

A MORPHOSYNTACTIC VERB INFLECTION FOR TENSE AND ASPECT  
IN BEMBA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
LINGUISTICS

BY

CHANGE MWITA

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

NOVEMBER, 2016.

## **DECLARATION**

This is my original work and it has not been presented in either part or full for examination or degree in any other university.

.....

Date: .....

Change Mwita

(Candidate)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This dissertation has been submitted with our recommendation as supervisors appointed by the University of Nairobi.

.....

Date: .....

Dr. Helgar Schröder

.....

Date: .....

Dr. Akidah Muhamad

## **DEDICATION**

To my wife, Memory; my children: Change jnr.; Hillary and Lukundo; my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mwita; my brother, Br. Godfrey Mwita for your endurance, patience and the support you gave me during my study.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I owe everything to God for blessing me with strength, good health and tenacity during my study and stay in Kenya.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisors: Dr. Akidah Muhamad and Dr. Helga Schröder, for your scholarly advice throughout my study.

My special thanks go to my lecturers: Prof. Okoth Okombo, Prof. Lucia Omondi Dr. Helga Schröder, Dr. Jane Oduor, Dr. Gideon Marete, Dr. Alfred Buregeya, and Dr. Michira Nyachae for their training and contribution during coursework.

Thanks to my course mates: Jennifer Munyu, Eunice Kemunto, Veilon Mnyore, Shem Nyamweya, Michael Innocent, Rael Abuonji, Michael Kitheka, Rose Gitari, June David, Carol Anindo and Liu Xin. I appreciate for your cooperation, help and encouragement during the course.

I thank my two informants for their contribution in the generation of data.

Last but not least, I greatly thank Br. Evans Chisha and the Brothers of Charity community in Karen, Nairobi, Kenya for the warm welcome and the orientation they gave me when I just arrived in Nairobi. May the Almighty God continue blessing you.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study sets out to analyze the Bemba verb inflection for tense and aspect. It employs Basic Linguistic Theory and Nurse's Conceptual Frame Work in the analysis of the distribution and interaction of tense and aspect on the verb phrase in Bemba. The background to the Bemba language of Zambia and to the study is given. The tenets of the Basic linguistic theory and Nurse's Conceptual Framework and their pivotal role in the morphosyntactic analysis of verb inflection for tense and aspect are also highlighted. It further provides the structure of the Bantu verb. The study further analyses the morphological structure of the Bemba verb by looking at the inflectional features of the verb. The verb is composed of features such as the root and prefixes and suffixes, the final vowel, subject marker and object marker. It further gives the basic syntactic structure in a Bemba sentence. The Bemba tense system includes the past, present and the future. The study further shows that tense marking is realized through affixation. It demonstrates how tense and aspect overlap. The distribution of aspect and its morphological realization in the Bemba verb phrase is discussed. The overlapping of tense and aspect is further established. Basic Linguistic Theory and Nurse's Conceptual Framework are employed in analyzing the data. The findings of the research have been summarized and conclusions are made by taking into account the research problem, questions and objectives. It reflects on the observations made in the body of the research project. Finally, recommendations for further research are given.

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background to the Study .....	1
1.1.1 Background to the Bemba Language.....	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	4
1.3 Research Questions.....	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	5
1.5 Justification of the Study .....	5
1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study .....	5
1.7 Literature Review .....	6
1.7.1 Literature Review on Bantu Verb Inflection .....	6
1.7.2 Literature Review on Bemba .....	8
1.8 Theoretical Framework.....	10
1.8.1 Basic Linguistic Theory.....	10
1.8.2 Nurse's Conceptual Framework .....	13
1.8.2.1 Explanation of the Principles in Figure 1 .....	14
1.8.2.2 The Structure of the Bantu Verb.....	15
1.9 Research Methodology .....	17
1.9.1 Data Collection .....	17
1.9.2 Data Analysis.....	17

<b>CHAPTER TWO .....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.0 The Morphology of the Bemba Verb .....	18
2.1 Introduction .....	18
2.2 The Bemba Verb Structure .....	18
2.2.1 The Verb Root .....	18
2.2.2 The Infinitive .....	20
2.2.3 Negation.....	20
2.2.4 The Pronominal/Subject Marker .....	22
2.2.5 Verb Agreement .....	25
2.2.6 Number Agreement .....	25
2.2.7 Subject- Object Agreement .....	26
2.2.8 The Final Vowel .....	26
2.2.9 Causative (Verbal Extension).....	26
2.2.10 Applied Extension .....	27
2.2.11 Stative Extension .....	28
2.2.12 Passive Extension .....	28
2.2.13 Reciprocal Extension.....	29
2.2.14 Reflexive Extension.....	29
2.2.15 Intensive Extension.....	30
2.2.16 Extensive or Frequentative Extension .....	30
2.2.17 Completive Extension.....	31
2.2.18 Reversive Extension .....	32
2.3 The Word Order of the Bemba Sentence.....	32
2.4 Summary.....	33
<b>CHAPTER THREE: TENSE .....</b>	<b>34</b>
3.0 Introduction .....	34
3.1 General Overview of Tense .....	34
3.2 Tense Marking In Bemba .....	35
3.2.1 The Past Tense.....	36
3.2.1.1 The Immediate Past .....	37
3.2.1.2 The Near Past.....	39

3.2.1.3 The Far Past Tense .....	40
3.2.1.4 The Remote Past Tense .....	42
3.3 The Present Tense .....	43
3.3.1 The Present Simple Tense .....	43
3.4 The Future Tense .....	45
3.4.1 The Immediate Future Tense .....	45
3.4.2 The Near Future Tense .....	46
3.4.3 The Remote Future Tense.....	48
3.5 Summary.....	51
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: ASPECT MARKING .....</b>	<b>53</b>
4.0 Introduction .....	53
4.1 General Overview of Aspect .....	53
4.2 Aspect in Bemba.....	54
4.2.1 The Imperfective Aspect .....	55
4.2.1.1 The Imperfective in the Present Progressive.....	55
4.2.1.2 Imperfective in the Near Past Progressive .....	57
4.2.1.3 Imperfective in the Remote Past Progressive.....	58
4.2.1.4 The Imperfective in the far Future Progressive.....	60
4.3 The Perfective Aspect.....	61
4.3.1 The Perfective in the Near Past .....	62
4.3.2 The Perfective in the Remote Past.....	63
4.4 The Perfect Aspect.....	64
4.5 The Habitual Aspect .....	65
4.5.1 The Habitual in the Remote Past .....	65
4.5.2 The Habitual in the Present .....	66
4.5.3 The Habitual Future .....	68
4.5.4 The Far Future Habitual .....	68
4.6 Iterative Aspect.....	69
4.6.1 The Past Iterative Aspect.....	70
4.6.2 The Near Past Iterative Aspect .....	70
4.6.3 The Far Past Iterative Aspect.....	71



4.6.4. The Present Iterative Aspect.....	72
4.6.5 The Future Iterative Aspect .....	73
4.7 Summary.....	73
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND</b>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>75</b>
5.0 Summary.....	75
5.1 Conclusion and Findings .....	76
5.2 Recommendations .....	77
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>82</b>

## **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

- i) Tense: the grammatical expression of the relation of the time of an event to some reference point in time. (Schröder, 2015).
- ii) Aspect: describes the internal temporal shape of events or states. (Payne, 1997)
- iii) Verb: the grammatical category that includes lexemes which express the least time- stable concept.
- iv) Mood: relates the speaker's attitude toward the situation or the speaker's commitment to the probability that the situation is true. (Schröder, 2015).
- v) Morphology: the study of the structure of words. (Mambwe, 2008:28)
- vi) Morpheme: the minimal meaningful grammatical unit.
- vii) Morphological processes: the way by which stems can be formally manipulated to adjust their meanings to suit their syntactic and communicational context.
- viii) Prefix: a bound morpheme fixed to the front of a root.
- ix) Suffix: a bound morpheme connected to the back of a root.
- x) Bound morpheme: a morpheme that cannot stand on its own.
- xi) Free morpheme: a morpheme that can stand on its own.
- xii) A root: an unanalysable form that expresses the basic lexical content of the word.
- xiii) Stem: it normally comprises a root. However, it may be analysable into a root and derivational morphemes.
- xiv) Inflection: the feature of verbs and nouns that indicates number, tense, aspect, mode, and agreement.
- xv) Extension: a morpheme that gives extended meaning to the word it is attached to.
- xvi) Syntax: the study of how words combine to form sentences.
- xvii) Morphosyntax: the interface of morphology and syntax.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADV	Adverb
ADJ	Adjective
AG	Agreement
ASP	Aspect
AUX	Auxiliary verb
APPL	Applicative
CAUS	Causative
CL	Class marker
F	Far
FV	Final vowel
FUT	Future tense
HAB	Habitual
INF	Infinitive
IT	Iterative
IM	Immediate
INT	Intensive
IPFV	Imperfective
NEG	Negation
NR	Near
NP	Noun Phrase
N	Noun
Num	Number
OM	Object marker

PFV	Perfective
PAS	Passive
PREF	Prefix
PRS	Present
FRE	Frequentative
PRG	Progressive
PST	Past
Pre-SM	Pre-Subject Marker
Post-FV	Post Final Vowel
SM	Subject marker
RE	Reciprocal
REF	Reflexive
REV	Reversive
REM	Remote
STAT	Stative
T	Tense
V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase
1SG	First Person Singular
1PL	First Person Plural
2SG	Second Person Singular
2SG	Second Person Plural
3SG	Third Person Singular
3PL	Third Person Plural
∅	Zero Morpheme

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Nurse's Conceptual Framework for Analysing TA .....	14
Figure 2: Slots on the Bantu verb. ....	15
Figure 3: Nurse's Verbal Word Hierarchical Structure.....	15
Figure 4: Time line. Adapted from Comrie (1985:2).....	35
Figure 5: Bemba Tense Representation.....	35
Figure 6: Immediate Past Tense Marking.....	38
Figure 7: Representation of the Near Past Tense.....	40
Figure 8: Representation of the Far Past .....	41
Figure 9: Representation of the Remote Past Tense.....	43
Figure 10: Representation of the Present Simple Tense.....	44
Figure 11: Representation of Immediate Future Tense .....	46
Figure 12: Representation of the Near Future Tense.....	48
Figure 13: Representation of the Remote Future Tense .....	49
Figure 14: Aspectual Categories. Adapted from Comrie (1976:25).....	54
Figure 15: Bemba Aspectual Category.....	55
Figure 16: Representation of the present progressive imperfective .....	57
Figure 17: Representation of the Near Past Progressive .....	58
Figure 18: Representation of Remote Past Progressive.....	59
Figure 19: Representation of Imperfective in the Far Future Progressive.....	61
Figure 20: Representation of the Perfective in the Near Past.....	63
Figure 21: Representation of Perfective in the Remote Past.....	64
Figure 22: Presentation of Habitual in the Remote Past.....	66
Figure 23: Presentation of the Habitual in the Present .....	67
Figure 24: Presentation of the Far Future Habitual .....	69
Figure 25: Presentation of the Near Past Iterative Aspect.....	71
Figure 26: Presentation of the Far Past Iterative Aspect .....	72

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Noun Classes in Bemba taken from Musonda (2013:16).....	23
Table 2: Bemba Tenses and their Corresponding Time Frame .....	36
Table 3: Tense Markers in Bemba.....	50

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This project includes the background to the study of the Bemba language. The statement of the problem, the research questions and the objectives of the study are given. It also comprises the justification, scope, and limitations of the study, literature review, theoretical framework and the study methodology, findings, and the conclusions.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

This research conducts a morphosyntactic analysis of the verb inflection for tense and aspect in Bemba. Bemba, like other Bantu languages, is agglutinative. Affixation plays an important role in word and sentence formation. Affixation also leads to verb inflection for tense, aspect and mood, number and agreement, among others.

Morphosyntax is, according to (Ochieng, 2013: 8), the study of grammatical categories or linguistic units that have both morphological and syntactic features. Payne (2006: 8) observes, “Morphosyntax has to do with how...sounds combine to form words and sentences.” He says that “morphology in linguistics deals with how words are shaped, and how the shapes of these words may be systematically adjusted so as to accomplish communicative tasks.” Further, he asserts that syntax is the way by which words are organized to form sentences. He justifies the importance of morphosyntax as follows:

One reason many linguists like to talk about morphology and syntax together is that sometimes a communicative job that is performed by word shapes (morphology) in one language is performed by combinations of words (syntax) in another. So if linguists want to compare different languages, it helps to be able to refer to morphosyntax. (Payne 2006:8).

(Payne 1997:7) also made observations that the evidence for the existence of “a morphosyntactic operation” is seen by “formal operators such as a prefix, a suffix, a stress shift.” This can also be evidenced through a combination of two or more of them.

To support the above view, O’Grady, Dobrovolsky & Katamba (eds.) (1997: 260) assert, “Many linguistic phenomena reflect the interaction of the morphological and syntactic components of the grammar.” The study of the interface of syntax and morphology has received a lot of recognition by linguists. Ochieng (2013: 10) says that linguists describe morphosyntax as the part of morphology which covers the similarities between morphology and syntax and it can explain the reasons for the inclusion of a word in a given grammatical category.

Chanda (2014: 4) also posits that syntax has been traditionally taken to be one of the two branches of grammar, the other one being morphology. According to <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/classics/NJL/Latin/intro2.html> (2/28/2007), there are two branches of grammar, be it in English or Latin. “Morphology is the grammar of single words and their inflections, the various endings specific kinds of word can take and what they mean.” Syntax is viewed as “the grammar of words in combinations: how they fit together into sentences, and the different grammatical constructions or rules of combination that apply.”

### **1.1.1 Background to the Bemba Language**

The Bemba language is to the large extent spoken in Zambia in the Northern, Muchinga, Luapula and Copperbelt provinces. It is also spoken in the southern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and southern Tanzania. The language is also called IchiBemba, CiBemba, ChiBemba and IchiBemba (Kashoki and Spitulniki 2001), (Kashoki 1968:1). The speakers of the language are known as abaBemba (Babemba). The principal dialects include, Aushi, Standard Bemba (Central Bemba), Bisa, Chishinga, Kunda, Lala, Lamba, Luunda, Ng’umbo, Swaka, Tabwa, and Unga. (Kashoki and Spitulniki 2001:51) further observe that each of the dialects listed above is “distinguished by its association with a distinct ethnic group, culture, and territory of the same name.”



They further posit that “Each of the dialects exhibit minor differences of pronunciation and phonology and very minor differences in morphology and vocabulary.”

Kabinga (2010:78) posits that since Bemba is the most widely used lingua franca, it is not strange to find that its varieties along the line of rail have a good number of vocabularies from the English language. These urban varieties are referred to by different names which include: ciKopabeeluti (ChiCopperbelt), ciTauni (Chi Town), and Town Bemba. Bemba is a Bantu language. (Richardson 1961: 25, Webb and Kembo-sure 2000:33) as quoted in Kabinga (2010:15-16), say that Bantu languages are classified as part of the larger Niger-Congo language family. The Niger-Congo family with more than a thousand languages and 260 million speakers is the largest family in Africa. Speakers of this language family are found in the western, eastern, central and southern parts of Africa, that is, throughout Africa except for the north. Bemba has the largest number of speakers in Zambia today. According to <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/zm/languages> (17/02/16), the total number of Bemba speakers is 4,110,000 and out this population, the 2010 Zambian Census statistics indicate that about “3,810, 000 people speak Bemba and related dialects as a first language; others speak Bemba as a second language.” Gray and Bwalya (2015:3) further posit, “Bemba is now spoken as either a first or a second language by over 50% of the Zambian population making it more widely understood than any other language in Zambia (including English).

“The Bemba people of Zambia originated from the Kola region in present day Congo (DRC)” as Kashoki and Spitulniki (2001:51-55) observe, “are an offshoot of the ancient Luba Empire.” The Babemba people’s original home land is referred to as Lubemba or Luba or Buluba and occasionally as Lunde, according to Roberts (1973:50). They settled in Northern, Luapula and Muchinga provinces. Their migration from Kola was the result of a succession dispute between the Babemba Chief called Mukulumpe and his sons Katongo, Chiti and Nkole whose mother Mumbi Makasa was believed to be of divine origin. The

three sons rebelled against their father and ran away taking their only sister, Chilufya Mulenga, who later bore a son. This son later became the first chief to bear the title of *Chitimukulu* named after the original leader Chiti (Roberts 1973:43). *Chitimukulu* is the title of the paramount chief of the Bemba chiefdom and it Means, “Chiti the great.” This group settled in the Northern Province of the country. The Babemba are a matrilineal people and lineage is determined by the mother with a centralised system of government.

In his classification of Bantu languages, Guthrie (1967:57) classifies Bemba in Zone M45a. (Kabinga 2010:17) observes that for many years Central Bemba has been used as a reference point for the standardised form of Bemba. (Spitulnik 1998: 38) adds by asserting that Central Bemba is the language that is used in the Bemba royal household, court and schools in the Northern, Luapula and Muchinga provinces. Central Bemba is also taught as a subject and is the medium of instructions from pre-school to Grade Three on the Copperbelt and parts of Central province. As early as the 1900s, it was used in government documents, educational textbooks, novels, and the Bemba version of the Bible and later it was used on the radio and television programs. Spitulnik (1998:38) posits, “The first Bemba Grammar book was published in 1907 and the first Bemba translation of the New Testament Bible produced by the Missionary Fathers appeared in 1923.”

Zambia has seven regional official languages which include; Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Luvale, Lunda and Lozi [Kashoki 1990:67 and Ministry of Education (MOE) 2005].

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study aims at determining how tense and aspect are distinctively morphologically marked in the verb in Bemba. Further, it establishes how the marking of tense and aspect overlap in Bemba. Bemba being an agglutinating language, the verb is of great importance and it comprises a complete sentence on its own when inflected for person, tense, aspect, mood, number, and agreement. Kabinga (2010) carried out a comparative study of the morphosyntax

and phonetics of Town Bemba and Standard Bemba dialects of the Bemba language. Her work did not discuss verb inflection for tense and aspect. Kamfuli (2009) conducted a study on a grammar of verbal extension in Bemba. Among other things, he looked at applied-passive extension, causative-passive extensive, reversive-passive extensive, the phonology of verbal extension and the syntax and semantics of the verbal extension. Kamfuli, however, did not include verb inflection for tense and aspect which the current study focuses on.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following questions.

- 1) How are tense and aspect marked in Bemba?
- 2) How do the marking of tense and aspect overlap in Bemba?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- 1) To investigate the markings of tense and aspect in Bemba.
- 2) To analyse sentences with tense and aspect marking to find out how the respective markings overlap.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

A number of studies have been conducted on Bemba such as syntax, phonetics, and grammar. Mann (1999), in his discussion of the Bemba grammar, does not draw a line between tense, aspect and mood. He simply discusses the three grammatical categories as tense. To the best of my knowledge, however, there has been no morphosyntactic study on verb inflection for tense and aspect in Bemba. The study contributes to the body of knowledge in Bemba by showing that tense and aspect are distinctive.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The focus of this study is to analyse the different morphological forms of verbs in Bemba. The research further establishes how distinctive the marking of tense and aspect in Bemba is. One hundred (100) sentences containing tense and aspect are generated. Consequently, the study limits itself to the morphosyntactic analysis of the inflectional forms of tense and aspect of the verb in Bemba. It

does not deal with verb agreement and derivation. The dialect used in this study is the Standard (Central) Bemba as it is the one the researcher is familiar with and competent in.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

### **1.7.1 Literature Review on Bantu Verb Inflection**

In his study on tense, aspect and mood, Gachomo (2004) established that tense, aspect and mood are morphologically marked on the verb through prefixation, suffixation and suprafixation. He further observed that Kikuyu, an agglutinative language has a lot inflection in the verb. He also defines mood as a grammatical category which has to do with the status of the proposition that describes the event. The concept grammatical mood describes the relation of the verb to reality or intent in speaking<sup>1</sup>. This, therefore, refers to attitudes on the part of the speaker towards the factual content of the utterance. In his study on tense, aspect and mood – morphosyntactic verb inflections in Kikuyu, Gachomo established that tense, aspect and mood are morphologically marked on the verb through prefixation, suffixation and suprafixation. She further observed that Kikuyu, an agglutinative language, has a lot of inflection in the verb. Gachomo's work is relevant to this research since Bemba is also a Bantu and agglutinative language.

Kihara (2010: 62) established in his study on the morphosyntax of Gikuyu simple sentence that different moods are evident in the language. These include; Imperative mood (imperative sentences), infinitive mood (as in declarative sentences or questions), the subjunctive mood, which uses morphemes to express uncertainty, wishes, desires, possibilities, and the conditional mood; tense and aspect. Further, she points out that mood in Gikuyu is achieved by inflecting the verb morphologically. Kihara's work is of benefit to the current study as it deals with tense and aspect marking in Bemba.

