sweet [soil].'

8.5.2.4 The marker **tə́** and truth focus constructions

The marker **tə́** marks truth focus. It precedes the verb, and when a segmental
tense marker is present, the truth focus marker precedes it, too. The presence
of the marker has no influence on the form of the verb or the tense markers.
Examples of constructions involving the marker **tə́** are given in (262)-(264).

(262) tɛ̋là mwɔ́m dzé   hǎyì, dzē   gbàn   ŋgɨ̄   lā   yɛ̄
      T.   M.   say(b) INTERJ say(b) CL1.in-law CL1.1SG.POSS DAT COMP
      n=<u>tə́</u>   tʃú
      1SG.PVB=VER.FOC come(b).IPFV

      'Tela Mwom said: No! Tell my in-law that I am coming!'

(263) wù   <u>tə́</u>   yə́   kwó   tʃű,   wù   ā   kù   wɔ̄
      CL1.PVB VER.FOC go_up(c) enter(c) come(b) CL1.PVB NEG cry(a) NEG
      kɛ́   bɨ́
      CL7/8.leg CL8;3SG.POSS

      'She has reached [here]. Is she not complaining [that] her legs [are
      hurting]?'

(264) yɛ̄, kɔ́ wū tǭ mɛ̄ tʃū, wù tá̱ ā
     COMP COND CL1IRR grow_up(b) finish(a) come(b) CL1 VER.FOC NEG
     lá kɔ̀ wɔ̄ sǎm, wù dǐ mɔ́sí yíŋ gbɔ̂ áná
     do(a) ?? NEG CL1/2.play CL1 F1 must build(c) CL3.house like_that
     nǐ́ tʃū nīm
     CL1/2.mother.3POSS come(b) live(a)

    '[...] that when he will have grown up fully, he will not play, he must build a house and bring down his mother.'

Example (262) is in the present tense and contains an imperfective verb. The tone of the Class B verb is high, as expected for an imperfective verb (see §8.5.2.1). The example is taken from a story and is an example of direct speech. When Tela Mwɔm's mother-in-law requests to see him, he first rejects her request. When his mother-in-law insists, Tela Mwɔm gives in (see (262)). By the use of the truth focus marker, he stresses that he *will* come to meet her. Example (263) is taken from a spontaneous conversation. The speaker pointed out that the researcher had indeed reached the village (on foot) and inquired whether she was complaining about her legs aching.

In example (264), which is taken from the same conversation as (263), the speaker is quoting a boy, Dya, who was telling everyone that when he will have grown up, he will build a house and have his mother move into the house. The speaker uses the truth focus particle in order to show how Dya was trying to convince people that he was serious.

8.5.2.5 The preverbal conditional marker kɔ́

The conditional 'tense' marker **kɔ́** may either occur in clause-initial position only, preceding the subject, or it may be repeated after the subject. The current section only deals with the second case, in which the marker is repeated after the subject, because we are mainly concerned here with the verbal complex, i.e. the verb and the markers in close association with it. Due to a lack of data, the tone patterns of conditional verbs are not described systematically.

In the construction under discussion, the marker **kɔ́** occurs twice in the conditional clause, once before the subject pronoun and once in preverbal position. The subsequent clause, which expresses the consequences, also contains an instance of the conditional marker, see (265).

(265) kə́ ŋ=kə́ kpǐ f-án, bēn kə́ mū
    COND 1SG.PVB=COND die(b) PROX-here 2PL.PVB COND take(a)
    tʃű ā dʒám, bēn kə́ mī̄ dʒì ʃì ǐ
    come(b) COM CL??.seed 2PL.PVB COND CONSEC put(a) go_down(a) LOC
    dzàm ŋgī̄ wɔ̄
    CL9/10.grave CL9;1SG.POSS on

‘If I die here, you will bring a calabash seed, and then you will plant [the seed] on my grave.’

The conditional clause ‘If I die here’ in (265) expresses a hypothetical condition. The consequences are expressed by two clauses, ‘you will bring a calabash seed’ and ‘and then you will plant [the seed] on my grave’, each of which contains a conditional marker.

8.5.3 Negation in constructions involving finite verb forms

As pointed out in §8.2.2, the most basic form of negation is the discontinuous negative marker **ā … wɔ̄**. However, the realization of negation may vary.

