TENSE AND ASPECT IN CHICHEWA, CITUMBUKA AND CISENA

A description and comparison of the tense-aspect systems in three southeastern Bantu languages

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Abstract

This dissertation describes and compares the tense-aspect systems found in three south-eastern Bantu languages, viz. Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena. For each language, an in-depth description of the tense-aspect categories and their use is given based on the analysis of different sources of data: audio recordings of arranged conversations and narratives, questionnaires in which native speakers of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena translated English sentences into their own language, and parallel corpora of Biblical texts as well as direct elicitation and consultation sessions.

The description provides evidence of dialectal variation in the tense-aspect systems in each language that has not been described systematically before. Furthermore, it discusses specific diachronic changes, such as the development of the present progressive marker *-ku-* into a present tense marker in Chichewa.

Remoteness distinctions in the past and future tenses, which are common across Bantu, are also found in the three languages under investigation here. The use of these categories is studied in detail and a certain extent of flexibility in their use is observed. For some varieties of Chichewa, a remoteness distinction is even found for past imperfective forms referring to habits or continuous events in the past, a distinction that has not been described previously.

Further emphasis is placed on the comparison of tense-aspect markings in negated as opposed to affirmative clauses. In all three languages, the perfect marker *-a-* is only found in affirmative clauses while a past tense marker or a particular form only found in clauses of this type, a negative perfect marker, occurs in the corresponding negative.

The comparison of the three tense-aspect systems shows that the overall design of the systems and the distinctions that are made in the three languages are, despite certain differences, rather similar while the markers that express these distinctions differ across languages in many respects.

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
APPL	applicative
CAUS	causative
COND	conditional
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
DFUT	distant future
EMPH	emphasising particle
FUT	future
HODFUT	hodiernal future
HODPST	hodiernal past
IMMPST	immediate past
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitive
IPFV	imperfective
IRR	irrealis
ITV	itive
NEG	negation, negative
NFUT	near future
NMLZ	nominalizer/nominalization
OBJ	object
PASS	passive
PER	persistive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PPF	pluperfect
PRF	perfect
PROG	progressive
PRS	present
PST	past
PURP	purposive
Q	question particle/marker

RECP	reciprocal
RECPST	recent past
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
REMPST	remote past
SBJ	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
TCL	temporal clause marker

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to describe and compare the tense-aspect systems of three south-eastern Bantu languages: Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena. With this work, I aim to contribute to a cross-linguistic understanding of tense and aspect both in Bantu languages in particular and in a more general linguistic perspective. Furthermore, I hope to shed light on questions regarding language diversity and uniformity.

Thus, I aim to answer the following questions:

- What do the tense-aspect systems in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena look like? Which categories are distinguished and in which contexts are they used?

- How do the results of my investigation relate to previous descriptions of tense and aspect categories in the selected languages?

- With regard to remoteness distinctions, how rigid or flexible are the different remoteness categories that are used?

- How different are the tense-aspect systems of the investigated languages from each other? What are the differences and similarities and what conclusions can be drawn regarding their historical development?

- How do the results of my investigation relate to the findings on tense and aspect categories in a larger sample of Bantu languages?

In order to account for a wide range of data and to obtain results with the greatest validity possible, five different methods of data collection were employed in this study:

1. questionnaires in which native speakers of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena respectively translated English sentences into their own language

2. arranged conversations

3. recorded narratives

4. direct oral elicitation and consultation sessions

5. parallel corpora of Bible texts

Thus, the specific contribution of this thesis to the research on tense and aspect is also a methodological one. By combining five different kinds and sources of data, a study of the systems that is both more comprehensive and more detailed is made possible. The reasons for selecting these particular Bantu languages are partly practical and partly methodological: being involved in a teacher-training project in Malawi, I had regular access to native speakers of these languages over a period of four years. Choosing three languages (as opposed to a single language or a large sample of languages) also has a methodological advantage: an in-depth description and analysis of the tense-aspect system in each language is possible based on data collected in the field and specifically for this investigation. Based on this analysis, a cross-linguistic comparison can be undertaken in order to give a picture of the similarities and differences of the tense-aspect systems in this geographical area. By relating these findings to research results concerning other Bantu languages, the cross-linguistic understanding of tense-aspect systems in this language family can be enhanced.

In the following chapter, I will give a brief introduction to the description and classification of Bantu languages and of the three languages under investigation, before I turn to previous research on tense and aspect in chapter 3 and then to my own results.

2. Bantu languages

Bantu languages are the largest subgroup in the Niger-Congo language family, and are spoken across much of sub-Saharan Africa. Estimates regarding the total number of Bantu languages range from 250 to around 680, the later the estimate, the larger the number of estimated languages (cf. Nurse and Philippson (2003) for an overview, and Maho (2003) for an updated classification and a list of languages). Nurse (2008) estimates 250 to 600 languages and views a lower figure to be more realistic when counting Bantu languages rather than dialects; the Ethnologue[1] gives 522 for Narrow Bantu (a definition of this term is given in the following section). Around 250 million people speak one (or more) Bantu languages today. The historical origin of the family of Bantu languages is assumed to lie near the southern border of West Africa. Approximately 5000 years ago, the ancestors of the Bantu people lived along what today is the Nigeria/Cameroon borderland and spread from there to the east and south. These major movements were completed about 2000 years ago (Nurse and Philippson (2003)).

2.1. Classification of Bantu languages

Hitherto, there has been no widely agreed genealogical classification of the Bantu languages. Guthrie (1948, 1971a) presented approximately 80 groups of languages classified by shared linguistic characteristics. These groups (labeled by two-digit numbers in which the first number indicates the group and the second digit the particular language of this group) are distributed across 16 zones (labeled by the letters A-T, in the later version of Guthrie's classification by A-S only). Each group consists of languages sharing certain linguistic characteristics, and each zone consists of "a set of groups which have a certain geographical continuity and which display a number of common linguistic features as well" (Guthrie, 1948, 28). Guthrie states that the selection of linguistic characteristics by which each group and each zone is distinguished from other groups and zones is arbitrary to a certain extent. He argues that, due to the lack of historical data and the fact that different linguistic features have different isoglosses, a more practical approach to the one he advocates is needed in order to be able to make a classification. Guthrie's classification and labeling system (cf. figure 2.1) are still widely used.

Since then, the number of Bantu languages that have been described has increased, although for many languages documentation is still missing. Maho (2003) provides an updated version of Guthrie's classification, noting that genealogical classifications are

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[1] `http://www.ethnologue.com`, last checked 16th May 2012
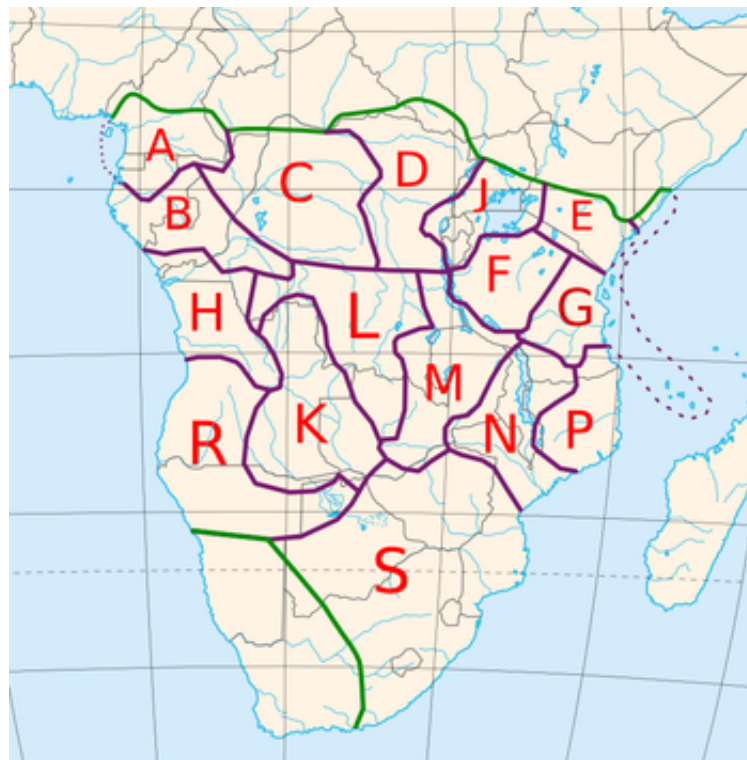
Figure 2.1.: Guthrie's classification of Bantu languages into zones (1948, 1971)

still controversial and under revision making a mainly referential classification, as Maho calls Guthrie's work, more useful, particularly as Guthrie's labels are widely used in the literature and research on Bantu languages.

The original homeland of the Bantu people in southern West Africa/western Central Africa is today the home of those Bantu languages (Guthrie's zones A and B, and to some extent also C, D and H) whose classification as Bantu is more problematic than that of the more southern and eastern languages, as the structural characteristics of the former changed more drastically than the structures of the Bantu languages to the south and east of this area, probably due to their contact with other, non-Bantu Niger-Congo languages in West Africa (cf. Nurse and Philippson (2003), Williamson and Blench (2000) and figure 2.2).

With regard to terminology, a distinction is usually made between a larger grouping called *Bantoid* and a smaller grouping called *Narrow Bantu* (still often simply *Bantu*) languages. Most of the other Bantoid languages are spoken in Cameroon and Nigeria. The largest groups are the Grassfields languages (previously called "Grassfields Bantu"), and the Tivoid, Jarawan, Beboid, Mambiloid and Mbam languages.

Figure 2.2.: Niger-Congo and Bantu languages

Apart from the classification difficulties due to language contact mentioned above, a notorious problem when it comes to classifying languages in general and Bantu languages in particular, is the question of how different particular varieties need to be from each other in order to be classified as separate languages, rather than as dialects of the same language. For a classification into languages and dialects, sociolinguistic parameters and structural or linguistic parameters are usually applied: Sociolinguistically, languages usually 1) have higher prestige than dialects, 2) a standard variety exists, 3) they are used in writing, 4) have official status, 5) comprise a larger number of speakers, 6) and they are mutually unintelligible. In terms of linguistic structure, different languages exhibit morphological, syntactical and lexical differences. However, the question of how much structural similarity is needed in order to classify varieties as mere dialects of the same language (or how well speakers of different varieties need to understand each other) is notoriously difficult to answer, and the lack of grammatical descriptions contributes further to this difficulty. Applying socio-linguistic criteria is not straightforward either, as many languages, including most Bantu languages, are not recognised as official languages, not used in writing, and thus not standardised, etc.

For the present study, I will look at three languages from three different groups within zone N: Chichewa (from group N30), Citumbuka (group N20) and Cisena (group N40), all of which are spoken in Malawi. I refer to these languages by their names in present-day Malawi which differ from the names used in Bantu classifications by Guthrie (1971a) and Maho (2003), as will be seen in the following. The prefix *chi-* is a noun class prefix, distinguishing the languages (Chi-chewa etc.) from the people who speak these languages (the Chewa, Tumbuka and Sena, respectively). The spellings *Citumbuka* and *Cisena* are used here according to the orthography proposed by the language stakeholders in the Southern African Development Community (SADC); however, the spellings *Chitumbuka* and *Chisena* are sometimes found elsewhere.

According to Guthrie's classification, Zone N consists of four language groups: the Manda group (N10), the Tumbuka group (N20), the Nyanja group (N30), the Senga-Sena group (N40). Guthrie (1948, 1971a) lists five languages in the Manda group (Manda (N11), Ngoni (N12), Matengo (N13), Mpoto (N14), all spoken in Tanzania according to Guthrie (1971a), and Tonga (N15), spoken in Malawi. Maho (2003) adds three further languages to this group: Ngoni (Malawi) (N121), Ndendeule (N121) and Nindi (N102).

The Tumbuka group is a dialect cluster consisting of Tumbuka (N21a), Poka (N21b), Kamanga (N21c), Senga (N21d), Yombe (N21e), Fungwe (N21f), Wenya (N21g), Lambia (N21h) and Wandia (N21k) according to Guthrie (1948). Guthrie labels dialects with lower-case letters following the group number. Maho (2003) does not include Lambia (N21h) and Wandia (N21k), but adds Mbamba Bay Mwera (N201) to this list. In his updated classification, Guthrie (1971a) lists Tumbuka (N21) as the only language in this group.

The Nyanja group consists of Nyanja (N31a), Cewa (N31b) (both Nyanja and Cewa (Peta) are reported to be spoken in Malawi and Zambia) and Maŋanja (N31c) according to Guthrie (1971a). Guthrie (1948) listed also Mbo (N32) and Mazaro (N33), Maho

(2003) adds Nyanja-Cewa (N31D), which is spoken in Mozambique and Tanzania. Nowadays, the variety of the language that is spoken in Malawi, is referred to as Chichewa in Malawi (Ethnologue[2] still uses *Nyanja* as the main name even for Malawi), while the varieties spoken in Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are referred to as Nyanja. The fourth group in Zone N, called Senga-Sena, consists of Nsenga (N41) (spoken in Zambia, all other languages in this group are spoken in Mozambique according to Guthrie (1971a)), Kunda (N42), Nyungwe/Tete (N43), Sena (N44), Rue (N45) and Podzo (N46).

In the following, I will summarise some salient structural properties of Bantu languages in general and of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena in particular. I will also provide information concerning the number of speakers and where the three languages are spoken, before turning to the the main topic of this investigation, tense and aspect.

2.2. Structural properties of Bantu languages

In this section, I will describe features that are typical of Bantu languages in general, with particular focus on features that are relevant for Bantu verb forms as well as to tense and aspect marking, as this will be the primary focus of the remaining chapters.

2.2.1. Phonology

Phonologically, Bantu languages are characterised by an open syllable structure (i.e. no consonants in the coda) and tone (typically two distinctive tone levels, i.e. high and low). In the transcription of the following examples, high tone is indicated by an accent, low tones are unmarked. Tones are not represented in the orthographies of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena.

Tones can distinguish lexical as well as grammatical meaning, cf. the following examples:

(2.1) lexical tone (Chichewa):

   mténgo – *mtengo*
   price   – tree

(2.2) grammatical tone (Chichewa):

   ndi-ná-fótokoz-a   – *ndi-na-fótókoz-a*
   1SG.SBJ-PST-explain – 1SG.SBJ-RECPST-explain

   'I explained'   'I explained recently' (Mtenje, 1987, 172)

Example 2.2 stems from Mtenje's (1987) account of tone rules in Chichewa based on a variety of the language that is spoken in Ntcheu in the south-western Central Region of Malawi. Chichewa exhibits dialectal variation in a number of aspects, including its tonal patterns (cf. Hyman and Mtenje (1999) for several differences between the varieties spoken in Ntcheu and in Nkhotakota, in the north-eastern Central Region of Malawi). I will come back to the topic of tone and geographical variation in chapter 5.2.2.

Tones are often not bound to the segmental material with which they occur. These "floating tones" stem from elided syllables and interact with preceding or succeeding tones yielding specific tone patterns.

2.2.2. Morphology

The overall morphological structure of words in Bantu is agglutinative. A salient morphological feature of Bantu languages is their noun class systems. A pervasive agreement system demands that modifiers of nouns as well as verbs take a congruent noun class prefix that agrees with the head noun or subject. The verbal prefixes that agree with the nouns are not merely agreement markers but can function as the only marking of subject and object in the clause, i.e. they are used as pronominal affixes, a phenomenon that is sometimes referred to as *pro-drop*, as lexical subjects can be dropped in languages with this structural property.

The following example from Chichewa illustrates noun class agreement:

(2.3) **Chi-**nkhanira   **chi-**ku-dzi-kanda.
     NCL7-scorpion   NCL7.SBJ-PRES-REFL-scratch

     'The scorpion is scratching itself.' (Mchombo, 1999, 64)

If the speaker wanted to describe the scorpion further, the modifying term would take the noun-class agreement prefix *chi-* for this class as well as the so-called associative prefix *cha-* to yield:

(2.4) **Chi-**nkhanira   cha-**chi-**kazi   **chi-**ku-dzi-kanda.
     NCL7-scorpion   ASSOC-NCL7-female   NCL7.SBJ-PRES-REFL-scratch

     'The female scorpion is scratching itself.'

A relative clause describing the scorpion further would start with the relative pronoun *chi-mene* which also agrees in noun class with the noun it refers to. Relative clauses and other modifiers of a noun belonging to a different noun class, e.g. *mkango* 'lion', noun class 3, would get a different prefix, in this case *u-*:[3]

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[3]Later on, for simplicity, I will not include class numbers in the glosses, but simply mark noun class prefixes as such.

(2.5) *Mkango* **u**-*mene* *ti-na-gwir-a* **u**-*ku-dzi-kanda.*
NCL3.lion NCL3-REL 1PL.SBJ-PST-catch NCL3.SBJ-PRES-REFL-scratch
'The lion which we caught is scratching itself.'

We will see in chapter 5.5.1 that a different, probably older, kind of relative construction is found in the Bible translation. In this construction, the verb in the relative clause is marked by an attributive prefix. This pattern is similar to what is found in earlier descriptions of Bantu languages (cf. Meussen's (1967) account of Bantu verbal structure below) and seems to be the inherited Bantu pattern, while the construction type marked by -*mene* is the one found in the present-day use of Chichewa.

Most of the above-mentioned structural properties are also found in the other subgroups of the Niger-Congo family (cf. Nurse and Philippson (2003), Williamson and Blench (2000)).

The morphological structure of verbs

Apart from subject and in some cases object prefixes, verb forms can contain a number of other grammatical markings such as negation, tense and aspect, passive, applicative, causative and other derivations. Thus, verb forms can be considerably complex.

The minimal sentence functions as the imperative and consists of a verb form containing the verb root and the final vowel, e.g.:

(2.6) (Chichewa)

Bwer-a!
come-FV
'come!'

Minimal declarative sentences consist of a verb form composed of a subject prefix, a tense-aspect prefix, the verb root and the final vowel, which expresses indicative (-*a*) or subjunctive mood (-*e*) in declarative sentences, e.g.:

(2.7) (Chichewa)

Ndi-ku-bwer-a.
1SG.SBJ-PRS-come-FV
'I'm coming.'

More complex verb forms may also contain object prefixes (object prefix and lexical object do usually not co-occur in Chichewa, cf. Marten et al. (2007)) and/or derivational suffixes, such as passive, reciprocal, causative and/or applicative, often referred to as *extensions*. Note the use of an applicative form in the following example:

(2.8) (Chichewa)

> *Ndi-dza-mu-lemb-er-a*   *kalata*
> 1SG.SBJ-FUT-3SG.OBJ-write-APPL-FV   letter
>
> 'I will write him/her a letter.'

Nurse (2008, 286) assumes that the agglutinating verbal structure emerged in (late) Proto-Bantu. Following Meussen (1967, 108), but with some modifications, he describes the general verb structure as follows:

> **Pre-SM + SM + NEG$_2$ + TA + OM + root + extension + FV + post-FV** (Nurse, 2008, 40)

Pre-SM	primary negation (NEG$_1$ in indicative main clauses) or relative marker
SM	subject marker
NEG$_2$	secondary negation (instead of primary negation, in subjunctives, relatives and other subordinate constructions)
TA	tense-aspect marker
OM	object marker
root	verbal root
extension/suffix	causative, passive, applicative, reciprocal markings etc.
FV	final vowel: indicative or subjunctive mood
post-FV	plural imperative

A verb form in which all slots are filled does not exist, as some positions are mutually exclusive. Thus, primary negation, i.e. the negation marking used in indicative main clauses, cannot cooccur with secondary negation, the negation marking found in subordinate and subjunctive clauses. Primary negation is marked by a prefix before the subject marker, while secondary negation is marked directly after it. Section 2.3.2 will describe how negation is marked in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena, and section 3.3.3 will show that tense-aspect marking differs to a certain extent in negated clauses from tense-aspect marking in affirmative clauses, cross-linguistically and across Bantu. Sections 5.7, 6.5, 7.5 and 8.5 will show how negation and tense-aspect marking interact in the languages under investigation here.

2.3. Some features of the group N languages in general and Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena in particular

In this section, a few linguistic features of the languages grouped into Zone N in general and of the three languages under investigation in particular will be discussed in order to view the following comparison of the tense-aspect systems from a wider perspective. Before turning to the structural features, the social status of the three languages as well as the number of speakers they comprise and their geographical distribution will be presented.

2.3.1. The group N-languages

As alternatives to Guthrie's primarily geographical classification, there have been several suggestions for new groupings, sometimes together with structural comparisons and overviews. Examples are the Interlacustrine languages, the Forest languages, and the Western Savanna languages. As for the languages in zone N, Nurse (1999, 14) notes that the groupings N20 (Tumbuka), N30 (Cewa, Nyanja), N40 (Nsenga, Kunda, Nyungwe, Sena, etc.) (Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe) are often considered to be genealogically valid. Nurse (1999) groups the N10-languages (excluding Manda) together with the groups P10 and P20 together in what he calls Rufiji-Ruvuma, stating that "[t]his is not a group in Comparative Bantu but [has been] widely accepted in recent decades" (Nurse, 1999, 13) based on phonological, lexical and lexicostatistical analysis. Odden (2003) gives an overview of the phonological, morphological and syntactic characteristics found for this group. To my knowledge, there is no structural comparison of the language groups N20 (Tumbuka), N30 (Nyanja) and N40 (Senga Sena), which Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena have been grouped into by Guthrie (1948, 1971a), apart from the account for Zone N (including the Manda group N10) given by Guthrie (1948), which I will outline below.

Guthrie postulates that "[t]he groups which constitute this zone [N] have many similarities to one another, and in most cases they are quite different from the neighbouring ones in other zones" (Guthrie, 1948, 59). The commonalities that he lists for all languages in this zone include the use of *ti-* for the first person plural verbal prefix (with the exception of Matengo, in which *tu-* is used with future tenses); the use of *ni-* or *ndi-* (or *n-* in Tumbuka) in nominal sentences, e.g. *cijaro* 'a door', *ncijaro* 'it is a door' (p. 60); and the absence of the suffix *-ile* (only in group N10 the suffixes *-i* (in Ngoni), *-iti* (in Manda), and *-ite* (in Matengo) denoting past tense occur). Furthermore, Guthrie observed that there are few tense distinctions, with Manda and its four distinct past tenses and four futures being the principal exception. True negative tenses are uncommon among the languages of this zone, negation is either marked by verbal affixes or elsewhere in the clause as "self-standing words". Guthrie gives Nyanja (31a) as an example of the first type, e.g. *tinapita* 'we passed', neg. *sitinapita*, and Manda (N11)

and Tumbuka (N21a) as examples for the second type, e.g. in Tumbuka, *tikawona zovu* 'we saw an elephant', neg. *kuti tikawona zovu cara* (ibid.). Guthrie further observes that "[t]here is usually no special word or element to indicate the relative construction, though in some languages there is a special tone pattern for tenses in relative clauses" (p. 61), and he notes that none of the languages in this zone have an alternance of vowel length.

2.3.2. Comparison of a few structural and lexical features of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena

The speakers that I worked with described themselves as being unable to understand speakers of the other languages, with the exception of Chichewa, which is understood by most speakers in Malawi due to its use as a lingua franca in Malawi, and consequently, its learning as a second language by many speakers there. Therefore, Citumbuka and Cisena are in language contact with Chichewa. Citumbuka and Cisena are spoken in areas with a relatively large geographic distance between them, so there is little, or no language contact between their speakers, cf. section 2.3.3 for a map. The following sections will show that the grammatical structure of the three languages is rather similar, with similar noun class systems and verb morphology. Only a few features were selected for this analysis, as a full comparison of the three languages was not possible within the scope of this study.

Lexical comparison

When compared lexically, Chichewa and Cisena share more cognates in basic vocabulary than Chichewa does with Citumbuka or Citumbuka with Cisena. A Swadesh list of 207[4] words was collected in the three languages, and each word from the list was compared with its counterpart in the other languages, finally, the number of cognates was counted. In most cases, the classification of two words as cognates was straightforward, as they are distinguished by no or only minor phonological differences, such as the alternation of [dz], [z] and [ʤ], e.g. [dzina] 'name' in Chichewa, [zina] in Citumbuka and [ʤina] (orthographically *jina*) in Cisena. Out of 203 words, the Chichewa word list contains 126 that are cognate with Cisena and 113 with Citumbuka. Citumbuka and Cisena share 91 cognates on this list. A comparison of Swedish, German and English by means of the same method yielded 135 cognates for Swedish and German, 116 cognates for German and English and 114 cognates for Swedish and English. This comparison is not meant to make claims about the historical development of the three languages, but to give the reader a rough impression of how similar, or different, these languages are with regard to their lexicon.

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[4]Practically, the list consisted of 203, not the original 207, words, as the words for 'snow', 'ice', 'green' and 'yellow' could not be translated into the three languages.

Noun morphology

The noun class systems of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena are very similar. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the three systems using the conventional numbering of Bantu noun classes, based on the descriptions by Bentley and Kulemeka (2001), Vail (1973) and Torrend (1900).[5] The comparison reveals that the differences between the three systems are rather limited and often phonological.

Table 2.1.: Noun class systems in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena, based on Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) for Chichewa, Vail (1973) for Citumbuka and Torrend (1900) for Cisena

noun class SG/PL	Chichewa		Citumbuka		Cisena	
1/2	mu-	a-	mu-	βa-	mu-	a-
1A/2	∅	a-	∅	βa-		
3/4	mu-	mi-	mu-	mi-	mu-	mi-
5/6	∅	ma-	li-	ma-	di- (?)	ma-
7/8	chi-	zi-	ci	vi-	chi-	pi-
9/10	∅	∅	N-	zi(N)-	n-	(zi)n-
11	-	-	lu-		-	-
12/13	ka-	ti-	ka-	tu-	ka-	pi-
14/6	u-	ma-	u-		u-	mau-
15	ku-		ku-			
16	pa-		pa-		pa-	
17	ku-		ku-		ku-	
18	mu-		mu-		mu-	

A comparison with the noun class systems in other Bantu languages shows that the systems differ considerably within different language groups. Against this contrastive background, the commonalities between Chichewa, Cisena and Citumbuka are even more apparent.

Katamba (2003) provides an overview of Bantu noun morphology. Figure 2.2 shows the noun class prefixes of eight Bantu languages. This selection of languages is not representative of all Bantu languages, but it contains languages from the north-western, north-eastern, the mid-western, mid-eastern and southern parts of the Bantu-speaking area (from Guthrie zones A, C, (J)E, N, R and S), and a few comparisons with the three languages studied here will be made. One salient feature in this list is that in four of the cited languages so-called augments are found before the noun class marker. These have been argued to function as a kind of definiteness, referentiality or focus marker (cf.

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[5]Torrend (1900) presented the individual classes with his own numbering. I reclassified these according to the conventional numbering used in Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) and Vail (1973) following Bleek (1962, 1969) and Meinhof (1906, 1910). "∅" stands for zero marking, and"N" stands for nasal. For noun classes 15-18, the same marking is used for singular as well as plural forms.

Bokamba (1971) for Dzamba, and Hyman and Katamba (1993) for Luganda). None of the three languages under investigation here employs augments, instead demonstrative pronouns following the noun are used for marking definiteness. Furthermore, in all three of them, class 12 and 13, marked by *ka-* and the corresponding plural form *ti-*, *tu-* or *pi-*, are used for diminutives. In only two other languages in Katamba's overview, apart from Chichewa (namely Ndonga R22, spoken in Namibia and Angola, and in (Lu)Ganda JE15 (spoken in Uganda)), noun class 12 is found.

Table 2.2.: Comparative table of Bantu noun classes (Katamba (2003,109))

Cl.	Ganda JE15	Chewa N31	Ndonga R22	Venda S21	Sotho S33	Xhosa S41	Lingala C36d	Tuki A601
1	*o-mu-*	*mu-*	*o-m-*	*mu-*	*mo-*	*u-m-*	*mo-*	*mo-*
1a	*∅-*		*∅-*	*∅-*	*∅-*	*u-*		
2	*a-ba-*	*a-*	*a-a [sic]*	*vha-*	*ba-*	*a-ba-*	*ba-*	*ba-*
2b			*o-o-*	*vho-*	*bò-*	*o-o-*		
3	*o-mu-*	*mu-*	*o-m-*	*mu-*	*mo-*	*u-m-*	*mo-*	*o-*
4	*e- mi-*	*mi-*	*o-mi-*	*mi-*	*me-*	*i-mi-*	*mi-*	*i-/iN-*
5	*e-ri-/CC-*	*∅-*	*e-*	*l̩i-*	*le-*	*i-li-*	*li-*	*i-/ni-*
6	*a-ma-*	*ma-*	*o-ma-*	*ma-*	*ma-*	*a-ma-*	*ma-*	*aN-/a-*
7	*e-ki-*	*chi-*	*o-shi-*	*tshi-*	*se-*	*i-si-*	*e-*	*i-*
8	*e-bi-*	*zi-*	*i-i-*	*zwi-*	*di-*	*i-zi-*	*bi-*	*bi-*
9	*e-N-*	*∅-*	*o-N-*	*N-*	*N-*	*N-*	*N-*	*∅-/N-*
10	*e-N-/zi-*	*∅-*	*o-N-*	*dzi-*	*diN-*	*i-ziN-*	*N-*	*∅-/N-*
11	*o-lu-*		*o-lu-*	*lu-*		*u-lu-*	*lo-*	*no-/nu-*
12	*a-ka-*	*ka-*	*o-ka-*					
13	*o-tu-*	*ti-*						*to-/tu-*
14	*o-bu-*	*u-*	*u-u-*	*vhu-*	*bo-*	*u-bu-*	*bo-*	*wu-*
15	*o-ku-*	*ku-*	*o-ku-*	*u-*	*ho-*	*u-ku-*	*ko-*	
16	*wa-*	*pa-*	*pa-*	*fha-*		*pha-*		
17	*ku-*	*ku-*	*ku-*	*ku-*	*ho-*	*ku-*		
18	*mu-*	*mu-*	*mu-*	*mu-*		*u-m-*		*mu-/mo-*
19								*i-*
20	*ogu-*			*ku-*				
21				*d̩i-*				
22	*a-ga-*							
23	*e-*					*e-*		

Copula constructions

In Chichewa and Cisena, copula constructions are marked by *-li*, *ndi* and *-khala*; in Citumbuka, a different form is used: *ŵa*,[6] *ni* occurs in one specific type of copula construction. In all three languages, a specific form is used for nominal predication in present tense clauses (*ndi* in Chichewa and Cisena, *ni* in Citumbuka).

The use of tense-aspect markings in copula constructions will be examined in the results chapters, therefore, a first overview of the grammar of these constructions is presented here. These constructions give a further impression of how similar or dissimilar the three languages are in terms of their grammatical structure.

-li is the copula verb used for most non-verbal predication constructions in Chichewa, non-finite *ndi* is used for nominal predication in sentences referring to the present, and *-khala*, meaning 'be, become, stay', is used for copula clauses referring to the future and with present habituals. While *ndi* is always unmarked for tense-aspect and person, *-li* and *-khala* are marked for person as well as tense and aspect, cf. the following examples:

- nominal predication:

  (2.9) *Iye*   ***ndi***   *mphunzitsi.*
      she/he   COP   teacher

  'She/he is a teacher.'

  (2.10) *A-na-**li**   mphunzitsi*
      3.SBJ-PST-COP   teacher

  'She/he was a teacher.'

  (2.11) *A-dza-**khal**-a   mphunzitsi.*
      3.SBJ-FUT-become-FV   teacher

  'She/he will be a teacher.'

- locational predication:

  (2.12) *A-**li**   ku   Blantyre.*
      3.SBJ-COP   at   Blantyre

  'She/he is in Blantyre.'

  (2.13) *A-na-**li**   ku   Blantyre.*
      3.SBJ-PST-COP   at   Blantyre

  'She/he was in Blantyre.'

  (2.14) *A-dza-**khal**-a   ku   Blantyre.*
      3.SBJ-FUT-become-FV   at   Blantyre

  'She/he will be in Blantyre.'

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[6] *ŵ* is the orthographic representation of the bilabial fricative [β].

In Citumbuka, *-ŵa* is the default marker for non-verbal predication, non-finite *ni* is used for nominal predication in contexts referring to the present. For locational predication in the present, *-li* is used. The following examples illustrate the system:

- nominal predication:

  (2.15) *Uyu* **ni** *musambizgi.*
       DEM COP teacher
  'She/he is a teacher.'

  (2.16) *Wa-ka-**ŵa*** *musambizgi.*
       3SG.SBJ-REMPST-COP teacher
  'She/he was a teacher.'

  (2.17) *Wa-zamu-**ŵa*** *musambizgi.*
       3SG.SBJ-DFUT-COP teacher
  'She/he will be a teacher.'

- locational predication:

  (2.18) *Wa-**li*** *ku Mzuzu.*
       3SG.SBJ-COP at Mzuzu
  'She/he is in Mzuzu.'

  (2.19) *Wa-ka-**ŵa*** *ku Mzuzu.*
       3SG.SBJ-REMPST-COP at Mzuzu
  'She/he was in Mzuzu.'

  (2.20) *Wa-zamu-**ŵa*** *ku Mzuzu.*
       3SG.SBJ-DFUT-COP at Mzuzu
  'She/he will be in Mzuzu.'

In Cisena, *-li* is, as in Chichewa, generally used for non-verbal predication, while *ndi* is restricted to nominal predication referring to the present. For referring to the future, *-khala* is used, as in Chichewa, cf. the following examples:

- nominal predication:

  (2.21) *Iye* **ndi** *mphunjisi.*
       she/he COP teacher
  'She/he is a teacher.'

  (2.22) *A-da-**li*** *mphunjitsi.*
       3.SBJ-REMPST-COP teacher
  'She/he was a teacher.'

(2.23) *A-naja-**khal**-a*   *mphunjisi.*
        3.SBJ-DFUT-become-FV   teacher

        'She/he will be a teacher.'

- locational predication:

    (2.24) *A-**li***   *ku Nsanje.*
            3.SBJ-COP   at   Nsanje

            'She/he is in Nsanje.'

    (2.25) *A-da-**li***   *ku Nsanje.*
            3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   at   Nsanje

            'She/he was in Nsanje.'

(2.26) *A-naja-**khal**-a*   *a-li*   *ku Nsanje.*
        3.SBJ-REMPST-become-FV   3.SBJ-COP   at   Nsanje

        'She/he will be in Nsanje.'

The use of different constructions or markings for nominal as opposed to locational predication is a very common pattern cross-linguistically, cf. Stassen (2005). Note that the marking difference occurs in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena only in clauses referring to the present: *ndi/ni* is used for nominal predication in present tense clauses, while *-li* is used for locational predication. For the other tenses, the same copula form is used for both nominal and locational predication.

Negation

Negation marking is a domain in which these languages differ considerably. As shown in 2.2.2, negation in Bantu is often expressed by verbal prefixes, and many Bantu languages distinguish two different strategies for indicative main clauses (primary negation), on one hand, and for subjunctives and non-finite forms (secondary negation), on the other. Of the three languages under investigation here, only Chichewa exhibits this pattern. Particles are used in Citumbuka (*cha(ra)* and *yayi*) and in Cisena (*tayu*) both in main and in subordinate clauses.

Compare the following examples for the two different markings found in Chichewa:

(2.27) context: According to the contract. . .

     Si**-ti-gwir-**a   *ntchito   mawa.*
     NEG-1PL.SBJ-catch-FV   work   tomorrow

     'We don't work tomorrow.'

(2.28) *Kutero*   *kuti*   *amayi*   *a-ma-yesets-a*   *kuti*   *sabata*
so.much/therefore   that   mother   3.SBJ-HAB-try.hard/do.best-FV   that   week
lirilonse   *koma*   *m'-nyumba*   *thobwa*   *li-sa-sow-e.*
each/every   but   NCL.in-house   thobwa   NCL.SBJ-NEG-be.missing-SBJV
'So much that the mother tries hard every week that thobwa should not be missing in the house/at home.'[7]

In Citumbuka and Malawian Cisena, negation is expressed by means of a particle following the verb, cf.:

- context: According to the contract...

(2.29) Citumbuka:

    Ti-zamu-gwir-a   *ntchito*   **cha**   *machero.*
    1PL.SBJ-DFUT-catch-FV   work   NEG   tomorrow
    'We don't work tomorrow.'

(2.30) (Malawian) Cisena:

    Ti-na-phat-a   *basa*   **tayu**   *magwana.*
    1PL.SBJ-NFUT-hold-FV   work   NEG   tomorrow
    'We don't work tomorrow.'

In Citumbuka, different negation particles are used, viz. *cha* as well as *yayi*. This variation will be further discussed in section 6.5. In Cisena, negation earlier appears to have been marked by a verbal prefix in addition to the negation particle, as described in section 7.5.

Thus, as opposed to noun morphology and subject and object marking, negation marking is rather different in the three languages, and we will see that the tense-aspect markings also differ in the three languages to a considerable extent.

2.3.3. Sociolinguistic data

Of the three languages investigated in this study, only Chichewa has official status (Kishindo (1990), Kayambazinthu (1999)). Chichewa (which was referred to as *(Chi)Nyanja* before 1964, and still is when referring to the varieties of the language spoken in the neighbouring countries by 2.7 million speakers in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique) has been the national language of Malawi and has served as a lingua franca throughout

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[7]The apostrophe orthographically marks a syllabic nasal in the Chichewa sentence. In this case *m'* is the phonologically reduced form of *mu* 'in'.

the country since Malawi became independent from Great Britain in 1964. Seven million people speak Chichewa as a first language in Malawi. In the northern region of the country, however, Citumbuka serves as a lingua franca and is spoken by approximately one million speakers as a first language. Cisena is spoken by 270,000 people as a first language in the southernmost districts of Malawi and by another one million speakers in Mozambique (all numbers according to Ethnologue (2009)[8]). We will see later that Cisena as it is spoken in Malawi differs considerably from the variety spoken in Mozambique, cf. chapter 7. Ethnologue lists the two varieties as two different languages, Sena [seh] (Mozambique) and Sena, Malawi [swk].

The Language Mapping Survey for the Southern and Central Regions of Malawi (2009) notes the following dialects of Chichewa: Cimang'anja, Cinyanja, Cilikoma, Cimbo, Cingoni, Cimagololo, Ciciwere and Cizaliwa. Cimang'anja is reported to be spoken in Mulanje, Chikwawa, Mwanza, Nsanje and Thyolo district (where in some areas, the same dialect is reported to be sometimes referred to as 'Cimagololo') in the Southern Region of Malawi. In some areas, such as Ntcheu, Balaka, Mwanza and in some areas of Dedza district, Chichewa is reported to be referred to as 'Cingoni' since the speakers belonging to the Ngoni grouping were originally Zulu. Cinyanja is listed among the dialects that are spoken in Mulanje district. In the Malindi area in Mangochi district, Chichewa is often referred to as 'Cilikoma'. Ciciwere and Cizaliwa are reported to be spoken in Nkhotakhota in the Central Region, and Ciciwere also in Ntchisi, Central Region. Cimbo is listed as a known dialect of Chichewa, but the survey does not indicate where it is spoken. The speakers of Chichewa that I worked with do not come from the areas mentioned above, but from the districts of Lilongwe, Dowa, Zomba and Mchinji, cf. section 4.2, and they refer to their language as Chichewa'.

For Cisena, the same survey states only one dialect, which is called Cinyungwi. The report does not state where this dialect is spoken. The speakers that I worked with come from Nsanje district, where Cisena is the dominant local language.

The Language Mapping Survey for Northern Malawi (2006) notes the following dialects of Citumbuka: Ciphoka, Cihenga, Cisisya, Cinyaluwanga, Citumbunyika and Cimphangweni. Cisisya is spoken along the lake in the northern part of Nkhatabay district. Citumbunyika is reported to be spoken in Chitipa district. Ciphoka and Cihenga are reported to be spoken in Rumphi district. Ciphoka is probably the dialect that Guthrie (1948) and Maho (2003) refer to as Poka (N21b). Cinsenga or Cisenga (both names are reported to be in use) is listed as a separate language in the survey, Guthrie (1948) and Maho (2003) refer to Senga (N21d) as a dialect of Tumbuka, and Nsenga (N41) is listed as a separate language in the Senga-Sena group. The Sociolinguistics Survey of Chitumbuka (1997) reports Nkhamanga as another dialect of Citumbuka that is spoken in Rumphi district. This is probably the dialect that Guthrie (1948) and Maho (2003) refer to as Kamanga (N21c). The other Tumbuka dialects mentioned by Guthrie (1948) and Maho (2003), Yombe (N21e), Fungwe (N21f) and Wenya (N21g) are not found in

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[8]http://www.ethnologue.com/

the surveys, but in his updated classification, Guthrie (1971a) lists Tumbuka as the only language in this group with no dialects being listed in the updated classification. The speakers of Citumbuka that I worked with come from Mzimba and Chitipa district.

The maps in Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show where Chichewa, Cisena and Citumbuka are spoken and where the speakers that I worked with originated.
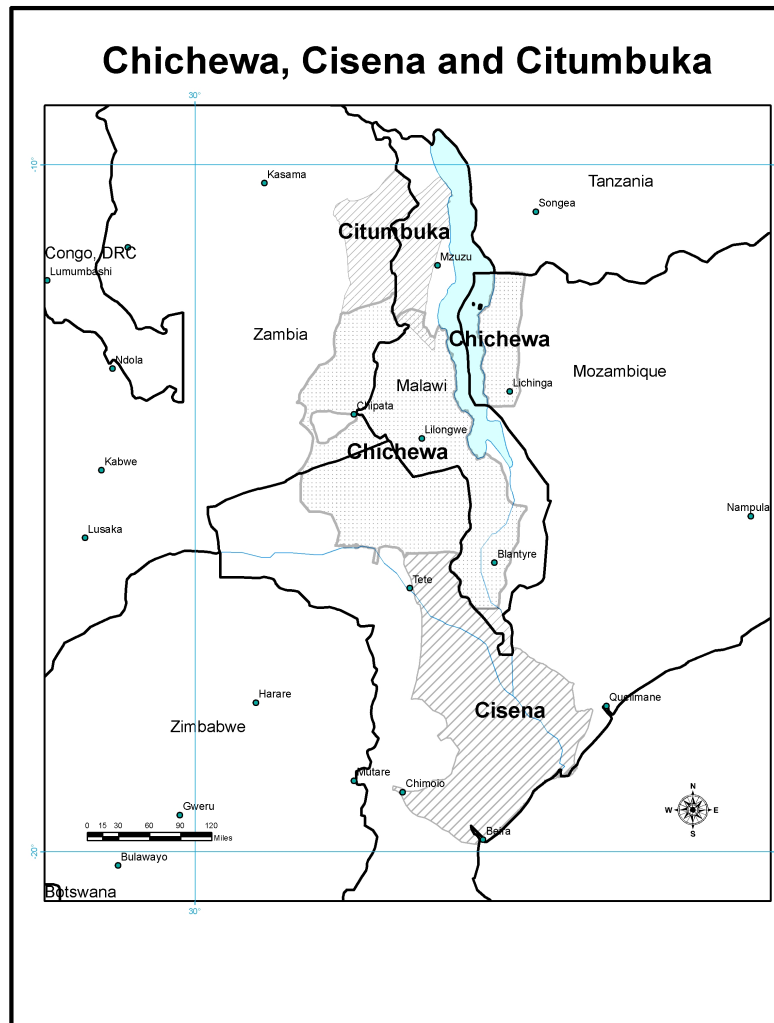
Figure 2.3.: Geographic distribution of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena

Citumbuka
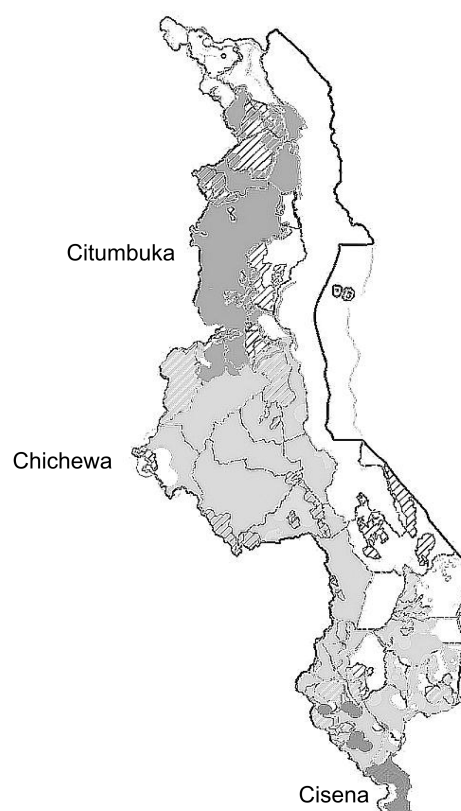
Chichewa

Cisena

Figure 2.4.: Geographic distribution of Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena in Malawi

3. The state of the art: Tense and aspect from a cross-linguistic perspective and in Bantu

It is well-known that Bantu languages exhibit a rich system of tense and aspect distinctions (Dahl (1985); Nurse (2003); Nurse and Philippson (2006); Nurse (2008)). Before turning to research findings concerning Bantu languages in general and the three languages under investigation in particular, I will give a brief account of how tense and aspect is defined in the literature and will briefly summarise the main findings of cross-linguistic investigations in this field. The theoretical approaches summarised here have influenced the research on tense and aspect to a considerable extent. Particular emphasis is placed on cross-linguistic findings, as I agree with a common view in language typology and basic linguistic theory (cf. section 4.1) that grammatical terms and concepts that are valid across languages are needed in order to adequately describe linguistic structures and categories in individual languages and that cross-linguistic findings provide more general insights into what language is. Thus, the analysis of the tense-aspect systems in the three languages under investigation will be based on and related to previous cross-linguistic findings on tense-aspect systems and categories in both Bantu and in other languages around the world.

3.1. On the definition of tense and aspect and the research tradition in this field

The two general linguistic textbooks on tense and aspect that are most often cited are both written by Comrie (1976, 1985). Comrie gives the following definition of these two linguistic categories:

> [. . .] although both tense and aspect are concerned with time, they are concerned with time in very different ways. [. . .] tense is a deictic category, i.e. locates situations in time, usually with reference to the present moment, though also with reference to other situations. Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal consistency of the one situation; one could state the differ-

ence as one between situation-internal time (aspect) and situation-external time (tense). (Comrie, 1976, 5)

The meaning of both categories is related to time, as both tense and aspect express different facets of time in language. Tense locates the situation in time, e.g. expressing whether the event happened/happens before, during or after the moment of speech, while aspect expresses the time structure of the event, e.g. whether the event happens habitually, repeatedly, etc., and whether it is seen by the speaker as a whole or in progress, etc.. Conceptually, the two notions can be kept neatly apart, but this is not so simple when dealing with linguistic form, as temporal and aspectual meanings are often expressed simultaneously by a single form, e.g. past time reference and perfective aspect.

With respect to their structural behaviour, both categories are grammatical, so that if a language exhibits tense and/or aspect as a grammatical category, then that category is obligatory, i.e. speakers must use one of the categories when uttering a sentence (e.g. in English and Russian). Comrie (1985) argues that for a structure to be a grammatical category, typically two criteria need to be fulfilled: *obligatory expression* and *morphological boundedness*, i.e. the clearest instances of grammatical categories are those that are obligatorily expressed and morphologically bound, e.g. the past/non-past distinction in English as in *John ran*, as opposed to *John runs.* Categories that are neither obligatorily expressed nor morphologically bound are clear instances of lexical categories. If only one of the criteria is fulfilled an unequivocal classification is not possible (Comrie, 1985, 10).

It follows that, in languages without tense and/or aspect as a grammatical category, sentences do not express such distinctions obligatorily. Nevertheless, in languages without tense and aspect, in principle, the same meanings can be expressed that are conveyed by grammatical categories in other languages. And even within one language, different strategies are used to express time: temporal and aspectual adverbials, lexical aspect (or Aktionsart), temporal particles (such as those mentioned above) and discourse principles (e.g. the order of occurrence in a text expresses the temporal order of events, cf. Klein (2009b) for an overview).

Out of all linguistic means to express time, lexical aspect, or Aktionsart, i.e. the inherent temporal meaning of verbs, and the way it interacts with tense and (grammatical) aspect has attracted particular attention among researchers. The combination of a verb describing a punctual event like *cough*, for example, and progressive or imperfective aspect marking, yields an iterative meaning in English and French, e.g. *he was coughing* and *il toussait* (Comrie, 1976, 42), while durative verbs like *to paint* marked by the same aspect form get a progressive, 'ongoing' interpretation.

Klein identifies the following focus in the research tradition devoted to the expression of time in language:

> For a long time, the study of how temporality is encoded was completely dominated by two grammatical categories, tense and aspect, and a lexical cat-

egory, called Aktionsart, situation type, or sometimes lexical aspect. (Klein, 2009a, 18)

He argues for a widened perspective by, for instance, studying temporal adverbials and specific means of encoding time in discourse.

A thoroughly comprehensive description and discussion of the long, established research tradition is provided by Binnick (1991). The research that he describes focuses on Greek, Latin, Romance, Germanic, Russian and Kikuyu.

There is a distinction between tense and aspect as general properties of a language, as in 'languages like English, Swedish and German have tense', and the specific values and markings that verbs can take in these languages, such as *past, perfect*, etc. For the latter, Klein (2009b) suggests the terms *tense form* and *tense meaning*. Bybee and Dahl (1989) refer to grammatical morphemes including both bound and periphrastic expressions that express tense or aspect, like the progressive in English or the past in German, as *grams*.

After a brief discussion of theoretical perspectives on tense and aspect, the remaining sections of this chapter summarise the findings of cross-linguistic investigations of tense and aspect categories in a broader sample of languages and in Bantu languages.

3.2. Theoretical approaches to tense and aspect

There are theories or models of tense and aspect, and there are linguistic, or grammatical, theories. Twenty-five years ago, Comrie (1985) stated:

[...] many current linguistic theories (as opposed to theories specifically about tense) seem to have remarkably little of interest to say about tense. (Comrie, 1985, viii)

This might have changed to some extent over the past two decades with, for example, the treatment of tense as a clause-level operator in Role and Reference Grammar, and the tense/aspect value in Lexical Functional Grammar. It is questionable, however, whether these approaches have anything more substantial to say about tense and aspect than the mere assignment of a place to these categories in their respective theory of grammar. Approaches to tense and aspect within different theories of Universal Grammar make considerable assumptions about the nature of tense and aspect. Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) propose a theoretical account of tense and aspect (in Romance and Germanic languages, in particular) in the Minimalist framework following Chomsky (1995). In their theory, tense and aspect forms are represented as two different temporal relations in a revised Reichenbachian framework (see below), while their morphosyntactic form and behaviour is accounted for by minimalist concepts of agreement marking and movement. The deductive research paradigm that accounts of this kind adhere to is fundamentally different from the inductive methodology applied in this investigation.

In the following, I will briefly summarise three models of tense and aspect: Reichenbach's time line, Vendler's Aktionsarten and Smith's speaker-based model of grammatical aspect. These three models have influenced the research on tense and aspect to a considerable extent and are therefore summarised here and given as a theoretical background. Section 3.3 will then turn to cross-linguistic studies on tense and aspect and to an overview of definitions regarding tense-aspect categories (e.g. perfective/imperfective, habitual, past tense, etc.).This cross-linguistic research paradigm serves as the methodological basis for this investigation. Its theoretical assumptions will be discussed in chapter 4.1.

3.2.1. Reichenbach's time line with reference points

Reichenbach (1947) analyses the English tense system, with some references to German, French, Turkish, Greek and Latin, in terms of a time line with different time points.

Reichenbach's different time points refer to the time of speech (S), i.e. when the proposition is uttered; the point of the event (E), i.e. when the event described in the sentence takes place; and a point of reference (R) which is needed to distinguish the simple past from the past perfect and the present perfect (and their counterparts in the future).

Thus, the sentence *Peter had gone* is analysed as:

Past Perfect

I had seen John

```
  ├────────┼──────┼──▶
  E        R      S
```
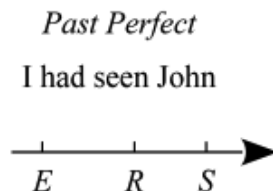
The time of the event precedes not only the time of speech, but also a certain reference point that is usually specified by the context in which the sentence occurs (Reichenbach, 1947, 288), as in *Peter had gone when I came.* Here, the time of the speaker's coming is the reference point that precedes the time of speech and happens after Peter had left.

For the present perfect sentence *I have seen John* the analysis is:

Present Perfect

I have seen John

```
  ├─────────────┼──────▶
  E             S,R
```
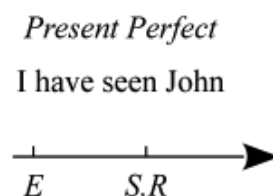
The event time is prior to both the time of speech and the reference time, which occur simultaneously, i.e. the speaker's seeing John happened before the moment of speech but is related to that current moment.

As a second usage of the present perfect, Reichenbach gives an analysis in which the point of event is extended and stretches from the event time to the present, as in *I have known him for ten years.*

For the simple past, the point of the event and the point of reference coincide, e.g. *I saw John*:

Simple Past

I saw John
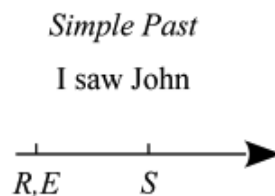
The speaker's seeing of John precedes the time of speech and is not related to any other reference point. The reference point coincides with the point of the event.

The different time points that Reichenbach defines can be extended from points to longer durations, thus yielding what he calls past perfect extended, simple past extended and present perfect extended:
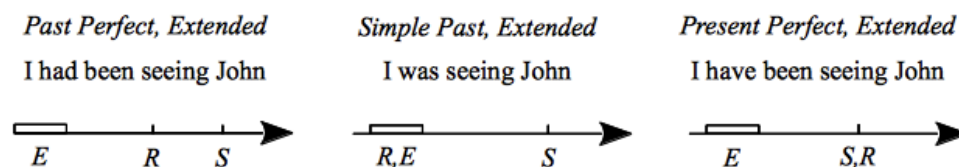
The order of time points is the same, only the event time (which is the same as the reference time for the simple past) is extended. Note also that the analysis of the present perfect extended is similar to the second usage of the present perfect as mentioned above. What Reichenbach leaves uncommented is the change of meaning that the verb *see* in English undergoes if used with a continuous tense: It expresses iterative meaning, as in to meet someone repetitively, i.e. to date someone, and is thus more appropriately represented like the subsequent Turkish example that Reichenbach gives. This has to do with the Aktionsart of the verb, a phenomenon systematically studied by Vendler and briefly described in the next section. Note also that this phenomenon is subject to language-specific variation. In Portuguese, for example, the combination of the progressive aspect with the verb *ver* 'see' does not trigger a change in the meaning of the verb itself. Perception verbs can be freely combined with the progressive aspect in certain languages, but not in others, cf. Comrie (1976, 35). Reichenbach also refers

to German, French, Greek and Latin tenses. For the German and French examples of the perfect tense, a word of caution is in order as the perfects of these languages have developed into simple pasts, at least in spoken language (Comrie, 1985, 81f.).

Furthermore, Reichenbach provides analyses of complex sentences distinguishing two different patterns: the permanence of the reference point (in all clauses the reference point is the same, while the event times can differ) and the positional use of the reference point (the reference point is different in the different clauses of the sentence). An example for the former pattern is *I had mailed the letter when John came and told the news*, where John's coming is the reference point. An example for the positional use of the reference point is *He was healthier when I saw him than he is now*, where the reference point of the final clause is the present as opposed to the past reference point in the first two clauses.

Reichenbach's analysis pays tribute to the deictic nature of tense and captures certain aspectual distinctions, too (as the continuous or extended tenses). His analysis provides a particularly clear account of the nature of the perfect. For languages that exhibit aspectual distinctions only, or aspectual distinctions other than the continuous and iterative, however, the Reichenbach approach would be difficult to be apply. Giving an account of such systems was obviously not Reichenbach's intention, but this point needs to be kept in mind when a broader perspective is taken.

Klein (1994) postulates three time points that are similar to Reichenbach's: situation time, topic time and time of utterance. In an utterance like *The light was on*, the situation time, according to Klein, is the time when the light was on, and the topic time is the time at which such a claim is made. As Klein emphasises, this can be a significantly shorter period of time than the time in which the light was actually on, e.g. in the sentence *When I came into the room, the light was on*, as the light was already on before the speaker entered the room. The utterance time, finally, is the time when the statement was made, i.e. the moment of speech. Klein's distinction does not focus on the analysis of present and past perfect constructions, as opposed to Reichenbach, and while Klein's topic time seems to be equivalent to Reichenbach's "point of reference" in many cases, Reichenbach is not explicit about the treatment of examples like the ones mentioned. Klein's situation time corresponds to what Reichenbach referred to as time of the event, and Klein's time of utterance was termed time of speech by Reichenbach.

3.2.2. The inherent temporal properties of verbs according to Vendler

Vendler's (1967) time schemata of verbs are not observations about tense and aspect, but about inherent temporal properties of verbs (and verb phrases) that have laid the foundations for more in-depth studies of the expression of time on the verb. Vendler's work laid the foundation for analyses of the interaction of the inherent temporal properties of the verb that he distinguished, later called Aktionsarten, or lexical aspect, and

tense-aspect categories yielding specific aspectual and temporal meanings, cf. Comrie (1976) for cross-linguistic observations of the interplay of lexical and grammatical aspect, and Smith (1997) for a model of this interdependency. The analysis and theory of Smith (1997) will be summarised in the next section.

Vendler distinguishes four kinds of verbs with respect to their inherent time characteristics: activities, accomplishments, achievements and states.

These four classes were established based on the structural, linguistic behaviour of individual verbs, i.e. the constructions in which they can and cannot occur, and on the temporal characteristics of the events that they express, e.g. whether they are processes with a certain duration or events that hold only for a single moment. Their linguistic behaviour is obviously a consequence of such characteristics although this dependency is not made explicit in Vendler's argumentation.

In a first step, Vendler differentiates between verbs that can take continuous forms and verbs that cannot, e.g. *I am running, writing, working*, etc. but not *I am knowing, loving, recognising* etc. The first group of verbs describe processes. The process of running takes place for a while and at subsequent moments within a certain amount of time. The second group of verbs, like *knowing, loving, recognising*, do not describe processes in which the event holds for every subsequent phase within a certain amount of time (before it stops).

The first group of verbs, denoting processes, can further be divided into processes involving a terminal point, e.g. *drawing a circle* and *running a mile*, and processes without a terminal point such as *running* and *pushing a cart*. If the process of drawing a circle is interrupted, the person doing it did not draw a circle, while a person being interrupted in running did run. For the first kind of process, questions like *How long did it take to draw the circle?* are appropriate while the same question for a non-terminal process sounds odd. For this kind of proccess a question like *For how long did he push the cart?* would be adequate, but it would sound odd if applied with terminal processes (Vendler, 1967, 100f). Vendler calls processes without a terminal point activities and processes with a terminal point accomplishments. The adjectives "atelic" and "telic" are often used to make the same distinction.

In addition, for the second group of verbs, which cannot take continuous forms, a further division is made: between those events that can last for longer periods of time and those that last only a single moment. *Reaching the hilltop, winning the race*, and *spotting or recognising something* is done for a moment only, whereas *to know* or *believe something*, and *to love* or *dominate someone* are events that stretch over a longer period of time. Thus, for the first kind of events, the question about its time would be *At what time did you reach the top?*, and for the second type the appropriate question would be *(For) How long did you believe in the stork?*, and not vice versa (Vendler, 1967, 102f). The first type is called *achievements*, the second *states*.

Depending on the context, the same verb can express different event types: *to think* can be an activity as in *He is thinking about Jones* or a state as in *He thinks that Jones is a rascal* (Vendler, 1967, 110). Similarly, verbs that express activities like smoking

and driving a cab can express states if they refer to a habit or the occupation of a person. Here, Vendler distinguishes between *specific states* and *generic states* where generic states refer to situations that involve rather unspecific actions like *She rules the country* and *He is married*. It is difficult to specify moments in which a ruler is actually ruling and a husband is actually acting as a husband as opposed to rather well-defined circumstances in which a cabdriver is driving a cab and a smoker is smoking. In the case of *seeing*, two uses can be distinguished, an achievement sense as in *At that moment I saw him*, i.e. in the sense of spotting, and a state sense as in *I saw him all the time*, which involves a longer period of time, but not in the sense of an activity, as a question like *What are you doing?* could not be answered by *I am seeing*. Furthermore, one could not deliberately see something in the way that one could deliberately look at or watch something.

The inherent temporal properties of verbs and situations that Vendler describes have an impact on the meaning and interpretation of verb forms marked for tense and aspect. A thorough analysis of these interactions is provided by Smith (1997). Her model is described in the next section.

3.2.3. Smith's two-component model of grammatical aspect

Smith (1997) argues that

> the aspectual meaning of a sentence results from interaction between two independent aspectual components, situation type and viewpoint. Both are realized in linguistic categories. [...] Viewpoint is generally indicated morphologically, with affixes or other designated morphemes. Situation type is conveyed more abstractly, by the verb and its arguments, or verb constellation. The forms that specify each aspectual component co-exist in a sentence. (Smith, 1997, xiv)

By situation types, Smith means what Vendler characterised as inherent temporal properties of verbs, which are elsewhere often called *Aktionsarten*. By viewpoint, she refers to the choices that the speaker makes when selecting a certain aspectual category over another, e.g. the perfective as opposed to the imperfective aspect in *John and Mary built a rock garden last summer* as opposed to *John and Mary were building a rock garden last summer*. In the first sentence, the perspective includes the whole, completed event, whereas in the second sentence the speaker focusses on the event in progress, not revealing whether it was ever completed or not (Smith, 1997, xiii).

Aspectual choice is restricted by truth, conventions and pragmatics, but still subjective to a considerable extent (Smith, 1997, 6). Smith follows prototype theory in assuming that aspectual categories are defined by a cluster of central properties. Language-specific variations are departures from the simplest and most general instantiation of a category (Smith, 1997, 13f.). However, she argues, prototype theory cannot explain and predict

the aspectual systems of languages, and therefore, she proposes her model of interaction between situation type, which is expressed by the verb, its arguments and sometimes modified by adverbials, and viewpoint aspect, which is expressed by grammatical aspect and sometimes modified adverbially. The interaction is claimed to hold, allowing for certain language-specific variations, for aspectual systems across languages.

Smith follows the Principles and Parameters approach proposed by Chomsky (1981) in suggesting a *parameter of aspect*, i.e. a language parameter as part of Universal Grammar, the value of which is language-specific and learned via linguistic input. Smith supports her universal claim with the observation that

> The concepts of aspect play a role in all languages, so far as we know. The aspectual systems of different languages are strikingly similar. (Smith, 1997, 13)

Although her approach adheres to a rigid theoretical framework and although the book also contains a formalisation of the approach, a considerable part of the book remains descriptive on a level that stays close to the linguistic phenomena at hand. The aspectual systems of five languages, viz. English, French, Russian, Navajo and Mandarin Chinese, are described and analysed. The aspectual systems of these languages are considerably different, and Smith's sample benefits from including more than only closely related and familiar European languages.

Universal and language-specific interactions of situation type and viewpoint aspect

Smith assumes three viewpoint aspects: the perfective, the imperfective and a neutral viewpoint. The main difference between the viewpoints is in how much of a situation they make visible: Perfective viewpoints view a situation as a whole, including its initial and final endpoints, while imperfective viewpoints make only part of a situation visible, excluding its endpoints. The neutral viewpoint is assumed due to the theoretical claim that all sentences have a viewpoint (Smith, 1997, 62). If no aspect marking is applied in a sentence, the neutral viewpoint is attributed to this sentence by default, as both open (without endpoints) and closed (with endpoints) readings are possible.[1]

The following three sentences, two English and one Chinese,[2] illustrate the different viewpoint aspects:

(3.1) Mary walked to school. (perfective)

(3.2) Mary was walking to school. (imperfective)

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[1]At some other point, however, Smith defines the neutral viewpoints as including the initial endpoint, i.e. starting point, of a situation and at least one internal stage (where applicable) (Smith, 1997, 3).

[2]According to Smith's model, English does not have sentences without a viewpoint morpheme (Smith, 1997, 80f.), thus neutral viewpoints do not occur.

(3.3) *Mali xie gongzuo baogao. (neutral)*
  Mali write work report

  'Mali wrote a work report./Mali was writing a work report (but has not finished it)./ Mali was writing a work report (and finished it).' (Smith, 1997, 79f.)[3]

The first situation (Mary's walking to school) is viewed in its entirety, whereas in the second example, it is left open whether Mary reached the school, or not, as only part of the situation is made visible. The first sentence shows perfective viewpoint, the second imperfective viewpoint. In the third sentence, both interpretations are possible, the writing of the report as an entirety including both endpoints and as part of the situation leaving open whether the writing of the report was finished or not.

