

7

Donno So (Dogon)

(Volta-Congo, Atlantic-Congo)

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7.1 General

Some seventeen Dogon varieties are spoken by approximately 700,000 people in Southeastern Mali (553,600) and Burkina Faso (138,000) (updated with SIL data, after Hochstetler et al. 2004). Most varieties are mutually unintelligible; at least one dialect, Bangi Me, does not belong in the group according to Blench (2005b). This chapter is based primarily on the Donno So(ɔ) dialect described by Kervran & Prost (1969) and Culy (1995)¹. Some data are from Tɔrɔ So(ɔ)², the national language of Mali.

Oral tradition claims Dogon speakers originated from the west bank of the Niger River, around 1490 A.D but Blench³, based on the many lexical and typological differences of Dogon from most other Niger-Congo languages, suggests that the “ancestor of Dogon is likely to have diverged [from proto-Niger Congo] very early, although the present-day languages probably reflect an origin some 3-4000 years ago”. He adds that “Dogon languages are territorially coherent, suggesting that, despite local migration histories, the Dogon have been in this area of Mali from their origin”. Presently, they are primarily agriculturalists, living in close proximity to other Niger-Congo language groups (Gur, Mande, Fulani).



Map source: World Factbook (CIA)

¹ I am in the process of updating the chapter to incorporate the recently published grammar of the Dogon dialect Jamsay (Heath 2008). Alternatively, I may devote another chapter to Jamsay itself, so that the reader may compare the two major dialects.

²The word *soo* refers broadly to ‘speaking’, be it as ‘language’, ‘way of speaking’ or even ‘piece of paper’. The name of the language itself is spelled differently, with short or long vowel, depending on particular authors. Kervran & Prost use the single vowel spelling of the Donno So dialect, a convention which I will use in this chapter.

³ http://homepage.ntlworld.com/roger_blench/Dogon/Dogon%20page.htm

Dogon has seven oral vowels: **i, e, ɛ, a, u, o, ɔ**, all occurring long and short, making a total of fourteen, as well as distinct nasal vowels in some dialects. There is limited vowel harmony, primarily (or exclusively) in verbs (see example (41)). Donno So has two tones, both marked here: high (´) and low (`) (Bendor-Samuel, Olsen & White 1989:172), although it should be noted that the tonal systems of various dialects have not been systematically studied. Dogon nouns show a vestige of a noun class system (mostly in kinship terms), with human nouns bearing a distinct plural suffix:

- (1) **ine** ‘person’ > **ineũ** ‘people’
 ãrã ‘man’ > **ãrãũ** ‘men’

7.2 Word Order

Dogon’s typology is rare among the Niger-Congo languages: Word order is strictly SOV, more like Mande or Ijo than other Niger-Congo languages. The general template is as follows:

- (2) S X O V AUX

Subject marking is on the far right of the verbal word (via cliticized pronouns), with TAM and NEG markers arranged between the root and the SM. Other syntactic structures (such as prepositional phrases) mirror this head-last typology. Noun phrases, however, show the following order: noun + adjective + definite + plural (Bendor-Samuel et al. 1989:176), as in the following example from Dogon dialect Tommo-so (data from Plungian (1995:10)), translated from the French):

- (3) **ene pilu gɛ mbe**
 goat white DEF plural
 ‘the white goats’

A minimal sentence in Donno So consists of a verb-less “presentation” utterance, formed by the addition of a post-posed low-toned (focus?) marker **-ñ** ‘it is’. The negative version deletes the **-ñ** and adds an independent negative word⁴ (data from Kervran & Prost (1969:50), with glosses translated from the French):

- (4) **mí bà** ‘my father’ > **mí bàñ** ‘it is my father’ > **mí bà làa** ‘it is not my father’

In Tɔɔ Soɔ (data from Bendor-Samuel et al. 1989:174), the same construction is marked by the post-posed marker **-i**:

- (5) **peju** ‘sheep’ (s) > **peju** ‘It is a sheep’
 peju gbe ‘the sheep’ (p) > **peju gbei** ‘It is the sheep’

A palatal nasal (represented by the symbol **-ñ** in Kervran & Prost), and typically high-toned, is appended to a noun or pronoun to mark a direct object:

⁴ A similar usage (with **le**) appears in Kisi.