8.5.3.1 Negation in tense marking constructions

In negative clauses, the preverbal tense marker is often merged with the preverbal negative marker **ā**. When the markers merge, the vowel **a** of the negative marker replaces the original vowel of the tense marker. The resulting tonal pattern of the combined marker is neither simply a combination of the tone of tense and the negation marker,[10] nor does the tone of one replace that of the other; see Table 8.14 for an overview of merged tense and negative markers.

tense	tense marker	negation + tense marker
P0		ā
P1	fə̋	fā́
P2	à∼nà	nǎ
P3	kə̀	kǎ
F1	dǐ	dā́
F2	ká	kā́

Table 8.14: Tense markers and merged tense + pre-core negation markers

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[10]Although the tone pattern of the merged marker is not exactly a combination of the two tone patterns involved, it reflects the relative height of the tones of the two markers, with e.g. a higher tone followed by a lower tone in the case of P1 **fā́** or a lower tone followed by a higher tone in P2 **nǎ**.

As I have no simple explanation for the tonal changes, I restrict myself here to their description. Examples of P1 and P3 negative phrases with merged tense and negation markers are (266) for P1 and (267) for P3.

(266) wù [fá̃   gàn wɔ̄] dʒwō   ɲwέn
       CL1 P1;NEG go(a) NEG CL1/2.stream today

    'She did not go to the stream today.'

(267) ŋ=wò   mɪ́ yɛ̄   wù dzé lɔ̄~lɔ̄   *bìkɔ́*
       1SG.PVB=think ?   SUBORD CL1 say(b) empty~RED because
       ɪ̃́=[kǎ   tʃyé   wɔ̄] yɛ̄ ŋwàtɪ̀   dɪ̃́ ná, dɪ̃́
       1SG.PVB=P3;NEG know(c) NEG COMP CL7/8.book be(b) as be(b)
       nɪ́ŋ   kə̄-dzɔ́ŋ
       CL7.thing CL7-good

    'So I was thinking that he was lying because I didn't know at that point that it is good to know how to read and write.' (lit,: [...] that book is like, is a good thing)

While the subject usually precedes the tense marker and the negative marker, the first person singular preverbal pronoun **N=** follows the first part of the negative marker **ā** and cliticizes to the verb when no preverbal TAM marker is present, i.e. in P0. In this case, the 1SG pronoun directly precedes the verbal core, as in (268) (copied from (80c)), see §6.1.1 for more on preverbal pronouns.

(268) [ā   ɲ=tʃyé   wɔ̄]
       NEG 1SG.PVB=know(c) NEG

    ◇'I don't know.'

Table 8.15 compares the tone patterns of affirmative non-final verbs with those of negated verbs.

	negated			affirmative non-final		
tense	A	B	C	A	B	C
P0	L	S	H	L	S	H
P1	L	S	H	L	S	H
P2	L	LH	H	L	[LH]	H
P3	L	LH	H	LH	M	H
F1	H	H	H	H	H	H
F2	H	H	H	H	H	H

Table 8.15: Tone patterns of negated and of affirmative non-final perfective verbs of tone classes A, B and C in all tenses (P0-P3 and F1-F2)

In most tenses, the tone of the affirmative verb form in non-final position and that of the negative verb form are identical.[11] However, in two of the tenses, P2 and P3, the tone of the negative verb is different than expected. In the first case, the non-hodiernal past P2, the verb tone patterns of negative P2 clauses are the same as those of affirmative P2 clauses (see Table 8.15 for an overview of affirmative and negative tone patterns and Tables 8.16 and 8.17 for examples). However, while the low-high rising tone in affirmative P2 clauses could have been derived from an underlying superhigh tone, due to the effect of the preceding low P2 marker **à**∼**nà** (see §8.5.1.1), this explanation is not available for the low-high rising tone in negative P2 clauses, where the P2 marker is merged with the negative marker, resulting in **nǎ**. In this case, the low tone of the P2 marker should have no effect on the following verb. An example of a negated Class B verb in P3 is in (269), which is taken from Table 8.17.

(269) bī   nǎ   **yǐ**   wɔ̄
       1PL.PVB P2;NEG   eat(b)   NEG

       ◊'We didn't eat [yesterday].'

The second case of non-identical affirmative and negative verb tone patterns is the distant past P3. In P3, which also differs tonally from the other past tenses in affirmative clauses (see Table 8.15), the tones of affirmative non-final verbs and negative verbs are not the same for Class A and Class B verbs.

While the tone of verbs in affirmative P3 clauses is low-high rising for Class A and mid for Class B, the tones for the respective verb tone classes in negative P3 clauses are low for Class A (see (270)) and low-high rising for Class B (see (271)); see also Table 8.15, Table 8.16 and Table 8.17. Class C verbs always bear a high tone.