At the centre of Smith's approach is the analysis of the combination of each of the three viewpoints with different situation types and the semantic effects that these combinations yield. Five basic situation types are distinguished: the first four are taken from Vendler (1967), activities, accomplishments, achievements and states, and a fifth, semelfactives.

Smith's additional, fifth type, the semelfactive (e.g. *tapping one's shoulder*) is similar to achievements in that it constitutes an instantaneous event. But unlike achievements, this type of event is not telic, i.e. it does not have an inherent endpoint. In her analysis of English, French, Russian and Mandarin Chinese, all five situation types occur. For Navajo, however, Smith's analysis is different: Only statives, durative and instantaneous events are distinguished.

The choice of viewpoint determines how much of the situation is made visible, i.e. whether inherent endpoints are included (perfective viewpoint) or excluded (imperfective viewpoint). For accomplishments (e.g. *Mary walked to school/Mary was walking to school*) the perfective viewpoint includes the terminal endpoint, whereas the imperfective leaves it open as described above. Achievements (e.g. *Bright Star won the race*) are viewed as single-staged events with the perfective viewpoint, whereas the imperfective views the preliminary stages of the event with no information about its outcome (e.g. *Bright Star was winning the race*, Smith gives similar examples for French and Russian). Some achievement verbs cannot combine with the imperfective (e.g. *?Mary was finding her watch*) due to the idiosyncratic properties of these achievement verbs: "It is difficult to think of certain events, such as finding, as having preliminary stages" (Smith, 1997, 172). In the case of semelfactives (such as *She knocked at the door*), the perfective viewpoint expresses a single-stage event, whereas the use of the imperfective with the same verb changes the situation type from semelfactive to an activity, i.e. in English *She was knocking at the door* does not express an instantaneous event, but a durative event (without inherent endpoint), and thus, a (derived) activity (Smith, 1997, 172). In French, the interpretation of an originally semelfactive verb combined with the *imparfait*

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[3]I added the translation myself based on Smith's argumentation and her evidence of possible answers to the clarification question: *Is she still writing?* following this sentence. The question can be answered by *Hai zai xie* 'She is still writing', *Xie-le* 'She stopped' or *Xie wan-le* 'She finished'.

yields a habitual stative or an activity reading[4] (e.g. *Maurice lui tapait l'epaule* 'Maurice was tapping (*imparfait*) his shoulder' (Smith, 1997, 198)). For activities in general, the imperfective shows the event without endpoints, whereas the perfective viewpoint imposes an endpoint, e.g. *Lily was swimming in the pond* as opposed to *Lily swam in the pond*. For states in English, only the perfective viewpoint can be taken. The interpretation of these sentences is ambiguous as both open and closed readings are possible, e.g. the situation *Sam owned three peach orchards* can either still pertain at the moment of speech, or it does not pertain any longer, as the two possible extensions show: *Sam owned three peach orchards last year, and he stills owns them* and *Sam owned three peach orchards last year, but he no longer owns them* (Smith, 1997, 171).[5] In French, states combined with the perfective viewpoint (i.e. *passé simple* and *passé composé*) yield closed interpretations, e.g. *Marie a été malade* 'Marie was (*passé composé*) sick' implies that Marie is not sick anymore. In Russian, only the imperfective viewpoint is possible with states. Verbs like *videt': uvidet'* ('to see (IMPFV)': 'to catch sight of, spot (PFV)') receive a stative interpretation ('see') when combined with the imperfective viewpoint and an achievement interpretation ('to catch sight of, spot') when combined with the perfective viewpoint. In Russian, the imperfective is the unmarked form both morphologically and in use, i.e. the perfective is only used when the endpoints of the situation are to be emphasised. "With the perfective viewpoint, the pragmatic emphasis is on endpoints; with the imperfective the emphasis is on the occurrence of the situation" (Smith, 1997, 241). Yet another picture arises, for stative situations but also for the general aspectual system, in Mandarin Chinese. First, it distinguishes no less than seven viewpoints: three perfective (expressed by post-verbal *le*, post-verbal *guo* and verb reduplication[6]), three imperfective (expressed by *zai, zhe* and zero-marking),[7] and a neutral viewpoint (by definition, no viewpoint morphemes are applied in this case). A further, more fine-grained distinction for stative situations is made. States that refer to rather temporary properties, e.g. *to be angry, to be available*, are combinable with the imperfective marker -*zhe*, while states that refer to stable properties of individuals, e.g. *to be a beaver*, are not. Statives, in general, frequently appear without any viewpoint

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[4]The *imparfait* is the preferred category for habituals in French in general (Smith, 1997, 199).

[5]With regard to Smith's definition of the neutral viewpoint as yielding both an open and a closed interpretation of the same sentence, it is surprising that this ambiguity in English stative sentences is not attributed to a neutral viewpoint. However, I assume, these sentences are classified as perfectives as their morphological (zero-)marking is coherent with other perfectives and contrasts with the imperfective.

[6]The differences between the three markings relate partly to the interval that is referred to and partly to modal connotations. *Guo* as opposed to *le* is applied when the final state of the situation no longer obtains, e.g. *Last month they went GUO to Hong Kong (they are no longer there)*. If the people referred to might still be in Hong Kong at the moment of speech, *le* marking is applied (Smith, 1997, 267). Another context in which *guo* but not *le* is applied are experientials of the type *A: Have you ever done X? B: Yes, I have GUO*. The verb reduplication perfective is used if the speaker wants to express that the situation talked about is of little importance (Smith, 1997, 271).

[7]*Zai* expresses progressive meaning, *zhe* and zero-marking are combined with different kinds of states.

morpheme and with an open-ended interpretation. The following is an example of such a combination, furthermore, it illustrates the kind of semantic tests that Smith carries out for her analysis – the extension of the sentence shows whether the situation expressed in the first part of the sentence is viewed as open-ended or not:

(3.4) *Mali zuotian   hen   gaoxing, xianzai hai hen   gaoxing*
      Mali yesterday very happy   now   still very happy

      'Yesterday Mary was happy, and she is still happy now. (Smith, 1997, 276)

This represents the typical reading of an imperfective stative in Mandarin, according to Smith. A closed reading (which would mean that Mary is no longer happy) only arises if made explicit by the perfective *-le*. Due to the open interpretation of the first part of the sentence (no endpoint is expressed so that Mary might still be happy at the moment of speech), Smith assumes an imperfective viewpoint here that is expressed by zero-marking. The neutral viewpoint, however, which is also expressed by the absence of viewpoint morphemes, yields an ambiguous interpretation, open or closed, and is found for non-stative situations only.

(3.5) *Zhangsan xiuli   yitai luyinji.*
      Zhangsan repair   one   CLtape.recorder

      'Zhangsan repaired/is repairing a tape recorder. (Smith, 1997, 277)

The translation shows that both an open and a closed reading is possible, thus Smith assumes a neutral viewpoint. As viewpoint morphemes in Mandarin Chinese are optional, sentences of this kind occur frequently.

The interpretation of situation types can be overridden not only by viewpoints (as in semelfactives turning into activities or habitual states when combined with an imperfective viewpoint), but also by adverbials. For example, *Bill knew the truth* is a state, but *Suddenly, Bill knew the truth* is an achievement; *Mary coughed* is a semelfactive, but *Mary coughed for an hour* is an activity; *Kim played a set of tennis on Friday* is accomplishment, while *Kim always played a set of tennis on Friday* is a habitual state (Smith, 1997, 18).

Temporal location, expressed by tense, adverbials and modals,[8] is also taken into account. Temporal location and aspect are seen as complementary systems (Smith, 1997, 66). As opposed to English, French and Russian, Mandarin Chinese and Navajo do not possess the grammatical category tense. In these languages, temporal location is expressed by means of contextual cues, adverbials or aspectual markings, i.e. imperfective viewpoints yield present interpretations, perfective viewpoints trigger past interpretations.

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[8]By *modals*, Smith is referring to constructions like the *will*-future in English.

Smith's analysis clearly shows how situation type (Aktionsart) and viewpoint aspect (aspect marking) interact with each other in different languages and reveals the kind of consequences that these interactions yield for aspectual meaning.

In the following, I will give an overview of investigations that studied tense-aspect categories from a cross-linguistic point of view.

3.3. Tense and aspect from a cross-linguistic perspective

Compared to the vast amount of research on tense and aspect in individual languages, cross-lingustic investigations in this field are rare, at least with respect to non-European languages. The bulk of research on time expressions on the verb, i.e. tense and aspect, has been carried out on Indo-European languages, most of all on Russian, French, Spanish, German and Ancient Greek (cf. Binnick's (2006) bibliography of tense and aspect research[9]). A large-scale cross-linguistic investigation of tense and aspect in European languages was undertaken in the EUROTYP-project (Dahl (2000)); earlier studies include Comrie (1990) and Hewson and Bubenik (1997).

Large-scale cross-linguistic studies have been undertaken by Dahl (1985), Bybee et al. (1994) and, on an extended sample, by Dahl and Velupillai (2005e). Dahl (1985) addresses the question of what tense-aspect categories are (typically) found in languages around the world, and Bybee et al. (1994) focus on the historical development of the forms that mark these categories.

In his cross-linguistic investigation of a sample of 64 languages, Dahl (1985) found evidence supporting his initial hypothesis that tense and aspect categories are cross-linguistically reducible to a relatively small set. The most common categories were future, perfective, past, and progressive, perfect and pluperfect. The average number of major tense and aspect categories in the languages of the sample was 6.5. Particularly interesting for the present study is that the three Bantu languages investigated by Dahl, viz. Kikuyu, Sotho and Zulu, distinguish as many as 11 categories. Other results of this study will be referred to in section 3.3.1 below where the findings for individual tense-aspect categories are summarised.

That not only the synchronic distribution, but also the lexical sources of grammaticalised tense and aspect categories are reducible to a relatively small set of linguistic elements has been shown by Bybee et al. (1994). Progressives, for instance, typically develop out of verbs meaning 'sit', 'remain', 'stay', 'be (+/- locative)', 'go', 'come', and perfects (anteriors) most often from verbs meaning 'finish', 'go (away)' or 'put'. Apart from these, secondary grammaticalization paths were discovered, i.e. already grammaticalised tense and aspect categories tend to develop further by changing their meaning (and form). For example, perfects appear to develop into perfectives and pasts, as in French, Italian, German and Dutch; Bybee et al. (1994) also cite evidence for a similar

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[9]http://www.scar.utoronto.ca/~binnick/TENSE/, last accessed on 21st May 2012

development in Eastern and Western Kru languages and a dialect of Ewe and progressives into imperfectives and presents, e.g. in Turkish and Maa (Eastern Nilotic) (Bybee et al. (1994, 141) referring to Underhill (1976), Dahl (1985) and Heine (1994)).

The investigations cited above focus on the distribution of tense and aspect forms and their meanings. As for encoding properties, Dryer (2005) has shown that tense and aspect are most commonly encoded by verbal suffixes. In a sample of 1,062 languages with grammatical tense and aspect, Dryer found 629 languages (59%) with tense- and aspect suffixes and 150 (14%) with prefixes. In 139 languages in the sample (13%), tense and aspect are expressed by particles, clitics or auxiliaries, and 133 languages (13%) use a combination of different strategies in which no strategy could be identified as prevailing, and 11 languages (1%) express tense and aspect primarily by means of tone differences.

In a further large-scale linguistic study, Miestamo (2005b,c) looked at the strategies that languages employ for negating declarative verbal main clauses and found that negation has an effect on tense-aspect marking in many languages. His findings will be briefly summarised in section 3.3.3 below.

As for the less described languages outside of Europe, research on tense and aspect has been undertaken mostly within general grammatical descriptions of individual languages. This applies also to the largest sub-group of the Niger-Congo language family, the Bantu languages. Being generally less well-described than Indo-European languages, the languages of this group have still been more extensively studied than the majority of other non-European and African languages. Nurse's (2003, 2006, 2008) investigations of tense and aspect markers across Bantu give an overview of their cross-linguistic distribution and meaning. He also suggests grammaticalization paths for a number of markers. The findings of this work will be summarised in section 3.3.2.

In the following sections, I will cite definitions for common tense-aspect categories that are based on cross-linguistic research. The choice of categories presented is also governed by what kind of categories I found in the three languages under investigation here. In the last section of this chapter, I will eventually turn to the interplay of tense and negation.

3.3.1. Tense-aspect categories

In the following, I will give an overview of definitions and observations regarding rather common tense-aspect categories that are also found in the languages under investigation here. It needs to be kept in mind, and we will return to this question in the result chapters of this work, that a single grammatical form can express both temporal and aspectual meaning, i.e. in a past progressive form both past and progressive meanings are combined. Dahl and Velupillai (2005e) note that aspectual forms often entail a certain kind of temporal reference, e.g. perfective forms typically refer to past events, as the perception of a completed event is usually only possible if the event is completely in the past. Likewise, imperfectives typically refer to the non-past or present (as, for instance, in Standard Arabic (cf. Comrie (1976, 78ff.)) and in Maltese (Ebert (2000)).

In many languages, a perfective/imperfective distinction is found only in the past tense (as in Spanish, Bulgarian and Georgian, cf. Comrie (1976, 71)), while no such distinction is found in other tenses.

The following definitions of tense-aspect categories are complemented by observations on the distribution of these categories in the languages around the world.

perfective/imperfective

Comrie (1976) defines these two aspectual categories as follows:

> Perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation. (Comrie, 1976, 16)

Imperfectivity is expressed by a single category in some languages (e.g. French, Russian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek), whereas in others, several categories are distinguished, such as habitual and progressive/continuous. Yet others exhibit a single category which "corresponds to part only of the meaning of imperfectivity" (Comrie, 1976, 25).

According to Dahl (1985, 188), the category perfective/imperfective belongs, with past and future tense, to those categories that are the most frequently found in languages. In 45 out of 64 languages in his sample, the perfective/imperfective opposition occurs in some form. Based on the contexts in which the perfective typically occurs in Dahl's (1985) questionnaire, he defines the prototypical perfective as:[10]

> A PFV [perfective] verb will typically denote a single event, seen as an unanalysed whole, with a well-defined result or end-state, located in the past. More often than not, the event will be punctual, or at least, it will be seen as a single transition from one state to its opposite, the duration of which can be disregarded. (Dahl, 1985, 188)

One of the three sentences in Dahl's (1985) questionnaire that was most often translated with a perfective verb form (32 out of 45 languages marking perfectives) is the last sentence in a narrative sequence describing a punctual event:

> Do you know what happened to me yesterday? . . . (narrative) . . . It DIE (Dahl, 1985, 78)

As seen in section 3.2.3, Smith (1997) defines the perfective as a viewpoint by which situations are viewed as a whole, including their endpoints, cf.

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[10]Dahl's questionnaire will be further described in section 4.2.1.

> Sentences with a perfective viewpoint present a situation as a whole. The span of the perfective includes the initial and final endpoints of the situation: it is closed informationally. (Smith, 1997, 66)

Correspondingly, Smith defines the imperfective as a viewpoint that presents only part of a situation "with no information about its endpoints" (Smith, 1997, 73) and an informationally open interpretation.

The three definitions summarised here differ in scope in that Comrie and Smith attempt a general definition, while Dahl refers to the prototypical core uses of perfectives, but all three share the view that a situation in the perfective is seen as a whole. Comrie and Smith treat habituals and progressives as types of imperfective, with Smith neglecting the pecularities of these more specific categories as opposed to more general imperfective forms. Dahl treats habituals, progressives and imperfectives (the latter in opposition with perfectives) as distinct categories. In my analysis, if a marker expresses both habitual and progressive meanings, this marker is classified as imperfective, as it is a straightforward way of capturing both meanings in one category. If a marker expresses only habitual meaning, I call it habitual; if it expresses only progressive meaning, I label it as progressive.

In their cross-linguistic study of 222 languages in the World Atlas of Language Structures, Dahl and Velupillai (2005d) found that approximately 45% of the languages (101 languages) mark the perfective/imperfective distinction grammatically (including morphologically bound as well as periphrastic marking). These languages are found on all continents.

progressive and continuous

By contrasting progressives with general imperfectives and habituals, Comrie notes that:

> [...] progressiveness is similar to continuousness, which is definable as imperfectivity that is not occasioned by habituality. (Comrie, 1976, 33)

Comrie uses the term *continuous* for situations viewed in progression, whereas *progressive* refers to non-stative events only. Looking at verbs that occur in the progressive with those that cannot, such as *know* in English in comparison to *savoir* 'know' in French, which can occur with imperfective, non-habitual meaning, he concludes with a final, somewhat circular definition:

> [...] we can give the general definition of progressiveness as the combination of progressive meaning and non-stative meaning. (Comrie, 1976, 35)

The contexts in which progressive forms are typically found in Dahl's investigation all involve an on-going activity. 'Ongoing' is defined as a "relation between a dynamic situation and a point in time. Accordingly, PROG [progressive] is normally not used for stative constructions." (Dahl, 1985, 91). The sentence that was most often translated with a progressive form (in 29 languages) is:

Father to child: (Please do not disturb me), I WRITE a letter. (Dahl, 1985, 92)

Out of 64 languages in Dahl's sample, at least 28 were found to distinguish a progressive category.

Smith states that

Progressives focus on the internal stages of non-stative events. (Smith, 1997, 74)

Of the five languages that Smith analyses, English has a progressive, French and Russian a general imperfective, Chinese a progressive and a resultative and Navajo a progressive and an imperfective.[11]

habituals and generics

Comrie's definition of habitual is:

The feature that is common to all habituals [...] is that they describe a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situation referred to is viewed not as an incidental property of the moment but, precisely, as a characteristic feature of a whole period. (Comrie, 1976, 27f.)

Dahl (1985) distinguishes habituals from generics and observes that:

It appears that the cases where HAB [habitual] is typically used are those in which the adverb *usually* is used in English. [...] Such sentences differ from generic ones by their lack of lawlikeness. (Dahl, 1985, 97)

Dahl differentiates three different habitual categories: habitual (HAB), habitual-generic (HABG) and past habitual (HABPAST).

The questionnaire sentences in which the category habitual (HAB) was most often found cross-linguistically are the answers to the question *What your brother usually DO after breakfast?*, e.g. *He WRITE a letter/letters.*

Habitual-generic (HABG) differs from HAB in that it is used also in generic contexts, e.g. *What kind of sounds do cats make? They MEOW* (Dahl, 1985, 97).

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[11]The difference between the progressive and the imperfective in Navajo does not become entirely clear in Smith's analysis. She notes that the progressive is limited to a certain verb class (typically, but not exclusively, to verb bases of motion) and gives two example sentences that contain the same verb ('fall'), once in the progressive, one in the imperfective form. The imperfective form is translated as 'about to fall' (but the other imperfective examples are translated as progressives in English), the progressive form of the verb as 'is falling' (Smith, 1997, 304).

Past habitual (HABPAST) constitutes a distinct category that is primarily used for habitual sentences with past time reference and is not composed of a combination of HAB or HABG and a past tense marker. It was most often found in sentences like *What your brother usually DO after breakfast last summer?*, i.e. *He WRITE a letter/letters* (Dahl, 1985, 101).

Habituals, habitual-generics and past habituals are not very common tense-aspect categories cross-linguistically. Each category was found four to six times among the languages in Dahl's sample.[12]

Smith (1997) does not define the habitual as a distinct category. In the languages that she analyses, habituality is only one of several possible meanings of imperfectives.

past tense and remoteness distinctions

Comrie (1985) assumes a time line in his definition of tense as the grammaticalisation of location in time. The present moment (or moment of speech) is marked in the middle of this time line and typically (at least for absolute, as opposed to relative, tenses) constitutes the deictic centre that time reference in language refers to. Comrie defines past tense as follows:

> Past tense locates a situation to the left of that present moment time point. The meaning of the past tense is thus location in time prior to the present moment, and any further deductions about temporal location that are made on the basis of individual sentences in the past tense are the results of factors other than simply the choice of tense. (Comrie, 1985, 41)

With the latter addition, Comrie excludes context-dependent uses from the meaning of tense categories and defines tense meanings independent from their particular contexts (Comrie, 1985, 26). Context-dependent uses of the past tense, e.g. the situation described in *John used to live in London* no longer holds at the moment of speech, are classified as sentence implicatures that can be cancelled, in this case by adding *and as far as I know he still does* (Comrie, 1985, 24). But the temporal meaning that this situation refers to a time prior to the moment of speech cannot be cancelled. Comrie also mentions that there are secondary meanings of the past tense in English, e.g. past tense forms indicating politeness *I just wanted to ask you...*, that do not locate situations prior to the present moment.

Therefore, Comrie argues for an approach according to which a category can have more than one meaning, namely basic and secondary, or basic and peripheral meanings. The most characteristic meaning of a grammatical category is seen as the prototypical meaning. Comrie argues that a more flexible approach of this type provides a more accurate characterisation of linguistic systems (Comrie, 1985, 19).

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[12]The reason why the habitual is dealt with here is that it constitutes a distinct grammatical category in two (Chichewa and Cisena) of the languages under investigation here.

Dahl (1985) and Smith (1997) are also in favour of a prototype approach, and they also refer to Reichenbach's (1947) model of a time line with several reference points (speech time, event time and reference time), cf. section 3.2.1.[13] According to his model, in past tense sentences, reference time precedes speech time, and is simultaneous with situation time. With respect to the distinction between meaning and use, Dahl (1985) argues that

> [. . .] the meaning of TMA categories cannot in general be reduced to questions of reference but must be formulated in the broader framework of a theory of language use. (Dahl, 1985, 3)

Accordingly, his investigation seeks to determine in which contexts certain categories are typically used. However, past time reference is expressed by a number of different categories in the languages of the sample, e.g. perfect, perfective and experiential. Dahl interprets the use of the past tense (which he terms PAST) as a default choice that is selected "whenever no other past time reference indicating category is eligible" (Dahl, 1985, 117), such as perfective (PFV), present perfect (PFCT) or experiential (EXPER). Dahl and Velupillai (2005b) found that 134 languages in their sample of 222 languages mark the past/non-past distinction grammatically, whereas 88 languages do not.

Of those 134 languages in the sample used by Dahl and Velupillai (2005b), one fifth make more fine-grained temporal distinctions when referring grammatically to the past. In these languages, different distances between the moment of speech and the described event (event time in Reichenbach's terms) are distinguished and marked grammatically. Thirty-eight of the forty languages with remoteness distinctions in past time reference mark two to three different degrees of remoteness; only two languages distinguish four or more different degrees of remoteness. If there is a well-defined cut-off point between different remoteness categories, it typically lies between 'today' and 'before today' (Dahl and Velupillai (2005b)). Dahl and Velupillai's results show that languages with remoteness distinctions are found in Sub-Saharan Africa, North and South America, in Papua New Guinea and, as evidenced by merely three languages in the sample, in Central Asia. A more detailed description of remoteness distinctions in Bantu languages will be given in chapter 3.3.2. Remoteness distinctions are also found in the three languages under study here.

perfect

(Present) perfects typically and cross-linguistically establish a relation between a past event and the present state (Comrie, 1976, 53). This relation consists of some type of present relevance, either in terms of the present result of a past action, in terms of temporal closeness (recency), by attributing high value to recently obtained information

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[13]Dahl (1985) argues, however, that Reichenbach's account of the progressive in English and the Aorist in Turkish is not convincing, partly because the model represents temporal reference, but not aspectual distinctions (Dahl, 1985, 30).

('hot-news perfect') or by referring to an experience that has been encountered at least once within a period of time that lasts until the moment of speech.

Lindstedt (2000) gives the following operationalisation of the perfect:

> A language possesses a perfect if it has a gram, associated with the verb, that is used in most of the first seven examples [in the applied translation questionnaire]- which illustrate different kinds of CR [current relevance] of past situations - but is *not* used in the following four examples, consisting of short narratives. This means that there is a negative criterion as well: the perfect is not a narrative tense [...]. (Lindstedt, 2000, 366)

The applied questionnaire that Lindstedt refers to is an extended version of Dahl's (1985) questionnaire, designed to particularly elicit perfect forms. The seven examples referred to are the following, with the first five corresponding to Dahl's prototypical perfect contexts, which he found most often to be marked by a perfect form in his typological sample (Dahl, 1985, 131-132):

1. A: I want to give your sister a book to read, but I don't know which one. Are there any of these books that she READ already?

   B: Yes, she READ this book.

2. A: It seems that your sister never finishes books.

   B: (That is not quite true.) She READ this book (= all of it).

3. Question: Is the king still alive?

   No, he DIE.

4. Question: You MEET my sister (at any time in your life up to now)?

5. A child asks: Can I go now?

   Mother: You DO your homework?

6. Question: Do you know my sister? Answer: Yes, I MEET her (so I know her).

7. Question: Can you swim in this lake? (= Is it possible for anybody to swim in this lake?)

   Answer: Yes, at least I SWIM in it several times.

Dahl and Velupillai (2005c) found 108 languages in their sample of 222 languages to have perfects, defined as forms that have both resultative and experiential uses. Their definition is the following:

1. A perfect may be used resultatively, i.e. of an event, often but not always a recent one, which has results that hold at the time of speech (or any other time serving as reference point): *Someone has stolen my purse!* (=the purse is gone).

2. A perfect may be used experientially, i.e. to say that a certain type of event took place one or more times over an interval of time, typically one that extends up to the moment of speech (or whatever time serves as the reference point): *I have seen worse things in my life.* (Dahl and Velupillai, 2005c, 271)

Categories that express only one of these two meanings were not treated as perfects in Dahl and Velupillai's study.

Perfects also have a wide distribution geographically, with the exception of Australia, Northern Africa, and the more central parts of North and South America (in Mesoamerica perfects are found), cf. the results of Dahl and Velupillai (2005c).

future tense

Comrie notes that

> [...] it might seem straightforward to define future tense as locating a situation at a time subsequent to the present moment [...] (Comrie, 1985, 43)

However, as future events have not yet happened at the time of speaking, referring to them is more speculative than talking about events in the past. Thus, the actual occurrence of a certain event in the future can seem more or less likely, depending on the circumstances, to the speaker who talks about the event. Accordingly, talking about the future is not only a question of deixis, locating the event at a time point, but also a question of mood, i.e. a question of how likely the event seems to the speaker. After his discussion of future expressions in English, German and Finnish, Comrie concludes that "the future seems to be weak or non-existent as a grammatical category in European languages" (Comrie, 1985, 48), as in all three of these languages, statements can be made about the future that do not employ the use of a future tense form, e.g. German *Ich gehe morgen*, Finnish *minä menen huomenna* both meaning 'I will go tomorrow', literally 'I go tomorrow' (Comrie, 1985, 44) and in English for scheduled events *The train departs at five o'clock tomorrow morning.* Apart from that, the meaning of *will*-constructions in English is not only future time reference, but also modal as in *He will go swimming in dangerous waters*, in which it expresses volition rather than future time (Comrie, 1985, 47). Also Smith (1997) refers to *will* as a modal.

Dahl (1985) observes that his category FUT, which he assumes to underlie most forms that are commonly referred to as future tenses, occurs in 50 out of 64 languages in his investigation. Most often, the category FUT is found in the sentences

> Said by a young man: When I GROW old, I BUY a big house
>
> The boy is expecting a sum of money – When the boy GET the money, he
> BUY a present for the girl (Dahl, 1985, 102)

Based on the contexts in which FUT markings occur, Dahl concludes that the proto-typical meaning of a future tense category includes at least the three features 'intention', 'prediction' and 'future time reference'.

Dahl and Velupillai (2005a) found 110 out of 222 languages to have an inflectional, i.e. morphologically bound, future tense. European languages (apart from Romance, Baltic and Celtic) do not belong to this group of languages. In Southeast Asia, no inflectional futures are found. In North America as well as Australia and New Guinea, languages with inflectional futures are in the majority whereas the distribution in Africa and South America is more varied.

3.3.2. Tense and aspect in Bantu languages

Nurse (2003, 2008) and Nurse and Philippson (2006) undertook large-scale studies of the tense and aspect systems across Bantu. A general problem of such an investigation is the scarcity of reliable grammatical descriptions from which such a typological study can collect its data. Nurse's (2003) first sample consisted of 120 languages, and he estimated that there was good data for only 20-25 of the languages. Some of his results are summarised here:

1. Worldwide common categories like perfectivity/imperfectivity, perfect (anterior),[14] progressive and habitual also occur in Bantu languages, peculiar to these languages are the categories persistive (*still X-ing*, something which happened/was true earlier is still happening or true at a later stage) and consecutive, i.e. a specific form for narration: once a time framework has been established, the subsequent verbs receive consecutive marking (the marker for this function is very commonly *-ka-*).

2. Of the 120 languages investigated, 23 have one past tense, 49 have two different past tenses, 47 have three and 16 have four different past tenses (the different degrees of remoteness refer to events that, for instance, happened just now, earlier the same day, the day before, or even longer before).

3. 50 languages have one future tense, 48 have two and 20 have three future tenses, most languages have more pasts than futures.

4. There is more variation in tense categories than in aspectual categories across Bantu regarding both their form and the distinctions that they express.

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[14]Nurse follows Bybee et al. (1994) in using the term *anterior* instead of *perfect*. I used the traditional terminology in section 3.3.1 and will continue to do so.

5. The encoding characteristics, i.e. the position of morphemes within the verb, are quite similar across Bantu: tense and aspect prefixes appear after the subject and before the (optional) object marking or the verb stem.

6. So far, little work has been done on the semantics of these categories and the specific contexts in which they occur. Nurse suggests that "useful future investigation on aspect and tense would focus on three issues: what categories are involved, how they fit together into systems, and then on how the categories are used in practice" (Nurse, 2003, 102).

7. Futhermore, there is need for future research regarding flexible vs. fixed time reference: The remote past does not have to refer to the same period of time in each speech event, but if an event occurs regularly (e.g. planting once a year), the selection of the tense category depends on the position of the event in this sequence of occurrences. Some variability can also be due to subjective estimation of remoteness.

Nurse (2008) describes the findings from the investigation of an expanded sample of more than 200 languages. Statistical statements are made only for a sample of 100 languages drawn equally from all Guthrie zones. The language groups that Guthrie identified add up to 84 groups. Of these, Nurse argues, only a quarter are well-described (meaning that there is at least one language in each group that is well-described and, for the other languages, descriptions exist), one quarter is poorly described, i.e. there is no good analysis of the verb system for any of the languages in the group, the remaining half of the languages are located somewhere in the middle between these two poles (Nurse, 2008, 8).[15] The data that Nurse collected on individual languages is published in two appendices that are available online.[16]

Nurse found that most Bantu languages have the same set of aspectual categories: perfective (unmarked), imperfective, progressive, habitual, persistive, and perfect (anterior) (Nurse, 2008, 24). The most common past tense marker is -a-, occurring in 78% of the languages in his sample with some kind of past time reference (Nurse, 2008, 82). (This marker occurs also in the three languages of my investigation, see chapter 8.3 for a comparative summary.) Another widely occurring past marker is the suffix -ile in combination with a pre-stem affix. For the future, no such prevailing marker could be found (-ka- occurs in 23% of the languages which is significantly less than the most common past tense markers).

Most Bantu languages encode several degrees of past and future reference, typically with more distinctions in the past than in the future. The distribution of remoteness

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[15]Chichewa and Citumbuka belong to this intermediate group, and Cisena belongs to the poorly described group. Swahili, among others, is part of the well-described group (and is, due to its high number of second-language speakers, the most wide-spread Bantu language.)

[16]Nurse's online appendices can be found at `http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dnurse/pdf/tabantu-app1.pdf`, last checked 3rd May 2012.

distinctions found across Bantu in this later study (Nurse (2008)) is similar to the findings of Nurse (2003): In his sample of 100 languages, systems with two past tenses were found most often (in 41 languages), followed by systems with a three-way distinction (31 languages) and systems with one past tense only (17 languages). Languages with a four- or five-way distinction are the least common, ten languages in his sample exhibit four remoteness distinctions and one language has a five-way contrast. Nurse argues that some of the languages that are purported to have a five-way distinction, e.g. Yombe (H16c), Western Gogo (G11) and Mituku (D13), are doubtful cases for such a contrast.

As far as future distinctions are concerned, the most common system has one future tense only, 47 out of 100 languages, followed by 25 languages with two future tenses, 16 languages with three future tenses, nine languages without any future tense, two languages with five future tenses, and one language with four future tenses.

With respect to the cut-off points for the different remoteness categories, Nurse observes that it is difficult to make statements on this issue as not all source grammars contained the relevant information necessary to do so. For languages with two past tenses, the most common division is between hodiernal and non-hodiernal past, i.e. between a past tense referring to earlier on the day of speech, as opposed to before that day.[17] Fewer languages distinguish grammatically between events that happened on the same day or on the day before speaking as opposed to earlier than that. Yet other languages distinguish between recent vs. remote past, in which case the cut-off points seem to be rather flexible. Those languages having three pasts most commonly distinguish between hodiernal (earlier on the same day), hesternal (on the day before) and earlier than that. Other, less frequent, systems have cut-off points between the same day vs. yesterday, and a few days before vs. earlier than that. Others involve an immediate past referring to the last few seconds or minutes before speaking. Languages with a four-way remoteness distinction in the past typically distinguish between immediate, hodiernal, hesternal and a more remote past. Table 3.1 illustrates the distinctions and systems mentioned. P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4 stand for different remoteness distinctions where P_1 is more recent than P_2, and so forth.

As a notoriously difficult problem, Nurse describes the classification of recent past and perfect forms as one or the other. He gives two main reasons. One is the related nature of the two categories. Perfects are used for past situations or events that still have an effect on present situations, thus linking the past to the present, and these past situations are more likely to be recent past situations than situations that took place a long time ago. The other is related to the linguistic origin of grammarians:

> The other reason has to do with the language of the authors of some of the sources for this book. It is notable that many of the Bantu languages

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[17]Most Bantu speakers perceive the day as starting at sunrise and ending at sunrise of the next day according to Nurse (2008, 90). Dahl (p.c.), however, found evidence that in a considerable number of Bantu languages, the new day starts at sunset and Price (1956, 229) notes for Chichewa that the day "starts at bedtime, so that our 'last night' is *usiko walelo*", i.e. literally *today's night.*

Table 3.1.: Remoteness distinctions in Bantu past tenses, based on Nurse (2008)

system	remoteness distinctions			
	Past$_1$ (P$_1$)	**Past$_2$** (P$_2$)	**Past$_3$** (P$_3$)	**Past$_4$** (P$_4$)
1	hodiernal	non-hodiernal		
2	hodiernal+hesternal	earlier than P$_1$		
3	recent	remote		
4	hodiernal	hesternal	earlier than P$_2$	
5	hodiernal	hesternal+a few days earlier	earlier than P$_2$	
6	immediate	hodiernal	non-hodiernal	
7	immediate (+ a few days earlier)	hodiernal+hesternal	earlier than P$_2$	
8	immediate (+ a few days earlier)	hodiernal	hesternal	earlier than P$_3$

> described as having no 'perfect' were analysed by authors whose first language
> was French (or German), especially languages in central and west African
> francophone countries. Most contemporary varieties of French and German
> have two forms, which appear to instantiate past versus perfect: French *Nous
> allâmes* versus *Nous sommes allés*, German *Wir gingen* versus *Wir sind
> gegangen*. But these pairs are no longer semantically distinct in most speech,
> differing only in register. [...] Analyses of Bantu languages produced by
> the Tervuren school were done either by francophones or others using French
> as their language of communication. The result is that Tervuren analyses
> typically have no category ANT [anterior/perfect], by contrast with analyses
> of Bantu languages done by anglophones, which usually do have this category.
> (Nurse, 2008, 95)

Nurse suggests different ways to deal with this problem in a cross-linguistic analysis, most of which relate to form. If languages have different ways of encoding tenses and aspects, e.g. tense categories are encoded as verbal prefixes while aspectual categories occur as suffixes, a suffixed term is to be classified as a perfect rather than as a recent past tense form. Due to this encoding similarity in many languages, Nurse treats the perfect as an aspectual category in Bantu.

For the different remoteness degrees, a certain degree of flexibility has been observed, which has only been studied to a limited extent. Nurse finds that a systematic survey of this issue would have been desirable, but "proved impossible because most sources do

not comment on the flexibility or rigidity of the remoteness system" (Nurse, 2008, 93).[18]

For future tenses, the remoteness divisions are less fixed and are often not distinguished by remoteness but modality, as the future, since it has not happened yet, is less certain than the past (cf. also section 3.3.1). Some futures do encode the distance of the described event from the present, and others the degree of certainty that the speaker ascribes to the event. In terms of phonological form, most future markers occur only locally, just two have a wider distribution, *laa* and *ka*, the former probably being an older form, the latter most likely being an innovation in early Bantu.

Regarding the expression of present tense, Nurse does not give any general or statistic results for the distribution and forms of present tenses across Bantu, due to its "flexible reference to a period between past and future" (Nurse, 2008, 116) and the different aspectual components often involved in the expression of present time reference. He does state, however, that "null forms" (zero marking) often encode what he calls "the vast present", used for general, frequent or generic situations. Zero marking is also used in narratives, after the time frame has been established, in subordinate clauses and in a certain focus type.

Many Bantu languages use a particular form in narratives for marking subsequent events once the time frame has been established. The most common marker employed for this function across Bantu is *-ka-* (found in at least 30% of the investigated languages). Zero marking, the prefix *-a-* and infinitives are other frequent means to encode this function. Some languages have more than one narrative marker, e.g. Gikuyu (E51), spoken in Kenya:[19]

(3.6) *tw-a-thi-ire*   *Nairobi,* *tʊ-**k**ɪ-nina*   *mɪeri*   ɪɪɾɪ   *tʊ-**g**ɪ-coka*...
      1p-P$_3$-go-PFV Nairobi 1p-NAR-finish months two 1p-NAR-return

      'We went to Nairobi, completed two months, and went (home) (P$_3$)...'

(3.7) *nɪ-n-gʊ-gwat-aga*   *(na)*   *nd-**a**-tiga*
      PreSM-1s-P$_1$-grasp-IPFV (and) 1s-NAR-leave off

      'I was taking hold and then I left off (P$_1$)'

(3.8) *ma-njʊ-r-agia*   *rɪɪtwa* *rakwa,* *n-**ga**-ma-henia,*   *n-**ga**-mera*
      3p-me-ask-EXT/FV name my   1s-NAR-them-deceive 1s-NAR-say

      'They ask me my name and I deceive them and I say...(present)...'

      (Nurse, 2008, 121)

With regard to aspectual distinctions, the most wide-spread in Bantu is the contrast between perfective and imperfective according to Nurse (2008). All languages in Nurse's

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[18]This observation led me to construct a data-collection and analysis set-up specifically to target this issue (cf. chapter 4.2.2).

[19]The glosses in these examples reproduce those in Nurse (2008).

statistical sample show this contrast. In many cases the perfective is the unmarked form while imperfective forms are marked, either specifically as habitual, progressive or persistive, or as a general imperfective; some languages have both, e.g. Basaa (A43). Of the languages with a perfective/imperfective distinction, 66% have a distinct progressive category, 56% languages a persistive[20] and 43% a habitual.

The most common markers for the progressive derive from locatives (as is the trend cross-linguistically, cf. Bybee et al. (1994)). Other progressive markings include -*a*-, -*(a)nga* and constructions deriving from 'have/be with'. The persistive is most widely encoded by -*ki*.[21] For encoding the habitual, the suffix -*ag-/-ang-/-anga* is most often applied, in many languages the same form expresses the general imperfective. Only a few languages employ this suffix as a progressive marker. Nurse relates this observation concerning the encoding of these categories to a cognitive connection between imperfective and habitual:

> What imperfective, habitual, (and iteratives [...]) share is the notion of lengthy and unbounded duration, as contrasted to the progressive, which emphasizes a short period of time around the point of reference. (Nurse, 2008, 144)

Another way of encoding imperfective meanings is the reduplication of the lexical stem or partial reduplication of the inflected stem. However, these constructions are often not dealt with systematically in grammatical descriptions (Nurse, 2008, 151) so that a cross-linguistic analysis is difficult.

Finally, 81% of the languages in the sample have perfect as a grammatical category (which Nurse classifies as an aspect, as mentioned above). Nurse states, however, that this number must be taken with caution, firstly due to the difficulties in distinguishing the perfect from the recent past discussed above, and secondly because a distinction between perfect and (near) past that existed earlier may have been neutralised, and the former perfect marker is used to express near past. Half of the 19 languages in the sample without perfect as a grammatical category are northwest Bantu languages, sometimes also referred to as Forest languages, which differ from other Bantu languages in many respects, possibly due to their contact with non-Bantu Niger-Congo languages (see section 2.1 above). Most of the languages that have grammaticalised perfects employ either a form containing the suffix -*ile* or the prefix -*a*- to express perfect meaning. Some languages have more than one perfect, where one perfect refers to an even earlier event that is related to a certain past time. Bukusu (E31), for instance, has two different

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[20]As mentioned above, the persistive expresses that a situation still holds.

[21]The same form has a situative meaning in other languages, i.e. it expresses that the situation is open-ended and could continue for a long while; it often occurs in hypothetical statements, background descriptions, and in subordinate clauses. Nurse states that it "differs from an imperfective in that no part of the situation is complete" (Nurse, 2008, 148). To me, it seems to be a subtype of imperfective category, just like progressives and habituals (cf. (Comrie, 1976, 24f)).

perfects and four past tenses. The two perfects relate a past event to the present: one more recent, and the other less so. The perfect can also be combined with the past tenses. The resulting forms translate as:

> [Bukusu (E31) perfects (present anteriors):]
> xw-áa-kul-á   We have bought recently
> xw-aa-kul-ile   We have bought (less recently)
> [past perfects (past anteriors):]
> xw-á-b-á xw-áa-kúlá   'We had bought recently before P_4
> xw-á-bá xw-aa-kul-ile   We had bought less recently before P_4
> [and so forth for the other past tenses]
>
> (Nurse, 2008, 158)

When a language has only one perfect relating a past event to the present moment (like Swahili and Zulu), Nurse refers to them as *absolute anterior* (perfect) (Nurse, 2008, 160f), following Comrie's distinction between relative and absolute tenses (Comrie, 1985, 56). Other perfects, such as past perfects and future perfects where the reference point is not the moment of speech, but another point given by the context, are termed *relative anteriors* (perfects). Bukusu has two absolute perfects. These can be combined with past tenses in compound constructions that give relative perfects.

Other languages have discrete morphemes for absolute and relative perfects respectively, one of these languages is Chichewa (Nyanja) according to Nurse (2008, 161). Nurse states that good semantic analyses of the perfects are only available for a few languages which, once more, limits the possibilities of a cross-linguistic analysis.

As for the development of perfects, Nurse mentions that not only secondary grammaticalisation from perfects into pasts and perfectives (as cross-linguistically found by Bybee et al. (1994)) take place in Bantu, but that perfects in several languages have developed present and future reference.

Looking at pure form, when compared to a larger cross-linguistic sample like the one studied by Bybee and Dahl (1989), the most obvious characteristic of Bantu languages is that tense-aspect in Bantu is predominantly expressed inflectionally by bound morphemes, while other languages use periphrastic constructions to a much larger extent. The difference is particularly salient with respect to perfects, futures and progressives. Perfects are encoded periphrastically in 88% of the languages in the universal sample, but only 18% of the Bantu languages express perfect meaning by means other than inflection. Futures are expressed periphrastically in approximately 54% of the languages around the world, but only 8% of the languages in the Bantu sample. The proportion of periphrastically marked progressives is 95% in the global sample as opposed to 51% in the Bantu languages.

3.3.3. Tense, aspect and negation

It has been observed in Bantu as well as in many other languages that tense-aspect distinctions and markers are often not the same in affirmative as in negated sentences (cf. Miestamo (2005c) for a large-scale cross-linguistic investigation and Contini-Morava (1989) for an in-depth analysis of Swahili).

A fundamental distinction with respect to negation markings is made between *standard negation* and *non-standard negation*. Payne (1985) defines standard negation as "that type of negation that can apply to the most minimal and basic sentences. Such sentences are characteristically main clauses and consist of a single predicate with as few noun phrases and adverbials as possible" (Payne, 1985, 50). Miestamo (2005b) confines standard negation to the negation used in declarative verbal main clauses. Thus, the negation of existential, copular, non-verbal, subordinate and non-declarative clauses do not belong to this domain. Miestamo's cross-linguistic findings that are summarised in the following focus on standard negation.

Miestamo (2005b,c) differentiates *symmetric* and *asymmetric* negation. In symmetric negation, the negative construction differs from the affirmative only in the presence of a negation marker, whereas in asymmetric negative constructions, there are additional differences, such as differences in finiteness of the verb form, in reality status, tense-aspect, person or number marking. Out of 297 investigated languages, 114 exhibit symmetric negation only; in all other languages some kind of assymetric negation constructions occur. In 82 out of these languages, asymmetries in negated clauses concern the grammatical categories tense, aspect, mood, person or number (Miestamo (2005a). One example that he quotes is the Nilo-Saharan language Koyraboro Senni, spoken in Mali, in which the imperfective is expressed by different markers in negative as opposed to affirmative sentences (*si* vs. *ga* (Heath, 1999, 8-9)). A similar asymmetry is found in the use of the Lezgian past imperfective forms in negative as opposed to affirmative sentences ((Haspelmath, 1993, 127, 245) quoted in Miestamo (2005b)).

In Bantu, the interaction between negation and tense and aspect seems to be twofold. Firstly, in contexts in which the perfect is used in affirmative clauses, an asymmetry occurs in corresponding negative forms, i.e. a different tense-aspect marker is used. By negative and affirmative counterparts of a sentence I mean the two alternative answers that can be given as a response to a polar question, one answer being positive and one negative, while the rest of the information given is the same (this is at least the case in symmetric negative constructions, cf. Miestamo (2003)). A similar phenomenon is observed for persistives. Secondly, in many Bantu languages, negated non-finite verb forms, which are not marked for tense or aspect, are marked by a negation marking that is different from the one used in indicative main clauses.

The different negation markings and positions for indicative main clauses as opposed to subjunctives and non-finite verb forms were introduced in chapter 2.2. To recapitulate, primary negation marking (NEG_1) is used in indicative main clauses and precedes the subject marker in the first position of the verb. As it occurs in declarative main clauses,

it qualifies as standard negation as defined by Payne (1985) and Miestamo (2005b). Secondary negation marking (NEG$_2$) is typically used with subjunctives, in relative clauses and with infinitive forms and follows the subject marker. Thus, it is a form of non-standard negation. For a systematic overview across Bantu, cf. Kamba Muzenga (1981) who lists 22 languages that seem to have lost the NEG$_2$ marking in relative clauses (Kamba Muzenga, 1981, 26).

Nurse (2008) found that 47% of the Bantu languages in his sample had two different negation markings, one for indicative main clauses and one either for subjunctives, or for subjunctives as well as relative clauses, or for main clauses as opposed to relative clauses. 18% of the languages exhibit a three-way contrast, 5% a four-way contrast and 6% a five-way contrast (Nurse, 2008, 185ff.). In the examples that Nurse gives for a three-way contrast, Mwani G403 (spoken in Mozambique) may serve to illustrate distinct negation markers for main clauses, relative clauses and subjunctives:

	Affirmative	Negative
Main clause	wá-∅-fisa 'They hide'	**a**-wa-∅-físa
Relative	wa-∅-físa 'They who hide'	**sá**-wá-∅-físa
Subjunctive	tu-∅-fulat-e 'Let's follow'	tu-**si**-∅-fúlat-e

(Nurse, 2008, 186)

Of the languages in the sample, 21% distinguish what Nurse calls "several/odd types". The following languages are categorised into this group: "those which have unusual morphology; those which have more than the canonical two or three contrasts; and those languages which have more or less the standard morphemes but use them to make unusual contrasts" (Nurse, 2008, 190). All the examples that Nurse gives for "unusual contrasts" involve tense. In Ila M63 (spoken in Zambia), *ta-* is used in non-past negated clauses and *-naku-* is used in negated clauses with the past tenses P$_1$ and P$_2$, while *-ta-* is used with subjunctives, relatives and past absolutive indicatives.[22]

Apart from these asymmetries in negation marking, a further semantic contrast has been observed to be grammaticalised in Bantu. Nurse (2008, 200) notes that the distinction between 'haven't done something' ("not at any point in the past") and 'haven't done something yet' ("not in the past but might in the future") is grammaticalised in many Bantu languages, so that different verb forms are used for each meaning, e.g. in Gikuyu (E51):

(3.9) *tǔ-ti-n-ona*   *Rose*
         1p-NEG-na-see   Rose
         'We haven't seen Rose.'

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[22]It is not mentioned what the difference is between the past tenses P$_1$ and P$_2$ and past absolutive indicatives.

(3.10) *tǔ-ti-on-ete*   *Rose*
      1p-NEG-see-ANT   Rose

      'We haven't seen Rose yet.' (Nurse, 2008, 199)

In the examples above, the negation marker *-ti-* is used in both constructions, while the markers that express negated anteriority together with the marker *-ti-* differ (*-na-* in the first example, *-ete* in the second).

Similar patterns are described by Contini-Morava (1989) for Swahili. Contini-Morava presents a semantic analysis of the different negation markings in Swahili and argues that these markings cannot be adequately described by affirmative-negative correspondences. Swahili distinguishes three negation markers: *ha-*, *-si-* and *-to-*. *-to-* is used with infinitives (marked by ku_2), *ha-* occurs either with the suffix *-i*, or the verbal markers ku_1 or *ja* and the suffix *-a*, *-si-* occurs with the suffix *-e*. While the negation marking involving *ha-* is found in main clauses, *-si-* seems to occur in subjunctives, infinitives and relative clauses.[23] The verbal markers ku_1 and *ja* and the suffix *-i* are not used in affirmative sentences.

The semantic differences between these different negative markings lie firstly in the presence or absence of time limitations and secondly in speakers' expectation on whether the negated event will happen in the future. Ku_1 is used when the negated event is expressed to be limited to a certain period of time, *ja* is used when the speaker expects the negated event to happen later on, i.e. it expresses 'not yet', and *-i* marks the lack of both time limitation and expectations of the affirmative and expresses a more general negation. In the following examples, *ha-* is the (primary) negation marker, while ku_1, *ja* and the suffix *-i* express the temporal and modal distinctions just described:

Maryam aliwafuata waliotangulia aliposikia jina lake. Wakapelekwa kwenye vyumba mbali mbali na kupewa baadhi ya vitabu vya kusomea na kuandikia. Siku hiyo hawa-KU-soma, *bali ilipofika saa sita mchana waliambiwa waende makwao.*

Maryam ha-KU-jua *wapi pa kwenda. Baba yake ndio kisha kwenda zake, na mji* hauju-I, *na hakuna wa kumwuliza, kila mmoja kashughulika na lake. Machozi yakaanza kumdondoka na huku anajifuta.*

Maryam followed the ones who had gone before when she heard her name. They were taken to different rooms and given some books for reading and writing. That day they *didn't study* (KU), but when noon arrived they were told to go on home.

Maryam *didn't know* (KU) where to go. Her father was already gone, and *she didn't know* (I) the city, and there was no one to ask, everyone was busy with their own affairs. Tears started to drip and she was wiping them off.

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[23]Contini-Morava's (1989) analysis is purely semantic and focusses on the different verbal markers that can be used with *ha-*, but this system is what can be inferred from her examples.

(Contini-Morava, 1989, 131)

Walimkuta Baniani ha-JA-fungua *mlango wake bado, na ilionyesha labda* ha-u-fungu-I *tena, maana wakati ule ulikuwa saa nne, tena na jua liko sabahani.*

They found [that] the Banyan *had not yet opened* (JA) his door, and it appeared perhaps he *would not open* (I) it at all, for by that time it was 10 o'clock, and the sun was already high.

(Contini-Morava, 1989, 138f.)

Let us now turn to the methods of data collection and analysis applied in this study, before giving an account of the results.

4. Method: Data collection and analysis

The general methodological approach taken in this investigation is empirical rather than theoretical, in other words, it is data-driven. This means that the aim of this thesis is not to test whether a certain theory is valid with regard to tense and aspect in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena, but rather to give an account and comparison of the three systems as indicated by the different types of data collected, based on earlier empirical, language-specific and cross-linguistic research on tense-aspect categories.

A research approach is never entirely theory-neutral and every investigator's approach has been shaped by particular research traditions and assumptions. This investigation is based on assumptions that have been developed in structuralism and language typology, and that have been termed Basic Linguistic Theory by Dixon (2010), a brief discussion of which I will give in the following section.

The reason for choosing this research paradigm as opposed to others is related to the amount of knowledge that has been established about the languages and their tense-aspect systems so far, and to the kind of questions that different theoretical traditions ask and aim to answer. As the only research on tense and aspect in Chichewa, Cisena and Citumbuka so far was carried out within more general grammatical descriptions of each language, certain questions remained unanswered. This thesis aims to answer some of them by looking more closely at the categories that express tense-aspect distinctions. Further descriptive work was needed first, which also requires theoretical reasoning and analysis, before further theoretical research can be undertaken.

4.1. Structuralism, language typology and basic linguistic theory

While structuralism, language typology and basic linguistic theory are not specific theories about tense and aspect, much of the research on tense and aspect has been carried out within one of these paradigms, including the present investigation.

These three research paradigms are summarised in the same section, as they have many theoretical assumptions in common, and structuralism in particular has influenced both language typology and basic linguistic theory to a considerable extent, although the focus in each approach differs slightly from the focus in the other research paradigms.

The common core of all three, originally developed in structuralism, is the quest to discover the grammatical, i.e. morphosyntactic, and phonological[1] structures that constitute the grammar of individual languages.

Analysing language according to the structuralist approach as it was formulated by Ferdinand de Saussure in the first decade of the 20th century means to look at the relations that different linguistic entities have to each other.[2] Both these entities themselves and their meaning and functions cannot be established by looking at each entity individually, but only by contrasting different entities within the same grammatical system with each other, cf., among others, Lyons (1977, 231ff.). The postulate of this methodology is also found in what Dixon calls Basic Linguistic Theory (Dixon (2010)), and it is also an essential part of the methodology that typological work is based on. Nichols (2007) describes the methodology applied in typology as follows:

> Theoretical constructs are built on a very simple machinery: a methodology of survey design common to most social and biological sciences, and classic structuralist notions such as contrast and complementary distribution. (Nichols, 2007, 231)

There is a further common trait of thinking in the structuralist and typological traditions as well as in basic linguistic theory that goes back to the work of the anthropologist and linguist Franz Boas and his studies of North American languages. His striving toward the description and analysis of a language in its own terms, without forcing it into a model of previously studied languages, influenced Edward Sapir and Leonard Bloomfied and their school of (American) Structuralism. This remains one of the major concerns of language typology[3] and basic linguistic theory (cf. Dixon (2010)).

Finally, all three approaches are characterised by an inductive research methodology. Findings are based on empirical studies of the grammatical structure of individual languages or on cross-linguistic comparisons, rather than being deduced on theoretical grounds from certain features of a single language or a small number of related languages, as in Universal Grammar approaches.

While structuralism is concerned with the analysis of individual languages, language typology is ultimately about language comparison (although typological work is based on and relies on the description and analysis of individual languages). The primary goal of language typology is to make generalisations about linguistic structures and features

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[1]Semantic and pragmatic phenomena are also taken into account, although not in all structuralist traditions. American structuralism since Bloomfield excluded semantics from structural linguistics (cf. Lyons (1977))

[2]Later, linguistic structuralism was further developed, principally within the Prague School (mostly associated with Nikolai Trubetskoy and Roman Jakobson), American Structuralism (mainly by Leonard Bloomfield and Edward Sapir), and the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen (founded among others by Louis Hjelmslev).

[3]For a discussion, cf. Haspelmath (2007, 2009). Nichols (2007) sees framework-neutral definitions at the centre of language typology, which is merely a different way of phrasing Boas' claim.

that hold across languages and was originally to answer the question of what is universal in language (cf. Greenberg (1963)). Croft (1990) defines modern linguistic typology as "the study of linguistic patterns that are found cross-linguistically, in particular, patterns that can be discovered solely by cross-linguistic comparison" (Croft, 1990, 1) and Comrie (2001) similarly states that "linguistic typology can be defined as the systematic study of cross-linguistic variation" (Comrie, 2001, 25).

According to Bickel, the goal in language typology has shifted to a different question over the past decade:

> [...] the new goal of typology is the development of theories that explain why linguistic diversity is the way it is [...] Instead of as asking "what's possible?" more and more typologists ask "what's where why?" (Bickel, 2007, 239)

To address this question, Bickel observes, the mechanisms of language change, fundamental principles of communication and cognition as well as the influences of culture on language have become major research interests of typologists in the past decades.

Furthermore, Bickel notes different fields within typological research: qualitative typology develops variables to capture similarities and differences among structures both within and across languages, quantitative typology investigates clusters and skewings in the distribution of these variables, and theoretical typology proposes theories to explain these clusters and skewings (Bickel, 2007, 248).

What dominates typological journals and conferences is, according to Nichols (2007, 235), the development of "framework-neutral grammatical theory (shared with field and descriptive work)", i.e. qualitative typology in Bickel's terms, rather than the application of this theory to cross-linguistic distributions, large samples and implicational correlations.

Whether typological work should be called *framework-neutral* (or *framework-free (grammatical theory)* as by Haspelmath (2009)) is, however, disputable. Nichols states in the same article:

> Typological theory is much like what Dixon (1997:128-135) calls 'Basic Linguistic Theory' (though I would remove the capital letters because it is not a framework but rather a framework-neutral theory): the body of knowledge about grammar built up over the years by analysis and comparison of different languages (my definition). (Nichols, 2007, 232)

In contrast, Dryer argues that

> Most descriptive grammars written within the past ten or fifteen years can be described as employing basic linguistic theory as their theoretical framework. (Dryer, 2006, 212)

I will describe at first what is understood by basic linguistic theory and then discuss the question of whether research in this vein, and the typological approach should be called *framework-neutral*.

According to Dryer (2001),[4] the assumptions and methodology of basic linguistic theory evolved in traditional grammar, which goes back to ancient Greek and Roman scholars, and have then been further developed especially by structuralism, which established modern linguistics. It was also influenced to some extent by early findings within generative grammar. As mentioned above, basic linguistic theory also embraces Boas' postulate of describing a language in its own terms.

Thus, Dryer (2006) characterises basic linguistic theory as follows:

> [Basic linguistic theory] can thus be roughly described as traditional grammar, minus its bad features (such as a tendency to describe all languages in terms of concepts motivated for European languages), plus necessary concepts absent from traditional grammar. It has supplemented traditional grammar with a variety of ideas from structuralism, generative grammar (especially pre-1975 generative grammar and relational grammar), and typology. (Dryer, 2006, 211)

Haspelmath (2009) identifies a contradiction in basic linguistic theory as it was formulated by Dixon (1997) and argues for a framework-free grammatical theory. He notes that the contradiction lies in the postulate to describe a language in its own terms, while at the same time, according to basic linguistic theory and Dixon (1997), grammar-writers are expected to know certain concepts before they can describe a language.

I would argue that the tension between these two postulates or prerequisites of linguistic research cannot be avoided. Like Dryer (2006), I would argue that atheoretical descriptive work is not possible and that basic linguistic theory itself can be called a framework (which was not established, but merely described by Dixon (1997, 2010)). Although it is not highly formalised as most other frameworks in linguistics, it does contain theoretical assumptions and a methodology. Furthermore, I think that also Haspelmath's argumentation is contradictory in that it calls a set of assumptions and principles a grammatical theory (Haspelmath argues for a "framework-free grammatical theory"), while at the same time calling it "framework-free". Haspelmath (2009) defines a *framework* as "a sophisticated and complex metalanguage for linguistic description that is intended to work for any language" (Haspelmath, 2009, 343) which is sometimes also referred to as a theory, e.g. Government & Binding Theory. Haspelmath gives three further definitions for what *theory* can refer to, confining his use of the term in *framework-free grammatical theory* to "a loose sense, referring to theoretical (i.e. non-applied) scientific work, or 'theorizing'" (Haspelmath, 2009, 344). This definition demarcates a theory primarily from what it is not instead of giving a clear, positive definition. The other two senses given define a theory as an "abstract model or description

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[4]http://linguistics.buffalo.edu/people/faculty/dryer/dryer/blt

of a complex empirical domain", or as a "set of coherent hypotheses or claims about a particular phenomenon" (ibid.).

This means that what Haspelmath refers to by *framework-free grammatical theory* is non-applied, theoretical scientific work without a sophisticated and complex metalanguage that is intended to work for any language. But if the theory is framework-free, how does it work and how is the methodology that is used to build the theory defined? If somebody with no knowledge of linguistics were to go into the field in order to study a hitherto undescribed language, the result, not surprisingly, would not be a grammatical description that fulfills the criteria of structuralist and qualitative typological work mentioned above. Thus, a framework and methodological principles are needed, and Haspelmath states in the same article that universally applicable concepts, such as *ergative case*, defined as the overt case of the transitive agent as opposed to the case of the intransitive single argument, are indeed used in typological framework-free research. The problem lies in the definition of what a framework is. Haspelmath uses the term framework in a very specific sense, but the principles of typological work specified above do provide a set of concepts that qualify as a framework which defines principles for the analysis of languages.

It seems that by claiming that typological theory is framework-neutral or framework-free, a delimitation from more formalised and deductive frameworks is sought, while in my opinion, the same could be achieved by stating the principles of the discipline in positive terms.

Finally, I will discuss the tension between two postulates that was mentioned above: One is the striving to describe a language in its own terms, regardless of philological pre-conceptions. The other is the quest for cross-linguistic generalisations and the establishment of grammatical terms and concepts that are valid across languages, e.g. the definition of grammatical relations like subject and object, grammatical categories like tense and aspect, etc. This does not mean that every language is expected to or will have such categories and that there will be no cross-linguistic differences in how these categories and concepts are instantiated in a particular language, but developing and applying terms and concepts that are cross-linguistically valid, at least at their core, makes cross-linguistic comparison possible – what can be compared if everything is taken to be different? and provides a terminology that can be applied to any language, which eventually results in a growing knowledge base on what languages around the world look like. Thus, while linguistic studies undertaken with a basic linguistic theory approach do not seek to fit the language under investigation into a given theory, they do try to describe the language with tools and methods that have been shaped by previous analyses of other languages and that will be further developed in case the language under study shows that further adaption is required. In my opinion, the tension between striving to describe each language in its own terms and the quest for cross-linguistic generalisations is not completely dissolvable, as languages are both diverse and similar when compared to each other, and different investigations have different focusses. It is, however, important that overall similarities as well as differences are taken into account and analysed

carefully. This is one of the goals in this thesis for the tense-aspect systems in the three languages under investigation.

Thus, the decisions that I had to make were the following: What kind of data do I need to collect and how? And how will I go about analysing the data?

4.2. Data collection

In order to get both a comprehensive and a detailed picture of the tense-aspect forms that are used in the three languages, I decided to combine data from a larger corpus of Bible translations and data from questionnaires in which the contexts of the forms that were to be elicited were controlled based on findings from earlier cross-linguistic research (cf. Dahl (1985) and the discussion in chapter 3.3). I further included more natural data and recorded narratives, re-tellings of 'The Pear Stories' film (Chafe (1980)), and arranged conversations in which two people were engaged in a conversation based on questions that I had prepared. Finally, I conducted direct elicitation sessions in which I asked the language consultants to translate prepared questions and to give possible answers to them. In these sessions, I also contrasted certain forms with each other and asked the consultants whether there were contexts in which one form was preferred over the other.

Thus, most of the data collected was parallel in the three languages and comparable in a straightforward way. The combination of different data collecting techniques was intended to yield a wider range of verb forms, as well as to counterbalance the shortcomings of each individual method: translations bear the risk of non-natural language use, and recording natural language, due to time limitations, will give rather limited data and only a few instances of each tense-aspect category, if any.

I collected the data during four field work visits in Malawi (adding up to approximately four months in total) in collaboration with native speakers of each language. Table 4.2 gives an overview of the numbers and of the origins of speakers that participated for each language. The maps in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the origins of the Chichewa and Citumbuka speakers participating in this study, as they are rather widespread.

