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Donnɔ Sɔ (Dogon)
(Volta-Congo, Atlantic-Congo)
Sarah Rose

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, Baŋgi Me, does not belong in the group according to Blench (2005b). This chapter is based primarily on the Donnɔ Sɔ(ɔ) dialect described by Kervran & Prost (1969) and Culy (1995). Some data are from Tɔɔ Sɔ(ɔ), the national language of Mali.

Oral tradition claims Dogon speakers originated from the west bank of the Niger River, around 1490 A.D but Blench, 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).

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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.

2 The word sɔɔ 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 Donnɔ Sɔ dialect, a convention which I will use in this chapter.

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)). Donn Sɔ 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)  ```
    inɛ `person' > inɛ ũ `people'  
    ārā `man' > ārā ũ `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)  ```
    ɛnɛ pilu ge mbe  
    goat white DEF plural  
    `the white goats'
```

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

(4)  ```
    mí bà `my father' > mí bàĨ `it is my father' > mí bà lāa `it is not my father'
```

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

(5)  ```
    peju `sheep' (s) > pejuĩ `It is a sheep'  
    peju gbe `the sheep' (p) > peju gbei `It is the sheep'
```

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

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⁴ A similar usage (with le) appears in Kisi.
(6)  a  mí  bá-ũ  w-ũ-∅
     my  father-DO  see-PFV-3s
     ‘He saw my father.’

     b  ú-ũ  w-ũ-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  Anda-ũ  keeloo  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-ũ  wainge  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 -∅, 1p -ũ, 2p -ũ, 3p
-i/-iya/-nni. Occasionally, both pronominal subject markers and verb-final subject markers co-
occur (10a):

(10)  a  pézũ  mí  dũ-ũ-m  b  pézũ  da-l-ũ-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-∅ ‘he takes’ >  dy-e-∅ ‘he took’ (FV -a + perfective marker -i > -e)
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 wo ‘be’ (= present tense reference):

a    gëndë-u    wo-m    
look-IPFV be.IPFV⁶-1s
‘I am (there) looking.’

b    gëndë-u    wo-lo-m
look-IPFV be.IPFV-NEG-1s
‘I am not looking.’


(14) Analytic verb with perfect participle and AUX se/e ‘have’:

(= present perfect)

a    bond-aa    se-m    
call-PFT have-1s
‘I have called.’

b    bond-aa    se-le-m
call-PFT have-NEG-1s
‘I have not called.’


(15) Analytic verb with perfect participle and perfective AUX be/e ‘be’

(= past reference)⁷

a    w-aa    be-ñ    
see-PFT be.PFV-1p
‘We saw.’

b    w-aa    be-le-ñ
see-PFT be.PFV-NEG-1p
‘We did not see.’

(Verb w(a) ‘see’)

7.3.1 Extensions

Donnø Sø 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: gënaa se be ‘il avait été ayant regardé’. Note that the vowel in the verb se/se ‘have’ is variable (e ~ e) (Kervran & Prost 1969:89). The significance – if any – of this alternation is unclear. A similar variation is seen in the verb be/be ‘be’.

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

⁷See §7.5.2.2 for forms with FV –i, the alternative strategy for expressing past reference.