Timbwah (2011) investigated the morphosyntactic nature of verb inflection for tense and aspect in Lunyore. She noted that Lunyore exhibits on its verb the past, present and future tense forms. According to her, auxiliaries are used to mark

tense and aspect in Lunyore. Verb inflection for tense and aspect are being studied in the current study, thus, Timbwa's research is of benefit as both Lunyore and Bemba are Bantu languages.

Namulemu (2014) carried out research on tense, aspect and mood in Lunyole grammar and narrative discourse. She says that Lunyole has a tense system of three basic tenses. These include the past, present and future. Its timeline is further divided according to its understanding of the time frame which leads to five more tenses.

Nzioka (2007) studied the tense and aspect in the Kikamba language. She concludes that aspect and tense feature exist in the language. In Kikamba, tense and aspect are separate categories that relate to time in different ways. According to her, the aspect system is a predominant category in Kikamba. The tense system depicts only two locational basic distinctions: the past and the non-past (future). Aspect is put into the past and non-past system of tense. Kikamba being a Bantu language, Nzioka's study is of value to the Bemba verb inflection for tense and aspect. Nzogi (2004) investigated the dramatization and discourse use of tense, aspect and mode in Lugwere, a language in Uganda.

Gatumu (2014) studied the morphosyntactic verb inflections for tense and aspect in Kimbere. She established that Kimbere's verbal inflections for tense and aspect are realised morphologically. The two categories have a systematic pattern of affixation to the verb root. She further says the morphemes are prefixed to the verb root and they always appear after the subject morpheme in a linear order. The aspect morphemes are suffixed to the verb root except for the present progressive morpheme which is a prefix. Gatumu's work help in this study as Kimbere is a Bantu language.

Ochieng (2013) looked at the description of the morphosyntactic structure of the Suba language. She says that Suba is the language of the Suba people (Abasuba) found in Kenya and Tanzania. She quotes Ayot (1987) that they trace their ancestry to one wave of the Bantu who migrated from Central Africa via

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical\\_mood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_mood) (8/11/16 at 11:10 hours).

Uganda. In her work, Ochieng concluded that Olusuba is an inflectional language with prefixing and suffixing. The function of the inflections is, according to her, to express different grammatical categories which include; tense, mood, voice, aspect, person and case. Further, she posits that most affixes used in Olusuba are prefixes and that inflections come before the stem. Bemba is an inflectional language with prefixing and suffixing just like Olusuba. Therefore, this study will benefit from Ochieng's work.

### **1.7.2 Literature Review on Bemba**

Extensive studies have been carried out in the Bemba language. Schoeffler (1907: 42-3), indicates that verbs in Bemba have the same general features as in other Bantu languages. All verb forms consist of a root, commonly mono-syllabic which combines with one or more prefixes and suffixes. He says that suffixes supply the distinctions known generally as those of stem, voice mood (except the infinitive), number, class (of subject and object), and conjugation. According to him, the tenses do not only indicate simple distinctions of time as past, present, and future, but also supply a kind of perspective view of time according to today, yesterday, or long ago, and even of foreground, middle distance ground, and background in some regions of the past and the future. They also represent the idea of the verb as inchoative, continuous, or complete, as specific, general, as single or customary, and in various combinations of these aspects.

Kashoki (1968) did a phonemic analysis of Bemba. This included a representation of Bemba syllable structure, phonemic contrasts and their distribution. He discusses vowels and consonants in Bemba and points out that the language has five vowels. Kashoki's work will be beneficial in this study especially for vowels and consonants.

Mann (1999) gives an outline of the Bemba grammar. He discusses the finite verb form, imperatives and participles. His work further looks at tense- signs, tone pattern in the verb- form, indicative tenses, perfect and habitual tenses, hypothetical tenses and so on. His study contributes to this research. However, Mann's work does not bring out a distinction between tense and aspect which is one of the tasks of the current study in addition to looking at mood.

Gray and Bwalya (2015) discuss verbs in a Bemba sentence and observe that nearly always they have prefixes attached. When prefixes are removed, verb roots are generally preceded by a hyphen. In their infinitive forms, or when they are functioning as nouns, verbs are prefixed with *uku-* “to”: for example *uku-lima* “to cultivate”. For tenses, they observe that markers placed between the subject and the verb show when an action happened.

Kamfuli (2009) carried out research on the grammar of verbal extension in Bemba. He defines extensions as morphemes that are suffixed to radicals in order to express different ways that the action stated by the radical is achieved. He further exemplified that an extension may indicate the reversal, intensity, extensiveness or reciprocity of the action stated by the radical. Some extensions increase valency permitted by their radicals. He posits that different verbal structures in Bemba have endings that include tenses, polarity, mood and aspect.

Chanda, as quoted in Kamfuli (2009:22) says that the **ending** of a **verbal extension** in Bantu languages can be analysed in three ways: the pre- ending, the ending and the post endings. The post-ending is the element that follows the ending. Bantu languages indicate tense, aspect and mood through verb inflection.

Kabinga (2010) carried out a comparative study of the Morphosyntactax and phonetics of Town Bemba and Standard Bemba of the Copperbelt province of Zambia. In her discussion, she posits that the verb phrase of the Bemba language follows a subject, verb and object/complement (SVOC) word order. She briefly discusses tense and points out that in Bemba what usually determines the past tense in the verb phrase is the use of the prefix, *-li-* ‘tense marker’ after a subject marker. The morpheme, *-li-* acts as the auxiliary verb in some instances. Therefore, this work benefits from her study in its discussion of verb inflection for tense in Bemba.

Musonda (2013) conducted a study on syntactic tones of nouns in Bemba. He briefly looks at how word classes and verbs are discussed in isolation in the Bemba language. The work will contribute to this study especially in the generation of data.

Other works of importance to this study on Bemba are the *Zambian Language: Orthography* approved by the Ministry of Education published in 1977 and reprinted in 2005 and Kandeke (1990) who has given a great number of Bemba synonyms. His work will be used as one of the material for data generation and as guide to the orthography of the Bemba language.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study uses the Basic Linguistic Theory by R. M. W. Dixon and Nurse's Conceptual Framework (2008) which will be instrumental when it comes to data analysis.

### **1.8.1 Basic Linguistic Theory**

Basic linguistic theory, spearheaded by R. M. W. Dixon, is, according to Dryer (2001), the theoretical framework that is most widely utilised by linguists in the description of language. It is a "cumulative framework that has slowly developed over the past century and linguists see it as a better way of describing languages." Rooted in traditional grammar, this theory is said to have developed out of traditional grammar. Dryer further argues that pre-generative structuralist traditions, has to a large extent influenced it more so in the way it emphasises on the need to describe each language in its own terms, rather than imposing on individual languages' concepts with motivation principally coming from other languages. Basic Linguistic Theory borrows analytic technique from structuralists' tradition, especially in the areas of phonology and morphology. It has also been influenced to some extent by generative grammar though the influence largely a reflection of the fact that early generative grammar examined many aspects of the syntax of English in great detail, and the insights of that research have influenced how basic linguistic theory looks at the syntax of other languages, especially in terms of how one can argue for particular analyses.



Langendoen (1967: 742-750) says, “Dixon’s approach is simply to find out how language is used, that is, in itself and in its relation to other phenomena.” He observes that Basic Linguistic Theory has embraced analogist and anomalist controversy as a more sophisticated version of the old naturalist and conventionalist controversy. The rules of the analogist were designed to determine membership in paradigm classes of words. The anomalist attack on the analogists’ rules was more of an attack on a particular and rather ineffective methodology than on the view that language is rule-governed behaviour. Langendoen further points out that Dixon argues that the relationship between signifier and signified is correlative rather than determinative, and that an important dimension in meaning is that of value in a system. Concerning theory making, Dixon contrasts two evaluative criteria: internal and external power. The internal power is according to him, comparable to the usual notions of simplicity and elegance while the external power means ‘exhaustiveness and faithfulness.’ A theory is exhaustive if it describes all the original set of lowest level pattern correlations (and no others); it is faithful if the descriptions obtained from the theory agree detail for detail with the lowest level descriptions, and freedom from bias. Lastly, language pattern must be analysed on its own merit.

Dixon cited in Langendoen (1967:747) says that Basic Linguistic Theory has four basic theoretical terms. These are observation, action, direction, pattern correlation. On pattern correlation, the view is that meaning pattern correlations referable to the language pattern, or part of it, under consideration. Dixon is of the view that meaning pattern correlations are referable to the language pattern, or part of it, under consideration. These can be intra text correlations (internal meaning), or with the general situation (external meaning).

Dixon (2009: 4) asserts that Basic Linguistic Theory concerns itself with the description and explanation of language. According to him description deals with how language is organised. For example, whether it has a system of tense, or of gender, the nature of such systems, and the way in which they fit into the

overall grammatical fabric. Linguists within the framework must also pursue explanation as to why a given language is arranged in the manner it is. He views linguistics as a branch of natural science with a single cumulative theory (Basic Linguistic Theory). The Basic Linguistic Theory has its origins in the pioneering work of Sanskrit and Greek grammarians between three thousand (3000) and two thousand (2000) years ago. It is being continually enhanced through descriptions of new languages each revision making it able to characterise a little more fully the essential nature of language as a cultural trait of human beings. Dixon gives an outline of the four basic principles which should guide a linguist when analysing a language as follows:

- a) One must ensure that all multi-word constituents are within square brackets.
- b) The linguist should label all verbal arguments. For core constituents good convention is a subscript indicating syntactic function, A (transitive subject), S (intransitive subject), or O (transitive object).
- c) Morpheme boundaries should be shown by hyphens.
- d) A gloss for each morpheme must be provided.

Dixon (2009: 184) further observes that working in terms of basic linguistic theory, a linguist analyses a language as a system in its own right, every part relating to the whole. The theory is an inductive pursuit, providing a set of parameters which are suggestive but malleable.

In terms of terminology in the basic linguistic theory, Dixon mentions morphology and syntax as some of them. On morphology, he says the core of a word is a lexical root, to which various morphological processes may apply. These include compounding (two roots are combined), reduplication, shift of stress or change of tone, internal change, and affixation. The most common type of morphological process is affixation, involving the addition to a root of suffix, prefix, circumfix (combination of prefix and suffix), or an infix inserted into the root. When just affixes are involved, a word can be segmented into components. Because an inflectional process applies last, if it is realised by an affix, this will

be on the rim of the word, the last suffix or the first prefix. In agglutinative languages, a word consists of a number of morphemes (roots and affixes) but it is fully segmentable.

He points out that a clause is the central unit of syntax. Each clause has a structure consisting of a predicate which may be filled by a copula verb, or may be zero in a verbless clause and a number of arguments. Below are the examples of how some of the basic principles of this theory apply in the analysis of the data in Bemba.

1a) U-pyang-e

S (2SG) sweep FV

‘You sweep.’

1b) U-ka-m-pyang-ile

S (2SG) OM T (FUT) sweep CAUS FV

‘You sweep for me.’

1c) Mu-ka-m-pyang-ile mailo

S (2PL) T (FUT) OM sweep CAUS ADV

‘You sweep for me tomorrow.’

All the above analysed examples are sentences.

### **1.8.2 Nurse’s Conceptual Framework**

In analysing the morphosyntax of verb inflection for tense and aspect in Bantu languages, Nurse (2008:10) came up with the conceptual framework which is composed of eight principles which are cardinal to his work as shown in the table below:

**Figure 1: Nurse’s Conceptual Framework for Analysing TA (Adapted from Nurse 2008:10- 14)**

1. “Tense and aspect form a system.”
2. “Tense and aspect systems are cognitively based, not direct representations of events in the real world.”
3. “Tense and aspect form an interlocking system.”
4. “A discrete verbal TA form has a specific and unique range of meaning.”
5. “The system is not inflexible or unchanging.”
6. “Any given (single) verb form can only have one tense.”
7. “Every finite verb form has aspect.”
8. “Most Bantu languages encode tense on the left and aspect to the right.”

**1.8.2.1 Explanation of the Principles in Figure 1**

Walker (2013:17-19) gives an explanation of the principles in figure 1 above. He says that number one to number three deal with how tense and aspect (TA) are systematically arranged in a given Bantu language. Nurse’s framework demonstrates that there is a system which is cognitively based and allowing learners to comprehend and reproduce it. Walker further points out that in principle six up to principle eight, Nurse tries to relate them to the morphosyntactic realisation of tense and aspect. A verb form will always have at least one aspect (but may have more), it can only have one tense. Tense and aspect in some Bantu languages tend to be marked to the right of the verb root. Where tense and aspect co-occur, tense is on the right of aspect. With good understanding of how the verb is structured in Bantu languages, the above concepts can easily be clarified.

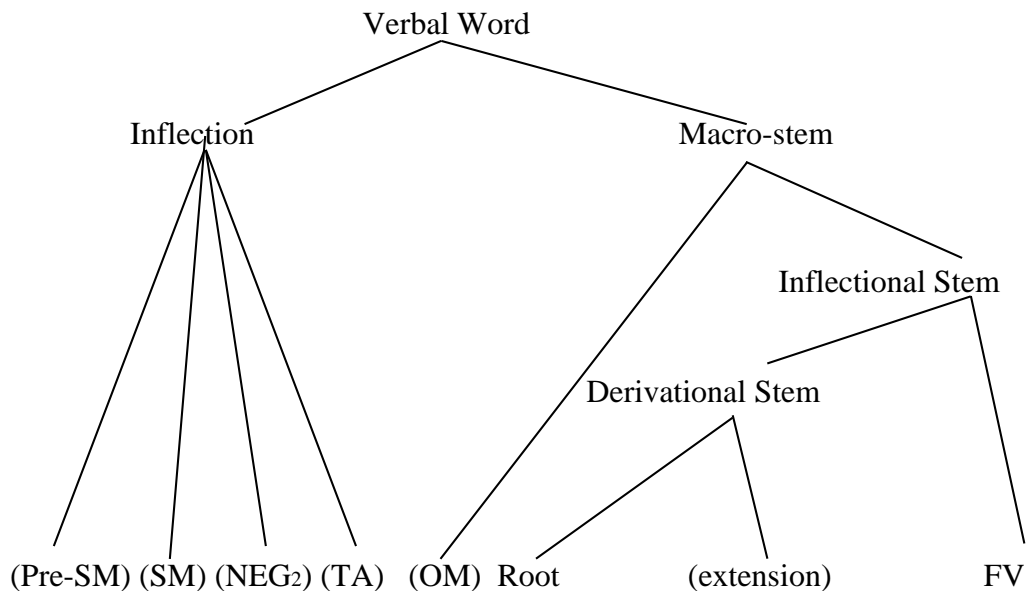
### 1.8.2.2 The Structure of the Bantu Verb

The verbal phrase in Bantu languages is able among other features to inflect for tense and aspect. Walker (2013:19) observes, “Multi-word compound constructions with auxiliaries exist and both single-word and multi-word patterns follow the principles in points six to eight of Nurse’s Conceptual Framework.” As stated before in this work, Bantu languages are agglutinating and a lot of information is represented on the verb. Nurse (2008:40) proposes a linear template to demonstrate how the verbal word is formed. Below is the figure showing how the verbal word is formed from the slots:

(Pre-SM) + (SM) + (NEG<sub>2</sub>) + (TA) + (OM) + root + (extension) + FV + (post-FV)

**Figure 2: A Representation of the Bantu verb. (Adapted from Nurse 2008:40)**

Figure 2 is explained together with figure 3 below which is in form of a tree diagram and Nurse uses it to illustrate that the organization of the verbal word is ordered hierarchically. Consider figure 2 below:



**Figure 3: Nurse’s Verbal Word Hierarchical Structure (Adapted from Walker 2013:20)**

There is a correspondence between the bottom row of figure 2 and the slots in Figure 3 (Walker 2013:20). The only exception could be that the post-final vowel (post-FV) is excluded in figure 3. There is a relationship between the slots and the middle level and higher level groups. In Bemba, just like many other Bantu languages, the inflectional stem without extensions on the root is the basic form of the verb form. Therefore, all the other slots beyond the root and the final vowel are treated as optional elements.

Further, Walker observes that the pre-subject marker (Pre-SM) slot is where some types of negation, relative objects, and morphemes for categories such as tenses, aspects, mood, and focus are commonly found.

The NEG2 slot is of relevance to some Bantu languages that display two kinds of negation: primary (before the SM) and secondary (after the SM). However, in such languages, marking at NEG2 does not co-occur with the marking of primary negation (Nurse 2008:44). In Bantu languages, and Bemba in particular, the subject marker (SM) slot is for the morpheme standing for the subject of the verb. It gives information about person, number and the noun class. A demonstration of the above explanation will be exemplified in chapter two of this work which discusses the Bemba verb structure. However, it is important to give one example here. Consider the following:

2) Ta-twa-ka-ba-ipik-ile (Tatwakabepikile).

NEG 1PL FUT T cook CAUS

‘We will not cook for them.

In the above example, negation comes in NEG1 (pre SM) slot, tense comes on the right side of the subject and the verb, the object marker is immediately before the root and the final vowel is replaced by the morpheme ‘-ile’ for causative extension which is attached at the end of the root.

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

This study makes use of the qualitative method of collecting and analysing data. The data is collected and processed in the manner that satisfies the research objectives.

### **1.9.1 Data Collection**

The study employed the researcher's introspection in collecting data on tense and aspect in the Bemba language since the researcher was a native language speaker. He generated one hundred (100) simple sentences containing tense and aspect in Bemba. The data was counter checked by two informants who were native speakers for more objectivity and correctness. Justification for the use of intuition in the collection of data was given by Atkinson et al (1982) quoted in Nkolola (1997: 6) who observed that if the linguist was a native speaker of the language he was investigating, he would be able to distinguish between well-formed strings of words. He was entitled to investigate sentences and non-sentences to formulate his hypothesis.

### **1.9.2 Data Analysis**

Data analysis procedure was conducted in a way that gave answers to the research questions and met the outlined objectives. After data collection, the irrelevant information was eliminated. The relevant data was then analysed and classified accordingly. Verb inflection for tense was analysed first, then later aspect was looked at.

All the relevant simple sentences were analysed using the basic linguistic theory approach and Nurse's Conceptual Framework. The analysis would be guided by the four basic principles stated in the theory and the Bantu language verb structure slots and the hierarchical structure of the verbal word in figures two and three respectively of the conceptual framework. Descriptions and explanation of the verb inflection for tense and aspect would be given with an objective stance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 The Morphology of the Bemba Verb

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the morphology of the Bemba verb. The morphological structure of the Bemba verb is looked into in section 2.1. The parts of the verb are studied. It is this chapter which acts as a foundation for data analysis of the verb root, the infinitive, the final vowel, the subject marker, the object agreement, number, negation, and other verbal extensions are discussed. Prefixes and suffixes in Bemba are used to indicate negation, aspect, tense, mood, subject agreement, object agreement and derivation. Further, the word order of the language is discussed in section 2.3.

#### 2.2 The Bemba Verb Structure

##### 2.2.1 The Verb Root

According to Payne (1997:24), a root is a part of a word which is in an unanalysable form that expresses the basic lexical content of the word, but it does not necessarily constitute a fully understandable word in and of itself. Katamba (1993: 41) also posits that a root is the irreducible core of a word, without anything else affixed to it. Bemba verbs have roots which cannot stand on their own thereby requiring one or more affixes. Consequently, the root is usually composed of a stem and the imperative affixes. This is exemplified below:

3a) N-da-ly-a (N-la-ly-a)

1SG PRS HAB eat FV  
'I eat.'

3b) U-la-ly-a.

2PS PRS HAB eat FV  
"You eat."

3c) A- la-ly-a.

3SG PRS HAB eat FV  
"He/she eats."



3d) Tu-ka-ly-a.

1PL FUT T eat FV

‘We will eat.’

3e) Aba-lumendo ba-a-li-ly-a.

CL2 boy 3PL PST PFT eat FV

‘Boys had eaten.’

It should be noted that the morphemes (bound prefixes) ‘-la-’, ‘-ka-’, and ‘-a-’ ‘-li-’ are the present aspect marker, future tense and past tense markers respectively. However, in the morpheme ‘-la-’, the alveolar lateral [l] changes to the alveolar plosive [d] when preceded by the first person pronoun ‘n-’ (I) as shown in example (2a).

The root can be elaborated with a single or several bound morphemes to elongate or change semantic connotations. Gleason (1961) cited by Eastman (1978: 19) says that the morpheme is a basic unit of linguistic expression which is both the smallest unit that is grammatically very important and the smallest meaningful unit in the structure of a given language. Eastman observes that since they affect tense, aspect and number, morphemes are the real units of grammar. The Bemba verb is the core of the sentence as other elements like the subject, object, person, and number depend on it as exemplified below:

4a) N-da-sambilil-a (N-la-sambilil-a)

1SG PRS HAB learn FV

‘I learn.’

4b) Tu- la- sambilil-a

1PL PRS HAB learn FV

‘We learn.’

4c) Ba- la- sambilil-a

3PL PRS HAB learn FV

‘They learn.’

4d) Mu-ka-sambilil-a.

2PL FUT T learn FV

‘You will learn.’

4e) Umu-lumendo a-a-li sambilil-a

CL1 boy 3SG PST T learn FV

‘The boy learnt.’

