

12 Godié

(Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Kru)

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12.1 General

This chapter reports on the verbal constructions of Godié, and since the source materials, mostly Marchese 1986a, give information about other Kru languages much cognate information has also been added. Though the various languages differ among themselves, even within one complex (Hasselbring and Johnson 2002), there are elements in the verbal structure that they all share¹.

The Kru language family is a group of languages spoken mainly in southwestern Ivory Coast and in Liberia. The total numbers of speakers of Kru languages is relatively small. Marchese (1986a) gives an estimate of 1.8 million, Encyclopaedia Britannica (2006) gives 3 million. The speakers of Godié, which belongs to the Eastern Kru languages, are reported by the Ethnologue as numbering some 27,000 in Ivory Coast.

A nine vowel system is common, and most have nasal vowels, including Godie, which has nine oral vowels plus four central vowels, as in (1).

(1)	Basic vowel system	Additional central vowels
	i u	i ɨ u
	ɪ ʊ	ɪ ɥ ʊ
	e o	e ə o
	ɛ ɔ	ɛ ʌ ɔ
	a	a

These are tone languages; Godié has three tones, Low, Mid, and High, and we have used an acute accent to mark H, no accent on M, and grave accent on L, as in the following: **sú** ‘push’, **su** ‘tree’, **sù** ‘be hot’ (Marchese 1986:16).

12.2 Word order

In Kru languages the word order depends on the type of sentence. The basic word order is S V O Other. When an auxiliary is present, the word order is necessarily as in (2), where VN represents a nominalized verb. In the second structure, Other can include ADV after AUX. Some constituents (e.g. temporal ADVs) can also be left dislocated for focus.

(2) S (particle) V O Other and S AUX O V Other (= S LOC O VN).

¹ The chapter was prepared originally by one of our collaborators, Christa Beaudoin-Lietz, as a chapter on the whole Kru family, which would then have been different from all the other chapters, except Narrow Bantu. Some of the cognate information, however, is especially relevant to Godié.

As Marchese points out, Kru languages exhibit a mixed system.² In SVO structures, O is meant as a general statement. To illustrate this from Neyo, several arguments can co-occur as in the following example with a ditransitive verb (Marchese 1986a:21):

- (3) **kɔkɔ la gla té**
 Kɔkɔ bring Gla yams
 ‘Kɔkɔ is bringing yams to Gla.’

Other items can follow in the basic sentence structure, for example adverbs in one of their possible positions³, and question particles (18) occur at the end of the sentence, as in (4-5) from Wobé.

- (4) **sa ɔ di-ɛ ko de dɔɔ**
 today he eat-DEC⁴ rice LOC market
 ‘Today he ate rice at the market.’ or ‘It is today he ate rice at the market.’

- (5) **ɔ di-ɛ ko de dɔɔ sa**
 he eat-DEC rice LOC market today
 ‘He ate rice at the market today.’ (Marchese 1986a:219)

Marchese notes that “Kru languages are exclusively suffixing.” (ibid.16). Concerning the structure of the NP, categories such as number and definiteness may be marked by suffixes. Several Kru languages have remnants of a noun class system expressed by suffixation. Most modifiers follow N within the NP⁵. Postpositions occur in Godié as the following example (ibid.18) illustrates:

- (6) **tlo wlú**
 hill on
 ‘on the hill’

The following examples illustrate the differences in word order with respect to verbs: the adverbial **zika** follows the inflected verb, be it main (7) or auxiliary (8). What is marked as a Recent Past also appears to be an adverbial element, since it follows the direct object (see §4.1).

² In contrast to those Africanists who posited an SOV word-order for proto-Kru, Marchese agrees with the now *communis opinio* that S AUX O V has developed out of S V₁ [OV₂ nom], where [OV₂ nom] serves as a complex complement of V₁. This point of view, proposed by Heine (1975) is simply another version of S V O because of the nominalization of the second verb, has also been argued by others (e.g. Ameka & Dakubu 2008:215-290).

³ According to Marchese (1986a), across Kru languages, temporal adverbs may occur in initial position (focused) or in sentence-final position. There is variance in terms of whether adverbs can occur within the verb brace (see example (7-8) from Godié).

⁴ DEC= Declarative

⁵ This is a general statement, examples reveal some variation as in (4). In some languages demonstratives precede the N.

(13) **Godié Performative**

- a **ɔ kú`**
3s die.PFM
'He died.' (Marchese 1986a:29)
- b **ɔ ɩ́ tɛ**
he eat.PFM snake
'He ate a snake.' (Ibid:39)

- (14) **ɔ ɓà sɩkʌ́ dɪ kʌ́**
she come.back.PFM rice cut NOM
'She came back from cutting rice.' (ibid:80)

(15) Krahn (bare verb stem)

- ɔ jūbō dɛ**
they know.PFM something
'They know something.' (ibid:31)

(16) **Godié Imperfective:**

- a **ɔ kū́**
he die:IPFV
'He is dying.' (ibid:29)
- b **ɔ ɩ́ tɛ**
he eat:IPFV snake
'He is eating snake/He eats snake.'