- (6) a **mí bá-ñ w-è-Ø**
 my father-DO see-PFV-3s
 ‘He saw my father.’
- b **ú-ñ w-è-m**
 you-DO see-PFV-1s
 ‘I saw you.’ (both examples from Kervran & Prost 1969:51)

It can also be appended (to a typically animate argument) to mark indirect object, as in (7), where it serves to disambiguate thematic roles in this ditransitive sentence:

- (7) **mi aaga Andaa-ñ kεεlo ob-u-m**
 1s morning Anda-IO money give-PFV-1s
 ‘I gave the money to Anda this morning.’ (Culy 1995:48)

In (8), word order, in combination with assignment of OM marker, disambiguates the sentence: the first (leftmost) NP is understood to be the subject, the second OM-bearing item is understood to be the goal, the third NP is understood to be the theme (see Culy (1995:56) for details of rules governing placement of the OM).

- (8) **yaani i anna pay-ñ wɔjine tagaa be**
 female child male old-OM stranger showed AUX
 ‘The girl showed a stranger to an old man’.

7.3 Verb Structure

The structure of a “simple” (= synthetic = one-word) verb is as follows:

- (9) ROOT-EXT-NEG-TAM-SM

Verbs are root initial, followed by optional extensions, optional negative marker, TAM markers, with the SM word final (except in the case of 3s, where the marker is zero, as in examples (6a) and (11)). The subject markers are as follows: 1s **-m**, 2s **-u**, 3s **-Ø**, 1p **-ñ**, 2p **-ñ**, 3p **-i/-iya/-nni**. Occasionally, both pronominal subject markers and verb-final subject markers co-occur (10a):

- (10) a **pézô mí dè-yì-m** b **pézô da-l-i-m**
 sheep 1s kill-PFV-1s sheep kill-NEG-PFV-1s
 ‘I killed a sheep’ ‘I did not kill a sheep’
 (Verb **da** ‘kill’. Kervran & Prost 1969:52)

With third person forms, where the SM is zero, the TAM marker is word-final:

- (11) **dy-a-Ø** ‘he takes’ > **dy-ε-Ø** ‘he took’ (FV **-a** + perfective marker **-i** > **-ε**)

In “compound” (= analytic = two/three-word) verbs, the leftmost main lexical verbal element (regularly a participle, marked for aspect) is followed by an inflected auxiliary (discussed below). In verbs with two auxiliaries, only the last (rightmost) is inflected. The structure is:

(12) root-TAM (auxiliary₁ = **se/se** ‘have’⁵) auxiliary₂-(NEG)-TAM-SM

Here are some examples of analytic verbs using different participles, with their corresponding negatives:

(13) Analytic verb with imperfective participle and imperfective AUX **wɔ** ‘be’
(= present tense reference):

a	gɛndɛ-u wɔ-m look-IPFV be.IPFV ⁶ -1s ‘I am (there) looking.’ (Verb gɛndɛ ‘look’. Kervran & Prost 1969:78)	b	gɛndɛ-u wɔ-lɔ-m look-IPFV be.IPFV-NEG-1s ‘I am not looking.’
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(14) Analytic verb with perfect participle and AUX **se/ɛ** ‘have’:
(= present perfect)

a	bond-aa sɛ-m call-PFT have-1s ‘I have called.’ (Verb bondo ‘call’. Kervran & Prost 1969:79)	b	bond-aa sɛ-lɛ-m call-PFT have-NEG-1s ‘I have not called.’
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(15) Analytic verb with perfect participle and perfective AUX **be/ɛ** ‘be’
(= past reference)⁷

a	w-aa be-ñ see-PFT be.PFV-1p ‘We saw.’ (Verb w(a) ‘see’)	b	w-aa be-le-ñ see-PFT be.PFV-NEG-1p ‘We did not see.’
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7.3.1 Extensions

