

8

Doyayo

(Duru, Adamawa, Adamawa-Ubangi)

John Hewson

8.1 General

Doyayo, spoken by a people known as the Dowayo, is spoken in and around Poli, Department of the Benue, in North Cameroon, by some 15,000 speakers. The description here, based on Marinus and Elisabeth Wiering (1994), is of the Poli dialect. Doyayo has seven oral vowels, long (written geminated) and short [i, e, ε, a, ɔ, o, u], and five nasal vowels, long and short, marked by a cedilla in the orthography, but here marked by a tilde: [ĩ, ê, ã, õ, ù]. Every syllable carries one tone or a sequence of tones, which are indicated by means of raised numerals: ¹ high, ² mid-high, ³ mid-low, ⁴ low. We are grateful to Elisabeth Wiering for correspondence, advice and correction of data.

8.2 Word order

Basic word order is S AUX V O X, as in (1a), although it precedes the infinitive, as in (1b). The O may also be fronted for focus, as in (1c). When objects are pronominal, both IO and DO, in that order, are cliticized to the V, as in (1d), or to AUX (whichever comes first) as in (1e). There are also complexities with the objects of multiple or sequential verbs.

- (1) a **mi³ gben³ daŋ² gi³¹ luk¹ du¹**
 1s saw knife.DEM house in
 ‘I found this knife in the house.’
- b **siŋ²³-mɔ¹ gi² lɛl²³ hɛ¹di¹-go³**
 sister-2s is place sweep-IPFV
 ‘Your sister is sweeping.’
- c **da³nɛ¹-mi¹ bɔ¹ mi¹ taa¹² zaa¹ loo¹-ko³**
 hat-1s DEM1s am.not other serve-IPFV
 ‘I’m not going back to get my hat.’
- d **hi³ wãã⁴-si⁴-mi⁴-ge⁴**
 3p catch-BEN¹-me-him
 ‘They caught him for me.’
- e **hi¹ gi²-si¹-mi³-ge³ wãã¹-ko³**
 3p be-BEN-me-himcatch-IPFV
 ‘They will be catching him for me.’

¹ We have consistently included the epenthetic vowel [i] as part of the preceding morph.

What is termed “Performative” aspect in this chapter has the simplest structure, consisting of V alone. Several aspects are based on the Incompletive, which has a more complicated structure. The Incompletive marker appears to be the verbal suffix **-ko³**. It combines with various morphemes at AUX to give time, modal and aspectual forms such as the Progressive, “Future”, Habitual/Potential, Remote, and Past Time. Since not all the morphemes involved at AUX are shown as co-occurring, we cannot be sure of their absolute ordering, but it appears to be roughly as follows:

- (2) Habitual/Potential: **gɔ²**
 Remote: **da³**, “Undesirable” **za²**
 Progressive: **gi²**
 Past Time: **ne¹**

The habitual function has a temporal meaning (‘when’) in a subordinate clause, but habitual or purposive in a main clause. Alone of the morphemes at AUX, its ordering is not fixed, as the variations in (3) show: the meaning of all three is the same.

- (3) a **gɔ² mɔ³ re³ko²**
 POT 2s go
 ‘when you go’
- b **mɔ³ gɔ² re³ko²** ‘ibid’
- c **mɔ³ gɔ² mɔ³ re³ko²** ‘ibid’

8.3 Word formation

Doyayo has two types of morphemes, free (an open, lexical class) and bound (a grammatical, closed class). It is radically analytic: all roots are monosyllabic, although they may be compounded to create derived forms. Bound morphemes, which are postposed, are often composed of a single consonant, and may consequently be followed by an epenthetic vowel (see fn.1). Most roots have a verbal stem, and there are common suffixes which may be added to form a variety of nominalizations, as in (4) and (5):

- (4)
- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| wɔr³ | ‘die’ |
| wɔr³ko² | ‘death, corpse’ |
| wɔrk³yɔ¹ | ‘dead’ |
| wɔ¹le¹ | ‘paralyzed’ |
| wɔ¹se¹ | ‘epidemic’ |
| wɔr³kil¹yɔ¹ | ‘dead’ |
| wɔ³tig¹yɔ¹ | ‘anguish, extreme anxiety’ |
- (5)
- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| gaa²³ | ‘shine, be bright’ |
| gaa¹to¹, gaat¹yɔ¹ | ‘clean’ |
| gaa¹le¹ | ‘bright’ |

gaa¹tig¹yo¹	‘cleanliness’
gaa¹kil³yo²	‘brightness, daylight’
gaa¹ki¹	‘very bright’

Other derivational suffixes are typical extensions of the verb. The following fourteen suffixes are listed by E. Wiering (1994:124) in order of frequency, beginning with the most frequent.