In Godié the Imperfective marker has disappeared (16a, b), leaving a mid tone. The Imperfective suffix, where it occurs, is expressed in the majority of languages by a front vowel, "which typically agrees in vowel height and vowel harmony with the verb stem" (Marchese: 1986a:40)⁷. The different tonal suffixes of Godié are shown in (17): low and mid tones are replaced where necessary, and high tones result in high-low (PFM) and high-mid (IPFV).

(17) Godié:

Stem	PFM	IPFV	gloss
yɪ	yɪ	yɪ	'come'
ɓà	ɓà	ɓa	'leave'
nú	nu	nū	'hear'

⁷ Marchese reconstructs *e on verbal forms for Proto-Kru though she speculates that it may have been *le.

budò	budò	budo	‘bathe’
ḃ́líl	ḃ́líl	ḃ́líl	‘kill’

(Adapted from Marchese 1986:45)

The Retrospective aspect is also found in many Kru languages, though, according to Marchese, not in the Grebo complex. In many, it is expressed by an auxiliary as in the Godié examples in (18-20).

(18) **ḃ́ yḅ pɛpɛ sɛk bóo bia-a**
 you RTR just-now rice bowl finish-Q
 ‘Have you just finished (eating) the bowl of rice?’ (Marchese 1984:251)

(19) **ḃ́ yḅ kú**
 3s RTR die
 ‘He is dead’ or he has died.’ (Marchese 1986a: 29)

(20) **ḃ́ yḅ-a zḅ púlú**
 3s RTR-earlier already pass
 ‘He had already passed (in front of them).’ (Marchese 1986a:68)

Auxiliaries cannot be marked for PFM or IPFV aspect, and require a suffixed adverbial marker to represent the past. For the status of the adverb ‘recently’ as in (20) and (25), see §12.4.2 below.

Finally, the Progressive is a periphrastic form; there are different forms for Eastern and Western Kru but the structure is the same: S be-at (O) V-NOM, the nominalization in the examples in (21,22) being achieved by the locative noun ‘place’. The verbs expressing ‘be-at’ differ from Western Kru (generally **n** + front vowel) to Eastern Kru (**kḃ/wḃ**) as in the following examples from Godié.

(21) **ḃ́ kḃ kú dḅ**
 3s be-at die place=NOM
 ‘He is in the process of dying.’ (ibid:29)

(22) **ḃ́ kḃ nāà dḅ**
 3s be-at walk place=NOM
 ‘He is walking.’ (ibid:25)

The Progressive is not used for habitual actions, while the Imperfective involves durative or habitual actions (23). The Progressive is not frequent in narratives, but may be used as background to ‘frame the event’ (24). It is formed periphrastically as in the Godié examples below, while the Imperfective, as already noted, is marked by the suffix (or tone remnant of suffix) *e on verbs.

(23) **Progressive**

ɔ kɔ sɛkʌ ɓi dʌ
 she be-at rice pound place
 ‘She is pounding rice (right now).’
 (Marchese 1986a: 66)

Imperfective

ɔ ɓi sɛkʌ
 she pound.IPFV rice
 ‘She is (always) pounding rice.’

(24)

ɔ ŋwɔnɔ ɔ kɔ budo dʌ lé ɔ pʌʌ jɔli-ɛ
 his wife she be-at bathe place and he throw-PFM arrow-DEF
 ‘While his wife was taking a bath, he shot the arrow.’ (Marchese 1986a:67)

12.4.2 *Tense*

Tense-like distinctions also exist in Kru languages. According to Marchese, certain languages such as Wobé and Gbaeson Krahn have no tense contrasts. On the other hand, while many Kru languages exhibit two adverbial style tense markers, one indicating recent past (25) and another indicating remote past (26), in some of the Western languages more distinctions have been reported. “In several Kru languages, temporal adverbs developed into tense markers” (Marchese 1984:265). The process is described as time adverbs moving out of the positions bracketed by AUX and V to positions following V (exbraciation), while reduced forms remained, forming “tense” markers. In some languages this process of tense formation is ongoing. Examples (25-26) are from Godié.

(25) Recent past

ɔ mɛ-a sūkū
 he go:PFM-recent school
 ‘He went to school.’