Donno So has a relatively small system of extensions which appear to be of recent origin (Williamson & Blench 2000:24):

⁵The first of the two auxiliaries (exclusively **se/se** ‘have’), appears in three verbal constructions: the analytic future, the conditional perfect and the “plus-que-parfait surcomposé” (Kervran & Prost (1969:80)) whose heavily marked (and somewhat artificial?) nature makes it difficult to render in English: **gɛndaa sɛ be** ‘il avait été ayant regardé’. Note that the vowel in the verb **se/se** ‘have’ is variable (**e** ~ **ɛ**) (Kervran & Prost 1969:89). The significance – if any – of this alternation is unclear. A similar variation is seen in the verb **be/be** ‘be’.

⁶ See §7.6 for a discussion of the nature and distribution of the various existential auxiliaries, as well as glossing conventions.

⁷ See §7.5.2.2 for forms with FV **-i**, the alternative strategy for expressing past reference.

Reflexive:	dumo ‘be finished’	>	dume ‘finish’
	paga ‘attach’	>	page ‘attach to oneself’
	kaba ‘separate’	>	kabe ‘separate self’
Inversive:	daga ‘lock’	>	dagala ‘unlock’
	dɛbɛ ‘cover’	>	dɛbɛɛ ‘uncover’
Causative:	daba ‘cover’	>	dabara ‘make cover’
	go ‘leave’	>	gondo ‘make s.o. leave’
Permissive:	go ‘leave’	>	gomo ‘allow to leave’

Extensions may be combined:

(16) **go** ‘leave’ > **gondo** ‘make (someone) leave’ > **gondomo** ‘allow to make leave’

7.4 Participles

In addition to the participles exemplified above, there is a future participle, marked by suffix **-ni**, meaning ‘about to do something’:

(17) **gɛndɛ** ‘look’ > **gɛndɛni** ‘about to look’
wɔ ‘be’ > **wɔni** ‘about to be’

There is also a compound future perfect participle whose use indicates that the activity involved, although not yet accomplished, will have been accomplished before a second activity takes place. In the following example, as indicated by Kervran & Prost (1969:91), the *accompli* sense is conveyed by the infix **-aa-**, the future value by suffix **-ni**:

(18) **nama ɛb-aa-ni** **dyand-aaze-m**
meat buy-PFT-FUT cook-PFT-1s
‘Having bought the meat, I will cook it’⁸ (Kervran & Prost 1969:91)

7.5 Aspect, Tense and Mood

According to Bendor-Samuel et al. (1989:175), Dogon has a binary aspectual system (perfective vs. imperfective) which works in tandem with a binary modal system (realis vs. irrealis). However, the aspectual system could be analyzed as ternary (imperfective, perfective, perfect). Imperfective is the “default” aspect in the *Donno So* system: Imperfective is either unmarked (as in the radical, which is inherently imperfective), or marked by appended **-u** in the participle system, and includes a progressive (examples (28,29)), an habitual (which differs from the progressive only by tone (example (30))), an analytic form which Kervran & Prost call an “Imperfect” (example (31)) and two forms marked by reduplication of the radical vowel, an

⁸ This is a direct translation from Kervran & Prost’s French (“ayant acheté de la viande, je vais la cuire”). However, since the main verb **dyandaazem** is what Kervran & Prost (1969:79) refer to as the Simple Perfect, a more accurate (or at least a more literal) translation would likely be ‘Once I will have bought the meat, I(’ll) have it cooked’. More will be said on the possible analysis of the Simple Perfect below.

iterative (example 32) and the “Simple Future” (example (34)); Perfective is marked by **-i** (examples (35, 36); Perfect is marked by **-aa** (also **-waa**, or **-yaa**) (examples 42-44).

7.5.1 “Future”: tense, aspect or mood?