Roots:	baa²³	kar⁴
1. Benefactive -s	baas²³ ‘seem hard to someone’	kas⁴¹ ‘climb for someone’
2. Immediate -z	baaz²³ ‘be hard just now’	kaz⁴¹ ‘climb this way’
3. Accessory -n	baan²³ ‘be hard with’	kan⁴¹ ‘climb with’
4. Prepunctive	baad²³¹ / baa²³dir¹ -d/-dir ‘already be hard’	kard⁴¹ / kad⁴¹ ‘already have climbed’
5. Reciprocal	-tin baa²³tin¹ ‘all be hard’	kar⁴tin¹ / ka⁴tin¹ ‘climb together’
6. Intensive/durative	baas²³¹ ‘be so hard’ -s/-sig baa²³sig¹ ‘stay so hard’	ka⁴sig¹ ‘keep on climbing’
7. Causative -s	baas³ ‘harden, strengthen’	kas⁴ ‘bring up, cause to mount’
Root:	kpēē³ ‘close’	
8. Passive -y	kpēēy¹ ‘be closed’	kay¹/ka¹riy¹ ‘be climbed, mounted’
9. Iterative -t	baat²³ ‘several are hard’	kat⁴ ‘climb many times’
10. Distributive	-l baal²³ ‘be hard in several places’	ka⁴ril¹ ‘climb many trees’
11. Intensive/ reversive -r	gub⁴ ‘pour out, spill’ kpēēr⁴ ‘open’	gubr⁴ ‘spill completely’
Roots:	zīī²³ ‘long’ (ADJ)	tus³ ‘spit’
12. Augmentative -m	zīīm³ ‘be long’	tums³ ‘spit out’

It must be remembered whenever the head verb is formed from an infinitive root, the derivational and pronominal object suffixes are fronted and cliticized to the immediately preceding auxiliary (**gi**²) which in these circumstances becomes obligatory (see (1e) above). This shift is also required if the imperfective suffix /-ko³/ is used. Suffixes include **-ko**³ (Incomplete) and **-ɔ**³ (Performative).

8.4.1 *Contrastive representations of time*

As in many Niger-Congo languages, the contrast between past and present events is represented aspectually: whatever is represented as complete is normally understood to be past, and whatever is represented as incomplete is normally understood as ongoing in the present, but these default understandings may be altered by adverbial and other elements.

A review of all the data, however, leads to the conclusion that a case can be made for a binary tense contrast between future and non-future, as discussed in §8.4.4.

8.4.2 *The representation of complete or unchanging events*

The least marked form of the verb is described as an ‘aorist’ (1994:54), presumably because it has two complementary functions, ‘a completive and a gnomic aspect’. The completive function is used to represent past time, ‘an action, process, or state completed or existing in the past’. The gnomic function is generic, as in English *water boils at 100 degrees centigrade*. With stative verbs it likewise normally represents the present. This twofold function indicates that it is not a Perfective (which is the form that was labeled *aorist* by the ancient Greek grammarians), but a Performative, similar to the simple forms of the English verb, but without the English tense contrast between past and non-past.

In (8) we give the paradigm of an activity verb (‘pour’) and an inchoative verb with a resultant state (‘grow’), which has also undergone reduplication. In this aspect the subject pronoun and the verb maintain their base or lexical tones, the suffix /-ɔ/ is added, and the third person singular subject is omitted.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| (8) | mi ³ kpe ⁴ lo ⁴ | ‘I pour(ed)’ | mi ³ to ³ to ¹ | ‘I grew (am) big’ |
| | mɔ ³ kpe ⁴ lo ⁴ | ‘you pour(ed)’ | mɔ ³ to ³ to ¹ | ‘you (s) grew (are) big’ |
| | kpe ⁴ lo ⁴ | ‘3s pours, poured’ | to ³ to ¹ | ‘3s grew (is) big’ |

8.4.3 *The representation of incomplete events*

There is a Progressive, which uses the (optional) auxiliary **gi**² ‘be’, with the tone of the stem changing to high, and also a suffix /-ko³/ with allomorphs /-k¹, -g¹, -ko¹, -go¹, -ko³, -go³/, although /-s, -z/, and other variations are found. The verb stem may also be optionally repeated (as in (10a)). It will be noted that the vowel of the aspect marker is lost when it occurs internally in the sentence.