(26) Remote past

ɔ yi-ɛ wʌ li
 he PRP-it remote eat
 ‘He was going to eat it.’ (ibid:24)

As we have already seen in example (7), however, (ɔ **l-ɛ-a zika** ‘He ate it yesterday’), the DO **ɛ** occurs BEFORE the “tense” marker **-a**, and the “tense” marker **wʌ** in (26) has been written as a separate word by Marchese, in spite of the fact that it is supposed to contrast with the **-a** of (25). The use of these “tense” markers is also optional, the difference being marked aspectually, as already seen in the minimal pairs in (13) and (16) above, where there are clear cut present and past representations without any signs of “tense” markers.

As noted above, in a later chapter on exbraciation (the breakdown of S AUX (O) V) Marchese (1986:263ff) lists four stages of the development of tense markers from time adverbs:

Absolute Past	ò	a	la	li
	3s	RTR	T	eat
				‘He ate.’
Future	ò	i	lè	li
	3s	PRP	T	eat
				‘He will eat.’
Subjunctive	ó	ka	lè	li
	3s	SBJ	T	eat
				‘He should eat.’

Here we see a Retrospective, an aspectual form, used in the function of Near Past, and **la** (from **kaalaa** ‘yesterday’) as the marker of a general Past. In similar fashion **lè** (from **kɛɛlɛ** ‘tomorrow’) used not only for Future, but also for the Subjunctive, which also represents imaginary Non-Past time: the only difference between the two is the typical H tone on the Subjunctive subject pronoun.

In Kru, representations of the future may be constructed in three different ways, by suffixation, by periphrasis, or by Aux, with considerable variation from one language to another. Modal meaning may also be involved. Some languages use more than one way of representing future time. In Godié, however, futures are expressed only by auxiliaries, the future AUX being developed from verbs expressing ‘come’ in (33), ‘have to’ (34).

(33) **ɔ yi mɛ**
 3s FUT.POT go
 ‘He can go.’ (Marchese 1986a:73)

(34) **ɔ kʌ sʌ pɪ**
 3s FUT.VOL down lie
 ‘He wants to lie down.’ (Marchese 1986a:73)

12.5 Other categories: Subjunctives

Sentence initial markers, which may coalesce with the subject pronoun, indicating Subjunctive and Conditional may also occur, for example

(35) Grebo: **b-a du nɛ**
 SBJ-1p pound it
 ‘Let us pound it.’ (Innes 1966 quoted from Marchese 1986a:25)

The Imperative is the base form of the verb as the following example illustrates:

(36) Grebo: **du nɛ**
 pound it
 ‘Pound it!’

In Godié the only difference between the Imperative and the Subjunctive is that the latter always has a subject pronoun, as in (38).

(37) **mu**
go.IMP
'Go!'

(38) **ɔ mu**
3s go. SBJ
'He should go.'

12.6 Negatives

There are at least two, in some languages three, different strategies to express negation in every Kru language. One of them is the use of a negative auxiliary. Performative verbs are always negated by negative auxiliaries, the use of which results in the typical word order of S NEG O V. Progressives and clauses expressing future time are also negated by auxiliaries. In contrast, Imperfective clauses are never negated by negative auxiliaries (Marchese 1986a:168).

Imperfectives are negated by second-position particles: the word order in these types of aspectual clauses is S NEG V O. The particles differ from auxiliaries in that they never occur with object clitics, tense markers, or adverbials. These negative formatives may be phonologically reduced and become part of the subject noun pronoun as in (45). Clauses that include negative imperatives or hortatives (subjunctives or non-second person imperatives) differ either in strategy or morphological shape from Performatives.

In Kru languages the negative auxiliaries are **se** (e.g. (39) which occurs in the majority of languages in the Western group), **ta** (e.g. (40,41); occurs in a limited form in the south eastern portion of the Eastern group), and **né** (e.g. (42) which occurs in Eastern Kru, with cognates in Western); **ti** has also been found. The particle **ní** or (**n** + high front vowel) is attested in several Western languages, and traces of it are found elsewhere. Where this particle is found, it negates Habituals and generics and in many cases Imperfectives, Hortatives, and Imperatives.

(39) Bassa (Hobley):

ɔ nyu-ε	žɔ	ɔ se-ε	zʒɔ
3s do.PFM-it	long- time-ago	3s NEG.PFM-it	long.time.ago
'He did it a long time ago.'		'He didn't do it a long time ago.'	

(40) Koyo

o	ta	yoo-o	yi
3s	NEG.PFM	boy-DEF	know
'He doesn't know the boy.' (Marchese 1986a:173)			

(41) Lozoua Dida

ɔ tá-ā budo
3s NEG-RCP bathe
'He didn't bathe.' (Marchese 1986a:172)

(42) Neyo

o ne gòlo ne sa yi
they NEG canoe do way know
'They didn't know how to use a canoe.' (Marchese 1986a:173)

The negative auxiliary can be phonologically reduced and can occur as the tonal suffix (high tone) on the preceding noun or pronoun, as in (43) from Godié, where the high tone of the subject pronoun **ʌ** 'I' both reflect **né**.

