

Verbal categories in Ẹt-Ma'in, a Kainji language of Nigeria

A recent study (Nurse et al. 2010) surveyed Niger-Congo verbal categories. However, no data from Kainji languages was included quite likely because very little on Kainji languages has been researched or published. This paper offers data from Ẹt-Ma'in, a Kainji language, spoken in Kebbi State and Niger State, Nigeria. Additional comparative verbal morphology data is presented from closely related languages, C'Lela [dri] and Ẹt-Hun [dud].

Ẹt-Ma'in employs verbal suffixes, a series of pre-verb auxiliaries and nominalizations to express the various tense and aspect categories of the language. Within the auxiliary paradigm, there is a three way tense distinction: past imperfective, present imperfective and future. The suffixed verb morphology paradigm shows only a two way tense distinction: past versus non-past.

- (1) *ām* *rɛ-g-ān* *sāp* *ɛ* *zwāgār*
1SG eat-PST-DIST rice LOC Zuru.town
'I ate rice in Zuru (before coming here)'

The suffixing paradigm expresses additional aspectual meanings for past forms, which include perfective interpretations along with distance (1), affectedness of the object, and exclusiveness of the subject (2), which emphasizes that only the referent of the subject pronoun/noun is capable of or subject to the predicate. To my knowledge, this type of exclusivity of the subject has not been described as a verbal category within an aspect system.

- (2) *ú* *jān-ɛ* *hōg-d-ə-mé*
C1.3SG leave-EXCL hear-C5-ASSOC-6M-shame
'(Only) he left ashamed.'

References:

Nurse, Derek, John Hewson & Sarah Rose. (2010). *Verbal categories in Niger-Congo languages*.
<http://www.mun.ca/linguistics/nico/index.php>