In examples (3a) to (3e), the morpheme ‘-sambilil-’ is the verb root. However, for it to be meaningful, bound affixes have to be attached as demonstrated.

### 2.2.2 The Infinitive

The infinitive is a class of verbs used as nouns, without distinction of singular and plural. In Bemba the infinitive form of the verb is formed by prefixing ‘**ku-**’/‘**uku-**’ to the stem of the verb and it is usually found in the initial slot of the verbal structure. It is important to take note that the subject marker and the infinitive in Bemba do not co-occur. Consider the following examples:

5a) Uku-lim-a

INF cultivate FV

‘to cultivate’

5b) uku- end-a (ukwenda)

INF walk FV

‘to walk’

### 2.2.3 Negation

According to Payne (1997:182) a negative clause shows that some state of affairs does not hold. Gray and Bwalya (2015:14) observe that negation is usually indicated by adding the morpheme ‘**ta-**’ in the Bemba language. However, when the subject is the first person pronoun ‘**n-**’(I), negation is shown by inserting the morpheme ‘**-shi**’ after the person prefix of the subject. Consider the following examples:

6a) Ta-u-lee-pep-a.

NEG 1SG PRS PRG ASP pray FV

‘You are not praying.’

- 6b) Ta-a-lee-pep-a.  
 NEG 3SG PRS PRG ASP pray FV  
 ‘He/She is not praying.’
- 6c) Ta-tu-lee-pep-a  
 NEG 1PL PRS PRG ASP pray FV  
 ‘We are not praying.’
- 6d) Ta-ba-lee-peep-a  
 NEG 3PL PRS PRG ASP smoke FV  
 ‘They are not smoking.’
- 6e) Ta-mu-lee-peep-a  
 NEG 2PL PRS PRG ASP smoke FV  
 ‘You are not smoking.’
- 6f) Aba-ana ta-ba-ly-e  
 CL2 child NEG 3PL NR FUT eat FV  
 ‘Children won’t eat.’
- 6g) Ta-tu-a-by-ele (Tatwabyele).  
 NEG 1PL PST T plant FV  
 ‘We did not plant.’
- 6a) N-shi-lee-tum-a  
 1SG NEG PRS PRG ASP send FV  
 ‘I am not sending.’
- 6b) N-shi-ishib-e.  
 1SG NEG PRS T know FV  
 ‘I do not know.’
- 6c) N-sha-ishib-e.  
 1SG NEG PST T know FV  
 ‘I did not know.’
- 6d) N-sha-ka-twal-e  
 1SG NEG FUT T FV  
 ‘I will not take.’

#### 2.2.4 The Pronominal/Subject Marker

The subject marker (SM) in Bemba may or may not be used together with the subject noun because the verbal cluster is composed of a grammatical element all together whether it has an overt subject or a null subject. Consider the following:

7a) Umu-kashana a-lee- ipik-a ubwali.

CL1 girl 3SG PRS PRG ASP cook FV O

‘A girl is cooking ugali.’

7b) Umu-lumendo a-lee-lim-a.

CL1 boy 3SG PRS PRG ASP cultivate FV

‘A boy is cultivating.’

In examples (7a) and (7b), the subjects ‘umu-kashana’ (a boy) and ‘umu-lumendo’ (a girl) are not elements of the verbs as they are visible nouns and are assigned nominative case. In the following examples, the sentences are equally grammatical even though the subject markers are not co-occurring with the nouns. This is due to the fact that the SM may or may not be used together with the subject nouns.

7c) A-lee-ipik-a ubwali.

3SG PRS PRG ASP cook FV ubwali

He/she is cooking ugali.

7d) A-lee-lim-a

3SG PRS PRG ASP cultivate FV

He/she is cultivating.

The Bemba language has eighteen noun classes (Mann 1999:52). They determine the verbal prefix to be used and the form of the final vowel in relation to tense aspect and mood. Table 1 below shows the noun classes in Bemba.

**Table 1: Noun Classes in Bemba taken from Musonda (2013:16).**

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>SUBJECT MARKER</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>GLOSS</b>
1	mu-	umu-lumendo	A boy
1a	∅	kolwe	A monkey
2	ba-	a-ba-lumendo	Boys
2a	baa-	baa-kolwe	Monkeys
3	mu-	u-mu- ti	A tree
4	mi-	imi-ti	Trees
5	i/li-	I-sako	A feather
5a	lii-	Lii-cakolwa	A drunkard
6	ma-	Ama-sako	Feathers
7	ci-	Ici-ibi	a door
7a	cii-	Cii-kolwe	A big monkey
8	fi-	Ifi-ibi	Doors
8a	fii-	Fii-kolwe	Big monkeys
9	n-	Im-bwa	A dog
9a	∅	Kaapu	A cup
10	n	Im-bwa	Dogs
11	lu	Ulu-pwa	Relation
12	ka	Aka-ntu	A small thing
12a	kaa	Kaa-kolwe	A small monkey
13	tu-	utu-ntu	Small things.
13a	tuu-	Tuu-kolwe	Small monkeys
14	bu-	ubu-uci	Honey
14a	buu-	Buu-kafundisha	Teaching profession
15	ku-	Uku-boko	A hand
16	pa/pali-	Pa-mushi Pali kafundisha	At village At the teacher's place.
17	ku/kuli	Ku-mu-shi kuli-kafundisha	to the village to the teacher's
18	mu/muli	Muli-kafundisha.	in the teacher's

In table 1, the classes can be paired accordingly to indicate grammatical number, diminutives, and pejoratives. Classes 16, 17, and 18 are locative classes and they represent the following prepositions: ‘on’, ‘to’, ‘at’, ‘in’, and ‘into’ respectively. Classes 1/2, 1a/2a, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 10/11, 12/13 and 15/6 express mathematical number. Classes 7a and 8a express pejorative construction while classes 12a and 13a express diminutive constructions. However, it is important to note that classes 1, 2, and 18 have similar prefix but convey distinct meanings. CL 1 carries nouns referring to ‘person’, CL 3 is for nouns that refer to things and some parts of the body and CL 18 is a locative class (Musonda 2013:17).

It is important to take note that the class whose head noun/subject marker is used should be indicated throughout the entire sentence. Agreement prefixes are used and they differ in accordance with the function they perform as demonstrated below:

8a) Umu-kashana a-a-li-is-a.

CL1 3SG girl PST PFT come FV

‘A girl came.’

8b) Aba-kashana ba-a-li-is-a.

CL2 2PL girl PST PFT

‘Girls came.’

8c) Ifi-ibi fi-le-salik-a.

CL8 3PL door PRS T close FV

‘Doors close.’

8d) Uku- tash-a- ku-suma.

CL15 thank FV INF ADJ.

‘It is good to be grateful.’

In the above examples, (8a) is in class 1 representing singularity while class 2 in (8b) represents its plural form.

### 2.2.5 Verb Agreement

The Bemba language has verb agreement markers which are determined by the behaviour of another within the same constituent. Agreement markers show person and number. Agreement prefixes can be found on verbs. The verb is marked with agreement morphemes which indicate singularity or plurality as stated earlier. Consider the following:

9a) Umu-ntu a-lee-angal-a.

CL1 person 3SG PRS PRG ASP play FV

‘A person is playing.’

9b) Aba-ntu ba-lee-angal-a.

CL2 person 3PL PRS PRG ASP play FV

‘People are playing.’

### 2.2.6 Number Agreement

Like other Bantu languages, the verb in Bemba is marked with agreement morphemes which can show singular form or plural form. It is worth noting, however, that in Bemba common nouns do not stand alone but have a prefix which is mainly a vowel.

10a) Kaa-kolwe ka-lee- tanauk-a

CL12a 3SG PRS PRG ASP jump FV

‘A small (diminutive) monkey is jumping.’

10b) Tuu-kolwe tuu-lee-tanauk-a.

CL13a 2PP PRS PRG ASP jump tree

‘Small (diminutive) monkeys are jumping.’

In example (10a) and (10b) class 12a indicates the diminutive in singular form while class 13a shows the diminutive in plural form respectively.

### 2.2.7 Subject- Object Agreement

The Bemba verb also indicates the object-verb agreement. The object prefix is optional in the verbal cluster but when used, it has to conform to the rules of concordial agreement as exemplified below.

11a) I-bala na-li-lim-w-a

CL5 OM field PST TNS cultivate

‘The field is cultivated.’

11b) Ama-bala na-ya-lim-w-a.

CL6 OM field PST cultivate PAS FV

‘The fields are cultivated.’

### 2.2.8 The Final Vowel

All the verbs in Bemba, as already alluded to, end with a final vowel (FV) –a. It changes its form to vowel –e according to the tense used in some instances. Consider the following examples.

12a) Ly-a.

2SG PRS T eat FV

‘You eat.’

12b) Ly-e-ni.

2PL PRS T eat FV.

‘You eat.’

### 2.2.9 Causative (Verbal Extension)

Mann (1999:38) observes that the causative extension introduces the person who is responsible for a given action. According to Schröder (2015:3), a causative (a derivational affix) changes an intransitive verb into a transitive one by adding an affix to the verb and an additional object argument. It also changes a transitive verb into a ditransitive verb. Examples include:

13a) Kafundisha a-a-kak-ish-a abasambi ifyoola.

CL9a 3SG PST T tie CAUS FV NP

‘The headteacher has made the students to tie their bags.’



13b) Ba-a-tu-lu-fy-a.

3PL PST T lose CAUS- FV

‘Our neighbours have made us get lost.’

13c) Ba-lee-uma-ny-a utu-bwa.

3PL PRS PRG ASP beat CAUS FV dog

‘The boys made the small dogs to fight.’

13d) Na- lwal-ik-a Mulenga.

3SG PST T infect CAUS FV N.

‘Musonda has made Mulenga get sick.’

In examples (13a) to (13d), the causative is indicated by –ish-, -fy-, -ny-, and –ik- respectively.

### 2.2.10 Applied Extension

This extension shows that an object has been worked for. These include; ‘to do for’, or ‘to do on’ ‘to do on behalf of’ or ‘to work with.’ Cited in Kamfuli (2009: 42), Chanda (2007:133) says that the applied extension has the underlying form of ‘-il-’, which is constrained in certain contexts by the rules of vowel harmony and nasal harmony to become –el-, -in-, and –en-. Its less frequently used variety is –sh-.consider the examples below:

14a) Ba-ka-bomb-el-a aba-ana

3PL parent FUT T work APPL FV 3PP N

‘Parents will work for children.’

14b) Tu-ka-biik-il-a aba-ice.

1PL FUT T put APPL FV 3PP N

‘We will put for the children.’

14c) A-aci-laa-mu-pim-in-a ibala.leelo ulucelo.

3SG NR PST PRG OM measure APPL FV N ADV.

‘He/she measured the field for him/her this morning.’

14d) Ici-ibi ca-a-li-pon-en-a kafundisha.

CL7 door PST PFT fell APPL FV N.

‘A tree had fallen on the teacher yesterday.’

14e) U-ka-mu-pwish-i-sh-e.

2PS TNS FUT finish- APPL FV

‘You finish for him/her.’

### 2.2.11 Stative Extension

The stative extension shows the state in which the referent of the verb to which it is attached is. Kamfuli (2009:42) says that mainly the form is ‘-ik-’ with the following as its variants: ‘-ek-,’ ‘-uk-,’ ‘-ok-,’ and ‘am-.’ Below are the examples:

15a) Ing’ombe na-i-tul-ik-a ilinso

CL10 cow TNS PST 3PS break STAT EXT FV eye

‘The cow’s eye is broken.’

15b) Umu-kashana a-li-mon-ek-a uwa fimba.

CL1 girl 3SG PST PFT look STAT EXT FV ADJ.

15c) In-bushi na-i-shiik-am-a mumatipa.

CL10 ring PST T 3SG bury STAT EXT FV N

‘My ring is buried in the mud.’

15d) Ama-sumbu ya -a-li-put-uk- a

CL6 net 3PL PST PFT cut STAT EXT FV ADV.

‘The nets got cut yesterday.’

### 2.2.12 Passive Extension

In passive extensions, the subjects of the verbs are typically patients. The following suffixes produce passive verbs: -u- and -iku-. The main form of the passive extension is ‘-w-’, which in certain instances appears as ‘-iw-’ as exemplified below:

16a) Tu-ka-fund-w-a bwino.

1PL FUT T teach PASS EXT FV ADV

‘We will be taught well.’

### 2.2.13 Reciprocal Extension

The reciprocal extension shows that the proposition of the verb affects both the object and the subject of the verb to which. Affixing the suffix ‘-na-’ to the verb gives it the idea of reciprocity as exemplified below:

17a) Aba-sole ba-a-li-temw-a-na.

CL2 disciple 3PL PST PFT love FV RE EXT

‘Disciples had loved each other.’

17b) Ifi-busa fi-ka- ikata-na (fikekatana).

CL8 friend 3PL FUT T hold RE EXT

‘Friends will hold each other.’

In (17a and 17b), the proposition stated by the verbal root becomes a mutual experience between the subject and the object of the verb containing the extension as both of them perform the action of the verb to each other.

### 2.2.14 Reflexive Extension

According to Schröder (2015:7), a reflexive is characterised by specifying that there are two separate roles or grammatical entities but one grammatical role. In Bemba, reflexives are morphologically encoded. A morphological reflex is expressed by a suffix **-i-** as indicated below:

18a) Aba-ice ba-a-li-i-cen-a.

CL2 child 3PL PST PFT REF EXT hurt FV

‘The children had hurt themselves.’

18b) A-a-li-i-cindik-a.

3SG PST PFT REF EXT respect FV

‘He/she had respected him/herself.’

### 2.2.15 Intensive Extension

The intensive extension signifies intensity. It shows that the proposition of the verb to which it is suffixed is applied with extra effort. It is realised by the form, ‘-esh’ or ‘-ish.’ Consider the following examples.

19a) umu-nang’ani ta- lim-ish-a

CL1 lazy NEG farm PRS T INT EXT FV

‘A lazy one does not farm a lot.’

19b) Aba-bomfi ba-a-lee-bomb-esh-a.

CL2 worker 3PL PST PRG work INT EXT FV

‘Workers worked very hard because they were co-operative.’

There are instances, when, according to Kamfuli (2009:45) the verb ends with ‘-si-’ or ‘-sh’ or [ʃ] sound, the intensive extension ‘-ish-’ or ‘-esh-’ mutates to ‘-ki-’ or ‘-ke-’ in order to meet the well formedness condition. Below are the examples:

20a) Ta-tu-fway-a uku-ipu-ki-sh-a.

NEG 1PL want FV INF PRS T ask INT EXT FV

‘We do not like to ask a lot.’

20b) A-ala-n-lole-ke-sh-a lyonse.

3SG PRS HAB look INT EXT FV ADV

‘He/she always look at me too much.’

It is worth noting that the intensive extension ‘-sh-’ or ‘-esh-’ above is the same as the causative extension discussed earlier in 2.2.9. What differentiates them is the context in which they are used.

### 2.2.16 Extensive or Frequentative Extension

A frequentative extension indicates that the proposition of the verb to which it is attached is extended in space and time or that the action is widespread as it has been repeated extensively or over a large area or to a large extent. According to Kamfuli (2009:67), the extension exists in two forms. These include ‘-aul-’ and **-auk-** as demonstrated below:

21a) Ba-ka-put-aul-a.

3PL FUT T cut FRE EXT FV

‘They will cut extensively.’

21b) Baa-kolwe- ba-a-li-nyant-aul-a nyanje

CL2a monkey 3PL PST PFT step FRE EXT FV N

‘Cows had stepped on maize extensively.’

21c) I-sukulu lya -a-li-tob-auk-a

CL5 school 3SG PST PFT break FRE EXT FV

‘The school had broken extensively.’

21d) A-la-end-auk-a

3SG PRS HAB walk FRE EXT FV

‘He/she moves a lot.’

### 2.2.17 Completive Extension

The completive extension shows that the proposition of the verb to which it is attached has been performed permanently. It has the form ‘**-ilil-**’ which differs in accordance with the different morphological constraints rules of vowel harmony and nasal harmony. These variants include: ‘**-elel-**’, ‘**-inin-**’, and ‘**-enen-**’. Consider the following examples:

22a) Ba- aci-swil-ilil-a umsaalu.

3PL NR PST T harvest COMP EXT FV N

‘Children have completely harvested the vegetables.’

22b) N-ka-oc-elel-a impanga (Nkoocelela impanga).

1SG FUT T burn COM EXT FV N ADV

‘I will burn the bush completely.’

22c) Tu-a-fik-ile ninshi umulilo naushim-inin-a.

1PL PST T CONJ N extinguish COM EXT FV

‘We arrived when the fire was completely extinguished.’

22d) A-a-li-pen-enen-a.

3SG PST PFT mad COM EXT FV

‘He/she had completely become mad.’

### **2.2.18 Reversive Extension**

This extension shows that the action of the root has been undone or reversed. It takes the following forms; ‘-ulul-’, ‘-olol-’, ‘-unun-’, and ‘-onon-.’ Below are the examples.

23a) N-lee lemb-ulul-a kalata (Ndeelembulula)

3SG PRES PRG ASP write REV FV N

‘I am rewriting a letter.’

23b) Mu-ka-la-lim-unun-a i-bala.

2PP FUT PRG ASP cultivate REV FV N.

‘You will be re-cultivating the field.’

23c) Ta-a-lee-som-onon-a.

NEG 3SG PRS PRG REV FV

‘Do not remove grass from the broom.’

23d) Aba puupu ba-a-li pomp-olol-a imi pila.

3PL thief 3PL PST PFT pump REV FV

‘Thieves deflated tubes.’

### **2.3 The Word Order of the Bemba Sentence**

According to Hartman and Stock (1972:231), syntax is a branch of grammar which deals with the study of the arrangement of words in sentences and of the means through which relationships are indicated such as word order and inflection. Gleason (1969) cited by Chanda (2014:4) further says that syntax may be looked at as the principles of arrangement of words into larger constructions such as phrases and sentences.

The word order in a simple Bemba sentence is subject, verb and object/complement (SVO/C). Consider the following examples.

24a) Umu-kashana-a-li-ly-a umukate

CL1 3SG PST PFT eat (V) FV O

‘A girl had eaten bread.’

24b) Aba-lumendo ba-lee-tey-a umupila.

CL2 boy 3PL PRS PRG ASP tey-(V) FV O

‘Boys are playing football.’

24c) Umu bomfi a-li-um-a umu-nankwe

CL1 worker 3SG PST PFT beat FV OM O

‘A worker had beaten a friend.’

## 2.4 Summary

Chapter two looked into the morphology of the Bemba verb. This included the general Bemba language verb morphosyntax. The verb carries various affixes which represent various morphosyntactic elements such as agreement, number, negation, and the infinitive. Some verbal extensions were also discussed in this chapter. The word order of the Bemba language was also looked at. The chapter has also shown that the verbal word in Bemba just like other Bantu languages can stand as a sentence. This confirms Haspelmath and Sims (2010:41-54) who say that rules of morphology can be viewed as a combination of morphemes in the same way as syntax combine word which results in the formation of sentences.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TENSE

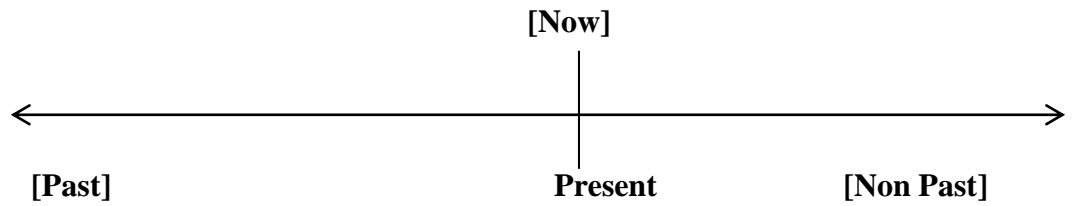
#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the morphological realisation of tense in the Bemba verb phrase. The Bemba language, like many other Bantu languages, has its verb consisting of affixes and the root as alluded to earlier in this study. The affixes are systematically arranged in the verb. The chapter establishes the inflectional forms for tense and their distribution in the verb phrase. Further, it discusses the overlap of tense and aspect. Section 3.1.0 gives the general overview of tense. Section 3.2.0 discusses tense marking in the Bemba language. The immediate past tense is looked at in section 3.2.1.1. Section 3.2.1.2 discusses the near past tense. The far past tense is discussed in section 3.2.1.3 while section 3.2.1.4 looks at the remote past. The present simple tense is discussed in section 3.3.1. Further, the chapter discusses the future tense in section 3.3. Section 3.3.1 deals with the immediate future tense, while the near future tense is discussed in section 3.3.2. Finally, section 3.3.3 looks at the remote future.