Although Donnɔ Sɔ is largely aspect-based, it is possible to consider the “Future” as modal (as Bendor-Samuel et al. have done), or, alternately, as a morphological Future tense (as Kervran & Prost have done). Future reference in Donnɔ Sɔ finite verbs is marked in two ways: 1. by reduplication, either of the root vowel (as in the iterative aspect)⁹ (example 19a), or of an entire syllable (example 19 b), or 2. by the use of **-zaa sɛ** (example 20), with no discernable meaning difference:

(19) Simple Future formed by reduplication

a of root vowel: **gɛ-ɛ-ndɛ-m** ‘I shall look.’

b of syllable: **nɔ-nɔ-m** ‘I shall drink.’

(20) Analytic future formed by the use of **-zaa sɛ**: **gɛndɛzaa sɛm** ‘I shall look.’

An iterative future is formed by combining the reduplicated root vowel form + **-zaa sɛ**:

(21) **gɛɛndɛzaa sɛm** ‘I shall look many times.’

A conditional combines the reduplicated root vowel form with perfective auxiliary **be/be** ‘be’:

(22) **gɛɛndɛ bem** ‘I would look.’ (lit: ‘will look I was’)

A conditional perfect combines either **gɛndɛzaa** or **gɛɛndɛzaa** with both auxiliaries **se/se** ‘have’ and **be/be** (perfective ‘be’):

(23) **gɛndɛzaa sɛ bem / gɛɛndɛzaa sɛ bem** ‘I would have looked.’

7.6 Verbal forms

Kervran & Prost (1969:64) claim four forms for a Donnɔ Sɔ verb, from which inflected forms can be constructed. These include: 1. a root or radical (the inherently Imperfective base for various Imperfectives, including the imperfective participle with appended **-u**, the imperative, the subjunctive¹⁰, the future participle with appended **-ni**, 2. a “narrative past”¹¹ marked by **-i**, 3. a

⁹ The overlap of iterative (or habitual) aspect and future tense is not uncommon. The shared morphological strategy of reduplication is iconic, representing an extension, either in time (present > future) or in number (one > many/repeated acts). Compare similar usages in Kisi.

¹⁰ There is but a single form for the subjunctive, identical to the third person singular (essentially, the radical), used in all persons (Kervran & Prost 1969:82). An example: **Amba úñ bara** ‘may God help you’. The negative form uses the prohibitive **-u**: **Amba kɔnnun dinge kanau** ‘May God not do the will of enemies’.

perfect participle¹² marked by **-aa**, and 4. a dependent form (“forme associée”), marked by **-u**¹³. These are illustrated below:

(24)	radical (IPFV)	“narrative past” (PFV)	perfect participle (PP) (PFT)	dependent form (DEP) (MODAL? See ex.(45))
	gɛndɛ	gɛndi	gɛndaa	gɛndu

7.6.1 Forms based on, or containing, the (imperfective) radical:

(25)	Imperatives:	a	second singular	gɛndɛ	‘Look!’
		b	second plural	gɛndɛñ	‘Look!’
		c	dual (inclusive)	gɛndɛmo	‘Let us (you and I) look!’
		d	plural (inclusive)	gɛndɛmoñ	‘Let us (all) look!’

(26)	Imperfective participle:	a	nya-u (verb nya ‘eat’ ‘eating’ (see also ex. 13a,b)	b	nya-lɛ-u ‘not eating’
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(27) Future participle: **gɛndɛ-ni** ‘about to look’

(28) Progressive: **gándé-zé-m** ‘I am looking.’¹⁴ / ‘I will look’.

Kervran & Prost say (1969:84) that the progressive is used to indicate that an action is not yet accomplished: it may be in progress, or about to be in progress. Consequently, it may be translated either as a present imperfective or as a future (illustrated here):

(29) **Hawa u-ñ taga-ze-m**
Hawa you-IO show-PRG-1s
‘I’ll show Hawa to you.’ (Culy 1995:49)

(30) Habitual: **gəndɛ-zɛm** ‘I am looking habitually.’