Reflexive:  
  \textbf{dumo} ‘be finished’ > \textbf{dume} ‘finish’  
  \textbf{paga} ‘attach’ > \textbf{page} ‘attach to oneself’  
  \textbf{kaba} ‘separate’ > \textbf{kabe} ‘separate self’

Inversive:  
  \textbf{daga} ‘lock’ > \textbf{dagala} ‘unlock’  
  \textbf{debe} ‘cover’ > \textbf{debele} ‘uncover’

Causative:  
  \textbf{daba} ‘cover’ > \textbf{dabar} ‘make cover’  
  \textbf{go} ‘leave’ > \textbf{gondo} ‘make s.o. leave’

Permissive:  
  \textbf{go} ‘leave’ > \textbf{gomo} ‘allow to leave’

Extensions may be combined:

\[(16) \textbf{go} \text{ ‘leave’} > \textbf{gondo} \text{ ‘make (someone) leave’} > \textbf{gondomo} \text{ ‘allow to make leave’}\]

7.4 Participles

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

\[(17) \textbf{gend} \text{ ‘look’} > \textbf{gend}ni \text{ ‘about to look’}  
  \textbf{wo} ‘be’ > \textbf{woni} ‘about to be’\]

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 infixed -aa-, the future value by suffix -ni:

\[(18) \textbf{nama gb-aa-ni dyand-aaze-m}  
  \text{meat buy-PFT-FUT cook-PFT-1s}  
  ‘Having bought the meat, I will cook it’\]

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 Donn Sô 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

\[\text{8 This is a direct translation from Kervran & Prost’s French (“ayant acheté de la viande, je vais la cuire”). However, since the main verb dyandaazem is what Kervran & Prost (1969:79) refer to as the Simple Perfect, a more accurate (or at least a more literal) translation would likely be ‘Once I will have bought the meat, I(’ll) have it cooked’. More will be said on the possible analysis of the Simple Perfect below.}\]
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 So 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 So 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 se (example 20), with no discernable meaning difference:

(19) Simple Future formed by reduplication
   a of root vowel: ge-ε-nde-m ‘I shall look.’
   b of syllable: no-no-m ‘I shall drink.’

(20) Analytic future formed by the use of -zaa se: gendezaa sem ‘I shall look.’

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

(21) gendezaa sem ‘I shall look many times.’

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

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

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

(23) gendezaa se bem / gendezaa se bem ‘I would have looked.’

7.6 Verbal forms

Kervran & Prost (1969:64) claim four forms for a Donnɔ So 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

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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 .gender bara ‘may God help you’. The negative form uses the prohibitive -u: Amba kɔnnun dings kanau ‘May God not do the will of enemies’.

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perfect participle\textsuperscript{12} marked by -\textit{aa}, and 4. a dependent form (“forme associée”), marked by -\textit{u}\textsuperscript{13}. These are illustrated below:

(24) \begin{tabular}{llllll}
radical & “narrative past” & perfect participle (PP) & dependent form (DEP) \\
(IPFV) & (PFV) & (PFT) & (MODAL? See ex.(45)) \\
gendi & gendi & gendi & gendu \\
\end{tabular}

\textbf{7.6.1 Forms based on, or containing, the (imperfective) radical:}

(25) Imperatives: a second singular gende ‘Look!’  
b second plural genden ‘Look!’  
c dual (inclusive) gendemo ‘Let us (you and I) look!’  
d plural (inclusive) gendemo ‘Let us (all) look!’  

(26) Imperfective participle: a nya-u (verb nya ‘eat) b nya-lg-u ‘eating’ (see also ex. 13a,b) ‘not eating’  

(27) Future participle: gende-ni ‘about to look’

(28) Progressive: gende-zé-m ‘I am looking,’\textsuperscript{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: gende-zé-m ‘I am looking habitually.’

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{14} I think that this form is a univerbation of an earlier two word structure – gende sàm – which collocated the (imperfective) radical gendi ‘look(ing)’ and the auxiliary verb se/se ‘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 gendaa and auxiliary sàm 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: gendi sàm > gende-sàm.
(distinguished from progressive by tone; Regrettably, this is the only example of such a
tonal contrast provided by Kervran & Prost.)

(31) (“Imperfect”\(^\text{15}\): **gende be-m** ‘I was looking.’

In iterative and future\(^\text{16}\) forms, the vowel of the radical is reduplicated:

(32) Iterative: **gẹnd-e-ze-m** ‘I sometimes look/am looking.’

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

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

7.6.2 “Narrative past” (= perfective aspect)

(35) **paza** ‘leave’ > **pazi** ‘he left’

**tẹbẹlẹ** ‘wrap’ > **tẹbẹlụ** ‘he wrapped’

**kilee** ‘steal’ > **kili** ‘he stole’

(36) a **gend-u/i-m** b **gende-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-PFV send-PFV-Ø

‘He left (definitely).’(Kervran & Prost 1969:90)

(38) **bombo yẹp-aa, i ọgụ ụbụ** **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 léń ọp-aa, saza nę 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 -I- before the TAM marker:

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\(^{15}\) 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 -\(\tilde{n}\). Its function is to link a noun and its attribute. Here, the meaning would
be ‘Adam and Eve were (\(\text{leń}\)) created (\(\text{tonaa}\))’. See Kervran & Prost (1969:54,58).