#### 3.1 General Overview of Tense

Tense can be described as relating the time of action, event or state of affairs referred to in a given sentence to the time of an utterance. Crystal (1980:348) says, “Tense is a category used in the grammatical description of verbs, along with aspect and mood, referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the time at which an action indicated by the verb took place.” Trask (1999) cited in Gatumu (2014:39) says that a given language is able to express limitless distinctions of time. If such a language exhibits these time distinction in its grammar, it is said to have tense. Comrie (1985:36) indicates that there are three basic tenses which include the present, past and future. The past tense locates the time of the situation at a time before now while the future tense locates the time of the situation after now. The present tense means that the time of the situation is placed at the present moment (now). Tense is therefore, a deictic category and Comrie (1985:2) illustrates a time line representation of time diagrammatically to account for tense in human languages as shown in the following:



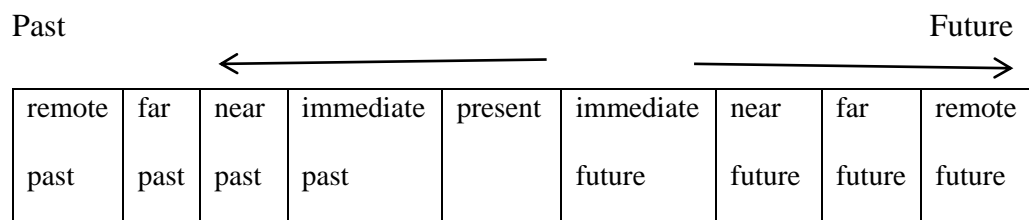


**Figure 4: Time line. Adapted from Comrie (1985:2)**

In his study, Nurse (2008:14) notes that a great number of Bantu languages encode tense on the left while aspect is encoded to the right whether both appear before the stem or not. In addition to inflection of the verb and tone, tense is also marked by the use of time adverbials. In terms of tense encoding Nurse (2008:80), concerns himself with widespread markers for the past, present and future tenses. Sampling of hundred ‘matrix’ languages, 78% exhibited a morpheme ‘a-’ with a past tense reference. The final vowel was used in about 59% of the languages in the present tense. Some languages (about 43%) had the suffix the suffix –ile for the present tense. He further pointed out that the morpheme ‘ile is also associated with aspect as well as near past. The morpheme ‘ka-’ used as a future tense marker in some Bantu languages. The other form of the future tense according to him is the morpheme la (a-) or ra (a)-.

### 3.2 Tense Marking in Bemba

Bemba uses verb inflection to encode tense. It also makes use of optional time adverbials accordingly. The Bemba tense system can be illustrated on a straight line time diagram in the figure bellow:



**Figure 5: Bemba Tense Representation**

Figure 5 above shows the division in the Bemba language. The past tense is subdivided into the immediate past, near past, far past and the remote past. The future tense is subdivided into the immediate future, near future, far future and remote future. In this study, the present tense is discussed as present simple tense. Other forms like what might be referred to as present progressive tense will be dealt with under aspect. This is the general scenario in many Bantu languages. In support of this point of view, Walker (2013:88) cites (Nurse 2008) who says, “Any type of Present will go beyond just a temporal component and will indicate some aspectual component as well.” Below is an elaborate table for Bemba tenses and their corresponding time frame:

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Immediate past	Just few minutes earlier in the day.
Near past	Minutes or hours within the same day before the time of speaking.
The far past	A day before speaking.
The remote past	two days, week, month or a year (years) earlier.
Present	Now.
Immediate future	Immediately after the time of speaking.
Near future	Minutes/hours after the time of speaking.
Remote future	From a day or year after now.

**Table 2: Bemba Tenses and their Corresponding Time Frame**

### **3.2.1 The Past Tense**

In this study, the past tense is looked at from three angles which include: the near past, the intermediate past and the far past. This tense portrays actions, events or state of affairs that occur before the time line of making an utterance. According to Shopen (1995:204) the past tense is used for events that occur prior to the time the speech is made. Walker (2013: 54) alludes to the fact that some Mara

languages which are Bantu languages in Tanzania have four past tense sessions. These include: remote past (P4. before yesterday'), hesternal past (P3 yesterday), hodiernal past (P2, earlier today), and immediate past (P1, within the last couple of hours). In this study, Bemba also has four divisions of the past tense but differs in the way it describes the time frame as shown in table two above.

### 3.2.1.1 The Immediate Past

The immediate past tense in Bemba accounts for actions that just took place just few minutes before the time of speaking. It also shows that a state of affair has just been achieved. It is marked by prefixing the morpheme 'a-' to the verb root. Consider the following:

25a) Umu-lumendo a-a-is-a.

CL1 boy 3SG IM PST T come FV

'The boy has just come.'

25b) Aba-ana ba-a-ly-a.

CL2 child 3PL IM PST T eat FV

'Children have just eaten.'

25c) Mu-a-ipik-a (Mwaipika)

2PP IM PST T cook FV

'You have just cooked.'

25d) N-a-lem-b-a.

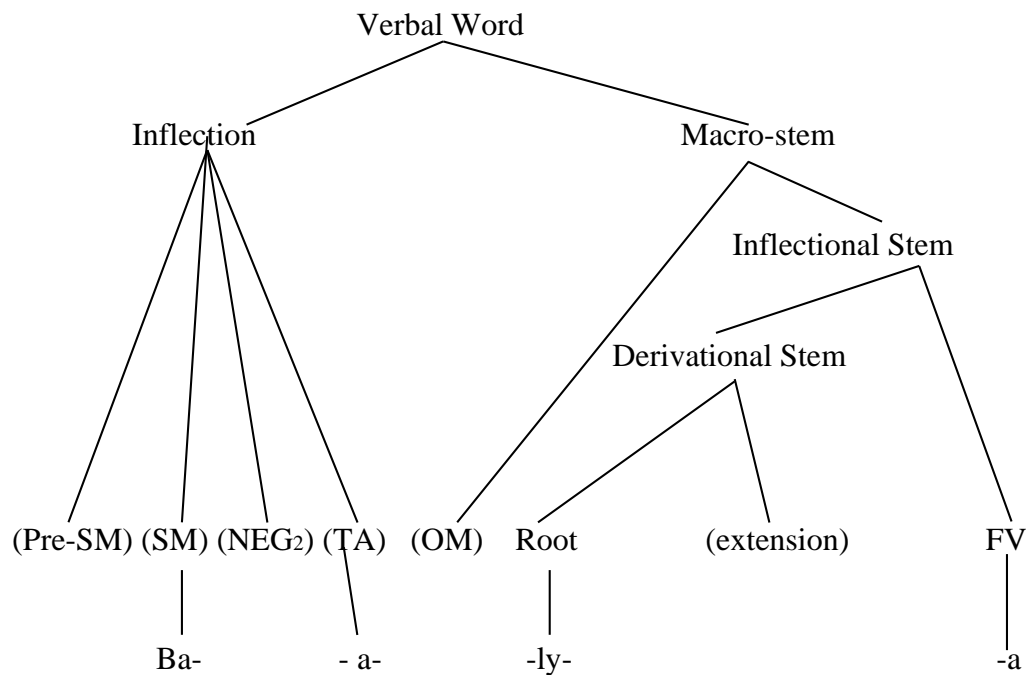
1SG IM PST T write FV

'I have just written.'

In example (25a) above, the prefix 'umu-' is the class (1) marker while 'lumendo' the noun (boy). The 'a-' is the third person singular which is in agreement with the class marker. The prefix '-a-' is the tense marker, '-is-' is the verb root (come) and the '-a' is the final vowel. The use of the morpheme, 'a-' as past tense marker conforms to the observation by Nurse that some Bantu languages make use of it to mark the past tense as alluded to in the introduction of this chapter (3.0). Ochieng (2013:53) in her description of the

morphosyntactic structure of the Suba, a Bantu language of Kenya, posits that the language uses the prefix ‘-a-’ attached to a verb root to denote the immediate past tense. In this case, Bemba shares some similarity with the Suba language when it comes to the immediate past tense marking. The illustration in (25a) also applies to examples (25b), (25c) and (25d) as well. It is worth noting that in sentences (25a) and (25b), the class marker has to agree with the person (number). Thus, ‘umu-’ and ‘a-’ and ‘Aba-’ and ‘ba-’ respectively. The final vowel does not change in the immediate past.

Consider the representation of example (25b) ‘Aba-ana ba-ly-a’ on Nurse’s framework below:



**Figure 6: Immediate Past Tense Marking**

The figure above shows that Bemba marks the immediate past tense through prefixation. The final vowel remains unchanged. The subject marker comes immediately before the tense. The pre-SM is empty because the slot is reserved for negation in Bemba which in is lacking in (25b). The slot for NEG2 does not apply to Bemba as the language marks negation at sentence initially (pre-SM).

The sentence does not have the OM and verb extension thereby making the respective slots empty. The final vowel comes at the end of the inflectional stem.

In his work, Walker (2013:20) says, “The most basic Bantu verb form is simply an Inflectional Stem without any extensions on the verb; this indicates that all the other slots besides the root and the final vowel are essentially optional.”

### 3.2.1.2 The Near Past

In Bemba, the near past tense is used to show that a given action took place some minutes or hours before the time of speaking. It indicates that the action took place within the same day. The morpheme ‘**aci-**’ is prefixed to a verb to denote that the action expressed was done in the near past. It overlaps with the perfective aspect in the near past in chapter 4 section 3.1. Consider the following:

26a) Aba-sambi ba-aci-shibuk-a uluceelo.

CL2 student 3PL NR PST T wake up FV ADV

‘The pupils woke up in the morning.’

26b) Tu-aci-ly-a ubwali pakatikakasuba.

1PL NR PST T eat FV O ADV

‘We ate ugali at noon.’

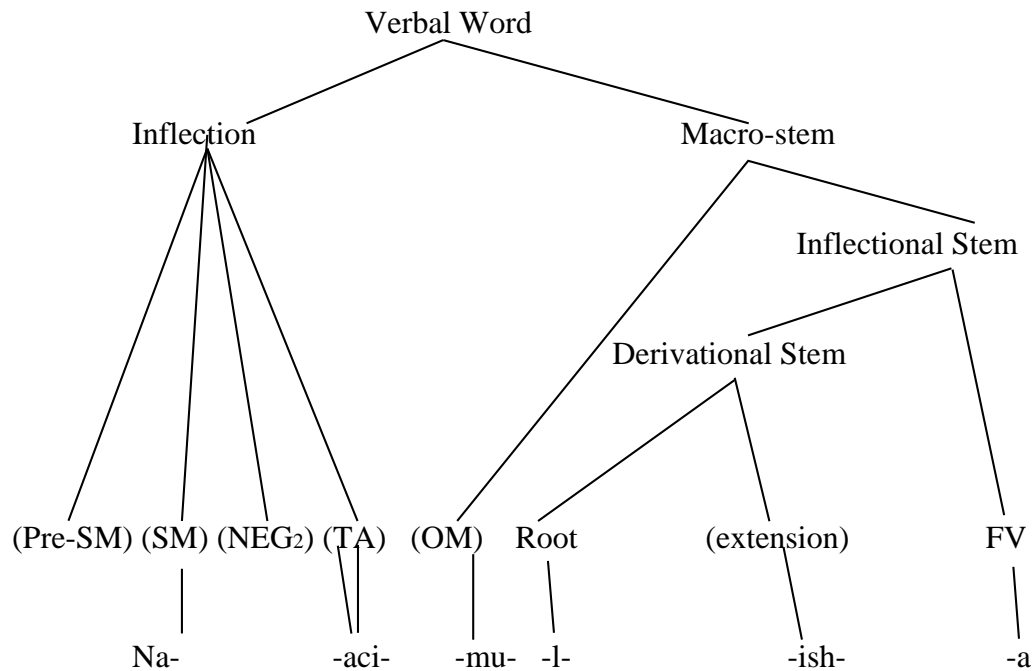
26c) Na-aci-mu-li-ish-a.

1SG OM eat NR PST T CAUS FV.

‘I fed him/her ugali.’

In (26a) above, ‘aba is the class marker and ‘-sambi’ is a noun (student). The morpheme ‘ba-’ (3PL) is in agreement with class 2 marker (aba). ‘-aci-’ is the near past tense morpheme marker. It expresses the idea that the action took place minutes or hours before the time of speaking within the same day. The morpheme ‘-im-’ is the verb root which means stand while the ‘-a’ at the end of the root verb is the final verb. Examples (26b) and (26c) share the same explanation for (26a). The adverbs of time in the above examples give more information as to when the action took place in the immediate past. They are, therefore, important when one wants to specify the occurrence of the activity.

Below is the representation of (26c) ‘Na-aci-mu-l-ish-a’ (I fed him/her) on the figure below:



**Figure 7: Representation of the Near Past Tense**

In the above structure, both tense and aspect have been mapped onto the morpheme ‘-aci-’ to show that the near PST TNS and the near PST ASP overlap as earlier discussed. This sentence contains the verbal extension which comes before the final vowel. The object marker ‘-mu-’ comes immediately before the root. The slots for Pre-SM and NEG2 are empty because the sentence does not have negation and that Bemba does not mark negation in NEG2 respectively.

### 3.2.1.3 The Far Past Tense

The far past tense in Bemba deals with actions that take place a day before the time of the speech. This tense is marked the final vowel in the verb root takes a modified shape. It is indicated by prefixing the morphemes ‘-a’ and ‘-ile’ to the verb root concurrently. Here, the verbs take a modified ending as the final vowel ‘-a’ is replaced by the morpheme ‘-ile’. The final vowel ‘-a’, is therefore replaced by the morpheme ‘-ile’ which is the underlying form but it becomes ‘-

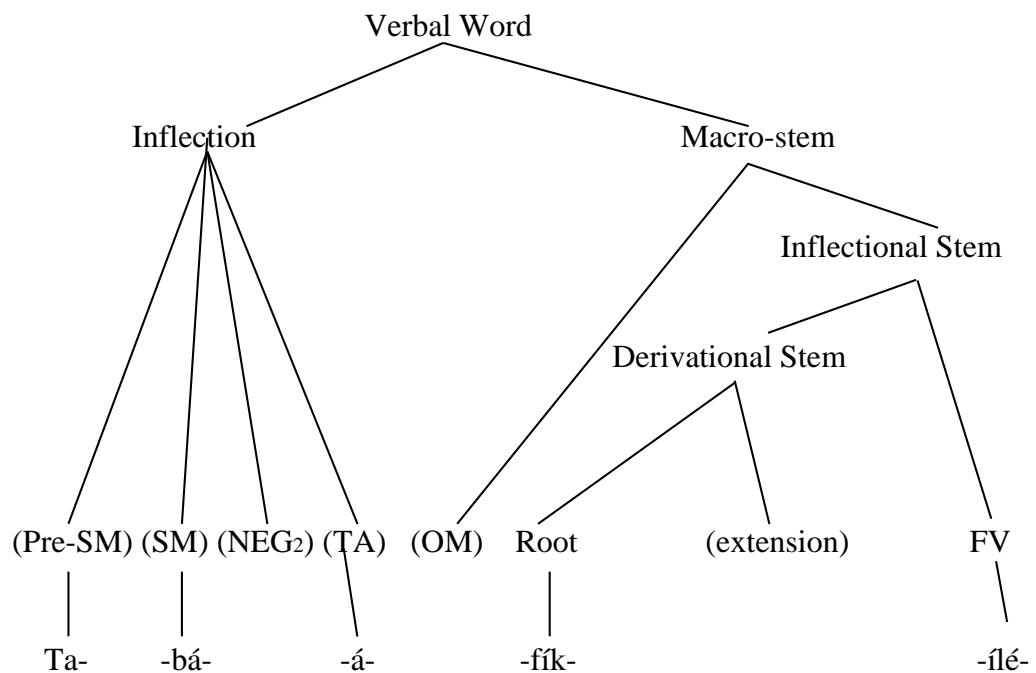
**ele'** as the FV (-a) and the vowel (i) which is at the beginning of the morpheme **'-ile** change to the vowel [e]. It is differentiated from the remote past through tone marking. Spitulnik and Kashoki (2014:68) say that tonal contrasts are present at grammatical level and can play a role in differentiating tense. Consider the example below:

27) Ta-bá-á-fík-ílé (Bááfíkílé) mailo.

NEG 3PL F PST T ADV

'They arrived yesterday.

In the above example, (27), the far past tense is expressed by the morpheme (-a-) being prefixed to root. The final vowel in the root is replaced by the morpheme 'ile'. Due to vowel harmony, the final vowel (-a) in the verb root and the front high unrounded vowel /i/ in the far PST T (-ile) marker changes to the mid front vowel [e]. Tone plays a role in contrasting it from the remote past. Below is the representation of the far past tense on the verbal hierarchical structure.



**Figure 8: Representation of the Far Past**

‘Ta-’ occupies the Pre-SM because it is indicating negation. In Bemba negation comes at the beginning of a sentence. The far PST T is marked by the morpheme ‘-a-’ but the root of the verb takes a modified ending as the final Vowel is replaced by ‘-ile’. For the sake of this study, the morpheme ‘-ele’, appears under the FV node. The nodes for OM and extension are empty because they are not present in the sentence. As stated earlier, all the other slots besides the root and the final vowel are optional. In Bemba the most basic verb form just is an inflectional stem with no extensions on the verb as is the case in other Bantu languages.

#### 3.2.1.4 The Remote Past Tense

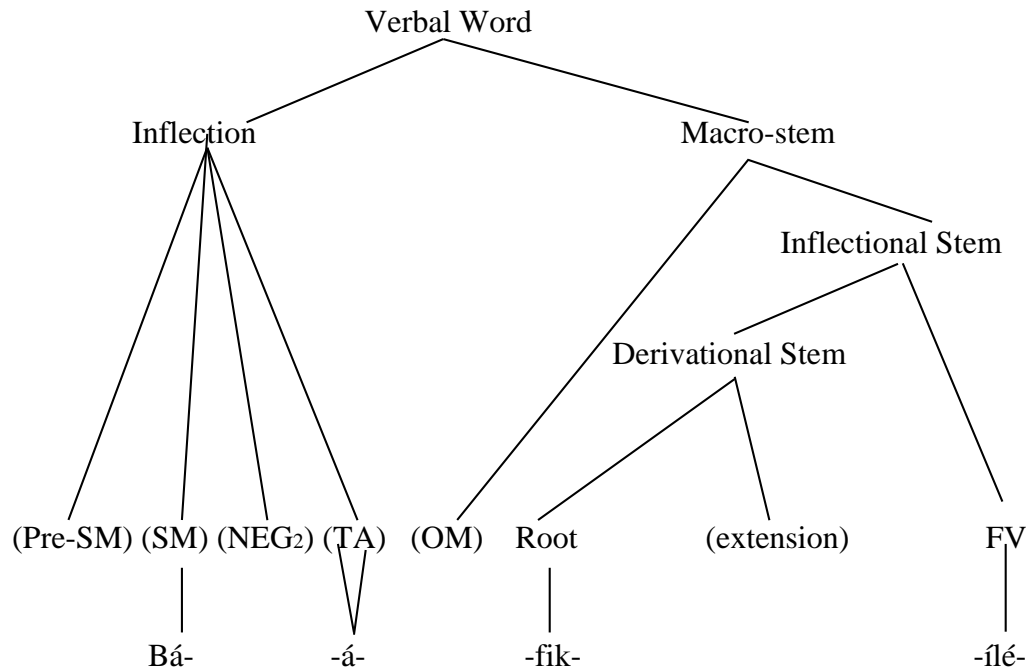
According to this study, the remote past tense in Bemba deals with actions that occur in the distant past. It is indicated by prefixing the morphemes ‘-a’ and ‘-ile’ to the verb root concurrently. Here, the verbs take a modified ending as the final vowel ‘-a’ is replaced by the morpheme ‘-ile’. The remote past tense overlaps with the perfective aspect in the remote past as observed in chapter 4 section 3.2 of this study. Consider the following examples:

28) Bá-á-fik-ílé (Bááfikílé) ulyamwaka.

3PL REM PST T reach FV

In examples(28), the morpheme ‘-ile’ is suffixed concurrently with the prefix ‘-a-’ to denote that the action took place in the remote past. It is important to note that the suffix ‘-ile’ used here is the same as the one used in the far past tense in section 3.2.1.3 above. Though the role of tone in the marking of tense is not one of the objectives of this study, it is important to state that tone differentiates the same sentence as to whether the action was carried out a day before (the far Past) or so many days or years (the remote past) before the time the speech is delivered. Consider figure 9 below:





**Figure 9: Representation of the Remote Past Tense**

In the above verbal structure, it is observed that TA is mapped on the same morpheme ‘-a-’ showing that the remote past tense and the remote past perfective aspect overlap. The morpheme ‘ile-’ features under the node for the FV as it replaces the final vowel in the sentence. The empty nodes indicate that the Pre-SM, OM and the extension are not represented in (28). NEG2 node is not necessary in Bemba as it marks negation at that beginning of the sentence.

### 3.3 The Present Tense

In this study, the present tense in Bemba is realised through the present simple tense. What might be referred to as the present progressive tense is discussed as the present progressive aspect in chapter four.