4.2.1. The questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by Dahl (1985) for a cross-linguistic study of tense and aspect. It comprises 197 English sentences containing 250 verbs, the target verb given as the infinitival form in upper-case letters. Each of these sentences is given in a specific context. The language consultants were asked to translate each sentence into their native language in written form. In the first data collection, I omitted 77 of the 197 sentences due to time limitations.[5] Due to practical reasons and time limitations, I divided the questionnaire into two parts so that each speaker translated around 60 sentences. As a third part of the questionnaire, I included the progressive questionnaire

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[5]The omitted sentences were 5-17, 84-86, 72, 109-124, 126, 131-144, 146-147, 156, 171-197.

Table 4.1.: Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena speakers involved in the study

Chichewa	speaker	origin	district	region
	Chi	Mponela	Dowa	mid Central
	Chim	Lilongwe town	Lilongwe	southern Central
	Da	Mkanda	Mchinji	western Central
	Mag	Mponela	Dowa	mid central
	Kam	Blantyre	Blantyre	mid Southern
	Kwe	Lilongwe rural, Mlika	Lilongwe	southern Central
	Li	Chinguwo village	Dowa	mid Central
	Mme	Zomba town	Zomba	mid Southern
	Mte	Lilongwe rural, Bunda Area	Lilongwe	southern Central
	Mza	Lilongwe, Area 25	Lilongwe	southern Central
	Ntha	Lilongwe town	Lilongwe	southern Central
	Phi	Lilongwe rural, Kasiya	Lilongwe	southern Central
	Pha	Blantyre town	Blantyre	mid Southern
Citumbuka	Chi	Mzuzu	Mzimba	northern (south)
	Ka	Wenya area, Chitipa	Chitipa	northern (north)
	Nu	Mzimba	Mzimba	northern (south)
	Mfu	Chitipa	Chitipa	northern (central)
	Si	Mzuzu town	Mzimba	northern (central)
Cisena	Dak	Nsanje	Nsanje	southern (south)
	Go	Chiphwembwe village	Nsanje	southern (south)
	Ma	Mafunga, Mozambique (until age 27) and Nsanje (last 20 years)	Mutalala, Mozambique	Tete province

developed in the EUROTYP-project (Dahl (2000)), as it allowed for a more detailed comparison of progressive forms in different contexts and of verbs with different lexical aspects. The data from this part was later only included for Chichewa, as I decided to disregard the data collected from speakers who no longer lived in an area where their mother tongue is spoken. Thus, I included the data from ten speakers of Chichewa and two speakers of Citumbuka who translated the different parts of the questionnaire in the first round of data collection. Another reason for the differences in speaker numbers was practical. I was involved in a teacher trainer's programme in Malawi and handed the questionnaires out to those participants of the programme who were willing to fill them out, the numbers reflect the composition of the group. In a second round of data collection, the complete questionnaire was given to one speaker of each language. For Cisena, two speakers filled out the questionnaire in collaboration.
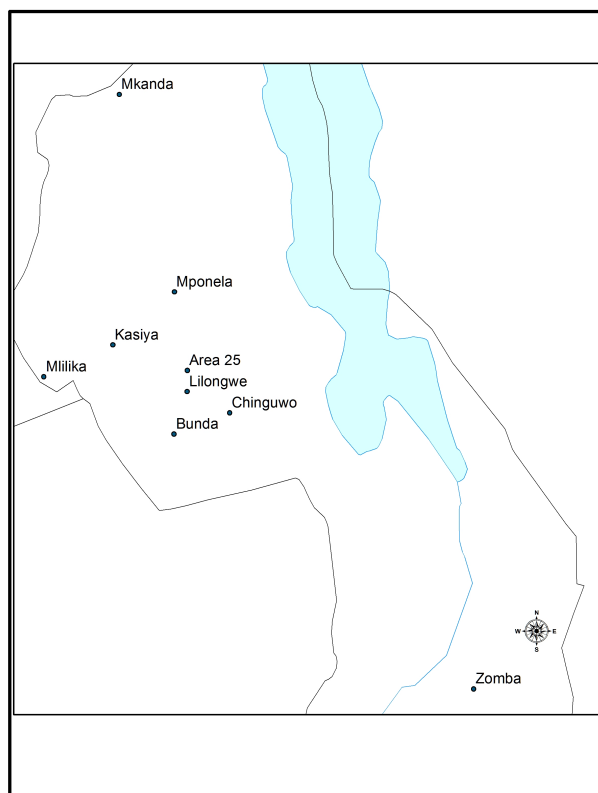
Figure 4.1.: The origin of the Chichewa informants participating in this investigation

It were the same speakers that I had conducted the arranged conversations with who filled in the complete version of the 1985-questionnaire. The arranged conversations will be described in the following section.

In the result chapters for each language, the examples that are taken from the questionnaire are marked by "q" and a number referring to the order of occurrence in the

questionnaire.
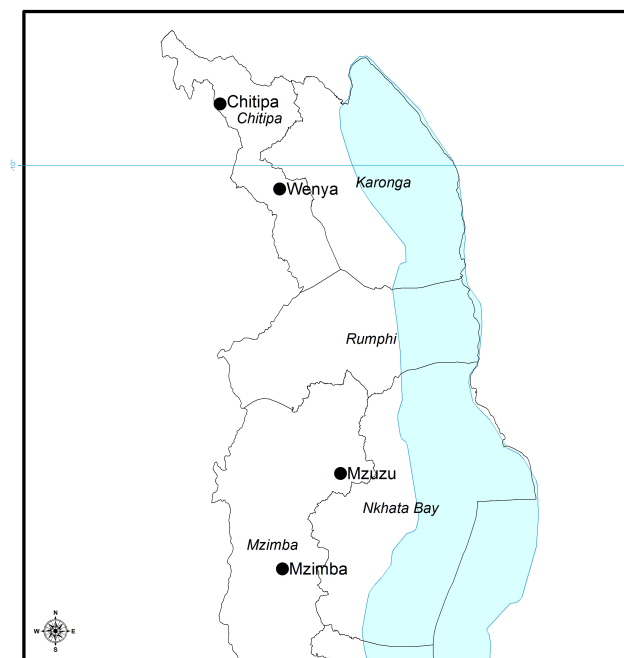
Figure 4.2.: The origin of the Citumbuka informants participating in this investigation

4.2.2. Recordings of arranged conversations

Another elicitation method consisted of arranged conversations. I prepared questions concerning things that the conversation partner had done earlier the same day and about recurring events in the past, such as the church service that had been held the previous Sunday and the previous two weeks, a person that he or she had known for a long time, their first meeting, a later meeting and the most recent one, a similar question about his or her favorite food and about his or her plans for the rest of the day. The questions that were asked during these conversations are listed in Appendix A. The reason for this set-up was the observation, which had not yet been studied more systematically, that the use of remoteness distinctions does not always follow absolute time measurements (like earlier the same day, the day before, and earlier than that), but that in certain contexts, especially in a sequence of recurring events, only the position in the sequence seems to matter (Nurse (2003, 2008)), thus, the most recent event in a chain of recurring events

is marked with the recent past, no matter whether the event took place the day before or several years ago. Dahl (1984) refers to Appleby (1961) as quoted in Johnson (1981) observing that in Bantu grammars, reference is often made to "current" as opposed to "preceding units of time" where one unit may refer to "days, months, years or even wars" (Dahl, 1984, 114). For each language, one recording was made according to the set-up described above. In each conversation, two speakers were involved: one asked the prepared questions, the other answered. This part of the conversation was later analysed.

For Chichewa, the speaker responding to the questions grew up and still lives in Lilongwe (Bunda area), and he speaks Chichewa at home. At work as a teacher, he speaks Chichewa as well as English. The speaker of Citumbuka grew up and still lives in Mzuzu, Mzimba district. She speaks Citumbuka at home and with her friends but also knows Chichewa. The Cisena speaker lives in Nsanje and grew up in Chiphwembwe village which is also located in Nsanje district. She speaks Cisena at home and with her friends but also knows Chichewa, which she uses along with English working as a teacher.

In the result chapters, the examples that are taken from the arranged conversations are marked by a number ≥ 300.

4.2.3. Recordings of narratives

The recorded narratives consist of re-tellings of the Pear Story film (Chafe (1980)), a six-minute film about a farmer and a boy who steals a basket of pears. One language consultant per language watched the film and then told the story to a friend or colleague who is a native speaker of the same language.

The Chichewa speaker grew up and still lives in Lilongwe, speaks Chichewa at home, and uses Chichewa as well as English at work as a secretary. The Citumbuka speaker grew up in Mzimba and now lives in Mzuzu, both in Mzimba district. She speaks Citumbuka with her friends and in the market, Chichewa with her child and husband, and English at school. The Cisena speaker was born in Mozambique in a Cisena-speaking area and has lived in Nsanje district, Gilbert village, for the last 20 years and speaks Cisena daily. In each case, the transcriptions and translations of the material were carried out with the help of another native speaker who was fluent in both the native language and in English.

In the result chapters, the examples that are taken from the narrative are marked by a number ≥ 400.

4.2.4. Oral, direct elicitation sessions

The oral, direct elicitation sessions were conducted with the speakers who also translated the recordings. All of them are native speakers of the respective language and still use it in their daily lives. They are also fluent speakers of English. In these sessions I asked the

speakers how they would ask another person about what he or she did the day before, last week, last year, and what he or she was going to do tomorrow, next week, and next year. Subsequently, they gave possible answers to these questions. Furthermore, I tested the combinability of tense-aspect markers with verbs of different lexical aspects. While going over the recordings with the speakers, I contrasted different forms and uses asking the speakers if and why a certain form was preferable in a certain context. The transcriptions and translations were later checked with another speaker for each language.

4.2.5. Parallel texts: Bible translations

Finally, I constructed a digital corpus of parallel texts, using the translations of the New Testament in Chichewa, Citumbuka, Cisena and English. Aligning the Malawian texts to the English translation by verse number, made an analysis of tense and aspect forms in a wide variety of contexts possible. Each text consists of around 150,000 words.

The new Chichewa translation that I used was published in 1998 (the translation process started in the 1970s). Translation experts at the Malawian Bible Society and the language consultant from Lilongwe who I worked with confirmed that this translation is based on the variety of Chichewa that is spoken in and around Malawi's capital Lilongwe. The Cisena translation was finished in 2005 by the Malawian Bible Society, a translation in Mozambican Cisena was published in Mozambique. In my data, only the Malawian translation is included, an earlier study by Funnell (2009) compared the Malawian and a Mozambican translation. Chapter 7 will show considerable differences between these two texts and between these two varieties of Cisena. The new translation of the New Testament in Citumbuka was published in 2002. For all translations, a team of translators, all native speakers of the language in question, were engaged in the translation process pursuing a meaning-based rather than a literal translation of the New Testament from English into Chichewa, Cisena and Citumbuka.

In order to test whether and how these translations deviate from present day language use, I asked native speakers to translate certain sentences from the English version. I also let them evaluate for a number of sentences whether they coincided with their perception of a proper, natural sentence in the given language and whether there were alternative, preferable ways to express the given contents.

For Cisena, for instance, when I asked one of the language consultants in Nsanje how she would describe the language used in the Cisena Bible, she said: "In the Bible, the real Cisena is used, while when we speak we just mix (Yao, Chewa, Tonga, Lomwe). They have taken their time to translate." When I presented four passages from the Malawian translation to her and asked whether she would express the contents differently, she only commented once that a noun was not wrong, but archaic.

For Citumbuka, the speaker explained the following:

Q: How would you describe the language that is used in the Citumbuka

Bible?

A: It is deeper Citumbuka than the Citumbuka that we use when speaking –
like in different English Bible translations. In the first Citumbuka translation,
which we had before this new translation, I couldn't understand what they
were saying, only when I compared it with the English Bible. This one is
better off. Here, children would only ask for those single words that I have
indicated where they would ask: What does this mean?

Also for the new Chichewa translation, the speaker pointed out that this version was
considerably revised compared with the older version in order for it to reflect the way
how people speak. He had no objections regarding the grammar, only certain words,
he pointed out, were difficult to understand, and would be better if replaced by other
expressions.

In addition to searching the entire New Testament, I performed searches in a reduced
corpus consisting of 307 direct speech sentences referring to events in the past. This
corpus was constructed by Östen Dahl, cf. Dahl (forthcoming) for an analysis of English, German, French, Spanish, Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and a number of
Chinantecan varieties. The reduced corpus has the advantages that a restricted number
of sentences (308) can be analysed more thoroughly, for example with regard to the
deictic time reference, the period in time that a certain clause refers to. Furthermore,
the extracted sentences are more likely to reflect speech, rather than a more narrative
register.

For Chichewa I also used an earlier translation that was published in 1922 and revised
in 1966. The translation was arranged by British missionaries, but Chichewa speakers
were part of the translation team. Reverend William H. Murray and the National
Bible Society of Scotland were responsible, and several Malawians from different regions
(e.g. Blantyre, Mvera (Dowa district) and Mlanda (Dedza district)) participated in the
translation team. Alexander Hetherwick, the author of one of the oldest descriptions of
Chichewa/Nyanja, belonged to the lead team of translators.[6] I was advised by language
experts in Malawi not to rely on this translation for research on Chichewa, as it does not
reflect the language as it is spoken. Being careful is important when using translations for
language investigations. At the same time, it needs to be kept in mind that old (written)
texts hardly ever reflect the language used in present-day communication. These texts
rather reflect a certain (literal) register of the language, possibly a certain dialect at a
certain point in time that is worth taking into account. If the investigator keeps this
in mind, a written text from older periods can still yield valuable information about
the language, in particular in combination with other sources. Thus, I included a small
corpus of this translation in my analysis in addition to the corpus of the more recent

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[6]`http://mlozivoyage.blogspot.com/2010_08_01_archive.html`, last checked on 16 February 2011.
(The same article was earlier published on the Blantyre Times newspaper website `/www.bnltimes.com`.)

translation, the same selection of 307 sentences occurring in direct speech and referring to past time events that was also selected from the other Biblical texts. Whenever I refer to this corpus in the result chapters, the sentences are labeled as originating from the earlier translation.

The way I analysed the data from these different sources and genres is explained in the following section.

4.3. Data analysis

For the recordings of the narratives and the arranged conversations, the language consultants first gave translations into English for each word in a sentence and then a translation for the sentence as a whole. On this basis and with the help of further elicitation questions and discussions about the same form in different contexts, I glossed each text grammatically. A first analysis for each tense and aspect morpheme was established. I analysed the use and meaning of each form by means of its translation, by comparing it to the context in which other verb forms containing the same morpheme occur and by contrasting it with sentences containing different tense and aspect morphemes and their translations.

The questionnaires were analysed in a similar way: verb forms containing the same morphemes in the tense and aspect position were grouped together, and their English translations as well as the sentential contexts were used for the semantic analysis.

In a second step, the questionnaire, arranged conversation, narrative and direct elicitation data was transferred and systemised in a database in which each verb form made up a separate entry. Each entry was specified for the tense-aspect morpheme used and the temporal setting that the clause referred to (e.g. *yesterday, every morning, unspecified past*, etc.). This classification was based on context information, e.g. in some cases temporal adverbials in the same sentence or in the context refer to the topic time (i.e. the time about which something is asserted, cf. (Klein, 2009b, 46)); in others, the order in which events are referred to or the event type give cues about their temporal interpretation. Apart from that, each negated sentence form received a tag in order to compare these constructions systematically with affirmative clauses.

As for the parallel texts, each sentence of the Bible translations in the given languages was aligned to the matching sentence in the English version according to its verse number. Morphological information, such as the paradigms of prefixes for subject marking and the final vowel indicating mood, e.g. either *-a* or *-e* for indicative or subjunctive in Chichewa, gave the necessary cues for automatic verb identification.

The verb forms in the database were grouped according to their tense and/or aspect morphemes. Verbs containing the same morpheme in the tense and aspect slot were classified into the same group. Subsequently, each group was studied separately and compared to verbs containing the same tense-aspect morpheme in the database in order to find a common semantic pattern fitting to the definitions of individual tense-aspect

categories given in section 3.3.1: Do the verb forms marked with that specific morpheme in general express perfectivity, future etc.?

Thus, for each language the relevant categories were identified and their meaning analysed by means of context information and the English translation. I compared my findings with those found in earlier descriptions. Later on, the categories were compared across the three languages, e.g. commonalities and differences in the expression or use of recent and remote pasts in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena.

Finally, quantitative comparisons concerning the distributional frequencies of the identified categories across Bantu give a broader picture of the tense and aspect systems investigated.

4.3.1. Tone

At least for some varieties of Chichewa, tone plays an essential role in the tense-aspect system.

Earlier findings

As mentioned in section 2.2, a characteristic and salient feature of Bantu languages is tone. According to Mtenje's (1987) analysis, tone also plays a distinctive role in tense-aspect marking in Chichewa, at least in the variety he describes. In the following, I will summarise what has been said about tone in Chichewa, Cisena and Citumbuka in earlier descriptions.

Watkins (1937) observes for Chichewa (Watkins' informant came from Kasungu in central Malawi):

> Tone is phonemically essential to the language; i.e. it is inherent in the morphological elements and must always be recognized as of grammatical and syntactical importance. There are also two basic tonal distinctions in Chichewa: a high register (indicated by the accute accent) and a low register, which is unmarked. (Watkins, 1937, 16)

Watkins marks tone consistently; most of the other earlier descriptions of Chichewa do not mark tone. According to Watkins' description, no distinctions in the tense-aspect system are expressed by tone alone.

Mtenje's (1987) account is different. He describes the variety of Chichewa spoken in Ntcheu (south-western Central region). Two grammatical distinctions, one between simple and recent past and one between past and present habitual, are marked by tone alone in this system, cf.:

ndi-**ná**-fótokoz-a	(simple past)	'I explained'
ndi-**na**-fótókoz-a	(recent past)	'I explained recently'
ndí-**nâ:**-fotokóz-a	(remote past)	'I explained some time ago'
ndí-**ma**-fotokóz-a	(present habitual)	'I always explain'
ndi-**ma**-fótókoz-a	(past habitual)	'I used to explain'

(Mtenje, 1987, 172)

The accute accents mark high tone, the circumflex a falling tone, low tones are not marked (the boldface is mine). In addition to level high (H) and low (L) tones, Mtenje notes that also "gliding or contour" tones are found in Chichewa, but only as combinations of the level tones. He uses ˘ to represent a rising (LH) tone and ˆ for a falling (HL) tone. The colon in *ndí-**nâ:**-fotokóz-a* marks a long vowel. Note that although the two *-ma-* morphemes do not differ in tone themselves in the example given above, they impact differently on the tones of surrounding syllables.

Hyman and Mtenje (1999) observe differences in tone between the varieties of Chichewa spoken in Ntcheu and Nkhotakota (north-eastern Central Region of Malawi, Ntcheu lies south-western of this region). The tense-aspect morphemes referred to above are, however, not mentioned in their article.

In other words, it seems that the impact of tone on tense-aspect distinctions in Chichewa depends on the regional variety. I will come back to further observations regarding regional tone differences in chapter 5.2.2.

For Citumbuka, Vail (1973) states that

> Except in ideophonic subsystems, tone is not phonemically significant. (Vail, 1973, 2)

Consequently, he does not include markings for tone in his transcriptions and analysis, and it does not play a role in his description of the tense-aspect system.

Torrend (1900) observes a *tonic accent* in Cisena, in general occurring on the penultimate syllable of words. Tonic accents are usually defined as stress realised by an increase in pitch, i.e. these accents are not 'tones', but pitch accents. Torrend does not give a definition but states that he only represents the tonic accents in his grammatical description when they deviate from the general pattern on penultimate syllables. No differences in meaning that are expressed by means of tone are described.

Consequences for my analysis

Tone is not represented orthographically in Chichewa, which meant that I was not able to rely on written texts in order to tackle these distinctions.

In the first phase of my work, I tried to take tone differences in Chichewa into account, due to the tone distinctions reported in the literature. Eventually, I decided to focus on varieties of Chichewa that do not make tense-aspect distinctions merely by means

of tone, but by different segmental morphemes. In some varieties, different past tenses seem to be distinguished by segmentally different morphemes (i.e. *-da-* and *-na-*); in others, the distinction seems to be made by tone (i.e. *ná* and *na*). Ten out of twelve speakers in this investigation use both *-na-* and *-da-* forms, two use only *-na-*, possibly differentiated by different tones. Also the distinction between present habitual *-ma₁-* and past imperfective *-ma₂-*, for those varieties that use *-ma₂-*, seems to be made by tone.

I asked the speakers who had filled in the questionnaire to supplementarily mark their answers for tones.[7] However, these markings were far from consistent. During discussions with the speakers, it also turned out that dialectal differences seemed to play a role for tone patterns. Facing time limitations of this project, I decided to focus on those varieties that express tense-aspect distinctions only by means of segmental morphemes. As an important part of my data consisted of written texts, this decision also had the advantage that I could use this kind of data with less reservation. For the distinction between present habitual *-ma₁-* and past imperfective *-ma₂-*, I decided to indicate by the numeric labels that a tone distinction seems to be found for these two markers, the actual realisation of tone patterns seem to vary here, too, among varieties and different verb forms. I will come back to this problem in section .

4.4. Data validity

I tried to minimize the risk of getting misleading results by combining different kinds of data, originating from different speakers, both in written and spoken form. By using a broad range of texts and translations the risk of looking at too narrow a selection of data was delimited. All speakers involved are native speakers of the language in question, i.e. it was the first or, if not the only one, one of the first languages they had learned, and it still serves as a major means of communication in their daily life. The accuracy of translations was cross-checked by different speakers.

A thorough reflection on the choice of methods and data as well as on the implicit and explicit assumptions taken in the course of an investigation is essential and constitutes a continuous challenge and source of new insights. For my own evaluation of the methods applied, compare the discussion in chapter 9.

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[7]This was done after some practice for the marking of tones during the teacher trainers' programme.

5. The tense-aspect systems in each language: Chichewa

This and the following two chapters present accounts of the tense-aspect systems in each of the three languages under investigation. The accounts will demonstrate the existence of significant varation within the languages, both between diachronic stages and between synchronic varieties. For Chichewa, being the largest of the three languages under study, in terms of the number of speakers (both first and second language speakers) and geographical extension, dialectal variation was to be expected. On the other hand, as Chichewa is used to a certain extent in writing and school teaching, standardization can be expected to set limits to variation. Having said this, I observed both variation, particularly regarding the different past markers and certain future markers, and uniformity, with respect to present markers.

The tense-aspect categories that I found in Chichewa are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.: Tense-aspect categories in Chichewa found in this investigation

past	present	future
perfect and hod. past: *-a-* recent: *-na-* remote: (*-da-*)[a] (discontinuous past: *-daa-*)[b] imperfective: *-ma$_2$-/-nka-*	present (progressive): *-ku-* extended present: $\emptyset$-marking habitual *-ma$_1$-*[c]	(hodiernal: *-zi-*) near : $\emptyset$-marking distant: *-dza-* habitual: *-zika-/-zidza-*
repetitive ('to do X again'): *-nso* persistive ('to still do X'): *-be*		

[a]The use of the markers given in brackets is subject to dialectal variation, see below.

[b]This marker was found in the Bible text only, but not in any of the other data sources, cf. 5.3.2. In the literature, it is only mentioned by Watkins (1937).

[c]*-ma$_1$-* and *-ma$_2$-* are distinguished by different tonal patterns, cf. section 4.3.1 and 5.2.2.

Note that the labels for the respective forms do not reflect their whole meaning and all their possible uses, I just use them to refer to the categories more conveniently and in a meaningful way. Both tense and aspect distinctions are found in Chichewa: in the past, imperfective forms are distinguished from the unmarked non-imperfective forms, for the present and the future, no such distinction is found, but there is a distinction between present and future habituals and the present and future tenses (in earlier stages

of the language, also a present progressive was found, but we will see that this form has developed into a present tense). I present the individual categories separately for present time, past time and future time reference as these are the temporal domains that are expressed in all the languages and as the categories used in these three domains appear to be relatively separate from each other, but it needs to be kept in mind and will be shown that the individual categories express both temporal and aspectual meaning in Chichewa as well as in Citumbuka and Cisena.

In the following, I will summarise earlier descriptions of Chichewa, before I turn to my own results and relate them to earlier findings.

Particularly for Chichewa, having the largest number of available descriptions of the three languages, these give a rather heterogenous and unclear picture.

The first description of Chichewa (then called (Chi)Nyanja) was written in 1880 by Alexander Riddel who had contact with speakers between 1875 and 1879, while he was working at the Livingstonia Mission in northern Malawi. His description, comprising roughly 40 pages, was relatively short.

Eleven years later, a further missionary of Livingstonia, George Henry, published his grammar of Chinyanja (Henry (1891)), and in 1907, Alexander Hetherwick, yet another missionary, published his *Practical manual of the Nyanja language*.[1] As opposed to the two missionaries before him who worked in northern Malawi (where Citumbuka is mostly spoken, and neither Henry nor Riddel mention where their informants came from), Hetherwick based his description on the variety of Chinyanja which was spoken on the Shire Highlands around Blantyre and the districts south-west of Lake Nyasa (now Lake Malawi), the area which is today southern Malawi.

In the 1930s, Mark H. Watkins wrote a more detailed desciption of Chinyanja (Watkins 1937), based on his field work with a speaker from Kasungu in central Malawi, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, who was to become the first president of Malawi (cf. Kishindo (1990)).

Three later publications explicitly have the practical goal of language teaching, Sanderson and Bithrey (1949), Thomson (1955), Price (1956) and Stevick (1965), who all include exercises for the language learner.

Sanderson and Bithrey (1949) state that their goal was to provide settlers in Nyasaland, as the territory which is today Malawi was called at that time, with foundational language knowledge rather than to write a complete grammar of the language and they mention that they rely heavily on Hetherwick's work. Furthermore, they note the existence of dialectal differences within the language and state that the variety that they describe is spoken in the southern half of Nyasaland (p.5). Thomson and Price do not specify which regional variety of the language they focus on. Like Sanderson and Bithrey, Price (1956) observes that there are dialectal differences within the Chinyanja-speaking territory, unfortunately without specifying the area his data comes from and without giving examples for dialectal differences.

In the 1960s, the Language Center in Malawi published a Chichewa intensive course

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[1]I consulted the fifth edition, published in 1920.

(LanguageCenter (1969)).

Mtenje (1987) gives an analysis of Chichewa tone rules. In this context, he also looks at the various tense-aspect markers. His account refers to the variety of Chichewa spoken in Ntcheu, in the Central Region of Malawi. A partial description was later undertaken by Botne and Kulemeka (1995). A fairly recent description of the language was written by Bentley and Kulemeka (2001). Neither of these two descriptions mention which variety of the language they describe.

In his cross-Bantu survey, Nurse (2008)[2] gives an analysis based on Botne and Kulemeka (1995), Price (1966) and Stevick (1965) which, he states, are not complete descriptions, but together give a rather complete picture though with the risk that different dialects might be conflated with each other.

In the following, after a short note on differences in tense-aspect marking in non-verbal as opposed to verbal predication, earlier descriptions of the different markers will be summarised, before I compare these descriptions with my own findings.

5.1. Verbal vs. non-verbal predication

Before turning to the description of individual tense-aspect-categories, I would like to point out that there are differences in tense-aspect marking in copula as opposed to verbal clauses. For copula constructions in Chichewa, a restricted set of tense-aspect markings is used when compared to full verb constructions.

As seen in 2.3.2, *-li* 'be' is the copula verb used for most non-verbal predication constructions in Chichewa, non-finite *ndi* 'be' is used for nominal predication (not locational predication) in sentences referring to the present, and *-khala*, meaning 'be, become, stay', is used for copula clauses referring to the future and with present habituals. While *ndi* is always unmarked for tense-aspect and person, *-li* and *-khala* are marked for person as well as tense and aspect, but with the following restriction: the copula verbs do not occur with imperfective markings, i.e. those markings that are or were imperfective markings such the present (progressive) *-ku-* and the past habitual/past imperfective markings *-ma$_2$-* and *-nka-* are not found in copula clauses. Thus, for copula clauses, there is no distinction between perfective and imperfective. For copula clauses referring to the present, zero marking is used, for referring to the past, *-na-* or *da-* is used and for the future, *dza-* is used, cf. the following examples:

- non-verbal predication referring to the present:

    (5.1) context: Usually the water is warm, but this summer...

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[2]The pages in Nurse' online appendices are not numbered, the order of presentation follows Guthrie's labelling system. When I quote examples, the reader is referred to Nurse' paragraphs on Cinyanja (N30), Chitumbuka (N21) and Cisena (N44), cf.: `http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~nurse/pdf/tabantu-app1.pdf`, last checked 3rd May 2012.

> **Ndi** *o-zizira.*
> COP   ATTR-be.cold
>
> 'It is cold.' (speakers Mza and Pha q34)

(5.2) *Ma-dengu   anga aja   a-**li**   kuti?*
       NCL.PL-basket my   DEM   3.SBJ-COP where

'Where are my baskets?' (Chim 457)

- non-verbal predication referring to the past:

(5.3) *Nyumba-yi   i-na-**li**   yayikulu.*
       house-DEM   NCL.SBJ-RECPST-COP   big

'The house was big.' (Pha q3)

(5.4) *Nyumba yanga i-da-**li**   yayikulu.*
       house   my   NCL.SBJ-RECPST-COP   big

'My house was big.' (Mte q3)

- non-verbal predication referring to the future:

(5.5) context: It's no use trying to swim in the lake tomorrow. [The water..]

       *A-dza-**khal**-a   o-zizir-a.*
       3.SBJ-FUT-become-FV   ATTR-be.cold-FV

'It will be cold.' (Pha q36)

The above tense-aspect markings occur with verbal predication, too, but also imperfective markings are found.

Note that the copula constructions occur with different types of predicatives: In example 5.1, the predicative is a form derived from a verb, *-zizira* 'be cold', marked by the attributive prefix *o-*. Depending on the noun class of the subject, the prefix has the form *o-*, *wo*, *lo-*, *cho-*, *yo-*, *zo-*, *to-*, *po-*, *ko-* or *mo-*. In sentence 5.3, the predicative is not derived from a verb. The prefix *yayi-* is composed of the associative prefix *ya-* and the prefix *yi-* which agree with the noun class (noun class 9) of *nyumba* 'house'. Only few adjectives receive this type of marking, most adjectives are marked by the associative prefix (consisting of the agreement marker that agrees with the noun class and the vowel *-a-*, e.g. *ya-*) alone.

Verbs like *-zizira*, and other state verbs of this kind, can also be used for verbal predication as full verbs which are marked for tense-aspect and person, cf. the following example:

(5.6) context: It's no use trying to swim in the lake tomorrow. [The water..]

       A-dza-zizir-a.
       3.SBJ-FUT-be.cold-FV

'It will be cold.' (Mte q36)

(5.7) context: Usually the water is warm, but this summer..

> *A-zizir-a.*
> 3.SBJ.PRF-be.cold-FV
> 'It is cold.' (Mte q34)

Thus, there are two possibilities of predicate formation with verbs like *-zizira*: Either their attributive form, marked by *o-*, is used together with the copula, or the full finite verb form is used, marked for tense-aspect and person. In both cases, the situation described is a state, but the restrictions in tense-aspect marking apply only to copula constructions. Thus, as a full verb, *-zizira* can take the markings *-ku-*, *-ma$_1$-* and *-ma$_2$-* /-nka-*. In my data, the full verb forms of *-zizira* are mainly found with *-na-* or *-da-* when they refer to the past (*Adazizira.* '[The water] It was cold.'), but past imperfective *-nka* also occurs, cf.:

(5.8) | *Nthawi* | *yoyamba* | *yomwe* | *ndi-na-samb-a* | *m'-madzi-mu* |
| time | first | even | 1SG.SBJ-PST-swim-FV | NCL.in-water-DEM |

> *a-nka-zizir-a.*
> NCL.SBJ-PSTIPFV-be.cold-FV
>
> 'The first time I swam in this water many years ago, it was cold.' (Da q33)

When referring to the present, the perfect marking *-a-* is used. We will see in section 5.3.2 that *-a-* is used for present reference with certain verbs. In my data, present progressive marking *-ku-* does not occur with the verb *-zizira*, but according to one speaker from Blantyre, it can be used in this form meaning 'the water is getting cold'.

In the following, each of the mentioned markings, will be described in more detail.

5.2. Expressing the present

5.2.1. Earlier findings

Riddel (1880) in his grammatical description of Chichewa (Chinyanja) merely gives the present tense forms with translations which shows that the bare stem combined with the person marking yield forms like *di manga* 'I bind'.[3] The progressive form for the present is illustrated in *u li ku manga* 'thou art binding', employing the auxiliary *-li* and what others refer to as the infinitive marker *ku-*. Apart from the translations that Riddel gives for the paradigms, in most cases, no further explanations are given regarding the meaning and use of these forms.

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[3]Other descriptions of Chichewa give the first person subject prefix as *ndi-* (Bentley and Kulemeka (2001)) or *ni-* (Watkins (1937)).

Eleven years later, **Henry (1891)** similarly observes what he calls indefinite present tense forms like *ndiswa* 'I break' consisting only of the person prefix (*ndi-*) and the verbal stem, as well as continuous present forms, such as *ndirikuswa* 'I am breaking' (Henry, 1891, 135f.). Apart from these, he states that *-to-* is used to construct the 'progressive' or 'imminent' tense, e.g. the form *nditoswa* is translated as 'I am just breaking, I am like to break'.[4] Apart from the translations of the examples, no explanations regarding the meaning and use of the different forms are given.

Hetherwick (1920) simply states that the present tense is formed by attaching the class particle to the verbal stem yielding forms like *munthu a-gwa* 'the person falls' (p.31). In order to express customary habits or actions, the "auxiliary particle" *-ma-* or *-mba-* is used, e.g. *mfumu i**mba**nena choincho* 'The chief is accustomed to speak this way' (p.155).

Watkins (1937) states that for the present tense, no marking is applied and gives the example *nikúdi̯a*, 'I am eating, I eat', explaining that *kudya* is the infinitive form of 'to eat'. He accounts for the meaning of this form by saying that

> The present tense refers not only to action taking place at the moment of speaking, but also expresses a generalized fact. With sufficient contextual support, it may be used for the future. (Watkins, 1937, 52)

His example for future reference is *nikudi̯á m̥má˙βa* 'I eat tomorrow'.

Sanderson and Bithrey (1949) only mention one present tense, formed by the person prefix and the verb root, yielding forms like *ndifuna* 'I want' (p.20). Apart from that, they describe the prefix *ka-* as expressing 'go and X' occuring in subjunctive forms marked by the suffix *-e*, e.g. *mukaitane* 'you may go and call' (p.28).

In his practical introduction to Chinyanja, **Thomson (1955)** mentions Hetherwick and Price for further reference and states that the present tense is formed by the verb stem and the subject prefix, e.g. *Ndi-ona* 'I see' (p.9). Later on, he introduces a distinction between *completed* and *incomplete* tenses, distinguishing between *I cook* and *I am cooking*, the latter exemplified by *Ndi-li-ku-pika* formed by the present tense of the verb 'to be' (*li*) and the infinitive marked by *ku* (p.24).

Price (1956) identifies verb forms consisting of the person prefix and verb stem as the *Habitual Present Tense* expressing "what is true in general, now and at other times" (p.21), also stating that this form can refer to the more or less immediate future if uttered with a higher pitch on the concordial (subject) prefix, e.g. in *ana athamanga* 'The children will run (shortly though not just this moment)' (p.21). Later on, he describes the affix *-ma-* as indicating an habitual act or condition which is still going on, e.g. *Antu akunyanja a**ma**lima mpunga* 'The people at the lake cultivate rice' (p. 188).

The *Chichewa intensive course* by the **Language Center (1969)** is in line with earlier descriptions with respect to present and future tenses. Present tense is expressed by the verb stem and subject prefix, and the same form can convey immediate future

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[4]'I am like to break' apparently means 'I am ready to break/am about to break'.

meaning. Present continuous is expressed by the verb *-li* 'to be' and a following infinitive marked by *ku* or simply by means of the infix *-ku-* which is described as the contracted form, e.g. *ali **ku**gwira nchito* or *a**ku**gwira nchito* 'He is working' (p.9). For actions that take place regularly, the use of the infix *-ma-* as habitual is indicated. But (depending on intonation) the same affix can trigger recent past interpretation (Language Center, 1969, 76, my translation).

Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) state that in order to indicate continuous action, the marker *-ku-* is used and call this category the present and present continuous, e.g. ndi-**ku**-dya 'I'm eating'. They mention a further form that refers to the present, the habitual *-ma-*, which is used to refer to events occurring regularly. Another use of the same form is "imperfect". For this use, they give the example *mwana a-**ma**-seŵera* 'she (the child) was playing', expressing an event that was not ongoing at the time of speaking, but at an earlier stage, or at the same time when something else happened.

Nurse (2008), based on Botne and Kulemeka (1995), Price (1966) and Stevick (1965), classifies the "full form" *liku* and "reduced" *-ku-* as expressing progressive aspect and *-∅-* as present perfective. "Present" is not given as a label in the table showing the tenses (past and future appear as labels) and aspects (perfective, habitual, progressive and anterior) but is used in the accompanying description. *-ma-* is classified as present habitual, but it is not mentioned as past habitual.

Table 5.2 gives an overview of the different markers referring to the present and how they have been described in the literature.

5.2.2. The present investigation

In the previous descriptions, three markers were mentioned that refer to the present: *-ku-* (and the alternate, and probably older, form *-li ku-*), zero marking and *-ma-*, cf. table 5.2. Not all descriptions mention all three markers and the differences in use and meaning of the individual categories is not entirely clear. When looking at the data collected for this study, the analysis of *-ma-* as a present habitual marker seems to be rather straightforward (cf. the section on present habitual below). The meaning and use of *-ku-* and zero marking are more difficult to determine. The marker *-to-*, which Henry (1891) described as the progressive or imminent tense, was not found in the data collected for this study.

Table 5.3 shows the distribution of the three different present markings that I found in the recordings and questionnaires. In the Bible translation, I performed searches on a few selected verbs that will be discussed below. As described in chapter 4.3, I classified each sentence in the questionnaires and recordings in which the markers occurred according to the time that each sentence referred to. Analysing the material, the distinction of three different temporal settings 'right now', 'usually/generally' and 'at present/currently' emerged as a categorization that could capture the differences in meaning and use between the different markings. 'Right now' is defined as the moment of speech. 'At present/currently' extends over a longer period before and (probably)

Table 5.2.: Earlier descriptions of present markers in Chichewa

	-ku-	-li (cop) ku- (inf)	∅-marking	-ma-	other
Riddel (1880)	-	present progressive	present	-	
Henry (1891)	-	-liku- continuous present	indefinite present	-	-to-: imminent tense 'be about to'
Hetherwick (1920)	-	-	present	-ma-/-mba-: habitual	
Watkins (1937)	present	-	-	-	
Sanderson & Bithrey (1949)	-	-	present	-	
Thomson (1955)		incomplete	present (complete)	-	
Price (1956)			(habitual) present	habitual	
Stevick (1965)	present progressive	present progressive (alt. form)	- [a]	present	
Language Center (1969)	present continuous	present continuous (alt. form)	present	habitual	
Botne & Kulemeka (1995)	present continuous	present continuous (alt. form)	-	habitual	
Bentley & Kulemeka (2001)	present and present continuous	-	-	habitual	
Nurse (2008)	present prog. (reduced form)	present prog. (full form)	present PFV	present hab.	-

[a]This form is only mentioned with immediate future meaning.

after the moment of speech that still is perceived as 'the present', as in 'I hope to meet him again', and 'This summer the water is cold'. 'Usually/generally' refers to habits, e.g. 'I rise at six in the morning', and generic truths, such as 'cats meow'. The setting 'at present/currently' is also defined negatively as comprising those present-time settings that are not confined to the moment of speech and that do not refer to habits or generic truths.

Table 5.3.: Distribution of present markers in the questionnaires and recordings of the present study

time reference	occurrence of tense markers		
	-ku-	$\emptyset$-mark.	-ma$_1$-
right now	88	10	2
usually/generally/generic	-	13 (of which 8 NEG)	52
at present/currently	5	14	7

According to the distribution of the markings in the questionnaire and the recordings, the marker *-ku-* is used primarily for events that are ongoing at the moment of speech and typically not much longer before or after that, *-ma$_1$-* is primarily used in habitual and generic contexts, while zero marking is found in all three temporal settings distinguished but is the preferred choice in sentences that refer to an extended present paraphrasable by adverbials like *at present, currently*.

When the Aktionsart of the different verbs occurring in these sentences is taken into account, it appears that *-ku-* is used for processes (activities and accomplishments) as well as for non-processes (states), while zero marking with present reference is confined to states in affirmative main clauses but is also used in negated and conditional clauses of other Aktionsart types. Some speakers use zero marking even in performative contexts, while others use *-ku-* in these sentences. In the following, the use and interpretation of the individual markers will be looked at in more detail.

present (progressive) -ku-

Earlier descriptions mention either *-ku-* or *-li ku-* (COP INF) or both as expressing present progressive or present continuous; *-ku-* is the marker that is predominantly used in the data collected for this investigation, while the marking *-li ku-* is used only in a few cases by two speakers (Chi from Dowa and Mag from Dowa/Lilongwe-town). The oldest speaker in the sample (Mte from Lilongwe rural, 69 years) uses both *-ku-* and *-li ku-* with more or less equal frequency. In spontaneous speech, i.e. in the recording, he uses only *-ku-*. Otherwise, no systematic difference in the use of the two forms could be identified. No other speaker uses the periphrastic form *-li ku-*; they all use *-ku-* instead. Given these observations and the fact that the older descriptions only mention the periphrastic form, while more recent descriptions mention either both or only *-ku-*, it seems that *-li*

ku- is the older form that has been grammaticalised into *-ku-*.

Dahl (1985) identified contexts in his questionnaire that are often marked by progressives cross-linguistically. In Chichewa, these sentences contain either the marking *-ku-* or *-li ku-* (or, for past time reference, *-nka-* or *-ma$_2$-*).[5] The sentence that was the most typical instance of progressive marking in Dahl's sample is translated as follows in Chichewa:

(5.9) context: Father to child: Please do not disturb me...

> *Ndi-**ku**-lemb-a*   *kalata.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRS-write-FV   letter
> 'I am writing a letter.' (speakers Ntha and Mme q83)

(5.10) context: Father to child: Please do not disturb me...

(5.11) *Ndi-**li***   ***ku**-lemba*   *kalata.*
      1SG.SBJ-COP   INF-write   letter
      'I am writing a letter.' (speakers Chi and Mte q83)

However, the markings *-ku-* and *-li ku-* are not only found in these contexts. Cross-linguistically, progressives are usually not found with state verbs as the inherent temporal properties of state verbs are not compatible with the progressive aspect. The markings *-ku-* and *-li ku-* do, however, occur with all four verb types described by Vendler (1967) (cf. section 3.2.2), which will be shown in the following, i.e. even with state verbs.

The following is an example of the use of *-ku-* expressing an activity. It is a typical example, most of the other examples with *-ku-* in the data are of similar structure and meaning.

> context: Somebody on the phone wants to know about Ann, the answer is: She is near me...

(5.12) *A-**ku**-send-a*   *mbatatesi.*
      3.SBJ-PRS-peel-FV   potatoes
      'She is peeling potatoes.' (speakers Li and Mag q212)

The event described in this sentence is an activity: The peeling of potatoes takes place for a while and at subsequent moments within a certain amount of time, an inherent endpoint is not involved. These properties can be tested by the applicability of continuous markers and the combinability of the sentence with adverbials like *for an hour* (*kwa ola limodzi*). If the process of peeling potatoes was interrupted at some point, the person in question had nevertheless peeled potatoes.

-ku- is also used with accomplishments like the following:

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[5]These are the sentences no. 83, 6, 5, 11, 9, 12 and 10 in the questionnaire (Dahl, 1985, 92), cf. Appendix B.

(5.13) *A-**ku**-send-a   ma-kilo   atatu   a   mbatatesi.*
      3.SBJ-PRS-peel-FV   NCL.PL-kilo   three   of   potatoes
      'She is peeling three kilos of potatoes.' (Li q214)

The peeling of three kilos of potatoes is an accomplishment, as it takes place for a while and at subsequent moments within a certain amount of time and has an inherent endpoint: If the process of peeling three kilos of potatoes was interrupted, the person in question had not peeled three kilos of potatoes.

-ku- is also found with achievements, i.e. punctual events that do not last for a longer time. When such verb forms are marked by a progressive marker, they express the repetition of the event over a certain period of time, e.g. the hitting of a ball in the following example:

(5.14) *Koteroko   ku-ma-bwer-a   a-bambo   ndi   ana*
      from.far   NCL.there-PSTIPFV-come-FV   NCL.PL/HON-man   with   children
      a-wiri   achinyamata, winayo   a-ku-sewerets-a   kanthu   kake
      NCL-two   NCL-young   another   3.SBJ-PRS-play-FV   something   his
      *ku-khala   ngati ka-mbale   a-**ku**-meny-ets-a   ka-mpira.*
      INF-behave   like   NCL.DIM-plate   3.SBJ-PRS-hit-CAUS-FV   NCL.DIM-ball
      'From far, there was a man coming with two young people, another one was playing with something in his hand like a small plate hitting (it) with a small ball.' (Chim 427-429)

Another function that *-ku-* seems to have in this context and in similar contexts in the recorded narrative, is the marking of background events. These are defined here following Hopper as "supportive material which does not itself narrate the main events" of a story (Hopper, 1979, 213). As opposed to the main (or foreground) events in a story, background events are not described sequentially. Furthermore, they often occur simultaneously with the main events in the story. In the example above, the description of a protagonist playing with something in his hand while approaching the scene does not develop the story line but gives some kind of backgrounded information.

-ku- is also found with state verbs:

(5.15) context: Of the water in a lake that is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

      *Achimwene a-**ku**-dziw-a,   kuti   madzi ndi   o-zizira.*
      brother   3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV   that   water   COP   ATTR-be.cold
      'My brother knows (now) that the water is cold (today).' (Mte q117)

State verbs do not describe processes in which the event holds for every subsequent phase within a certain amount of time before it stops, as opposed to activities and accomplishments like the ones given above. As progressive markers usually are not

found with state verbs, *-ku-* would not be expected to occur in such contexts as the one in example (5.15), if it was a progressive marker. The occurrence of *-ku-* with state verbs suggests that this marker is used as a present tense.

As there are only few occurrences of state verbs in the questionnaires and recordings, I studied their use in the 1998 Bible translation in addition to the questionnaires and recordings. The distribution given in table 5.4 shows that the verbs *dziwa* 'know' and *funa* 'want' occur more frequently with *-ku-* than with *-ma$_1$-* (habitual) or zero marking (extended present) but that these verbs are used both with *-ku-* and with zero marking as well as with *-ma$_1$-*.

The comparison of the contexts in which these verbs occur with different tense/aspect markers revealed that *-ma$_1$-* with present reference marks habituals while the distribution of *-ku-* and zero marking is difficult to untangle. Zero marking is often, but not only, found in conditional clauses and negated sentences. The rest of the zero marking examples seem to be semantically equivalent to corresponding *-ku-* cases, cf. the following contrasting sentence pairs with 'want' and 'believe', respectively:

(5.16) *A-phunzitsi,* *ti-fun-a* *kuti* *mu-ti-wonets-e*
          HON-teacher 1PL.SBJ-want-FV that 2PL.SBJ-1PL.OBJ-show-SBJV

  chizindikiro *chozizwitsa.*
  sign miracle

  'Master, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.' (Matthew 12:38)

(5.17) *Ambuye,* *ti-**ku**-fun-a* *kuti* *ti-zi-peny-a.*
          Lord 1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV that 1PL.SBJ-shall-see-FV

  'Lord, we want our sight.' (Matthew 20:33)

(5.18) context: I will live in hope because...

  ...*ndi-khulupirir-a* *kuti* *si-mu-dza-ndi-siy-a* *ku* *Malo* *a*
  1SG.SBJ-believe-FV that NEG-2PL.SBJ-FUT-1SG.OBJ-leave-FV to place of

  anthu *akufa*
  people dead

  'I believe that you will not abandon me to the grave.' (Acts 2:27)

(5.19) context: So keep up your courage, men...

  ...*pakuti* *ndi-**ku**-khulupirir-a* *Mulungu,* *kuti* *zimene*
  because 1SG.SBJ-PRS-believe-FV God that what

  wa-ndi-wuz-a-zi *zi-dza-chitika-di* *momwemo.*
  3SG.PRF-1SG.OBJ-tell-FV NCL.SBJ-FUT-happen-EMPH literally/such.like

  '...for I have faith (believe) in God that it will happen just as he told me.' (Acts 27:25)

Table 5.4.: Stative verbs marked by *-ku-*, ∅-marking and *-ma$_1$-* in the 1998 Bible text, questionnaires and recordings

	-ku-	∅-mark.	-ma$_1$-
dziwa ('know')	37	2 (1 NEG)[a]	18
funa ('want')	42	15 (6 cond.)	7
khulupirira ('believe')	5	5 (1 cond., 3 NEG)	5
konda ('like/love')	0	2 (2 cond.)	7
yembekeza ('hope')	3	2	1

[a]One zero marked form occurs in a negated clause, one in an affirmative clause.

A semantic difference between the corresponding *-ku-* and zero marked forms is difficult to establish. A possible explanation for this use of *-ku-* could be a development of the *-ku-* marker from a progressive or continuous present to a general present tense. Another indicator for such a development is the occurrence of *-ku-* with performatives, at least for some speakers in the sample, cf.:

(5.20) context: Uttered as a promise:

> *Ndi-**ku**-lonjeza*   *ndi-ku-pedz-a* *mawa.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRS-promise-FV 1SG.SBJ-   2SG.OBJ-find-FV tomorrow
> 'I promise to come (lit. find you) tomorrow.' (speaker Mme q125[6])

Cross-linguistically, progressives have been observed not to occur with performatives (Bybee and Dahl, 1989, 82). Two speakers in the sample use *-ku-* with performatives, while the oldest speaker (Mte) uses zero marking in this context. These observations, along with the distribution of *-ku-* and zero marking with state verbs just described, support the hypothesis that *-ku-* has most likely developed from a progressive into a present marker. The older use of *-ku-* seems to be partly reflected by the older speaker in the sample, while the younger speakers reflect the more recent use. The development of progressives into general imperfectives and presents is rather common cross-linguistically (Bybee et al. (1994)).

There is, however, also some support for the classification of *-ku-* as a right-now tense contrasting with zero marking as an extended present tense. I contrasted the following two examples and asked speaker Kam from Blantyre whether there was a difference in meaning between the two of them:

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[6]Speakers Ntha and Chi also use *-ku-* and *-li ku-*, respectively, in this context.

(5.21) *Ndi-**ku**-yembekez-a   ku-kumana   na-ye   posachedwa.*
      1SG.SBJ-PRS-hope-FV   INF-meet   with-him   soon
      'I hope to meet him soon.'

(5.22) *Ndi-yembekez-a   ku-kumana   na-ye   posachedwa.*
      1SG.SBJ-hope-FV   INF-meet   with-him   soon
      'I hope to meet him soon.'

The speaker explained that (5.22) expresses a broader time span than (5.21). This interpretation seems to support the hypothesis that *-ku-* expresses a right-now present, while zero marking represents a more general present tense. Such a difference is, however, difficult to establish for the contrastive sentence pairs in (5.16)-(5.19) above.

All of these observations seem to point to a development in which the aspectual, i.e. progressive, component of the meaning of *-ku-* has bleached to a certain extent in favour of the temporal, i.e. present tense, meaning.

The following section further describes those contexts in which zero marking occurs with present reference.

extended present zero marking

Sentences in which no tense-aspect morpheme is applied are analysed as zero marked for tense-aspect. Table 5.4 showed that many of the zero marked verbs occur in conditional or negated clauses. The two following examples represent cases in which zero marked verbs with present reference occur in affirmative, non-conditional clauses. The verbs in these sentences refer to states, cf.:

(5.23) context: Talking about a friend, when they used to meet and when they will meet again...

      Ndipo   ndi-yembekez-a   ku-kumana   na-ye-nso   mkuja...
      And   1SG.SBJ-hope-FV   INF-meet   with-he-again   day.after.tomorrow
      'I hope to meet him again the day after tomorrow.' (Mte 337,2)

(5.24) context: Talking about his choir at church and the wish to participate in an international competition:

      ...ti-funa   tere   ti-olok-e   Lwangwa   ku-nk-a
      1PL.SBJ-wish-FV   therefore   1PL.SBJ-cross-SBJV   Lwangwa   INF-go-FV
      ku-dziko   li-na..
      ncl.to/at-country   NCL-other

      '...therefore, we want to cross Lwangwa River to go to another country.' (Mte 319,1)

Another context in which zero marking is applied for present reference are performatives. This is found at least for the oldest speaker in the sample:

(5.25) context: Uttered in a naming ceremony:

Ndi-tch-a   *mwana-yo*   *"John".*
1SG.SBJ-name-FV   child-DEM   John
'I name this child "John".' (Mte q126)

(5.26) context: Uttered as a promise:

Ndi-lonjez-a   *ku-bwera*   *mawa.*
1SG.SBJ-promise-FV   INF-come   tomorrow
'I promise to come tomorrow.' (Mte q125)

As mentioned in the previous section, other speakers use *-ku-* marking in this context.

Apart from the marking of performatives by one speaker, zero marking with reference to the moment of speech seems to be confined to stative verbs.

A sentence like the following containing a dynamic verb is also zero-marked, but does not refer to the present, but to the future:

(5.27)   *Ndi-lemb-a*   *kalata.*
      1SG.SBJ-write-FV   letter

      'I am going to write a letter.'

Sentences of this kind always have future time reference, which is the second use of zero marking and will be discussed in section 5.4.2.

If the meaning of *-ku-* develops from a progressive to a general present marker, the use of zero marking in contexts referring to the present can be expected to decrease. Note that the occurrences of zero marking with present reference stem from speaker Mte only, the oldest speaker in the sample.

present habitual -ma$_1$-

Sentences referring to current habits and generic truths contain the marker *-ma$_1$-*. I use the subscript to distinguish this marker from *-ma$_2$-*, which occurs with different tonal patterns and is used to refer to habits and ongoing events in the past (at least for speakers from some regions of Malawi, cf. 5.3.2). I will describe the tonal properties further below and therefore indicate tone in this section.

-ma$_1$- is the marking found in those sentences in the questionnaire that have been observed to be typical occurrences of habituals, cf. Dahl (1985, 97)[7], e.g.:

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[7]These are sentences no. 19, 18 and 31 for non-past habituals, cf. Appendix B.

(5.28) context: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast? A:

> *A-**má**-lemb-a   kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-HAB-write-FV   letter
> 'He writes a letter.' (Da q19)

Earlier descriptions classify *-ma$_1$-* as a habitual (apart from Stevick (1965) who simply states that these forms would be translated by the simple present in English) as shown in table 5.2. Not all descriptions mention this marker: Hetherwick (1920), Price (1956), Stevick (1965), Language Center (1969), Botne and Kulemeka (1995) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) mention it while the earlier descriptions, apart from Hetherwick, do not mention this marker (Riddel (1880), Henry (1891), Watkins (1937), Sanderson and Bithrey (1949) and Thomson (1955)).

-ma$_1$- is also used for generics, i.e. in sentences expressing general truths (cf. 3.3.1):

(5.29) context: What kind of sound do cats make?

> *A-**má**-lir-a   miyawu-miyawu.*
> 3.SBJ-HAB-cry-FV   meow-meow
> 'They meow.' (Da q73)

The tonal pattern as indicated by speaker Da from Dowa in the examples above suggests that *-ma$_1$-* is marked by a high tone on the tense-aspect affix. Another speaker, Ka from Blantyre, produced the translation of (5.28) with a different tonal pattern:

(5.30) context: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast? A:

> *Á-**ma**-lemb-a   kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-HAB-write-FV   letter
> 'He writes a letter.' (Ka q19)

In Ka's speech, the verb is marked by a high tone on the subject prefix, which is a different tonal pattern from the one given by speaker Da from Dowa. Different tonal patterns are also presented in the literature. The pattern for the present habitual *-ma$_1$-* described by Mtenje (1987) has a high tone on the subject prefix and on the last syllable of the stem, e.g. *ndí-ma-fotokóz-a* ('I always explain'), while Botne and Kulemeka (1995) observe a high tone following the present habitual marker, e.g. *a-ma-vína* ('She usually dances') (Botne and Kulemeka, 1995, xvii). The tone pattern produced by Ka resembles the one described by Mtenje (1987), but there is no high tone on the verb stem. Mchombo (2004) gives examples showing the same tonal pattern (p. 16, 88). The length and the inherent tonal properties of the verb stem can play a role here, too, cf. Mtenje (1987). Dialect differences in tone patterns have been observed

earlier. Hyman and Mtenje (1999) mention several differences between the varieties spoken in Ntcheu (south-western Central Region of Malawi) and in Nkhotakota (north-eastern Central Region of Malawi). Differences or commonalities between -ma_1- and -ma_2- are, however, not treated in their article; one tonal difference between the two dialects concerns reflexive forms marked by -*dzí*-.

We can conclude that the different tone patterns might be due to dialectal differences. It is, however, not clear how reliable the tone transcriptions in the examples are as the speakers only underwent a short training in the distinction of tones before they were asked to mark them in their translations. But they were checked for consistency, and the tone markings of speaker Da are consistent, as opposed to those of other speakers. For speaker Ka, I transcribed the tones myself when listening to his production of the sentence. In conclusion, it can be said that the observations point to a tonal pattern that distinguishes the present habitual -ma_1- from the past imperfective -ma_2-. The exact realisation of this pattern seems to be different for speakers from different regions in Malawi.

Regional differences also play a role with regard to past time markers in Chichewa which will be described in the following section.

5.3. Expressing the past

5.3.1. Earlier findings

According to **Riddel (1880)**, past tense is expressed by the "particle" *a* yielding forms like *w**a** manga* 'you bound'. The perfect is, according to Riddel, marked by *na*, which is more often used than the other past tenses and denotes "an action *Perfect* or *Complete in past time*, and may therefore be used for the English Past, Perfect, or Pluperfect" (p.38).

For the pluperfect tense, Riddel gives the first person forms *di da manga* and *ti ta manga*, 'I had bound' and 'we had bound'.

Progressive tenses are, as in the present, expressed by a periphrastic construction employing a form of the auxiliary *li* and the infinitive marked by *ku*. Forms like *di **na li ku** manga* 'I was/have been binding' and *si ndi **da li ku** manga* 'I was not binding' are termed *perfect or past progressive, or imperfect*. The *perfect progressive* is given as a different form, exemplified by *di da li kumanga*, which is translated as 'I had been binding' and the corresponding negative form (Riddel, 1880, 40). No analysis is given regarding the use of these forms and how their meanings are differentiated.

Henry (1891) mentions two past tenses: the *indefinite past tense*, which is formed by means of -*na*-, and the perfect tense for which -*da*- is used, e.g. *ndi**na**swa* 'I broke' and *mu**da**swa* 'you have broken' (p.138f.). For the latter, however, he observes additional, as he assumes, possibly contracted forms like *ndaswa, mwaswa* etc. 'I have broken, you have broken'. He also observes contractions in narratives in which two or more verbs are

connected by the conjunction *ndi* 'and':

> The subsequent verb is contracted to *naba* and *naloa* from the full form *ndi anaba* ['and he stole'] and *ndi analoa* 'and he entered', cf. *Iye anadza **naloa** m'nyumba **naba** zintu zatu* 'He came and entered the house and stole our things' instead of *Iye anadza **ndi analoa** m'nyumba **ndi anaba** zintu zatu* (Henry, 1891, 140).

According to **Hetherwick (1920)**, the past tense is formed by prefixing either *-na-* or *-da-* to the stem, e.g. *Munthu a-**na**-gwa* 'The person fell' (p.33), without explaining any differences between the two possibilities. The perfect or "completed tense" is observed to be formed by prefixing the 'relative particles' *wa-*, *a-*, *wa-*, *ya-*, etc., according to the subject, to the verb stem, as in *munthu **wa**-gwa, anthu **a**-gwa* 'The person has fallen, the people have fallen' (p.40). Hetherwick observes that "this Perfect or Completed Tense is used where in English we would employ the Present, as, *mfumu yakoma mtima*, the chief is good hearted (lit. has become good hearted)" (p.41). Past continuous is according to Hetherwick expressed by *-ka-*. Furthermore, Hetherwick describes the "auxiliary" *-ta-* as referring to a completed action. The examples reveal that he means an action completed in relation to another action, as in *ndinafika dzulo atachoka* 'I arrived yesterday when they had already started off' (p. 149). The use of *-ta-* is not restricted to past time reference, cf. *Atafika madzulo ano atipeza* 'When they shall have arrived this evening they will find us' (ibid.). To denote consecutive actions, the infinitive is used after the first verb in the sequence which takes the "direct" tense or mood, Hetherwick terms this form the *historical infinitive*, e.g. *anafika dzulo ndi **ku**gona pano ndi **ku**lawira mamawa* 'He came yesterday and slept here and started off early this morning' (p. 157)

Watkins (1937) states that

- *-a-* expresses *recent past with present influence* and *narrative past* for events occurring from the night before until the moment of speaking, such as 'I have eaten and am not hungry, I ate'. (p.53)

- *-ná-* expresses *recent past without present influence*, such as 'I have eaten, but am now hungry.' (p.54)

- *-dá-* expresses *remote past with present influence* for events that happened prior to the last night before speaking , i.e. yesterday and earlier, such as 'I have eaten and am not hungry'. (ibid.)

- *-dáa-* expresses *remote past without present influence*, such as 'I have eaten but am now hungry.' (p.55)

- *-má-* expresses *past descriptive and habitual*, such as 'I was eating, I used to eat.' (p.56)

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Sanderson and Bithrey describe *-na-* as past tense and *-da-* as the perfect, e.g. *ndinaona* 'I saw' and *ndaona* 'I have seen' (Sanderson and Bithrey, 1949, 21f.), and again, apart from the label and the verb form examples and paradigms, no further explanation is given regarding the use of these markers. For narratives and the sequencing of verb forms, they give a similar example as Henry (1891,140), stating that only the first verb in the sentence is given in its full tense form.

Also **Thomson (1955)** classifies *-na-* forms as the past tense, e.g. *ndi-**na**-ona* 'I saw' (p.12). The perfect is formed by *-a-*, e.g. *ndi-**a**-ona* becoming *ndaona* 'I have seen' (p.18).

Thomson further distinguishes a *Completed Perfect*, formed by *-ta-*, e.g. *mkango u-ta-coka* 'The lion had gone (before the hunter arrived)' and *ti-ta-dziwa* 'We knew that already' (p.18).

The *incomplete past* is formed in a similar manner to the *incomplete present*, i.e. by the past form of the verb 'to be' (*li*) and the infinitive marked by *ku*, e.g. *a-**na**-**li**-**ku**-pika* 'she was cooking' (p.24).

Price (1956) identifies a single past tense, marked by *-na-*, e.g. *antu a**na**thamanga* 'the people ran' (p.21). In his notes on the infix *-ka-* he states that in one of its several uses, it expresses actions that extend over a long period of time in the past. In this usage, Price argues, it takes the form *-nka-*, e.g. ***Anka**fika koma tsopano adwala* 'He **used to come** but now he is ill', constituting the past habitual counterpart of the *-ma-* form used in the present (as set out in section 5.2.1). A further infix *-ta-* is described to express the completion of an act before the beginning of another, e.g. *A**ta**manga nyumba yace anakwata* 'After he had built his house, he married' (p.56).

Sentences like *Nd**a**bvala kabudula* 'I've put on my shorts' (p.56) involving *-a-* marking, which is analysed as perfect by other authors, are given in examples in other contexts by Price (here, for a certain kind of passive), but remain unanalysed in terms of tense and aspect.

Like Hetherwick, **Language Center (1969)** note that *-da-* and *-na-* are both used as past tenses. While Hetherwick does not explain any difference in use between them, Language Center (1969) gives an illustration with the following example:

> *A**da**pita ku mudzi*   He went home (supposes that he did not turn back)
> *A**na**pita ku mudzi*   He went home (supposes that he is back)

> (Language Center (1969, 22), boldface added)

The *-na-* form is said to be more common.

The infix *-nka-* is reported to be the past tense equivalent of *-ma-*, meaning 'used to', e.g. *Chaka chatha a**nka**pita ku sukulu...* 'Last year, he/she/they used to go to school...' (p.76).

Furthermore, two relative tenses are described: *-sana* indicates that the event happened before another event, *-ta-* indicates that another event happened after the event marked by *-ta-*.