(43) ʌ a Dàkpá dʌ yi
1s.NEG recent Dakpa place know
'I didn't know where Dakpa lived.' (Marchese 1986a:176)

In Godié, reflexes of **wé** and **ta** found with Performatives and reflexes of **ní** are found in the Imperfectives, Habituals, and Imperatives (Marchese 1986a:178-203). The following, according to Marchese, illustrates the negative particle, showing (44) the negation of the Imperfective, and (45) of the Imperative in Dewoin.

(44) ɔ na tawa ɔ ní ná tàwa
3s:IPFV drink tobacco 3s NEG drink tobacco
'He smokes,' 'He doesn't smoke.' (1986a:168)

(45) nì nu ɔ
NEG do it
'Don't do it!.' (1986a:169)

12.7 Auxiliaries

There are several auxiliaries in Godié which serve a variety of purposes. Auxiliaries form analytic aspects, as opposed to the synthetic aspects formed by suffixes. The two Prospective forms **mu** and **kʌ** (before the event), are given in (46) along with **yi** which marks the Prospective elsewhere in Kru, and the full verbs from which they are obviously derived.

(46) Full verb AUX

mɛ 'go' mu-PRP
kʌ 'have (to)' kʌ-PRP
yi 'come' yi-PRP

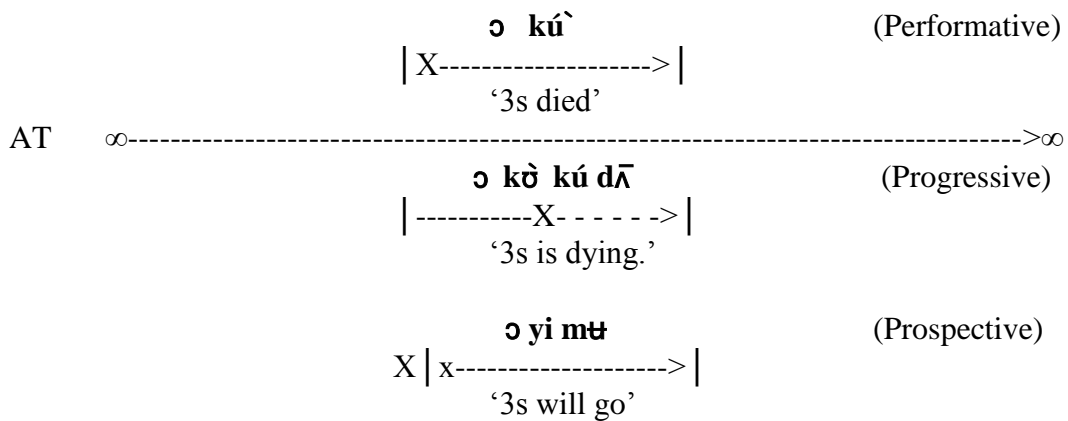
The Progressive (during the event) in Godié is marked by **k**, which probably has spatial rather than verbal reference. It is given in (47), along with the Retrospective auxiliary **yΛ** and the full verb from which the latter may be derived.

- (47) (**ne** ‘be at’) **kò**-PRG
 (**lΛ** ‘bring’?) **yΛ**-RTR

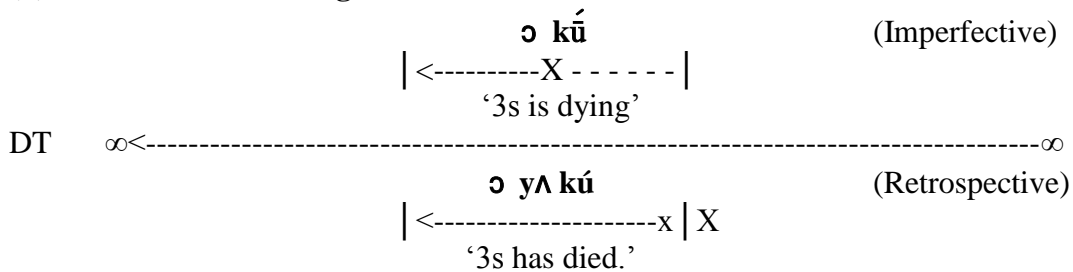
There are also the negative auxiliaries, **se**, **né**, and **tá**. **Se** is found only in Western Kru, while **né** and **tá** are mostly found in Eastern Kru.

12.8 Diagrammatic Representations

(i) Forms in Ascending Time



(ii) Forms in Descending Time



References

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