(40)  \textit{gendi} ‘he looked’  >  \textit{gend-\textit{l-i}} ‘he has not looked’

Forms with extensions are subject to vowel harmony after the addition of \textit{-i}:

(41)  \textit{damanda} ‘make go up’  >  \textit{dami\textit{ndi}} ‘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 \textit{wo} ‘be’ is used for intransitive verbs, giving a stative sense, and \textit{se/se} ‘have’ for transitive verbs, rendering a present perfect). Both examples are from Kervran & Prost (1969:79):

(42)  a  \textit{ye\textit{l-aa wo-\textit{m}}}  \\
     come-PFT  be.IPV-1s  \\
    \textit{‘I have come/am here.’}  \\  
     b  \textit{ye\textit{l-aa wo-lo-\textit{m}}}  \\
     come-PFT  be.IPV-NEG-1s  \\
    \textit{‘I have not come.’}

(43)  a  \textit{paz-\textit{aa se-\textit{m}}}  \\
     leave-PFT  have-1s  \\
    \textit{‘I have left.’}  \\  
     b  \textit{paz-\textit{aa se-le-\textit{m}}}  \\
     leave-PFT  have-NEG-1s  \\
    \textit{‘I have not left.’}

The \textit{-aa} also appears to be incorporated into the “Simple” Perfect:

(44)  \textit{gend-aa-ze-\textit{m}}\textsuperscript{18}  \\
     look-PFT  have-1s  \\
    \textit{‘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 \textit{na-} ‘forget’). Despite the labelling, we think it might be possible to consider this morpheme as a subjunctive:

(45)  \textit{gend-\textit{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

Donn\textsuperscript{c} So has an extensive arsenal of auxiliary verbs, including two different existential verbs (imperfective) \textit{wo} and (perfective) \textit{be/be}, both ‘be’, and one primarily locative (?) \textit{to} ‘be in a

\textsuperscript{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 \( \text{wo} \) is used for present reference, and is glossed as be.IPFV; Perfective \( \text{be/be} \) is used for non-present (past and future) reference (and is glossed as be.PFV). Auxiliary \( \text{se/se} \) ‘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 jee ‘take’), used without aspectual or modal restriction (Bendor-Samuel et al. 1989:175), -do (from ddo ‘arrive’, used only in the progressive aspect), and -go (from gge ‘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) \( \text{wom} \) ‘I am’ \( \text{bem} \) ‘I was’ \( \text{bebem} \) ‘I will be’ \( \text{sem} \) ‘I have’
\( \text{wou} \) ‘you are’ \( \text{beu} \) ‘you were’ \( \text{bebeu} \) ‘you will be’ \( \text{seu} \) ‘you have’
\( \text{wo} \) ‘he/she/it is’ \( \text{be} \) ‘he/she/it was’ \( \text{bebia} \) [sic] ‘he/she/it will be’ \( \text{se} \) ‘he/she/it has’
\( \text{woñ} \) ‘we are’ \( \text{beñ} \) ‘we were’ \( \text{bebemmo} \) ‘we will be’ \( \text{señ} \) ‘we have’
\( \text{woñ} \) ‘you are’ \( \text{beñ} \) ‘you were’ \( \text{bebemmo} \) ‘you will be’ \( \text{señ} \) [sic]‘you have’
\( \text{wuiya} \) ‘they are’ \( \text{biya} \) ‘they were’ \( \text{bebemmo} \) ‘they will be’ \( \text{siya} \) ‘they have’

Below are examples with existential auxiliaries:

(47) Perfective aux \( \text{be/be} \) ‘be’ with past reference:

a \( \text{ya, ye}-\text{aa be} \)
\( \text{yesterday, come-PFT be.PFV-Ø} \)
\( \text{‘Yesterday, he had arrived.’} \)

b \( \text{Anta-ñi ibe-ra ya w-aa be-m} \)
\( \text{Anta-OM market-LOC yesterday see-PFT be.PFV-1s} \)
\( \text{‘I saw Anta at the market yesterday.’ (Culy 1995:48)} \)

(48) Imperfective aux \( \text{wo} \) ‘be’ with present reference:

\( \text{ye}-\text{aa wo} \)
\( \text{come-PFT be.IPFV-Ø} \)
\( \text{‘He has come.’ (= ‘he is there’) (Kervran & Prost 1969:88)} \)

(49) a \( \text{ginge giru ne wo} \)
\( \text{house front in be.IPFV-Ø} \)
\( \text{‘He is in front of the house.’} \)

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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  

\begingroup
\footnotesize
\begin{align*}
\text{b} & \quad \text{ging} \text{ giru} \text{ ne} \text{ be} \\
& \quad \text{house} \text{ front} \text{ in} \text{ be.PFV-Ø} \\
& \quad \text{‘He was in front of the house.’} \quad (\text{Kervran & Prost 1969:56}).