The rather recent description by **Bentley and Kulemeka (2001)** classifies

- *-a-* as present perfect, referring to an event which has taken place in the recent past with no definite endpoint. The result or influence of the action is still present (p.31)

- *-na-*, *-da-* as recent past with an endpoint, reporting an event or action which occurred prior to the time of speaking and has no effect on or connection with the current moment (ibid.). Bentley and Kulemeka note that both forms are used with this meaning, but do not specify whether these forms are dialectal variants.

- *-da-* as remote past with no endpoint, refering to actions 'whose inception was prior to the time of speaking but with no obvious endpoint to the result of the action' (ibid.), beginning at a point considerably long ago. This form is said to be fairly limited in use. No comment is given on the relation between this marking and the *-da-* in the preceding paragraph.

- *-na:-*, *-da:-* as remote past with an endpoint, expressing an action which occurred a long time ago which has no effect on present time (p.31f.). Similarly to *-da-* and *-na-*, the alternative forms are given without any specification as to whether these forms are dialectal or stylistic variants or whether the choice of one marker over the other is motivated by any other factor.

- *-ma-* as habitual and imperfect, refering to actions that occur regularly, also used to describe continuing past actions (p.30f.)

Mtenje (1987) gives an analysis of Chichewa tone rules and describes verbal paradigms in this context. The variety of Chichewa that he refers to is spoken in Ntcheu, in the southern part of Malawi's central region. In his description, three different past tenses are distinguished: *-ná-* (simple past), *-na-* (recent past) and *-nâ:-* (remote past) with differences in tone and vowel length marking differences in temporal remoteness. Mtenje (p.c.) observed that the two forms *-nâ:-* and *-da:-* are variants of one another that express the same meaning. In the variety of Chichewa that he describes, *-nâ:-* (with a falling tone) (and not *-da:-*) is used.

Also the present habitual and past habitual are distinguished by tone differences alone:

ndi-**ná**-fótokoz-a	(simple past)	'I explained'
ndi-**na**-fótókoz-a	(recent past)	'I explained recently'
ndí-**nâ:**-fotokóz-a	(remote past)	'I explained some time ago'
ndí-**ma**-fotokóz-a	(present habitual)	'I always explain'
ndi-**ma**-fótókoz-a	(past habitual)	'I used to explain'

(Mtenje (1987, 172), bolding added)

Note that the tone differences do not occur locally on the tense-aspect morpheme but spread as different patterns over the whole word. Mtenje further observes that these patterns also depend on the tonal structure of the verb stem. Low tone verbs carry low tones only, and high tone verbs have a high tone syllable in their root; the verb *fotokoza* given in the example belongs to the low tone verbs.

Nurse's (2008) analysis identifies a past perfective *-ná-*, a pluperfect (past anterior) *ná-a-* and a perfect (present anterior) *-a-*, but no remoteness distinction, as well as a past progressive involving a periphrastic construction consisting of the copula in the past tense (*na-li*) and the infinitive (marked by *ku-*), e.g.

(5.31) *ti-na-lí*   *kú-gula*
        1PL-PST-be   INF-buy
     'We were buying.'

The earlier descriptions summarised above give a rather heterogenous picture, cf. table 5.5 for an overview. This diversity can either reflect differences in different varieties of Chichewa, at least five descriptions state which region their account refers to, it can reflect instances of language change, at least when the more recent descriptions are compared to the earlier descriptions, or it can simply reflect different analyses or interpretations of the distinctions found in the data. The authors of the two earliest descriptions, Riddel (1880) and Henry (1891), both worked in Livingstonia, in northern Malawi, with only 11 years between the two publications, yet, there are considerable differences in their accounts. Henry does not note the form *-a-* (according to him, these are contracted forms of *-da-*) which is past tense according to Riddel, and the form *-da-* is classified as pluperfect by Riddel and as perfect by Henry. Hetherwick (1920) and Sanderson & Bithrey (1949) both refer to a variety spoken in southern present-day Malawi, and yet their accounts are different. While Hetherwick classifies *-a-* as the perfect marker, Sanderson & Bithrey attribute this label to the marker *-da-* and do not mention *-a-* forms. Four of the later descriptions do not mention the form *-da-* at all, unfortunately none of them identifies the area or variety of Chichewa which the description refers to. Apart from Watkins (1937) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001), no description mention remoteness distinctions for past time reference. The fact that all descriptions from 1880 to 1950 referring to different areas mention *-da-*, but four out of six descriptions from 1955-2001 do not mention this marker, might be a sign of the loss of this marker in these varieties in case the later descriptions refer to the same varieties as the earlier descriptions, which is only a possibility. The diversity in description even for those cases where the authors worked in the same area makes it even more advisable to draw possible conclusion with caution.

Let us now turn to my own findings.

Table 5.5.: Past tense-aspect markers according to earlier descriptions of Chichewa.

	-a-	-na-	-da-	-daa-/-naa-	-ta-	-ma-	-nka-	-na-li ku-
Riddel (1880)	past tense	perfect	pluperfect (also -ta-)	-	pluperfect	-	-	-
Henry (1891)	-	indefinite past	perfect[a]	-	-	-	-	-na/da-li ku- perfect or past prog.
Hetherwick (1920)	perfect	past tense	past tense	-	compl. action	-	-	-
Watkins (1937)	recent past with present influence, narrative past	recent past without present influence	remote past with present influence	-dá:- remote past with out present influence	-	descriptive (continuous) and habitual	-	-
Sanderson & Bithrey (1949)	-	past tense	perfect	-	-	-	-	-
Thomson (1955)	perfect	past tense	-	-	completed perfect	-	incompl. past	-
Price (1956)	-	past tense	-	-	completion of act before beginning of other	-	past habitual	-
Stevick (1965)	past tense/ perfect	past (terminated events)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Language Center (1969)	-	past tense (went back)	past tense (went and gone)	-	completion of act beginning of other	past continuous	past habitual	-
Botne & Kulemeka (1995)	perfect	simple past or present perfective	-	-na-a- past perfective	complet. of act beginning of other	past habitual	-	-
Bentley & Kulemeka (2001)	perfect	recent past with endpoint	recent past with endpoint (as an allomorph to -na-) and remote past with no endpoint	remote past with an endpoint (allomorph: -naa-)	completion of act before beginning of other	past continuous	-	-
Nurse (2008)	perfect (present anterior)	-ná- past perfective, ná-a- pluperfect (past anterior)	-	-	-	-	-	past progressive

[a] Henry also observes forms like ndasua and mwasua, which he analyses as contracted forms of ndi-da-sua and ma-da-sua (p. 138f).

Table 5.6.: The different past-tense systems found in the data

Dowa (speakers: Li and Chi)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-	
past imperfective	-nka-			

Lilongwe-town (speakers: Chim, Ntha, Mza and Mag[8])

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-	
past imperfective	-ma-			

Blantyre-Zomba (speakers: Pha and Mme) and Lilongwe-rural (speakers: Kwe and Mte)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-	
past imperfective	-ma-		-nka-	

Lilongwe-rural Kasiya (speaker: Phi)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-		
past imperfective	-nka-			

Mchinji (speaker: Da)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-		
past imperfective	-ma-		-nka-	

recent Bible translation (1998)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-	-daa-
past imperfective	-ma-		-nka-	

5.3.2. The present investigation

The markers *-a-*, *-na-*, *-da-*, *-daa-*, *-ma₂-*, *-nka-* and *-ta-* were found in the material to refer to past events and situations.

Not all markers are used by every speaker: *-daa-* only occurs in the recent Bible translation; *-da-* is used by all but two speakers in the sample. In past progressive and past habitual contexts, some speakers use *-nka-*, some use *-ma₂-*, some use *-nka-* and *-ma-* alternately. *-a-* and *-na-* are used by all speakers.

I found five different systems for past time reference among the speakers in my data. Table 5.6 gives an overview of the different systems. The systems appear to be regionally

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[8]As stated above, this speaker grew up in Dowa but has been living in Lilongwe for a long time. Her past tense use conforms with that of other speakers from Lilongwe-town, which is why she is classified as such here.

distributed, and I am labelling them after the regions where they are used.

In the following, each marker will be described separately and with respect to the categories that it contrasts with. Then the different systems will be compared to each other and to earlier descriptions.

perfect and hodiernal past -a-

The marker *-a-* was classified as a perfect marker in most earlier descriptions, cf. table 5.5. Watkins (1937) describes this marker as recent past with present influence and as the narrative past; the latter use was not found in the data investigated in this study. In my data, no differences were observed for the use of this marker by speakers from different regions, but most data is available for Lilongwe-rural and from the Bible translation (the variety of Chichewa used in this translation is said to be spoken in and around Lilongwe, cf. section 4.2.5). *-a-* seems to be used either as a perfect or as a hodiernal past, but only the data from Lilongwe-rural and from the Bible translation comprises contexts that refer to earlier on the day of speaking, hence, it is not clear whether this use of the marker *-a-* is also found in other regions. As a hodiernal past, *-a-* refers to events and situations that happened earlier on the day of speaking, when it is used as a perfect, also to events that originated earlier in the past. Table 5.7 shows the distribution of *-a-* in the data.

Table 5.7.: The use of *-a-* in the data of this study

time reference	occurrence of tense-aspect marker *-a-*						
	Dowa	Llw-town	Blntr-Zmb	Llw-rural	Kasiya	Mchinji	Bible
just now	1	3	1	4	-	-	21
earlier today	2	3	1	7	-	2	34
yesterday	-	2	-	1^a	-	-	1^b
previous couple of days	-	-	-	-	-	-	5^c
recently	-	-	-	2	-	-	4
childhood	-	-	-	-	-	-	2^d
unspecified	4	6	3	5	1	2	31

[a]since yesterday
[b]last night
[c]one occurrence: since four days, two occurrences: since three days
[d]both occurrences: since my youth

Of the seven sentences which typically contained perfect marking in Dahl's cross-linguistic sample only the following sentence was translated with the marking *-a-* by the Chichewa speakers in this investigation:

(5.32) context: Child: Can I go now? Mother:

> *W-**a**-tsuk-a*　　　　*mano?*
> 2SG.SBJ-PRF-wash-FV　teeth
>
> 'Have you brushed (your) teeth?' (Pha q64)

The sentence that was most frequently translated using a perfect marker in Dahl's (1985) sample (no. 56 Q: Is the king still alive? A: No, *he DIE*.) was translated using *-na-* or *-da-* by the speakers in this investigation; these two past tense markings will be analysed in the following section.

But there are other occurrences of *-a-* in the data that suggest that this marker expresses perfect meaning. As discussed in 3.3.1, perfects have been observed to express resultative, experiential and persistent meaning. Two of these meanings, resultative and persistent, seem to be expressed by means of *-a-*, or its allomorph *wa-* for third person subjects, in the data.

The following example illustrates the resultative use:

(5.33) . . . ***wa**-uk-a*　　　　*kwa*　*akufa*
　　　　3SG.SBJ.PRF-rise-FV　from　the.dead

　　　'He has risen from the dead.' (Matthew 28:7)

The marker *-a-* is also used for situations that arose (or events that started) at some point in the past and persist at the moment of speech, as in the following example:

(5.34) *Ambuye,*　*wa-yamb-a*　　　　*kale*　　*ku-nunkha,*　*pakuti*
　　　　Lord　　　3SG.SBJ.PRF-start-FV　already　INF-stink　　because
　　　　***wa**-gona-mo*　　　　*ma-siku*　　*a-nai.*
　　　　3SG.PRF-sleep-in.there　NCL.PL-day　NCL-four

　　　'Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.' (John 11:39)

In similar contexts ('All these things I have observed from my youth', 'I have been baking since this morning'), the construction SBJ-***a**-khala* SBJ-*ku-VERB* is used (*-khala* means 'stay, remain, sit, become'). This construction is discussed further in section 5.3.2 below.

Cross-linguistically, perfects are also widely used to express experiential meaning, e.g. in sentences like *Do you know my brother? Yes, I have met him*, cf. 3.3.1. Sentences of this kind in the questionnaire were not translated using the marker *-a-* but with one of the past tense markers *-na-* or *-da-*.

The marker *-a-* is also used in contexts that appear to be perfects only at second sight: it occurs in sentences in the recordings and questionnaires that refer to the moment of speech. These sentences contain verbs like 'shine' (*wala*), 'stand' (*imirira*) or 'sit' (*khala*), as in:

(5.35) context: Look out of the window now!

> *Dzuwa l-**a**-wal-a.*
> sun   NCL.SBJ-PRF-shine/become.light-FV
> 'The sun is shining.' (Kwe q236)

(5.36) *Ann **wa**-imirir-a   m'-khomo.*
   Ann 3SG.PRF-stand/get.up-FV in-door
   'Ann stands in the doorway [right now].' (Mag q258)

(5.37) ***Wa**-khal-a   m'-khitchini.*
   3SG.PRF-sit/sit.down-FV in-kitchen
   'She is sitting in the kitchen [right now].' (Mag q228)

The glossings suggest that these verbs are statives. According to the dictionary (Paas (2004)), however, they can also also have an achievement, or inchoative, meaning such as 'become light', 'sit down' and 'get up'. It is probably this achievement meaning that triggers a resultative interpretation when combined with the marker *-a-*: The result of the very recent event (of sitting down, of starting etc.) holds at the moment of speech. That verbs of this kind receive perfect-marking when referring to a present state is cross-linguistically common (cf. referens?).

In addition to the perfect uses described above, the marker *-a-* is used with non-resultative, non-persistent meaning referring to events that happened a moment ago or earlier on the day of speaking, as in the following example:

(5.38) context: Q: Do you know my brother? (Conversation takes place in the afternoon. [...])

> *Nd-**a**-kuman-a   na-ye   ku msika   m'mawa.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV with-he at market this.morning
> 'I met him at the market this morning.' (Mte q141)

In a similar context in which the meeting at the market took place on the day before, the same speaker uses the marker *-da-*, not *-a-*:

(5.39) context: Q: Do you know my brother?

> *Ndi-**da**-kuman-a   na-ye   ku msika   dzulo.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV   with-he at market yesterday
> 'I met him at the market yesterday.' (Mte (q142))

A further example for the hodiernal past use of *-a-* is found in the recent Bible translation:

(5.40) context: A woman touches Jesus' garment and her bleeding stops. Jesus asks:

Kodi	*ndani*	***wa**-ndi-khudz-a*	*zovala?*
Q	who	3.SG.SBJ.PRF-1SG.OBJ-touch-FV	clothes

'Who touched my clothes?' (Mark 5:30)

Here, a difference in the use of *-a-* in the more recent Bible translation from 1998 as opposed to the earlier translation from 1922/1966 emerges. All examples given so far and if not stated otherwise stem from the more recent translation; the earlier translation was only consulted for certain additional searches. *-a-* forms occur 69 times in the direct-speech corpus of more recent translation and 96 times in the corresponding corpus of the earlier translation. In the majority of cases in which *-a-* is used in the earlier translation, it is also used in the more recent translation. One difference seems to be that *-a-* forms are used with hodiernal past meaning in the translation from 1998, but in the earlier translation, I only found it once in this type of context in the direct-speech corpus. The sentence that is marked by *-a-* in the more recent Bible translation, cf. 5.40, *-na-* in the earlier translation:

(5.41)
Ndani	*a-**na**-khudz-a*	*zobvala*	*zanga?*
who	3.SBJ-PST-touch-FV	clothes	my

'Who touched my clothes?' (Mark 5:30, 1922/1966 translation)

Further differences between the earlier and the more recent Bible translation will be discussed in subsection below describing the use of *-na-* and *-da-* . It seems that in the variety of Chichewa spoken in Lilongwe-rural and in the variety used in the recent Bible translation, *-a-* functions as a hodiernal past marker and as a perfect marker. For the other varieties, the use of *-a-* is less well documented in the data collected for this study, the contexts in which it occurs are mostly contexts with perfect meaning, more specifically, resultative and persistive meaning. The related construction SBJ-*a-khala* SBJ-*ku-VERB* that was mentioned above is described in the following section.

perfect progressive: -a-khala -ku-

For events that extend over a certain time in the past and last until the moment of speech, the construction *-a-khala -ku-* is used:

(5.42) context: I'm so tired. . .

*Nd-**a-khal-a***	*ndi-**ku**-phik-a*	*kuyambira*	*m'mawa.*
1SG.SBJ-PRF-stay-FV	1SG.SBJ-PRS-cook-FV	since	this.morning

'I've been baking (cooking) all day since I got up this morning.' (Lim q281)

(5.43) *Aphunzitsi,   zonse-zi   nd-**a-khal-a***
     teacher   all-DEM   1SG.SBJ-PRF-stay-FV

    *ndi-**ku**-zi-tsat-a*   *kuyambira* *ndi-li*   *mwana.*
    1SG.SBJ-PRS-NCL.PL.OBJ-follow-FV since   1SG.SBJ-COP child

    'Master, all these (things) I have observed from my youth.' (Mark 10:20)

In the literature, this construction is only mentioned by Bentley and Kulemeka (2001). It is relatively rare. Thirteen occurrences are found in the data of this investigation: four in the questionnaires and recordings, and nine in the recent Bible translation.

recent past -na- and remote past -da-

All earlier descriptions mention *-na-* as some kind of past marker. It is either classified as a past tense, as recent past without present influence or as a perfect. Only some mention *-da-* and define it as a perfect, a pluperfect (past perfect), a recent past with an endpoint, a remote past with present influence or simply as a past tense (cf. table 5.5). Some varieties, including the Bible translation, contrast these, and they are the topic of this subsection. The next subsection will discuss systems in which *-na-*, but not *-da-* is found.

Table 5.8.: The distribution of *-na-* and *-da-* in those systems that distinguish these markers for past-time reference

time reference	occurrence of tense markers							
	Dowa		Llw-town		Blntr-Zmb		Llw-rural	
	-na-	-da-	-na-	-da-	-na-	-da-	-na-	-da-
just now	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	-
earlier today	-	-	3	-	2	-	6	-
yesterday	6	20	17	11	17	-	12	48
previous couple of days	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
previous weeks	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	5
recently	-	1	2	-	2	-	2	2
earlier this year/years ago	-	2	4	5	4	4	1	7
childhood	-	4	3	1	4	-	1	4
unspecified	8	9	24	20	8	2	13	13

The distribution of *-na-* and *-da-* is shown in table 5.8 for the systems that distinguish both markers. Figure 5.1 shows the geographical distribution found in this study.

The overall distribution shows that the two markers are not in fully complementary distribution in terms of temporal deixis and remoteness: *-da-* is not used for events and situations that happened earlier on the day of speaking, while *-na-* (and *-a-* as seen in the subsection above) is used in these contexts.
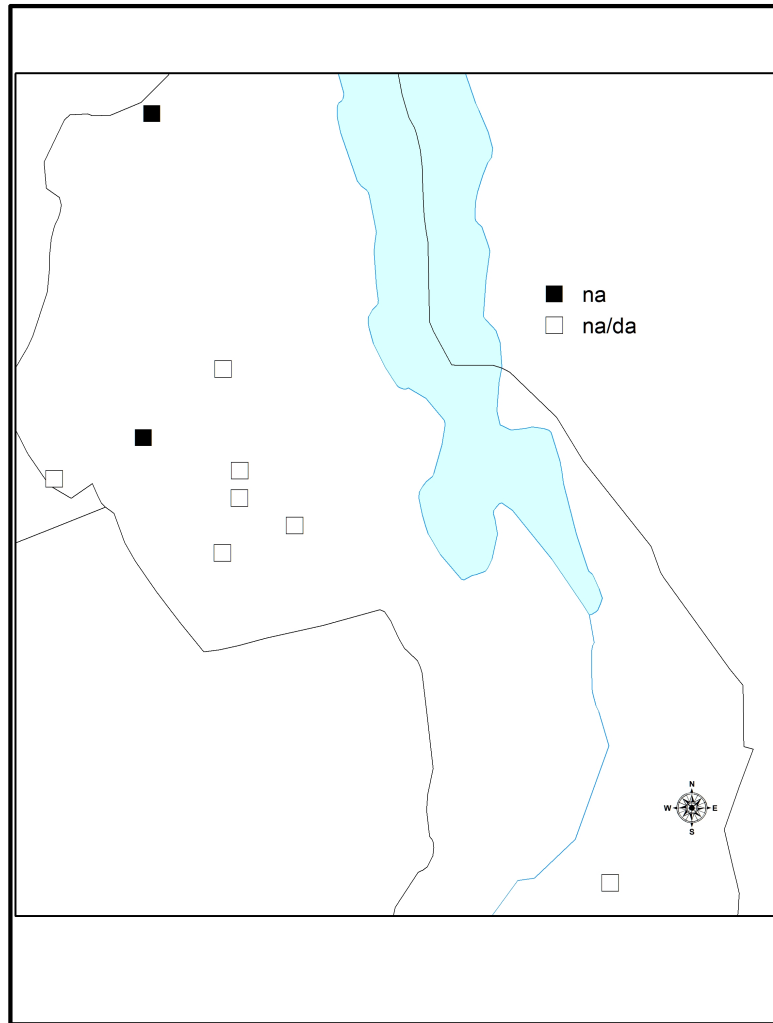
Figure 5.1.: Geographical distribution of the *-da-/-na-* distinction found in this study

I have been told by Andrew Goodson, a teacher with a vivid interest in the study of Chichewa who has worked in Malawi for a long time, that *-na-* is preferred in speech in the Southern Region as well as by city dwellers in the Central Region, while *-da-* can be heard in the speech of villagers from the Central Region. In formal written Chichewa, however, *-da-* is preferred even in the Southern Region. According to Goodson, speakers from the cities regard the use of *-da-* as rather old-fashioned and attribute it to the language used in more rural areas. A closer look at how individual speakers use the different markers gives further insights into their use and meaning.

During the consultation with speaker Mte from Lilongwe-rural, I asked him how he would translate and answer the questions 'What did you do this morning?' and 'What did you do yesterday?'. He gave the following answers:

context: What did you do this morning?

(5.44) *Ndi-**na**-yelets-a   nyumba.*
         1SG.SBJ-RECPST-clean-FV house
       'I cleaned the house.'

context: What did you do yesterday?

(5.45) *Ndi-**da**-pit-a   ku-munda.*
         1SG.SBJ-REMPST-go-FV to/at-garden
       'I went to the garden.'

When translating short narrative sequences in the questionnaire, the same speaker used *-da-* in the narratives that referred to the day before speaking, to his childhood and to an unspecific day in the past ("one day..."), but *-na-* for a narrative that referred to events happening earlier on the day of speaking, e.g.:

(5.46) context: I'll tell you what happened to me once <u>when I was a child</u>.

Ndi-nka-yend-a   *m'-nkhalango.* *Mwadzidzidzi,*
1SG.SBJ-REMPSTIPFV-walk-FV   in-forest   suddenly
*ndi-**da**-pond-a*   *njoka.* *I-**da**-ndi-lum-a*   *pa*
1SG.SBJ-REMPST-step-FV   snake   NCL.SBJ-REMPST-1SG.OBJ-bite-FV   on
mwendo. *Ndi-**da**-yi-las-a*   *ndi*   *mwala.*
leg   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-NCL.OBJ-hit-FV   with   stone
*I-**da**-f-a.*
NCL.SBJ-REMPST-die-FV

'I was walking in the forest. Suddenly I stepped on a snake. It bit me in the leg. I threw a stone at it. It died.' (Mte q166-170)

(5.47) context: The speaker is right back from a walk in the forest: Do you know what <u>just</u> happened to me?

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Ndi-ma-yend-a   *m'-nkhalango.*   *Mwadzidzidzi,*
1SG.SBJ-RECPSTIPFV-walk-FV   in-forest   suddenly

*ndi-**na**-pond-a*   *njoka.*   *I-**na**-ndi-lum-a*   *pa*
1SG.SBJ-RECPST-step-FV   snake   NCL.SBJ-RECPST-1SG.OBJ-bite-FV   on

mwendo.   *Ndi-**na**-tol-a*   *mwala*   *ndi*   *ku-yi-gend-a.*
leg   1SG.SBJ-RECPST-pick-FV   stone   and   INF-NCL.OBJ-throw-FV

*Y-**a**-f-a.*
NCL.SBJ-PRF-die-FV

'I was walking in the forest. Suddenly I stepped on a snake. It bit me in the leg. I took a stone and hit it. It (has) died.' (Mte q186-190)

Speaker Mte explained that *-na-* is used for things that happened only a little while ago when discussing examples (5.44)-(5.45). Temporally contrastive examples from other speakers support this observation. Then we looked at the transcription of the recorded conversation. I pointed out to him that he used *-na-* when talking about his favorite subject at school many years ago:

(5.48) . . . *ndipo*   *pa-sukulu-po*   *chi-mene*   *chi-ma-ndi-sangalats-a*
       and   on-school-DEM   NCL-REL   NCL.SBJ-RECPSTIPFV-1SG.OBJ-please-FV

       kwambiri   *chi-**na**-li*   *Boys*   *Bugade*   */. . . /*
       very   NCL.SBJ-RECPST-COP   Boys   Brigade   NCLDIM.SBJ-RECPST-COP

       *ka-**na**-li*   *ka-gulu*   *ka-mene*   *anyamata*
       NCLDIM-group   NCLDIM-REL   youth   NCL.SBJ-RECPSTIPFV-learn-FV-DEM

       a-ma-phunzir-a-po   *maluso*   *osiyanasiyana*   *ku-phatikiz-a-po*   *ku-gub-a..*
       skills   various   INF-include-FV-DEM   INF-march-FV

       'And at the school, what pleased me best **was** the Boys Brigade /. . . / it **was** a group where the youth learned various skills including marching drills. . . '

When I asked him why he had used *-na-* and not *-da-* in this context, he explained the following:

> The item we're talking about - we're seeing it in front of us. The speaker/questioner took us there. I'm trying to emphasize how useful that exercise was, I wanted to bring it closer to us. If I had said 'chi**da**li' [instead of 'chi**na**li'] it would be far away.

Thus, the choice of *-da-* or *-na-* seems to be subject to a certain flexibility depending on the perspective of the speaker. The overall distribution of *-na-* and *-da-* as shown in table 5.8 indicates that, too: the use of the marker *-na-* is rather flexible, it is used in all contexts. The marker *-da-* on the other hand, seems to be restricted to events that happened before the day of speaking.[9]

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[9]It would be worth testing whether *-da-* can also be used for events that happened earlier on the day of speaking if they seem rather remote to the speaker at the moment of speech.

A similar variation is observed in the use of *-da-* and *-na-* by other speakers. Speaker Ntha from Lilongwe-town, for example, uses *-na-* once, and *-da-* once in two very similar contexts. The deictic time reference is the same in both contexts, as they refer to an event on the day before speaking:

(5.49) context: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?

> *A-**na**-tsokomol-a   kwa ka-nyengo.*
> 3.SBJ-RECPST-cough-FV   of   NCL.DIM-time/period
> 'He coughed for a while.' (Ntha q95)

(5.50) context: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?

> *A-**da**-tsokomol-a   kwa ola   li-modzi.*
> 3.SBJ-REMPST-cough-FV   of   hour NCL-one
> 'He coughed for an hour.' (Ntha q96)

In the translation of two other contexts, however, which only differ in time reference, yesterday as opposed to last year, the same speaker uses *-na-* for the more recent context and *-da-* for the more remote context, cf.:

(5.51) context: The boy's father sent him a sum of money some days ago and it arrived <u>yesterday</u>

> *Pamene mnyamata a-**na**-teng-a   ndalama,*
> when   boy   3.SBJ-RECPST-take-FV   money
> *a-**na**-gul-ir-a   mphatso mtsikana.*
> 3.SBJ-RECPST-buy-APPL-FV   present   girl
> 'When the boy got the money, he bought a present for the girl.' (Ntha q100)

(5.52) context: <u>Last year</u>, the boy's father sent him a sum of money

> *Pamene mnyamata a-**da**-teng-a   ndalama,*
> when   boy   3.SBJ-REMPST-take-FV   money
> *a-**da**-gul-ir-a   mphatso mtsikana.*
> 3.SBJ-RECPST-buy-APPL-FV   present   girl
> 'When the boy got the money, he bought a present for the girl.' (Ntha q101)

Another example of this use of *-da-* and *-na-* in contexts that differ in temporal remoteness is the translation of two sentences by speaker Mme from Zomba:

(5.53) context: Looking at a house

> A-***da***-mang-a   nyumba   iyi   ndani?
> 3.SBJ-REMPST-build-FV   house   DEM   who
> 'Who build this house?' (Mme q128)

(5.54) context: Looking at a house, recently painted

> A-***na***-pent-a   nyumba   iyi   ndani?
> 3.SBJ-RECPST-paint-FV   house   DEM   who
> 'Who painted this house?' (Mme q130)

In a longer narrative text, the Pear Story, *-na-* and *-da-* are used equally often by speaker Chim from Lilongwe-town who seems to switch between the two markers in order to create certain nuances in the story. The introduction is marked by *-da-*:

(5.55)   *A-bambo*   *ena*   *a-**da**-li*   *mu-mtengo.*
        NCL.PL/HON-man   certain   3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   in-tree.
        'There was a certain man in a tree.' (Chim 401)

As the story develops (the man was picking fruits from the tree and a boy came by), the speaker suddenly switches to *-na-*:

(5.56)   *Mnyamata*   *uja*   *a-**da**-teng-a*   *zipatso*   *dengu*   *li-modzi*   *ku-ika*
        boy   DEM   3.SBJ-REMPST-take-FV   fruits   basket   NCL-one   INF-put
        pa-njinga   *pa-ke,*   *koma*   *a-bambo*   *aja*
        NCL.on-bicycle   NCL.on-his   but   NCL.PL/HON-man   DEM
        *s-a-**na**-on-e*   *kuti*   *mnyamata*   *uja*   *wa-teng-a*   *dengu*
        NEG-3.SBJ-RECPST-see-SBJV   that   boy   DEM   3SG.PRF-take-FV   basket
        lija.
        DEM
        'The boy took one basket of fruits and put (it) on his bicycle but the man didn't see that the boy took that basket.' (Chim 412-415)

The verb with which *-na-* occurs in the sentence above is negated, and we will see in 5.7 that *-na-* occurs more often in negated clauses than *-da-*, but that *-da-* does occur, i.e. is possible, with negation as well. The speaker continues using *-na-* in the next sentence, commenting on what happened:

(5.57)   *Kumeneko*   *ku-**na**-li*   *ngati*   *ku-ba.*
        that.there   NCL.SBJ-RECPST-COP   like   INF-steal
        'It was like stealing.' (Chim 416)

A sequence marked by -*na*- (and -*ku*- for background events) follows, before the speaker switches back to -*da*-:

(5.58) *A-ta-duts-an-a*   *na-ye*   *mtsikana* *uja*   *pa-njinga*
        3.SBJ-TCL.PST-pass-RECPST-FV with-her girl   DEM NCL.on-bicycle

        pa-ja   *iye* *maso* *a-**da**-li*   *pa-mtsikana* *uja.*
        NCL.on-DEM he eyes 3.SBJ-REMPST-COP NCL.on-girl DEM

        'After he and the girl on the bicycle passed one another, his eyes were on the girl.' (Chim 422-423)

(5.59) *Kenako* *njinga* *ija*   *i-**da**-meny-a*   *mwala.*
        then   bicycle DEM NCL.SBJ-REMPST-hit-FV stone

        'Then that bicycle hit a stone.' (Chim 424)

A description of what happened to the boy and the fruits on the bicycle follows. The event that develops the story line focusing on the boy (he fell from the bicycle) is marked by -*da*-, while the description of background events (such as other people appearing further away) are coded using the imperfective markings -*ma$_2$*- and -*ku*-. Once the other protagonists arrive at the setting where the boy is located, the speaker switches to -*na*- again:

(5.60) *Kenako* *a-**na**-fik-a*   *paja*   *ndi* *ku-mu-thandiz-a*
        then   3.SBJ-RECPST-reach-FV there and INF-3SG.OBJ-help-FV

        ku-mu-tolera-tolera   *zipatso* *zija* *ndi* *ku-mu-ik-ir-a*
        INF-3SG.OBJ-collect-collect fruits   DEM and INF-3SG.OBJ-put-APPL-FV

        m'-dengu   *muja.* *Basi.*
        NCL.in-basket DEM   that's.it

        'Then they arrived there and assisted him in collecting those fruits and putting them in that basket for him.' (Chim 430-433)

Further infinitive forms follow describing the protagonists moving on. Then the boy forgets his hat where he fell which is again marked by -*na*-:

(5.61) *Kenako* *a-**na**-iwal-a*   *chipewa* *pa-mene*   *pa-**na**-li*
        then   3.SBJ-RECPST-forget-FV hat   NCL.on-REL on-RECPST-COP

        pa-da-gwel-a   *paja.*
        on-RECPST-fall-FV there

        'Then he forgot the hat where he fell.' (Chim 440-441)

After the others had already continued, one of the other boys whistled (marked by -*na*-) and gave the hat back to the boy. This was rewarded by the boy, and this is where the speaker switches to -*da*- again:

(5.62) *A-ta-m-pats-a*   *chipewa chija iye a-**da**-teng-a* *zipatso*
   3.SBJ-when-3.OBJ-give hat DEM he 3.SBJ-REMPST-take-FV fruits
   zitatu ndi ku-m-patsa. *Basi.*
   three and INF-3.OBJ-give that's.it.
   'After he gave him that hat, he took three fruits and gave them to him.' (Chim
   448-450)

Talking about the other protagonist who shares the fruits with his friends, the speaker
uses *-na-* again and approaches the climax of the story where the farmer discovers that
one of his baskets was stolen. The speaker narrates this with a sequence of infinitives
and a few *-na*-marked forms:

(5.63) *Ku-yesa* *ma-dengu* *anga a-**na**-li-po*   *atatu!*
   INF-think NCL.PL-basket my 3.SBJ-RECPST-COP-there three
   'Thought my baskets were three!' (Chim 460-461)

The speaker concludes the story by switching back to *-da*-marked verb forms to talk
about the farmer wondering what happened to his fruits:

(5.64) *Mwa iwo okha a-**da**-ngo-ganiz-a*   *kuti ndi zi-patso* *zija.*
   of him self 3.SBJ-REMPST-just-think-FV that COP NCL.PL-fruit DEM
   'By himself, he thought that it were those fruits.' (Chim 472-473)

(5.65) *Kenako nkhani-yo i-**da**-ngo-ther-a*   *pomwepo kuti anthu*
   then story-DEM NCL.SBJ-REMPST-just-end-FV here that people
   a-ma-pitilir-a   *koma a-bambo*   *sa-**da**-yakhul-e*
   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-continue-FV but NCL.PL/HON-man NEG-REMPST-speak-SBJV
   *koma a-**da**-ngo-khal-a*   *modabwa..*
   but 3.SBJ-REMPST-just-sit-FV amazed
   'Then the story just ended there that the people were continuing but the man did
   not speak but remained amazed..' (Chim 474-477)

The speaker seems to use the different past tense markers in the narrative to create
different nuances in the story: The beginning and the conclusion are marked by *-da-*,
while in between the speaker switches between *-na-* and *-da-*. The recent past *-na-* seems
to be used for highlighting key moments: The first time *-na-* is used is when the speaker
describes that the man in the tree did not see the boy taking one of his baskets, which
is one of the crucial events in the story, and the speaker comments on this behaviour as
stealing. The farmer's realisation that one of his baskets was missing is also marked by
-na-. It seems that once the speaker has switched to the recent marker *-na-*, the same
marker is used for the narration of several different events before she returns to *-da-*
marking.

Overall, the use of *-da-* and *-na-* appears to be flexible to a certain extent in all data types. One restriction seems to be that *-da-* is not used for events occurring earlier on the day of speaking. In contrasting contexts, speakers tend to use *-na-* for the more recent and *-da-* for the more remote event. This rule can be overridden by the speaker highlighting a certain event, even if it is rather remote in absolute time, by expressing it with the recent past marker *-na-*.

When comparing the tense-aspect markings in the direct speech corpus in the earlier Bible translation with the more recent translation again another system emerges. The use of *-na-* and *-da-* in the more recent Bible translation seems to correspond to the use of these markers by the speakers from Lilongwe-rural and Lilongwe-town. The statement by various speakers that this Bible translation is based on the Lilongwe variety of Chichewa is in line with this observation. The use of the past tense markers in the earlier Bible translation differs from the use found in Lilongwe. *-na-* is the past tense marker that is most frequently used (164 forms out of 307 verb forms in the direct speech corpus) in the translation from 1922/1966, as opposed to *-da-*, which is the most frequent past tense marker in the 1998 translation (111 out of 307). *-da-* occurs only 15 times in the direct-speech corpus of the earlier translation, *-na-* is used 29 times in the direct-speech corpus of the more recent translation. The following examples illustrate the use of the most frequent past tense marker in each translation, respectively:

(5.66) context: The disciple Peter speaking to Jesus:

> *[. . .] [I]fe   ti-na-siy-a   zonse ndi ku-tsata   Inu..*
> [. . .] we   1PL.SBJ-PST-leave-FV all   and INF-follow you
> 'We have left everything and followed you.' (Matthew 19:27, 1922/1966 translation)

(5.67) context: The disciple Peter speaking to Jesus:

> *Ife-tu   paja   ti-da-siy-a   zonse kuti*
> we-EMPH DEM   1PL.SBJ-REMPST-leave-FV all   that
> *ti-zi-ku-tsata-ni.*
> 1PL.SBJ-shall-2.OBJ-follow-2PL/HON
> 'We have left everything and followed you.' (Matthew 19:27, 1998 translation)

There are no context clues given in the text as to when exactly the leaving took place, but it is understood that it did not happen recently.

-da- does occur in the 1922/1966 translation, but less frequently. Three of the 15 occurrences of *-da-* in the direct speech corpus are given in the following three examples:

(5.68) *Ti-pit-ir-e-tu*   *ku Betelehemu, ti-ka-on-e*   *cinthu*
      1PL.SBJ-go-APPL-SBJV-EMPH to Bethlehem   1PL.SBJ-ITV-SBJV thing
      ici   ci-da-citik-a,   *ci-mene   Ambuye*
      DEM NCL.SBJ-PST-happen-FV NCL-REL Lord

a-na-ti-dziw-its-ir-a   *ife.*
3.SBJ-PST-1PL-know-CAUS-APPL-FV   we/us

'Let's go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' (Luke 2:15, 1922/1966 translation)

(5.69) context: A certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said to Jesus:

Yo-dala   *mimba*   *imene*   *i-**da**-ku-bala-ni,*   *ndi*   *mawere*
ATTR-bless   belly   REL   NCL.SBJ-PST-2.OBJ-bear-2PL.OBJ   and   breasts
amene   *mu-na-yamw-a.*
REL   2PL.SBJ-PST-suck-FV

'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts which nursed you!' (Luke 11:27, 1922/1966 translation)

(5.70) *Mu-sa-ka-uz-e*   *munthu*   *coonekaco,*   *kufikira*   *Mwana*   *wa*
      2PL.SBJ-NEG-ITV-say-SBJV   man/person   any   until   child   of
      munthu   *a-**da**-dzauk-a*   *kwa*   *akufa.*
      man/person   3.SBJ-PST-rise-FV   from   the.dead

'Don't tell anyone until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.' (Matthew 17:9, 1922/1966 translation)

As opposed to past tense *-na-* forms, *-da-* forms in this translation seem to refer to past events with resultative meaning, but when compared to *-a-* forms, referring to a more remote past. A difference between *-na-* and *-da-* appears in the second example above in which the event of being born (and still being alive) is referred to with a *-da-* form, while the event of breast-feeding is referred to with a *-na-* form. The event time that is referred to can also lie in the future as in the third example above. Seven of the contexts in which *-da-* was used in the 1922/1966 translation were translated with remote past *-da-* forms in the translation from 1998, in five cases perfect/hodiernal past *-a-* was used, once discontinuous past *-daa-*, and once remote past imperfective *-nka-*.

In the following section, yet another system will be described. After that, I will further discuss the different systems of past time reference that I found in the data and compare them with the observations made in earlier descriptions.

-na- in systems without contrasting -da-

Two speakers in the sample from different regions in Malawi (Phi from Kasiya and Da from Mchinji) use *-na-*, but not *-da-*. The use of *-na-* seems to cover all contexts in which either *-na-* or *-da-* is used in other regions. The use of *-a-* seems to be similar to the use of *-a-* in other regions.

Mtenje (1987) states that with respect to the past tense markers used in Ntcheu, different tone patterns distinguish the simple past *-ná-* from the recent past *-na-*.[10] Ntcheu is located in the Central Region of Malawi, Mchinji is approximately 260km north-west of Ntcheu (travel distance), Kasiya is 230km north-west of Ntcheu, and the travel distance between Kasiya and Mchinji is roughly 100km.

In the present investigation, the speaker Da from Mchinji marked tone consistently when asked to annotate her translations. Her tone markings indicate no tone difference between the verb forms in the following sentence pair, although the two sentences refer to different time points in the past:

(5.71) *Ndi-**ná**-kúman-a   na-ye   zaka   zingápo zapítazo.*
        1SG.SBJ-PST-meet-FV   with-he years several passed

        'I met him once several years ago.' (Da q38)

(5.72) *Ndi-**ná**-kúman-a   na-ye   posachedwapa.*
        1SG.SBJ-PST-meet-FV   with-he a.short.while.ago

        'I just [= a couple of minutes ago] met him.' (Da q39)

Speaker Phi from Kasiya also marks tone consistently in her annotation, and the tones on the two following verb forms seem to exhibit the same tone pattern, again referring to different points in time:

(5.73) context: Of a visible lake, in which the speaker swam yesterday: Today the water is warm, but yesterday...

        *Á-**na**-li   wo-zízira.*
        3.SBJ-PST-COP   ATTR-be.cold

        'It was cold.' (Phi q32)

(5.74) context: Of a visible lake: The first time I swam in this water many years ago...

        *Á-**na**-li   wo-zízira.*
        3.SBJ-PST-COP   ATTR-be.cold

        'It was cold.' (Phi q33)

For the analysis of the categories that these two speakers use, again certain reservations apply regarding the validity of the data and the results. Furthermore, the data for these two regions is rather scarce as only one speaker from each area is included in the sample. Both speakers mark tones consistently and do not indicate tone differences distinguishing different degrees of remoteness. Thus, only a single marker *-na-*, along with *-a-*, appears to express past tense in these systems.

We now turn to the past tense marker *-daa-*.

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[10]The tonal patterns are more complex, cf. 5.3.1, this notation is a simplification.

discontinuous past: -daa- as opposed to -na- and -da-

Watkins (1937, 55f.) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001, 31) are the only authors who mention the marker *-da:-*. I refer to this marker with its orthographic form *-daa-*. Watkins describes it as 'remote past without present influence' and gives the sentence 'I have eaten but am now hungry' as an example. He discusses further examples such as *yesu k'irisitú a**dá:fa*** 'Jesus Christ died but did not remain dead'. Accordingly, 'God created the world and his creation is yet existent' is expressed using *-dá-*, and not *-dá:-*, unless one wanted to express that a "second creator did a more enduring work"; *-na:-* is given as an alternate form of this morpheme. This form, but not the variant *-da:-*, is also mentioned in Mtenje's (1987) article, in Botne and Kulemeka (1995), and Nurse (2008). Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) label this form as "remote past with an endpoint" expressing that "[t]he action is understood as taking place a long time ago and having no current effect on the present time" (p. 31). It seems that neither Watkins' label "remote past without present influence" (as opposed to "remote past with present influence") nor Bentley and Kulemeka's "remote past with an endpoint" really captures the distinction that emerges when comparing the examples given, as it is not the lack of present influence that is decisive, but rather whether or not the event was followed by another event that influences the interpretation of the first event.

I found 18 occurrences of the marker *-daa-* in the more recent Bible translation (see table 5.9), but none in the earlier Bible translation, the questionnaires, recorded narratives and conversations. No instances of *-naa-* were found. Phonemically long vowels are orthographically represented by double vowel letters. They occur rather infrequently. In the questionnaires, eight words with double vowel letters were found, most of these spellings occur at morpheme boundaries (e.g. *siinafike* consisting of *si-i-na-fik-e* NEG-NCL.SBJ-PST-arrive-SBJV), but also morpheme-internally, e.g. *myaawuu* for *meow*. This observation suggests that speakers represent long vowels in writing. However, Al Mtenje and Andrew Goodson (p.c.) report that in their experience, speakers usually do not represent the vowel length distinction between *-da-* and *-da:-* (or *-na-* and *-na:-*) in writing. Thus, my language consultants' written data needs to be treated with caution in this respect. The form *-daa-* (or its alternate *-naa-*) was not found in the questionnaires nor in the transcriptions of the recordings.

Therefore, the analysis of this marker focussed on its use in the direct-speech corpus of the recent Bible translation where it occurs 18 times. The distributional analysis of *-daa-* showed that, like *-da-* and in contrast to *-na-* and *-a-*, it is not used for events and situations ocurring earlier on the day of speaking, cf. table 5.9.[11]

Similar to what Watkins (1937) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) describe, what all instances of *-daa-* have in common, and what distinguishes the clauses in which -

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[11] As with *-da-*, it is worth checking whether a scenario can be set up that would allow the use of *-daa-* in this context, too.

[12] All of which probably refer to the recent past, although there is no straightforward evidence in the text.

Table 5.9.: Time reference of sentences in the direct-speech Bible corpus (1998) containing *-daa-*, *-a-*, *-na-* and *-da-*

time reference	occurrence of tense markers			
	-a-	-na-	-da-	-daa-
just now	21	1	-	-
today/this morning/lunch-time	34	12	-	-
yesterday	1	-	2	-
previous couple of days	5	-	-	-
earlier this year/previous years	4	-	-	-
recently	-	6	1	2
childhood	2	-	-	-
a long time ago	-	-	-	2
unspecified	31	8[12]	90	14

daa- is used from the clauses in which *-na-* or *-da-* are used, is that these clauses refer to an event that became obsolete because something else happened later. In certain contexts, it resembles a pluperfect, but only one out of 18 sentences containing *-daa-* in the Chichewa Bible translation is expressed by means of a pluperfect in the English version. In one of the following subsections, the use of the marker *-ta-* is described that also in some cases resembles a pluperfect marker.

In the following example, the use of *-daa-* resembles a pluperfect as a past event is given ('I have found') that can be interpreted as the reference time in Reichenbach's terms (cf. 3.2.1), which was preceded by another event ('it was lost'):

(5.75) *Mu-kondwer-e*   *na-ne*   *pamodzi, chifukwa*
      2PL.SBJ-be.happy-SBJV   with-me   together   because
      nd-a-i-pez-a   *nkhosa ya-nga*   *i-**daa**-tayik-a*   *ija.*
      1SG.SBJ-PRF-NCL.OBJ-find-FV   sheep   NCL-my   NCL.SBJ-DPST-be.lost   DEM
      'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep **which was lost!**' (Luke 15:6)

In the following examples, however, no such reference time or event is given but merely understood within the context:

(5.76) context: When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said:

      *Ndithudi, munthu-yu a-**daa**-li-di*   *Mwana wa Mulungu.*
      indeed   man-DEM   3.SBJ-DPST-COP-EMPH   child   of   God
      'Truly this man was the Son of God!' (Mark 15:39)

(5.77) context: Talking about a man who received his eye sight from Jesus

> *Kodi inu, uyu ndi mwana wanu? Ndiye mu-ku-ti*
> Q   you DEM COP child your it.is.him 2PL.SBJ-PRS-say
> *a-**daa**-badwa-di   wo-sa-penya?*
> 3.SBJ-DPST-be.born-EMPH ATTR-NEG-see
>
> 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind?!' (John 9:19)

The use and meaning of pluperfects and *-daa-* seem to be slightly different from each other.

When I asked speaker Mte from Lilongwe-rural about similar examples, he said that *mu-**daa**-ndi-siyira* 'you gave me/had given me' (as opposed to *mu-**da**-ndi-siyira* 'you gave me') is used when "there will be a follow-up" or when "there should be a feedback". If you use *mu-**da**-ndi-siyira* 'you gave me', "it is over, you don't think about it anymore".

Plungian & Van der Auwera (2006) describe a category found in a considerable number of genealogically unrelated languages, mostly in Oceania and West Africa, that expresses an "additional semantic component specifying the situation as non-existent or no more relevant at the moment of utterance" that distinguishes this category from other past tenses (Plungian & Van der Auwera, 2006, 345). They call this category *discontinuous past*. The observations made above suggest that marker *-daa-* is an example of this category.

Let us now turn to the expression of past imperfectivity in Chichewa.

past imperfective -ma$_2$-, -nka- (and -na-li ku-/-da-li ku-)

Also in the domain of past imperfective marking, variation is found. Speakers from Lilongwe-town use only *-ma$_2$-* for the past imperfective, the Dowa and Kasiya speakers use only *-nka-* while speakers from Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe-rural and Mchinji use both markers. The geographical distribution found in this study is shown in figure 5.2.

It was mentioned in 5.2.2 that the marker *-ma$_2$-* is distinguished from the present habitual *-ma$_1$-* by tone. Speaker Da from Dowa marks a high tone on the present habitual *-ma$_1$-* but no high tone on *-ma$_2$-* which is used in a past habitual context. Here, a high tone is indicated on the syllable following the tense-aspect marker:

(5.78) context: Did you know my father, who died last year?

> *Ndi-**ma**-kúman-a   na-wo   kawirikawiri*
> 1SG.SBJ-RECPSTIPFV-meet-FV with-DEM regularly
>
> 'I used to meet him now and then.' (Da q44)

The speaker Ka from Blantyre produced the same tonal pattern. This pattern is similar to the one Mtenje (1987) describes for the past habitual: a high tone on the
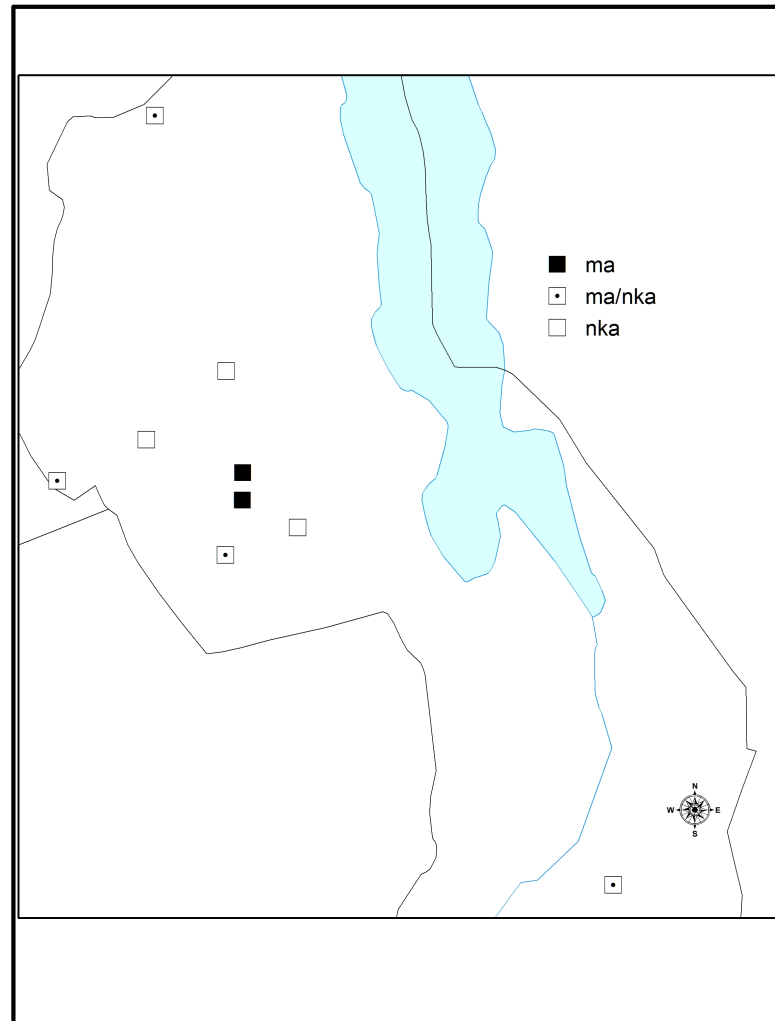
Figure 5.2.: Geographical distribution of the *-ma-/-nka-* distinction found in this study

stem syllable following the past habitual marker (Mtenje also gives a high tone on the second syllable of the stem of the verb *ndi-ma-fótókoz-a* ('I used to explain'). Botne and Kulemeka (1995) describe both a high tone on the following stem syllable and a high tone on the preceding subject prefix (*á-ma-vína* 'She used to dance' (Botne and Kulemeka, 1995, xvii)) which differentiates the past from the present habitual (*a-ma-vína* 'She usually dances') in their description. Note that the latter pattern is similar to the past habitual pattern given by the speaker in example 5.78. As mentioned in 5.2.2, different inherent tone patterns of verbal stems as well as the speakers' lack of experience in marking tones cannot be ruled out as factors playing a role here. Regardless of how exactly the different patterns are realised by speakers from different regions, a distinct tone pattern seems to distinguish *-ma$_2$-* from *-ma$_1$-*.

Leaving tone aside, *-ma$_2$-* is the only past imperfective marker in the system found for Lilongwe-town. Both progressive and habitual meaning is expressed by this marker:

(5.79) context: Beginning of a story: I'll tell you what happened to me once I was a child.

> *Ndi-**ma**-yend-a*   *ku*   *thengo.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PSTIPFV-walk-FV   NCL.at   forest
> 'I was walking in the forest.' (Ntha q166)

(5.80) context: What your brother usually DO after breakfast last summer?

> *Chilimwe*   *chatha-chi*   *mchimwene*   *wanga*   *a-**ma**-lemb-a*   *kalata*
> dry.season   last-DEM   brother   my   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-write-FV   letter
> *a-ka-th-a*   *ku-dya*   *chakudya*   *chakadzutsa.*
> 3.SBJ-when-finish-FV   INF-eat   food   breakfast
> 'Last summer/dry season, my brother used to write a letter after finishing breakfast.' (Mza q20)

In the recorded narrative told by speaker Chim from Lilongwe-town, *-ma$_2$-* is used for background events, cf. example 5.14, repeated here for convenience:

(5.81) *Koteroko*   *ku-**ma**-bwer-a*   *a-bambo*   *ndi*   *ana*
> from.far   NCL.there-PSTIPFV-come-FV   NCL.PL/HON-man   with   children
> *a-wiri*   *achinyamata,*   *winayo*   *a-ku-sewerets-a*   *kanthu*   *kake*
> NCL-two   NCL-young   another   3.SBJ-PRS-play-FV   something   his
> *ku-khala*   *ngati*   *ka-mbale*   *a-ku-meny-ets-a*   *ka-mpira.*
> INF-behave   like   NCL.DIM-plate   3.SBJ-PRS-hit-CAUS-FV   NCL.DIM-ball
> 'From far, there was a man coming with two young people, another one was playing something in his hand like a small plate hitting (it) with a small ball.' (Chim 427-429)

For the speakers from Dowa and Kasiya, *-nka-* is the only past imperfective marker used. It is found in past progressive as well as past habitual contexts. The following two examples illustrate the two types of use:

(5.82) context: Beginning of a story: I'll tell you what happened to me once I was a child.

> *[...] ndi-**nka**-yend-a   nkhalango.*
> [...] 1SG.SBJ-PSTIPFV-walk   forest
> '...I was walking in the forest.' (Chi q166)

(5.83) *Chaka   chatha   ti-**nka**-konz-a   m-nyumba   loweruka   lirilonse.*
    year   last   1PL.SBJ-PSTIPFV-clean-FV   in-house   Saturday   every

  'Last year we used to clean the house on Saturdays.' (Li q204)

(5.84) context: Talking of what happened yesterday

> *Pamene   iye   a-**nka**-lemb-a   kalata,   ine   ndi-**nka**-dikirir-a*
> while   he   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-write-FV   letter   I   1SG.SBJ-PSTIPFV-wait-FV
> *m'-munda.*
> in-garden
> 'While my brother was writing the letter, I was waiting in the garden.' (Phi q28)

Price (1956) and Language Center (1969) are the only sources in the literature to mention *-nka-*. They attribute past habitual meaning to it but do not mention *-ma-* with past time reference. *-ma-* with past time reference is mentioned by Watkins (1937), Botne & Kulemeka (1995) and Bentley & Kulemeka (2001) and defined as past habitual and/or imperfective. None of the descriptions mention both markers, cf. table 5.5.

The periphrastic forms *-na-li ku-* and *-da-li ku-* are mentioned by Riddel (1880), Thomson (1955) and Nurse (2008) as imperfect, perfect, past progressive or incomplete past. They are, however, only marginally used in the data of this investigation: two occurrences of *-na-li ku-* were found in the questionnaires and recordings, one in the new Bible translation and three occurrences in the direct-speech corpus of the old translation. *-da-li ku-* is found once in the questionnaire by speaker Mte from Lilongwe-rural, who is the oldest speaker in the sample. The same speakers use *-ma$_2$-* or, alternately, *-nka-* in other past imperfective contexts. It seems, therefore, that the use of *-na-li ku-* and *-da-li ku-* is decreasing, while *-ma$_2$-* or, alternately, *-nka-* are in prevalent use.

For the speakers from Blantyre-Zomba, Lilongwe-rural and Mchinji, I found a variation in past imperfective marking. These speakers use either *-ma$_2$-* or *-nka-* in past imperfective contexts. Table 5.10 shows the overall distribution of the two markers for these areas. In these systems, a distinction in terms of remoteness appears to govern

the use of the two different forms: for habitual or continuous events that took place rather recently (e.g. earlier on the day of speaking) -*ma₂*- is used, while -*nka*- is used for more remote events. -*ma₂*- can also be used for more remote events; thus, as with the -*na-/-da*- distinction, the distribution is not strictly complementary. Nevertheless, -*ma₂*- is more frequently used in recent past contexts than -*nka*-, and when looking at contrasting sentence pairs that only differ in remoteness, a clear distinction is found in the use of individual speakers, cf. speaker Mme from Zomba and speaker Mte from a village close to Lilongwe (Lilongwe-rural):

(5.85) context: narrative about what happened <u>yesterday</u>

> *Ndi-**ma**-yend-a*   *nkhalango.*
> 1SG.SBJ-RECIPFV-walk-FV   forest
> 'I was walking in the forest.' (Mme q161)

(5.86) context: narrative about what happened <u>when speaker was a child</u>

> *Ndi-**nka**-yend-a*   *nkhalango.*
> 1SG.SBJ-REMIPFV-walk-FV   forest
> 'I was walking in the forest.' (Mme q166)

(5.87) context: narrative about what <u>just</u> happened

> *Ndi-**ma**-yend-a*   *m'-nkhalango.*
> 1SG.SBJ-RECIPFV-walk-FV   in-forest
> 'I was walking in the forest.' (Mte q186)

(5.88) context: narrative about what happened <u>when speaker was a child</u>

> *Ndi-**nka**-yend-a*   *m'-nkhalango.*
> 1SG.SBJ-REMIPFV-walk-FV   in-forest
> 'I was walking in the forest.' (Mte q166)

Also in the more recent Bible translation, -*ma₂*- is found as the past imperfective referring to more recent events, while -*nka*- is used for more remote past imperfective events, cf.:

(5.89) context: Jesus came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked the disciples about what happened earlier (probably the same day):

> *Kodi*   *pa-njira*   *pa-ja*   *mu-**ma**-tsutsan-a*   *zotani?*
> Q   NCL.'on'-way   NCL.'on'-DEM   2PL.SBJ-RECIPFV-debate-FV   which
> 'What were you arguing among yourselves on the way?' (Mark 9:33)

(5.90) context: Jesus to his disciples after his crucification:

> *Nzimenezitu   zimene   ndi-**nka**-ku-uz-a-ni*   *pamene*
> this   REL   1SG.SBJ-REMIPFV-2.OBJ-tell-FV-2PL.OBJ   while
>
> *ndi-na-li*   *na-nu.*
> 1SG.SBJ-RECPST-COP   with-you
>
> 'This is what I told you, while I was still with you.' (Luke 24:44)

Thus, although not mentioned in earlier descriptions, a remoteness distinction is found also in past imperfective contexts, at least for speakers from Blantyre, Zomba, Mchjinji, Lilongwe-rural and in the recent Bible translation which is said to be based on the Lilongwe variety of Chichewa.

In the earlier Bible translation neither *-ma$_2$-* nor *-nka-* are used in past imperfective contexts, but the form *-naliku-*, which was mentioned by Riddel (1880) and Thomson (1955), appears instead:

(5.91) context: Jesus said to his disciples when he found out that Lazarus had died: Let us go back to Judea. The disciples answered:

> *Ambuye,   A-yuda   a-**naliku**-funa   ku-ku-ponya-ni   miyala*
> Lord   NCL.PL-jew   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-want   INF-2.OBJ-throw-2PL/HON   stones
>
> *tsopano   apa;   ndipo   mu-nka-nso   komweko   kodi?*
> now   here   and   2PL/HON-go-again   there   Q
>
> 'Lord, the Jews were just [a short time ago] trying to stone you, and you are going there again?' (John 11:8, old translation)

(5.92) context: Joseph and Mary were looking for their twelve-year old son for three days until they found Jesus in the temple courts in Jerusalem where he had stayed behind:

> *[...]   atate   wako   ndi   ine   ti-**naliku**-funa-fun-a   Iwe   ndi*
> [...]   father   your   and   I   1PL.SBJ-PSTIPFV-look.for-look.for-FV   you   with
>
> *kuda nkhawa.*
> discomfort
>
> '[...] your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.' (Luke 2:48, old translation)

Note also that in the second example, a stem reduplication of *-funa* is used to intensify the description of the reported search. Only three occurrences of *-naliku-* are found in the direct speech corpus of the early Bible translation; *-daliku-* does not occur in this corpus.

Table 5.10.: The distribution of *-ma₂-* and *-nka-* in the systems where they are differentiated in the questionnaires, recordings and the Bible corpus

time reference	occurrence of tense markers							
	Blntr-Zmb		Llw-rural		Mchinji		Bible translation	
	-ma₂-	-nka-	-ma₂-	-nka-	-ma₂-	-nka-	-ma₂	-nka-
just	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
earlier today	1	-	3	-	1	-	2	-
yesterday	3	-	1	8	2	-	-	-
previous couple of days	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
recently	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
earlier this year/previous years	-	3	1	3	4	-	-	-
many years ago	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
childhood	-	1	2[13]	2	-	-	-	-
unspecified	3	-	5	1	3	1	2	15

Most of the contexts in which the past imperfective markers *-ma₂-* and *-nka-* are found in the more recent translation contain *-na-* marking, the default past time marker, in the earlier translation.

Out of all the previous descriptions of Chichewa, Hetherwick's (1920) description seems to be closest to the variety of the language used in the old Bible translation, although he did not describe *-naliku-* as a past imperfective marker. The use of the past imperfective and past markers in the early Bible translation as described above and in the subsection describing the use of the markers *-na-* and *-da-* is similar to what Hetherwick (1920) observes in his grammatical description, with two exceptions. Hetherwick mentions that both *-na-* and *-da-* are used for past tense without describing any difference between the use of the two markers. Furthermore, Hetherwick states that past continuous is expressed by *-ka-* (which is reported to have several other functions, too, e.g. in clauses expressing 'to go and. . .'). Hetherwick notes that his description is based on the variety of the language spoken in the Shire Highlands around Blantyre and the districts south-

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[13]Both occurrences were found in the recorded conversation in a sequence in which the recent past marker *-na-* was also used (namely in the utterances referring to 'At the school, what pleased me best was the Boys Brigade. It was a group where the youth learned various skills', cf. example (5.48)).

west of Lake Nyasa (today Lake Malawi). This area is located in southern present-day Malawi. The Malawian translators that were involved in the old translation came from Blantyre but also from two more northern districts, Dowa and Dedza.

The language used in the new Bible translation is the variety of Chichewa spoken in and around Malawi's capital Lilongwe, according to translation experts at the Malawian Bible Society and according to speaker Mte from Lilongwe-rural who was involved in the present investigation. Thus, the two different translations show two different dialects at two different points in time rather than two different historical stages of the same language.

The following section deals with the last marker referring to events in the past.

Pluperfect (?) -ta-

The marker *-ta-* was described by Riddel (1880) as the pluperfect and by Hetherwick (1920) as referring to a completed action but not restricted to past time reference; Thomson (1955) terms it the completed perfect; Price (1956) and similarly Language Center (1969), Botne and Kulemeka (1995) and also Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) interpret it as expressing the completion of an act before the beginning of another.