#### 3.3.1 The Present Simple Tense

This tense is non- overtly marked in Bemba. It is indicated by a zero morpheme (-Ø-) being prefixed to the verb root. It implies that an action occurs every time. This tense also brings in some aspectual implications as it also expresses the present habitual aspect. In her study, Timbwah observed that the simple present tense is marked by a zero morpheme as a prefix. Walker (2013:88) adds that the

present tense marked by a zero morpheme is found in many Bantu languages of the Great Lakes.

Consider the examples below:

29a) N-Ø-shit-ish-a salaula.

1PS sell CAUS FV N

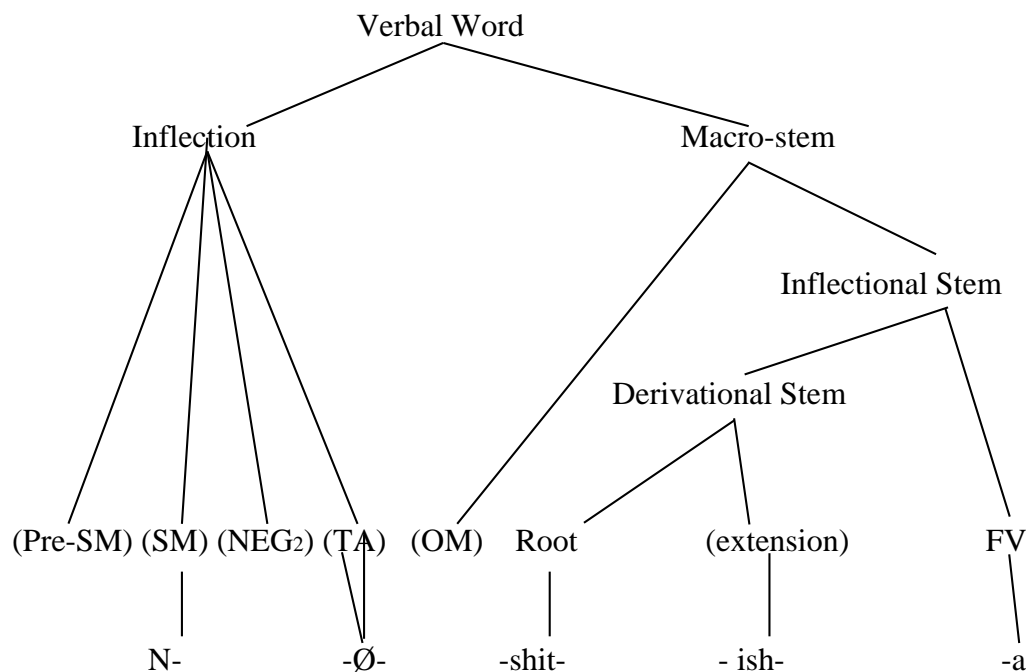
‘I sell second hand clothes.’

29b) Aba-sha ba-Ø-bomb-a lyonse

CL2 slave 3PP work FV ADV

‘Slaves work always.’

In examples (29a) and (29b), the zero morpheme marks tense confirming the earlier statement that the present simple tense is not overtly realised. Consider example (29a) in the figure below:



**Figure 10: Representation of the Present Simple Tense**

TA is mapped on ‘-Ø-’ to show that it can also tense mark aspect. The final vowel remains unchanged. The slots for Pre-SM, NEG2 and OM are unoccupied since they are not represented in the sentence.

### **3.4 The Future Tense**

The future tense in Bemba shows the idea that an action or event is yet to take place any time from now up to within the same day of speaking or days, weeks, months and years to come. Mulilo et al (2007:39) observe that the future tense in Bemba indicates situations that will take place in future. They, however, do not give categories of sessions in the future tense or give clearly the demarcation between the future tense and aspect. In this study, the future tense in Bemba is divided into the immediate future tense, the near future tense, and the remote future tense. Further, the study isolates the future tense from the future aspect.

#### **3.4.1 The Immediate Future Tense**

The immediate future is indicated by placing the morpheme ‘-le-’ between the subject and the verb root. It denotes the idea that the action will be carried out not long from now within the same day. It gives the impression that the situation takes place immediately the utterance is made. Consider the examples below:

30a) Ba-namaayo ba-le-pyang-a.

CL2 woman 3PL IM FUT T sweep FV

‘The women will sweep.’

30b) N-le-is-a (Ndeisa) nombaline.

1SG IM FUT T come FV ADV

‘I will come soon.’

30c) U-le-y-a.

2SG IM FUT go FV

‘You will go.’

30d) Mu-le-ly-a.

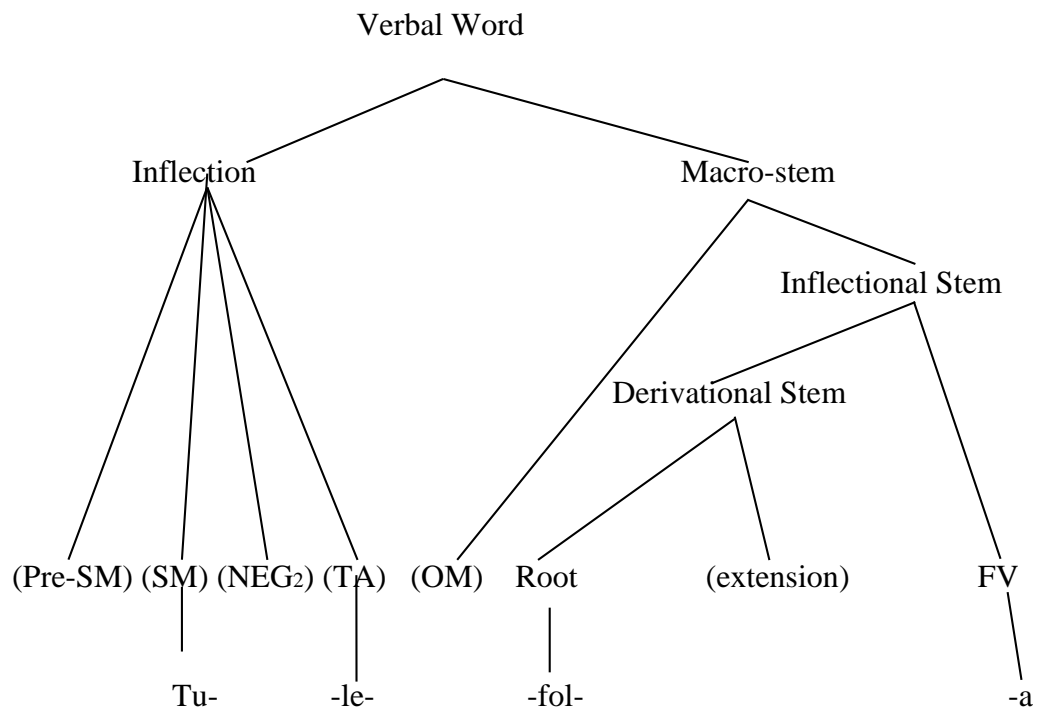
2PL IM FUT T FV

‘You will eat.’

30e) Tu-le-fol-a.

1PL IM FUT T FV

‘We will get paid.’ In example (30a to 30e) the immediate future tense marker is placed between the subject marker and the verb root. The final verb does not change its form. In example (30b), the alveolar lateral /l/ in the immediate future morpheme changes to the voiced alveolar plosive because it is preceded by the first person pronoun singular ‘n-’ which is the alveolar nasal /n/. Consider (30e) representation on the figure below:



**Figure 11: Representation of Immediate Future Tense**

In the above structure, the immediate future tense is marked by the morpheme ‘-le-’. The FV remains unchanged. The unmarked nodes on the figure are not present in the sentence.

### 3.4.2 The Near Future Tense

The near future tense shows that an action will take place hours after now but within the same day. It is indicated by inserting the morpheme ‘-ala-’ between the subject of the verb and the verb as indicated in the following examples.

31a) Aba-lumendo ba-ala-lemb-a.

CL2 boy 3PL NR FUT T write FV

‘Boys will write.’

31b) Umu-kashana a-ala-biik-a pamulu.

CL1 girl 3SG NR FUT T put FV PP

‘The girl will put on top.’

31c) Na-ala-lemb-a.

1SG NR FUT T write FV

‘I will write.’

31d) Mu-ala-pyang-a (Mwalapyanga).

2PL NR FUT T sweep FV.

‘You will sweep.’

31e) Tu-ala-byal-a.

1PL NR FUT T plant FV

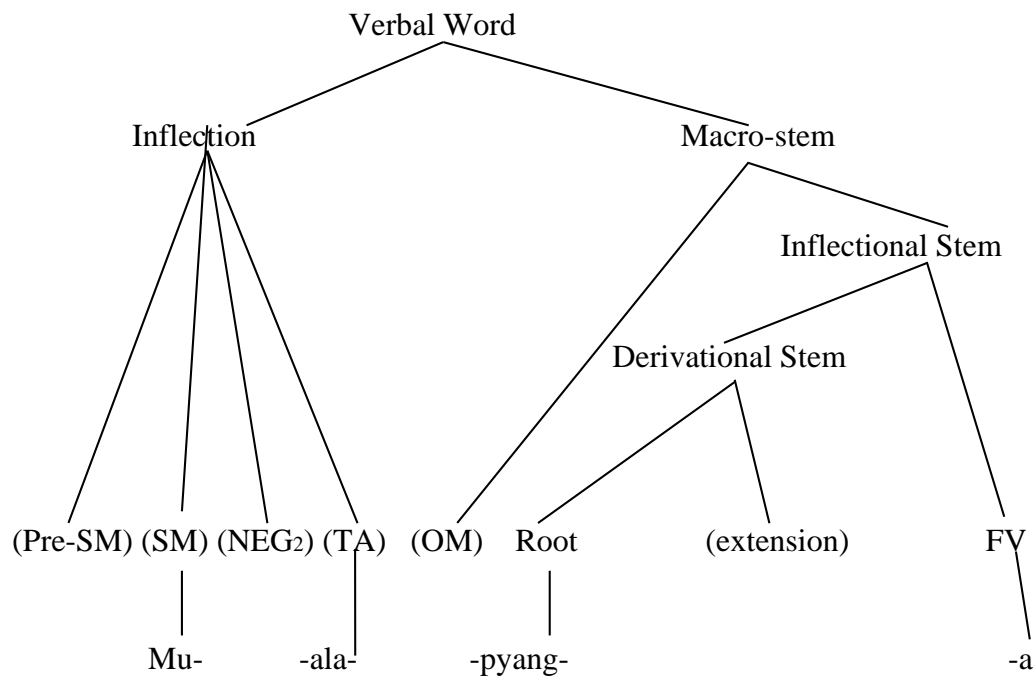
‘We will plant.’

31f) Ba-ala-lim-a.

3PL NR FUT T cultivate FV.

‘They will cultivate.’

In the above sentence (31a), the morpheme ‘-ala-’ is prefixed to the verb root to show that an action will take place in the near future. Sentences in (31b) to (31f) also exhibit the same idea. Though optional, the time adverbials may be necessary to give information as to when exactly the action will take place in the near future as is the case in examples (31d) above. Below is the representation of sentence (31d) on the verbal structure figure:



**Figure 12: Representation of the Near Future Tense**

The near future tense maker ‘-ala-’ is prefixed to the verb root. The final vowel remains unchanged.

### 3.4.3 The Remote Future Tense

The remote future tense in Bemba is used to indicate situations which are likely to occur further in the future. It implies the idea that an action will take place a day up to years to come. Time adverbials are used to specify the exact time in the future that a situation is going to take place. The morpheme ‘-ka-’ is placed between the subject and the verb to show the remote future tense. Consider the following:

32a) Aba-lumendo ba-ka-lemb-a mailo

CL2 boy 3PL REM FUT T write FV ADV

‘Boys will write.’

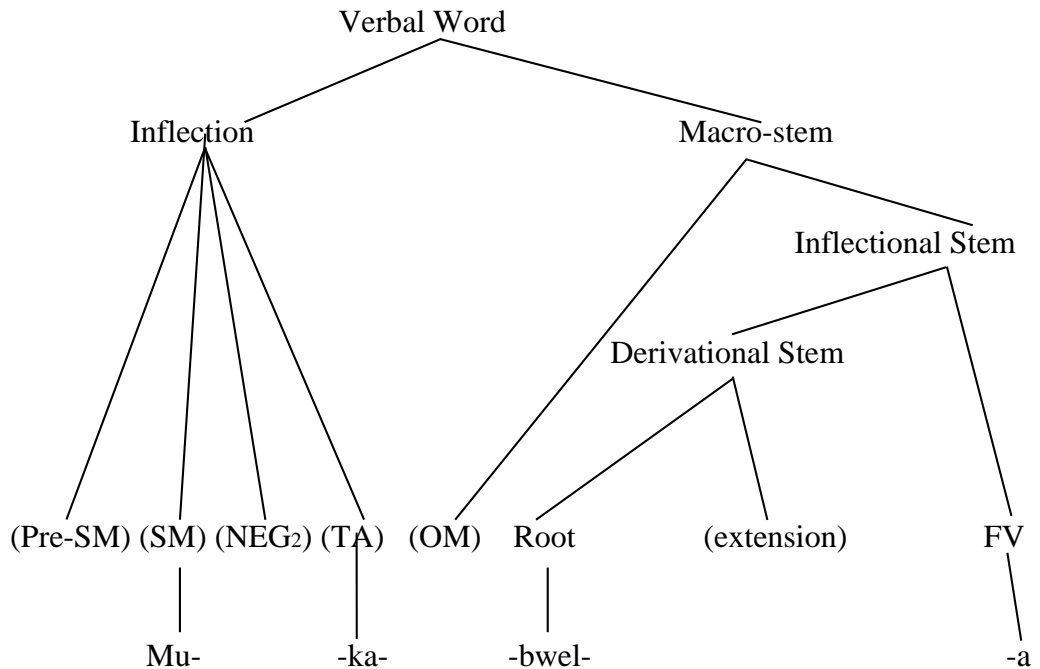
32b) Umu-kashana a-ka-let-a

CL2 girl 3SG REM FUT T bring FV

‘The girl will bring.’

- 32c) N-ka- y-a.  
 1SG REM FUT go FV  
 ‘I will go.’
- 32d) Tu-ka-is-a (Tukesa).  
 1PP REM FUT come FV  
 ‘We will come.’
- 32e) U-ka-shit-a incinga.  
 2SG REM FUT buy FV O  
 ‘You will buy a bicycle.’
- 32f) Mu-ka-bwel-a.  
 1PL REM FUT T FV  
 ‘You will come back.’

It is observed that when the remote future marker ‘-ka-’ is followed by the front open high vowel /i/, it is modified to ‘ke-’. Refer to example (32d) above. Adverbials are necessary for specificity. Below is the representation of sentence (32f) on the verbal hierarchical structure:



**Figure 13: Representation of the Remote Future Tense**

In the figure above, the future tense marker ‘-ka-’ is prefixed to the verb root as explained above. The final vowel does not change. The empty nodes show that certain elements are not represented in the sentence.

Tense marking in Bemba in the Bemba verb phrase can be summarised in table (3) below:

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Overlap</b>	<b>Tense morpheme</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
Past	Immediate		[a-]	Ba- <b>a</b> -y-a.	They have just gone.
	Near	near past PRFV ASP	[aci-]	Ba- <b>aci</b> -y-a.	They went.
	Far	Far past PRFV ASP	prefix -a- suffix ‘ile-’	Tw-a-sw- <b>ile</b>	We harvested.
	Remote	REM PST PRFV ASP	[a-]... [-ile]	A- <b>a</b> -sos- <b>ile</b>	He/she spoke.
Present	present simple	PRS simple ASP	∅	A-bwel-a ubushiku	He/she comes back at night
Future	Immediate		[le-]	A- <b>le</b> -y-a	He/she will go
	Near		[ala-]	Na- <b>ala</b> -y-a	I will go.
	Remote		[ka-]	Tu- <b>ka</b> -ly-a	We will eat

**Table 3: Tense Markers in Bemba**



Table (3) shows that tense marking in Bemba is done by adding a prefix to the verb root. In the marking of the far past and the remote past, the final vowel is replaced by the morpheme –ile-. The simple present tense is not indicated by any morpheme apart from the subject marker, the verb root and the final vowel. It further shows cases of overlap in tense and aspectual marking. The slot for the present tense is realised as present simple tense as other forms of present will be discussed as aspect. This is in agreement with Mulilo et al (2007:39) who say that Bemba has the present simple tense (*inshita yalyonse*). In this study, the present simple tense overlaps with the present habitual aspect while what may be termed as the present progressive is discussed as the progressive present aspect as discussed in chapter 4.

### 3.5 Summary

Chapter three discussed tense in Bemba and its morphological realisation in the verb phrase. From the analysis, it has been established that Bemba has a tense system of basic tenses. These include: past, present and future. Further, the language has a subdivision of its time line in accordance with its understanding of the time frame. In this study, the past tense is sub-divided into three distinct past tenses: the immediate past which is shown by prefixing the morpheme ‘-a-’ to the verb root; the near past is marked by prefixing ‘-aci-’ to the verb root indicating that the action occurred not long ago or within the same day. It overlaps with the perfective aspect in the near past in chapter 4 section 2.1; the far past tense is marked by the prefix ‘-a-’ while the ending of the root gets modified by replacing the FV with ‘-ile’. It signifies that an action took place a day before. The remote past is also indicated by prefixing ‘-a-’ and replacing the FV with ‘-ile’. They occur concurrently. It is distinguished from the far past through tone marking. The remote past tense overlaps with the remote past perfective aspect. The present tense as already alluded to is realised as present simple tense which overlaps with the present habitual aspect. It is non- overt but the subject and the verb root are used. The future tense is sub-divided into: the immediate future which is shown by placing the morpheme ‘-le-’ between the

subject and the verb root; the near future is marked by placing the morpheme ‘-**ala-**’ between the subject marker and the verb root; and the remote future tense which is marked by the morpheme ‘-**ka-**’ prefixed to the verb root.

The overlapping of the past tense forms such as the near past (aci-) with the perfective aspect in the near past and the perfective in the far past is supported by Nurse (2003: 1) who argues that an obvious close link between the perfective and past actions exist as in most cases, it is the past situations that are complete.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

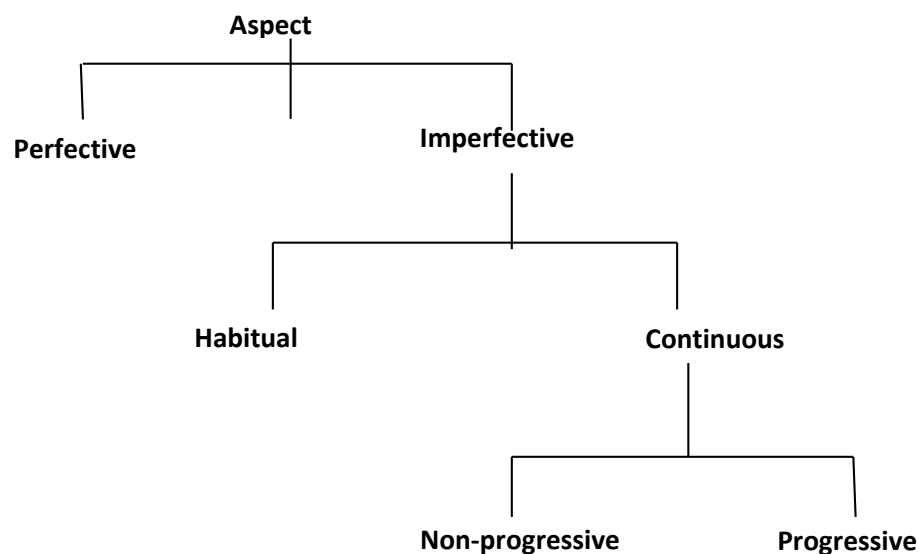
### **ASPECT MARKING**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

On her study on Kimbere, Gatumu (2014:58) observes that aspect and tense are concerned with time in different ways despite the fact that all deal with time. This chapter discusses the marking of aspect in the Bemba verb phrase. It discusses various realisations of aspect and points out instances of overlapping of tense and aspect to confirm the observations made in chapter three. Section 4.1.0 gives the general overview of aspect while section 4.2.0 is on aspect on Bemba. The imperfective aspect is discussed in section 4.2.1.0 with section 4.2.1.1 looking at the imperfective in the present progressive. Section 4.2.1.2 is on the imperfective in the near past progressive. The imperfective in the remote past progressive is covered in section 4.2.1.3. The imperfective in the far future progressive is discussed in section 4.2.1.4. The perfective aspect is discussed in section 4.3.0. The perfect, habitual and the iterative aspects are discussed in sections 4.4.0, 4.5.0 and 4.6.0 respectively.