\end{align*}
\endgroup

Auxiliary \text{se/se} ‘have’ appears primarily in analytic future forms, as in the following:

(50) Analytic future: \text{gendzęzaa sem} ‘I shall look.’
Iterative future: \text{geęndęzaa sem} ‘I shall look several times.’
Conditional perfect: \text{geęndęzaa se 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): \text{pazaa sem} ‘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) \text{te} ‘send’, \text{bolo} ‘leave’, and \text{dyaa} ‘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 \text{te} ‘send’:

\begin{align*}
\text{dyag-aa} & \quad \text{t-i} \\
& \quad \text{break-PFT send-PFV-Ø} \\
& \quad \text{‘He broke/has broken.’} \quad (\text{Kervran & Prost 1969:90})
\end{align*}

b  with AUX \text{bolo} ‘leave’:

\begin{align*}
\text{yim-aa} & \quad \text{bol-i} \\
& \quad \text{die-PFT leave-PFV-Ø} \\
& \quad \text{‘He has died/is dead.’} \quad (\text{Kervran & Prost 1969:89})
\end{align*}

c  with AUX \text{dyaa} ‘take’:

\begin{align*}
\text{min-aa} & \quad \text{dy-ε} \\
& \quad \text{swallow-PFT take-PFV-Ø} \\
& \quad \text{‘He swallowed/has swallowed.’} \quad (\text{Kervran & Prost 1969:90})
\end{align*}

7.8 Negatives

Dogon distinguishes two negatives, one a prohibitive, marked by final -\text{u} in the singular, -\text{gĩn} in the plural:
(53)  **gende** ‘look’  >  **gende-u** ‘Don’t (s) look!’  >  **gende-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)  **gendeñi be** ‘Be looking!’  >  **gendeñi beu** ‘Don’t be looking!’

The auxiliary **nau** (plural **nagíñ**) (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)  **genu nau** ‘Don’t look!’

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

(56)  **mí bàñ** ‘It is my father’  >  **mí bà làa** ‘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)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existential auxiliaries</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔ-m ‘I am’</td>
<td>wɔ-m ‘I am’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔ-m ‘I am (there)looking’</td>
<td>wɔ-m ‘I am (there)looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be-m ‘I was’</td>
<td>be-m ‘I was’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be-m ‘I was (there)looking’</td>
<td>be-m ‘I was (there)looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progressive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-ze-m ‘I am looking’</td>
<td>gende-ze-m ‘I am looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-ze-m ‘I will look’</td>
<td>gende-ze-m ‘I will look’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iterative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-ze-m ‘I am often looking’</td>
<td>gende-ze-m ‘I am often looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Imperfect”:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende be-m ‘I was looking’</td>
<td>gende be-m ‘I was looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(=past progressive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple perfect:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-aa-ze-m ‘I have looked’</td>
<td>gende-aa-ze-m ‘I have looked’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“PluPerfect”:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-aa bem ‘I had looked’</td>
<td>gende-aa bem ‘I had looked’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende i-Ø ‘he looked’</td>
<td>gende i-Ø ‘he looked’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(analytic) future:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-zaa sɛ-m ‘I shall look’</td>
<td>gende-zaa sɛ-m ‘I shall look’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective participle:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-u ‘looking’</td>