Most occurrences of *-ta-* (25 in all) are found in temporal clauses. In the recordings and the direct speech Bible corpus, these were the only examples of *-ta-*. The temporal clause use will be discussed in section 5.5.3. In the questionnaires, there were also five main clause occurrences, e.g.:

(5.93) context: What did you find out when you came to town yesterday?

> *Mfumu   i-**ta**-f-a.*
> king   NCL.SBJ-PPF-die-FV
> 'The king had died.' (Mte, Pha and Mza q67)

This use is found for speakers from Lilongwe-rural, Lilongwe-town and Blantyre. The speakers from Kasiya and Mchinji on the other hand do not use *-ta-* in this context, but *-na-*. As the death of the king preceded the reference time (the speaker's coming to town), a pluperfect can be expected in this context. Most of the sentences that were typically translated with a pluperfect in Dahl (1985), however, are not marked by *-ta-* in Chichewa, with the exception of one sentence that was translated with a periphrastic construction involving *-ta-* and the copula:

(5.94) *Ndi-ta-bwer-a*   *ku-mudzi,*   ***a-na-li***
       1PL.SBJ-TCL.PST-come-FV   at-home   3.SBJ-RECPST-COP
       *a-**ta**-lemb-a*   *ma-kalata*   *a-wiri.*
       3.SBJ-PPF-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter   NCL.PL-two

'When I came home [yesterday], he had written two letters [he finished writing them just before I came].' (Mte q138)

Other typical pluperfect contexts received *-na-* or *-da-* marking. Speakers Chi from Dowa and Mte from Lilongwe-rural used *-da-* in the following context; speakers Mme from Zomba and Ntha from Lilongwe-town used *-na-*, e.g.:

(5.95) context: Q: Did you find your brother at home? A: No, we did not.

> *A-**na**-chok-a.*
> 3.SBJ-RECPST-leave-FV
> 'He (had) left.' (Mme, Ntha q89)

A slightly different, but related use of *-ta-* is found in subordinate clauses.

In temporal clauses, *-ta-* is most often used to refer to an event that was completed before another event. This use, like that found in (5.93), seems pluperfect-like, although *-ta-* only occurs in very few contexts in which pluperfects typically appear. We will come back to the use of *-ta-* in temporal clauses in section 5.5.3.

The different systems for past time reference compared to earlier descriptions

The previous sections have shown a considerable variation in past tense marking by the speakers from different regions in Malawi, and, to some extent, between the two Bible translations. We have also seen quite a lot of variation in the earlier descriptions of Chichewa. In this section, the different systems are compared to each other, and it will be examined whether the different systems found in the data conform to earlier descriptions.

The system found in the Bible translation from 1998 is similar to the one found for Lilongwe-rural and Blantyre-Zomba, but it shows an additional marking (*-daa-*) that I did not find in the oral recordings or the questionnaires. These three systems distinguish two past imperfectives, *-ma$_2$-* and *-nka-*; none of the earlier descriptions mention both markers in this function.

The system found for Lilongwe-town resembles the descriptions in Watkins (1937) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001), except that the marker *-daa-* was not found in my data.

Segmentally, the past tense forms in the system of Mchinji seem to be similar to the system that Mtenje (1987) describes for Ntcheu. However, the tone marks that the Mchinji speaker added to her translation do not suggest a remoteness distinction expressed by *-na-* markers with different tones. Mtenje does not give a full description of the tense-aspect system but describes the tone properties of a number of verb forms with different tenses. *-nka-* is not mentioned in Mtenje (1987) as it does not play a role in the tone patterns that the article analyses, but both *-nka-* and *-ma$_2$-* are used in Ntcheu, according to Al Mtenje (p.c.).

The speaker from Mchinji also uses *-nka-*. Mchinji and Ntcheu are located some 200km distant from each other.

The system found for the speaker from Kasiya resembles the description by Price (1956) who mentions *-na-* as past tense and *-nka-* as past habitual.

The system found for the speakers from Dowa is consistent with the description by the Language Center (1969).

Table 5.11 gives an overview of the different systems and shows the consistencies with earlier descriptions. For the authors given in brackets, the consistency is only partial. If there are inconsistencies in more than one respect, no reference is given.

Table 5.11.: The different past-tense systems found in the data compared to earlier descriptions

Dowa (speakers: Li and Chi)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-		Language Center
past imperfective	-nka-				

Lilongwe-town (speakers: Chim, Ntha, Mza and Mag)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-		(Watkins, Bentley & Kulemeka)
past imperfective	-ma-				

Blantyre-Zomba (speakers: Pha and Mme) and Lilongwe-rural (speakers: Kwe and Mte)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-		-
past imperfective	-ma-		-nka-		

Lilongwe-rural Kasiya (speaker: Phi)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-		Price
past imperfective	-nka-			

Mchinji (speaker: Da)

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-		-
past imperfective	-ma-	-nka-		

recent Bible translation

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-	-daa-	(Watkins, Bentley & Kulemeka)
past imperfective	-ma-		-nka-		

early Bible translation

perfect and past tenses	-a-	-na-	-da-		(Hetherwick)
past imperfective	-naliku-				

Only the systems in Dowa and Lilongwe-rural seem to correspond to earlier descriptions (Language Center (1969) and Price (1956)). For the other systems, certain tense-aspect categories that were described in the literature simply might not have been elicited. In other cases, distinctions were found in this investigation that were not

described earlier, which might be the result of language change, cf. the discussion in section 5.3.1 above.

5.4. Expressing the future

5.4.1. Earlier findings

Riddel (1880) observes two different future tenses, near future and distant future. The near future is expressed by *ka*, as in *di **ka** manga* 'I shall bind', and the distant future by *dza*, as in *di **dza** manga* 'I shall bind'. No further explanation is given as to the contexts in which these forms are used. For both tenses, a progressive form exists, expressed periphrastically by a form of copular *li* and the infinitive marked by *ku*, a *li **ku** **ka** manga*[14] for the near future and correspondingly for the *dza*-future.

Henry (1891) calls the future expressed by *dza* forms the "indefinite future" and relates what he calls the particle *dza* to the verb *ku-dza* 'to come'. He briefly mentions the imminent future (a couple of pages earlier termed the progressive or imminent present) that expresses something that is about to happen, marked by *-to-*, without giving any further examples or explanations. A third future, marked by *-ka-*, the *contingent future*, "may also serve as a potential or conditional tense" (p. 143).

Hetherwick (1920) distinguishes two futures, a near and a distant future. While the near future has the same form as the present tense, zero marking (cf. section 5.2.1), e.g. *mfumu ifika* 'The chief will arrive/arrives', the distant future is marked by *-dza-*, e.g. *Munthu a-**dza**-gwa* 'The person will fall' (p.38). It is generally noted that "the distant future refers to incidents which take place at some little distance of time" (Hetherwick, 1920, 38). If *-dza-* is combined with a past tense marker, it means 'X came to do Y' as in *a**nadza**manga nyumba yache pano* 'He came to build his house here' (p. 38). An action involving movement away from the speaker is expressed by *-ka-*, e.g. *ndinakatenga* 'I went to bring' (Hetherwick, 1920, 145). The marker is also combinable with other tense markers to refer to other times.

Watkins (1937) states that the prefix *dzá* is applied in order to refer to the future, e.g. m̥dzáwɔna m̥ máꞏβa 'Ye shall see in the morning'.

"With sufficient contextual support" the same form that is applied for present tense, zero marking, can also be used for the future, e.g. *nikud̬iá m̥máꞏβa* 'I eat tomorrow' (p.52, cf. also section 5.2.1 above). In order to express both uncertainty and futurity, the bare verb stem is used with the subject prefix and without the future marker but with the subjunctive suffix (FV) *-ε*, e.g.

níꞏtcɔkε	sabatá	yámáβa
I shall leave perhaps	week	of tomorrow

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[14]The fact that the *ka*-morpheme is placed after the infinitive marker, as opposed to the past progressive forms in which the past marker occurs before the auxiliary *-li*, is not commented on.

'I shall leave perhaps next week.' (Watkins, 1937, 58)

Future habitual is expressed by the prefix - ´‧*zí*, e.g.:

tsɔpánɔ	ní‧zírɛ‧mba
now	I shall habitually write

'Now, I shall write habitually.' (Watkins, 1937, 58)

Sanderson and Bithrey (1949) mention two futures: a distant future tense formed by prefixing *-dza-* to the root of the verb, and an immediate future which like the present has zero marking. The distant future refers to "e.g. 'next week' or 'next month'", for example, *ndi**dza**funa* 'I shall want (sometime)' (p.21). The immediate future is exemplified by *tifuna* 'we shall want (presently)'.

Thomson (1955) mentions one future tense only, formed by *-dza-* as in *ndi-**dza**-ona* 'I shall see' (Thomson, 1955, 12).

Price (1956) identifies the same *-dza-* future and notes the immediate future use of the form consisting of the subject prefix and the stem only involving a higher pitch on the subject prefix than when used with present time reference, cf. section 5.2.1 above.

Similarly, **Language Center (1969)** and **Stevick (1965)** distinguish the *-dza-* future from the immediate future which has the same form as the present tense, zero marking.

Botne and Kulemeka (1995) identify *-dza-* as the marking for the remote future, referring to an event happening on the day after speaking or later, and zero marking for the immediate or near future, referring to an event that "will occur most likely before tomorrow, i.e., very soon" (p. xviii). *-zidza-* is given as the form for the future habitual.

Also according to **Bentley and Kulemeka (2001)**, *-dza-* is used for the future tense. For events in the immediate future, no morphological marking is applied, aside from a high tone on the subject prefix. Strictly speaking, this is no zero marking, as the tone on the subject marker is distinctive and distinguishes the grammatical meaning. Nevertheless, I list this marking in Table 5.13 in the column of zero marking, as no segmental morpheme is applied. The following example illustrates the use of this marking (Bentley and Kulemeka do not mark tone):

Kalolo	a-∅-gul-a	njinga	lero
Kalolo	3-FUT-buy-FV	9.bicycle	today

'Kalolo will buy a bicycle today.' (Bentley and Kulemeka, 2001, 32)

Bentley and Kulemeka also identify the marker *-zidza-* for future habitual use.

Nurse (2008) identifies only one future tense, marked by *-dza-*, which is surprising, as at least two of his sources, Botne and Kulemeka (1995) and Stevick (1965), identify both an immediate or near future with zero marking and a distant futuremarked by *-dza-*. I did not check Price (1966), but in the earlier version of this description, Price (1956) also mentions two different future tenses, as described above.

It may be noted that regarding future marking, the descriptions of four authors conform to each other at last. Hetherwick (1920), Sanderson and Bithrey (1949), Stevick (1965), and Language Center (1969) distinguish distant and immediate or near future formed by *-dza-* and zero marking, respectively. None of the four mentions a future habitual form. Price (1956) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) note that immediate future is marked by tone alone, while *-dza-* is the marking for the distant future tense. Riddel (1880), Henry (1891), Watkins (1937) and Thomson (1955) suggest other analyses, the latter three of these descriptions do not identify a remoteness distinction in the future tense(s).

For each tense, Riddel (1880) identifies an "Imminent Tense", which expresses "an action on the point of being done, or a state on the point of being realised" and is marked by *to* (Riddel, 1880, 40f), e.g. in the present *di **to** manga* 'I am about to bind', the past *da **to** manga* 'I was about to bind', and, what Riddel calls the perfect, *di na **to** manga* 'I was about to bind'. Riddel states that the imminent form exists for the pluperfect, the two future tenses and the progressives as well, but is less common in use.

Henry (1891) also describes imminent forms marked by *-to-*, but translates them first as 'just doing X' or 'to be like to do X' in the present (cf. section 5.2.1), calling them the progressive or imminent present (as opposed to the continuous present). When he comes back to these forms later, he labels them as "imminent future", without giving any further examples or explanations. Sanderson and Bithrey (1949) do not mention any imminent tenses but give one example of a form involving *-to-*, along with forms containing the prefix *-ngo-* , stating that either of these expresses the meaning 'merely', e.g. *angokala* 'he is just sitting (doing nothing)', *atocita* 'he merely does so' (Sanderson and Bithrey, 1949, 47). Hetherwick (1920), too, mentions *-to-*, but again with a slightly different meaning. He attributes the meaning 'to be in the act of doing' to it and its alternate form *-ndo-*, as in *atodza* 'He is in the act of coming' (Hetherwick, 1920, 154). Later descriptions do not mention this category at all, neither the imminent forms nor the morpheme *-to-*.

The forms and uses given in these sources are summarised in Table 5.12.

5.4.2. The present investigation

Most earlier descriptions of Chichewa state that immediate future is expressed by zero marking and distant future by *-dza-*, cf. Table 5.12. In the questionnaires and the recordings, only a few instances of future time reference occur. The overall distribution of future markers in these data types is shown in Table 5.13.

Zero marking and *-dza-* were used by all speakers. The marker *-zi-* was used by one speaker from Dowa (Chi), one speaker from Lilongwe-rural (Mte), and two speakers from Lilongwe-town (Mza and Mag).The other speakers did not use this marker.[15] My data

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[15]It needs to be pointed out that not every speaker translated the same sentences, as the questionnaire was split into two different parts. Thus, four speakers did not translate any of the sentences in which

Table 5.12.: Future tense markers according to earlier descriptions of Chichewa

	∅ **marking**	**-dza-**	**-zi-**	**-zidza-**	other
Riddel (1880)	-	distant future	-	-	*-ka-* near future, *-ka-li ku-* near future progressive, *-dza-li ku-* distant future progressive, *-to-* imminent
Henry (1891)	-	indefinite future	-	-	*-to-* imminent future, *-ka-* contingent future, potential, conditional tense
Hetherwick (1920)	near future	distant future	-	-	*-to-/-ndo-* 'to be in the act of doing'
Watkins (1937)	-	future	future habitual (with high tone on *-zi-* and preceding syllable)	-	*-e* uncertain future
Sanderson & Bithrey (1949)	immediate future	distant future	-	-	*-to-/-ngo-* 'to merely X'
Thomson (1955)	-	future	-	-	-
Price (1956)	immediate future (with high tone on subject prefix)	future	-	-	-
Stevick (1965)	immediate tense	future	-	-	-
Language Center (1969)	immediate future	future	-	-	-
Botne & Kulemeka (1995)	immediate and near future (today)	remote future (tomorrow and later)	-	future habitual	-
Bentley & Kulemeka (2001)	immediate future (with high tone on subject prefix)	future	-	future habitual	-
Nurse (2008)	-	future PFV	-	-	-

Table 5.13.: Distribution of future markers in the questionnaires and recordings

time reference	occurrence of tense markers			
	$\emptyset$ marking	-zi-	-dza-	-zika-/-zidza-
now immediately	10	2		-
later today	2	2		-
tomorrow	6	-	7	-
when I grow old	-	-	4	-
unspecified	-	1	4	-
habitually	-	-	-	3

also turned up a form *-zika-*, not described in earlier sources, alternating with *-zidza-* to signal future habitual. Variation is also found for the use of these two. Speakers Da (Mchinji) and Phi (Kasiya) use the former as future habitual, speaker Pha from Blantyre (but not speaker Ka from the same town) uses *-zidza-* in this context.

The marker *-to-*, which was described as *imminent* tense and translated as 'be about to X' or 'just' or 'merely doing X' or 'be in the act of doing X' by Riddel (1880), Henry (1891), Sanderson and Bithrey (1949) and Hetherwick (1920), seems to be no longer used as it was not mentioned by later descriptions, and it was not found in the data collected for the present investigation either.

near future: zero marking and -zi-

Three speakers translated a sentence referring to the immediate future as follows, using zero marking:

(5.96) context: Q: What are you planning to do right now? A: I WRITE a
letter

Ndi-lemb-a   *kalata.*
1sg.SBJ-write-FV   letter

'I'm going to write a letter.' (Pha, Da, Phi q23)

Another speaker applied the form *-ku-* introduced in 5.2.2 in this context which indicates that the present form can also be applied in this context and interpreted with an immediate future meaning.

Speaker Ka from Blantyre translated the sentence *Ndilemba kalata* in example 5.96 as 'I will write a letter'. He added that when adding the adverbials *lero* 'today' or *mawa* 'tomorrow', it can refer to later the same or the following day. As the distribution

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-zi- was used by other speakers.

represented in Table 5.13 shows, zero marking with future reference is used in contexts referring to later on the day of speaking and to the following day.

The speakers Chi from Dowa and Mag from Dowa/Lilongwe-town use the marking *-zi-* in similar contexts:[16]

(5.97) context: Hurry up!

> *Sitima   i-**zi**-nyamuk-a.*
> train   NCL.SBJ-HODFUT-depart-FV
> 'The train is leaving (soon).' (Mag q256)

(5.98) context: Said as an order by a teacher leaving the classroom:

> *Pamene   ine   ndi-**zi**-bwer-a*   *ndi-pez-e*
> when   I   1SG.SBJ-HODFUT-come-FV   1SG.SBJ-find-SBJV
> *mu-ta-maliz-a*   *ku-lemba   ntchito   iyi.*
> 2PL.SBJ-PPF-finish-FV   INF-write   work   DEM
> 'When I return, you will have written this assignment.' (Chi q108)

The distribution of the marker *-zi-* suggests that it functions as a hodiernal future marker for the speakers from Dowa.[17]

These speakers, who use *-zi-* for the hodiernal future, also use zero marking with future reference, not when referring to later on the day of speaking, but rather when talking about the following day, cf.:

(5.99) *A-nyamuk-a   mawa.*
>   3.SBJ-leave-FV   tomorrow
> 'She will leave tomorrow.' (Mag q266)

In the recent Bible translation, which is said to employ the Chichewa variety spoken in Lilongwe, however, sentences in which *-zi-* are used correspond to modals in the English translation that can be paraphrased by *you should VERB*, i.e. they express a type of deontic modality:

(5.100) *Nd-a-ku-patsa-ni*   *chitsanzo, kuti   inu-nso*
>   1SG.SBJ-PRF-2.OBJ-give-2PL.OBJ   example   that   you-also
> *mu-**zi**-chit-a*   *monga   momwe   Ine*
> 2PL.SBJ-should-do-FV   as   like   I

---

[16]They did not translate the sentence given in example 5.96.

[17]During the final revision stage, Andrew Goodson (p.c.) reported that according to his experience, *-zi-* can also be used for future time reference later than the day of speaking. He would rather describe the meaning of this marker as future imperfective. Unfortunately, I did not have time to investigate this question further.

nd-a-ku-chit-ir-a-ni   *inu.*
1SG.SBJ-PRF-2.OBJ-do-APPL-FV-2PL.OBJ   you

'For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.'
(John 13:15)

It has been widely observed that future and modality are closely related and intertwined in many languages, Chichewa is no exception in this respect.

The data collected contains only few sentences referring to the future. More data is needed to draw valid conclusions. From the instances of future reference that I found, a three-way future distinction seems to be used by the speakers from Dowa: *-zi-* for hodiernal future, zero marking for near, non-hodiernal future and *-dza-* for the distant future. In other regions in Malawi and in the recent Bible translation, only a two-way distinction is found: zero marking for near future (the same marking is also used for extended present states, cf. 5.2.2) and *-dza-* for the distant future. This category will be described in the following section.

distant future: -dza-

In those contexts in the data that refer to future events occurring later than on the day of speaking, *-dza-* is applied most frequently. Zero marking is used in six cases, cf. table 5.13 and example 5.99 above, but never for the time after tomorrow. Of these six instances, four were given by Dowa speakers, the other two by a speaker from Lilongwe rural and by a speaker from Zomba.

Two contexts in the questionnaire referred explicitly to 'tomorrow' and one to the time 'when I grow old'. In both cases, *-dza-*, the distant future marker, is applied, cf.:

(5.101) *Ndi-ka-**dza**-kul-a*   *ndi-**dza**-gula*   *nyumba* *ya-ikulu*
         1SG.SBJ-TCL.FUT-FFUT-grow(up)-FV   1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy   house   NCL-big

         'When I grow old, I buy a big house.' (Chi, Mme, Ntha q152[18])

(5.102) context: It's no use trying to swim in the lake tomorrow.

         Mawa   *[...]*   *madzi-wa*   *a-**dza**-khal-a*   *o-zizira.*
         tomorrow   [...]   water-DEM   3.SBJ-DFUT-stay/become-FV   ATTR-cold

         'The water will be cold (then).' (Da q36)

Thus, for the non-hodiernal future, *-dza-* seems to be the preferred choice.

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[18]Speaker Mte uses the same tense markings but a different verb: *manga* 'build'.

future habitual: -zika- and -zidza-

In order to express future habituality, the prefix *-zika-* is used by speakers from Mchinji, Kasiya and Blantyre, while *-zidza-* is used by a different speaker from Blantyre. These morphemes seem to be composed of *-zi-* and *-ka-* or *-dza-*. The following examples illustrate the use of these markers:

(5.103) context: A: My brother has got a new job. He'll start tomorrow. B: What kind of work he DO there?

> *A-**zika**-lemba ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-FUTHAB-write NCL.PL-letter
>
> 'He will write letters.' (Da from Mchinji, Phi from Kasiya and Ka from Blantyre q27)

(5.104) *A-**zidza**-lemba ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-FUTHAB-write NCL.PL-letter
>
> 'He will write letters.' (Pha from Blantyre q27)

Note that one speaker from Blantyre translates the sentence by using *-zika-*; the other uses *-zidza-*.

Both markers are used in the recent Bible translation, although rather infrequently. *-zidza-* occurs 12 times in the New Testament and *-zika-* 10 times, cf. the following two examples:

(5.105) *Pa nthawi imeneyo ambiri a-dza-tay-a chikhulupiriro chao,*
> on time when many 3.SBJ-DFUT-discard-FV faith DEM
>
> *a-**zidza**-perek-an-a nkumadana.*
> 3.SBJ-FUTHAB-betray-RECP-FV and.hating
>
> 'At that time when many will turn away from the faith, they will betray and hate each other.' (Matthew 24:10)

(5.106) *Ndithu ndi-ku-nenets-a kuti kulikonse kumene anthu*
> indeed 1SG.SBJ-2SG.OBJ-emphasize-FV that wherever where people
>
> *a-**zika**-lalik-a Uthenga Wabwino pa dziko lonse lapansi,*
> 3.SBJ-FUTHAB-preach-FV message good on earth whole down
>
> *a-**zidza**-fotokoz-a-nso zimene maiyu wa-chit-a, kuti anthu*
> 3.SBJ-FUTHAB-explain-FV-also what woman 3SG.PRF-do-FV that people
>
> *a-**zidza**-m-kumbukir-a.*
> 3.SBJ-FUTHAB-3SG.OBJ-remember-FV
>
> 'I tell you wherever the gospel will be preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.' (Mark 14:9)

The sentences marked by *-zidza-* and *-zika-* in the Bible translation seem to refer to more general prophecies about the future that hold over a period of time rather than to a single event. The difference between the two, *-zidza-* and *-zika-*, is difficult to grasp but might be a difference related to a movement towards or away from something, a distinction between *ventive* and *itive* that will be discussed further in sections 5.5.5 and 5.5.6. According to this distinction, *-zika-* would mean 'will go and X', while *-zidza-* would mean 'will come and X'.[19] However, as there are only few sentences in the data showing these forms, the analysis remains preliminary.

5.5. Sequencing: temporal clauses, itives, ventives and consecutive marking in narratives

So far, we have looked primarily at tense-aspect marking in main clauses with finite verbs. In the following, more complex constructions will be described involving either subordinate (temporal) clauses or non-finite verb forms that express consecutive events. In section 5.5.4, we will look at a marking that expresses future reference in temporal clauses, *-ka-*. Furthermore, itive and ventive forms are discussed. The two latter form types occur in main clauses and with finite verb forms but are semantically similar to the previously mentioned constructions in that they express sequences of events.

5.5.1. Subordinate clauses

Subordinate clauses are generally defined as dependent clauses, i.e. clauses that do not occur on their own and that modify a superordinate, main clause. A number of types of subordinate clauses are found in Chichewa, among them complement clauses, relative clauses and temporal clauses which will be discussed in the following.

A very common subordinate clause type in Chichewa is the complement clause, functioning as an argument to the verb in the main clause, which is introduced by the conjunction *kuti* 'that':

(5.107) *A-chimwene*   *a-ku-dziwa,*   ***kuti*** *madzi ndi o-zizira.*
       NCL.PL/HON-brother 3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV that water COP ATTR-be.cold
'My brother knows that the water is cold.' (Mte q117)

(5.108) *. . . ndi liti*   *ti-daa-mva-po*   ***kuti***
       and when 1PL.SBJ-hear/understand-DEM that
mu-ku-dwal-a   *kapena kuti mu-li*   *m'-ndende. . .*
2PL/HON-PRS-be.sick-FV or   that 2PL/HON-COP NCL.in-prison
'. . . and when did we see you sick [lit. hear/understand that you are sick] or in prison [and did not help you]?' (Matthew 25:44)

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[19]I thank Al Mtenje for this observation.

In clauses of this type following verbs like 'want', 'hope' etc., the verb in the subordinate clause is marked as subjunctive mood, cf.:

(5.109) *Ife si-ti-ku-fun-a konse **kuti** munthu a-mene-yu*
      we NEG-1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV never that man NCL-REL-DEM

*a-khal-**e** mfumu yathu.*
3.SBJ-become/be-SBJV king our

'We don't want this man to be our king. (lit. We don't want that this man becomes our king.' (Luke 19:14)

Another type of subordinate clauses are relative, or attributive, clauses introduced by a form of the relative pronoun *-mene*, e.g.:

(5.110) *Masana ano ka-nkhomaliro ka-**mene** ndi-na-dy-a*
      lunch.time DEM NCL.DIM-lunch NCL.DIM-REL 1SG.SBJ-RECPST-eat-FV

ndi nsima.
COP nsima

'This afternoon, the small lunch that I ate was nsima (maize porridge).' (Mte 307)

In the more recent Bible translation, apart from this type, another type of attributive clause is used in which not a relative pronoun but a non-finite verb form marked by the attributive prefix *o-* is used, cf.:

(5.111) *Ngo-dala anthu **o**-dzets-a mtendere, pakuti*
      just/only-be.blessed people ATTR-cause/bring-FV peace because

Mulungu a-dza-ŵa-tch-a ana ake.
God 3.SBJ-DFUT-3.OBJ-call-FV children his

'Blessed are the peace makers (lit. the people who cause/bring peace), for they will be called sons of God.' (Matthew 5:9)

In all types of subordinate clauses illustrated so far, either a conjunction or relative pronoun or a non-finite verb form is used that distinguishes these clause types from main clauses.

In the temporal clauses that will be described in the following sections, no conjunctions are used but rather affixes in the tense-aspect slot, following the subject prefix, such as *-sana-* 'before', *-ta-* 'when' (past) and *-ka-* 'when' (future). Before we turn to these markers, we will take a closer look at the subjunctive marking that is used in certain subordinate clauses, and that also plays a role in negated clauses, cf. section 5.7.

Subjunctive -e

Subjunctive verb forms, marked by the suffix -e, have three main functions in Chichewa: They are used instead of imperatives in polite requests, in complement clauses to certain verbs, and in certain types of negated clauses (for negation see section 5.7). Imperatives can also be formed by the verb root and the final vowel -a; the subjunctive form is more polite, e.g.:

(5.112) *Mu-ndi-pempher-er-**e***   *inu-yo*   *kwa*   *Ambuye*   *kuti*   *zi-mene*
        2PL/HON-1SG.OBJ-pray-APPL-SBJV   you-DEM   to   Lord   that   NCL-REL

        mw-a-nen-a-zi   *zi-sa-ndi-gwer-e.*
        2PL/HON-PRF-say-FV-DEM   NCL.SBJ-NEG-1SG.OBJ-fall-SBJV

        'Pray for me to the Lord, that none of the things which you have spoken come on me.' (Acts 8:24)

Complement clauses of volitional verbs, verbs of saying and the like where the complement clause expresses a wish or the purpose of an action start with the conjunction *kuti* 'that'. The search for finite subjunctive forms in the recent Bible translation yielded nearly two thousand hits, I looked at 50 of these, two of which are the following:

(5.113) *Ife*   *si-ti-ku-fun-a*   *konse*   ***kuti***   *munthu*   *a-mene-yu*
        we   NEG-1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV   never   that   man   NCL-REL-DEM

        *a-khal-**e***   *mfumu*   *yathu.*
        3.SBJ-become/be-SBJV   king   our

        'We don't want this man to be our king [lit. We don't want that this man becomes our king].' (Luke 19:14)

(5.114) *Ndi-da-lalik-a*   ***kuti***   *a-tembenuk-**e***
        1SG.SBJ-REMPST-preach-FV   that   3.SBJ-change/overturn-SBJV

        mtima   *[...]*
        heart/soul/mind

        'I preached that they should repent [...] [lit. I preached that they should change (their) heart].' (Acts 26:20)

Both subjunctive verb forms in the examples above, *a-khal-**e*** and *a-tembenuk-**e***, refer to something that is not a fact at the moment of speech. This use of -*e* is in line with earlier observations on this suffix both in Bantu and in Chichewa.[20]

Meinhof (1906) describes the function of -*e* in Bantu historically as follows:

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[20]For example 5.113, there is an alternative way of expressing a wish employing the affix -*zi*-, as in *Ambuye, ti-ku-fun-a kuti ti-**zi**-peny-a.* 'Lord, we want our sight' (lit. 'We want that we shall see') (Matthew 20: 33, 1998 translation).

> Man denke sich gewissermaßen die drei Endungen *-a*, *-e* und *-i* so, dass *-e* zwischen *-a* und *-i* steht: *-a* bezeichnet die Handlung als "wirklich", *-e* als "erwünscht, möglich", *-i* als "nicht wirklich". (Meinhof, 1906, 64)[21]

In Chichewa, *-e* is used for both desired/possible events and not real/not actual events. Watkins (1937) describes the functions of the suffix *-e* as expressing either a less strong, more polite form of the imperative (hortative), or indicating that the action described "is not regarded as being under the volitional control of the speaker (or subject of the action), but is a contingency. Verbs which follow expressions of desire, intention, etc. therefore, often take the suffix *-ɛ*" (Watkins, 1937, 65).

Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) describe the subjunctive similarly as expressing obligation, desirability, possibility, uncertainty in the future or uncompletedness of an event.

We saw that subjunctives are used in certain types of subordinate clauses, and we will see further below (cf. 5.7) that subjunctive forms play a role in certain negated constructions as well.

Let us now turn to three types of subordinate clauses that express a temporal relation between the events expressed in the subordinate and the main clause. In the first one, described in the following section, subjunctive marking is employed, too.

5.5.2. temporal clause –sana–: 'before. . . '

The marking *-sana-* occurs 22 times in the recent Bible translation, once in the recordings and five times in the questionnaires. It occurs in subordinate clauses that mark a certain point in time (e.g. the start of a conversation) and establishes a temporal relation between the subordinate and the main clause: the main clause expresses what happened before the event took place that is described in the subordinate clause marked by *-sana-* and subjunctive *-e*, e.g.:

(5.115)   *Ah,*   *ti-**sana**-yamb-**e***   *ku-lankhul-an-a-ku*
        INTERJ   1PL.SBJ-before-start-SBJV   NMLZ-talk-RECP-FV-DEM

      bambo   *mu-li*   *apa*   *ine* *ndi-ma-pumul-a. . .*
      man/father/friend   2PL/HON.SBJ-COP   here I   1SG.SBJ-PSTIPFV-rest-FV

      'Ah, before we started this conversation, my friend, I was resting. . .' (Mte 309)

(5.116)   *Dzulo*   *madzulo,* *ndi-da-ka-gon-a*   *a-chimwene*
        yesterday   evening   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-ITV-sleep-FV   NCL.PL/HON-brother

      *a-**sana**-bwer-**e**.*
      3.SBJ-before-come-SBJV

      'Yesterday evening, I went to bed before my brother came (home).' (Mte q132)

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[21]The three endings *-a*, *-e* und *-i* can be considered such that *-e* is located between *-a* and *-i*: *-a* describes the action as "real, actual", *-e* as "desired, possible" and *-i* as "not real, not actual" [my translation, AK].

Note that the verb forms marked by *-sana-* end with the subjunctive suffix *-e-*. Only the affix *-sana-* and the subjunctive marking *-e-* mark the subordinate relation between the two clauses, no subordinating conjunction is used. Section 5.7 will show that there is a close connection between this marking and negated clauses expressing 'not yet'.

5.5.3. temporal clause -ta-: 'after/when. . . ' (past)

In section 5.3.2, the marker *-ta-* was decribed as expressing a completed situation in relation to another event in the past. The same marker is used in subordinate clauses in a similar way. The subordinate temporal clause defines the time period that the main clause refers to. Such a temporal relation is termed interclausal anaphora by Klein (1994, 69), the time defined by the subordinate clause is the topic time about which a certain assertion is made, cf. section 3.2.1). Here, the subordinate clause defines the topic time of the main clause as a time at which the event described by the subordinate clause marked by *-ta-* is already completed, e.g.:

(5.117) *A-**ta**-duts-an-a*   *na-ye*   *mtsikana* *uja*   *pa-njinga*
       3.SBJ-TCL.PST-pass-RECP-FV   with-her   girl   DEM   NCL.on-bicycle

       paja   *iye* *maso* *a-da-li*   *pa-mtsikana* *uja.*
       NCL.on-DEM   he   eyes   3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   NCL.on-girl   DEM

       'After they passed one another with that girl on the bicycle, his eyes were on the girl.' (Chim 423-424)

(5.118) *A-nza-nu*   *a-ma-perek-a*   *vinyo* *wabwino* *kwambiri* *poyamba,*
       NCL.PL-friend-your   3.SBJ-HAB-give-FV   wine   good   very   at.first

       kenaka   *anthu* *a-**ta**-khut-a,*   *a-ma-wa-pats-a*
       thereafter   people   3.SBJ-TCL.PST-be.full-FV   3.SBJ-HAB-3PL.OBJ-give-FV

       vinyo *wo-koma*   *pang'ono.*
       wine   ATTR-be.good   slightly

       'Everyone serves [lit. your friends serve] the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, then that which is worse.' (John 2:10, new translation)

In previous descriptions, as seen in 5.3.2, *-ta-* has been classified as pluperfect (Riddel (1880)), as referring to a completed action but not restricted to past time reference (Hetherwick (1920)), or as expressing the completion of an act before the beginning of another (Price (1956), Language Center (1969), Botne and Kulemeka (1995) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001)).

Most of the occurrences of *-ta-* in subordinate clauses in the questionnaires, recordings and the direct speech Bible corpus establish such a precedence relation between the events described in the subordinate and main clause. However, there are also cases in which the event described in the subordinate clause is not viewed as completed in relation to the situation in the main clause:

(5.119) *Ndi-**ta**-bwer-a*   *ku-mudzi;*   *a-na-li*   *ku-lemba*
       1SG.SBJ-TCL.PST-come-FV NCL.at/to-home 3.SBJ-RECPST-COP INF-write
       ma-kalata   *a-wiri.*
       NCL.PL-letter NCL-two
       'When I came home yesterday, he was writing two letters.' (Mte q140)

Another, similar case is the following:

(5.120) *A-**ta**-fik-a*   *ku-nyumba*   *dzulo,*   *Joni* *a-na-li*
       3.SBJ-TCL.PST-arrive-FV NCL.at-house yesterday John 3.SBJ-RECPST-COP
       o-topa   *kwambiri* *chifukwa* *a-da-gwir-a*   *ntchito* *sabata*
       ATTR-be.tired very   because 3.SBJ-REMPST-catch-FV work   week
       yonse.
       whole
       'When John came [lit. arrived at] home yesterday, he was very tired because he worked hard all week.' (Kwe q282)

Also in the earlier Bible translation, *-ta-* is found in temporal clauses that define a time period that the main clause refers back to, cf. the following examples in which (5.121) corresponds to the newer translation in example (5.118):

(5.121) *Munthu*   *a-li*   *yense* *a-ma-yamb-a*   *ku-ika*   *vinyo*
       man/person 3.SBJ-COP entire 3.SBJ-HAB-start-FV INF-put whine
       wo-koma;   *ndipo* *anthu* *a-**ta**-mw-a-tu,*   *pamenepo*   *wina*
       ATTR.-be.good and   people 3.SBJ-when-drink-FV-EMPH there(then) other
       wo-sa-koma
       ATTR-NEG-be.delicious
       'Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, then that which is worse.' (John 2:10, old translation)

(5.122) *Ndi-**ta**-muk-a*   *komweko* *ndi-yener-a*   *ku-ona-nso* *ku*
       1SG.SBJ-when-depart-FV there   1SG.SBJ-should-FV INF-see-also to
       Roma.
       Rome
       'After I have been there, I must also see Rome.' (Acts 19:21, old translation)

What is common to all sentences containing a subordinate clause marked by *-ta-* is that the time period that they refer to lies in the past. This seems to be the main difference between *-ta-* and another prefix occuring in subordinate temporal clauses, *-ka-*, which is described in the following section.

5.5.4. temporal clause -ka-: 'when...' (future)

In a similar way to temporal clauses involving -ta-, the prefix -ka- is used in subordinate temporal clauses that state the topic time for the situation described in the main clause. Note that -ka- is also used for conditionals that are not temporal clauses. The conditional use will not be discussed further here.

As opposed to -ta-, in all cases but one, the temporal clauses marked by -ka- refer not to the past but to the future, e.g.:

(5.123) context: The boy is expecting a sum of money

A-***ka***-landir-a   ndalamazo, a-mu-gul-ir-a   mtsikana
3.SBJ-TCL.FUT-receive-FV money-DEM 3.SBJ-3SG.OBJ-buy-APPL-FV girl
mphatso.
present
'When the boy gets the money, he will buy a present for the girl.' (Mme and Chi q103)

(5.124) Ti-***ka***-chok-a   pano, ndi-zi-ka-chit-a   [ma...]
 1PL.SBJ-TCL.FUT-leave-FV here 1SG.SBJ-NFUT-ITV-do-FV [...]
ndi-zi-ka-santhul-a   nchito ya mawa
1SG.SBJ-NFUT-ITV-prepare-FV work of tomorrow
'When we leave this place, I will go and do...I will go and prepare tomorrow's work.' (Mte 314)[22]

The only exception to this generalisation that I have encountered is a sentence that refers to a habitual event in the past, cf.:

(5.125) context: The boy used to receive an amount of money now and then

A-***ka***-landir-a   ndalama a-ma-gul-ir-a
3.SBJ-TCL-receive-FV money 3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-buy-APPL-FV
msungwana   mphatso.
girl/young.woman present
'Whenever the boy got the money, he bought (used to buy) a present for the girl.' (Mte and Mme q102)

In this case, the subordinate clause does not refer to a single point in time in the past, but to a recurring situation. For each of these situations, the assertion made in the main clause is true. The corresponding sentence marked by -ta- refers to a specific point in time:

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[22]In the second and third predicate here, which belong to the main clause, -ka- has a different meaning, see section 5.5.5 below.

(5.126) context: Last year, the boy's father sent him a sum of money

> *A-**ta**-landir-a*   *ndalama,*   *a-da-gul-ir-a*
> 3.SBJ-TCL.PST-receive-FV   money   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-buy-APPL-FV
> *msungwana*   *mphatso.*
> girl/young.woman   present
>
> 'When the boy got the money, he bought a present for the girl.' (Mte and Mme q101)

In the literature, the use of *-ka-* in temporal clauses is merely described with the meaning 'when' and illustrated by example sentences (Botne and Kulemeka (1995) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001)). Older descriptions like Hetherwick (1920) and Price (1956) only mention other meanings of *-ka-* such as conditional and itive (cf. 5.5.5 for the latter). Henry (1891) attributes contingent future meaning to this form, which also serves as a potential or conditional tense. Hetherwick (1920) suggests the verbs *-muka* and *-nka*, both meaning 'to depart' or 'go', as sources for this affix and also associates the past habitual *-nka-* with it. In a paper on the morpheme *-ka-* across Bantu, Botne (1999) cites tentative analyses by Meeussen (1967) and Guthrie (1971b) reconstructing *-ka-* as a future tense formative and mentions the reconstruction of the verb root *-ka-* 'go' by Meinhof (1910). Botne points out that *-ka-* is one of the most common verbal morphemes, albeit with numerous functions, across Bantu.

The infinitive marker ku- marking consecutive events

The infinitive marker *ku-* is used to mark consecutive events. Unlike most forms discussed here, it does not occur in the tense-aspect slot following the subject marker but verb-initially; these verb forms do not show subject marking.

Sixteen forms of this kind (out of 79 verb forms in total) occur in the recording of the Pear Story. They are used within a sentence as well as sentence-initially:

(5.127) *M'nyamata*   *uja*   *a-da-teng-a*   *zipatso*   *dengu*   *li-modzi*   ***ku**-ika*
       boy   DEM   3.SBJ-REMPST-take-FV   fruits   basket   NCL-one   INF-put
       pa-njinga   *pake...*
       NCL.on-bicycle   NCL.on-his

'The boy took one basket of fruits and put (it) on his bicycle...' (Chim 412-413)

(5.128) *Aah!*   *ma-dengu*   *anga*   *aja*   *a-li*   *kuti?*   ***Ku**-pezek-a*
       INTERJ   NCL.PL-basket   my   DEM   3.SBJ-COP   where   INF-be.found-FV
       kuti   *ma-dengu*   *pa-li*   *awiri, aah!*   ***Ku**-yesa*   *ma-dengu*
       that   NCL.PL-basket   there-COP   two   INTERJ   INF-think   NCL.PL-basket
       anga   *a-na-li-po*   *atatu?*   ***Ku**-yamba*   *ku-werenga:*   *aah!*
       my   3.SBJ-RECPST-COP-there   three   INF-start   INF-count/read   INTERJ

A-pit-a   *kuti?*
3PL.SBJ.PRF-go-FV   where

'Aah! Where are my baskets? He finds that there are two baskets, aah! Thought my baskets were three, starts counting: aah! Where are they [lit. where have they gone]?' (Chim 457-459)

The subject reference is given either by the context or by a lexical noun phrase in the sentence. For the latter, see the following example in which the reference switches from another protagonist to the boy who is the main actor in the story:

(5.129)   *Ndi*   *ku-nyamuka*   *iwo*   *aja*   *ku-ma-lowera*   *kumene*
      and   INF-start.off   they   those   INF-PSTIPFV-go   where

      a-ma-pit-a   **m'nyamata**   **uja-nso**   **ku**-*yamba*   *ku-guguluza*   *njinga*
      3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-go-FV   boy   DEM-also   INF-start   INF-roll   bicycle

      ija...
      DEM

      'And these ones started off to where they were going, **that boy**, too, started rolling that bicycle...' (Chim 434-438)

As opposed to consecutive markers in many other languages, *ku-* in Chichewa is not the only marking that is used in narratives once the temporal, narrative frame has been established. As discussed in section 5.3.2, the past tense markers *-da-* and *-na-* frequently occur in the narration of the Pear Story. The consecutive marking *ku-* seems to be mostly used for intra-sentential consecutive events, i.e. where a sequence of events is described within one sentence, the first event in the sentence being marked by *-da-* or *-na-*, and the following by *ku-*. At the climax of the story, it is the main verbal marking that is used; other tense-aspect are here only used for embedded constructions, e.g. for phrasing the protagonist's thoughts, while the main story line is expressed by *ku-* forms. The chaining of the *ku-* forms give the impression of increased narrative speed and tension. As *ku-* forms do not express deictic temporal reference, but rather relative temporal reference, by expressing that these events happen after the other events described in the sentence or story, these forms seem to constitute a relative, rather than an absolute, tense in Comrie's (1985) sense.

5.5.5. Itive -ka-: 'to go and . . . '

We saw in 5.5.4 that *-ka-* is used in temporal subordinate clauses referring to the future and in conditional clauses. A further use is in verb forms that can be translated as 'to go and X'. Schadeberg (1990), Nurse (2008) and others use the term 'itive'; Botne (1999) calls this meaning 'distal'. Botne (1999) finds one third of the languages in his Bantu sample (51 out of 150 languages) use *-ka-* with the meaning 'to go and X'.

The prefix *-ka-* is used to describe a movement away from the speaker and a subsequent action, e.g.:

(5.130) context: A: Is Ann at home right now?

> *Ayi,*   *wa-**ka**-gul-a*   *zinthu.*
> No   3SG.PRF-ITV-buy-FV   things
>
> 'No, she has gone shopping.' (Mag q246)

Itive *-ka-* co-occurs in indicative forms with a tense marking that locates the event temporally. In the example above, the hodiernal past/perfect-marking is used; in the following example, the prefix *-zi-* locates the event in the near (hodiernal) future:

(5.131)   *Ti-ka-chok-a*   *pano,*   *ndi-zi-**ka**-chit-a. . .*
        1PL.SBJ-TCL-leave-FV   here   1SG.SBJ-HODFUT-ITV-do-FV

    *ndi-zi-**ka**-santhul-a*   *nchito*   *ya*   *mawa.*
    1SG.SBJ-HODFUT-ITV-prepare-FV   work   of   tomorrow

    'When we leave this place, I will go and do. . . I will go and prepare tomorrow's work.' (Mte 314,1)

According to Botne (1999), Bantu languages differ in terms of the types of verb forms that these markers can be used in. In some languages, they only occur in imperatives or subjunctives, in others they can occur in both of these and in indicatives, in some also in infinitives. Botne suggests an implicational relationship between these constructions. In languages in which the itive (distal) occurs with infinitives, it is also found with indicatives, subjunctives and imperatives. Botne (1999) lists Chichewa as one of these languages in which the itive marker can occur in all four different types of verb forms. He refers to Watkins (1937) and Hetherwick (1914), but gives only the general morphological patterns *ka-*ROOT-*e,* SP-*ka-*ROOT-*e,* SP-*ka-*ROOT-*a* and *ku-ka-*ROOT-*a,* without examples. According to these patterns, distal (itive) *-ka-* does not co-occur with tense-aspect morphemes (Botne, 1999, 481). However, my data and the examples given above show that itive *-ka-*, at least in current usage, does co-occur with tense-aspect markers in Chichewa.

The examples above showed two indicative forms, the following illustrate the use of *-ka-* with an an infinitive, an imperative and a subjunctive form:

(5.132) context: What did Martin do yesterday evening?

> *A-na-wereng-a,*   *a-na-wereng-a-nso*   *nyuzi,*   *ku-dya*   *ndi*
> 3.SBJ-RECPST-read-FV   3.SBJ-RECPST-read-FV-also   news   INF-eat   and
>
> *ku-**ka**-gona.*
> INF-ITV-sleep
>
> 'He read/studied, read the newspaper, too, ate and went to sleep.' (Mag q271)

(5.133) ...*pita*, ***ka****-gulits-e* *z-onse* *zi-mene* *u-li*   *na-zo.*
     go   ITV-sell-SBJV NCL-all NCL-REL 2SG.SBJ-COP with-DEM

'[If you want to be perfect], go, sell your possessions [to the poor].' (Matthew 19:21)

(5.134) *Tiyeni* *ti-nk-e*   *ku* *midzi* *ina* *kufupi* *konkuno,*
     let's   1PL.SBJ-go-SBJV to   villages other near   elsewhere(?)

*ndi-**ka**-lalik-e*   *mau*   *kumeneko-nso [...]*
1SG.SBJ-ITV-preach-SBJV words there-also

'Let's go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also [...]' (Mark 1:38)

At least in the Bible texts, the itive *-ka-* forms often co-occur with a verb meaning 'go', e.g. *-pita* and *-nka* in the examples above.

This marker does not encode tense or aspect in a strict sense. It does not locate an event in time relative to the moment of speech or relative to another point in time. In indicative verb forms, itive *-ka-* co-occurs with a tense marker that fulfills this function. Neither does *-ka-* express the internal time structure of the event. However, this marker does give a certain kind of temporal information, in a way similar to consecutives, as it is used for actions following a movement. Thus, this marker was taken into account in this investigation. In the next section, a similar construction is described referring to an action following movement towards the speaker.

5.5.6. Ventive -dza-: 'to come and ...'

Parallel to *-ka-* 'to go and ...', Watkins (1937) describes the marker *-dza-* (which can also express distant, or non-hodiernal, future, see section 5.4.2) meaning 'to come and ...'. It is used in order to describe a movement towards the speaker and a subsequent action.

I found a single use of this ventive form in the questionnaires and 14 occurrences in the direct speech Bible corpus, cf. the following examples:

(5.135) *M-chirimwe,*   *Joni* *a-da-**dza**-ti-yender-a*   *katatu.*
     NCL.in-summer John 3.SBJ-REMPST-VENT-1PL.OBJ-visit-FV three.times

'Last summer, John visited us three times.' (Li q205)

(5.136) *Kodi* *mw-a-**dza**-ti-wonong-a?*
     Q   2PL.SBJ-PRF-VENT-1PL.OBJ-destroy-FV

'Have you come to destroy us?' (Mark 1:24)

12 of these 15 verb forms are indicatives, two are infinitives and one is a subjunctive form. Compare the following examples of the infinitive and the subjunctive uses:

(5.137) *Kodi   mw-a-bwer-a   kuno   ku-**dza**-ti-zunz-a   nthawi*
        Q   2PL.SBJ-PRF-come-FV here   INF-VENT-1PL.OBJ-ill.treat-FV time
i-sana-kwan-e?
NCL.SBJ-before-be.enough-SBJV

'Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?' (Matthew 8:29)

(5.138) *Mu-uz-e-ni   a-**dza**-ndi-thandiz-e.*
        2PL.SBJ-say-SBJV-IMP   3.SBJ-VENT-1SG.OBJ-help-SBJV

'Tell her to help me (lit. Tell her to come and help me)!' (Luke 10:40)

This marker, just as in the case of *-ka-* expressing 'to go and . . . ', does not encode tense or aspect in a strict sense. However, both markers do give a certain kind of temporal information, as they are used for actions following a movement.

Up to now, all markers described precede the verb stem. The following two morphemes follow the stem. They express two different aspectual meanings.

5.6. Suffixed aspectual markings

The markings *-be* and *-nso* are suffixed to the verb, their meanings will be described in the following two sections.

5.6.1. persistive -be

As many other Bantu languages, Chichewa has a persistive marker that expresses that a certain situation still holds at topic time. According to Nurse (2008, 145ff.), the persistive across Bantu is most often encoded by reflexes of *-*kí*- and the copula, followed by a verbal noun or a zero marked verb. However, unlike many other Bantu languages, this marker occurs in word-final position in Chichewa, the form is *-be*. In the questionnaires, only one sentence was translated using *-be*, by two speakers:

(5.139) context: Last night at 8pm. . .

*Pamene   John   a-na-bwer-a,   Ann   a-ma-gwir-a-**be***
when   John   3.SBJ-RECPST-come-FV   Ann   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-catch-FV-PER
ntchito.
work

'When John came, Ann was still working.' (Mag q203)

(5.140) context: Last night at 8pm. . .

John	*a-da-pez-a*	*Ani*	*a-ku-gwir-a-**be***	*ntchito.*
John	3.SBJ-REMPST-find-FV	Ann	3.SBJ-PRS-catch-FV-PER	work

'John found Ann still working.' (Lim q203)

The recent Bible translation contains 171 occurrences of the persistive. No instances were found in the recordings. Another meaning of *-be* will be shown in 5.7.

5.6.2. repetitive -nso

Another suffix with aspectual meaning is *-nso*. Attached to nominal expressions, it means 'also', cf. example (5.129); as a verbal suffix, it expresses repetition, cf. the following example from the recording of the arranged conversation:

(5.141) context: Talking about his friend, when they met for the first time and again recently...

Zi-mene	*zi-na-chitik-a*		*ndi*	*ife*
NCL.SBJ-REL	NCL.SBJ-RECPST-happen-FV		with	we

*ti-ta-on-an-a-**nso***		*posachedwapa,*	*ndi-ye*
1PL.SBJ-TCL.PST-see-RECP-FV-again/also		recently/soon	COP-3SG

ku-kumbuts-an-a	*umo*	*abale*	*a-ku-khalir-a*
INF-remind-RECP-FV	how	relatives	3PL.SBJ-PRS-remain/stay-FV

ku-mudzi.
NCL.to/at-village

'What happened to us when we met again recently, was to remind one another how the relatives are living at the home village.' (Mte 338)

-nso occurs on 295 finite verb forms in the recent Bible translation and with 395 words that are either non-verbal or non-finite verb forms.

5.7. Tense-aspect and negation

As in many other languages (cf. section 3.3.3), tense-aspect marking in Chichewa is different in certain negated clauses compared with their affirmative counterparts.

In the following, I summarise the findings about negated verb forms and the tense-aspect markings involved that have been stated in earlier descriptions of Chichewa, before I turn to the results of this study.

5.7.1. Earlier findings

According to Riddel (1880), the negative form of what he calls the past tense (this form is termed the perfect by other authors and in this study) is expressed by forms like *si wa manga* 'you did not bind', corresponding to the affirmative *wa manga* 'you bound'. He notes, however, that in the third person, the negative form is constituted of the perfect form and the negative prefix, and is generally marked by *na* (this form is called "recent past" here and by other authors). By contrast, Hetherwick (1920) and Thomson (1955) note that the perfect does not occur in negated forms at all, but that the negative forms of the past tense are used instead ending in either *-a* or *-e*. Hetherwick does not state what the difference between these two forms ending in *-a* or *-e* is. Thomson as well as Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) note that the form ending in *-e* expresses 'not yet' as in e.g. *asikari sanafik**e*** 'The troops have not arrived yet' (Thomson, 1955, 18) while the forms ending in *-a* translate simply as '(did) not'.

According to Riddel (1880) as well as Watkins (1937), there are different negation markings depending on the type of construction that is negated. One corresponds to what Payne (1985) and Miestamo (2005b) define as standard negation, i.e. the marking that is used to negate declarative main clauses. In these verb forms, the negation marker occurs first, followed by the subject prefix, what is often referred to as primary negation, NEG$_1$, in Bantu studies (cf. section 3.3.3).

In the second type, which corresponds to non-standard negation as it is defined by Payne (1985) and Miestamo (2005b), the negation marker occurs in second position in the verb after the subject prefix. This form is often called secondary negation, NEG$_2$, in Bantu studies, with regard to the morphological position in which the negative affix occurs on the verb and its use in subordinate constructions. Riddel (1880) reports this construction to have a meaning similar to English perfect participle forms, e.g. *di sa na manga* 'I not having bound' (Riddel, 1880, 38).

Watkins (1937) describes four different negation markings: two of them are found in declarative, verbal main clauses, one is found with non-finite verb forms and one in existential clauses (bolding added):

1. *sí-* is used for all verbs except the copula *li-*

   (5.142) $^n tc^{'}itó$ ***síík**ʉ́t'a*
         work   not it ceases

      'Work never ceases.' (Watkins, 1937, 96)

2. *si-(-si-)...-ná-...ɛ*, marked by past tense *-ná-* and ending in subjunctive *-e*, means 'not yet', e.g.

   (5.143) *akabaβέ*   ***si**βanámv**e***   *zákálátá* *w̩yu*
         Akabawe   not yet they have heard of letter   this

      'Akabawe has not yet heard of this letter.' (Watkins, 1937, 96)

3. *-sa-* is used with non-finite forms of the verb, as in *kusáˑdza* 'not to come'. Watkins also gives the following examples:

(5.144) *umpʽáˑβi ní kúsadzíˑβa kumatísaúˑtsa*
poverty and to not know they were us annoying

'Poverty and ignorance were annoying us.'

(5.145) *mwayambá kálɛ kugwirá ⁿtcʽiˑtɔ wɔ́ˑsapumurá maˑndja*
ye have begun already to catch work not resting hands

'You have been working for a long time without resting your hands.'
(Watkins, 1937, 97)

The negated form in example 5.144 above seems to be a nominalised form, example 5.145 shows a non-finite, subordinated verb form.

4. *´-djɛ* is used to negate the copula *-li* if it means 'to not have/there is not/was not', e.g. *nilidjɛ kaˑntʽu* 'I have not anything' (ibid.)

(5.146) *sáˑru kulíˑdjɛ*
calico there is not

'There is no calico.' (ibid.)

Bentley and Kulemeka (2001), however, do not mention this form but describe another morpheme, the suffix *-be* (which we saw marking persistive aspect in section 5.6.1), functioning as a negator expressing 'to not have'/'there is no', cf.:

(5.147) *ndi-li-be kanthu*
1SG.SBJ-COP-NEG NCL.DIM.thing

'I have nothing.' (Bentley and Kulemeka, 2001, 34)[23]

(5.148) *ku/pa/mu-na-li-be*
NCL.LOC-RECPST-COP-NEG

'There wasn't...' (Bentley and Kulemeka, 2001, 34)

Language Center (1969) observes for present habituals in negated contexts that the habitual affix *-ma-* is dropped, e.g. the bisyllabic stem *-pita* 'go' in *sapita ku sukulu* 'They do not go to school', and that monosyllabic verbs often take the present affix *-ku-* instead, e.g. monosyllabic *-mwa* 'drink' in *sindikumwa* 'I do not drink' (Language Center, 1969, 18, translations added).

Nurse (2008) notes two different negation formatives: *-sa-* being used with subjunctives, imperatives and infinitives, in all other contexts, *si-* is used. He mentions two different negated forms for the past, *si-ndi-na-nen-a* and *si-ndi-na-nen-e*, differing only

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[23]I added the glossing.

in the final vowel, and notes that "most sources suggest the first represents 'I didn't speak' (PFV NEG), the second 'I haven't spoken (yet)'. Some of Stevick's examples do not entirely support this."

Turning to the results of the present investigation, we will see, for instance, that the negation marking *si-...-ná-...ɛ*, which is described as the 'have not yet'-construction by Watkins (1937) and Thomson (1955), no longer seems to be confined to the meaning 'have not yet'. Instead, it appears to express general negation of past events.

5.7.2. The present investigation: tense-aspect and standard negation

In Chichewa, as in many other Bantu languages depending on the clause type, different forms of negation are used (cf. section 2.3.2). This section deals with standard negation, i.e. negation in declarative verbal main clauses, while non-standard negation markings are analysed and discussed in section 5.7.3 below. The data from the questionnaires and the recordings contain 80 negated verb forms: 77 of these occur in declarative verbal main clauses, two in subordinate clauses.

The questionnaire contains four questions referring to the past in which the speaker is to give both an affirmative and a negative reply.[24]

For some sentence pairs referring to the past, but not for the other tenses, the choice of the tense-aspect marker seems to be influenced by the presence or absence of a negation marker. When the affirmative sentence is marked by the perfect/hodiernal past *-a-*, the negated version is marked either by *-na-* or *-da-*, not by *-a-*, and the verb form ends with the subjunctive suffix *-e* as opposed to indicative *-a* in affirmative clauses. Compare the answers of two different speakers (the first one coming from Lilongwe-rural, the second one from Blantyre):

(5.149) context: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A: You MEET my brother (yet)? Answer:

> *Nd-**a**-kuman-**a**   na-wo.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRF-FV   with-them
> 'I have met him.' (Mte and Ntha q150)

(5.150) ***Si**-ndi-**da**-kuman-**e**   na-wo.*
> NEG-1.SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-SBJV   with-them
> 'No, I haven't met him.' (Mte q151)

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[24]Here, I just included those question-answer pairs in which the answers are fully symmetrical apart from their polarity. There are a couple of other questions in which the answers are slightly modified, e.g. *I met him, just before I came here* and *I haven't met him before I came here.*

(5.151) **Si**-*ndi*-**na**-*kuman*-**e**   *na-ye.*
       NEG-1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-SBJV with-him

    'I haven't met him.' (Ntha q151)

In those cases where the affirmative answers contain *-da-* (remote past) and *-na-* marking, the tense marking in the negated version of the answer is the same as in the affirmative answer, but the mood suffix is different. Thus, for the *-da-* and *-na-* tenses, an assymetry in mood marking occurs, but not in tense-aspect marking, cf.:

(5.152) context: Assuming that B was going to meet A's brother, A asks: You MEET my brother (yesterday, as was planned)? Answer:

    Ndi-**na**-*kuman*-**a**   *na-ye*
    1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-FV with-him

    'I met him [yesterday].' (Pha, Phi, Da q46)

(5.153) **Si**-*ndi*-**na**-*kuman*-**e**   *na-ye*
       NEG-1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-SBJV with-him

    'I didn't meet him [yesterday].' (Pha, Phi, Da q47)

(5.154) *Eya,* *ndi*-**da**-*kuman*-**a**   *na-ye*   *dzulo[...]*
       yes   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-FV with-him yesterday

    'Yes, I met him yesterday.' (Mza, Mte q46)

(5.155) *Ayi,* **si**-*ti*-**da**-*kuman*-**e**   *dzulo...*
       no   NEG-1PL.SBJ-REMPST-meet-SBJV yesterday

    'No, we didn't meet yesterday.' (Mza, Mte q47)

The same question that the speakers Ntha and Mte from Lilongwe town and Lilongwe-rural answer with an affirmative sentence marked with the hodiernal past/perfect *-a-* (in examples 5.149 - 5.151 above) is marked with the recent past *-na-* by two other speakers from Zomba and Dowa district, both in the affirmative and the negative version of the answer. The mood suffix is again different:

(5.156) context: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A: You MEET my brother (yet)? Answer:

    Ndi-**na**-*kuman*-**a**-*po.*
    1SG.SBJ-RECPST-FV-DEM

    'I have met him.' (Mme, Chi q150)

(5.157) ***Si**-ti-**na**-kuman-**e**-po.*
　　　　NEG-1PL.SBJ-RECPST-meet-SBJV-DEM
　　　'No, we didn't meet.' (Mme, Chi q151)

37 (out of 77) of the negated verb forms in main clauses refer to the past, and all of these forms end in *-e* and employ the construction *si-..na..-e*, consisting of a negation, tense-aspect and a subjunctive marker. As shown above, this form was described by Watkins (1937), Thomson (1955) and Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) as the *not yet* construction, which is grammaticalised in many Bantu languages, cf. 3.3.3. Indeed, the construction seems to have the meaning 'not yet' also in the present data in cases such as the following:

(5.158) context: The king is expected to arrive

　　　Mfumu　***si**-i-**na**-fik-**e**.*
　　　king　　　NEG-NCL.SBJ-RECPST-arrive-SBJV
　　　'The king hasn't arrived yet.' (Mme q154)

But not all occurrences of this construction in the present data can be interpreted as 'not in the past but maybe in the future', but they seem to express simply 'not in the past', as in the following examples:

(5.159) context: Q: Did you know my father, who died last year?

　　　Si**-ndi-**na**-kuman-**e　　　　　*na-wo.*
　　　NEG-1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-SBJV　　with-3PL/HON
　　　'I didn't meet him (at any time).' (Mza q50, similarly Pha, Da, Phi, Mte[25])

(5.160) context: It is cold in the room. The window is closed. Q: You OPEN the window [and closed it again]?

　　　Si**-ndi-**na**-tsekul-**e　　　　　*windolo/zenera.*
　　　NEG-1SG.SBJ-RECPST-open-SBJV　　window
　　　'I didn't open the window.' (Mza q63, similarly speaker Da)

Thus, *si-..na..-e* seems to be used in a broader variety of contexts today compared to what has been observed in earlier descriptions.[26] In order to specifically express 'not yet', two speakers added the persistive suffix *-be*, cf. section 5.6.1, to the sentence in 5.158:

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[25] All speakers use the same negation marking. The speaker Mte from Lilongwe-rural uses not *-na-*, but *-da-* for tense, but the same negation marking.

[26] Andrew Goodson (p.c.) reported that the two meanings 'not in the past' and 'not yet' are distinguished by different tone markings. More data on this phenomenon is needed.

(5.161) context: The king is expected to arrive

    A-mfumu **s**-a-**na**-*fik-**e**-**be**.*
    king   NEG-3.SBJ-RECPST-arrive-SBJV-PER
    'The king hasn't arrived yet.' (Chi q154, and similarly Ntha)

In other words, to mark the distinction between 'not' and 'not yet', a different marking can be used. Furthermore, in contrary to what was observed in earlier descriptions, the form *si-..da..-e* is found in the present data. Of all negated sentences that refer to the past, 31 employ the recent past tense marker *-na-*, eight employ the remote past tense marker *-da-*. Most examples given above show *-na-* marking, the following illustrates the use of *-da-* with the primary negation marker and also the subjunctive suffix *-e*, which always co-occurs with the negation marker and *-na-* or *-da-*:

(5.162) context: Assuming that B was going to meet A's brother, A asks: You MEET my brother yesterday as was planned? B answers:

    Si-*ndi-**da**-kuman-**e**   *na-wo*.
    NEG-1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-SBJV   with-DEM
    'I didn't meet him.' (Mte q47)

For the other tense-aspects, past or non-past, no encoding asymmetries in negated as opposed to affirmative sentences have been found. Past imperfectives are marked identically, the only difference being the presence or absence of the negation marker, both in affirmative and in negative sentences. Here, no parallel alternatives were elicited in the questionnaire, so I give a negated example and contrast it with an affirmative sentence by the same speaker. The sentences are comparable, as both describe activities that were ongoing when/while something else happened. A more similar pair of contexts would have been desirable, but was not available in the data. The examples are as follows:

(5.163) context: During the whole class/prayer...