(270) wù   kǎ   ʃì   wɔ̄
       CL1.PVB P3;NEG   go_down(a)   NEG

       ◊'He did not go down.'

(271) wù   kǎ   ʃǐ   wɔ̄
       CL1.PVB P3;NEG   spend_day(b) NEG

       ◊'He did not spend the day at home.'

Table 8.16 contains elicited examples of non-final affirmative verbs and Table 8.17 contains examples of negative verbs of verb tone classes A, B and C.

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[11] When negated, the verb is followed by the post-verbal negation marker **wɔ̄** and thus non-final.

verb tone class	tense	example	gloss
A	P0	**bī kpὲ gɛ̄**	'We just soaked corn.'
	P1	**bī fɔ́ kpὲ gɛ̄**	'We soaked corn (earlier today).'
	P2	**bī à kpὲ gɛ̄**	'We soaked corn (yesterday).'
	P3	**bī kὲ kpɛ̌ gɛ̄**	'We soaked corn (long ago).'
	F1	**bī dɪ́ kpɛ́ gɛ̄**	'We will soak corn (later today).'
	F2	**bī káā kpɛ́ gɛ̄**	'We will soak corn (after today).'
B	P0	**bī yɪ́ nyām**	'We just ate fufu.'
	P1	**bī fɔ́ yɪ́ ɲām**	'We ate fufu (earlier today).'
	P2	**bī à yǐ ɲām**	'We ate fufu (yesterday).'
	P3	**bī kὲ yī ɲàm**	'We ate fufu (long ago).'
	F1	**bī dɪ́ yí ɲām**	'We will eat fufu (later today).'
	F2	**bī kɑ́ yí ɲām**	'We will eat fufu (after today).'
C	P0	**bī yíŋ gbɔ̄**	'We just built a house.'
	P1	**bī fɔ́ yíŋ gbɔ̄**	'We built a house (earlier today).'
	P2	**bī à yíŋ gbɔ̄**	'We built a house (yesterday).'
	P3	**bī kὲ yíŋ gbɔ̄**	'We built a house (long ago).'
	F1	**bī dɪ́ yíŋ gbɔ̄**	'We will build a house (later today).'
	F2	**bī kɑ́ yíŋ gbɔ̄**	'We will build a house (after today).'

Table 8.16: Elicited examples of affirmative non-verb-final simple clauses containing perfective verbs of Class A, B and C in all tenses (P0-P3 and F1-F2)

8.5.3.2 Negation in constructions with preverbal markers other than tense markers

The negative habitual is not marked by a discontinuous marker. Instead it only has the post-core negative marker **wɔ̄**. Thus, only the preverbal habitual marker **kɔ̀** and the post-core negative marker **wɔ̄** are present (cf. (272) and (273)).

(272) mɔ̀   [kɔ̀ dyà   wɔ̄] wú   lā
      CL1.person HAB see(a).IPFV NEG CL1.PP DAT

'Nobody [ever] sees him.'

verb tone class	tense	example	gloss
A	p0	**bī ā kpè wɔ̄**	'We did not just soak.'
	p1	**bī fã́ kpè wɔ̄**	'We did not soak (earlier today).'
	p2	**bī nǎ kpè wɔ̄**	'We did not soak (yesterday).'
	p3	**bī kǎ kpè wɔ̄**	'We did not soak (long ago).'
	f1	**bī dã́ kpé wɔ̄**	'We will not soak (later today).'
	f2	**bī kã́ kpé wɔ̄**	'We will not soak (after today).'
B	p0	**bī ā yí wɔ̄**	'We did not just eat.'
	p1	**bī fã́ yí wɔ̄**	'We did not eat (earlier today).'
	p2	**bī nǎ yǐ wɔ̄**	'We did not eat (yesterday).'
	p3	**bī kǎ yǐ wɔ̄**	'We did not eat (long ago).'
	f1	**bī dã́ yí wɔ̄**	'We will not eat (later today).'
	f2	**bī kã́ yí wɔ̄**	'We will not eat (after today).'
C	p0	**bī ā yíŋ wɔ̄**	'We did not just build.'
	p1	**bī fã́ yíŋ wɔ̄**	'We did not build (earlier today).'
	p2	**bī nǎ yíŋ wɔ̄**	'We did not build (yesterday).'
	p3	**bī kǎ yíŋ wɔ̄**	'We did not build (long ago).'
	f1	**bī dã́ yíŋ wɔ̄**	'We will not build (later today).'
	f2	**bī kã́ yíŋ wɔ̄**	'We will not build (after today).'