¹¹ This is Kervran & Prost’s terminology: “le passé narratif” (1969:67,70). I have analyzed these forms in **-i** not as past tense but perfective aspect.

¹² Bendor-Samuel et al. (1969:175) describe forms in **-aa** as “perfective”. I feel that some forms in **-aa** (though not all) are better analyzed as “perfect” (see examples 14 (a,b), 43, 44), with “perfective” reserved for forms in **-i**, or analytic forms in **-aa** with AUX **be/ɛ** (15 (a,b),47).

¹³ Despite their homonymy, the dependent **-u**, the imperfective marker **-u**, and the prohibitive marker (also **-u**) are not identical. See also examples (26,45,52,54).

¹⁴ I think that this form is a univerbation of an earlier two word structure – **gándé sɛm** – which collocated the (imperfective) radical **gándé** ‘look(ing)’ and the auxiliary verb **se/sɛ** ‘have’, with the literal meaning ‘look(ing) have-I’ = ‘I am looking’. (See example (31) for the ‘past’ version of this, where the imperfective sense is again conveyed by the radical, the past reference by the perfective auxiliary **be/be** ‘be’.) I assume a similar analysis for the “Simple” perfect, which is, I suggest, the univerbated form of a prior combination of the perfect participle **gəndaa** and auxiliary **sɛm** with the literal meaning ‘(having) looked have I’ = ‘I have looked’. Both analyses assume the intervocalic voicing of the /s/ of the auxiliary (as Kervran & Prost suggest (1969:76), once univerbation has taken place: **gándé sɛm** > **gándézɛm**).

(distinguished from progressive by tone; Regrettably, this is the only example of such a tonal contrast provided by Kervran & Prost.)

(31) (“Imperfect”¹⁵: **gɛndɛ be-m** ‘I was looking.’)

In iterative and future¹⁶ forms, the vowel of the radical is reduplicated:

(32) Iterative: **gɛɛndɛ-zɛ-m** ‘I sometimes look/am looking.’

(33) Imperfect iterative: **gɛɛndɛ be-m** ‘I was sometimes looking.’

(34) Simple future: **gɛɛndɛ-m** ‘I shall look.’

7.6.2 “Narrative past” (= perfective aspect)

(35) **paza** ‘leave’ > **pazi** ‘he left’
tɛbɛlɛ ‘wrap’ > **tɛbɛli** ‘he wrapped’
kilee ‘steal’ > **kili** ‘he stole’

(36) a **gɛnd-u/i-m** b **gɛndɛ-l-u-m**
look-PFV-1s look-NEG-PFV-1s
‘I looked at.’ ‘I didn’t look at.’

In compound (= analytic) verbs (example (37)), the (rightmost) auxiliary determines the main time reference (here past via perfective **-i**). In complex sentences (examples (38) and (39)), the perfect participle may function as the verb in a subordinate clause:

(37) **paz-aa t-i**
leave-PFT send-PFV-Ø
‘He left (definitely).’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:90)

(38) **bombɔ yɛŋ-aa, i gɔ-ñ bomb-i**
carrier take-PFT child definite-DO put on back-PFV-Ø
‘Having taken the cloth, she put the child on her back.’

(39) **Amba Adama le Hawa léñ¹⁷ toŋ-aa, saza nɛ boz-i**
God Adam with Eve copula create-PFT garden in put-PFV-Ø
‘God, having created Adam and Eve, put them in the garden.’
(Kervran & Prost 1969:86)

The negative form of the perfective employs **-l-** before the TAM marker:

¹⁵ I employ Kervran & Prost’s term (1969:67).

¹⁶ Again, I employ Kervran & Prost’s term. As noted, forms which they term “future” could be analyzed as modal.

¹⁷ This morpheme is complex: it is explained by Kervran & Prost as a linking or copular element, formed from a combination of **le** ‘with’ plus the suffix **-ñ**. Its function is to link a noun and its attribute. Here, the meaning would be ‘Adam and Eve were (**leñ**) created (**tonaa**)’. See Kervran & Prost (1969:54,58).