    Ann *a-**ma**-yankhul-**a***   *ndi*   *mnzake*.
    Ann 3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-speak-FV with neighbour/friend
    'Ann was talking to her neighbour.' [in fact, she carried on afterwards] (Mag q249)

(5.164) *Bwana* *a-na-kwiya*   *chifukwa* *John* **s**-*a-**ma**-gwir-**a*** *ntchito*.
        boss   3.SBJ-RECPST-be.angry because John NEG-3.SBJ-do-FV work
        'The boss was angry, because John wasn't working [when he came in].' (Mag q276)

In the recent Bible translation, 11 occurrences of the past imperfective *-nka-* were found in combination with the negation prefix (compared to 362 affirmative forms with the same tense-aspect marker). They all refer either to habits like the absence of daily eating, drinking, manner of dressing, or more general behaviours or capabilities (like non-believing, not being able to see, being neglected in the daily ministration, or not being fearful).

Also in the present, the marking is symmetrical in affirmative and negated sentences. 20 out of 80 negated verb forms in the questionnaire and recordings refer to the present. In all main clause occurrences, the negation prefix *si-* is employed and the verb ends in the indicative suffix *-a*.

In the absence of completely symmetric sentence pairs, I have compared the sentences below that are very similar in structure. We can see that the marking is symmetrical in affirmative and negated sentences, i.e. there are no differences in tense-aspect marking:

1. for present habitual *-ma-*:

   (5.165) context: What kind of sounds do cats make?

Mphaka	*a-**ma**-lir-**a***		*kuti*	*myaawuu.*
cats	3.SBJ-HAB-make.sound-FV		that	meow

   'Cats meow.' (Pha, Da, Phi q73)

   (5.166) | *Mphaka* | ***s**-a-**ma**-lir-**a*** | | *ngati* | *galu.* |
   |---|---|---|---|---|
   | | cats | NEG-3PL.SBJ-HAB-make.sound-FV | like | dog(s) |

   'Cats do not bark.' (Pha, Da, Phi q76)

2. for the extended present (∅-marking):

   (5.167) | *U-ka-yik-a* | | *mwala* | *m-thumba* | *li-ng'ambik-**a*** |
   |---|---|---|---|---|
   | 2SG.SBJ-if-put-FV | | stone | NCL.in-bag | NCL.SBJ-be.damaged-FV |

   'If you put a stone into the bag, it breaks.' (Ntha, Mte q79)

   (5.168) | *Ngakhale* | *u-ta-yik-a* | | *mwala* | *m-thumba* | *i-li* |
   |---|---|---|---|---|---|
   | even.if | 2SG.TCL.FUT-put-FV | | stone | NCL.in-bag | NCL-DEM |

***si**-li-ng'ambik-**a**.*
NEG-NCL.SBJ-be.damaged-FV

   'Even if you put a stone into this bag, it doesn't break.' (Ntha, Mte q80)

3. and for the present *-ku-*:

   (5.169) | *Ambuye,* | *ti-**ku**-fun-a* | | *kuti* | *ti-zi-peny-a.* |
   |---|---|---|---|---|
   | Lord | 1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV | | that | 1PL.SBJ-shall-see-FV |

   'Lord, we want our sight [lit. that we shall see].' (Matthew 20:33)

(5.170) *Ife* **si**-*ti*-**ku**-*fun*-**a**   *konse kuti munthu a-mene-yu*
       we NEG-1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV never that man   NCL-REL-DEM

a-khal-e   *mfumu yathu.*
3.SBJ-become/be-SBJV king   our

'We don't want this man to be our king.' (Luke 19:14)

Data for the future tenses is scarce in the questionnaire and in the recordings. Seven out of 80 negated verb forms refer to the future. Four of these were given in response to questionnaire question no. 82, all four being zero marked for near future (we have seen in sections 5.2.2 and 5.4.2 that zero marking expresses either near future or present reference):

(5.171) context: According to the contract...

Si-*ti-gwir*-**a**   *ntchito mawa.*
NEG-1PL.SBJ-catch-FV work   tomorrow

'We don't work tomorrow.' (Mte, Mme and Chi q82)

In the questionnaires and recordings, no instances of the future marker *-dza-* occurs in negated sentences. In the recent Bible translation, 36 negated forms of the distant future marked by *-dza-* are found (compared to 347 *-dza-* forms in affirmative sentences, cf. section 5.4.2). All of these negated future forms refer to an unspecified future such as prophecies about the kingdom of heaven or the rest of an individual's life if they believe or do not believe in God.

(5.172) *Thambo ndi dziko la-pansi zi-dza-th-a*   *koma mau anga*
       heaven and earth NCL-down NCL-DFUT-pass-FV but   words my

s-*a*-**dza**-*th*-**a**   *mphamvu konse*
NEG-DFUT-pass-FV power   never

'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.' (Matthew 24:35)

The marker *zi-*, which is used to mark mood rather than tense in the recent Bible translation, does not occur in negated sentences in the data, although there are 113 occurrences in affirmative sentences (cf. section 5.4.2).

To sum up, in all tenses, apart from the hodiernal past/perfect, the same tense-aspect marking seems to be applied in affirmative and negative sentences. For the past tenses *-na-* and *-da-*, the final vowel is *-a* in affirmative clauses, but *-e* in negated clauses. Table 5.7.2 gives an overview of the different markings applied in affirmative as opposed to negated clauses.

Table 5.14.: Tense-aspect markers and negation

t/a category	t/a affirmative	mood affirmative	t/a negative	mood negative
HODPST/PRF	**-a-**	-a	**-na-/-da-**	**-e**
RECPST	-na-	-a	-na-	**-e**
REMPST	-da-	-a	-da-	**-e**
PSTIPFV	-nka-/-ma-	-a	-nka-/-ma-	-a
HAB	-ma-	-a	-ma-	-a
PRS	∅/-ku-	-a	∅/-ku-	-a
DFUT	-dza-	-a	-dza-	-a

5.7.3. The present investigation: negation in subjunctive and non-finite verb forms

In subjunctive and non-finite verb forms, the negation marker is *-sa-*, and it occurs in the second position of the verb form, as is typical for secondary negation in Bantu languages, not in the initial position as the negation marker *si-* in indicative verb forms. Depending on the type of verb form, the first position is occupied by the subject marker or, in attributive clauses, by an attributive prefix, such as *wo-*, *o-*, etc., depending on the noun class. The verbs occurring in this kind of attribute clause are non-finite forms, not marked for tense or aspect nor for person, but by the attributive prefix followed by the negation prefix *-sa-*.

Three instances of negation in subjunctives are found in the questionnaires and recordings, e.g. the following:

(5.173) *Kutero*   *kuti*   *amayi*   *a-ma-yesets-a*   *kuti*
so.much/therefore   that   mother   3.SBJ-HAB-try.hard/do.best-FV   that
sabata   *lirilonse*   *koma*   *m'-nyumba*   *thobwa*   *li-**sa**-sow-**e**.*
week   each/every   but   NCL.in-house   thobwa   NCL.SBJ-NEG-be.missing-SBJV
'So much that the mother tries hard every week that thobwa should not be missing in the house/at home.' (Mte 327)

In all three of these sentences, the negated verb form ends in subjunctive *-e*. Watkins (1937) gives a similar example referring to negated "infinitive forms of the verb" (Watkins, 1937, 96), cf. section 5.7.1.

Non-finite verb forms in attributive clauses were only found in the Bible translation, a total of 74 forms. The most frequent time reference of these forms seems to be the past, but instances of non-past time reference were also found, cf. the following example:

(5.174) *[. . .]*   *munthu*   *wo-loŵa*   *m'-khola*   *la*   *nkhosa*
[. . .]   man   ATTR-enter   in-stable   of   sheep

*o-**sa**-dzer-a*   *pa khomo,*   *koma ku-chita*
ATTR-NEG-pass.through-FV at entrance/doorway but INF-do

ku-kwerera   pena,   *ameneyo ndi wakuba ndi wolanda.*
INF-climb.up somewhere.else that.one COP thief and robber

'[. . .] the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.' (John 10:1)

Thus, different negation markings are used in indicative verb forms as opposed to subjunctive and non-finite verb forms. Furthermore, tense-aspect marking is affected, either in terms of the choice of a certain marker over the other (*-da-*/*-na-* as opposed to *-a-*) or with respect to the presence or absence of a tense-aspect marker (as in the different types of non-finite forms described above).

5.7.4. Negation in existential clauses

Watkins (1937) describes COP´-*djɛ* (with a high tone on the copula) as the form expressing existential negation, while Bentley and Kulemeka (2001) note the construction *ku/mu/pa*(NCL.LOC)-COP-*be* in this function.

Neither type is found in the recordings or questionnaires. The recent Bible translation contains eight forms of the type *ku/mu/pa*(NCL.LOC)-COP-*be*, e.g.:

(5.175) *Mbeu zina zi-da-gwer-a*   *pa nthaka yamiyala, pamene*
         seed some NCL.SBJ-REMPST-fall-FV on ground stony   where

         pa**-na-**li-be   *dothi lambiri.*
         NCL.on-RECPST-COP-NEG soil much

         'And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth [lit. where there was not much].' (Mark 4:5)

The form COP´-*djɛ* as described by Watkins is not found in the Bible translation which might indicate another instance of language change since the 1930s. The same marking, with the orthographic spelling 'lije', seems to be used for existential negation in Citumbuka, cf. 6.5.

After describing the tense-aspect markers of Chichewa used in the data collected for this study and comparing their use with the findings in earlier description, we will now turn to Citumbuka, the second language under investigation. A summary of the findings for each language is given in chapter 8 in which the use of the different markers in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena will be compared. Chapter 9 will give an overview and discussion of the main results.

6. The tense-aspect systems in each language: Citumbuka

This chapter deals with the system of tense-aspect marking in Citumbuka. Here too, variation was found both in earlier descriptions and my own analysis, although less than that observed in Chichewa. With one million speakers in Malawi and 480,000 in Zambia,[1] Citumbuka is not as widespread a language as Chichewa, but it is still spoken in a rather large area, mainly in northern Malawi. Another reason why less variation was found here could be that less data was included in this study for Citumbuka than for Chichewa (cf. section 4.2 for details).

Grammatical descriptions of Citumbuka were undertaken by Elmslie (1923) and Vail (1973), Kishindo and Lipenga (2006) published a language guide, Nurse (2008) gives an account of the tense-aspect system based on an undated anonymous manuscript and on Güldemann (1999) whose source, in turn, was Young (1932). Vail gives a particularly thorough description of the verb and states that his informants came from Rumphi and Mzimba districts. Elmslie does not specify where exactly his data comes from. Pascal Kishindo (p.c.) explained that the description in Kishindo and Lipenga (2006) represents the variety spoken in Rumphi. 50 years passed between Elmslie's and Vail's descriptions, and another 33 between Vail's and Kishindo & Lipenga's work, and some of the differences between the descriptions may be due to language change. Table 6.1 gives an overview of the tense-aspect forms described in previous sources. Their findings will be described in the following.

Table 6.2 gives a first overview of the tense-aspect categories found in this study of Citumbuka. Note that the labels for the respective categories do not reflect their whole meaning and all their possible uses, I just use them to be able to refer to them more conveniently and in a meaningful way.

In the following, each marker will be discussed individually.

6.1. Expressing the present

6.1.1. Earlier findings

In all four descriptions, the marker *-ku-* is identified to express present tense, the first person singular form is aspirated *-khu-*. **Elmslie (1923)** calls forms with *-ku-* the "Present

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Table 6.1.: Earlier descriptions of tense-aspect markers in Citumbuka.

	-ku-	**-ka-**	**-angu-**	**-a-**	**-liku-**	**-nda-**
Elmslie (1923)	Present Tense	Past Indefinite Tense (remoteness)	Past Perfect Tense (completed action)	Perfect Tense (completed results)	Perfect Tense (remaining results)	-
Vail (1973)	1. present tense 2. ongoing 3. habitual)²	Past tense	Proximate Past Tense	Past Present Tense	Past Stative	NEG of -a-
Kishindo and Lipenga (2006)	le présent	le passé lointain	le passé récent	le passé composé	-ri present anterior "(?)"	-nda-...-e: neg. present anterior "(?)"
Nurse (2008)	present & immediate future	P₃ (before today)	P₂ (today)	P₁ (just now)	ku-: neg. anterior "(?)"	-

	ti..e	**-(y)am(ku)-**	**-zamku-**	**-zamu-**	**-(ti-)..enge**	**-anga**
Elmslie (1923)	Future Tense	Future Tense ('go and X')	Future Tense ('come and X')	-	-nge: Future Incomplete	incomplete
Vail (1973)	'must do X'	-amu-(ku)- 'will go and X'	-zamu-zamuku- future tense	(-zamu-zamuku-) future emphatic tense ('will surely X')	future complete/Progr.	habitual+cont.
Kishindo and Lipenga (2006)	-	-	-	le futur lointain	ti-...-enge: le futur proche	inaccompli
Nurse (2008)	-	-	-	-	-enge: future PFV	imperfective³

[a]This (third) meaning has been concluded from the given examples.
[b]Apart from perfective, imperfective and anterior, Nurse (2008) lists the persistive as a further aspectual marking found in Citumbuka, marked by *-chali ku-* in the present ('are still ...ing') and by *-ka-*COP *-chali ku-* in the past ('were still ...'). Elmslie (1923) and Vail (1973) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2006) do not describe these constructions.

Table 6.2.: Citumbuka tense-aspect markers found in this study

past	present[4]	future
immediate/perfect: *-a-* perfect: *-liku-* hodiernal: *-angu-* pre-hodiernal: *-ka-*, perf.neg.: *-nda-*	present (and habitual): *-ku-* (habitual: *-ku-...-anga*)	near (hod.): *-enge* distant: *(z)amu-*
imperfective *-nga* (combinable with *-a-* and *-ka-* and *-zamu-*)		

*c*The present habitual and future markings are subject to some variation which will be described below.

Tense Indefinite". He merely gives the paradigm for this tense and the translation of the different verb forms, e.g. *Nkuruta* 'I go', *Tikuruta* 'we go' (p.79). **Kishindo and Lipenga (2006)** call it the present and say it is used for events taking place at the time of speech, and **Nurse (2008)** merely labels this forms as present with perfective and imperfective aspect, noting that this form can also have immediate future meaning. **Vail (1973)**, however, observes that "this tense is often called the 'Present' tense, although its usage is by no means restricted to the existential present" (p.385).[5] According to him, it rather expresses that the activity is ongoing simultaneously with "the point-present", which can be, but is not necessarily, the moment of speech; the point-present can also be a point in time in the past, or future. Vail describes it to be "primarily a point of order, not of time" (p.384). He states that this tense can refer to habitual actions as well as to narrated events. He gives the following examples of its use:

(6.1) /*musepuka uyu wakuwona nyama*/

'The boy is seeing the animals.'

(6.2) /*nkhudika bulaŋgete; nkhugonako pa kuwemi.*/

'I cover myself with a blanket; I sleep in a better place.'

(6.3) /*masambi ndi salu yeneyiyo yikupaŋgika kufuma ku khuni βakuti*

'*mundola*' *iyo sono mukuyiwona ya ziŋgilizga pa muzi wuno*/

"masambi" is a cloth that is made from a tree that they call 'mundola', which you see now surrounding this village.' (Vail, 1973, 387, bolding added)

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[5]Vail generally gives the tenses numeric labels but refers to their conventional names also.

Unfortunately, there is no more context given, but Vail states in the introduction of his work that most of his data stems from narratives, and that only a few examples were elicited. Example (6.1) above seems to be a fairly typical sentence from a story, and a rather frequent type of use, according to Vail, where the use of the present tense makes the narration more vivid, whereas the other two examples above are more general descriptions, and the first two verbs in example 6.3 (and possibly the verbs in example 6.2) express habitual actions.

In narration, *-ku-* is used with further functions that will be looked at in section 6.2.

Vail observes "highly flexible patterns of language usage in Tumbuka, patterns which demand a close analysis of actual context for the proper translation of verb forms" (p.392). I assume that this is true for verb forms in all languages, but the following partly differing descriptions of past and future tense markers indicate that an account of the system is not straightforward.

6.1.2. The present investigation

The form *-ku-* is described as being used for referring to present events in all four earlier descriptions as shown in Table 6.1. The data from this investigation supports these earlier observations. 48 forms marked by *-ku-* occur in the questionnaire, the arranged conversation and the Pear Story. Another 12 forms are marked by *-ku-...-anga*, they will be discussed further below. For the Bible translation, I performed searches on a few selected verbs. The form *-ku-* is used for events that are ongoing at the moment of speech, e.g.:

(6.4) context: Father to child: Please do not disturb me..

> *N-**khu**-lemb-a   kalata.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRS-write-FV   letter
> 'I'm writing a letter.' (Ka q83)

This marking is not restricted to progressive contexts:

(6.5) context: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

> *Balongosi   ba-**ku**-many-a   kuti   maji   gha-**ku**-zizim-a.*
> my.brother   3.SUBJ-PRS-know-FV   that   water   NCL.SBJ-PRS-be.cold-FV
> 'My brother knows [now] that the water is cold [today].' (Ka q117)

Examples (6.4) and (6.5) show that the marking *-ku-* is used both in contexts where progressive markers are typically used as in example (6.4) (cf. Dahl (1985) and chapter 3.3.1), but also in contexts with stative verbs referring to the present, as in example (6.5), which cross-linguistically do not take progressive markings. In this respect, the marking is used in a similar way to *-ku-* in Chichewa (see section 5.2.2).

Also in the Bible translation, *-ku-* is used in this way, as a present tense marker:

(6.6) *N-**khu**-mu-phalir-a-ni*   *unenesko, yumoza wa imwe*
1SG.SBJ-PRS-2PL.OBJ-tell-FV-2PL.OBJ truth   one   of   you
wa-ndender-enge   *mphiska, mweneuyo wa-**ku**-ry-a*   *na-ne*
3.SBJ-move/do-NFUT betrayal REL   3.SBJ-PRS-eat-FV with-me
pamoza.
together
'I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me – one who is eating with me.'
(Mark 14:18)

(6.7) context: After hearing about Jesus' healing of a blind and mute man, some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to Jesus:

*Musambizgi, ti-**ku**-khumb-a*   *kuti mu-ti-rongor-e*
teacher   1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV that 2PL/HON.SBJ-1PL.OBJ-show-SBJV
chimanyikwiro.
sign
'Master, we want to see a [miraculous] sign from you (lit. We want you to show us a sign.)' (Matthew 12:38)

-ku- is also used in generic contexts, and, at least by the speakers from Mzimba district, in habitual contexts:

(6.8) context: Q: What kind of sound do cats make?

*Ba-**ku**-ti*   *miyawo.*
3.SBJ-PRS-say   meow
'They meow.' (Ka q73)

(6.9) context: Talking about things that the speaker enjoys doing

*Icho   n-**khu**-temw-a*   *chinthu icho   n-**khu**-chit-a*   *ku-gawula*
which 1SG.SBJ-PRS-like-FV thing   which 1SG.SBJ-PRS-do-FV INF-till
ku-dimba   then ku-tchalichi ku-luta ku-ka-pemphera na   kw-imba nyimbo
at-garden then at-church   INF-go INF-PURP-pray and INF-sing song
*nganaumo vi-**ku**-chit-ik-ir-a*   *va   ku-tchalichi vira.*
as.usual   NCL.SBJ-PRS-do-PASS-APPL-FV they at-church   DEM
'What things I like, what I do is tilling in the garden, then, going to church and praying and singing songs as things are usually done at church.' (Chi 304)

Speaker Ka from Chitipa district instead uses the marking *-ku-. . .-anga*, rather than simple *-ku-* consistently in habitual contexts. This marking combines *-ku-* with the imperfective marker *-anga* (see section 6.2 below):

(6.10) context: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast? A:

> *Wa-**ku**-lemb-**anga**   kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-HAB-write-IPFV   letter
> 'He writes a letter.' (Ka q19)

-ku- is not used in copula constructions. Copula clauses referring to the present employ *ni* for nominal predication or *-li* for locational predication, both forms are unmarked for tense and aspect, e.g.:

(6.11) *Uyu   ni   musambizgi.*
　　　 DEM COP teacher
　　　 'He/she is a teacher.'

(6.12) *Wa-li   ku Mzuzu.*
　　　 3.SBJ-COP at Mzuzu
　　　 'He/she is in Mzuzu.'

Vail (1973) mentions the habitual use of *-ku-* but does not observe *-ku-. . .-nga* as a habitual marking. Elmslie (1923) translates the *-ku-* forms as present tense but does not mention habitual meanings, neither do Kishindo and Lipenga (2006).

Table 6.3 shows the distribution of the marker *-ku-* in the questionnaire and the recordings of the arranged conversation.

Table 6.3.: The distribution of the present tense/habitual markers *-ku-* and *-ku-. . .-anga* in the questionnaires and the arranged conversation

time reference	occurrence of tense markers			
	Chitipa speakers		Mzimba speakers	
	-ku-	-ku-anga	-ku-	-ku-anga
right now (ongoing)	17	-	2	-
now	14	-	3	-
usually	-	10	12	-
generic	3	-	3	-

Searching the whole New Testament, 1,802 *-ku-* forms were found. Not all of them express present tense or habitual, as a *-ku-* form can also be applied to refer to events in the past, which will be demonstrated in section 6.2 below. For present habituals in the Bible translation, *-ku-* is used, e.g.:

(6.13) *Kweni yose uyo   wa-**ku**-gha-chit-a   na   ku-sambizga*
　　　 but   all   DEM/REL 3.SBJ-PRS-NCL.OBJ-do-FV   and INF-teach
　　　 ŵanyakhe, ndi-yo   w-amku-chem-ek-a   mukuru mu Ufumu   wa
　　　 others   COP-DEM 3.SBJ-FUT-call-PASS-FV great   in kingdom of

kuchanya.
heaven

'...but whoever practises and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 5:19)

No *-ku-...-anga* forms were found in the Bible text. Thus, the speaker from Chitipa is the only one in the sample who uses a special form, *-ku-...-anga*, for this purpose. In the use of Citumbuka by the other speakers, and in the Bible translation, present tense, present progressive, present habitual and generic are all expressed by the marker *-ku-*.

6.2. Expressing the past

6.2.1. Earlier findings

The past tense markers that are described in all four sources are *-ka-*, *-angu-* and *-a-*.

Elmslie (1923) describes the forms marked by *-ka-* as expressing the "Past Indefinite Tense", which marks remoteness in time or place, **Kishindo and Lipenga (2006)** call it "le passé lointain", the remote past, and **Vail (1973)** refers to these forms as the past tense, saying that it is the principal narrative tense. **Nurse (2008)** labels this tense as "P$_3$ (before today)", which marks a more remote past than the past tenses "P$_2$ (today)" marked by *-angu-* and "P$_1$ (just now)" marked by *-a-*. One example that Vail gives for the use of *-ka-* is the following:

(6.14) /*mu nyumba mula* <u>*mukanjila*</u> βapapi, <u>βa*ka*jiziŋga</u> *mu mphasa*/

'..into that house <u>entered</u> the parents, and they <u>wrapped</u> themselves in a mat' (Vail, 1973, 411, bolding added)

Vail notes that this tense is usually used for events that took place at least a day before the moment of speech, as opposed to the *-a-* and *a-ngu-* tenses that refer to more recent events. He also notes that in a narrative, for "heightened dramatic effect" (p.411) only the first verb form is marked by *-ka-* and the subsequent forms receive the marking *-ku-* (in section 6.1 described in its present tense function), as in the following example:

(6.15) /*munthu yula* wa*ka*fuma *pala na kwiba vyose vila*

<u>wa*ku*luta wa*ku*cimbila</u> *navya*/

'that man went away from that place and stole all those things, and <u>he left</u> and <u>ran off</u> with them.' (Vail, 1973, 390, bolding added)

Furthermore, Vail observes the marking *-ku-* being used with the past marker *-ka-* in narrative, past progressive contexts as well as in (habitual?) relative clauses:

(6.16) /*wafika nayu pala wakasaŋga kuti* βanthu β*a__ku__jumpha mu musewu*/

'he arrived there with him and found that people <u>were crossing</u> the road'

(6.17) /*iyo yika*β*a na daŋgo lake laweluzgi mu* β*anthu a*β*o* β*a__kw__anaŋga*

pacalo/

'he had his own law for judging among those people who <u>went wrong</u> in that
place' (Vail, 1973, 390, bolding added)

In example (6.15), *-ku-* functions as a consecutive marker, and thus, as a relative
tense, in example (6.16), the same marking has past progressive meaning, i.e. expressing
temporal as well as aspectual meaning, in example (6.17), it seems to express past
habitual.

-(a)ngu- is described as the "Past Perfect" by Elmslie (1923) who also notes that this
form signifies a more recent past than *-ka-* forms. Kishindo and Lipenga (2006) label
-angu- as "le passé récent", the recent past, and Vail as the "Proximate Past Tense",
stating that it is used for events that took place relatively close to the time of speaking
while "the effects of the verb's action are still being felt" at the moment of speech. Among
others, he gives the following example of the use of this tense:

(6.18) /*apa wase*β*elaŋga na* β*anyake, Vuka* <u>*wa*ŋ__*gu*__*vula*</u> *malaya* ɣ*ake* ɣ*ose*/

'while he was playing with his friends, Vuka <u>took off</u> all his clothes' (Vail, 1973,
414, bolding added)

Vail notes, however, in contradiction to his earlier statement about persistent effects
implied with this tense, that according to his informants, the sentence in (6.18) implies
that Vuka "has been reclothed" at the moment of speech. He further notes that when
used with the word *umu* 'throughout the time that...' this tense marker seems to have
a different function, referring to the extension of an event over a period of time in the
past, e.g.:

(6.19) /*umu* <u>*n__a__ŋ__gu__sambilila*</u> *n__a__ŋ__gu__*β*avya suzgo yikulu*/

'throughout the time that <u>I was learning</u>, I had no large problem' (Vail, 1973,
417, bolding added)

Elmslie describes verb forms with the tense-aspect morpheme *-a-* as denoting com-
pleted actions, as do Kishindo and Lipenga, who call it *le passé composé*. Nurse (2008)
labels this form "P1 (just now)" but notes that it also has perfect (anterior) functions.

Vail observes that forms marked by -a- refer to events occuring immediately before the *point-present* and their effects "are still being felt" at this point. Vail states that this form is usually called the "Past Present Tense". The following example is said to indicate that "the hand was recently caught and is still caught":

(6.20) /iye **wa**wila woko la malyelo/

'he has just caught his right hand' (Vail, 1973, 394)

But even if the recency of the event (often within half an hour before the point of speech) is a "common characteristic of the tense's use", the -a- forms may also be used of less recent events if the state or situation "still endures" at the point of speech:

(6.21) /nyuŋgu zila **za**thambalala kwamuzila feteleza/

'those pumpkin plants have spread out broadly without the use of fertilizer (and are still spread out broadly)' (Vail, 1973, 395, bolding added)

Vail also mentions the occurrence of -a- with certain verbs where the predicate refers to the moment of speech:

(6.22) /nd**a**kondwa comene cifukwa imwe mukuchezgana nane/

'I am very happy because you are visiting me' (Vail, 1973, 399, bolding added)

Vail (1973) and Nurse (2008) note a distinct form marked by -nda- that is used as the negative counterpart of the -a- forms, see further section 6.5.

Vail (1973), Elmslie (1923), and Nurse (2008)[6], but not Kishindo and Lipenga (2006), mention another form, -liku- that seems to be similar in meaning to -a-. Forms marked by -liku- are described by Elmslie as expressing a completed action, the results of which still hold, e.g. Wa**liku**tuma 'he has sent' (Elmslie, 1923, 80f.). Nurse (2008) interprets this form as perfect stating that it is described as "Stative Past" in his source referring to 'a state of affairs begun in the past and still continuing at the moment of speaking".

The same form is described by Vail in a similar manner. He illustrates the meaning of -liku- forms by contrasting them with -ka- forms:

(6.23) /libwe li**ka**wa/ vs. /libwe li**liku**wa/

'the rock fell' (Vail, 1973, 427, bolding added)

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[6]In his tense-aspect table for Citumbuka, Nurse (2008) cites this form as -ri ku while in the accompanying notes, he spells the same form -li + ku.

For the second sentence, marked by *-liku-*, Vail notes that the implication is that the rock is still there where it had fallen, while no such implication is made in the first sentence, which is marked by *-ka-*. However, he does not specify in which respect the meaning of *-liku-* differs from *-a-*.

The past perfect is formed by *-ngu-* according to Elmslie, but he also notes the form marked by *-ka-ti -a-*VERB, as in **Nkati n*a*ruta** 'I had gone' (Elmslie, 1923, 83) with the same meaning. Vail describes only the latter as the pluperfect, with a variant form: *-(k)a-ti -a-*VERB, i.e. either the *-a-* or *-ka-* tensed form of the verb *ti* followed by the *-a-* tensed form of the main verb, as in:

(6.24) /sono   apo   <u>wa**kati** w**a**tola</u>   mwanakazi,   waka*β*na   mwana/

      'so after <u>he had married</u> a woman, he had a child'

(6.25) /sono   <u>**wati** w**a**gona</u>   tulu,   wakawuka   wakacema   *β*anyina/

      'so after <u>he had slept</u>, he woke up and called his mother' (Vail, 1973, 419f., bolding added)

The negated form of this tense is given as the corresponding form where the main verb is marked by *-nda-*.

Vail describes two continuous tenses with past-time reference, one formed by *-a-...-aŋga*, the other one formed by *-ka-....-aŋga*, cf.:

(6.26) /ise   <u>t**a**fom**aŋga**</u>   pa   kukwela   cikwela   ici/

      'we've <u>been sweating constantly</u> during climbing this steep slope' (Vail, 1973, 436, bolding added)

(6.27) /kukiza   kalulu   na   kwambi   <u>*β*a**kaly*aŋga***</u>   comene   ska*β*a   zila/

      'there came along a hare and a fox, and <u>they were eating</u> a great amount of those groundnuts' (Vail, 1973, 420, bolding added)

Forms marked by *-a-...-aŋga-* are described as indicating that an action was carried out continuously before the moment of speech and that it is either still being carried out or that its effects are still present. Forms marked by *-ka-+-aŋga* do not have the latter meaning component. Vail also describes them as expressing past habitual actions, cf.:

(6.28) /ntheula   ndiko   kacidokoni   kanyake   ako   *β*agogo   <u>*β*a**k*a*dum*aŋga***</u>/

      'this is another little story that grandfather used to tell' (Vail, 1973, 440, bolding added)

The continuous suffix *-aŋga* is also used in combination with future tense markings, as we will see in section 6.3.

6.2.2. The present investigation

The markers that are used in my data for past time reference are *-ka-*, *-angu-*, *-a-*, *-nda-* (NEG), *-liku-* and *-ka-ti -a-*. Their distribution will be discussed in the following sections. It will be shown that *-ka-* and *-angu-* contrast in terms of remoteness while *-a-* and its negated counterpart *-nda-* and *-liku-* express perfect meaning. *-a-* also expresses recency in certain contexts, and *-ka-ti -a-* is found in temporal clauses.

remote past -ka- vs. hodiernal past -angu-

The most frequently used past tense marker in the data is *-ka-* and its first person singular allomorph *-kha-*. It occurs 100 times in the questionnaires, 82 times in the direct-speech Bible corpus, 31 times in the arranged conversation, and 21 times in the Pear Story. The marker *-angu-* is used 28 times in the direct-speech Bible corpus, 15 times in the questionnaires, and 5 times in the arranged conversation. The Pear Story does not contain any uses of *-angu-*.

Table 6.4.: The distribution of past tense markers *-ka-* and *-angu-* in the data

time reference	occurrence of tense markers					
	Chitipa-speakers		Mzimba-speakers		Bible corpus	
	-ka-	-angu-	-ka-	-angu-	-ka-	-angu-
just now	-	-	-	1	-	3
earlier today	-	11	1	6	1	18
yesterday	53	-	2	-	3	-
earlier this week	-	-	5	1	-	-
recently	1	-	7	-	3	6
(many) year(s) ago	13	-	10	-	1	-
unspecified past	15	1	36	-	73	1

Table 6.4 shows the distribution of the markers *-ka-* and *-angu-* in the data. It can be seen that they differ in remoteness. *-ka-* is used for referring to events that lie in the past, but generally not (with two exceptions) for events that took place on the day of speaking. For this purpose, *-angu-* is used. However, *-angu-* is also used to refer to events that happened a short time before the day of speaking. I refer to *-ka-* as remote past (REMPST) and *-angu-* as hodiernal past (HODPST). The following examples illustrate the use of *-ka-* and *-angu-*:

(6.29)   *Apa*   *n-**kha**-ŵa*   *mwana*   *sukulu*   *n-kha-luta-nga*   *kwa*
        when   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-COP   child   school   1SG.SBJ-PST-go-IPFV   at
        Sonda.
        Sonda
        'When I was a child I went to Sonda School.' (Chi 307,1)

(6.30) *Kufuma   mulenji   na   umo   n-**angu**-ukir-a*
      from   morning I   as   1SG.SBJ-HODPST-wake.up-FV

      *n-**angu**-ly-a*   *bala*   *n-a-pyer-a*
      1SG.SBJ-HODPST-eat-FV   porridge 1SG.SBJ-PRF-sweep-FV

      n-a-suk-a   *mbale* *n-**angu**-gez-a*
      1SG.SBJ-PRF-wash-FV   plates 1SG.SBJ-HODPST-wash.myself-FV

      *n-**angw**-iz-a*   *kuno.*
      1SG.SBJ-HODPST-come-FV here

      'Since I got up this morning, I ate porridge, swept, washed plates, washed myself, then I came here. ' (Chi 302,1)

The first sentence refers to the speaker's childhood; the speaker uses the marker *-ka-* for this purpose. In the second sentence above, the speaker refers to the activities in which she was engaged earlier on the day of speaking and uses *-angu-* in this context. When describing that she swept the floor and did the dishes, she uses the perfect/immediate past marker *-a-*, possibly in a resultative sense implying that the house is cleaned and that the dishes are done. The use of the marker *-a-* will be discussed in section 6.2.2 below.

The two cases in the data in which *-ka-* is used to refer to the day of speaking, cf. Table 6.4, are the following sentences:

(6.31) context: Jesus is telling a story about a man preparing a great dinner. He invited many guests, but when his servant calls them on the day of the dinner, they are all too busy to come. Thus, the master tells his servant to invite the poor, the blind and the lame. After doing so, the servant returns to his master and says:

      *Bwana,   vyose   ivyo   mu-**ka**-langur-a*   *nd-a-fisk-a,*
      Lord   all   DEM 2PL.SBJ-REMPST-command-FV 1SG.SBJ-PRF-fulfill-FV

      kweni   malo   gha-cha-li   *waka.*
      but   place NCL.SBJ-still-COP NEG

      'Lord, it is done as you commanded, and there is still room.' (Luke 14:22)

(6.32) context: Q: Your brother DO what his teacher told him to do today?

      *Enya,   wa-**ka**-wereng-a*   *buku   lose   ili   naumo*
      yes   3.SBJ-REMPST-read-FV book all DEM today

      *wa-**ka**-tumikir-a.*
      3.SBJ-REMPST-be.told-FV

      'He read all of this book today as he was told.' (Si q55)

The first example above is part of a narrative told by Jesus. The utterance is made by the servant, the main character in the story, and Jesus quotes what he says. The servant refers to the same day of speaking, which is a context in which the hodiernal past marker *-angu-* would be expected. But the moment of Jesus' talking is different from the moment when the servant made this utterance and referred to an earlier event on the day of speaking. In such a context the remote past tense marker seems to be the preferred choice before the hodiernal past tense marker.

It is difficult to say why the speaker used *-ka-* in (6.38), the second example above, as *-angu-* is used by the same speaker and by other speakers in other contexts referring to earlier on the day of speaking, e.g.:

(6.33) context: Q: Why is it so cold in the room? [The window is open but the person who asks does not know. The person who opened the window answers:]

> *N-**angu**-jul-a*   *windo.*
> 1SG.SBJ-HODPST-open-FV   window
>
> 'I opened the window.' (Si q69)

(6.34) context: The speaker is right back from a walk in the forest: Do you know what just happened to me? I was walking in the forest.

(6.35) *Mwamabuchi*   *n-**angu**-kand-a*   *njoka.*
       suddenly   1SG.SBJ-HODPST-step-FV   snake

       'Suddenly I stepped on a snake.' (Ka q187)

The use of *-ka-* in example (6.38) suggests that this marker can also be used in contexts that refer to the day of speaking.

Similarly, the use of *-angu-* is not completely restricted to events occurring earlier on the day of speaking. In one case, out of 48 occurrences in the data, *-angu-* is used for an event taking place a couple of days earlier. Here, the speaker is talking about a series of recurring events, the church service on the previous three Sundays. The speaker first explains about the three different Sundays, using the remote past marker *-ka-* throughout. When asked about the weather on the last Sunday, the speaker replies:

(6.36) context: The speaker is talking about the activities at church and the weather the past three Sundays:

> *Sabata*   *iyi*   *kw-**angu**-cha*   *pakatikati*   *zuŵa*   *na*   *vula*
> week   this   NCL.SBJ-HODPST-become.light   in.the.middle   sun   and   rain
> *vose*   *vi-ka-ŵa*   *waka*   *pakatikati.*
> all   NCL.SBJ-REMPST-COP   just   in.the.middle
>
> 'This Sunday, it was just in between, sunlight and rain were just in between.'
> (Chi 319,1)

Thus, for the most recent event in a series of recurring events, the hodiernal past marker *-angu-* is used, although the event happened several days ago and although the use of the hodiernal past marker generally seems to be confined to events happening on the day of speaking. Such a use of remoteness distinction was pointed out by Nurse (2003, 101) and Nurse (2008, 93) (cf. also 3.3.2).

The use of *-ka-* with the copula verb in example (6.36) above, after the sentence started with a verb marked by *-angu-*, might be another indicator of the flexibility in the choice of the two past tense markers. Another possibility is that *-ka-* is chosen in this case because *-angu-* cannot be used with copula verbs.

Overall, the distribution of the two markers shows that *-angu-* is generally preferred for more recent events, and that it is most often used for events that took place earlier on the day of speaking, while *-ka-* is generally used for events that took place earlier. But the use of *-angu-* and *-ka-* is not restricted to these uses, and, as in Chichewa, an absolute cut-off point for the choice of one marker over the other does not seem to exist. Nevertheless, the remoteness contrast appears to be somewhat clearer for *-ka-* and *-angu-* in the Citumbuka data than for *-da-* and *-na-* in the Chichewa data investigated in this study (cf. section 5.3.2).

The following section will show that there is a further remoteness distinction in Citumbuka, as the marking *-a-* is used to express perfect as well as immediate past meaning.

perfect -liku- vs. perfect and immediate past -a-

Table 6.5.: The distribution of the past markers *-a-*, *-angu-* and *-ka-* in the data

time reference	occurrence of tense markers								
	Chitipa-speakers			Mzimba-speakers			Bible corpus		
	-a-	-angu	-ka-	-a-	-angu-	-ka-	-a-	-angu-	-ka-
just now	8	-	-	-	1	-	32	3	-
now	6	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
earlier today	5	11	-	4	6	1	24	18	2
yesterday	1	-	53	-	-	2	2	-	3
earlier this week	-	-	-	-	1	5	2	-	-
recently	2	-	1	-	-	7	16	6	3
(many) year(s) ago	-	-	13	-	-	10	-	-	1
unspecified past	5	1	15	-	-	36	38	1	72

Table 6.5 shows how *-a-*, *-angu-* and *-ka-* contrasts with each other. While *-angu-* is mostly used for the hodiernal past and *-ka-* for more remote events, *-a-* occurs in contexts referring to the immediate past, for the time reference 'just now', cf. Table 6.5.

With perfect meaning, *-a-* occurs in other past time contexts, too, in general accordance with Vail's (1973) account. However, in similar contexts with perfect meaning,

Table 6.6.: The distribution of the perfect and immediate past marker *-a-* and the perfect marker *-liku-* in the data

time reference	occurrence of tense markers					
	Chitipa-speakers		Mzimba-speakers		Bible corpus	
	-a-	-liku-	-a-	-liku-	-a-	-liku-
just now	8	-	-	-	32	-
now	6	-	2	-	-	-
earlier today	5	-	4	-	24	-
yesterday	1	-	-	-	2	-
earlier this week	-	-	-	-	2	-
recently	2	1	-	-	16	-
(many) year(s) ago	-	-	-	-	-	-
unspecified past	5	5	-	-	38	5
temporal clause (when..)	4 past, 3 fut	-	3 (fut)	-	-	-

but less frequently, *-liku-* occurs (see Table 6.6 for the distribution of *-a-* and *-liku-* in the data).

In those rather few cases in which *-liku-* is used, a completed event is described, either with resultative or experiential meaning, cf.:

(6.37) *Yohane uyo n-kha-mu-dumur-a mutu yura ndiyo*
       John DEM 1SG.SBJ-REMPST-3SG.OBJ-cut.off-FV head DEM and

       *wa-**liku**-wuskik-a ku wakufwa!*
       3.SBJ-PRF-rise-FV at/from the.dead

       'This is John, whom I beheaded. He has risen from the dead.' (Mark 6:16)

(6.38) context: A: I want to give your brother a book to read, but I don't know which. Is there any of these books that he READ already?

       *Wa-**liku**-ŵazg-a buku ili.*
       3.SBJ-PRF-read-FV book DEM

       'He has read this book.' (Ka q53)

The second example above is experiential in the sense that the reading of the book is an event that happened once in the time span from some time in the past until the present.

All occurrences of *-liku-* refer to events that are more remote than the day of speaking. Many of the sentences marked by *-liku-* have experiential meaning. In Dahl's (1985)

cross-linguistic study, example (6.38) is the context that was most often translated using a perfect marker. The three most prototypical contexts for perfect marking in the questionnaire (cf. section 3.3.1) were translated using the marker *-liku-* by speaker Ka from Chitipa. Speaker Si from Mzimba translated only one of these using *-liku-*:[7]

(6.39) context: Q: Is the king still alive?

> *Yayi,* *wa-**liku**-tayik-a.*
> no   3.SBJ-PRF-be.lost-FV
> 'No, he has died.' (Si q56)

The distribution of *-a-* in the data indicates that *-a-* expresses either immediate past meaning or perfect (resultative, but not experiential meaning, which is expressed by *-liku-*). The following example illustrates the use of *-a-* with resultative meaning. It is another sentence from the questionnaire in which perfect marking is frequently used cross-linguistically. In this example, *-a-* is dropped as the verbal stem starts with a vowel (as described by Vail (173, 393f.)):

(6.40) context: The king has been expected for weeks. The speaker has just seen him:

> *Fumu*   *y-iz-a.*
> king   NCL.SBJ.PRF/IMMPST-come-FV
> 'The king has [just] arrived.' (Ka q135)

With regard to its immediate past meaning, *-a-* contrasts with the hodiernal past marker *-angu-*. While *-angu-* is the general marker for events taking place earlier on the day of speaking, *-a-* is more often applied in contexts referring to just before the moment of speech, cf. Table 6.5. In the following examples, the use of a perfect marker would not be expected as they express neither resultative nor experiential meaning. Here *-a-* has immediate past meaning:[8]

(6.41) context: Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said:

> *Iwe* *Mesiya,* *loska,*   *kasi* *ndi* *njani* *wa-ku-pamanth-a*
> you Messiah prophesy Q   COP who   3.SBJ.PRF/IMMPST-2SG.OBJ-hit
> *na*   *malupi?*
> with   palms
> 'Prophesy to us, you Christ! Who hit you?' (Matthew 26:68)

---

[7]The translation of sentence (6.38) contained the marking *-nga*, a modal marker, described by Vail (1973) with the meaning 'to be able to'. Speaker Si from Mzimba translated the third prototypical perfect context ('A: It seems that your brother never finishes books. B: [That is not quite true..] He READ this book' using the remote past tense marker *-ka-*.

[8]With third person subject markers *a-*, the tense-aspect morpheme *-a-* merges with the person marking.

(6.42) context: Immediately Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone forth from him, turned around in the crowd, and asked:

Ndi   njani   wa-khwask-a   malaya   ghane?
COP   who   3.SBJ.PRF/IMMPST-touch-FV   clothes   my

'Who touched my clothes?' (Mark 5:30)

In both cases, the event being referred to happened only a moment ago, and neither context expresses remaining effects.

Finally, *-a-* is sometimes found in sentences referring to present states, such as sitting in the following example:

(6.43) context: Q: What your brother DO right now? (What activity is he engaged in?)

Wa-khal-a   pa   mpando   wa-ku-bazg-a   buku.
3.SBJ.PRF/IMMPST-sit-FV   on   chair   3.SBJ-PRS-read-FV   book

'He is sitting in a chair and is reading a book.' (Ka 85,1)

Thus, *-a-* is used with resultative, inchoative and immediate past meaning, while *-liku-* is used with experiential and resultative meaning. *-a-* being used for present, or inchoative, states, such as sitting in example (6.43), is reminiscent of the use of the same marker in Chichewa (cf. 5.3.2), and of other perfect markers across Bantu. Another commonality between this marker in Citumbuka and Chichewa is that *-a-* is not used in experiential contexts. In Citumbuka, *-liku-* is used in these cases, cf. example (6.38) above.

When contrasting *-a-* with *-angu-* and *-ka-*, cf. Table 6.5, for events that happened just before the moment of speech, *-a-* seems to be the preferred marking, while for events that happened at some point earlier on the day of speaking, both *-angu-* and *-a-* are used, possibly with a slight preference for *-angu-* in the oral and written data from the speakers from Chitipa and Mzimba. Meanwhile, *-a-* is used slightly more often also in general hodiernal contexts in the Bible translation. The marking *-ka-* prevails in contexts referring to the day before speaking and any time before that.

The distinct negative forms marked by *-nda-* will be discussed in section 6.5.

imperfective -anga

Imperfective meaning, termed "incomplete" by Elmslie (1923) and "habitual" and "continuous" by Vail (1973), is described as being expressed by the suffix *-anga*. We saw in section 6.1.2 that is used combined with the present marker *-ku-* by the Chitipa speaker in present habitual contexts, and we will see in section 6.3.2 that it also occurs in combination with a future marker. In my data, it occurs most frequently with *-ka-* (44 occurrences) marking past imperfective as in:

(6.44) context: A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What he DO? (What activity was he engaged in?)

> *Wa-**ka**-lemb-**anga***   *ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-REMPST-write-IPFV   PL-letter
>
> 'He was writing letters.' (Ka q9)

(6.45) *Ku-sukulu visambizgo n-**kha**-vi-temw-**anga***   *masamu*
      at-school   subjects   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-NCL.OBJ-like-IPFV   mathematics
      chizungu ni-nen-e   *kuti chitumbuka pa nyengo yila kweni-so*
      English   1SG.SBJ-say-SBJV   that   Citumbuka   on   time   DEM   but-also
      na bola.
      with   ball
      'At school, I liked the subjects mathematics, English, I should say Citumbuka in those times but also netball.' (Chi 308,1)

Thus, both past continuous and past habitual meaning is expressed by *-ka-...-anga*. The opposition between *-ka-* and *-ka-...-anga* is only marginally found in copula constructions where *-ka-* is used in most cases. In the recordings and questionnaires, five copula constructions referring to the past occur, all of them marked by *-ka-* only, e.g.:

(6.46) *Sabata*   *iyi*   *ku-**ka**-ŵa*   *ku-sala*   *ku-lya..*
      week/Sunday   DEM   there-REMPST-COP   INF-refrain   INF-eat
      'This week/Sunday, there was fasting day.' (Chi 317,1)

In the Bible translation, all but two copula constructions referring to the past are marked by *-ka-*. The only exceptions are the two forms in the following sentence:

(6.47) *Kweni apo*   *kwananga ku-**ka**-ŵ-**anga***   *kunandi,*   *uchizi wa*
      but   where   sin   there-REMPST-COP-IPFV   many/much   grace   of
      *Chiuta u-**ka**-ŵ-**anga***   *unandi*   *kwakuruska.*
      God   NCL.SBJ-REMPST-COP-IPFV   many/much   all.the.more
      'But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.' (Romans 5:20)

Here, the copula marked by *-ka-...-anga* expresses the meaning 'became (much)'. In elicitation sessions, speaker Ka from Chitipa explained that both forms are possible with the copula:

(6.48) *Wa-**ka**-ŵa*   *musambizgi.*
      3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   teacher
      'He/she was a teacher.'

(6.49) *Wa-**ka**-ŵ-**anga***   *musambizgi.*
     3.SBJ-REMPST-COP-IPFV   teacher
     'He/she was a teacher.'

The speaker gave the following example in order to illustrate the difference between the two forms: A group of people met regularly for a certain time to be taught how to swim, one person was the teacher during these meetings; in this case, *Wa-ka-ŵ-anga musambizgi* is used. In a context where the group only meets once, and you talk about the person acting as the teacher, the form marked by *-ka-* only would be used. In a different context, when referring to the two clauses below, the speaker pointed out that the form marked by *-ka-...-anga* is used when it refers to a longer period of time:

(6.50) *Wa-ka-ŵa*   *ku*   *Mzuzu.*
     3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   at   Mzuzu
     'He/she was in Mzuzu.'

(6.51) *Wa-ka-ŵ-anga*   *ku*   *Mzuzu.*
     3.SBJ-REMPST-COP-IPFV   at   Mzuzu
     'He/she was in Mzuzu (e.g. for a longer period of time).'

Eight instances of *-a-...-anga* are also found in the data, e.g.:

(6.52) context: A returns home after being away for a while. B asks:

     *W-**a**-chit-**anga***   *vichi?*
     2SG.SBJ-PRF-do-IPFV   what
     'What have you been doing?' (Ka q65)

(6.53) context: Answer to the question in 6.52:

     *N-**a**-gul-**anga***   *chakulya.*
     1SG.SBJ-PRF-buy-IPFV   food
     'I have been buying food.' (Ka q66)

(6.54) *Wawuso*   *na*   *ine*   *t-**a**-ku-penj-**anga***   *na*   *kwenjerwa*
     your.father   and   I   1PL.SBJ-PRF-2SG.OBJ-look.for-IPFV   with   anxious
     kukuru.
     great
     'Your father and I were anxiously looking for you.' (Luke 2:48)

In all eight occurrences, as in the three examples above, the event described started at some time in the recent past, extended over a period of time and continued until just before the moment of speech. Thus, this forms seems to express persistive perfect.

pluperfect -ka-ŵa kuti -a-

The pluperfect, finally, is expressed in the data by a form of *-ka-ŵa (*COP*) kuti -a-*, cf. the context which in Dahl's (1985) questionnaire was most often marked by a pluperfect cross-linguistically:

(6.55) context: Q: Did you find your brother at home? A:

*Wa-**ka-ŵa***	***kuti***	***wa**-fuma-po*	*sonosono.*
3.SBJ-REMPST-COP	that	3.SBJ.PRF/IMMPST-leave-DEM	immediately

'He had just left.' (Ka q90)

Elmslie (1923) states that *-angu-* expresses past perfect, but as we saw above, this form is used for the hodiernal past in the data that I analysed. The form that Vail (1973) describes as the pluperfect, *-(k)a-ti -a-*, is found here only in temporal clauses and will be described in section 6.4 below.

6.3. Expressing the future

6.3.1. Earlier findings

Future tense forms in Citumbuka often contain a combination of tense and mood or compound constructions involving morphemes of motion. **Kishindo and Lipenga (2006)** only mention two future tenses, *le futur proche* and *le futur lointain*, the near future marked by *-ti-. . . -enge* and the distant future marked by *zamu-*, e.g. *ni-ti-rut-enge* vs. *ni-zamu-ruta* 'I will go'.[9]. **Elmslie (1923)** describes slightly different forms:

- a form constructed of the verb *-ti* and the subjunctive form of the main verb, ending in *-e*, e.g. *Niti nirute* 'I shall go' which is often contracted to *Tinirute* 'I shall go' (p. 86)

- a form constructed of *ya* 'go', *m(u)* and *ku*, e.g. *Nayamkuruta* 'I shall go', often contracted to *namkuruta* or even *namruta*, and a corresponding form with *iza* 'come', e.g. *Nizamkuruta* 'I shall go' (p. 87). The former marking is used for motion towards something in order to do something, the latter is used to express a movement from something in order to do something.[10]

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[9]Kishindo and Lipenga translate the near future form as 'je vais aller' and the distant future form as 'j'irai' (Kishindo and Lipenga, 2006, 42f.)

[10]Using the verb 'go' as the main verb in the example is rather unfortunate in this case as the prefixes express a motion from or towards something, which is not transparent when the main verb 'go' is used.

- the "future incomplete" is formed by SBJ-*ti* SBJ-*V-enge*, e.g. *Niti nitemwenge* 'I shall be loving' (Elmslie, 1923, 88)

Vail (1973), on the other hand, mentions the form *-zamu-* (or *-zamu-ku-*), which according to him is usually called the future tense, being "a semantically unmarked tense with no special connotations", e.g.:

(6.56) /mose mwaβana mu**zamu**geza pa ciziβa ici pa vula/

'all you children will bathe in this pool in the rainy season' (Vail, 1973, 404)

Verb forms marked by *-zamu-ku-* have the same meaning, but are less common.

Vail also mentions forms marked by *ti-...-e*, which appears to be the general future in Elmslie's description. Vail observes that these forms translate as 'must do X', which may reflect a change from this modal to the future tense meaning during the 50 years that passed between the two descriptions. Vail gives the following example:

(6.57) /**ti**walut**e**/

'he must go' (Vail, 1973, 442)

Another form that employs *ti*, although not in verb-initial position, but after the subject marker and with the suffix *-enge*, is termed the "Future Emphatic Tense" by Vail, cf.:

(6.58) /ndasikulwa, ndi**tifw****enge** ndine/

'I am under bad omens; I shall surely die' (Vail, 1973, 446)

According to Vail, this form occurs in the northern parts of the area where Citumbuka is spoken (Rumphi and northern Mzimba Districts), the same form is also identified by Kishindo and Lipenga as the near future. A corresponding form without *-ti-*, only marked by *-enge* is used in southern and western Mzimba District, e.g. *ndifwenge* in the context above.

Vail describes the continuous form of the future tense, SBJ-*ti* SBJ-*V-enge* in Elmslie's description, as being formed by *-zamu-/-zamu-ku-* and the suffix *-anga*, e.g.:

(6.59) /mbeβa pela ndizo zi**zamu**wila**ŋga** mu cpiŋgo ici/

'only rats will be getting caught in this trap' (Vail, 1973, 438)

Vail notes that sentences like these imply that the event holds over a relatively long period of time. It seems that all the examples that he gives refer to habitual events.

The future perfect is usually expressed by a form consisting of the copula βa (ŵa) marked by *-zamu(-ku)-* (general future) and the main verb marked by *-a-*, cf.:

(6.60) /wa**zamuku**βa wa**a**guliska yembe zose pa Mandi/

'he will have sold all the mangoes by Monday' (Vail, 1973, 406)

Vail notes that this tense is "exceedingly rare [...], well on the way to total extinction" and not used at all in the western Citumbuka-speaking area (ibid.). The examples that he gives are elicited as this form did not occur in the oral material that he collected.

Furthermore, Vail describes forms marked by *-amu-(ku)-* as meaning 'will go and...', which he terms the "Future Transitional Tense", e.g.:

(6.61) /nd**amuku**chezga na muviyala wane na macelo/

'I shall go and visit with my cousin tomorrow' (Vail, 1973, 450)

Vail emphasises that "the subject must change locale, status or condition" before the action is carried out (p.449). According to Elmslie (1923), this meaning is expressed by *-zamku-*, as described above.

An additional meaning component is expressed by what Vail calls the "Future Motive Tense", which is marked by *-nda-mu-* and used for events in which the subject goes to a place to do something and then moves on to a different place, e.g.:

(6.62) /β**andamu**gona pa Lumphi na macelo/

'they will be sleeping at Rumphi tomorrow (on their way somewhere else)' (Vail, 1973, 452)

Vail mentions a further tense-mood marking, the "Future Potential/Volitional" -ŋga-zaka, e.g.:

(6.63) /Vuka wa**ŋgazaka**tiwovwila/

'Vuka will be able to help us' (Vail, 1973, 424)

Vail describes this form as rare. -ŋ*ga-* is also used as the only tense-mood marker expressing present possible events.

Nurse (2008) writes that his anonymous source shows nine structures involved in future reference, "the commonest and apparently neutral one" being *-enge*, all the others

seem to involve other features such as emphasis, certainty, distance from speaker, itive and ventive, e.g. *ti-ti ti-lut-e* 'We'll go' (lit. 'we say we go' "strong future"), *ti-ti ti-lut-enge* 'we'll go (emphatic)', *t-a-m-(ku-)gul-a* 'we'll buy (elsewhere)', *t-iza-m-(ku-)gul-a* 'we'll (come here to) buy', *ti-za-ka-gezy-a* 'we'll (come and) try (in a sequence of events)', *t-a-ya-m-(ku-)sang-a* 'We'll (go and) find', *ti-enda-m-(ku-)pereka* 'we'll hand over (on our way to...)'.

The comparison of the three descriptions shows a certain range of variation in the meaning and use of future tense marking that might be, as for Chichewa, due to historical and/or geographical variation.

6.3.2. The present investigation

The markers found in the data expressing future time reference are *-zamu-*, *-amu-*, *-enge* and *-zamu-nga*. *-zamu-* is only found in the data from Chitipa speakers where it seems to contrast with *-enge* in terms of remoteness. There are no occurrences of *-zamu-* by the speakers from Mzimba. Speaker Si only uses *-zamu-e-nga* for a habitual activity in the future that starts on the day after speaking.

Table 6.7.: The distribution of future markers *-zamu-* and *-enge* in the questionnaires and the arranged conversation

time reference	occurrences of tense markers			
	Chitipa speakers		Mzimba speakers	
	-zamu-	-enge	-zamu-	-enge
later today	-	3	-	1
tomorrow	1	2	-	-
unspecified future	4	2	-	-

There are no future markings in the Pear Story, and a more comprehensive analysis is needed to give an account of the future markings in the Bible, but some occurrences will be discussed below. As far as can be concluded from only 13 occurrences in the questionnaires and the arranged conversation, for the speakers from Chitipa, there seems to be a preference for *-enge* in near future contexts, while *-zamu-* is preferred in distant future contexts. This distinction can be rather clearly seen in the sentences translated by speaker Ka from Chitipa:

(6.64) context: According to the contract..

*Ti-**zamu**-gwir-a*	*ntchito*	*cha*	*machero.*
1PL.SBJ-DFUT-catch-FV	work	NEG	tomorrow

'We won't work tomorrow.' (Ka q82)

(6.65) context: It's no use trying to swim in the lake tomorrow. [The water..] [..then.]

> *Maji   gha-zizim-**enge**.*
> water   NCL.SBJ-be.cold-NFUT
> 'The water will be cold.' (Ka q36)

(6.66) context: Q: What are you planning to do right now?

> *Ni-lemb-**enge**   ma-kalata.*
> 1SG.SBJ-write-NFUT   NCL.PL-letter
> 'I'm going to write letters.' (Ka q22)

(6.67) context: Q: What your brother DO if you don't go to see him today, do you think?

> *Wa-ni-lemb-el-**enge**   kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-1SG.SBJ-write-APPL-NFUT   letter
> 'He will write me a letter.' (Ka q15)

The examples above show that for the day after speaking, in some cases *-zamu-* and in others *-enge* is used, which suggests that, as we have seen for other remoteness distinctions, there is no clear cut-off point that would strictly govern the choice of one marker over the other. Table 6.7 gives an overview of the markers and temporal contexts found in the data. It seems that the remoteness distinction for these future tenses is a rather recent innovation, as only Kishindo and Lipenga (2006) describe it.

For the speakers from Mzimba, no occurrence of *-zamu-* is found. Speaker Chi from Mzimba uses *-amu-* both for an event on the day after speaking and for an event in the following year, and *-zamuku-* for referring to an event later on the day of speaking, cf.:

(6.68) context: Talking about a person that the speaker meets often:

> *Ti-ku-kuman-a   pafupipafupi,   namachero   t-**amu**-kuman-a.*
> 1PL.SBJ-HAB-meet-FV   regularly   tomorrow   1PL.SBJ-DFUT-meet-FV
> 'We meet regularly, tomorrow we will meet.' (Chi 311,3)

(6.69) context: Talking about another person that the speaker meets often:

> *Munthu   uyo   n-kha-kuman-a   na-yo   panji   ni-ti*
> person   DEM   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-FV   with-DEM   maybe   1SG.SBJ-say
> *n-kha-mu-won-a   ku   Karonga   ndipo*
> 1SG.SBJ-REMPST-3.OBJ-see-FV   at   Karonga   and

*ni-**zamuku**-wona-na-so*   *na-yo*   *pala*   *n-a-lut-a.*
1SG.SBJ-FUT.ITV-see-RECP-again   with-DEM   when   1SG.SBJ-go-FV

'I met with that person maybe I should say I saw her in Karonga and I will see her again when I go.' (Chi 312,13)

Speaker Ka from Chitipa explained, when discussing the recording, that the form *t-amu-kuman-a* in example 6.68 is a short form of *tizamukumana*. The marking *-zamuku-* corresponds to what Elmslie (1923) describes as a future marking encoding a subsequent action, i.e. 'will go and X', Vail (1973) describes the same meaning as being expressed by *-amu-(ku)*, cf. section 6.3.1.

In the Bible translation, the form *-zamu-* is used only three times. Here, the form SBJ-*ti* SBJ-*V-e* (which was described by Elmslie (1923)) and SBJ-*ti* SBJ-*V-enge* seem to be the predominant future markings; forms of *-amu* and *amku-* also occur but a more comprehensive analysis is needed to describe their distinct meanings accurately.

Imperfective future is expressed by the marking *zamu-anga*, cf.:

(6.70) context: Q: What your brother DO when we arrive, do you think? (What activity will he be engaged in?)

*Wa-**zamu**-lemb-**anga***   *ma-kalata.*
3.SBJ-DFUT-write-IPFV   NCL.PL-letter

'He will be writing letters.' (Ka q16)

(6.71) context: A: My brother has got a new job. He'll start tomorrow. B: What kind of work he DO there?

*Wa-**zamu**-lemb-**anga***   *ma-kalata.*
3.SBJ-DFUT-write-IPFV   NCL.PL-letter

'He will be writing letters.' (Ka q27)

Thus, the imperfective suffix *-anga* occurs in the data with *-zamu-* (future imperfective), *-ka-* (past imperfective), *-a-* (persistive perfect) and *-ku-*, at least in the data from Chitipa (present habitual).

We saw in section 6.3.1 that Kishindo and Lipenga (2006) describe *-zamu-* as the distant future and SBJ-*ti-…-enge* as the near future, while Vail (1973) classifies *-zamu-* as the general future and *-enge* and its variant SBJ-*ti-…-enge* as the future emphatic tense ('shall/will surely X'). Elmslie (1923) does not describe *-zamu-*, but a similar form, *-zamku-* expressing 'I shall go and X', *-(e)nge* is classified by him as the future incomplete/progressive, it also "signifies force, thoroughness" (Elmslie, 1923, 88). Nurse (2008), based on his anonymous source, lists *a-m-(ku)* as 'will X (elsewhere)', *-iza-m-(ku)* 'will (come here to) X' and *-enge* as the most common future and the only form

that does not entail other functions. When compared with what I found in my data, it seems that the future tenses have undergone significant changes, one of which appears to be the introduction of a remoteness distinction between near and distant future, *-zamu-* and SBJ-*ti-. . . -enge*, now *-enge*, which has so far only been described by Kishindo and Lipenga (2006). The affix *-ti-* seems to have been dropped expressing the near future.