The fact that the auxiliary of the Progressive is optional is an indicator that the verb root with suffix **-ko**³ may by itself be an Imperfective, which becomes a Progressive when the auxiliary is used, in the same way that the English *-ing* participle has an imperfective sense when used without auxiliary (*Knowing the answer, he smiled*, but

**Since he was knowing the answer...*). There are, in fact, occasional usages of the /-ko³/ form that would be extremely unlikely with a Progressive, but normal usage for an Imperfective, as in (9), where the suffix was originally labeled “incompletive”.

- (9) **taa¹²-si¹-be¹ ber¹-ko³**
 1s.not-BEN-me be.good-IPFV
 (‘It is not good for me.’/ *‘It is not being good for me.’) = ‘I sure don’t like it.’

The paradigmatic usage of the “incompletive” is shown in (10), with optional auxiliary and optional repetition of the verb stem:

- (10) a **mi³ (gi²) kpel-k¹ mɛm¹ (kpe¹lɔ¹)** ‘I am pouring water’
mɔ³ (gi²) kpel-k¹ mɛm¹ (kpe¹lɔ¹) ‘you (s) are pouring water’
(gi²) kpel-k¹ mɛm¹ (kpe¹lɔ¹) ‘3s is pouring water’
- b **mi³ (gi²) luk¹ hɛ¹d-i¹-go³** ‘I am sweeping house’
mɔ³ (gi²) luk¹ hɛ¹d-i¹-go³ ‘you (s) are sweeping house’
(gi²) luk¹ hɛ¹d-i¹-go³ ‘3s is sweeping house’
- c **mi³ (gi²) tɔɔ¹-k tɔ¹ or mi³ (gi²) tɔɔ¹-kɔ¹** ‘I am growing’
mɔ³ (gi²) tɔɔ¹-k tɔ¹ or mi³ (gi²) tɔɔ¹-kɔ¹ ‘you (s) are growing’
(gi²) tɔɔ¹-k tɔ¹ or (gi²) tɔɔ¹-kɔ¹ ‘3s is growing’

In these paradigms the final /-l/ of /kpel-k/ is a distributive extension, and [-k] the aspect marker³; the /-i¹-/ of /hɛ¹d-i¹-go³/ is an epenthetic vowel, and [-go³] the aspect marker; in the reduplicated verb the position of the aspect marker is variable. In the (b) examples the noun **luk¹** ‘house’ is generic, and the meaning is ‘house-sweeping’ (see (1a) above); the normal position for a direct object is seen in (a).

8.4.4 The representation of future situations

There are two forms to represent future situations, a proximate or immediate future, and a remote future. The Proximate is a form of the Progressive: it has the same high tone on the stem, the same optional auxiliary **gi²**, and the same **go³** suffix. It differs from the Progressive in that the subject pronoun has high tone, as in (11).

- (11) **mi¹ (gi²) kpel-k¹ mɛm¹ (kpe¹lɔ¹)** ‘I am about to pour water’
mɔ¹ (gi²) kpel-k¹ mɛm¹ (kpe¹lɔ¹) ‘you (s) are about to pour water’
(gi²) kpel-k¹ mɛm¹ (kpe¹lɔ¹) ‘3s is about to pour water’

The Remote is a form of the Performative; it also has high tone on the subject marker, but the stem maintains its normal lexical tone, as in (12).

- (12) **mi¹ kpe⁴lɔ⁴** ‘I will pour’ **mi¹ tɔɔ³ tɔ¹** ‘I will grow big’

³ The FV is omitted except in phrase-final position.

mɔ¹ kpe⁴lɔ⁴ ‘you (s) will pour’ **mɔ¹ tɔɔ³ tɔ¹** ‘you (s) will grow big’
gi¹ kpe⁴lɔ⁴ ‘3s will pour’ **gi¹ tɔɔ³ tɔ¹** ‘3s will grow big’

It may be noted that the 3s subject cannot be omitted when the high tone form is used. The two futures consequently appear to be Prospectives, tonal variants of the Performative and Progressive/ Imperfective. Elisabeth Wiering notes (1994:54) that **mɔ¹ kpe⁴lɔ⁴**, the Performative Prospective, can function as an indirect imperative: it can mean either ‘you will pour’ or simply ‘pour!’.