Table 8.17: Elicited examples of negative simple clauses containing perfective verbs of Class A, B and C in all tenses (p0-p3 and f1-f2)

(273) Pế kǎ   sɛ́   gán   mɔ̀   w-ɔ̄   yɛ̄
      P. p3.HAB insult(c).IPFV go(a).IPFV CL1.person CL1-DET COMP
      mɛ̀   mɔ̀   w-ɔ̄   [kã́ nàm   tʃyé   wɔ̄]
      NCS.QUOT.Q CL1.person CL1-DET HAB work(a).IPFV know(c).IPFV NEG
      ná wù   táŋ dzɪ́   tsṹ   yɛ̄
      as CL1.PVB buy(b) travel(b) CL7/8.banana QUOT.Q

      'Pe was insulting the man [asking] whether the man doesn't know how
      to work as he [aimlessly] buys banana?'

In (272), the semantics are clearly habitual. The sentence could be translated literally as 'A person always does not see him'. The semantics of (273) are less obviously habitual.

The negative habitual, like the affirmative habitual requires the imperfective form of the verb. The tone patterns of verbs in the negative habitual are the same as in the affirmative habitual: low for Class A and high for Class B and C.

Due to a lack of data, this section only contains a description of the negated habitual. The description of negated consecutive, negated truth focus and

negated conditional constructions has to be postponed until more data is available.

8.5.3.3 Frustrative

Another way to express negation is the frustrative construction. This construction is marked by the right-modifying minor coverb **dǝ̀** 'see' and of the postverbal frustrative marker **bɔ̀**, cf. example (274). A preverbal negation marker is not present. The use of the frustrative construction implies that someone has tried to do something and failed.

(274) wù kǒ   [tsé   dyá]   bɔ̀ tsṹ   b-ɔ́
      CL1 P3.HAB search(a).IPFV see(a).IPFV FRUST CL7/8.banana CL8-DET

      'He was searching for the bananas but couldn't find them.'

While the frustrative marker more commonly immediately follows the verbal core, thus preceding the object as in (274), it may also follow the object, as in (275). The choice between these two options seems to be free. It is unclear how the choice between these two options influences the meaning, if at all.

(275) wù [tsē   dɔ̄]   wān   wū   bɔ̀
      CL1 search(a) see(a) CL1.child CL1;3SG.POSS FRUST

      'She did not find her child.'

In certain contexts, the frustrative marker occurs without the minor coverb **dǝ̀** 'see'. This is the case, e.g., when the ability construction is negated, as in example (230) in §8.4.2. When the main verb is also a verb of cognition, such as **tʃyé** 'know' in (276), the minor coverb is absent.

(276) ã́à   n=kū   bí   yéé mɔ́
      INTERJ 1SG.PVB=cry(a) go_out(b) INTERJ CS.QUOT
      m̀=bwã́n   mɪ́ŋ   gbǝ̀   ã́ lɔ̀~lɔ̀,
      1SG.PVB=get_wounded(a) 1SG.NPVB? house.LOC ADVLZ empty~RED
      kě   n=kɔ́   tʃyé   bɔ̀   nɪ́ŋ   nō̰   ń=lā̄
      even 1SG.PVB=HAB know(c) FRUST CL7.thing SUBORD 1SG.PVB=do(a)
      k-ɔ́   kɪ́
      CL7-REL CL7.SG

      'Ah! I cried out. Yeoh! I got wounded in my house for no good reason.
      I don't even know what I have done.'

8.5.3.4 The not-yet tense

In order to express the fact that an event has not yet taken place, or that an action has not yet been carried out, a different construction is used that

employs the common post-verbal negation marker **wɔ̄** in combination with the special preverbal marker **dá̰** (glossed 'not yet', cf. (277)). The marker **dá̰** is probably a merged form derived from the copula verb **dḭ́** 'be' and the common preverbal negation marker **ā**. When the marker **dá̰** is preceded by a low tone preverbal pronoun, as in (278), it is realized with a rising tone.

(277) bɔ̌   dá̰   ʃì   wɔ̄
       CL1.PVB not_yet go_down(a) NEG

       ◇'They have not yet gone down.'

(278) wù   dǎ̰   ʃì   wɔ̄
       CL1.PVB not_yet go_down(a) NEG

       ◇'He has not yet gone down.'