#### **4.1 General Overview of Aspect**

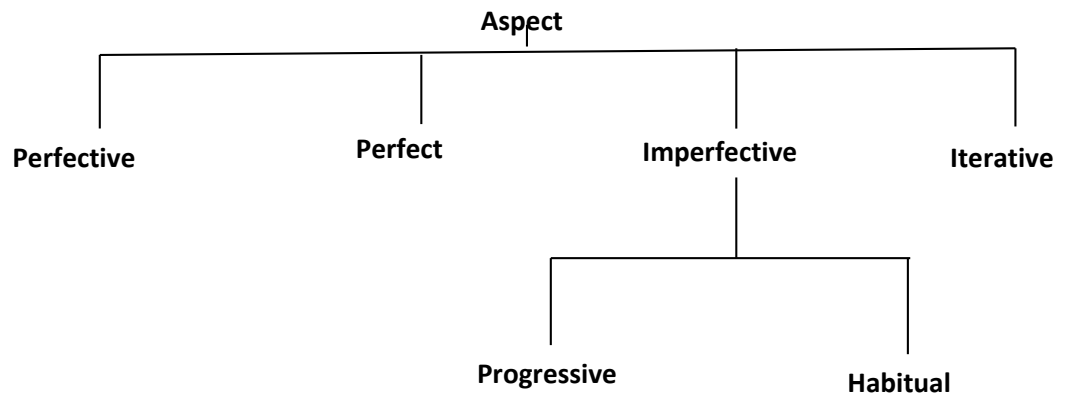
Aspect, according to Payne (1997:238), gives a description of the internal shape of an event or a state of affair. Saeed (1997: 118) further views aspect as a grammatical system relating to time. However, the speaker may choose how to describe the internal temporal nature of a situation. Aspect, therefore, has to do with spatio-temporal condition of an event in time and space which may be progressive (on going) or may be complete. Schröder (2015:4) adds that aspects are various ways in which the internal temporal constituency of a situation are viewed. Comrie (1976: 25) gives the classification of aspectual categories as indicated in figure fourteen below:



**Figure 14: Aspectual Categories. Adapted from Comrie (1976:25)**

#### **4.2 Aspect in Bemba**

The Bemba language exhibit both tense and aspect. It is common to confuse aspect for tense. For instance, Mulilo et al (2007:19) talk about the present continuous tense. However, in this study, Bemba does not have the present continuous tense but the present progressive aspect. Actions that are complete at the time an utterance is made are categorised as the perfective aspects while those that are in progress and incomplete at the time of speaking are described as imperfective aspects. Continuous and habitual aspects in Bemba fall under the imperfective aspect as will be discussed in the following sections. The Bemba aspectual system is divided into the following categories: the perfective aspect, perfect, imperfective aspect and the iterative aspect. The perfective includes the past aspect which is further subdivided into: the near past, far past, and remote past. The perfect is divided into the present perfect and the past perfect. The imperfective is divided into: the imperfective in the present (progressive) aspect; the past (near past aspect and remote past); the future (near FUT and the far FUT aspects) and the habitual aspect. The iterative aspect indicates both complete and incomplete situations in Bemba as will discussed in this chapter. In his conceptual framework, Nurse says that most Bantu languages mark aspect as prefixes. Figure fifteen (15) below shows the Bemba aspectual Categories:



**Figure 15: Bemba Aspectual Category**

In figure 15 above, it is noticed that the progressive and habitual aspects fall under the Imperfective.

#### **4.2.1 The Imperfective Aspect**

Schröder (2015:4) observes that the imperfective describes an action which is non-completed and that within the imperfective there are different aspects. Nzioka (2007:53) says that the imperfective aspect involves the viewing of a situation from ‘inside’ as an on-going and continuing process. Nurse (2003:3) posits that in most Bantu languages, the imperfective is one of the many incomplete categories which can go with aspects such as the progress, habitual, and iterative. The imperfective, therefore, can be used in the past, present, and future tense. In Bemba, being a Bantu language, the imperfective aspect exists in the present, past and in the future and they are all dependent on tense. The past imperfective aspect is subdivided into the near past and the remote past while the future is subdivided into the near future and the far future.

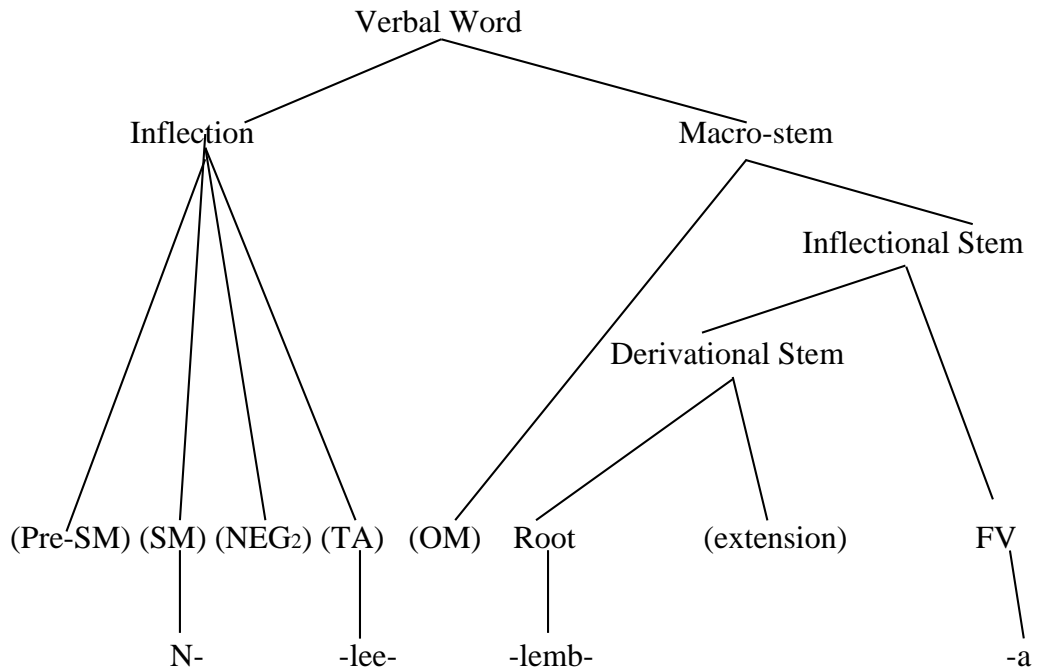
##### **4.2.1.1 The Imperfective in the Present Progressive**

The imperfective aspect in the present accounts for continuous situations within the present moment at the time of speaking. The progressive aspect morpheme ‘-lee-’ is placed between the subject marker and the verb root to indicate that the action is on-going in the present moment. Consider the following examples:

- 33a) N-bwa i-lee-bos-a  
 CL10 dog 3SG PRS IPFV bark FV  
 ‘The boy is barking.’
- 33b) Baa-kolwe ba-lee-see-a.  
 CL2a monkey 3PL PRS IPFV laugh FV  
 ‘Monkeys are crying.’
- 33c) Mu-lee-cap-a bwino.  
 2PL PRS IPFV wash FV ADV  
 ‘You are washing well.’
- 33d) Tu-lee-tey-a umupila.  
 1PL PRS IPFV play FV O  
 ‘We are playing football.’
- 33e) N-lee-lemb-a kalata (Ndeelemba).  
 1PS PRS IPFV write FV O  
 ‘I am writing a letter.’

In examples (33a-33e), the morpheme ‘-lee-’ is placed between the subject marker and the verb root. It implies that the action took place in the present at the time of speaking and that it was continuing. The verb may be followed by an adverb as in (33c) or an object as in (33d) and (33e) just for specifications. There is no indication as to when the action will end. In example (33e) it is observed that when the first person pronoun ‘N-’ precedes the alveolar lateral /l/ in the PRS IPFV ASP marker ‘lee-’ it changes to the alveolar plosive as indicated earlier in this study.

Consider the representation of the present progressive imperfective aspect of (33):



**Figure 16: Representation of the Present Progressive Imperfective**

The PRS PRG ASP ‘-lee-’ is prefixed to the verb root to represent actions that are on- going in the present. The FV does not change. The slots that are unfilled are not represented in the sentence.

#### 4.2.1.2 Imperfective in the Near Past Progressive

This aspect shows that an action was continuous in the near past. The near past tense marker ‘-aci-’ co-occurs with the aspect morpheme ‘-laa-’. They are placed between the subject and the verb root concurrently as demonstrated in the following examples:

34a) Umu-ana (umwana) a-aci-laa-ly-a.

CL1 child 3SG PST IPFV eat FV

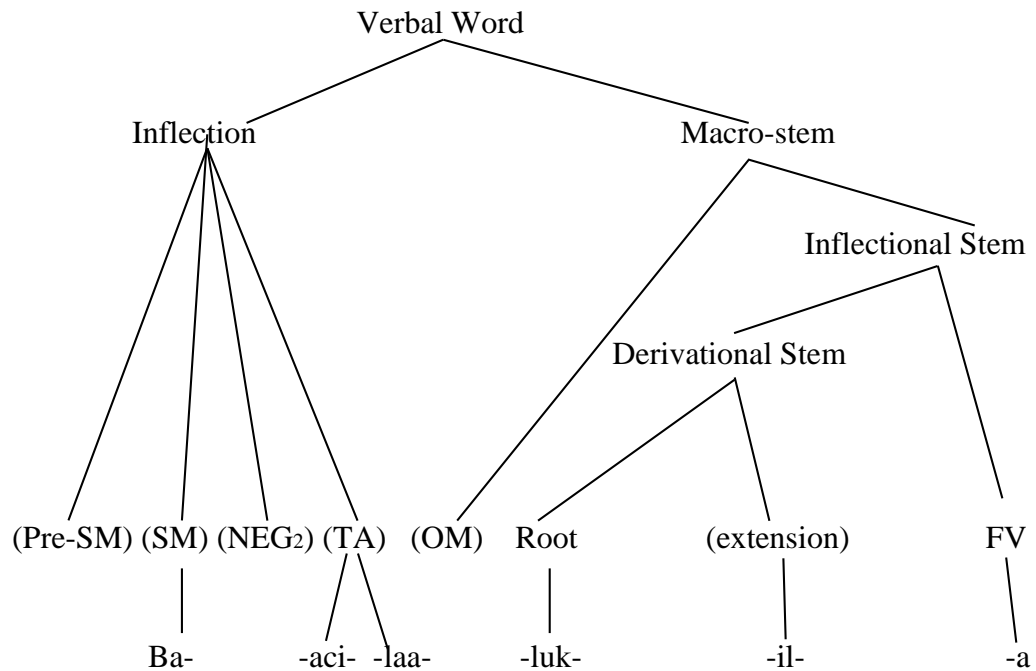
‘The child was eating.’

34b) Ba-aci-laa-luk-il-a banyina.

3PP near PST IPFV plait APPL EXT FV O

‘They were plaiting for their mother.’

In (34a) and (34b), the near past tense morpheme ‘-aci-’ co-occurs with the aspectual morpheme ‘-laa-’. They are placed between the subject marker and the verb root to show that actions were continuing and that they were incomplete in the near past. Consider the representation of example (34) in the figure below:



**Figure 17: Representation of the Near Past Progressive**

The above representation agrees with Nurse’s observation that in most Bantu languages, tense and aspect are marked on the right side of the verbal root and where they co-occur, tense is on the right side of aspect. In this case the morpheme for tense ‘-aci-’ is on the right side of the aspect marker ‘-laa-’. The final vowel does not change. The empty nodes are not represented in the sentence. In this case, the near past tense co-occurs with the near future tense as stated above.

#### 4.2.1.3 Imperfective in the Remote Past Progressive

The imperfective aspect in the remote past in Bemba accounts for an action that was non complete (progressive) in the remote past. It is marked by the past tense morphemes ‘-a-’ and progressive aspect marker ‘-lee-’ are placed between the subject and the verb root concurrently. It overlaps with the remote past progressive habitual aspect. Consider the following:



35a) Umu-ana a-a-lee-ly-a ubwali.

CL1 child 3SG IPFV REM PST eat FV O

‘The child was eating ugali.’

35b) Aba-ana ba-a-lee-imb-a iloba.

CL2 child 3PL IPFV REM PST dig FV O

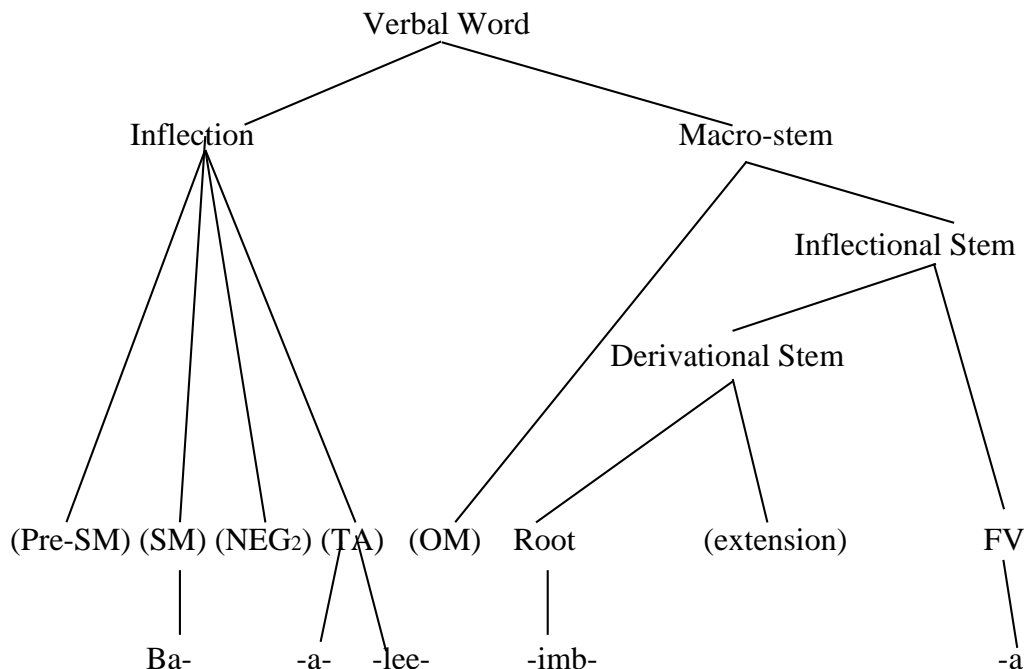
‘The children were digging the soil.’

35c) Twa-a-lee-biil-a kaputula.

1PP REM PST IPFV FV O

‘We were sewing a short.’

In the above, it is noted that the morpheme ‘a-’ and the progressive morpheme ‘-lee-’ are concurrently prefixed to the verb root. The idea expressed is that the actions were continuing and incomplete in the remote past. Adverbs of time may be added if one wants to specify the time an action occurred in the remote past. The action might have taken place a day up to years from the time of the speech. Consider example (35b) represented on the figure below:



**Figure 18: Representation of Remote Past Progressive**

In the figure above, aspect appears on the node to the left of tense. The past tense marker co-occurs with the progressive aspect to mark the past progressive imperfective aspect. The unfilled nodes are not represented in the sentence.

#### 4.2.1.4 The Imperfective in the Far Future Progressive

The far future imperfective aspect shows that a situation was on going in the far future. It is realised by the future tense morpheme ‘-ka-’ and the aspect morpheme ‘-laa-’ concurrently. It denotes activities continuing a day to years from the time of speaking. Adverbs are cardinal if one wants to show the exact day, week, month or year the action will be taking place. Consider the examples below:

36a) Aba-lumendo ba-ka-laa-lim-a.

CL2 boy 3SG far IPFV FUT cultivate FV

‘The boys will be cultivating.’

36b) A-ka-laa-fund-a.

3SG far FUT IPFV teach FV

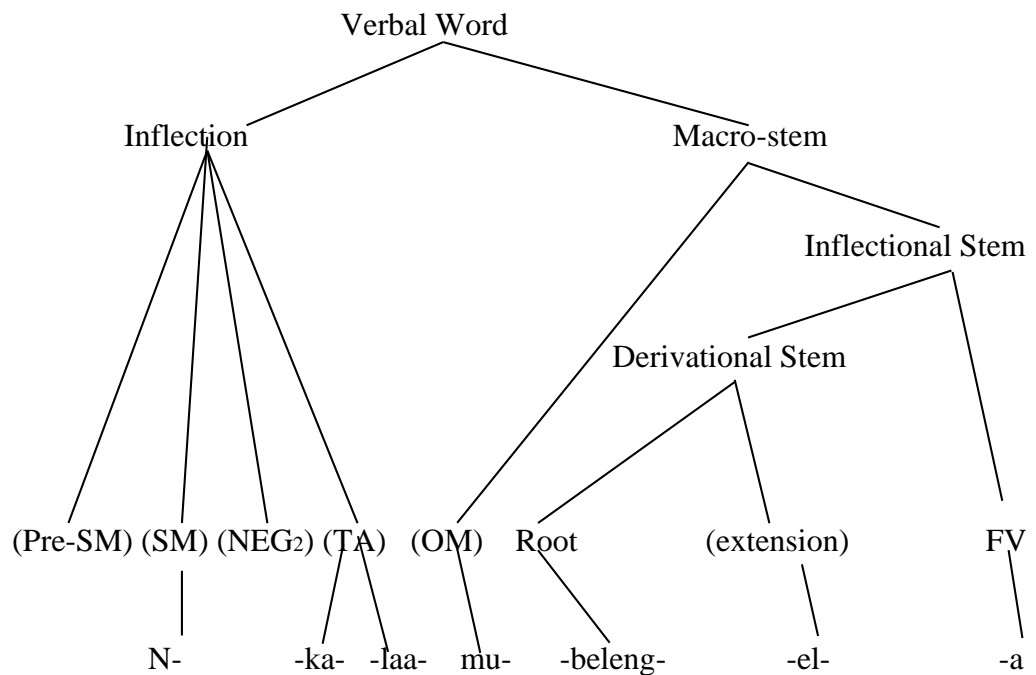
‘He/She will be teaching.’

36c) N-ka-laa-mu-beleng-el-a.

1PS F FUT IPFV OM read APPL FV

‘I will be reading for him/her.’

The far future morpheme ‘-ka-’ co-occurs with the morpheme ‘-laa-’ and placed between the subject marker and the verb root. The idea denoted is that the action will happen in the far future. Further, it indicates that the action will be continuing and incomplete. Consider the representation of sentence (36c) on the figure below:



**Figure 19: Representation of Imperfective in the Far Future Progressive**

The future tense marker ‘-ka-’ co-occurs with the aspectual marker ‘-laa-’ to mark the far future progressive aspect. The tense marker is on the right side of the aspectual morpheme on the figure. It confirms the already alluded to observation. The empty nodes are not represented in the sentence.

### 4.3 The Perfective Aspect

The perfective aspect deals with actions that are completed. Givon (1984:276) observes that an “action or event is perfective if it has been terminated, completed or accomplished at the time –axis.” Comrie also say that perfective aspect usually shows the completion of a situation when contrasted with an imperfective situation. Gatumu (2014:60) says, “The perfective aspect is used to contrast with imperfective aspect and also to represent a situation as a single bounded whole, without regard to its constituent phases.” In Bemba, the perfective aspect expresses completed situations that occur in the past at the time of reference. It therefore, shows no specific connection with the present tense.

### 4.3.1 The Perfective in the Near Past

In Bemba, this perfective aspect brings out the idea that an action took place in the near past and was completed. It is marked by placing the near past morpheme ‘-aci-’ between the subject marker and the verb root. This aspect, therefore, overlaps with the near past tense discussed in chapter 3 section 2.1.2. Consider the following:

37a) Ba-aci-ib-a inyanje.

3PL NR PST PFV steal FV O

‘They stole maize.’

37b) Umu-ice a-aci-nw-a umukaka.

CL1 child 3SG NR PST PFV drink FV O

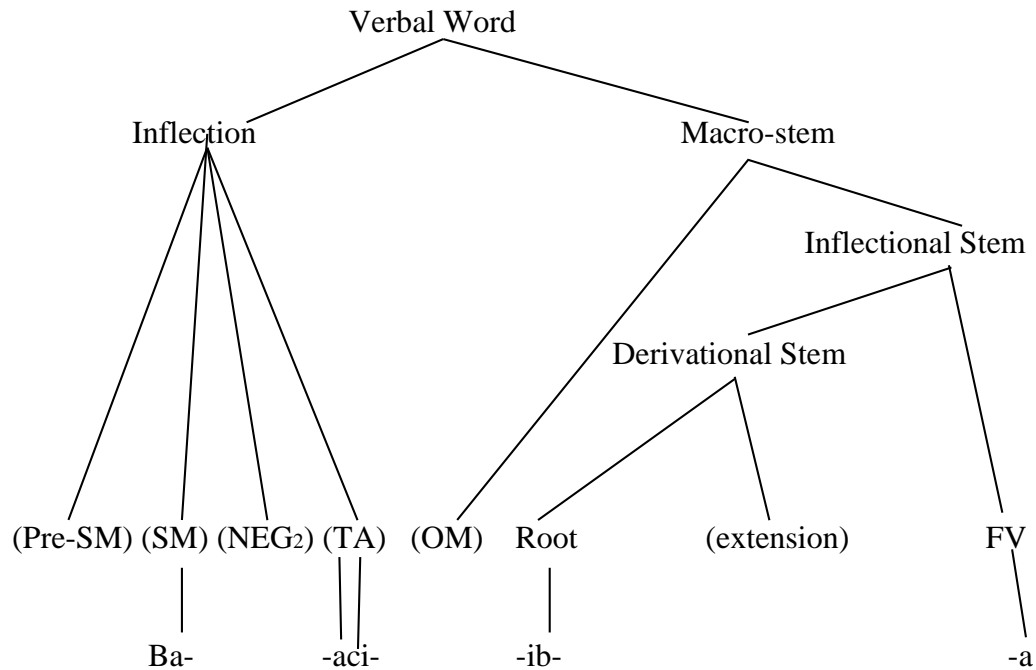
‘The child drank milk.’