8.4.5 *The particle nɛ¹*

The particle **nɛ¹** is used to mark a clause as representing an earlier event, as in (13a) and (13b). In Elisabeth Wiering’s data it appears to be used only with incomplete verbs, and may simply be a particle for creating past usages of the Imperfective/Progressive. Occasionally as in (13c) it may be translated by perfect forms in English, but its usage is not that of a Perfect or Retrospective.

- (13) a **be³ gi-m²¹ nɛ¹ tɛk¹ be¹ gbɛ²nu-m¹ gɛ²**
 1s am-youprior look 1s see-you not
 ‘I was looking for you and couldn’t find you.’
- b **yɔ¹ buu²³ yɔ¹ da³ gii²wɛ¹ nɛ¹ gbaa¹-ko³**
 when white when REM be-REM-us prior keep-IPFV
 ‘When the white people used to look after us...’
- c **lɔmt² bɔ¹ da³ gi² nɛ¹ le¹-ko³**
 fig REL REM is prior eat-IPFV
 ‘The wild fig he had been eating...’

8.4.6 *Summary overview of tense and aspect in Doyayo*

There are several features in the data that has been presented that are quite typical of the verbal systems of Niger-Congo languages. The first of these is the use of aspect rather than tense to distinguish the present from the past. If the whole of time is represented by the Vast Present, it necessarily follows that whatever is represented as complete in the Vast Present necessarily represents a past event, whereas whatever is represented as incomplete is necessarily still ongoing, partially complete (in the past) and partially incomplete (in the non-past).

A second feature that is found elsewhere is what may well be a binary tense distinction between future and non-future, marked in Doyayo by a difference of tone on the subject marker. Since this is also a representational distinction between experiential time and imaginary time, which necessarily involves the element of modality, it is possible to argue that this is a distinction of mood rather than tense. The fact remains, however, that such a binary contrast involves the whole of universal time, the kind of time that contains events, and is consequently, whether it is also modal or not, necessarily a tense contrast. In this respect the data from Doyayo is particularly interesting, since the

two major aspectual contrasts, the completive (Performative in Doyayo) and the incompletive (Imperfective, which becomes Progressive when the auxiliary is added) are found in each of the two apparent contrastive tenses. This is a normal distribution pattern for tense and aspect contrasts, the data of English, with its binary tense contrast of Past vs. Non-past being quite typical, as demonstrated in (14).

(14)	Performative	Progressive	Prospective	Retrospective
Non-past	I speak	I am speaking	I will speak	I have spoken
Past	I spoke	I was speaking	I would speak	I had spoken

The binary tense contrast of Future vs. Non-future does not occur in Indo-European, but the pattern that occurs in Doyayo, as in (15), is exactly what one would expect of such a contrast:

(15)	Performative	Imperfective
Non-future	past	present
Future	far future	near future

What is complete in the Non-future is necessarily a representation of past time, and what is incomplete in the Non-future is a representation of the ongoing, unending activity of present time. What is complete in the Future is a representation of an event that is wholly in future time, without any connection to the present: a totally imaginary event. What is incomplete in the Future is an act that is in some way (normally by simple intention) connected to the present moment, as when we say in English “I’m leaving for Montreal on Friday”. This English example, however, is a Non-past, not a Future tense, and English speakers need to be reminded that a Future vs. Non-future distinction is for them a totally foreign contrast. The important point to note is that a Future Imperfective is a representation of an event to be carried out in the initial moments of future time, the completion of something already underway or in the throes of getting started, and consequently incomplete.

8.5 The representation of modality

Modality is represented by combining aspect (Performative, Progressive) with a variety of clausal particles. A few examples are in (16). Readers will notice that the subjunctive mood is not represented by inflections, as it often is in other Niger-Congo languages.