So far the description has primarily dealt with tense-aspect marking in affirmative main clauses. In the following section, consecutive marking and temporal clauses are discussed, before this chapter is concluded with an account of tense-aspect marking in negated clauses.

6.4. Sequencing: consecutive events and temporal clauses

The infinitive marker *ku-* is used for consecutive events, as decribed by Vail (1973), the other sources do not mention this construction. This marking occurs 16 times in the narration of the Pear Story, 14 times in the questionnaires and three times in the arranged conversation, cf. the following examples:

(6.72) from the Pear Story:

> *Mbwenu*   *ka-ka-ghanaghan-a*   *kuti*   *ka-tol-e-po*
> then   NCL.SUBJ-REMPST-think-FV   that   NCL.SUBJ-take-SBJV-DEM
> *basiketi*   *yimoza*   *ka-k-iba-po*   *chi-dunga*   *chimoza*   *cha*
> basket   one   NCL.SBJ-REMPST-steal-DEM   NCL.SG-basket   one   of
> *vi-pambi*   *na*   ***ku**-wika*   *pa-njinga*   *yake*   *na*   ***ku**-kwera*   *mbwe*   *na*
> NCL.PL-fruits   and   INF-put   on-bicycle   his   and   INF-get.on   then   and
> ***kw**-amba*   ***ku**-luta.*
> INF-start   INF-go
> 'Then he thought that he should take one basket, he stole one basket and put (it) on his bicycle, got on (it) and started going.' (Nu 408,4)

(6.73) from the narration sequence in the questionnaire:

> *Wa-ka-tol-a*   *libwe*   *na*   ***ku**-yi-sw-a*   *njoka.*
> 3.SBJ-REMPST-take-FV   stone   and   INF-NCL.OBJ-throw/hit-FV   snake
> 'He took a stone and threw it at the snake.' (Ka 174,2)

The use of the infinitive marking *ku-* for consecutive events is the same as in Chichewa, cf. section 5.5.4.

In temporal clauses referring to the past, the marking *-ka-ti -a-* is used. This marking consists of two verb forms, the first one, *-ti*, being marked by *-ka-*, and the second verb form being the main verb marked by *-a-*, e.g.:

(6.74) from the Pear Story:

> *Ndipo wa-**ka-ti*** *wa-m-bek-a* *cha mmanyuma*
> and 3.SBJ-REMPST-TCL.PST 3.SBJ.PRF-3SG.OBJ-look-FV at back
> *wa-ka-sangik-a* *kuti* *wa-gand-a* *libwe na ku-wa.*
> 3SG.SBJ-REMPST-find-FV that 3SG.SBJ.PRF-hit-FV stone and INF-fell.down
> 'As he looked back, he found that he hit a stone and fell.' (Nu 410,1)

(6.75) *N-**kha-ti*** *n-**a**-fik-a* *ku-nyumba* *mayiro*
    1SG.SBJ-REMPST-TCL.PST 1SG.SBJ-PRF-arrive-FV at-house/home yesterday
    a-ka-lemb-a *ma-kalata* *ya-ŵiri.*
    3.SBJ-REMPST-write-FV NCL.PL-letter NCL-two
    'When I came home [yesterday], he wrote two letters [first I came and then he wrote the letters].' (Ka q137)

(6.76) *N-**kha-ti*** *n-**a**-fik-a* *ku-nyumba*
    1SG.SBJ-REMPST-TCL.PST 1SG.SBJ-PRF-arrive-FV at-house/home
    wa-ka-ba *kuti* *wa-ku-lemb-a* *ma-kalata* *ya-ŵiri.*
    3.SBJ-REMPST-COP that 3.SBJ-PRS-write-FV NCL.PL-letter NCL-two
    'When I came home yesterday, he was writing two letters [that was the activity he was engaged in].' (Ka q140)

Vail (1973) and Elmslie (1923) describe this marking as the pluperfect, or past perfect. The examples that Vail gives are all temporal clauses translated as 'after X had…' and he observes that this tense "indicates that an action takes place anterior to a recalled axis of orientation" (Vail, 1973, 418). In the data investigated here, the marking *-ka-ti -a-* only occurs in temporal, subordinate clauses, not in main clauses. Therefore, these forms do not seem to mark pluperfect, but temporal clauses meaning 'when, after x'. The examples above show that the temporal relation between the subordinate and the main clause can be either simultaneity or subsequence; in both cases, the marking in the subordinate, temporal clause is *-ka-ti -a-*. The use of this marking is reminiscent of the use of *-ta-* in Chichewa, which is also used in temporal clauses referring to the past, regardless of whether the temporal relation between the main and subordinate clause is simultaneity or subsequence.

Temporal clauses referring to the future are marked in a different way, by means of *-zaka-* and the conjunction *pala*:

(6.77) ***Pala*** *ni-**zaka**-kul-a,* *ni-zamu-gul-a* *nyumba*
    when 1SG.SBJ-TCL..FUT-grow(up)-FV 1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy-FV house
    yikulu.
    big
    'When I grow old, I will buy a big house.' (Ka q152)

6.5. Tense-aspect and negation

In all tenses except the perfect/immediate past *-a-* negation is expressed by a particle, either *yayi* or *cha(ra)*, cf.:

(6.78) context: Q: Your brother WRITE a letter right now? (Is that the activity he's engaged in?)

> *Wa-**ku**-lemb-a*   *kalata*   ***yayi**.*
> 3.SBJ-PRS-write-FV   letter   NEG
>
> 'He's not writing a letter.' (Ka q84)

(6.79) *Pala*   *n-a-lut-a*   *kwali*   *mu* *Julayi* *n-**khu**-many-a-po*
>   when   1SG.SBJ-PRF-go-FV   maybe   in   July   1SG.SBJ-PRS-know-FV-DEM
>
> *makola*   ***cha**.*
> well   NEG
>
> 'When I go, maybe in July, I don't know really.' (Chi 315,2)

(6.80) *Wa-ka-zizw-a*   *waka* *pakuti*   *wa-**ka**-many-a*   ***yayi***
>   3SG-REMPST-wonder-FV   just   because   3.SG.SBJ-REMPST-know-FV   NEG
>
> *kuti*   *ch-a-lut-a*   *nkhuni.*
> that   NCL.SBJ-PRF-go-FV   where
>
> 'He just wondered since he didn't know where it had gone.' (Nu 417,2)

(6.81) context: According to the contract. . .

> *Ti-**zamu**-gwir-a*   *ntchito*   ***cha***   *machero.*
> 1PL.SBJ-DFUT-catch-FV   work   NEG   tomorrow
>
> 'We won't work tomorrow.' (Ka q82)

The symmetry in negation marking for all but one tense observed in this study is in accordance with Vail's (1973) and Nurse's (2008) account. Elmslie (1923) stated that the negative conjugation is the same for all tenses (Elmslie, 1923, 79).

When looking at the examples above and the distribution of negation particles in the data overall, the distribution of *yayi* as opposed to *cha(ra)* does not seem to be conditioned by grammatical or dialectal factors. Both markings are found in different clause types, with different tense-aspect markers, and are used by speakers from different areas. It seems that *cha* might be preferred by older speakers (Chi and Mfu) whereas *yayi* prevails in the translations and texts recorded from younger speakers (Ka, Si and Nu). In the Bible translation, *cha*, not *yayi*, is used as the negation marker.[11] Furthermore,

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[11] *Yayi* does occur as the interjection 'no' in the Bible translation.

the Bible translation has a marking system in which *kuti* is placed before and *chara* after the verb, which is not found in the recordings or questionnaires. This is the marking that Elmslie (1923) described for verbal negation in general. See the following example from the Bible translation:

(6.82) context: The blind man who was healed by Jesus being questioned by the Pharisees:

> *Nd-angu-mu-phal-ir-a-ni*   *kale*   *ndipo*   **kuti**
> 1SG.SBJ-2PL.OBJ-tell-APPL-FV-2PL.OBJ   already   and   NEG
> *mw-angu-pulik-a*   **chara**.
> 2PL.SBJ-RECPST-listen-FV   NEG
> 'I told you already, and you didn't listen.' (John 9:27)

Unlike Elmslie, Vail (1973) and Nurse (2008) observed the distinct negative perfect marked by *-nda-. . .-e*, which was also found in my data, cf.:

(6.83) context: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A: You MEET my brother (yet)?

> *(Enya)*   *N-**a**-kuman-a*   *na-wo.*
> yes   1SG.SBJ-PRF-FV   with-DEM
> '(Yes) I met him.' (Ka q150)

(6.84) *(Yayi)*   *Ni-**nda**-kuman-**e***   *na-wo.*
> no   1SG.SBJ-PRF.NEG-meet-SBJV   with-DEM
> '(No) I haven't met him (yet).' (Ka q151)

However, Vail notes that the positive verb form marked by *-a-* is often combined with the negation particle *chala/chá* instead, and he predicts that the negative tense form will probably disappear eventually. The negation particle *chá* (as in the example above) or *chala* is also used with the negative verb form, e.g.:

(6.85) /β*anda*tilembelepo <u>kalata</u> *chá* /

> <u>'they have never written us</u> a letter ' (Vail, 1973, 401, bolding added)

-nda-. . .-e is not only found in contexts expressing 'not yet' ('not in the past, but might in the future'), but also in a more general sense of 'not in the past':

(6.86) context: It is cold in the room. The window is closed. Q: You OPEN the window (and closed it again)?

*Ni-**nda**-jul-**e**-po*   *windo.*
1SG.SBJ-PRF.NEG-open-SBJV-DEM   window
'I didn't open the window.' (Ka q62/63)

This asymmetry in affirmative-negative marking being confined to the marking *-a-* and its negative counterpart is similar to the situation in Chichewa where the same marking *-a-* (immediate past/perfect) also does not occur in negated sentences (cf. section 5.7).

In negated existential constructions, the marking *-lije* is used, e.g.:[12]

(6.87)   *So*   *dada*   *uyo*   *wa-ka-ti*   *wa-khir-a*
        so   father   REL   3.SBJ-REMPST-TCL   3.SBJ-descend-FV

         wa-ka-fik-a   *mu-khuni*   *pasi*   *na*   *ku-sanga*   *kuti*
         3.SBJ-REMPST-reach-FV   from-tree   on.ground   and   INF-find   that

         chi-dunga   *chi-moza*   *pa-**lije**.*
         NCL-basket   NCL-one   on-was.not.there

         'So the man, who descended from the tree and reached the ground, found that one basket was not there.' (Nu 416,4)

Affirmative existential constructions are formed by means of the copula *-ŵa*, e.g. *Sabata yila ŵanthu ŵa-ka-**ŵa** ŵanandi kutchalichi.* 'That week, there were many people at church.' The negated existential construction is reminiscent of the corresponding construction in Chichewa in which *-libe* is used.

The asymmetry in negation marking being confined to the perfect, the use of a specific marker for temporal clauses, and of the infinitive for consecutive events in narration are features that Citumbuka shares with Chichewa. The three-way remoteness distinction in the past tense between immediate, recent and remote past differentiates Citumbuka from Chichewa, and, as we will see in the following chapter, from Cisena.

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[12]Note that in the following sentence the temporal clause marking *-ka-ti -a-* is used in a relative clause.

7. The tense-aspect systems in each language: Cisena

The variety of Cisena that is spoken in Malawi differs in various respects from the variety, or varieties, spoken in Mozambique, and also the tense-aspect system is subject to certain variation.

In Malawi, Cisena has fewer speakers than the two other languages described here – around 270,000. When including the Mozambican speakers, the total number of Cisena speakers adds up to 1.6 million, which is higher than the total number of Citumbuka speakers.

Grammatical descriptions of Cisena were written by Anderson (1897) and by Torrend (1900). Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) published a language guide. A recent study by Funnell (2009) compares two varieties of Cisena, one spoken in Malawi and the other in neighbouring Mozambique.

Anderson (1897) described the home of Cisena (Sena) as the district bordering the Zambesi River from Shupanga to the Lupata Gorge in present-day Mozambique. He also noted that the language was rapidly spreading and was spoken and understood from the mouth of the Zambesi to the town of Tete, and up the Shire River, in present-day Malawi, as far as its tributary, the Ruo. The title of the grammar, *An introductory grammar of the Sena language; spoken on the lower Zambesi*, suggests that Anderson based his description on the variety of the language spoken in present-day Mozambique.

Similarly, Torrend (1900) stated that Cisena is spoken along the Zambezi River from the sea up to the Lupata Gorge. He also noted that the language was expanding quickly.

Roughly 100 years later, Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) observe that Cisena is spoken in the districts of Sofala, Manica, Zambezia and Tete in central Mozambique as well as in Nsanje and Chikwawa districts in southern Malawi. According to Pascal Kishindo (p.c.), the Cisena that is recorded in that description is the one of Nsanje district in Malawi.

The two varieties of Cisena spoken in Malawi and Mozambique seem to be rather similar with regard to the lexicon; also most of the grammatical forms are identical, e.g. subject and object markings on the verb and some of the tense-aspect markers. But the future, present, habitual and the narrative tense markers are different in the two varieties, as will be shown in the following. Funnell (2009) compared the two varieties of Cisena, based on a comparison of two Bible translations: The Bible Society of Malawi's translation of the Book of Jonah and the Gospel of Matthew and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Mozambique's translation of the Book of Matthew. In the examples,

MLS refers to Malawian Cisena, while MZS is short for Mozambican Cisena. The tense-aspect markings that Funnell found in the Bible translation from Mozambique are the same that Heins (2007) describes in an unpublished paper on past tense and discourse structure in Mozambican Cisena.

Nurse (2008) gives an account of Cisena's tense-aspect system, with his source being B. Heins, SIL field worker in Mozambique.

A more detailed account of the similarities and differences of Malawian and Mozambican Cisena is given in the following sections. An overview of the different tense-aspect categories described by each author is given in Table 7.2.

Table 7.1 gives a first overview of the tense-aspect categories found in this study of Cisena. Note that the labels for the respective categories do not reflect their whole meaning and all their possible uses, I just use them to be able to refer to them more conveniently and in a meaningful way.

Table 7.1.: Malawian Cisena tense-aspect markers found in this study

past	present[1]	future
perfect and hodiernal: *-a-* pre-hodiernal: *-da-* imperfective: *-kha-*	present: *-ku-* habitual: *-mba-*	near: *-na-* distant: *-naja-/-nadza-*
consecutive *mbi-/mba-*		

In the following, each marker will be discussed individually.

7.1. Expressing the present

7.1.1. Earlier findings

Anderson (1897), Torrend (1900), and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007), as well as Funnell (2009), identify *-na-* as the present tense marker (according to Torrend (1900) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007, 69), the same marking is also used to indicate future time reference). Anderson (1897) distinguishes the present *-na-* from the immediate present *-na-so-*, e.g. *Ndi-na-funa* 'I want' and *apale a-na-so-pika kudya* 'The boys are cooking their food'. He further observes that monosyllabic stems are marked by *-ku-*, e.g. *a-na-so-ku-dza* 'they are just coming'. Similarly, Torrend (1900) observes that some speakers use *na-ku* before monosyllabic stems, e.g. *Ndi-na kudza* 'I am coming'. Nurse (2008), based on his source B. Heins, notes that *-na-* refers to the near, certain future but also has present meaning in some contexts. Nurse assumes that *-na-* was once a present marker, but took on future reference with the present meaning fading. Nurse gives *-sa-* as the marker of perfective present (*ndi-sa-dya* 'I eat') and *-ri ku-* (*ndi-∅-ri ku-dya* I am eating') as marking imperfective present. No concrete examples of the usage of the forms are given, however.

Table 7.2.: Earlier descriptions of tense-aspect markers in Cisena

	-na-	-mba-	-a-	-da-	-k(h)a-[2]	-k(h)a-da-	-na-dza-
Anderson (1897)	present, -na-so-/-na-ku- immediate present	-	perfect/recent past	remote past	continuant past	-	simple future
Torrend (1900)	present and future[3]	-	past absolute	relative past (perfect) (rel. cl. and negated cl.)	imperfect	pluperfect	-
Kishindo and Lipenga (2007)	present and future	present habitual	recent past	remote past	past imperfective	pluperfect	-
Funnell (2009)	present and imm. future	present habitual (MLS[4])	narrative past (only in MZS[5]), perfect	imperfect	past continuous	pluperfect (-khada-)	future (-na-dza-ka in MZS)
Nurse (2008)	near, certain future	-[6]	past perfective[7]	present anterior (perfect) in rel. clauses	past imperfective	past anterior	remote, uncertain future -na-dza ku-

	-sa-	-ku-
Anderson (1897)	-	-
Torrend (1900)	-	-
Kishindo and Lipenga (2007)	-	-
Funnell (2009)	present habitual and present continuous (MZS)	present continuous (MLS)
Nurse (2008)	present perfective	-ri ku- present imperfective[8]

[a]Anderson (1897) and Torrend (1900) write "ka"; Kishindo and Lipenga (2007), Nurse (2008) and Funnell (2009) write "kha" when referring to this form.

[b]With monosyllabic verbs -na-so-ku- is used instead.

[c]-mba- in the position following the subject marker is not mentioned, only mba- preceding the subject marker. It is described as occurring only in subordinate clauses with unclear meaning, e.g. mba-ndi-dya 'eating, when I eat, and I ate'.

[d]MLS: Malawian Cisena

[e]MZS: Mozambican Cisena

[f]The translation of the example that is given for this form suggests, however, that it also functions as a perfect: nd-a-dy-a is translated as 'I ate, have eaten'.

[g]As a further aspect for the present tense, persistive -ci-ri ku- is given. -dza- is noted to be used in constructions expressing 'already' and 'not yet', e.g. nd-a-dza-dy-a 'I have already eaten' and (ha)nd-a-dza-ti ku-dy-a 'I have not eaten yet'.

Only Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) identify a present habitual tense marked by *-mba-*, e.g. *ndi-mba-lima* 'I hoe (every day)'.[9]

Funnell (2009) notes that in Malawian Cisena, the present continuous is expressed by *-ku-*, while in Mozambican Cisena either *-sa-* or *-na-* is used, cf.:[10]

(7.1) *Ndi**ku**kupangani   kuti   Mulungu...*

'I am telling you that God ...' (MLS Matthew 3.9)

(7.2) *Ndi**sa**kupangani   pakweca   kuti   Mulungu...*

'I am telling you that God...' (MZS Matthew 3:9)

(7.3) *Ndi   thangwi   eneyi   ine   ndi**na**kupangani...*

'This is the reason I'm telling you...' (MZS Matthew 6:29) (Funnell, 2009, 52)

Funnell further observes that *-na-* expresses present or immediate future in both varieties, e.g.:

(7.4) *a**na**tionesa   nyatwayi...*

'he will give us trouble (or he brings us trouble)...' (MLS Jonah 1:7)

(7.5) *a**na**tidzesera   tsoka...*

'he will bring us disaster (or he brings us disaster)...' (MZS Jonah 1:7) (Funnell, 2009, 53)

Also the habitual is expressed differently in the two varieties according to Funnell's comparison. In Malawian Cisena, *-mba-* expresses present habitual meaning, while the marker *-sa-* has this function in Mozambican Cisena, cf.:

(7.6) *...i**mba**gwandwa   mbiponywa   pamoto...*

'...is cut down and thrown in the fire...' (MLS Matthew 7:19)

(7.7) *...u**sa**gwandiwa   mbutayiwa   pa   moto...*

'...is cut down and thrown in the fire...' (MZS Matthew 7:19) (Funnell, 2009, 55)

Thus, according to this comparison, the two varieties differ in present continuous and present habitual marking but employ the same marker for present (and immediate future) tense, *-na-*.

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[9]*Je bine (tous les jours).*

[10]Funnell (2009) does not give the full sentence; dots added.

7.1.2. The present investigation

As just outlined, in the earlier descriptions dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, *-na-* is described as the primary marker for the present (and future) tense. However, when looking at the data from the questionnaire and the arranged conversation, i.e. the language used by Malawian speakers of Cisena, *-na-* is generally found with future reference, while the marker *-ku-* occurs in contexts referring to the present. The following observations are based on my data from Nsanje, Malawi. One speaker who grew up in Mozambique was included in the sample; whenever I refer to his data, I will state this explicitly.

The marking *-ku-* is found 22 times in the questionnaire and the arranged conversation, the Pear Story does not contain present reference marking, and for the Bible translation, I performed searches on a few selected verbs that will be described further below. 20 of these 22 clauses in which *-ku-* is used refer to the present, either to the moment of speech or a broader time span, paraphrasable as *right now* and *this summer/now*, e.g.:

(7.8) context: Father to child: Please do not disturb me...

     *Ndi-**ku**-lemb-a*   *tchamba.*
     1SG.SBJ-PRS-write-FV letter
     'I'm writing a letter.' (Go & Dak q83)

(7.9) *Majiwa   mwakauno   a-**ku**-tonthol-a.*
     water   this.summer 3.SBJ-PRS-cold-FV
     'This summer, the water is cold.' (Go & Dak q34)

In one case, *-ku-* occurs in a clause referring to the past, cf.:

(7.10) *Mwemo ti-li   n-tchalitchi   mvula i-**ku**-vumb-a.*
     when   1PL.SBJ-COP NCL.in-church rain   NCL.SBJ-PRS-fall-FV
     'While we were in the church, rain was falling.' (Go 323,3)

In another case, *-ku-* occurs in a subordinate clause referring to the future:

(7.11) *Ndi-ku-dumbir-a   kuti ndi-**ku**-dz-a   kweko mangwana.*
     1SG.SBJ-PRS-promise-FV that 1SG.SBJ-PRS-come-FV there   tomorrow
     'I promise to come to you tomorrow.' (Go 125,2)

The marker *-na-*, which was identified as the present (and also as future) tense marker in earlier descriptions, is generally not found with present time reference in the questionnaire and the arranged conversation. The main clauses in which *-na-* is employed refer to the future, see section 7.3.2, e.g.:

(7.12) *Mangwana* *chakuthoma* *ndi-**na**-thom-a*   *ku-sasanya* *m'-nyumba*
　　　 tomorrow　 at.first　　 1SG.SBJ-FUT-start-FV　 INF-prepare　in-house
　　　 ndi-nga-mal-a　　　　　*ndi-yend-e*　　　 *ku* *basa* *ndi-ka-phunjis-e.*
　　　 1SG.SBJ-when-finish-FV　 1SG.SBJ-go-SBJV　 to　work　1SG.SBJ-ITV-teach-SBJV
　　　 'Firstly, tomorrow I will prepare (do preparations) in my house, after that, I will
　　　 go to work and teach.' (Go 308,1)

In three subordinate clauses, however, *-na-* refers to the day of speaking, e.g.:

(7.13) *Nananga*　 *a-ku-jiw-a*　　　　*kuti* *maji* *ale* *a-**na**-tonthol-a.*
　　　 my.brother　3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV　that　water　DEM　3.SBJ-FUT-be.cold-FV
　　　 'My brother knows (now) that the water is cold (today).' (Go & Dak q117,2)

The other two clauses with *-na-* referring to the day of speaking are of the same type; they are complement clauses referring to a state, viz. the coldness of the water. Both express assumptions and knowledge about the water temperature on the same day: once the verb *nyerezera* 'think' is used, and once the verb *jiwa* 'know' with reference to the brother's knowledge on the day before speaking.

In copula clauses referring to the present, neither *-na-* or *-ku-* nor any other marker of tense or aspect are found, cf.:

(7.14) *Ndi-li*　　　 *ku* *Nsanje.*
　　　 1SG.SBJ-COP　at　Nsanje
　　　 'I am in Nsanje.'

(7.15) *Iye*　　 *ndi* *mphunjisi.*
　　　 he/she　COP　teacher
　　　 'He/she is a teacher.'

In the Bible translation, both *-na-* and *-ku-* occur as present markers. As noted in 7.1.1, Funnell (2009) observed that *-ku-* expresses present progressive, while *-na-* functions as present marking. The following examples illustrate that this distinction is not supported by my data, as *-ku-* and *-na-* are used with the same verbs in similar contexts, cf. the use of *-na-* in the following sentences:

(7.16) context: When Jesus forgives the sins of a paralytic man, the teachers of the
　　　 law say to themselves: This fellow is blaspheming!

　　　 Yesu *a-da-dziw-a*　　　 *kale*　　 *pikhanyerezera*　　*iwo,* *na-tenepo*
　　　 Jesus　3.SBJ-PST-know-FV　long.ago　what.were.thinking　they　and-so
　　　 a-da-long-a　　　　*mb-a-ti,*　　　 "*Mwatani* *mu-**na**-nyerezer-a*　　*pinthu*
　　　 3.SBJ-PST-speak-FV　CONS-3.SBJ-say　why　　　　2PL.SBJ-PRS-think-FV　things

pyakuipa ninga penepi?
evil   like   these

'Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said: "Why do you entertain evil things in your heart?" (Matthew 9:4)

(7.17) *Mfunzisi, ti-**na**-fun-a   ti-ku-on-e-ni*
      master   1PL.SBJ-PRS-want-FV   1PL.SBJ-2.OBJ-see-SBJV-2PL.OBJ
      mu-ku-chit-a   chidzindikiro.
      2PL.SBJ-PRS-do-FV   sign

      'Master, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.' (Matthew 12:38)

The same verbs occur in similar contexts also with the marker *-ku-*, e.g.:

(7.18) context: Then the high priest tore his clothes and said: "Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy." Asking the teachers of law and the elders for their judgement about Jesus:

      *Mphapo, mu-**ku**-nyerezer-a   tani?*
      Q   2PL.SBJ-PRS-think-FV   what
      'What do you think?' (Matthew 26:66)

(7.19) context: The Pharisees came to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said:

      *Thangwi yache njanji anthu   a   nsiku   zino a-**ku**-fun-a*
      reason   its   what   people of time/day DEM   3.SBJ-PRS-want-FV
      chidzindikiro?
      sign
      'Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign?' (Mark 8:12)

In present habitual contexts, the marking *-mba-* is consistently used in the data (25 occurrences in the questionnaire and arranged conversation, 902 in the Bible translation). Only Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) and Funnell (2009) mention this marking, it does not seem to occur in the Mozambican variety of Cisena. The following examples illustrate its use in the Malawian variety:

(7.20) context: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast? A:

      *A-**mba**-lemb-a   tchamba.*
      3.SBJ-HAB-write-FV   letter
      'He writes a letter.' (Go & Dak q19)

(7.21) context: Of a visible lake, what the water is usually like

> *Majiwa   a-**mba**-tonthol-a.*
> water   3.SBJ-HAB-be.cold-FV
> 'The water is cold.' (Go & Dak q31)

(7.22) context: While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax
collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the
Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples:

> *Thangwi yache njanji mfunzisi wanu a-**mba**-dy-a   pabodzi na*
> reason   its   what   teacher   your 3.SBJ-HAB-eat-FV together with
> *anthu   ninga enewa?*
> people like
> 'Why does your teacher eat with such people?" (Matthew 9:11)

To sum up, *-na-* was mentioned as the only present tense marker in the descriptions by
Anderson (1897), Torrend (1900) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007); *-sa-* is the present
perfective tense marker identified by Nurse (2008), which seems to be the marking used
in present-day Mozambican Cisena. In the Malawian Bible translation in Cisena, both
-na- and *-ku-* are used as present tense markers. In the data collected most recently
in Malawi, i.e. in the questionnaire and the arranged conversation, *-ku-*, but not *-na-*
or *-sa-*, is generally used as the present tense marker, while *-na-* remains the marking
for the future tense. As most Cisena speakers in Malawi also speak Chichewa, such a
development was probably influenced by the use of *-ku-* as a present marker in Chichewa.

Thus, for present reference, three different markings are found for Malawian Cisena,
-na-, *-ku-* and present habitual *-mba-*. *-ku-* seems to have become the predominant
present tense marking, while *-na-* is used mainly for future time reference in the data
collected.

7.2.   Expressing the past

7.2.1.   Earlier findings

The past tense markers *-a-*, *-k(h)a-* and *-da-* are described in all five earlier accounts.
Torrend (1900) labels *-a-* the absolute past without further describing its use, giving the
following examples: *U-a gona kupi masiku? – Nd-a-gona' mudzi.* 'Where did you sleep
last night? – I slept at home.', *a-fa* or *u-a-fa* 'he died', *a-enda* or *u-a-enda* 'he went
away' (Torrend, 1900, 125). The subject marker *a-* for third person and the tense-aspect
marker *-a-* usually merge into *a-*, expressing both third person subject and perfect/past.

Anderson (1897) classifies *-a-* as the perfect or recent past, giving examples like *nda-fika* 'I have arrived'. Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) note that *-a-* is used to refer to an event that happened on the day of speaking but not earlier than that, e.g. *ndaimba* 'J'ai chanté' ('I have sung') (p. 70). According to Kishindo and Lipenga, perfective aspect is marked by *-ek-*. However, their description of this marker reveals that it is the passive suffix (which is used with the same form and vowel harmony also in Chichewa and Citumbuka), e.g. *kuva* 'entendre' ('hear') and *kuveka* 'être entendu' ('be heard') (p. 74). Nurse (2008) labels *-a-* as past perfective and states that Cisena has one past tense only. The translation of the example that he gives suggests that the same form also functions as a perfect: *nd-a-dy-a* is translated as 'I ate, have eaten'. Funnell (2009) observes that *-a-* is used as perfect marker in both the Malawian and the Mozambican variety of Cisena, e.g.:

(7.23) *Mw**a**tambira okhonda pagali*

   'You have received without paying.' (MLS Matthew 10:8)

(7.24) *Mw**a**pasiwa pezi*

   'You have been given freely.' (MZS Matthew 10:8) (Funnell, 2009, 46)

However, in the Mozambican variety, the marking *-a-* does not seem to be restricted to perfect marking, as Funnell finds it to be the primary past marker used in narration. Where *-da-* is used in the Malawian variety, *-a-* is used in the translation from Mozambique:

(7.25) *Yona a**da**tawira mbati, "Ine ndine Muheberi. [. . .]"* (MLS Jonah 1:9)

(7.26) *Djona a**a**tawira kuti: "Ine ndine wa dzinza ya aebereu. [. . .]"*

   (MZS Jonah 1:9)

   'Jonah answered: 'I am of the tribe of Hebrews. [. . .]"' (Funnell, 2009, 47)

Funnell (2009) notes that *-da-* is used consistently as a marker of what he calls the "imperfect tense or simple (or narrative) past tense" in the Malawian Bible translation, while *-a-* is used mostly in the corresponding contexts in the version from Mozambique, although *-da-* occurs in some cases, too. The marker *-da-* is identified as the remote past marker, contrasting with recent past *-a-*, both by Anderson (1897) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007), e.g. *mbuzi i-da-fa* 'the goat died' (Anderson, 1897, 25). While Anderson does not specify a cut-off point governing the choice of one marker over the other, Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) report that *-a-* is used for events happening on the

day of speaking, while *-da-* is used for events happening before the day of speaking, e.g. yesterday or last year. Torrend (1900), on the other hand, claims that *-da-* is only used in relative clauses and in negated clauses, e.g. *ndi-da-lima* '(I) who hoed', *Si-da-mu-'ona* 'I did not see him', *Nk'a-da-fa* 'He is not dead' (Torrend, 1900, 125f.). Nurse (2008), too, lists *-da-* as the marking that is used in relative clauses, e.g. *ndi-da-dy-a* 'I have eaten', with perfect (present anterior) meaning.

As for the past imperfective, the marker *-ka-* is described by Anderson as denoting "continuant past time", e.g. *ndi-ka-famba* 'I was travelling' (Anderson, 1897, 25). Torrend calls it "imperfect" without further specifying its use. One of the example he gives is *ndi-ka-lima* 'I was hoeing' (Torrend, 1900, 124), Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) and Nurse (2008) label it "past imperfective" . Kishindo and Lipenga describe that this form is used for non-completed events in the past, Nurse (2008) gives only an example: *ndi-kha-dy-a* 'I used to eat, was still eating'. Funnell (2009) observes that *-ka-* is used in both varieties of Cisena with past continuous meaning.

Both Torrend (1900) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) describe the marking *-ka-da-* as the pluperfect, e.g. *ndi-ka-da-lima* 'I had hoed' (Torrend, 1900, 126). Funnell (2009) notes that *-khada-* is used in the Malawian as well as the Mozambican variety with pluperfect meaning; Nurse (2008) terms this form past anterior.

7.2.2. The present investigation

The distribution of *-a-* and *-da-* in the data indicates that *-a-* is used as both a perfect and a recent, mostly hodiernal, past tense marker, while *-da-* is used for more remote events. The boundary between the uses of the two markers is, however, not absolute. While *-da-* is sometimes used for events happening as recently as earlier on the day of speaking, *-a-* is occasionally used not only for events in the hodiernal past, but also for more remote events, apart from its use as a perfect marker. In the Pear Story narration by a speaker from Mozambique, *-a-* is the marker that is most frequently used, functioning as the narrative past tense marker. Table 7.3 shows the distribution of the two markers in the data.

The following examples illustrate the use of the marker *-a-* as a perfect marker in Malawian Cisena:

(7.27) context: Child: Can I go now? Mother:

> *W-**a**-tchuk-a   mano   ako?*
> 2SG.SBJ-PRF-clean-FV   teeth   your
>
> 'Have you brushed your teeth?' (Go & Dak q64)

(7.28) context: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A: Have you met my brother (yet)? B:

Table 7.3.: The distribution of -*a*- and -*da*- in the recordings, the questionnaire and the direct speech Bible corpus

time reference	occurrence of tense markers					
	Nsanje-speakers		Mozambican speaker		Malawian Bible corpus	
	-*a*-	-*da*-	-*a*-	-*da*-	-*a*-	-*da*-
just now	6	-	-	-	24	2
now	7	-	-	-	-	-
earlier today	13	5	-	-	23	9
yesterday	-	37	-	-	1	-
earlier this week	-	-	-	-	3	1
recently	-	3	-	-	10	3
last year	1	5	-	-	-	-
(many) year(s) ago	1	5	-	-	-	1
unspecified past	7	9	33	10	36	49

> *Nd-**a**-guman-a*   *naye.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV   him
> 'I have met him.' (Go & Dak q150)

(7.29) context: Jesus appointed 72 others and told them:

> *Ufumu*   *wa*   *Mulungu*   *w-**a**-dz-a*   *chifupi*   *na*   *imwe.*
> kingdom   of   God   NCL.SBJ-PRF-come-FV   near   with   you
> "The kingdom of God has come near to you." (Luke 10:09)

The same marking expresses hodiernal past in the following contexts:

(7.30) context: Conversation takes place in the afternoon. Q: Do you know my brother?

> *Nd-**a**-guman-a*   *naye*   *pa-msika*   *machibese*   *alero.*
> 1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-FV   him   at-market   morning   today
> 'I met him at the market this morning.' (Go & Dak q141)

(7.31) context: Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said:

> *Lotera,*   *Khristu!*   *Mbani*   ***a**-ku-meny-a?*
> phrophesy   Christ   who   3.SBJ.RECPST-2SG.OBJ-hit-FV
> 'Prophesy to us, you Christ! Who hit you?' (Matthew 26:68)

(7.32) context: Immediately Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone forth from him, turned around into the crowd, and asked:

A-*khuy-a*   *nguwo*   *zanga*   *mbani?*
3.SBJ.RECPST-touch-FV   clothes   my   who
'Who touched my clothes?' (Mark 5:30)

As the overall distribution of -*a*-, shown in table 7.3, indicates, -*a*-, with past tense meaning, is primarily used for events happening earlier on the day of speaking. There are, however, also cases that are not covered by this rule, as the following two examples show:

(7.33) context: Talking about a person that the speaker regularly meets, different points in time are mentioned, here the speaker refers to the most recent meeting:

*Nd-**a**-pez-an-a*   *naye*   *pontho*   *pakatipa*   *pyaka*   *pishanu*
1SG.SBJ-RECPST-get-RECP-FV   her   again   between   years   five
pyapitapi.
past
'I met her again five years ago.' (Go 319,7)

(7.34) context: Talking about the speaker's favorite food, different points in time are mentioned, here the speaker refers to the most recent time she ate this particular dish:

Chinchino   *pano*   *nd-**a**-chi-dy-a*   *pontho*   *chaka*   *chamalachi*
now   here   1SG.SBJ-RECPST-NCL.OBJ-eat-FV   again   year   last
mpunga   *na*   *solili.*
rice   with   solili
'I last ate it last year, this rice with solili.' (Go 316,3)

Thus, in a context like this, where the speaker is talking about a recurring event, -*a*- can be used for the most recent event, even if it occured one year or several years ago.

In the Pear Story narration by a Mozambican speaker, the same marking is used as the narrative tense, e.g.:

(7.35) *Bukapepo*   **a**-*gones-a*   *njinga-che*   *gones-e*
      from.there   3.SBJ.PST-lay.down-FV   bicycle-his   lay.down-SBJV
      a-*kwat-a*   *sheshito*   *ibodzi*   *ya*   *msampho*   *u-kha-tchol-a*
      3.SBJ.PST-take-FV   bag   one   of   fruit   NCL.SBJ-PSTIPFV-pick-FV
      mamuna   *ule.*
      man   DEM
      'From there, he laid down his bicycle and took one bag of fruits picked by the man.' (Ma 443)

The use of -*a*- as a recent past and a perfect marker is in line with what Anderson (1897) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) observed. The use of -*a*- as a general past or narrative tense marker is what Torrend (1900) and Funnell (2009) describe for the Mozambican variety of Cisena. The use of -*a*- to mark the most recent in a series of events has not been described before the present investigation.

The distribution of -*da*- indicates that this marking is primarily used for more remote events taking place on the day before speaking or earlier than that, cf. table 7.3 and the following examples:

(7.36) *Dimingu ile yapita-yo ti-**da**-li na mwambo wa*
   week DEM past-DEM 1PL.SBJ-REMPST-COP with function of
   ku-konzekera kuti ti-tambir-e mbus-athu.
   INF/NMLZ-prepare-FV that 1PL.SBJ-receive-SBJV priest-our
   'The week before last, we had a preparatory function of welcoming our pastor.'
   (Go 322,4)

(7.37) context: Do you know what happened to me yesterday? I was walking in the forest. . .

   *Namdzidzi ndi-**da**-pond-a nyoka.*
   suddenly 1SG.SBJ-REMPST-step-FV snake
   'Suddenly, I stepped on a snake.' (Go & Dak q162)

But again, as seen for the past tenses in Chichewa and Citumbuka, the boundary is not absolute. In 16 cases out of 129 in the recordings, questionnaire and the direct speech Bible corpus of Malawian Cisena, -*da*- is used for events happening earlier on the day of speaking, i.e. the time range for which -*a*- is usually applied, e.g.:

(7.38) context: The speaker just came back from a walk in the forest: Do you know what just happened to me? I was walking in the forest, suddenly. . .

   *Ndi-**da**-pond-a nyoka.*
   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-step-FV snake
   'Suddenly, I stepped on a snake.' (Go & Dak q187)

(7.39) context: Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered. Others said:

   *Angelo a-**da**-long-a kuna iye!*
   angel 3.SBJ-REMPST-speak-FV to he
   'An angel has spoken to him!' (John 12:29)

-da- is the marking generally applied in the narrative sequences of the questionnaire, regardless of whether the narrated event took place as recently as a short while ago on the day of speaking or whether it refers to the childhood of the speaker. Thus, although *-da-* is generally applied for events taking place earlier than the day of speaking, there are contexts in which this rule is overridden, one such context being narratives.

The past imperfective with either past progressive or past habitual meaning is marked by *-kha-*, cf.:

(7.40) context: A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What he DO? (What activity was he engaged in?)

> *A-**kha**-lemb-a   ma-tchamba.*
> 3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He was writing letters.' (Go & Dak q9)

(7.41) context: A: Last year, my brother worked at an office. B: What kind of work he DO there?

> *A-**kha**-lemb-a   ma-tchamba.*
> 3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He wrote letters.' (Go & Dak q26)

In the narrative sequences of the questionnaire quoted in (7.37) and (7.38), the introductory sentence *I was walking* in the forest is marked by past imperfective *-kha-*. Consecutive events within a clause are marked by *mba-*, which will be described in section 7.4 below, all other verbs in the narrative sequences are marked by *-da-*.

Torrend (1900), Anderson (1897) and Funnell (2009) only mention the continuous meaning of the form *-kha-*. According to Funnell, it is found in both the Malawian and the Mozambican variety. Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) assign this form to incomplete events.

-kha- also occurs with state verbs with past habitual meaning, cf.:

(7.42) context: Talking about the speaker's childhood and time at school:

> *Kweku   ndi-**kha**-komwer-a   maningi.*
> here   1SG.SBJ-PSTIPFV-be.pleased-FV   very
> 'I was [used to be] very happy there.' (Go 313,1)

(7.43) context: Talking about the speaker's childhood:

*Pi-**kha**-li-ne*   *khombwani   mayi*
when-PSTIPFV-COP-1SG.SBJ   baby   mother

a-kha-ndi-pang-a   *kuti   ndi-**kha**-kond-a*
3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-1SG.OBJ-tell-FV   that   1SG.SBJ-PSTIPFV-like/love-FV

pyakwanga   ku-dya   phalala   ya   mgaiwa.
very   INF-eat   porridge   of   maize.flour

'When I was little, my mother was telling me that I loved maize flour porridge very much.' (Go 310,3)

In the questionnaire data, a further form expressing past progressive meaning, consisting of the past tense marker *-da-*, the copula *-li* and the infinitive marker *-ku-*, i.e. *-da-li-ku-*, occurs:

(7.44) context: A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What he DO? (What activity was he engaged in?)

   *A-**da-li-ku**-lemb-a*   *tchamba.*
   3.SBJ-REMPST-COP-INF-write   letter

   'He was writing a letter.' (Go & Dak q10)

The marking *-kha-* is used more frequently than *-da-li-ku-* in the data: 23 occurrences of *-kha-* and 8 occurrences of *-da-li-ku-* are found in the questionniare data. In the Pear Story and in the Bible corpus, only *-kha-* is used in past imperfective contexts.

In copula clauses referring to the past, both the marker *-kha-* and the marker *-da-* occur. In the recordings and the questionnaire, three copula clauses occur that are marked by *-kha-*, while three other copula clauses are marked by *-da-*, e.g.:

(7.45) *Nyumba   i-**kha**-li*   *i-kulu.*
       house   NCL.SBJ-PSTIPFV-COP   NCL-big

       'The house was big.' (Go q3)

(7.46) *Lero   tchiku   i-**da**-li*   *pyadidi   maningi.*
       today   day   NCL.SBJ-PST-COP   good   very

       'Today, the day was very good.' (Go 303,1)

When asked about the difference between the two forms, speaker Dak observed that *-kha-li* is the traditional form, and that *da-li* is increasingly used nowadays. This observation is consistent with what is found in the Bible translation in which only *-kha-li* is used in copula clauses referring to the past.

The pluperfect marking mentioned in the descriptions by both Torrend (1900), Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) and Funnell (2009) is *-k(h)ada-*. However, in my data, this form is only found in the Bible translation in this function, e.g.:

(7.47) *Tenepo*   *munthu*   *ule*   *a-d-end-a*   *mb-a-ka-pang-a*
     so   man/person   DEM   3.SBJ-REMPST-go-FV   CONS-3.SBJ-ITV-tell-FV
    akadamu   *a*   *Chiyuda*   *kuti*   *munthu*   *a-**khada**-mu-wangis-a*
    elders   of   Jewish   that   man/person   3.SBJ-PPF-3SG.OBJ-made.well-FV
    ule   *a-kha-li*   *Yesu.*
    DEM   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-COP   Yesu
    'The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.' (John 5:15)

In the questionnaire, *-kada-* occurs only once and expresses irrealis meaning, cf.

(7.48) *Mphale*   *a-nga-da-zi-tambir-a*   *dinyerozo*   *julo,*
     boy   3.SBJ-COND-REMPST-NCL.OBJ?-receive-FV   money   yesterday
    *a-**kada**-m-gul-ir-a*   *mtchikana*   *mtukwa.*
    3.SBJ-IRR-3SG.OBJ-buy-APPL-FV   girl   present
    'If the boy had gotten the money yesterday, he would have bought a present for the girl.' (Go & Dak q106)

In the questionnaire, pluperfect meaning is instead expressed by the marking *-da-li -a-*, consisting of the past marker *-da-* with the copula *-li*, and the perfect marker *-a-* on the main verb. The following two sentences are those that in Dahl's (1985) cross-linguistic sample most often contained pluperfect forms, e.g.:

(7.49) context: Q: Did you find your brother at home?

    *A-**da-li***   *__a__-buluka-po.*
    3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   3.SBJ.PRF-leave-DEM
    'He had left (just before we came).' (Go & Dak q90)

(7.50) *Pi-da-bwer-a*   *ine*   *mmuji*   *a-**da-li***   *__a__-lemb-a*
    TCL-REMPST-come-FV   I   home   3.SBJ-REMPST-COP   3.SBJ.PRF-write-FV
    ma-tchamba   *awiri.*
    NCL.PL-letter   two
    'When I came home (yesterday), he had written two letters (he finished writing them just before I came).' (Go & Dak q138)

While earlier descriptions and the analysis of the Bible translation point to *-khada-* as the pluperfect marker, the present-day use of the language seems to favour a different construction, *-da-li -a-*, in pluperfect contexts.

We have seen that in Malawian Cisena a remoteness distinction between hodiernal past *-a-* and remote past *-da-* is made. The absolute temporal distance between the time of the event and the time of speaking is not always decisive for the choice of one

marker over the other. For past imperfective and pluperfect marking, some variation was found. For the past imperfective, two different markings are used in the most recent data, *-kha-* and *-da-li-ku-*. For the pluperfect, the marking *-khada-* described in earlier sources is found in the Bible translation (from 2005), but a different marking, *-da-li -a-*, is used in the data collected from Nsanje.

Let us now turn to the expression of future temporal reference.

7.3. Expressing the future

7.3.1. Earlier findings

Torrend (1900) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) identify *-na-* as the tense marker for both future and present time reference, e.g. *mu-na-lima* 'you hoe, will hoe', while Anderson (1897) says that simple future is expressed by *-na-dza-*, e.g. *ndi-na-dza-enda* 'I will go' (Anderson, 1897, 25). According to Funnell (2009), *-na-* is used for immediate future reference in the Malawian as well as the Mozambican variety of Cisena, while future tense is otherwise expressed by *-nadza-* in Malawian Cisena and by *-nadza-ka-* in Mozambican Cisena. *-na-* is observed to be used more often than *-nadza-ka-* in the Mozambican variety when referring to the future, e.g.:

(7.51) *Baba wanu wa kudzulu a**na**kulekereranimbo*

'your heavenly Father will also forgive you' (MZS Matthew 6:14) (Funnell, 2009, 55)

(7.52) *Babanu wa Kudzulu a**nadza**lekererambo pyakudawa pyanu*

'your Heavenly Father will also forgive your sins' (MLS Matthew 6:14)

Nurse (2008) labels only *-na-* as future (perfective) tense in his tense-aspect table and describes Cisena in the accompanying overview as having one future tense only. A form *-na-dza ku-* consisting of the *-na-* marked verb *-dza* 'come' and the infinitive form of the main verb is, however, also given, marked by a question mark, and the example *ndi-na-dza ku-dya* is translated as 'I will eat (remote, uncertain)' as opposed to the example *ndi-na-dya* '(I eat), I will eat (certain, near future)'. The future imperfective and persistive is given as *ndi-na-khala ku-dya* 'I will (still) be eating', in the column marked by a question mark, also *ndi-na-dza-khala ku-dya* 'I will be eating (remote, uncertain)' is given. Nurse notes that "the TA system gives the impression of having undergone much change, and fairly recently, because several of the formatives occur in full and bleached shape, e.g. *-khala* 'be' is only partly grammaticalised as can be seen from its shape", e.g. *ndi-na-khala ku-dya* 'I will (still) be eating' as opposed to the reduced form *ndi-kha-dya* 'I was eating'.

The marker *-dza-* with subjunctive *-e* is mentioned by Torrend (1900) who labels it the approximative, expressing the meaning 'come and X', e.g. *ndi-dza-lime* 'I am coming to hoe' (p. 132). The marker *-ka-* expresses the contrary directional, e.g. *ndi-ka-lime* '(that) I go and hoe' (p. 133).

7.3.2. The present investigation

Near future events are marked by *-na-* in the questionnaire and in the arranged conversation. The ten clauses in which *-na-* is used in the questionnaire and the arranged conversation, refer either to the day of speaking or the day after speaking, e.g.:

(7.53) context: Talking about the speaker's plans for the following day:

Mangwana	*chakuthoma*	*ndi-**na**-thoma*		*ku-sasanya*	*m'-nyumba*
tomorrow	at.first	1SG.SBJ-FUT-start-FV		INF-prepare	in-house
ndi-nga-mal-a		*ndi-yend-e*	*ku*	*basa*	*ndi-ka-phunjis-e.*
1SG.SBJ-after-finish-FV		1SG.SBJ-go-SBJV	to	work	1SG.SBJ-ITV-teach-SBJV

'Firstly, tomorrow I will prepare (do preparations) in my house, after that, I will go to work and teach.' (Go 308,1)

(7.54) context: Talking to someone who is leaving in a while:

U-nga-bwerer-a	*u-**na**-ndi-pez-a*
2SG.SBJ-when/if-return-FV	2SG.SBJ-FUT-1SG.OBJ-find-FV
nd-a-maliz-a	*ku-lemba* *tchamba-yi.*
1SG.SBJ-PRF-finish-FV	INF-write letter-DEM

'When you return, you will find that I have finished writing the letter.' (Go & Dak q107)

In more remote reference, *-nadza-/-naja-* is used. Speakers Go and Da often write both forms, *-nadza-* and *-naja-*, in the questionnaire, one of them given in brackets. Speaker Go explained during a consultation session that *-naja-* is used when speaking while *-nadza-* is the written form. The following example illustrates the use of this form:

(7.55) context: Said by a young man:

Ndi-ngaja-kul-a,	*ndi-**naja**-gul-a*	*nyumba*	*igoloso.*
1SG.SBJ-TCL.FUT-be.grown-FV	1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy-FV	house	big

'When I grow old, I'll buy a big house.' (Go & Dak q152)

During the consultations, speaker Go explained that the following two sentences basically have the same meaning:

(7.56) *Ndi-**na**-lemb-a*   *kalata.*
       1SG.SBJ-NFUT-write-FV   letter
     'I will write a letter.' (Go)

(7.57) *Ndi-**nadza**-lemb-a*   *kalata.*
       1SG.SBJ-DFUT-write-FV   letter
     'I will write a letter.' (Go)

When I asked whether the latter sentence can be used with *lero* 'today', she said that this was not possible, in contrast to the first sentence.

Also in the Bible translation, as described by Funnell (2009), both *-na-* and *-nadza-* are found. Funnell (2009) and Nurse (2008) are the only earlier descriptions in which both future markers are mentioned. Torrend (1900) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) only describe *-na-* as the present and future marker, Anderson (1897) identifies *-na-dza-* as the simple future marker (and *-na-* as the present marker). As Funnell (2009) and Nurse (2008) are more recent descriptions, it seems that the future tense system with two degrees of remoteness is the result of a rather recent development.

In the Bible translation, too, *-na-* seems to mark a nearer future than *-nadza-*, e.g.

(7.58) context: A ruler came, knelt before Jesus and said: My daughter has just died.

Apo   *tendeni*   *mu-ka-m-sanjik-e*   *manja-nu,*   *tenepo*   *iye*
then   let's.go   2PL.SBJ-ITV-3SG.OBJ-lay.on-SBJV   hands-your   so   she
*a-**na**-khal-a*   *pontho*   *na*   *moyo.*
3.SBJ-NFUT-be/become-FV   again   with   life
'But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.' (Matthew 9:18)

(7.59) *Ndi-ku-ku-pang-a-ni*   *pyakuonadi*   *kuti*   *anthu*   *azinji*
       1SG.SBJ-PRS-2.OBJ-tell-FV-2PL.OBJ   truth   that   people   many
       *a-**nadza**-bwer-a*   *ku-bulukir-a*   *kumabulukiro*   *na*   *kumadokero*   *dzuwa*
       3.SBJ-DFUT-come-FV   INF-leave-FV   east   and   west   sun
       mb-a-dza-khal-a   *pansi*   *pabodzi*   *na*   *Abrahamu,*   *Isake*   *na*   *Yakobo*
       CONS-3.SBJ-come-sit-FV   down   together   with   Abraham   Isaac   and   Jacob
       pa-phwando   *mu*   *Ufumu*   *wa*   *Kudzulu.*
       on-feast   in   kingdom   of   heaven
       'I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 8:11)

The phrase *a-**na**-khal-a pontho na moyo* in the first sentence refers to a nearer future than *a-**nadza**-bwer-a* in the second example which refers to a prophesy concerning an unspecified point in the future. The marker *-nadza-* is also found in imperfective future contexts, cf.:

(7.60) context: A: My brother has got a new job. He'll start tomorrow. B: What kind of work he DO there?

(7.61) *A-**nadza**-lemb-a   ma-tchamba.*
     3.SBJ-DFUT-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
     'He will write letters.' (Go & Dak q27)

(7.62) context: Q: What your brother DO when we arrive, do you think? (What activity will he be engaged in?)

     *A-**nadza**-lemb-a   ma-tchamba.*
     3.SBJ-DFUT-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
     'He will be writing letters.' (Go & Dak q16)

Thus, it is not only the past tense categories but also the future tenses that exhibit a remoteness distinction. This distinction was not observed in the early descriptions by Torrend (1900) and Anderson (1897) or the more recent language guide by Kishindo and Lipenga (2007). Only Funnell (2009) and Nurse (2008) mention both forms, which suggests that this is a rather recent development. For Mozambican Cisena, the remote future tense seems to be slightly different from the form used in Malawian Cisena: -*nadza ku*- is used in Mozambican Cisena according to Nurse (2008, based on Heins), and -*nadza-ka*- is used in the Mozambican Cisena Bible translation according to Funnell (2009), while -*nadza*- is used in Malawian Cisena.

7.4. Sequencing: Consecutive events and temporal clauses

7.4.1. Earlier findings

Marking of events as consecutive is described in several earlier descriptions, even though the authors might not use the term "consecutive". Torrend (1900) and Anderson (1897) mention the prefix *mba*- in this function which differs from present habitual -*mba*- by its position preceding the subject prefix. In Torrend's words: It "connects two real facts prescinding from all notion of tense present, future or past" as in *Ndakupasa pesa pa 'nkulo, mb-u-tambira iwe* 'I gave you a piece (of cloth or money) near the brook, and you accepted it' (Torrend, 1900, 158). He also notes a form *mba*-SBJ-*da*- which "connects two hypothetic facts that have not been realized", e.g. *Mb-u-da-gua muti, mb-u-da-ku-finha* 'If the tree had fallen down, it would have crushed you' (Torrend, 1900, 159). *Mba*- expresses a further meaning when found with the subjunctive suffix -*e*, as in *Munt'u mb-a-lime* 'Then let the man dig' (ibid.). Funnell (2009) does not discuss *mba*- in his comparison. Nurse (2008, based on Heins) describes *mba*- as occurring only in

subordinate clauses with unclear meaning, e.g. *mba-ndi-dya* 'eating, when I eat, and I ate'. He states that the glosses given are "just glosses, but the underlying meaning needs more work".

The temporal clause marker *pi-* 'when' is only explicitly mentioned by Funnell (2009). He states that *pida-* occurs regularly in both varieties of Cisena "to introduce a past participial phrase" (Funnell, 2009, 48), where *pi-* means 'when', e.g. *Pidava Yesu* 'when heard Jesus' (p. 49). Torrend gives a clause with the marker *pi-* (*Pidafikeye = pidafikaye* 'When he came' (Torrend, 1900, 108)) as an uncommented example in his description of relative clauses. Neither Anderson (1897) nor Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) or Funnell (2009) mention this marking.

The present investigation

When talking about a sequence of events in one sentence, only the first verb form is marked by one of the tense markers described (e.g. *-da-*), while the following events are marked by *mba-/mbi-*. Speaker Da notes that both forms are applicable without a difference in meaning. *Mba-* seems to be more common, the marker *mbi-* is only found three times and only in the arranged conversation. The following examples illustrate the use of *mba-/mbi-*:

(7.63) context: Talking about the speaker's childhood and school days

> *Pontho pa buleki ti-kha-kond-a kw-enda muji unango wa*
> also   on break 1PL.SBJ-PSTIPFV-like-FV INF-go village certain of
> *Jeke ka-tchola manga **mbi**-ti-dy-a.*
> Jeke PURP-pick-FV mangoes CONS-1PL.SBJ-eat-FV
>
> 'Also during the breaks, we used to go to Jeke village to pick mangoes and eat them.' (Go 313,8)

(7.64) context: I'll tell you what happened to me once when I was a child. I was walking in the forest. Suddenly, I stepped on a snake. It bit me in the leg.

> *Ndi-da-kwat-a mwala **mba**-ndi-i-pony-er-a.*
> 1SG.SBJ-PST-take-FV stone CONS-1SG.SBJ-NCL.OBJ-throw-APPL-FV
>
> 'I took a stone and threw it (at the snake).' (Go & Dak q169)

In my data, *mba-* is used both by the speakers from Nsanje district in Malawi and by the speaker from Mozambique. *Mbi-* occurs 3 times in the arranged conversation (out of 71 tense-aspect forms used by the speaker from Nsanje during the conversation), *mba-* occurs 11 times in the questionnaire (the whole questionnaire contains 248 tense-aspect forms), 25 times in the narration of the Pear Story by the Mozambican speaker (the whole narration contains 179 tense-aspect markings), and 353 times in the Bible

translation (out of approximately 30,000 verb forms altogether). It is thus a rather productive means of marking consecutive events.

The verb in a temporal clause receives the prefix *pi-*. Also this marking is found in the data from the speakers from Nsanje district in Malawi as well as from the speaker from Mozambique. The structure of the verb marked by *pi-* is slightly different from the structure of finite verbs in main clauses. Verb-initially, *pi-*, and not the subject marker, is found, while the subject is expressed either as an enclitic after the verb stem, such as *-ye* in the first example below, or by means of a pronoun after the verb, such as *ine* in the second example below:

(7.65) **Py**-*a-bwer-e-ye*   *pile*   *na*   *mbuzi*   *yache*   *ku-fika*   *pepo*   *iye*
     when-PRF-come-SBJV-he that.one with goat his INF-arrive there he
     mkulu-yo   *a-kha-li*   *m-muti.*
     big-DEM   3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-COP   in-tree
     'When he arrived with his goat, the big (man) was in the tree.' (Ma 414)

(7.66) **Pi**-*da-bwer-a*   *ine*   *mmuji,*   *ndi-da-lemb-a*   *ma-tchamba*   *awiri.*
     TCL-PST-come-FV   I   home   1SG.SBJ-PST-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter   two
     'When I came home (yesterday), I wrote two letters (first I came and then I wrote the letters)' (Go & Dak q137)

According to Torrend (1900), a similar verb formation with the subject marking as an enclictic or a pronoun after the verb, but without initial *pi-*, is found in relative clauses, e.g. *Nhumba inagonera ine* 'The house in which I sleep' (Torrend, 1900, 104). The noun class prefix in the first position on the verb refers to the head noun of the relative clause.

The subjunctive ending *-e* in a *pi-* marked clause, as in example (7.65), occurs only in the narration of the Pear Story by the Mozambican speaker in which such forms are found alongside corresponding forms ending in *-a*, e.g.:

(7.67) **Py**-*a-mu-lang'an-**a**-ye*   *iye*   *mkulu*   *ule*   *a-kha-li*
     TCL-PRF-look.at-FV-he he/him big   DEM 3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-COP
     m-muti-be   *basi.*
     in-tree-still   that's.it
     'When he looked at him, the big man was still in the tree.' (Ma 441)

The three forms in the arranged conversation and the six forms occurring in the questionnaire all show indicative marking *-a*.

7.5. Tense-aspect and negation

7.5.1. Earlier findings

Torrend (1900) as well as Kishindo and Lipenga (2007) note that the negation of clauses in which *-na-*, *-da-* or *-ka-* are used as tense-aspect markers is formed in a particular

way: With first person singular subjects, the negation marker *si-* is used, and the subject marker does not occur, e.g. *si-na-lima* 'I do not dig' (Torrend, 1900, 161). In the other persons, *nk'(a)* is used before the subject marker, e.g. *nk'a ti-na lima* 'we do not dig' (ibid.). With other tenses, verbal negation is expressed by the particle *bi* or *tayu*, e.g. *Ndamu'ona bi/tayu* 'I did not see him' (Torrend, 1900, 162). He further states that the particles *tayu* and *bi* can always be added to clauses marked by *si* or *nk'a*. Note that in Torrend's account, the marker *-a-* occurs in negated clauses. We will see in the following that according to Anderson (1897) and according to my own findings, *-a-* does not occur in negated clauses, in which the marker *-da-* is used instead.

Anderson (1897) notes that with the present tense *-na-*, the past tense *-da-* and the future tense *-na-dza-*, *si-* is used for the negation of verb forms referring to the first person singular. With the second person singular, *h-* is used, and with all other person markings, *ka-* is applied. In some parts, Anderson notes, *ha* is used instead of *ka*. He gives, among others, the following examples for the rules described in negation marking: *si-na-ona* 'I do not see', *h-u-da-ona* 'you didn't see', *ka-na-ona* 'he/she doesn't see' (Anderson, 1897, 27). He also observes that *-a-* is not used in negative contexts, *-da-* is used instead. He does not mention the particles *tayu* or *bi*. Nurse (2008, based on Heins) notes that *ha-* can apparently be added to most, if not all, inflected positives. All examples he gives have a first person singular subject, and most of their negated forms are marked by *si-*, apart from the negated present tense form, which is *n-kha-be ku-dy-a*, and the remote, uncertain future, for which two forms are given, *ndi-kha-be ku-dza ku-dya* and *si-na-dza-dy-a* 'I will not/never eat'. A form with *ha-* (in brackets) is only given as one of two possible negated counterparts of the *already*-form *nd-a-dza-dy-a* 'I have already eaten', namely *(ha)nd-a-dza-ti ku-dy-a* 'I have not eaten yet' as opposed to a similar form ending in *-e* without *(ha-)*. According to Heins (ms.), verbal negation in Mozambican Cisena is marked by *ha-* for all persons except first person singular verb forms. For constructions involving the copula *-li*, it is not *ha-*, but merely the particle *tayu* and, for the first person singular, *si-* that are used.

7.5.2. The present investigation

The 21 negated clauses in the questionnaire and the arranged conversation give a different picture for Malawian Cisena from the authors above. Here, the verb forms that are used in negated clauses have the same structure as in affirmative clauses, without an initial *si-*, *ha-* or *nk'(a)* marking. Negation is expressed by the particle *tayu/tayi* alone. In two cases the suffix *-bi* is used instead, and once both alternatives are given, the particle *tayi* and *-bi* in brackets. The following examples show how negation is expressed in the present, past and future tenses:

- present and present habitual:

    (7.68) context: Q: Your brother WRITE a letter right now? (Is that the activity he's engaged in?)

*A-**ku**-lemb-a*   *tchamba* ***tayi (/bi)**.*
3.SBJ-PRS-write-FV   letter

'He's not writing a letter [he's asleep].' (Go & Dak q84)

(7.69) context: Q: Do cats bark?

*A-**mba**-ut-a*   ***tayu**.*
3.SBJ-HAB-bark-FV   NEG

'They don't bark.' (Go & Dak q76)

- past:

Here, both subjunctive marking *-e* and the final vowel *-a* are found:

(7.70) context: Q: When you came to this place a year ago, did you know my brother?

*Ndi-**da**-guman-**a***   *naye* ***tayi**.*
1SG.SBJ-PST-meet-FV   him   NEG

'I didn't meet him [before I came here].' (Go & Dak q51)

(7.71) context: Assuming that B was going to meet A's brother, A asks: You MEET my brother (yesterday, as was planned)?

*Ndi-**da**-guman-**e***   *naye* ***tayu**.*
1SG.SBJ-PST-meet-SBJV   him   NEG

'I didn't meet him [yesterday, as was planned].' (Go & Dak q47)

- perfect and hodiernal past:

Here, I give an affirmative sentence first in which the perfect marker *-a-* is used. There is only one negated sentence in the data with probably hodiernal past time reference; also in this context, *-da-*, not *-a-* is used.