37c) Na -aci-lemb-a amashindano ulucelo

1SG NR PST PFV write FV O ADV

‘I wrote exams in the morning.’

In the above examples (37a-37c), placing the morpheme ‘-aci-’ between the subject marker and the verb root indicates the perfective aspect in the near past. The action took place and was complete in the near past. The near past perfective aspect overlaps with the near past tense since they are both marked by the same morpheme. Here, time adverbials may be necessary to indicate the exact period that an action took place in the near past. Below is the representation of sentence (37a) in the figure:



**Figure 20: Representation of the Perfective in the Near Past**

As already stated in chapter 3 section 2.1.2, the near past perfective aspect overlaps with the near past tense. The above figure, TA is mapped on the morpheme ‘-aci-’. The empty nodes have no representation in the sentence.

#### 4.3.2 The Perfective in the Remote Past

The perfective in the remote past expresses the idea that an action took place in the remote past and was completed. It is indicated by attaching the remote past prefix with the final vowel being replaced by the morpheme ‘-ile’. When the morpheme ‘ile’ is used in this context, it becomes ‘-ele-’ as observed before. It overlaps with the remote past tense already alluded to in chapter 3 section 2. 1.4. Below are the examples:

38a) A-a-bomb-ele mailo.

3SG REM PST ASP work FV ADV

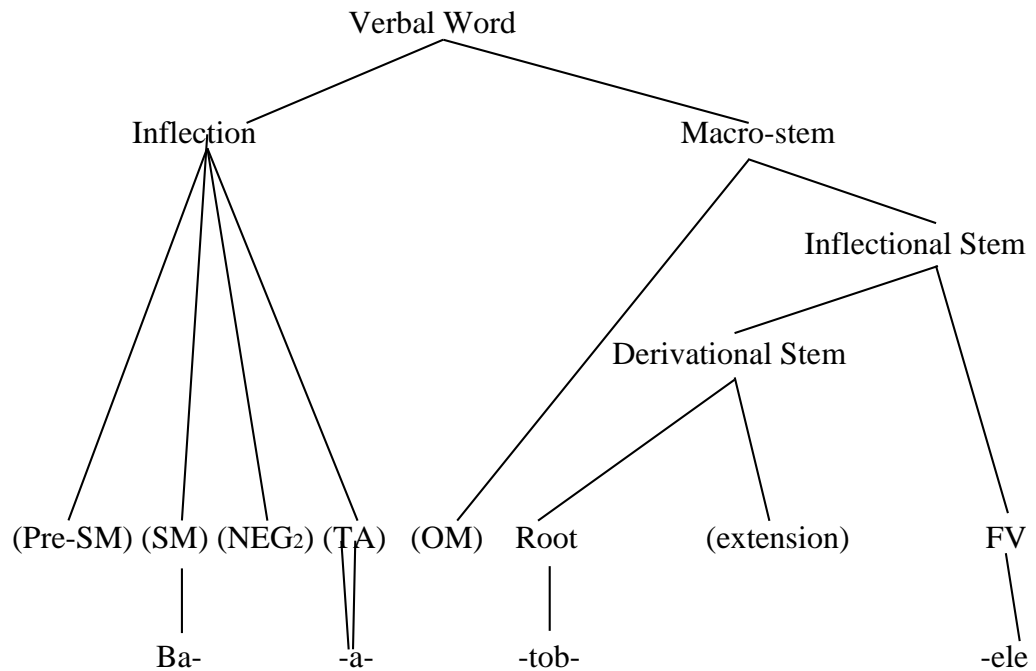
‘He/she worked yesterday

38b) Ba-a-tob-ele ing’anda.

3PL REM PST break FV O

‘They broke a house.’

In examples (38a) and (38b) the prefix ‘-a-’ and the suffix ‘-ile-’ are used to mark the perfective in the remote past. In this case, the aspect overlaps with the remote past tense as discussed in chapter 3 section 1.3. Consider the mapping of sentence (38a) on the figure below:



**Figure 21: Representation of Perfective in the Remote Past**

The final vowel is replaced by ‘-ile-’ and occupies the FV node in this study. The mapping of the TA on the REM PST TENS shows the overlapping of tense and aspect as earlier mentioned.

#### 4.4 The Perfect Aspect

This aspect, as Gachomo (2004:64) puts it, “refers to a past situation where the event is seen as having some present relevance or consequence (for dynamic verbs) or to a situation which started in the past and continues into the present (for stative verbs).” In Bemba the past perfect aspect is marked by prefixing the past tense morpheme ‘-a-’ and the auxiliary verb ‘li-’ concurrently to the root of the verb. The present perfect is realised by a zero morpheme. Consider sentence (39a and 39b) respectively.

39a) A-a-li-ikaal-a.

3SG PST ASP (AUX) stay FV

‘He or she had stayed.’

39b) ba-Ø-ikaal-a.

3PL stay FV

‘They have stayed.’

The representations of the two examples in (39) on the verbal hierarchical structure figure are the same as those presented on aspects above.

#### **4.5 The Habitual Aspect**

The habitual aspect describes an action which is performed regularly from time to time. It exists in the past, present and the future. Comrie (1976:28) says that habitual aspect explains “situations that take place regularly over an extended period of time and that is viewed as a characteristic feature of a whole period.” Nurse (2003:5) observes that the habitual aspect is based on the imperfective plus another feature in most Bantu languages. In Bemba, the habitual aspect is realised in the present, past and future. Nzioka (2007:65) observed that the habitual aspect does not occur with the immediate past or the near future tense as habitual actions are not grounded within a short period. Bemba shares the same characteristics as Kikamba.

##### **4.5.1 The Habitual in the Remote Past**

In Bemba, this aspect accounts for situations that occurred regularly in the past. It is realised when the past tense morpheme ‘a-’ is concurrently prefixed to the root of the verb with the morpheme ‘-le-’. Consider the examples in (40) below:

40a) Aba-lumendo ba-a-le-celw-a.

CL2 boy 3PL HAB PST late FV

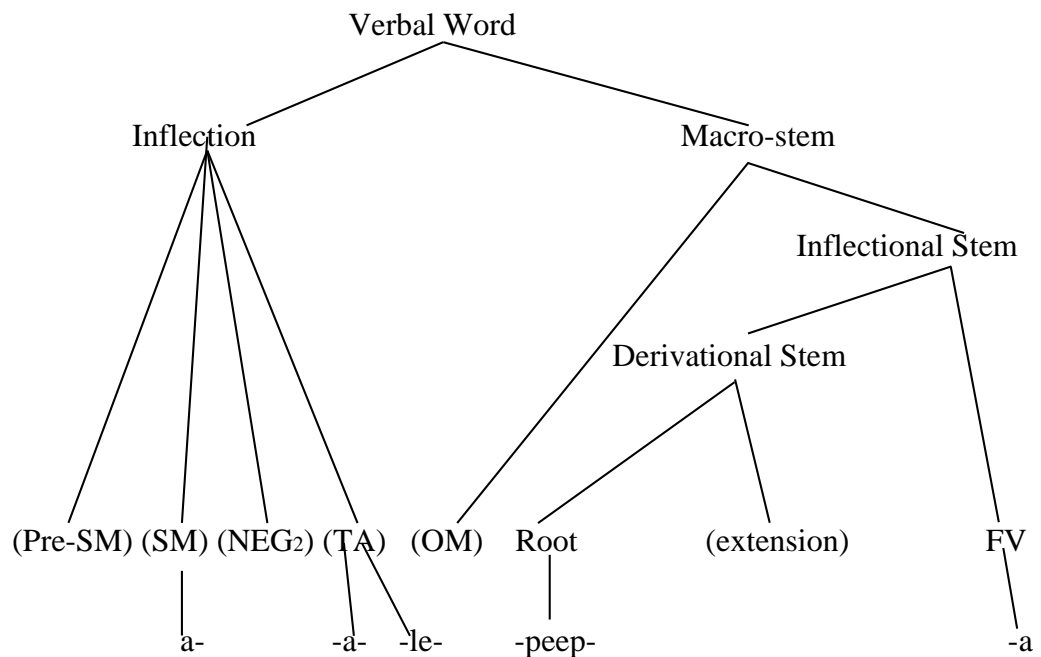
‘Boys were late (regularly).’

40b) Umu-lumendo a-a-le-peep-a cilamulungu.

CL1 boy 3SG HAB PST smoke FV ADV

‘The boy used to smoke every week.’

It may be necessary for the adverb to follow the verb in the habitual past aspect to show the specific period the action used to take place in the past. Example (40b) shows that the boy used to smoke every week by the addition of the adverb. The idea expressed in the examples above is that the actions used to take place repeatedly in a day or up to a year or years before the time of speaking. Consider example (40b) on the figure below:



**Figure 22: Presentation of Habitual in the Remote Past**

The figure above shows that this aspect is marked concurrently by ‘-a-’ and ‘-le-’. The final vowel does not change.

#### 4.5.2 The Habitual in the Present

This aspect signifies that an action is on-going and that it occurs all the time. Nzioka (2007:65) says, “The present habitual explains a situation that habitually takes place without necessarily coinciding with the present moment.” In Bemba, it is marked by placing the morpheme ‘-la-’ between the subject marker and the verb root. Consider the following:

41a) Aba-lumendo ba-la-lw-a pasukulu

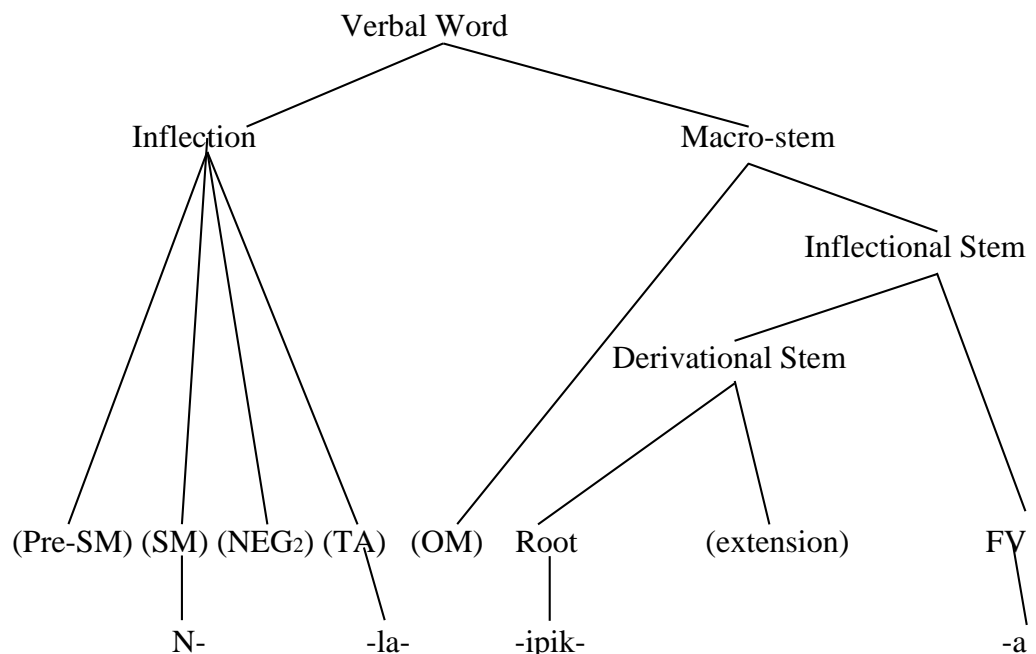
CL2 boy 3PL PRS HAB fight FV PP

‘Boys fight at school (regularly).’



- 41b) Aba-ana ba-la-celw-a mukusalika.  
 CL2 child 3PL PRS HAB late FV pray  
 ‘The children come late for prayers (regularly).’
- 41c) Tu-la-nw-a ubwalwa pacibelushi  
 1PL PRS HAB drink FV beer  
 ‘We drink beer (regularly).’
- 41d) Umu-lumendo a-la-bep-a.  
 CL1 boy 3SG PRG HAB cheat FV  
 ‘The boy cheats (regularly).’
- 41e) Mu-la-imb-a (Mulemba).  
 3PL PRS HAB sing FV  
 ‘You sing regularly.’
- 41f) N-la-ipik-a (Ndeepika)  
 1SG PRS HAB cook FV  
 ‘I cook regularly.’

Time adverbials or prepositional phrases may be used at the end of the verb carrying the aspectual marking to give more information on when or where the situation takes place as is in (41a) and (41c) respectively. Consider the mapping of sentence (41f) on the figure below:



**Figure 23: Presentation of the Habitual in the Present**

The final vowel remains unchanged. Aspect is marked as a prefix to the verb root.

#### **4.5.3 The Habitual Future**

The future habitual aspect indicates habitual situations, events or actions expected to take place in the future. They can occur in the near future and the far future aspects.

#### **4.5.4 The Far Future Habitual**

The far future habitual aspect is used for actions or situations that take place continually or habitually in the far future. It is marked by placing the morphemes ‘-ka-’ and ‘la-’ between the subject marker and the verb root concurrently. Consider the following:

42a) Ba-ka-la-celw-a.

3PL F FUT HAB late FV

‘They will be reporting late (regularly)

42b) Tu-ka-la-lw-a.

1PL F FUT HAB fight FV

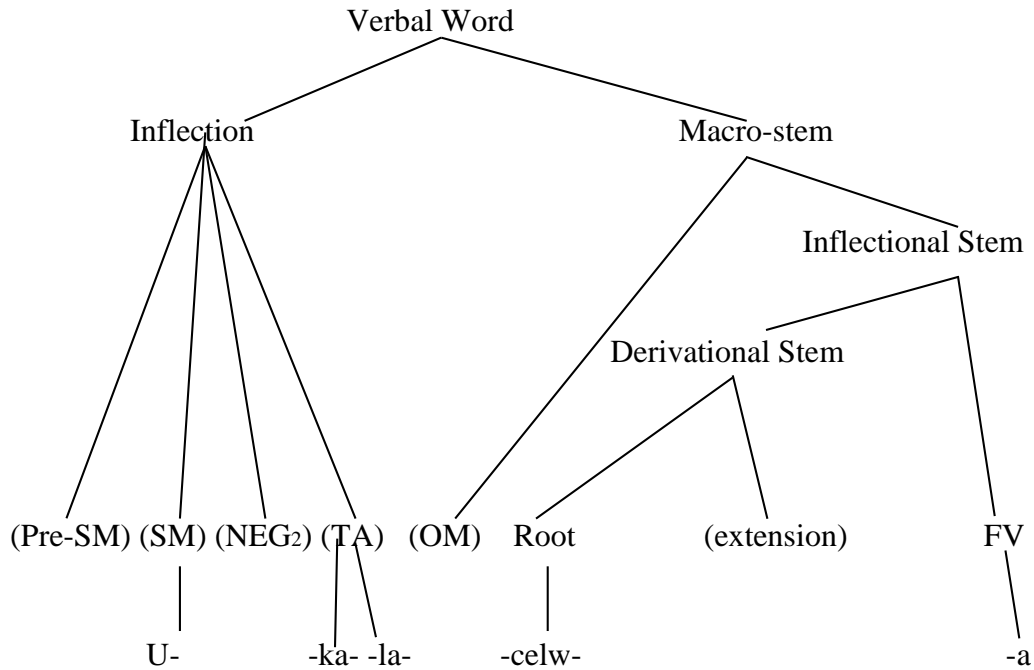
‘We will be fighting (regularly).

42c) U-ka-la-lil-a.

3SG F FUT HAB FV

‘You will be crying (regularly).

Consider sentence (42c) mapped on the figure below:



**Figure 24: Presentation of the Far Future Habitual**

The future tense marker ‘-ka-’ appears before the aspectual morpheme ‘-la-’ to denote the future habitual aspect. The vowel is unchanged.

#### 4.6 Iterative Aspect

The iterative aspect is also known as the repetitive or frequentative aspect. It denotes actions done on and off. It accounts for events that successively occur. Nurse (2003: 5) observes, “An iterative aspect represents a situation that is repeated, an incomplete series of complete events.” In Bemba, the iterative aspect is marked by complete reduplication of the verb stem or the root. According to Crystal (1997:325), reduplication is a process of repetition in which the form of the affix is a reflection of some phonological features of the root. The Ministry of Education (2005:50) observes, “reduplicated words should be joined with a hyphen but reduplicated stems should be spelt as one word (i.e. without a hyphen).…” This aspect in Bemba is expressed in the past, present, and the future as presented in the following sections of this chapter.

#### 4.6.1 The Past Iterative Aspect

The past iterative aspect accounts for actions that were done repeatedly in the past and were complete at the time of the utterance. It is divided into the near past and the far past iterative aspect.

#### 4.6.2 The Near Past Iterative Aspect

This aspect shows that the action took place repeatedly and was complete before the time of the utterance but within the same day. It is marked by the morphemes ‘-aci-’ and ‘-laa-’ which are prefixed to the duplicated form of the verb concurrently. Consider the following examples:

43a) Aba-ana ba-aci-laa-lil-a -lil-a.

CL2 child 3SG NR PST IT cry FV

‘The children cried repeatedly.’

43b) Ø-motoka ya-aci-laa-fw-a -fw-a.

CL9a vehicle 3SG NR PST IT break down FV

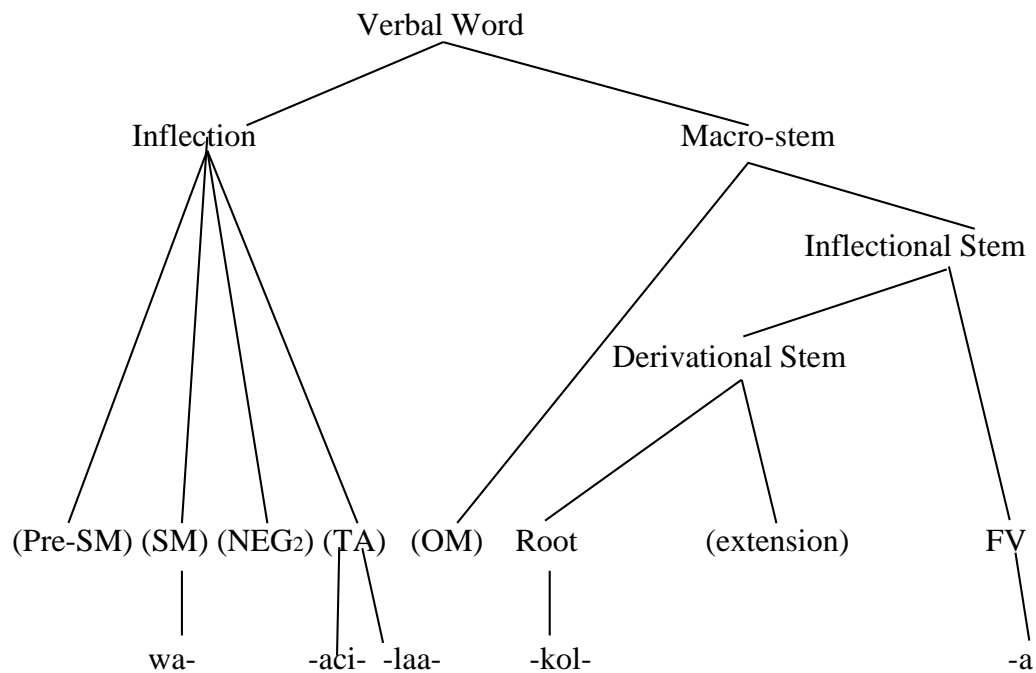
‘The vehicle broke down repeatedly.’

43c) Wa-aci-laa-kol-a -kol-a.

2SG NR PST IT cough FV

‘You coughed repeatedly.’

Consider sentence (43c) mapped on the figure below:



**Figure 25: Presentation of the Near Past Iterative Aspect**

The near past tense marker ‘-aci-’ and the aspectual marker ‘-laa-’ are concurrently prefixed to the verb root. The root of the verb ‘-kol-’ is duplicated in the formation of this aspect. The final vowel remains the same.

#### 4.6.3 The Far Past Iterative Aspect

The far past iterative aspect shows that an event occurred repeatedly and was complete in the far past. It is marked by prefixing the past tense morpheme ‘-a-’ and the aux verb ‘-li-’ which acts as the aspectual marker to the duplicated verb. Consider the following below:

44a) Ba-a-li-lil-a –lil-a.