(40) **gɛndi** ‘he looked’ > **gɛndɛ-l-i** ‘he has not looked’

Forms with extensions are subject to vowel harmony after the addition of **-i**:

(41) **damanda** ‘make go up’ > **damindi** ‘made go up’

7.6.3 Perfect participle

The Perfect participle appears regularly in a subordinate clause, as in examples (37) and (38) above, and often as the first element in the analytic perfect (where the auxiliary **wɔ** ‘be’ is used for intransitive verbs, giving a stative sense, and **se/sɛ** ‘have’ for transitive verbs, rendering a present perfect). Both examples are from Kervran & Prost (1969:79):

(42) a **yɛl-aa** **wɔ-m** b **yɛl-aa** **wɔ-lɔ-m**
 come-PFT be.IPFV-1s come-PFT be.IPFV-NEG-1s
 ‘I have come/am here.’ ‘I have not come.’

(43) a **paz-aa** **sɛ-m** b **paz-aa** **sɛ-lɛ-m**
 leave-PFT have-1s leave-PFT have-NEG-1s
 ‘I have left.’ ‘I have not left.’

The **-aa-** also appears to be incorporated into the “Simple” Perfect:

(44) **gɛnd-aa-zɛ-m**¹⁸
 look-PFT-zɛ-1s
 ‘I have looked.’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:79)

7.6.4 The Dependent form

The dependent form appears always in combination with another verb. It is common in the negative imperative (where the main verb is **na-** ‘forget’). Despite the labelling, we think it might be possible to consider this morpheme as a subjunctive:

(45) **gɛnd-u** **na-u**
 look-DEP forget-prohibitive
 ‘Don’t look!’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:81)
 (Possibly lit: ‘Do not forget lest you should look’)

7.7 Auxiliaries

Donno So has an extensive arsenal of auxiliary verbs, including two different existential verbs (imperfective) **wɔ** and (perfective) **be/be**, both ‘be’, and one primarily locative (?) **to** ‘be in a

¹⁸ See fn. 13 for an analysis of this form.

place’. Whereas the first two are used as auxiliaries for the progressive, their distribution differs: Imperfective **wɔ** is used for present reference, and is glossed as be.IPFV; Perfective **be/be** is used for non-present (past and future) reference (and is glossed as be.PFV). Auxiliary **se/se** ‘have’ appears with the analytic future (example (20)), the conditional perfect (example (23)) and the “plus-que-parfait surcomposé” (fn.4).

Other auxiliaries convey various aspectual meanings: **-je** (according to Calame-Griaule, from a verb **jɛɛ** ‘take’), used without aspectual or modal restriction (Bendor-Samuel et al. 1989:175), **-do** (from **doɔ** ‘arrive’, used only in the progressive aspect), and **-go** (from **gɛɛ** ‘say’, used only in what Bendor-Samuel et al. call irrealis – given the verb, suggesting an evidential). The following example illustrates some of the more important auxiliary verbs, and the pronominal subject markers:

(46) wɔm ‘I am’	bem ‘I was’	bɛbɛm ‘I will be’	sɛm ‘I have’
wɔu ‘you are’	beu ‘you were’	bɛbɛu ‘you will be’	sɛu ‘you have’
wɔ ‘he/she/it is’	be ‘he/she/it was’	bebia [sic] ‘he/she/it will be’	sɛ ‘he/she/it has’
wɔñ ‘we are’	beñ ‘we were’	bɛbɛmmo ‘we will be’	sɛñ ‘we have’
wɔñ ‘you are’	beñ ‘you were’	bɛbɛmmo ‘you will be’	sɛñ [sic] ‘you have’
wuiya ‘they are’	biya ‘they were’	bɛbɛmmo ‘they will be’	siya ‘they have’

Below are examples with existential auxiliaries:

(47) Perfective aux **be/be** ‘be’ with past reference:

a **yaa, yɛl-aa be**
yesterday, come-PFT be.PFV-Ø
‘Yesterday, he had arrived.’¹⁹

b **Anta-ñ ibɛ-ra ya w-aa be-m**
Anta-OM market-LOC yesterday see-PFT be.PFV-1s
‘I saw Anta at the market yesterday.’ (Culy 1995:48)

(48) Imperfective aux **wɔ** ‘be’ with present reference:

yɛl-aa wɔ
come-PFT be.IPFV-Ø
‘He has come.’ (= ‘he is there’) (Kervran & Prost 1969:88)

(49) a **ginɛ giru nɛ wɔ**
house front in be.IPFV-Ø
‘He **is** in front of the house.’

¹⁹ This is called a pluperfect by Kervran & Prost (1969:89), presumably because of the double marking (perfect participle + perfective AUX). However, this analytic construction seems to be a common method of expressing past events, and is usually translated as a simple past, not as a pluperfect. Therefore, we see no reason why example (47a) could not be translated equally as correctly as ‘Yesterday, he arrived’.

- b **gine giru nε be**
house front in be.PFV-Ø
‘He **was** in front of the house.’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:56).

Auxiliary **se/sε** ‘have’ appears primarily in analytic future forms, as in the following:

- (50) Analytic future: **gεndεzaa sεm** ‘I shall look.’
Iterative future: **gεndεzaa sεm** ‘I shall look several times.’
Conditional perfect: **gεndεzaa sε bem** ‘I would have looked.’

In combination with the perfect participle (as in example (43), repeated here), the use of this auxiliary renders a present perfect:

- (51) Present perfect (perfect aspect, present reference): **pazaa sεm** ‘I have left.’

The Perfect is often analytic, using the perfect participle of the leftmost lexical verb and semantically compatible auxiliaries (indicating action is complete) **te** ‘send’, **bolo** ‘leave’, and **dya** ‘take’ in their perfective form. Note that although all three exist as full verbs, in this particular aspectual usage they show a substantial amount of semantic bleaching.

- (52) Examples of auxiliaries expressing perfect/perfective aspect:

- a with AUX **te** ‘send’:

dyag-aa t-i
break-PFT send-PFV-Ø
‘He broke/has broken.’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:90)

- b with AUX **bolo** ‘leave’:

yim-aa bol-i
die-PFT leave-PFV-Ø
‘He has died/is dead.’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:89)

- c with AUX **dya** ‘take’:

min-aa dy-ε
swallow-PFT take-PFV-Ø
‘He swallowed/has swallowed.’ (Kervran & Prost 1969:90)

7.8 Negatives

Dogon distinguishes two negatives, one a prohibitive, marked by final **-u** in the singular, **-giñ** in the plural:

(53) **gɛndɛ** ‘look’ > **gɛndɛ-u** ‘Don’t (s) look!’ > **gɛndɛ-giñ** ‘Don’t (p) look!’

There is a continuous prohibitive which uses a combination of the future participle and the perfective auxiliary **be/be** (Kervran & Prost 1969:81):

(54) **gɛndɛni bɛ** ‘Be looking!’ > **gɛndɛni bɛu** ‘Don’t be looking!’

The auxiliary **nau** (plural **nagiñ**) (verb **na** ‘forget’) may also be used. The leftmost main verb is put into the Dependent form, and the auxiliary bears the prohibitive marker:

(55) **gɛndu nau** ‘Don’t look!’

The majority of other negative forms are marked with **-IV-**. A post-posed independent particle **lâa** appears in the negative form of “presentation” utterances (as a denial of identity or existence).