(7.72) context: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A: You MEET my brother (yet)? Answer:

*Nd-**a**-guman-a*   *na-ye.*
1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV   with-DEM

'I have met him.' (Go & Dak q150)

(7.73) context: Answer to the same question:

*Ndi-**da**-guman-**e***   *na-ye*   ***tayi**.*
1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-SBJV   with-DEM   NEG

'I haven't met him (yet).' (Go & Dak q151)

(7.74) context: It is cold in the room. The window is closed. Q: Did you open the window? A:

> *Ndi-**da**-i-fungul-**e***   *zenera-yi*   *tayi.*
> 1SG.SBJ-REMPST-NCL.OBJ-open-SBJV   window-DEM   NEG
> 'I didn't open the window.' (Go & Dak q63)

- future:

(7.75) context: According to the contract..

> *Ti-**na**-phat-**a***   *basa*   ***tayu*** *magwana.*
> 1PL.SBJ-NFUT-hold-FV   work   NEG   tomorrow
> 'We don't work tomorrow.' (Go & Dak q82)

Thus, verb forms in all tenses apart from perfect/hodiernal past *-a-* have the same form in affirmative as in negated clauses. The corresponding negative of an *-a-* marked verb form is marked by the past tense marker *-da-*. With negated past tense forms, both subjunctive *-e* and indicative marking *-a* occur, but I could not find a difference in meaning related to this variation. With negated forms in the other tenses, subjunctive marking is not found. A negated clause containing the perfect and hodiernal past marker *-a-* does not occur. This corresponds to Anderson's (1897) observation. The meaning 'not yet' seems to be expressed by the marking *-sati-* and the negator *tayi,* cf.:

(7.76) context: The king is expected to arrive.

> *Nyakwawa*   *a-**sati**-bwer-a*   ***tayi.***
> king   3.SBJ-yet-come-FV   NEG
> 'The king hasn't arrived yet.' (Go & Dak q154)

A different system emerges when looking at the Bible translation. Here, the negation markings mentioned in the earlier descriptions do occur. With first person singular subjects, *si-* is used as the negative marker, in combination with the particle *tayu*. *Si-* replaces the subject marker *ndi-* in the first slot of these verb forms. All other verb forms take *ha-* as negation marker before the subject prefix, combined with *tayu,* cf.:

(7.77) *Ine*   ***si-na**-longa-mbo*   ***tayu*** *kuti*   *iwe*   *w-a-them-a*
      I   NEG.1SG-PRS-speak-also   NEG   that   you   2SG.SBJ-PRF-hurt-FV
      ku-phiwa.
      INF-be.killed
      'Then neither do I condemn you.' (John 8:11)

(7.78) ***H-u-na**-tawir-a*   ***tayu*** *pinthu*
      NEG-2SG.SBJ-NFUT-answer-FV   NEG   things
      pi-na-ku-long-er-a   *anthu-wa?*
      NCL.SBJ-PRS-2.OBJ-speak-APPL-FV   people-DEM
      'Are you not going to answer to the things that these people say to you?'
      (Matthew 26:62)

(7.79) *Ine* **si-da**-*dz-er-***e**   *dza-chemer-a anthu*
        I   NEG-PST-come-APPL-SBJV come-call-FV people

        a-ku-lungam-a   **tayu**...
        3.SBJ-PRS-be.honest-FV   NEG

        'I have not come to call the righteous...' (Mark 2:17)

(7.80) *[...] pi-da-fik-a*   *ife ku Makedonia kwene,*
        [...] TCL-PST-arrive-FV we at Macedonia EMPH?

        ha-ti-da-*pum-***a**   **tayu**[...]
        NEG-1PL.SBJ-PST-rest-FV   NEG

        'For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest...' (2
        Corinthans 7:5)

(7.81) context: Jesus predicting Peter's betrayal: Tonight before the cock crows twice,
        you yourself will disown me three times. Peter replies:

        Podi   *na*   *ku-ndi-ph-a*   *kwene*   *pabodzi*   *na*   *imwe,*
        even.though with INF-1SG.OBJ-die-FV EMPH? together with you

        si-nadza-*long-a*   *tenepo*   **tayu**!
        NEG-DFUT-speak-FV   like.that   NEG

        'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' (Mark 14:31)

(7.82) *Ndi-ku-ku-pang-a-ni*   *pyakuonadi kuti pano pana*
        1SG.SBJ-PRS-2.OBJ-tell-FV-2PL.OBJ truth   that   here there.are

        anango ale **h-a-nadza**-*f-a*   **tayu** *kufikirana a-on-a*   *Mwana*
        some   DEM NEG-3.SBJ-DFUT-die-FV NEG   before   3.SBJ-see-FV child

        Munthu a-dz-a   *dza-khala*   *Mfumu*   *wa anthu onsene.*
        man   3.SBJ-come-FV come-become kingdom of   people all

        'I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they
        see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.' (Matthew 16:28)

This system of negation marking corresponds partly to what Anderson (1897) describes, at least for those parts where *ha-*, not *ka-*, is used for the negated forms other than first person singular. As noted above for the data from the questionnaire and the arranged conversation, both subjunctive *-e* and indicative marking *-a* occur with negated past tense forms.

The tenses represented in the examples above are the ones for which Anderson identified *si-* and *ha-/ka-* as negation markers. The same pattern is, however, also found with all the other tense-aspect forms that occur in affirmative clauses, apart from *-a-*, cf. the following examples:

(7.83) *Iwo* **h-a-ku**-*dziw-a*   **tayu** *mule mumbalungamisira Mulungu*
they NEG-3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV NEG DEM righteousness God
anthu pamaso pache. . .
people presence his
'Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God. . .' (Romans 10:3)

(7.84) *Podi*   *kwene imwe* **ha-mu-mba**-*mu-on-a*   *chinchino*
even.though EMPH? you NEG-2PL.SBJ-HAB-3SG.OBJ-see-FV now
tayu, *kwache imwe mu-mba-m-khulup-ir-a*   *basi.*
NEG ? you 2PL.SBJ-HAB-3SG.OBJ-believe-APPL-FV still
'. . .even though you do not see him now, you believe in him. . .' (1 Peter 1:8)

(7.85) *Natenepo Yesu* **h-a-kha**-*famb-a*   *pakwecha mu Yudea*
therefore Jesus NEG-3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-walk-FV openly in Judea
tayu. . .
NEG
'Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews.' (John 11:54)

(7.86) *Mfumu ule a-d-end-a*   *m'-nyumba-mo ka-yang'ana*
king DEM 3.SBJ-PST-go-FV in-house-DEM PURP-look.at
anyakuchemerwa   *ale mba-ona munthu unango, ule*
those.who.were.invited DEM CONS-see person certain DEM
h-a-khada-*val-a*   *nguwo za paphwando yakukazhali* **tayu**.
NEG-3.SBJ-PPF-wear-FV clothes of feast marriage NEG
'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.' (Matthew 22:11)

In the Bible translation, primarily in clauses referring to the present, double marking of negation is also found, involving in addition to the postverbal particle *tayu* a preverbal particle *nkhabe*. It is reminiscent of the negation prefix *nk'(a)/nkh(a)-* mentioned by Torrend (1900) and Kishindo and Lipenga (2007), which was not found in the data collected for this investigation. The following examples illustrate the markings involving *tayu* and *nkhabe*:

(7.87) *Imwe* **nkhabe** *dziwa* **tayu** *chi-na-pemph-a*   *imwe.*
you NEG know NEG NCL.SBJ-PRS-ask-FV you
'You don't know what you are asking.' (Matthew 20:22)

(7.88) *Anthu a-ku-wang-a*   **nkhabe** *funa ng'anga* **tayu**, *mbwenye*
people 3.SBJ-PRS-be.strong-FV NEG want doctor NEG but
atenda.
the.sick
'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.' (Matthew 9:12)

When comparing the systems of negation marking found in my data and in the earlier descriptions of Cisena, negation appears to be a further domain in which language change has taken place. The verb-initial marking seems no longer to be used in Malawian Cisena, but negation is expressed by the particle *tayu/tayi* or by the suffix *-bi* alone.

The previous chapters constitute a description of the tense-aspect systems in the three languages Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena. Let us now turn to a further aim of this investigation, the comparison of the three systems.

8. Comparison of the three languages

In this chapter, the tense-aspect systems in the three languages will be compared with regard to the kind and number of distinctions that they make, and individual categories and their use will be compared to each other across languages. The findings will be seen in the light of cross-linguistic findings in Bantu.

8.1. The overall tense-aspect systems in the three languages

The overall structure of the systems is rather similar (cf. Table 8.1). All three languages distinguish a near and a distant future, a perfect, a hodiernal and a pre-hodiernal past, a present tense and a present habitual and a past imperfective marking. The system of Citumbuka presents a few peculiarities. The language distinguishes an immediate past and uses the same marker for past and future imperfectives (in one variety the same marker is also used for present habituals); moreover, in one variety of Citumbuka, present tense and present habitual are not distinguished from each other but are instead expressed by the same marker. In all three languages, a particular strategy is applied to mark consecutive events: in Chichewa and Citumbuka, consecutive events are marked by the same marking as infinitives; in Cisena, a particular marker, *mba-/mbi-*, is used.

Some of the distinctions made are expressed by the same marker in all three languages: *-ku-* is used for referring to present events in Chichewa, Citumbuka and in Malawian Cisena. Furthermore, in all three languages, the marker *-a-* is used for the perfect and the recent past but with slightly different distributions. In Citumbuka, *-a-* is used to mark the immediate past; in Chichewa (Lilongwe-rural and new Bible translation) *-a-* is used for hodiernal past marking, while *-na-* is the more general recent past marker. The markers *-da-* and *k(h)a* occur as past or past imperfective markers in two systems: *-da-* occurs in certain varieties of Chichewa and in Cisena whereas *-ka-* is the remote past tense marker in Citumbuka and *-kha-* the past imperfective in Cisena. As for the future tenses, a form related to *-(d)za-* (etymologically come') seems to occur in all three systems: *-dza-* for the distant future in Chichewa, *zamu-* in Citumbuka and *-nadza-/-naja-* in Cisena. In the following, the commonalities and differences of individual categories will be illustrated and further compared.

Table 8.1.: Tense-aspect categories in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena found in this investigation

past	present	future
Chichewa: perfect and hod. past: *-a-* recent: *-na-* remote: *(-da-)*[a] discontinuous past: *(-daa-)*[b] imperfective: *-ma₂-/-nka-*	present (progressive): *-ku-* extended present: ∅-marking habitual *-ma₁-*[c]	 near : ∅-marking distant: *-dza-* habitual: *-zika-/-zidza-*
consecutive: infinitive *ku-*		
Citumbuka: perfect and immediate past: *-a-* perfect: *-liku-* hodiernal: *-angu-* pre-hodiernal: *-ka-* neg.: *-nda-*	present (and habitual): *-ku-* (habitual: *-ku-...-anga*)[1]	 near: *-enge* distant: *(z)amu-*
imperfective *-anga* (combinable with *-a-* and *-ka-* and *-zamu-*)		
consecutive: infinitive *ku-*		
Cisena: perfect and hodiernal: *-a-* pre-hodiernal: *-da-* imperfective: *-kha-*	present: *-ku-* habitual: *-mba-*	near: *-na-* distant: *-naja-/-nadza-*
consecutive *mbi-/mba-*		

[a] The use of the markers given in brackets is subject to dialectal variation.
[b] This marker was found in the Bible text only, but not in any of the other data sources.
[c] *-ma₁-* and *-ma₂-* are distinguished by different tonal patterns.

8.2. Referring to the present

In Chichewa three different markings are used in order to refer to the present. *-ku-*
and zero marking have a rather similar distribution. When comparing the present-day
use with earlier descriptions and when comparing the way these markings are used by
speakers of different age in the data, it seems that *-ku-* is developing from a present
progressive to a present tense marker. *-ma₁-* is used for habitual events and generics.
In the Mzimba variety of Citumbuka, *-ku-* is the only present marker, expressing both
present tense and present habitual. In the Chitipa variety, *-ku-* is used for present tense
and *-ku-...-anga* (*-anga* is the general imperfective suffix) for present habitual. Earlier
descriptions also identify *-ku-* as the present tense marker. In Cisena, too, the analysis
suggests a development in which *-ku-* has become the present tense marker during the
last century, while before, *-na-* was used for this purpose. As *-ku-* is not documented
earlier in Cisena, and as most Cisena speakers use Chichewa as a second language, this
form might be borrowed from Chichewa.

Thus, in all three languages, *-ku-* is used as a present tense marker. The following
parallel examples illustrate this use:

(8.1) Chichewa

A-chimwene   *a-**ku**-dziw-a*   *kuti*   *madzi*   *ndi*   *o-zizira.*
NCL.PL/HON-brother   3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV   that   water   COP   ATTR-cold
'My brother knows (now) that the water is cold (today).' (Mte q117)

(8.2) Citumbuka

Balongosi   *ba-**ku**-many-a*   *kuti*   *maji*   *gha-ku-zizim-a.*
brother   3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV   that   water   NCL.SBJ-PRS-be.cold-FV
'My brother knows (now) that the water is cold (today).' (Ka q117)

(8.3) Cisena

Nananga   *a-**ku**-jiw-a*   *kuti*   *maji*   *ale*   *a-na-tonthol-a.*
my.brother   3.SBJ-PRS-know-FV   that   water   DEM   3.SBJ-NFUT-be.cold-FV
'My brother knows (now) that the water is cold (today).' (Go & Dak q117)

At least for Chichewa, the data analysis and the comparison with earlier descriptions
suggest that *-ku-* was earlier restricted to progressive uses.

Nurse observes that in 66% of the languages in his sample, a progressive category is
attested as a distinct category from general imperfectives. He notes that progressives
across Bantu are most often expressed by a locative construction such as 'be in/at verb-
ing'. Nurse cites Bastin (1989a,b) who showed that in numerous Bantu languages, the

progressive is derived in one way or another from a construction *-li+mu+ku-*, where *li-* is the copula, *mu-* is the locative prefix 'in', and *ku-* the infinitive/verbal noun marker (Nurse, 2008, 139). This observation for Bantu is consistent with more general cross-linguistic findings. Bybee et al. (1994) state that the verbs *sit, remain, stay, be (+/-locative), go* and *come* are the most common lexical sources for progressives. In section 5.2.2, we saw that the oldest Chichewa speaker in the present investigation uses *-ku-* in his spoken language but favours the construction SBJ-*li-ku-VERB* when he writes. The latter is the form observed to function as the present progressive in the early descriptions of Chichewa by Riddel (1880) and Henry (1891). Later descriptions mention this form as an alternative form to *-ku-*. The locative *mu-* does not occur in this construction; it might have been used earlier, but without more historical data, a conclusion is difficult to draw.

52% of the languages in Nurse' (2008) sample have a zero marked form with present meaning (or, in some cases, "an easily derivable meaning, such as future" (Nurse, 2008, 118)), which is widespread across Bantu and can also be reconstructed for Proto-Bantu. This marking is what we find in Chichewa with state verbs and performatives where ∅ marks present tense. However, we saw in section 5.2.2 that ∅-marking in performatives is only found for the oldest speaker in the sample. For state verbs, not only ∅, but also *-ku-* is used. These observations suggest that ∅-marking for present tense is decreasing, while *-ku-* is increasingly used instead.

For referring to habitual events, different markers are used in the three languages. In Chichewa, *-ma$_1$-* is used, Cisena applies *-mba-*, and in the Chitipa variety of Citumbuka *-ku-...-anga* is the present habitual marking, while in the Mzimba variety of Citumbuka *-ku-* is used for expressing both general present and present habitual. I could not find sound correspondences between the two languages that would indicate that *-ma$_1$-* and *-mba-* would derive from the same form. The following examples illustrate the use of these forms:

- context: A: My brother works at an office. B: What kind of work he DO there?

(8.4) Chichewa

> *A-**ma**-lemb-a   ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-HAB-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He writes letters.' (Mte q25)

(8.5) Citumbuka – Mzimba speaker

> *Wa-**ku**-lemb-a   ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-PRS/HAB-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He writes letters.' (Si q25)

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(8.6) Citumbuka – Chitipa speaker

*Wa-**ku**-lemba-**nga*** *ma-kalata.*
3.SBJ-PRS-write-IPFV NCL.PL-letter

'He writes letters.' (Ka q25)

(8.7) Cisena

*A-**mba**-lemb-a* *ma-tchamba.*
3.SBJ-HAB-write-FV NCL.PL-letter

'He writes letters.' (Go & Dak q25)

Habituals as a category distinct from general imperfectives occur in Nurse' (2008) sample in 43% of the languages. This category is less common than general imperfectives across Bantu. Both distinct habituals and general imperfectives are most often encoded by a form of the suffix *-ag-/-ang-/-aga/-anga*, (Nurse, 2008, 144), which in this investigation is only found in Citumbuka.

8.3. Referring to the past

In the varieties of Chichewa spoken in Lilongwe-rural and the variety used in the recent Bible translation, *-a-* functions as a hodiernal past (and perfect) marker, *-na-* as a more general recent past and *-da-* as a remote past marker. For the other varieties, the use of *-a-* is less well documented in the data collected for this study, and, in the contexts in which it occurs, it mostly functions as a perfect. Another two of the six varieties of Chichewa that I found distinguish between a recent past, marked by *-na-*, and a remote past, marked by *-da-*. Only in the recent Bible translation is the marking *-daa-* found for discontinuous past.

Citumbuka shows a similar system, with *-a-* being the marker for the immediate past (and perfect), *-angu* for hodiernal past and *-ka-* for pre-hodiernal past.

In Cisena, only one distinction is made, *-a-* marks the hodiernal past, while *-da-* marks the pre-hodiernal past. The following examples illustrate the use of the hodiernal past tense markers in the data:

- context: Conversation takes place in the afternoon. Q: Do you know my brother?

(8.8) Chichewa

*Nd-**a**-kuman-a* *na-ye* *ku* *msika* *m'mawa.*
1SG.SBJ-HODPST-meet-FV with-he at market this.morning

'I met him at the market this morning.' (Mte q141)

(8.9) Citumbuka

    (Enya) *N-**angu**-kuman-a-yo*   *muhanya* *uno*   *mulenji* *ku-msika.*
    yes   1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-FV-DEM daytime   DEM morning at-market
    '(Yes,) I met him at the market this morning.' (Ka q141)

(8.10) Cisena

    *Nd-**a**-guman-a*   *na-ye*   *pa-msika*   *machibese* *alero.*
    1SG.SBJ-RECPST-meet-FV with-him on-market morning   today
    '(Yes,) I met him at the market this morning.' (Go & Dak q141)

For even more recent events, *-a-* is used in Citumbuka:

(8.11) Citumbuka

    context: Q: Do you know my brother?

    *N-**a**-kuman-a*   *na-yo*   *waka* *sonosono*   *apa.*
    1SG.SBJ-IMMPST-meet-FV with-him still? immediately here
    'I just met him.' (Ka q38)

In all three languages, the marker *-a-* is used for both the perfect and the recent past; in Citumbuka, the most recent, i.e. immediate past; in Chichewa (Lilongwe-rural and new Bible translation) *-a-* is used for hodiernal past marking, while *-na-* is the more general recent past marker. For more remote events, typically happening on the day before speaking or earlier than that, the more remote tense marker is used, e.g.:

- context: Conversation takes place in the afternoon. Do you know my brother?

(8.12) Chichewa – Lilongwe-rural

    *Ndi-**da**-kuman-a*   *na-ye*   *ku* *msika* *dzulo.*
    1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-FV with-he at market yesterday
    'I met him at the market yesterday.' (Mte q142)

(8.13) Citumbuka

    (Enya) *N-**kha**-kuman-a*   *na-yo*   *mayiro* *ku-msika.*
    yes   1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-FV with-him yesterday at-market
    '(Yes,) I met him at the market yesterday.' (Ka q142)

(8.14) Cisena

*Ndi-**da**-guman-a*   *na-ye*   *pa*   *msika*   *julo.*
1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-FV   with-him   on   market   yesterday
'(Yes,) I met him at the market yesterday.' (Go & Dak q142)

According to Nurse (2008), as outlined in chapter 3.3.2, most systems across Bantu distinguish at least two different past tenses and about half have at least three. The system of Cisena falls into the first group, while Citumbuka and the system found in Chichewa for Lilongwe-rural belong to the second group. The two systems differ, however, from each other with regard to the distinctions that they make. For the systems with two past tenses, Nurse observes that the most common division is between hodiernal and pre-hodiernal past, which is the distinction found for Cisena in the present investigation. For the systems with three different past tenses, Nurse states that the most common division is between hodiernal, hesternal (referring to the day before speaking) and earlier than that, which differs from the distinctions found in Citumbuka and the Chichewa variety of Lilongwe-rural. The Chichewa variety of Lilongwe-rural distinguishes a hodiernal, general recent and remote past. In Citumbuka, a distinction between the immediate, hodiernal and more remote past is found.

The distribution of the remoteness markers is the least clear-cut in Chichewa. In those varieties that distinguish between *-na-* and *-da-* for marking the past, *-na-* is applied to both recent as well as more remote events, while *-da-* is not found in contexts referring to earlier on the day of speaking, i.e. it seems to be restricted to more remote events.

For Citumbuka and Cisena, the distribution is fairly clear. *-a-* is found in Citumbuka with immediate past meaning referring to events that happened immediately before the moment of speech, while nearly all occurrences of *-angu-* refer to events happening earlier on the day of speaking, and *-ka-* is used (in all but two cases) for more remote events. In Cisena, *-a-* with past tense meaning is mostly used when referring to events on the day of speaking, while *-da-* is mainly used for events that happened before the day of speaking.

However, these are general rules and the cut-off points for the choice of one marker over the other are not absolute. We have seen that hodiernal markers can be used for more remote events and that remote past markers are sometimes used for referring to events that happened as recently as on the day of speaking. This flexibility is found in all three languages. The following examples show the use of a recent (for Citumbuka and Cisena: hodiernal) past tense marker referring to a point in time for which the remote past tense marker is used in other contexts, e.g.:

(8.15) Chichewa – Lilongwe-rural

context: Speaking about the speaker's childhood:

> *..ndipo pa-sukulu-po chi-mene chi-ma-ndi-sangalats-a*
> and on-school-DEM NCL-REL NCL.SBJ-RECPSTIPFV-1SG.OBJ-please-FV
> *kwambiri chi-**na**-li Boys Bugade* ...
> very NCL.SBJ-RECPST-COP Boys Brigade
> 'And at the school, what pleased me best **was** the Boys Brigade...'

(8.16) Citumbuka

context: Talking about the activities at church and the weather at the three past Sundays:

> *Sabata iyi kw-**angu**-cha pakatikati zuŵa na vula vose*
> week this there-RECPST-become.light in.the.middle sun and rain all
> *vi-ka-ŵa waka pakatikati.*
> NCL.SBJ-REMPST-COP just in.the.middle
> 'This sabbath was just in between, sunlight and rain were just in between.' (Chi 319,1)

(8.17) Cisena

context: Talking about a person that the speaker regularly meets, different points in time are mentioned, here the speaker refers to the most recent meeting:

> *Nd-**a**-pez-an-a naye pontho pakatipa pyaka pishanu*
> 1SG.SBJ-RECPST-get-RECP-FV her again between years five
> *pyapitapi.*
> past
> 'I met her also five years ago.' (Go 319,7)

The last two of the examples above refer to the latest occurrence of a recurring event that the speaker is talking about, viz. church services on Sundays and meetings with a close friend. Similar observations for other Bantu languages were mentioned in section 3.3.2.

As for the remote past markers, *-da-*, in the varieties of Chichewa in which this marker is used, is not found in the data referring to the day of speaking, but only to time before that. In Citumbuka and Cisena, the remote past markers are in a few cases also found referring to the day of speaking, cf.:

(8.18) Citumbuka

    Enya, *wa-**ka**-wereng-a*   *buku* *lose* *ili*   *naumo*
    yes   3.SBJ-REMPST-read-FV book all   DEM today
    *wa-**ka**-tumikir-a.*
    3.SBJ-REMPST-be.told-FV

    'He read all of this book as he was told today.' (Si q50)

(8.19) Cisena

    context: The speaker is right back from a walk in the forest: Do you know what
    just happened to me? I was walking in the forest, suddenly...

    *ndi-**da**-pond-a*   *nyoka.*
    1SG.SBJ-REMPST-step-FV snake

    'I stepped on a snake.' (Go & Dak q187)

Dahl (1984) and Comrie (1985) state that languages differ in terms of the rigidity with which the cut-off point between different remoteness distinctions is interpreted. In Haya (spoken in Tanzania), the cut-off points seem to be interpreted rigidly: the hodiernal past can only co-occur with the adverbial for 'today', the hesternal past with 'yesterday' and the remote past with adverbials referring to points in time before 'yesterday'. In Sotho (spoken in Lesotho and South Africa), on the other hand, basically any past time adverbial seems to be combinable with any past tense marker. "An apparently incorrect combination will be interpreted to mean that the situation in question, though objectively at a certain temporal distance from the reference point, is being presented as subjectively closer or more distant than the literal distance" (Comrie, 1985, 90). Nurse (2008) acknowledges the desirability of a systematic investigation of this phenomenon across Bantu that has been impossible to carry out so far, as "most sources do not comment on the flexibility or rigidity of the remoteness system" (Nurse, 2008, 93). In his database of around 210 languages, 25 are explicitly described as having flexible reference, while in the majority of descriptions no statements are made concerning this question. He observes that some sources describe the cut-off points as rigid but in the texts given in the appendices of these descriptions, these rules are clearly broken. He therefore assumes that flexible time reference is more frequent than rigid cut-off points (ibid.).

In all three languages, past imperfective markings are found. In some varieties of Chichewa (Blantyre-Zomba, Lilongwe-rural and Mchinji), two different past imperfective markers are used; *-ma₂-* seems to be used for more recent past imperfective events, while *-nka-* is used for more remote events. In Cisena, *-kha-* is used generally for past imperfective events. In Citumbuka, the suffix *-anga* combined with the past tense marker *-ka-* expresses past imperfective meaning. This suffix is also applied with the marker *-a-*

to express a persistive perfect and with the future marker *-(z)amu-* to express imperfective future.

- context: A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What he DO? (What activity was he engaged in?)

(8.20) Chichewa (Lilongwe-rural)

> *A-**nka**-lemb-a*   *ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-REMPSTIPFV-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He was writing letters.' (Mte q9)

(8.21) Citumbuka

> *Wa-**ka**-lemb-**anga***   *ma-kalata.*
> 3.SBJ-PST-write-IPFV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He was writing letters.' (Ka q9)

(8.22) Cisena

> *A-**kha**-lemb-a*   *ma-tchamba.*
> 3.SBJ-PSTIPFV-write-FV   NCL.PL-letter
> 'He was writing letters.' (Go & Dak q9)

The forms *-nka-* and *-kha-* might appear phonetically similar to each other, but I have not found corresponding sound alternations in other words that would suggest that these forms are cognates.

Of all the markers described above, *-a-* seems to be the most common across Bantu. As described in chapter 3.3.2, *-a-* occurs in 78% of the languages in Nurse's sample (Nurse, 2008, 237); its reconstruction for Proto-Bantu as a past marker is claimed to be relatively reliable (Nurse, 2008, 257). On the other hand, remoteness distinctions are assumed to have evolved later. A *-ka-*past, as in Citumbuka, occurs only in 15% of the languages in the sample, in an area centred on southwestern and southern Tanzania, northern Zambia and northern Malawi (languages F10, M11, M14, G11, G62, M25, M301, N14 and N21) (Nurse, 2008, 243). This marker is mainly attested for remote pasts. *-ka-* has several other functions across Bantu, such as 'itive' ('to go and...'), future, narrative/consecutive and conditional/temporal clause marker or persistive (Nurse, 2008, 240ff.). It is not clear whether these forms are cognate, for a discussion cf. Güldemann (1996) and Botne (1999).

-na- occurs in around 40% of the languages, often followed by the remnants of an infinitive, and is scattered across all Guthrie's zones except B. It also has various functions like narrative, progressive/imperfective, 'not yet', future and past across Bantu,

the latter two often in conjunction with other tense markers (Nurse, 2008, 250). A diversity of meanings for *-na-* forms is also found in the three languages investigated here: *-na-* is a past tense marker in Chichewa, a near future marker in Cisena (earlier also with present tense meaning) and part of the distant future form *-nadza/naja-* in Cisena. Nurse argues that it might be linked to *na* 'with', which is widespread across Bantu, "'be+with (+verbal noun)' gives 'have'; 'be with' or 'have' give progressives, which may become imperfectives, 'not be with now' or 'not have now' may give 'not yet'; and 'was with' and 'will be with' form the basis for pasts and futures" (Nurse, 2008, 251).

-angu- and *-da-* seem to have fairly limited distribution, Nurse reports neither in his study.

8.4. Referring to the future

Remoteness distinctions are also found in the future tense systems of the languages under investigation, mostly in terms of an opposition between a near and a distant future . The near future is expressed by zero marking in Chichewa (one variety seems to make a three-way distinction, see below), in the Chitipa variety of Citumbuka near future is marked by *-enge*. In Cisena, *-na-* is used for referring to the near future (the same marker used to be applied also for present marking). For the distant future, *-dza-* is used in Chichewa, *-zamu-* in the Chitipa variety of Citumbuka and *-nadza-/naja-* in (Malawian) Cisena. For the Mzimba variety, *-zamuku-* might be used for the near and *-amu* for the distant future, but there is not enough data with future reference to draw safe conclusions on this matter. Future habitual is by most speakers expressed by *-zika-* in Chichewa; in the Chitipa variety of Citumbuka, the general imperfective suffix *-anga* is combined with the distant future marking *-zamu-* to express future imperfective, and in Cisena, no distinct marker for future imperfectives is used. The following examples illustrate the different remoteness distinctions:

(8.23) Chichewa (Blantyre-Zomba and Lilongwe-rural):

(a) context: Q: What are you planning to do right now?

Ndi-lemb-a   *kalata.*
1SG.SBJ-write-FV   letter
'I'm going to write a letter.' (Pha, Mte q23)

(b) *Ndi-ka-**dza**-kul-a*   *ndi-**dza**-gul-a*   *nyumba*   *ya-ikulu*
1SG.SBJ-when-DFUT-grow(up)-FV   1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy-FV   house   NCL-big
'When I grow old, I buy a big house.' (Mme q152)

(8.24) Citumbuka (Chitipa)

(a)   context: Q: What are you planning to do right now?

    *Ni-lemb-**enge***   *ma-kalata.*
    1SG.SBJ-write-NFUT   NCL.PL-letter
    'I'm going to write letters.' (Ka q22)

(b)   *Pala*   *ni-zaka-kul-a,*   *ni-**zamu**-gul-a*   *nyumba* *yikulu.*
    when   1SG.SBJ-TCL.FUT-grow(up)-FV   1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy-FV house   big
    'When I grow old, I will buy a big house.' (Ka q152)

(8.25) Malawian Cisena

(a)   context: Traveller to local:

    U-nga-ndi-pangiz-a   *njira,* *ndi-**na**-ku-pas-a*   *dinyero.*
    2SG.SBJ-if-1SG.OBJ-show-FV   way   1SG.SBJ-NFUT-2SG.OBJ-give-FV money
    'If you show me the way, I'll give you money.' (Go & Dak q145)

(b)   context: Said by a young man:

    Ndi-ngaja-kul-a,   *ndi-**naja**-gul-a*   *nyumba* *igoloso.*
    1SG.SBJ-TCL.FUT-be.grown-FV   1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy-FV house   big
    'When I grow old, I'll buy a big house.' (Go & Dak q152)

    In the Dowa variety of Chichewa, three future tenses are distinguished. When referring to events happening later on the day of speaking, *-zi-* is used; for the day after speaking zero marking is applied and for the distant future *-dza-* is used.

(8.26) Chichewa (Dowa)

    context: Hurry up!

(a)   *Sitima* *i-**zi**-nyamuk-a.*
    train   NCL.SBJ-HODFUT-depart-FV
    'The train is leaving (soon).' (Mag q256)

(b)   *A-nyamuk-a*   *mawa.*
    3.SBJ-leave-FV   tomorrow
    'She will leave tomorrow.' (Mag q266)

(c)   *Ndi-ka-**dza**-kul-a*   *ndi-**dza**-gul-a*   *nyumba*   *ya-ikulu*
      1SG.SBJ-when-DFUT-grow(up)-FV   1SG.SBJ-DFUT-buy-FV   house   NCL-big
      'When I grow old, I buy a big house.' (Chi q152)

Most languages in Nurse's (2008) sample have one future tense (47 out of 100 languages); 25 out of 100 languages have two future tenses, and 16 out of 100 have three future tenses. Systems with more future tenses are less common. Most of the varieties of Chichewa that are investigated here, the Chitipa variety of Citumbuka, and Cisena fall into the group with two futures, only the Dowa variety of Chichewa distinguishes three future tenses.

Nurse (2008) states that there is no clear preference for particular future markers across Bantu. Only *laa* is a tentative candidate for Proto-Bantu reconstruction. *-ka-* appears in 29% of the languages in Nurse's sample referring predominantly to distant future, but he points out that this number is significantly lower than for the principal past tense markers. *-la(a)*, or [ra(a)], occurs in 12% of the languages in the sample, but is not found in the three languages under investigation here. Derivatives of the verb 'come' function as future markers locally all across Bantu outside of the northwest (around 15% of the languages in Nurse's sample). "The variable meaning of these derivatives, the fact that they vary a lot in their degree of grammaticalization, and their scattered geographical distribution, suggest that they do not derive from an early Bantu form but are rather spontaneous and more recent innovations that have arisen, and continue to arise, in different times and places" (Nurse, 2008, 85). The future marker *-dza-* in Chichewa seems to belong to this kind of marking (*-dza* is also used as a full verb meaning 'come, become', the verb most frequently used for 'come' is *-bwera*). The markings *-nadza-/-naja-* in Cisena and *-zamu-* in Citumbuka seem to contain this form, too. In Cisena, the verb for 'come' is *-dza*, in Citumbuka *-(i)za*. Cognates that contain the affricate [dz] in Chichewa generally have the fricative [z] in Citumbuka, e.g. Chichewa *dzuwa* 'sun', Citumbuka *zuwa* 'sun'.

When comparing the present-day use of future markers in the data with earlier descriptions, for all three languages, considerable differences can be observed. For Chichewa, most of the earlier descriptions observe a remoteness distinction and two different future tenses, but according to the earliest descriptions, from 1880 and 1891, *-ka-* is used as one of the future markers (in addition to *-dza-*). In the later descriptions, which describe zero marking and *-dza-* as immediate and general future respectively, and in the data analysed in this study, *-ka-* as a future tense marker does not occur. In my data, *-ka-* occurs as itive 'to go and X', for marking the purpose of an action, in conditional clauses and in temporal clauses referring to the future.

For Citumbuka, only the most recent description, from 2006, describes a remoteness distinction for the future tenses expressed by similar markers as the ones found in the present study. The two earlier descriptions, from 1923 and 1973, differ from each other and the most recent description with regard to the markers they describe and the kind of distinctions they observe.

In Cisena, only one earlier description observes a remoteness distinction for the future tenses, in the other descriptions, only one future marker is identified.

These differences can be due to different varieties of the language that they might describe. The overall picture for the domain of future tense marking seems to be rather diverse, and changes in the system seem to be considerable over time or in terms of dialectal diversification.

8.5. Tense-aspect and negation

Although the three languages differ in their general negation strategies, they exhibit similar asymmetries between the tense-aspect marking of affirmative and negative clauses.

While in Citumbuka (with the exception of the perfect, see below) and present-day Malawian Cisena, verbal negation is expressed by means of particles, in Chichewa, verbal negation is in main clauses marked by the prefix *si-* in verb-initial position (before the subject marker), and, in subordinate clauses, by means of *-sa-* following the subject marker. Compare the following examples:

(8.27) Chichewa

(a) Verbal negation in main clauses, context: According to the contract...

Si-ti-gwir-a   *ntchito   mawa.*
NEG-1PL.SBJ-catch-FV   work   tomorrow
'We don't work tomorrow.' (Mte (also Mme and Chi) q82)

(b) Verbal negation in subordinate clauses

Kutero   *kuti   amayi   a-ma-yesets-a*   *kuti   sabata*
so.much/therefore   that   mother   3.SBJ-HAB-try.hard/do.best-FV   that   week
lirilonse   *koma   m'-nyumba*   *thobwa   li-sa-sow-e.*
each/every   but   NCL.'in'-house   thobwa   NCL.SBJ-NEG-be.missing   -SBJV
'So much that the mother tries hard every week that thobwa should not be missing in the house/at home.' (Mte 327)

(8.28) Citumbuka

context: According to the contract...

Ti-zamu-gwir-a   *ntchito   cha   machero.*
1PL.SBJ-DFUT-catch-FV   work   NEG   tomorrow
'We don't work tomorrow.' (Ka q82)

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(8.29) (Malawian) Cisena

Ti-na-phat-a *basa* ***tayu*** *magwana.*
1PL.SBJ-NFUT-hold-FV work NEG tomorrow
'We don't work tomorrow.' (Go & Dak q82)

In Citumbuka, different negation particles are used. *Cha* seems to be preferred by the older speakers in the sample and is used in the Bible translation, *yayi* seems to be preferred by younger speakers.

In Malawian Cisena, negation marking by means of a particle alone seems to have evolved rather recently, as according to earlier descriptions and the Bible translation, negation was marked by means of verb-initial prefixes (*si-* for first person singular and by *ha-/nkha-* (depending on the description) for other persons. In Mozambican Cisena the present-day use is, at least for the tenses marked by *-na-*, *-ka-* and *-da-*, *si-* for the first person and *-nkha* for other persons (Kishindo and Lipenga, 2007).

In all three languages, verbal negation seems to be marked symmetrically in most cases, i.e., apart from the negation marker, affirmative and negated clauses have the same form. Only the perfect marking *-a-* does not occur in negated clauses. Negated clauses contain a past tense marker in Chichewa and Cisena, or a particular tense-aspect form that is only used in these negated clauses in Citumbuka, cf. the following sentence pairs in each language:

- context: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A: You MEET my brother (yet)? Answer:

(8.30) Chichewa

(a) *Nd-**a**-kuman-a* *na-wo*
    1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV with-DEM
    'I have met him.' (Mte (q150))

(b) ***Si**-ndi-**da**-kuman-**e*** *na-wo.*
    NEG-1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-SBJV with-DEM
    'No, I haven't met him (yet).' (Mte q151)

(8.31) Citumbuka

(a) *(Enya)* *N-**a**-kuman-a* *na-wo.*
    yes 1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV with-DEM
    'I have met him.' (Ka q150)

(b) *(Yayi)* *Ni-**nda**-kuman-**e*** *na-wo.*
    no 1SG.SBJ-PRF.NEG-meet-SBJV with-DEM
    'I haven't met him (yet).' (Ka q151)

(8.32) Cisena

(a) *Nd-**a**-guman-a*   *na-ye.*
     1SG.SBJ-PRF-meet-FV   with-DEM
     'I have met him.' (Go & Dak q150)

(b) *Ndi-**da**-guman-e*   *na-ye*   ***tayi****.*
     1SG.SBJ-REMPST-meet-SBJV   with-DEM   NEG
     'I haven't met him (yet).' (Go & Dak q151)

This asymmetry in tense-aspect marking of perfect affirmative clauses in opposition to their negated counterparts was observed earlier across Bantu (cf. Nurse (2008, 198ff.)).

9. The main results - evaluation and conclusion

The research questions that I set out to answer were the following (cf. chap. 1):

- What do the tense-aspect systems in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena look like? Which categories are distinguished and in which contexts are they used?

- How do the results of my investigation relate to previous descriptions of tense and aspect categories in the selected languages?

- With regard to remoteness distinctions, how rigid or flexible are the different remoteness categories used?

- How different are the tense-aspect systems of the investigated languages from each other? What are the differences and similarities and what conclusions can be drawn regarding their historical development?

- How do the results of my investigation relate to the findings on tense and aspect categories in a larger sample of Bantu languages?

The first three questions have been dealt with in the result chapters on each language, which describe the tense-aspect systems of these three relatively closely related Bantu languages, taking different varieties of each language into account, based on both oral and written data from different sources.

The analysis for each language relied on previous cross-linguistic findings on tense-aspect systems and categories both in Bantu and other languages around the world. The meaning and use of individual tense-aspect categories were studied by analysing their distribution in different contexts in a sample of texts, recordings and questionnaires. The different data sources complement each other: more spontaneous, oral language was studied in the recordings of narratives and arranged conversations, while the translation questionnaires and Bible texts sample written language use. The questionnaire provided controlled conditions in which tense-aspect markings in specific contexts were elicited and compared to each other. A corpus of Bible translations allowed searches for specific forms in a larger number of contexts. The specific contribution of this investigation is therefore both descriptive and methodological: being based on a number of different data sources and on a distributional analysis of the individual tense-aspect categories, the description gives a detailed and comprehensive account of the tense-aspect systems.

Previous descriptions give a rather heterogeneous picture of the three languages. For Chichewa, I compared 11 different earlier descriptions that showed considerable variation in their analysis and description of the tense-aspect markers found. For Citumbuka and Cisena, there are fewer earlier descriptions, and they show less variation, but they still differ in various ways from the systems discovered in my analysis of present-day Citumbuka and Cisena. In my analysis, I included data from speakers from different regions for each language. Thus, the investigation captures not only variation across, but also within languages by taking different varieties of each language into account.

Particular attention was devoted to the question of whether the remoteness distinctions found for past and future tenses are used with rigid cut-off points or in a more flexible way. As pointed out in earlier cross-linguistic studies, most descriptions do not address this question systematically. A specific method was devised to target this issue, the arranged conversations. For all three languages it was shown that generalisations for the use of each marker can be made, e.g. hodiernal past tenses are typically used when referring to events that happened earlier on the day of speaking, but that in certain contexts remoteness distinctions seem to be a matter of relative contrast and, at least in Chichewa, the speaker's perspective. In other words, the choice of one marker over the other is not determined by the absolute temporal distance between the moment of speech and the described event.

Further emphasis was laid on a comparison of tense-aspect markings in negated as opposed to affirmative clauses. In all three languages, the perfect marker was only found in affirmative clauses, while a past tense marker or a dedicated form that was only found in negated clauses of this type occurred in the corresponding negative.

The fourth and fifth research questions raised above were the topic of chapter 8. The comparison of the three tense-aspect systems showed that the overall design of the systems and the distinctions that are made in the three languages are, despite certain differences, rather similar, while the markers that express these distinctions differ across languages in many respects. All three systems exhibit two or three remoteness distinctions for the past tenses and a two-way distinction for the future tenses. In all three systems, a distinction between non-imperfective and imperfective forms is found for the past, past imperfectives, and, in Citumbuka, also future imperfectives have a form that is distinct from their non-imperfective counterparts. Some markers are used in more than one language, e.g. *-ku-* is used as present marker in all three languages (for Chichewa and Cisena, this is a rather recent development), *-a-* is used as the perfect marker and as a hodiernal or immediate past marker, *-da-* is used as a remote past tense marker in certain varieties of Chichewa and in Cisena, and forms involving *-(d)za-* are found as distant future markers across the three languages. The other markers differ from one language to another, e.g. the past imperfective and future imperfective markings, the present habitual markers, the near future markers, and the remaining past tense markers that were not included above. For consecutive marking, the same marking is used in Chichewa and Citumbuka, the infinitive marker *ku-*, while Cisena employs a particular form *mba-/mbi-* which is only used in this function. Furthermore, the comparisons of

each tense-aspect system with earlier descriptions and Bible texts and the comparison of the use of individual markers in the languages that are in contact with each other gave insights into possible diachronic developments. An overview of these observations is given in table 9.1.

Table 9.1.: Historical developments in Chichewa, Citumbuka and Cisena

Chichewa:	page no.
-li ku- > *-ku-* present progressive	89
-ku- present progressive > present tense	93f.
use of ∅-marking for present tense decreasing	94f.
-na-li ku-/-da-li ku- past imperfective today only marginally used, *-ma₂-/-nka-* prevailing	124
-to- imminent tense no longer used	135
past NEG *si-…-na-…-a* 'not' in the past and *si-…-na-…-e* 'not yet' in the past > *si-…-na-…-e* meaning either 'not' or 'not yet' in the past	156f.
existential negation li-je > li-be	161
Citumbuka:	
remoteness distinction for future tense seems to be a relatively recent innovation	187f.
Cisena:	
-ku- > present tense in Malawian Cisena, probably borrowed from Chichewa	197ff.
-kha- past tense in copula constructions > *-da-*	207
pluperfect *-khada-* in Malawian Cisena > *-da-li -a-*	207f.
remoteness distinction for future tense seems to be a relatively recent innovation	212
negation prefixes no longer used in Malawian Cisena, only negation particle instead	220

The results of this investigation are not merely relevant within linguistic research. In school education, grammatical knowledge is important for a number of reasons, such as foreign, or second, language acquisition and reading and writing skills. Chichewa, being the national language and lingua franca in most parts of Malawi, is widely used in daily and professional life, and fluency in Chichewa is therefore an important learning objective. It is taught as a subject in schools from the first grade and is used as the medium of instruction during the first four years of primary school. In areas where another local language is more widely spoken, this language is used in teaching. The description and comparison of the tense-aspect systems of Chichewa, Cisena and Citumbuka provides useful information for teachers in order to be able to teach grammar in these languages effectively. Teachers are often not native speakers of the language that

they teach, and even for mother tongue speakers, grammatical knowledge needs to be acquired. The comparison of the three systems has revealed that different markers are used to express different tense-aspect distinctions in the three languages which means that learning Chichewa's grammar is not as straightforward for Citumbuka and Cisena speakers as might be expected, given that the languages are rather closely related and rather similar in other domains of grammar such as noun class marking and subject marking on the verb.[1]

This investigation gives an insight into the variation within what is commonly referred to simply as *Chichewa*, *Citumbuka* or *Cisena*, but, for future research, especially for Chichewa, a more fine-grained analysis of the different varieties would be desirable, as for some of them, the data that was collected was rather limited. Furthermore, it was mentioned that in at least one of these varieties, tone plays a distinctive role in tense-aspect marking, and a systematic study of whether further distinctions can be found in other varieties would give a more complete picture of this phenomenon.

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[1]In Appendix C, an example for an activity is given in which rules governing the choice of tense-aspect markers in Chichewa can be playfully learned.

A. Arranged conversations

This is aimed to be as natural a conversation as possible. Please ask every question that is given and inquire further if your colleague forgets to answer part of the question. Feel free to give your own comments, talk about your own experiences or ask questions if you are interested in something.

1. Please greet each other and start the conversation in a way you would usually do; take your time.

2. Tell me a little about how your day went so far. What did you do in the morning, what did you have for lunch and what did you do just before we've started talking?

3. What did you have for breakfast this morning?

4. What are you going to do when you leave from here?

5. Tell me about an event that is important to you and that happens regularly, e.g. once a week or once a year. Tell me how you experienced this event this year (or this week), last year (or last week) and when you were a child (e.g. your birthday or a specific event at church).

6. As a child, where did you go to school? Was there something you liked about school?

7. Tell me about your favorite dish (or drink). When did you last eat it, when did you eat it for the first time and where did you get it again after that?

8. When you ate it for the first time, do you remember where it was? What did you do at that place, who was with you?

9. Tell me about somebody whom you have known for a long time and whom you meet regularly. When did you last meet, when did you meet before that and where did you meet for the first time? When will you meet again?

10. What did you do when you met for the first time?

11. What did you do when you met the latest time?

12. Tell me about your church. Do you remember what happened last Sunday, the Sunday before and on that Sunday even before that?

13. What was the weather like that day? (Sunday three weeks ago)

14. How about Sunday last week? What was the weather like last Sunday?

15. Please finish the conversation as you would usually do.

B. Tense-aspect questionnaire

Dahl's (1985) questionnaire:

1: Standing in front of a house
The house BE BIG
2: Talking about the house in which the speaker lives (the house is out of sight)
The house BE BIG
3: Talking about a house in which the speaker used to live but which has now been torn down
The house BE BIG
4: Talking about a house which the speaker saw for the first time yesterday and doesn't see now:
The house BE BIG
5: Q: What your brother DO right now? (=What activity is he engaged in?: A by someone who can see him
He WRITE letters
6: Q: What your brother DO right now? (=What activity is he engaged in?) A by someone who can see him
He WRITE a letter
7: A: I just talked to my brother on the phone. B: What he do right now? A answers:
He WRITE letters
8: A: I just talked to my brother on the phone. B: What he DO right now? A answers:
He WRITE a letter
9: A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What he DO? (=What activity was he engaged in?)
He WRITE letters
10: A: I went to see my brother yesterday. B: What he DO? (=What activity was he engaged in?)
He WRITE a letter
11: A: I talked to my brother on the phone yesterday. B: What he DO? (=What activity was he engaged in?)
He WRITE letters
12: A: I talked to my brother on the phone yesterday. B: What he DO? (=What activity was he engaged in?)
He WRITE a letter

13: A: When you visited your brother yesterday, what he DO after you had dinner? ANSWER:

He WRITE letters

14: A: When you visited your brother yesterday, what he DO after you had dinner? ANSWER:

He WRITE a letter

15: Q: What your brother DO if you don't go to see him today, do you think? A:

He WRITE a letter (to me)

16: Q: What your brother DO when we arrive, do you think? (=What activity will he be engaged in?)

He WRITE letters

17: Q: What your brother DO when we arrive, do you think? (=What activity will he be engaged in?)

He WRITE a letter

18: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast? A:

He WRITE letters

19: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast? A:

He WRITE a letter

20: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast last summer? A:

He WRITE letters

21: Q: What your brother usually DO after breakfast last summer? A:

He WRITE a letter

22: Q: What are you planning to do right now? A:

I WRITE letters

23: Q: What are you planning to do right now? A:

I WRITE a letter

24: Neither A nor B can see B's brother. A: What he DO right now, do you think? (=What activity is he engaged in?)

He WRITE letters (I think so because he does that every day at this time)

25: A: My brother works at an office. B: What kind of work he DO?

He WRITE letters

26: A: Last year, my brother worked at an office. B: What kind of work he DO there?

He WRITE letters

27: A: My brother has got a new job. He'll start tomorrow. B: What kind of work he DO there?

He WRITE letters

28: Talking of what happened yesterday

While my brother WRITE the letter, I WAIT in the garden

29: Q: Did your brother finish the letter quickly? A:

(No,) he WRITE the letter slowly

30: Talking of the water in a lake which is visible to the speaker and the hearer:

(The water is usually warm, but today) it BE COLD

31: Of a visible lake, what the water is usually like

It BE COLD

32: Of a visible lake, in which the speaker swam yesterday

(Today the water is warm, but yesterday) it BE COLD

33: Of a visible lake

(The first time I swam in this water many years ago) it BE COLD

34: Of a visible lake, said in the summer

(Usually the water is warm, but this summer) it BE COLD

35: Of a visible lake, said in the summer

(Usually the water is warm, but last summer) it BE COLD

36: It's no use trying to swim in the lake tomorrow

The water BE COLD (then)

37: Q: Do you know my brother?

(Yes,) I MEET him (so I know him)

38: Q: Do you know my brother?

(Yes,) I just (=a couple of minutes ago) MEET him

39: Q: Do you know my brother?

(Yes,) I MEET him (once) several years ago

40: Q: Do you know my brother?

(Yes,) I MEET him often (up to now)

41: Q: Do you know my brother?

(No,) I not MEET him (in my life)

42: Q:

You MEET my brother (at any time in your life until now)?

43: Q: Did you know my father, who died last year?

(Yes,) I MEET him (at least once)

44: Q: Did you know my father, who died last year?

(Yes,) I MEET him (several times, now and then)

45: Assuming that B was going to meet A's brother, A asks:

You MEET my brother (yesterday, as was planned)

46: Answer to (45)

(Yes,) I MEET him (yesterday, as was planned)

47: Answer to (45)

(No,) I not MEET him (yesterday, as was planned)

48: Q: When you came to this place a year ago, did you know my brother?

(Yes,) I MEET him (at least once before I came here)

49: Q: When you came to this place a year ago, did you know my brother?

(Yes,) I MEET him (just before I came here)

50: Q: Did you know my father, who died last year?

(No,) I not MEET him (at any time)

51: Q: When you came to this place a year ago, did you know my brother?

(No,) I not MEET him (before I came here)

52: Q: When you came to this place a year ago, did you know my brother?

(No,) I not MEET him (before I came here but I met him later)

53: A: I want to give your brother a book to read, but I don't know which. Is there any of these books that he READ already? B:

(Yes,) he READ this book

54: A: It seems that your brother never finishes books.

(That is not quite true.) He READ this book (=all of it)

55: Q: Your brother DO what his teacher told him to do today?

(Yes,) he READ (all of) this book (as he was told)

56: Q: Is the king still alive? A:

(No,) he DIE

57: A: Have you heard the news? B: No, what happened? A:

The king BE KILLED (or: They KILL the king)

58: Q: Do you think the king will go to sleep? A:

(Yes,) he BE TIRED

59: Looking out of the window, seeing that the ground is wet

It RAIN (not long ago)

60: The police are investigating a burglary. Seeing an open window and footprints beneath it, the police inspector says:

The thief ENTER the house by this window

61: It is cold in the room. The window is closed. Q:

You OPEN the window (and closed it again)?

62: Answer to (61):

(Yes,) I OPEN the window

63: Answer to 61):

(No,) I not OPEN the window

64: Child: Can I go now? Mother:

You BRUSH your teeth?

65: A returns home after having been away for a while. B asks:

What you DO?

66: Answer to (65):

I BUY food

67: Q: What did you find out when you came to town yesterday? A:

The king DIE

68: Q: What did you find out when you came to town yesterday? A:

The king BE KILLED

69: Q: Why is it so cold in the room? [The window is open but the person who asks does not know. The person who opened the window answers:]

I OPEN the window

70: Q: Has this house always been red? A:

(No, earlier) the house BE WHITE

71: Talking about the speaker's habits: I like to be up early.

I RISE at six in the morning (or: at dawn)

72: This week I have to go to work early.

I RISE at six in the morning (or: at dawn)

73: Q: What kind of sound do cats make?

They MEOW

74: Q: What do your cats do when they are hungry?

They MEOW

75: —

If you tease a cat, it MEOW

76: Q: Do cats bark?

(No), they not BARK

77: —

Whatever you TELL him, he not ANSWER

78: —

Whatever you PUT into this bag, it not BREAK

79: —

If you PUT a stone into this bag, it BREAK

80: —

Even if you PUT a stone into this bag, it not BREAK

81: Q: What HAPPEN if I eat this mushroom?

You DIE

82: —

(According to the contract) we not WORK tomorrow

83: Father to child:

(Please do not disturb me), I WRITE a letter

84: Q: Your brother WRITE a letter right now? (=Is that the activity he is engaged in?)

(No,) he not WRITE a letter (he's asleep)

85: Q: What your brother DO right now? (=What activity is he engaged in?) A:

He SIT in a chair (and) READ a book

86: Q: What your brother DO right now? (=What activity is he engaged in?) A:

He EAT bread and DRINK water

87: Q: What your brother DO after breakfast (yesterday)? A:

He GO to the market and/to BUY some apples

88: Q: What the boy's father DO when the boy came home (yesterday)? A:

He BEAT him and KICK him (several times)

89: Q: Did you find your brother at home? A:

(No, we did not.) He LEAVE (before we arrive)

90: Q: Did you find your brother at home? A:

(No, we did not, we were very unlucky.) He LEAVE (just before we came)

91: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?

He COUGH once

92: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?
He COUGH twice
93: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?
He COUGH seven times
94: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?
He COUGH many times
95: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?
He COUGH for a while
96: Q: What your brother's reaction BE when you gave him the medicine (yesterday)?
He COUGH for an hour
97: Q: Why do you think your brother has caught a cold?
He COUGH often
98: Q: Why did you think yesterday that your brother had caught a cold?
He COUGH often
99: Q: How long did it take for your brother to finish the letter?
He WRITE the letter in an hour
100: The boy's father sent him a sum of money some days ago and it arrived yesterday
When the boy GET the money, he BUY a present for the girl
101: Last year, the boy's father sent him a sum of money
When the boy GET the money, he BUY a present for the girl
102: The boy used to receive a sum of money now and then
When the boy GET the money, he BUY a present for the girl
103: The boy is expecting a sum of money
When the boy GET the money, he BUY a present for the girl
104: The boy thinks that he will perhaps get a sum of money
If the boy GET the money, he BUY a present for the girl
105: The speaker knows the boy was expecting money, but he doesn't know if he got it
If the boy GET the money (yesterday), he BUY a present for the girl
106: The speaker knows the boy was expecting money and that he did not get it
If the boy GET the money (yesterday), he BUY a present for the girl
107: Talking to someone who is leaving in a while
When you RETURN, I WRITE this letter (=I FINISH it already at that time)
108: Said as an order by a teacher leaving the classroom
When I RETURN, you WRITE this assignment (=You FINISH it by then)
109: Assuming that the speaker's brother is trustworthy and speaking of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer
My brother SAY (right now) that the water BE COLD
110: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer
My brother SAY (right now) that the water BE COLD (but I don't believe him)
111: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer
My brother SAY (right now) that the water BE COLD (yesterday, but I don't believe him)

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112: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother SAY (yesterday) that the water BE COLD (yesterday, but I think he was wrong)

113: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother SAY (yesterday) that the water BE COLD (the day before yesterday, but I think he was wrong)

114: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother SAY (yesterday) that the water BE COLD (today, but he turned out to be wrong)

115: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother THINK (right now) that the water BE COLD (today, but he is wrong)

116: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother THINK (yesterday) that the water BE COLD (yesterday, but he was wrong)

117: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother KNOW (now) that the water BE COLD (today)

118: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother KNOW (yesterday) that the water BE COLD (today)

119: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother BELIEVE (yesterday) that the water BE COLD (usually)

120: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

He FEEL (right now) that the water BE COLD

121: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

(Yesterday when my brother went into the water) he FEEL that the water BE COLD

122: Of the water in an invisible lake - the speaker knows that the water is in fact cold

My brother not THINK (right now) that the water BE COLD (=he thinks it is warm)

123: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother DOUBT (right now) that the water BE COLD (=he suspects it is warm)

124: Of the water in a lake which is not visible to the speaker and the hearer

My brother HOPE (right now) that the water BE COLD

125: Uttered as a promise

I PROMISE to COME to you tomorrow

126: Uttered in a naming ceremony (for NAME, substitute any suitable verb (e.g. CHRISTEN), for X, substitute any suitable proper name (e.g. JOHN)

I NAME this child X

127: Looking at a broken cup, angrily:

Who BREAK this cup?

128: Looking at a house

Who BUILD this house?

129: Looking at a picture of a house which has been torn down

Who BUILD this house?

130: Looking at a house, recently painted

Who PAINT this house?

131: —
You MUST GO to bed before you GET tired (today)
132: —
(Yesterday evening) I GO to bed before my brother COME home
133: the speaker has just seen the king arrive (no one had expected this event)
(Have you heard the news?) The king ARRIVE
134: A person who has heard (133) but not seen the event says:
(Have you heard the news?) The king ARRIVE
135: The king has been expected for weeks. The speaker has just seen him:
The king ARRIVE
136: A person who has heard 135) but not seen the event says:
The king ARRIVE
137: —
When I COME home (yesterday), he WRITE two letters (=first I came and then he wrote the letters)
138: —
When I COME home (yesterday), he WRITE two letters (=he finished writing them just before I came)
139: —
When I COME home (yesterday), he WRITE two letters (=that is what he accomplished during my absence)
140: —
When I COME home (yesterday), he WRITE two letters (=that is the activity he was engaged in)
141: Conversation takes place in the afternoon. The market referred to is assumed to be situated at a considerable distance from the place where the conversation takes place
QUESTION: Do you know my brother?
(Yes,) I MEET him at the market this morning
142: Conversation takes place in the afternoon. The market referred to is assumed to be situated at a considerable distance from the place where the conversation takes place
QUESTION: Do you know my brother?
(Yes,) I MEET him at the market yesterday
143: Conversation takes place in the afternoon: Do you know my brother?
(Yes,) I MEET him here this morning
144: Conversation takes place in the afternoon in the afternoon: Do you know my brother?
(Yes,) I MEET him here yesterday
145: Traveller to local:
If you SHOW me the way, I GIVE you money
146: Mother to child:
If you not STOP PLAY with that ball, I TAKE it away
147: Standing in front of a house: Who BUILD this house?

My brother BUILD this house

148: (Of a coughing child:) For how long has your son been coughing?

He COUGH for an hour

149: A knows that B was going to meet A's brother but not when. A:

You MEET my brother (yet)?

150: Answer to (149):

(Yes,) I MEET him.

151: Answer to (149):

(No,) I not MEET him

152: Said by a young man

When I GROW old, I BUY a big house

153: The speaker has just seen the king arrive (earlier than was expected):

The king ARRIVE already

154: The king is expected to arrive

The king not ARRIVE yet

155: Q: Has your brother finished the letter?

(No,) he still WRITE it

156: Q: What did your brother say yesterday when you asked him if he was busy?

He SAY that he WRITE letters

161: Do you know what happened to me yesterday?

I WALK in the forest

162:

Suddenly I STEP on a snake

163:

It BITE me in the leg

164:

I TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake

165:

It DIE

166: I'll tell you what happened to me once when I was a child.

I WALK in the forest

167:

Suddenly I STEP on a snake

168:

It BITE me in the leg

169:

I TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake

170:

It DIE

171: Do you know what happened to my brother yesterday? I saw it myself

We WALK in the forest

172:

Suddenly he STEP on a snake
173:
It BITE him in the leg
174:
He TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake
175:
It DIE
176: Do you know what happened to my brother yesterday? He told it himself.
He WALK in the forest
177:
Suddenly he STEP on a snake
178:
It BITE him in the leg
179:
He TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake
180:
It DIE
181: Once upon a time there was a man. This is what happened to him one day.
He WALK in the forest
182:
Suddenly he STEP on a snake
183:
It BITE him in the leg
184:
He TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake
185:
It DIE
186: The speaker is right back from a walk in the forest: Do you know what just happened to me?
I WALK in the forest
187:
Suddenly I STEP on a snake
188:
It BITE me in the leg
189:
I TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake
190:
It DIE
191: I'll tell you what happens to me sometimes when I am walking in the forest
I SEE a snake
192:
I TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake

193:

I SEE a snake

194:

I TAKE a stone and THROW at the snake

195: I'll tell you what I see in the window right now

A boy and a girl PLAY in the street

196:

(Right now) the boy TAKE a ball and THROW it to the girl

197:

The girl THROW it back

default

C. Teaching tense and aspect

The following is an example of a teaching and learning activity in which learners in primary school can acquire an understanding of the meaning and use of different tense-aspect forms (as developed for the InWEnt teacher trainer's programme 2004-2008).[1]

Figure C.1.: Learning about tense and aspect

- Learning outcome: Learners recognise in which context (i.e. with which time adverbials) certain tense-aspect forms are used.

- What you need: Matching cards – One set of cards should have verb forms with different (highlighted) tense-aspect affixes written on them: *ndi**dza**bwera* 'I will come', *a**na**bwera* 'he/she came', *a**ku**bwera* 'he/she is coming', and the same set of

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[1] Christa Röber developed numerous language games of this kind for literacy teaching in German, cf. Röber-Siekmeyer (1997); Röber (2009). During the InWEnt teacher training programme and for Chichewa, we developed this activity for the different tenses in Chichewa, and other games, together. For other activities, see the manual *Discovering language structure: Learning to read and to write Chichewa. A handbook for learner-centred language and literacy lessons in primary education and teacher training in Malawi.* InWEnt publications, 2008. The illustration shown above is a reprint from the manual.

tense-aspect prefixes with three other verb stems.[2] Another set should have the matching time adverbials written on them: *mawa* 'tomorrow', *dzulo* 'yesterday', *tsopano* 'now' (each time adverbial card is copied four times so that all of the 12 verb forms match a time adverbial card).

- Procedure:

    1. Shuffle the cards and put them on the table face down so that the players cannot see what is written on them.

    2. Ask the first player to pick a card, turn it over, read it, then pick a second card and read it. If the two cards make a meaningful sentence, the player should keep the pair of cards and have a second turn. If the two cards do not make a meaningful sentence, the player replaces the card to its original face-down position on the table.

    3. The next player continues. The game comes to an end when all cards have been collected. The winner is the person who collected the most matching cards.

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[2]As a first step, only three tenses are introduced. Later on, more tense-aspect forms and further time adverbials (and their different possibilities of use) can be discussed.

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