3PL PST IT cry FV

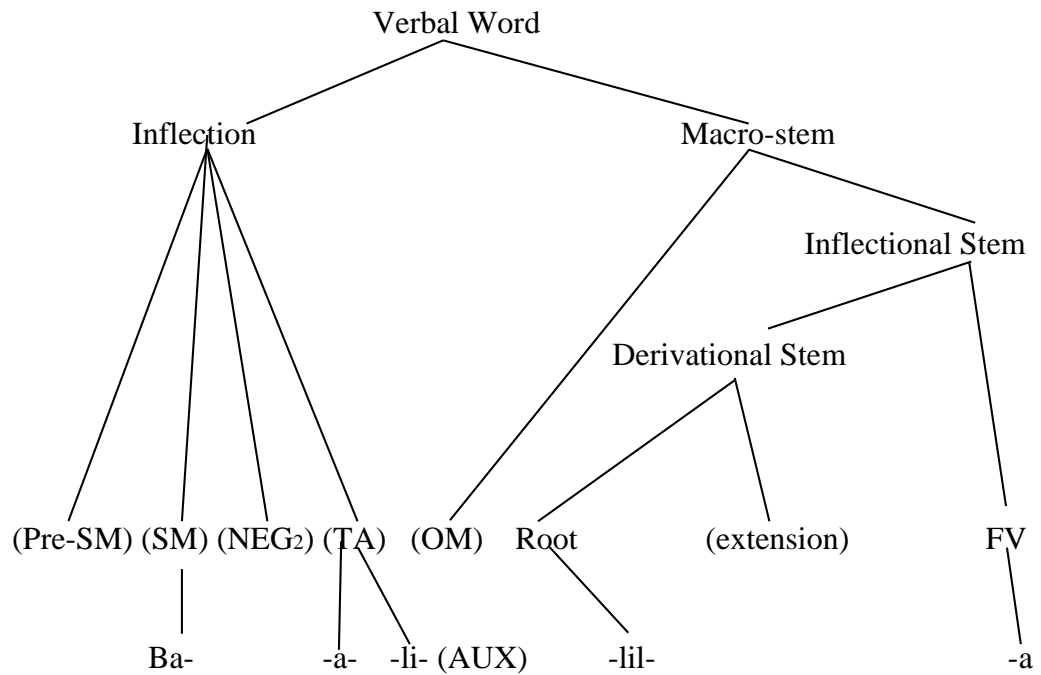
‘They had cried repeatedly.’

44b) Ø- Motoka ya-a-li-fw-a –fw-a.

CL9a Vehicle 3SG PST IT break down FV

‘The vehicle had broken down repeatedly.’

Example 47 is represented on the figure below:



**Figure 26: Presentation of the Far Past Iterative Aspect**

In the above figure the AUX features in the slot for aspect. It therefore, marks aspect. The past tense marker co-occurs with the AUX. The FV remains unchanged.

#### 4.6.4. The Present Iterative Aspect

This aspect accounts for an action that occurs repeatedly at the time of speaking. The progressive marker ‘-lee-’ is prefixed to the reduplicated verb. Consider the examples below:

45a) Aba-ana ba-lee-lil-a –lil-a.

CL2 child 3PL PRS IT cry FV

‘The children are crying repeatedly.’

45b) Tu-lee-kol-a –kol-a.

1PL PRS IT cough FV

‘We are coughing repeatedly.’

45c) I-ncinga i-lee-pon-a –pon-a.

CL5 bicycle 3SG PRS IT fall FV

‘The bicycle is falling repeatedly.’

The representation of this aspect on the hierarchical structure is not different from those discussed before.

In the above examples (45a to 45c), the situations occurred repeatedly at the time of the utterance.

#### 4.6.5 The Future Iterative Aspect

In Bemba, this aspect shows an action that will be done repeatedly in the future. It is marked by the future tense morpheme ‘-ka-’ prefixed to the reduplicated verb. Consider the following:

46a) Aba-lumendo ba-ka-sek-a –sek-a.

CL2 boy 3PL FUT IT laugh FV

‘The boys will laugh repeatedly.’

46b) U-ka-lil-a –lil-a

2SG FUT IT cry FV

‘You will cry repeatedly.’

46c) Tu-ka-imin-a inin-a (Tukeminina-iminina)

1PL FUT IT stop FV

‘We will stop repeatedly.’

The realisation of aspect on the hierarchical figure is not different from those done before.

#### 4.7 Summary

This chapter discussed aspect marking in Bemba. The imperfective aspect in the present is marked by the prefix ‘lee-’ attached to the root of the verb showing continuous situations within the present moment at the time of speaking. The imperfective aspect in the near past is marked by the near past tense morpheme ‘-aci-’ and ‘laa-’ prefixed to the verb root concurrently to show an action that was continuous in the near past. The imperfective aspect in the remote past is used for actions that were non complete and continuing in the remote past. It is marked by the past tense morpheme ‘-a-’ and the progressive aspect marker ‘-lee-’ concurrently being prefixed to the verb root.

The chapter further discussed the perfective aspect which expresses completed actions at the time of reference. In Bemba, it is divided into the perfective aspect in the near past which is realised by prefixing the morpheme **'aci-'** to the verb root. It overlaps with the near past tense. The perfective in the remote past is marked by concurrently prefixing the morphemes **'-a-'** and **'-ile-'** to the verb root. It overlaps with the remote past tense.

The habitual aspect describes an action which is performed regularly from time to time. It exists in the past, present and the future. It includes the habitual past aspect, realised by the prefixes **'-a-'** **'le-'** attached to the verb root. The habitual present aspect shows actions that occur all the time. It is marked by the prefix **'-la-'** attached to the verb root. The far future is marked by attaching the future morpheme **'-ka-'** and **'-la-'** to the root of the verb. The perfect aspect is realised in the past in which case the past tense marker **'-a-'** is concurrently prefixed to the verb root with the auxiliary verb **'-li-'** as aspect marker. The present perfect is marked by a zero prefix.

Lastly the chapter discussed the iterative aspect. It accounts for events that occur successively. They include the near past iterative aspect which is marked by the morphemes **'-aci-'** and **'-la-'** prefixed to the duplicated form of the verb. The far past iterative aspect shows that an event occurred repeatedly and was complete in the far past. It is marked by prefixing the past tense morpheme **'-a-'** and the AUX **'-li-'** to the duplicated verb. The present iterative aspect accounts for an action that occurs repeatedly at the time of speaking. The morpheme **-lee-** is prefixed to the reduplicated verb. The future iterative aspect shows an action that will be done repeatedly in the future. It is marked by the morpheme **-ka-** prefixed to the reduplicated verb.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Summary**

This study aimed at analysing the morphosyntactic realisation of tense and aspect in the verb phrase of the Bemba language. It was established that Bemba language is agglutinative just like most other Bantu languages. Being an inflectional language, a Bemba verb root can have prefixes or suffixes to bring out different grammatical features such as person, number, mood, negation, subject marker and object marker. The study further established the evidence of tense and aspect marking in Bemba and contributed to the body of knowledge in Bantu languages and Bemba in particular. The research established that tense and aspect are distinctively realised in Bemba although they tend to overlap in certain situations. It looked into the structure of the Bemba verb and established that the verb is highly inflected for various categories such as number, tense and aspect. In Bemba, a single word with prefixes or suffixes can stand alone as a sentence. The root is the nucleus of the verb phrase. Nurse's Conceptual Framework played a vital role in scrutinising the features of the verb phrases given in the examples. The Bemba language has eighteen noun classes. These were relevant in the analysis of the verb phrase.

The morphological tense marking in Bemba language was investigated. It was established that tense in Bemba is divided into three basic tense categories which include: the past, the present, and the future. This study established that what may be referred to as present progressive tense is better placed under aspect. Bemba further divides tense into subdivision according to its understanding of the time frame. The past tense is subdivided into the immediate past, near past, far past and the remote past. The future tense is divided into the immediate future, near future and the remote future and the present tense is realised through the present simple tense.

It is further established that aspect is morphologically realised in Bemba. These include: the perfective, perfect, imperfective (which is divided into habitual and continuous) and the iterative aspect. Iterative aspect indicates both complete and incomplete situations. In the imperfective aspect, events are viewed as continuing processes. The perfective is used for events that took place in the past and that they were complete. It is divided into: the perfective in the near past which overlaps with the near past tense and the remote past perfective which also overlaps with the remote past tense. Nurse's Conceptual Framework was important in establishing aspect marking in Bemba. Aspect is marked on the right side of the root of the verb and where it co-occurs with tense, aspect appears to the left of tense.

### **5.1 Conclusion and Findings**

The study aimed at establishing morphosyntactic realisations of tense and aspect on the Bemba verb phrase. The goal was to answer the following questions:

1. How is tense and aspect marked in Bemba?
2. How do the marking of tense and aspect overlap in Bemba?

The research answered the above questions through the analysis of the verb phrase and identification of the inflectional forms for tense and aspect. Tense and aspect are morphologically marked. The two features are affixed to the verb root. Both aspect and tense are prefixed to the verb root. The imperfective progressive aspect in the near past is concurrently marked by the near past tense morpheme '-aci-' and the aspectual morpheme '-laa'. The imperfective in the remote past is marked by concurrently prefixing the past tense morpheme marker '-a-' and the progressive aspectual marker '-lee-'. The past perfect aspect is realised by the past tense marker '-a-' and the auxiliary verb '-li-' prefixed respectively to the verb root while the present perfect is marked non-overtly. The remote past perfective aspect and the remote past tense are marked by the prefix '-a-' and the suffix '-ile'. The morpheme '-ile' in both cases replaces the final vow. The study, therefore, proves that tense and aspect are independent. However, there is interplay between tense and aspect as explained in cases of overlaps.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The study recommends that further study be carried out to determine the role of tone in tense, aspect and mood marking.

Further, research should be conducted on the verb inflection for tense and aspect in other dialects of Bemba.

## REFERENCES

- Chanda, M. V. (2014). *LIN5311- Syntactic Theory*. Lusaka: University of Zambia.
- Comrie, B. (1976). *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, B (1985). *Tense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (4<sup>th</sup> Ed)*. New York: Blackwell Publishers.
- Crystal, D. (1980). *A Dictionary Linguistics and Phonetics*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (2009). *Basic Linguistic Theory*. Volume 1: Methodology. Oxford: OUP.
- Dryer, M. (2001). *What is Basic Linguistic Theory?*  
<http://linguistics.buffalo.edu/people/faculty.dryer/dryer/blt>. (09/03/16).
- Eastman, C. M. (1978) *Linguistic Theory and Language Description*. Philadelphia, New York, San Jose Toronto: J.B. Lippincott Company.
- Gachomo, H. N. (2004). *Tense, Aspect and Mood: A Morphosyntactic Verb Inflections in Kikuyu*. Unpublished M. A. Dissertation. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Gatumu, D. R. (2014). *Morphosyntactic Verb Inflections for Tense and Aspect in Kimbere*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Givon, T (1984). *Syntax: A Functional Typological Introduction*. Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company.
- Gray, A. and Bwalya, P. (2015). *Bemba: A Learner's Guide Zambia's largest language*.
- Guthrie, M (1967). *The Classification of the Bantu Languages*. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall.

Hartman, R. R. K and Stock, F. C (1972). *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. London: Applied Science Publishers.

Haspelmath, M and Sims, D, A. (2010). *Understanding Morphology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). London: Hodder Education.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/411814> . Retrieved on 09/03/16.

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/classics/NJL/intro2.html>. (28/02/07).

Kabinga, M. (2010). *A Comparative Study of the Morphosyntax and Phonetics of Town Bemba and Standard Bemba of the Copperbelt, Zambia*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Kamfuli, B. A. (2009). *A Grammar of Verbal Extension in Bemba*. M. A. Dissertation. Lusaka: University of Zambia.

Kandeke, T. (1990). *A Handbook of Icibemba Synonyms*. Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation.

Kashoki, E. M. (1990). *The Factor of Language in Zambia*. Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation.

Kashoki, E. M. (1968). *A Phonetic Analysis of Bemba Syllable Structure, Phonemic Contrasts and their Distribution*. *Zambian Papers* no. 3. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Katamba, F (1993). *Morphology*. New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd.

Kihara, C. P. (2010). *A Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) Analysis of the Morphosyntax of the Gikuyu Simple Sentence*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

Langendoen, D. T. (1967). *What is Language? A New Approach to Linguistic Description*. In: *Language*, Vol. 43, no. 3, Part 1. New York: Linguistic Society of America: pp 742-752.

Mann, M. (1999). *An Outline of Icibemba Grammar*. Lusaka: Book world Publishers.

- Ministry of Education (2005). *Zambian Languages: Orthography approved by Ministry of Education*. Lusaka: ZEPH.
- Mulilo, A. M., Mwansa, P. A., Chipasha, J. M., Mambwe, A. K., Musosha, J. F., Chasaya, P. & Kapabwe, E. C. (2007). *Icibemba mu 8 Icitabo ca Musamba*. Lusaka: ZEPH.
- Musonda, M. (2013). *Syntactic Tones of Nouns in Bemba*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis. Lusaka: University of Zambia.
- Namulemu, E. W. (2004). *Tense, Aspect and Mood in Lunyole Grammar and Narrative*. Unpublished M. A. Project. Nairobi: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.
- Nkolola, M. M. (1997). *An Analysis of the Applied, Causative and Passive Verb Extension in Tonga*. PhD. Thesis. Lusaka: University of Zambia.
- Nurse, D. (2008). *Tense and Aspect in Bantu*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nurse, D. (2003) *Aspect and tense in Bantu languages*. In Derek Nurse & Gérard
- Philippson (eds.) *The Bantu Languages*. London: Routledge, 90-102.
- Nzioka, N. A. (2007). *A Minimalist Analysis of Kikamba Tense and Aspect*. Unpublished M. A. Dissertation. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Nzogi, R. K. (2004). *Grammaticalization and Discourse use of Tense, Aspect and Mode in Lugwere*. Unpublished M. A. Project: Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.
- Ochieng, A. L. (2013). *A Description of the Morphosyntactic Structure of the Suba Language*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis. Egerton University.
- O'Grady, W, Dobrovolsky, M & Katamba, F (eds). (1997). *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd.

- Payne, T. E. (2006). *Exploring Language Structure: a Student's Guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Payne, T. E. (1997). *Describing Morphosyntax: a Guide for Field Linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roberts, A. (1973). *A History of the Bemba: Political growth and change in north eastern Zambia before 1900*. London: Longman.
- Saeed, J. (1997). *Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Schröder, H (2015). *Lecture Notes in Morphology*: University of Nairobi.
- Schoeffler, Rev. Father (1907). *A Grammar of the Bemba as Spoken by the People of Northern Rhodesia*. Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press.
- Shopen, T. (1995). *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*. Vol 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spitulnik, D. (1998). *The Language of the City: In Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 8(2): 30-59.
- Spitulnik, D. and Kashoki, E. M. (2001). In: *Facts about the World's Major Languages: An Encyclopaedia of the World's Major Languages, Past and Present*. Garry, J. & Rubino, C (eds). New York. Dublin: pp 51-55.
- Spitulnik, D and Kashoki E. M (2014). "Bemba, A Linguistic Profile." P68 Retrieved online at <http://scholarblogs.emory.edu/bemba/>
- Timbwah, S. B. (2011). *Morphosyntactic Verb Inflection for Tense and Aspect in Lunyore: A Minimalist Approach*. Unpublished M. A. Dissertation. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Walker, B. J. (2013). *Comparative Tense and Aspect in the Mara Bantu Languages: Towards a Linguistic History*. PhD Thesis: Trinity Western University.
- "Zambia – Languages/ Ethnologue."  
<http://www.ethnologue.com/country/zm/languages>. Retrieved on 17/02/16.

## APPENDIX

S/N	BEMBA SENTENCE	GLOSS
1	Tema	(You) cut.
2	Nteme.	Should I cut?
3	Uteme.	You should cut.
4	Umu-lumendo a-litema.	The boy cut.
5	umu- kashana a-la-tema.	The girl cuts.
6	Umwa-ice a-ka-laa-tema.	The child will be cutting.
7	Umwa-ice a-lee-tema.	The child is cutting
8	Umwaice aaleetema.	The child was cutting/He used to cut.
9	Umulimi aacitema.	The farmer cut. (a while ago)
10	Umwaana alila sana.	The child has cried very much
11	Aleelila sana.	He/ She is crying very much.
12	Akalila sana.	He/ She will cry very much.
13	Ulalila sana.	You cry very much.
14	Nkalaalila sana.	I will be crying very much.
15	Tulalila sana.	We cry very much.
16	Biika pamulu.	You put it on top.
17	Ukabiike pamulu mailo.	You put it on top tomorrow.
18	Baalibiikile pamulu.	They had put on top long ago.
19	Baalibiika pamulu.	They had put it on top.
20	Akabiika pamulu.	He/ She will put it on top.
21	Akalaabiika pamulu.	He/she will be putting it on top.
22	Alabiika pamulu.	He/she puts it on top.
23	Alaabiika pamulu.	He/she will put it on top very soon.
24	Aleebiika pamulu.	He/she is putting it on top.
25	Lemba kalata.	Write a letter (now).
26	Ukalembe kalata uyu mulungu uleisa	You write next week.
27	Alalembe amakalata.	He/she writes letters.
28	Aalilemba kalata kuli bawishi.	He/she wrote a letter to his/her father.
29	Acilemba kalata.	He/she wrote a letter a while ago.
30	Aalilembele kalata mailo.	He/she wrote a letter yesterday.
31	Ndeelemba kalata.	I am writing a letter.
32	Nkalembe kalata mailo.	I will write a letter tomorrow.
33	Nkalalembe kalata mailo.	I will be writing a letter tomorrow.
34	Aaleelemba kalata mailo.	He/she was writing a letter yesterday.
35	Naalilembele kalata.	I wrote a letter.
36	Bapyanga.	They have just swept.
37	Nabapyanga.	They have already swept.



38	Baalipyangile mailo.	They swept yesterday.
39	Balapyanga.	They sweep.
40	Bacipyanga uluceelo.	They swept in the morning.
41	Bakapyanga mailo.	They will sweep tomorrow.
42	Bakalaapyanga mailo.	They will be sweeping tomorrow.
43	Bacilaapyanga uluceelo.	They were sweeping in the morning.
44	Baalepyanga mailo.	They were sweeping yesterday.
45	Anwa umuti.	He/she has just taken medicine.
46	Acinwa umuti.	He/she took medicine a while ago.
47	Aalinwa umuti palicibili mailo.	He/she took medicine on Tuesday.
48	Aalinwene umuti mailo.	He/ she took medicine yesterday.
49	Twalanwa umuti icuungulo bushiku.	We will take medicine in the evening.
50	Twakulaanwa umuti cilabushiku.	We will be taking medicine every day.
51	Twacilaanwa umuti uluceelo.	We were taking medicine in the morning.
52	Twaleenwa umuti mailo.	We were taking medicine yesterday.
53	Baafolele mailo	They got paid yesterday.
54	Abaana baacilalwa-lwa.	Children were crying repeatedly.
55	Bakalacelwa.	Boys will be coming late regularly.
56	Abaana balililalila.	Children cried repeatedly.
57	Abalumendo baaleecelwa.	Boys were regularly late.
58	Akulima.	Go on cultivating/ start cultivating.
59	Kandime.	Let me go and cultivate.
60	Natulime.	Let us cultivate.
61	Kamwebe alime.	Tell him/her to go and cultivate.
62	Kamwebeeni akashite.	Tell him/her to buy.
63	Ukulamona	To see always.
64	Ukulaalya bwino kusuma.	To be eating well is good.
65	Ukulaasamba.	To be bathing always.
66	Ukusamba.	To bathe.
67	Ukupyanga.	To sweep.
68	Ukulaapyanga.	To sweep always/to be sweeping.
69	Ukulaabelenga takwayafya.	To read is not difficult
70	Abaana baleelila-lila.	Children are crying repeatedly
71	Tabalepyanga.	They are not sweeping.
72	Tabapyangile	They have not swept.
73	Nshipyangile	I have not swept.
74	Nalifundilwe pamyaka ingi.	I was taught for many years.
75	baliuminwe sana.	They were beaten a lot.
76	Aupwa.	She is married just now.
77	Aacuupwa.	She got married a while.
78	Akoopwa.	She will get married.

79	Alaupwa.	She will get married just now.
80	Ipika.	You cook.
81	Ukwipika.	To cook.
82	Aipika.	He/she cooked (just now)/has just cooked.
83	Aaliipika.	He/she cooked.
84	Aleeipika.	He/she is cooking.
85	Aaleeipika.	He/she was cooking/ used to cook.
86	Ndeelila.	I am crying.
87	Nshileelila.	I am not crying.
88	Nkalila.	I will cry.
89	Nkalaalila.	I will be crying.
90	Naleelila.	I was crying.
91	Umwaice akaseka-seka	The child will laugh repeatedly
92	Nacilila.	I cried.
93	Nalila.	I have cried.
94	Ndaalila.	I cry always.
95	Nshacilaalila.	I was not crying.
96	Nshilila.	I do not cry.
97	Bacilaalwa.	They were fighting.
98	Bacilwa.	They fought.
99	Balalwa.	They fight.
100	Bakalaalwa.	They will be fighting.