<td>gende-u ‘looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect participle:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-aa ‘having looked’</td>
<td>gende-aa ‘having looked’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existential auxiliaries</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wɔ-lo-m ‘I am not’</td>
<td>wɔ-lo-m ‘I am not’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-u wɔ-lo-m / gende-le-u wɔ-m ‘I am not looking’</td>
<td>gende-u wɔ-lo-m / gende-le-u wɔ-m ‘I am not looking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be-le-m ‘I was not’</td>
<td>be-le-m ‘I was not’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gende-u be-le-m / gende-le-u be-m ‘I was not looking’</td>
<td>gende-u be-le-m / gende-le-u be-m ‘I was not looking’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progressive: \( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}le-m} \) ‘I am not looking’
Iterative: \( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}le-m} \) ‘I am not often looking’
“Imperfect”: \( \text{g\text{-}nde be-\text{-}le-m} \) ‘I was not looking’
(= past progressive)
Simple perfect: \( \text{g\text{-}end-a-\text{-}le-m} \) ‘I have not looked’
“PluPerfect”: \( \text{g\text{-}end-aa be-\text{-}le-m} / \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}lu be-m} \) ‘I had not looked’
Perfective: \( \text{g\text{-}ndum} / \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}lu be-m} \) ‘I looked’
(Analytic) future: \( \text{g\text{-}nd-
\text{-}zaa se-\text{-}le-m} \) ‘I shall not look’
Imperfective participle: \( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}le-u} \) ‘not looking’
Perfect participle: \( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}lu} \) ‘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:

\( \text{g\text{-}nde} \) ‘look’ \( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}m} \) ‘I shall look’ \( \text{g\text{-}nderum} \) ‘I shall not look’
\( \text{no} \) ‘drink’ \( \text{no-\text{-}m} \) ‘I shall drink’ \( \text{norum} \) ‘I shall not drink’
\( \text{kana} \) ‘make’ \( \text{kana\text{-}m} \) ‘I shall make’ \( \text{kandum} \) ‘I shall not make’
\( \text{paza} \) ‘leave’ \( \text{paza-\text{-}m} \) ‘I shall leave’ \( \text{parum} \) ‘I shall not leave’

7.9 Summary of Forms (Affirmative only)

Imperatives: \( \text{g\text{-}nde} \) ‘Look! (singular)’
\( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}m} \) ‘Look! (plural)’
\( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}mo} \) ‘Let us (you and I) look!’
\( \text{g\text{-}nde-\text{-}mo\text{-}n} \) ‘Let us (all) look!’

Participles: \( \text{g\text{-}ndeu} \) (Present = Imperfective) ‘looking’
\( \text{g\text{-}ndeni} \) (Future) ‘about to look’
\( \text{g\text{-}endaani} \) (Future Perfect) ‘(once) having looked’
\( \text{g\text{-}enda\text{-}a} \) (Perfect) ‘having looked’

Imperfective (progressive): \( \text{g\text{-}deze\text{-}m} \) ‘I look/am looking/will look’
Imperfective (habitual): \( \text{g\text{-}dz\text{-}u} \) ‘I am looking habitually’
“Imperfect” (analytic progressive): \( \text{g\text{-}deze\text{-}m} \) ‘I sometimes look’
Imperfective (analytic iterative): \( \text{g\text{-}de\text{-}be\text{-}m} \) ‘I was looking’
\( \text{g\text{-}de\text{-}be\text{-}m} \) ‘I kept looking’
Perfective (= “narrative past”): \( \text{gendum/gendim} \) ‘I looked’
Simple perfect: \( \text{gendaaz\text{-}m} \) ‘I looked/have looked’
Simple future: \( \text{gendem} \) ‘I shall look’
Analytic future: \( \text{g\text{-}deze\text{-}zaa se-\text{-}m} \) ‘I shall look’
Iterative future: \( \text{g\text{-}deze\text{-}zaa se\text{-}m} \) ‘I shall look repeatedly’
Conditional: \( \text{g\text{-}de\text{-}be\text{-}m} \) ‘I would look’
Conditional perfect: \( \text{g\text{-}deze\text{-}zaa se\text{-}bem} \) ‘I would have looked’
References