(56) **mí bàñ** ‘It is my father’ > **mí bà lâa** ‘It is not my father’

The following table provides some representative examples of various forms and their negative counterparts (following). Note that in certain analytic forms with the existential auxiliaries, *either* the main verb or the auxiliary may bear the negative marker, with no discernable meaning difference (Kervran & Prost 1969:78):

(57) Affirmative

Existential auxiliaries:	wɔ-m ‘I am’ gɛndɛ-u wɔ-m ‘I am (there)looking’ be-m ‘I was’ gɛndɛ-u be-m ‘I was (there)looking’
Progressive:	gɛndɛ-zɛ-m ‘I am looking’/ ‘I will look’
Iterative:	gɛndɛ-zɛ-m ‘I am often looking’
“Imperfect”: (=past progressive)	gɛndɛ be-m ‘I was looking’
Simple perfect:	gɛnd-aa-zɛ-m ‘I have looked’
“PluPerfect”:	gɛnd-aa bem ‘I had looked’
Perfective:	gɛnd-i-Ø ‘he looked’
(analytic) future:	gɛndɛ-zaa sɛ-m ‘I shall look’
Imperfective participle:	gɛndɛ-u ‘looking’
Perfect participle:	gɛnd-aa ‘having looked’

Negative

Existential auxiliaries:	wɔ-lɔ-m ‘I am not’ gɛndɛ-u wɔ-lɔ-m / gɛndɛ-lɛ-u wɔ-m ‘I am not looking’ be-le-m ‘I was not’ gɛndɛ-u be-le-m / gɛndɛ-lɛ-u be-m ‘I was not looking’
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Progressive:	gɛndɛ-lɛ-m ‘I am not looking’
Iterative:	gɛɛndɛ-lɛ-m ‘I am not often looking’
“Imperfect”: (=past progressive)	gɛndɛ be-le-m ‘I was not looking’
Simple perfect:	gɛnd-a-lɛ-m ‘I have not looked’
“PluPerfect”:	gɛnd-aa be-le-m / gɛndɛ-lu be-m ‘I had not looked’
Perfective:	gɛndɛ-l-i-Ø ‘he didn’t look’
(Analytic) future:	gɛndɛ-zaa sɛ-lɛ-m ‘I shall not look’
Imperfective participle:	gɛndɛ-lɛ-u ‘not looking’
Perfect participle:	gɛndɛ-lu ‘not having looked’

In the simple future, suffix **-r** is found (**-d** after a nasal), which replaces both reduplication and certain vowels of the affirmative forms:

gɛndɛ ‘look’	gɛɛndɛm ‘I shall look’	gɛndɛrum ‘I shall not look’
nɔ ‘drink’	nɔnɔm ‘I shall drink’	nɔrum ‘I shall not drink’
kana ‘make’	kaanam ‘I shall make’	kandum ‘I shall not make’
paza ‘leave’	paazam ‘I shall leave’	parum ‘I shall not leave’

7.9 Summary of Forms (Affirmative only)

Imperatives:	gɛndɛ ‘Look! (singular)’ gɛndɛɲ ‘Look! (plural)’ gɛndɛmo ‘Let us (you and I) look!’ gɛndɛmoɲ ‘Let us (all) look!’
Participles:	gɛndɛu (Present = Imperfective) ‘looking’ gɛndɛni (Future) ‘about to look’ gɛndaani (Future Perfect) ‘(once) having looked’ gɛndaa (Perfect) ‘having looked’
Imperfective (progressive):	gɛndɛzɛm ‘I look/am looking/will look’
Imperfective (habitual):	gɛndɛzɛɲm ‘I am looking habitually’
Imperfective (iterative):	gɛɛndɛzɛm ‘I sometimes look’
“Imperfect” (analytic progressive):	gɛndɛ bem ‘I was looking’
Imperfective (analytic iterative):	gɛɛndɛ bem ‘I kept looking’
Perfective (= “narrative past”):	gɛndum/gɛndim ‘I looked’
Simple perfect:	gɛndaazɛm ‘I looked/have looked’
Simple future:	gɛɛndɛm ‘I shall look’
Analytic future:	gɛndɛzaa sɛm ‘I shall look’
Iterative future:	gɛɛndɛzaa sɛm ‘I shall look repeatedly’
Conditional:	gɛɛndɛ bem ‘I would look’
Conditional perfect:	gɛndɛzaa sɛ bem ‘I would have looked’

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