- (16) a **an¹ we³ meε³ yɔ² yɔ¹ we³ tɔ² gεε²³**
 if 1p knew INTS RES 1p eat not
 (conditional, intensive, resultative particles)
 ‘If we had known, we wouldn’t have eaten (it).’
- b **a⁴ be¹ aas² yɔ¹ mɔ³ tuu⁴ tu¹**
 if 1s open RES 2s go.out
 ‘If I open it you will go out.’

- c **gi² an¹ mɔ¹ kɛ¹mɔ³**
 be that 2s understand
 ‘It is necessary that you understand.’

8.6 Negatives

There are three negative constructions. The first is found with the Performative aspect, the second with the Imperfective, and the third with Imperative. This results in a distinction between past time, represented by the first of these, non-past time represented by the second, and imaginary time represented by the third. In the first the negative particle **gɛ²** is added at the end of the phrase. The subject pronoun takes tone ¹ and the third person subject is deleted as usual. The verb takes tone ² on its nuclear syllable, tone ¹ on the second syllable (if any), and tone ³ on the third syllable (if any), as in (17).

- (17) a **zaa²³-za¹ / zaa² gɛɛ²³** ‘he came / he didn’t come’
 (verb only has reduplication in clause-final position)
- b **mi³ gbɛ³ni¹-ge¹ / mi¹ gbɛ²ni-g¹ gɛɛ²³** ‘I saw him / I didn’t see him’
- c **hi³ wãã⁴-si⁴-mi⁴-ge⁴**
 3p catch-BEN-me-him
 ‘They caught him for me.’
- d **hi¹ wãã²-si¹-mi-g³ gɛɛ²³**
 3p catch-BEN-me-him not
 ‘They didn’t catch him for me.’

In the second negative construction the distinctions between the Remote, Proximate, and Present are neutralized: all three have the same form. The subject pronoun again has high tone, but the negative auxiliary **taa¹²** ‘be not’ replaces the normal **gi²** ‘be’, and the **-ko** suffix carries tone ³ as in (18).

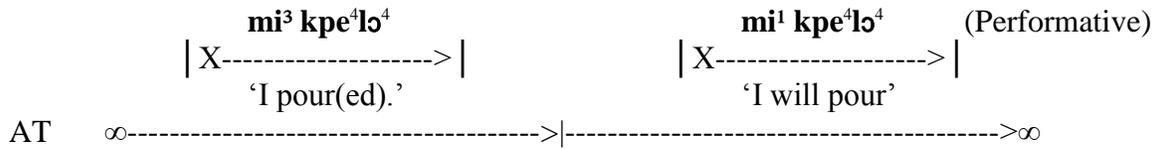
- (18) a **hi¹ taa² zaa¹-ko³**
 1p be.not return-IPFV
 ‘they will not come, are not coming, are not going to come’
- b **mi¹ taa¹² wɛɛ¹-zi¹-go³**
 1s be.not return-IMM-IPFV
 ‘I will not return, am not returning, am not going to...’

The third negative construction has an interdictory word **bɔ²** in initial position, followed by subject pronoun and verb with the tones of the remote future, as in (19).

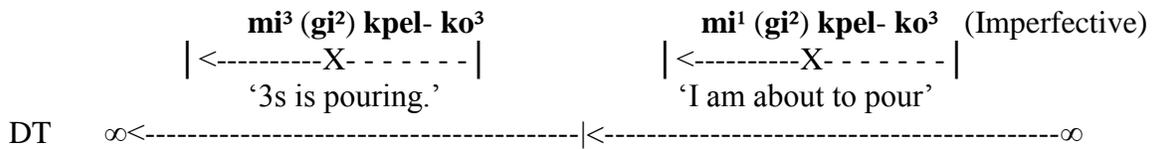
- (19) **bɔ² mɔ¹ re³k-ɔ³** ‘don’t go!’
 bɔ² wɛ¹ le¹g-ɔ³ ‘let’s not get stuck!’
 bɔ² hi¹ fɔ⁴-ge¹ ‘let them not follow him!’

8.7 Diagrammatic Representations

(i) Forms in Ascending Time



(ii) Forms in Descending Time



1. The Performative is the unmarked form of the paradigm.
2. The Imperfective is marked by the suffix - **ko**³- on the root.
3. The Progressive is marked by the auxiliary **gi**².
4. The Future is marked by High Tone on the subject pronoun.

References

Wiering, Elisabeth & Marius Wiering. 1994. **The Doyayo Language**. University of Texas at Arlington: SIL.