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Tense, Aspect, and Mood in Town Nyanja: A Morphological Inventory and Contrastive Analysis from Chichewa

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A Morphological Inventory and Contrastive Analysis from Chichewa

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Abstract

The Bantu languages Nyanja and Chichewa are considered dialects of the same language in some circles; Town Nyanja is one of three different dialects among Nyanja itself, spoken in Zambia's capital city, Lusaka. This piece of research delves into morphological data provided by a Town Nyanja native speaker through a series of remote video elicitations. While potentially (and likely) not comprehensive, this paper includes a morphological inventory of tense, aspect, and mood markers for Town Nyanja verbs, and contrasts these morphemes with those present in Chichewa; it is the belief of this researcher that there is significant evidence that the two languages' verbal morphologies are contrastive enough to challenge the prior beliefs that Chichewa and Town Nyanja are the same language or dialect.

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1 Introduction on Town Nyanja

Nyanja is a language spoken in Eastern Zambia and in Zambia's capital city, Lusaka. This analysis examines the dialect spoken in Lusaka, known as Town Nyanja, and as such this analysis doesn't record any differences between Town Nyanja and the language spoken in Eastern Zambia.
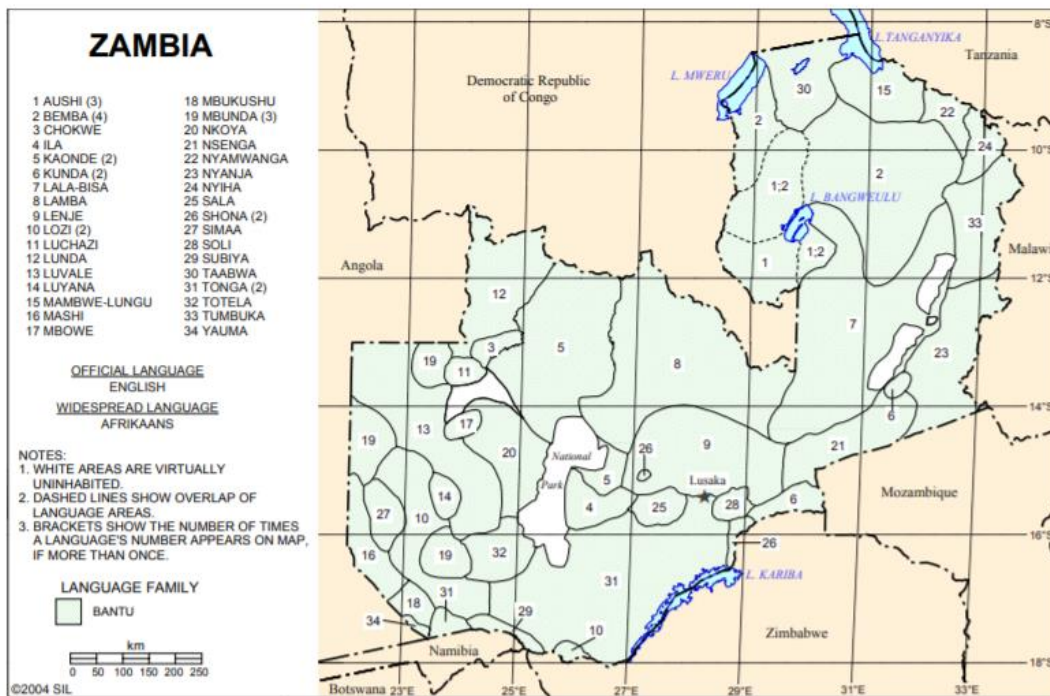
Figure 1

A Linguistic Map of Zambia, from Ethnologue

As can be seen on this linguistic map of Zambia, Nyanja is spoken in the region labelled '23' in Eastern Zambia. However, the map doesn't mention that many speakers of a dialect of Nyanja inhabit Lusaka, Zambia's capital city. Nyanja and its very closely related language, Chichewa, is also spoken in neighboring regions in Mozambique and Malawi.

Like many languages in Southern and Eastern Africa, Nyanja is considered a Bantu language, along with languages such as Swahili and Tonga. As such, it shares some notable characteristics that are present across all Bantu languages, namely the existence of noun class. What noun class is and how it presents itself in Nyanja is explained in detail in section 2.5.

Additionally, Nyanja and its closest related language, Chichewa, has been described as very similar, and shares many words in each other's lexica. More on why this is relevant is explained in section I(a).

1.1 Our Data Consultant and Data Collection Methods

Our data collection process included a series of video conferences with a native multilingual speaker of Nyanja named Mwaka Mauro-Nachilongo, age 42. She was born and raised in Lusaka, Zambia, and grew up speaking the language with her family. To this day, she still speaks Nyanja with members of her family that still live in Lusaka. She studied university in Zambia until she came to complete graduate work in the United States. Thanks to her patience and openness to share her language and culture with us, we were able to compile the data for this analysis.

Regarding Nyanja's similarities with Chichewa, Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo has stated that she is able to understand Chichewa. Whenever she had a word on the tip of her tongue during our elicitation interviews, she could occasionally supply a Chichewa word she had been exposed to in Lusaka as a substitution if she couldn't remember the word in Nyanja, though almost always distinguished whether that word was Chichewa or Nyanja, as far as I as a researcher have been made aware of.

Again, the importance of Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo's patience and willingness to work with us cannot be understated. Without her, there would be no analysis of Town Nyanja. She was incredibly pleasant to work with and incredibly informative, and I would formally like to take an opportunity to thank her here.

2   Orthography, Basic Background Information, and Assumptions

2.1   Vowels in Town Nyanja

Town Nyanja possesses five vowels, with tense and lax variations as allophones of the same vowel phonemes. In the table below, I've elected to include the IPA notation of all the vowel sounds I elicited from Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo during our interviews.

It is possible that the vowels [ɪ], and [ɛ] are allophones of the vowels [i], and [e] respectively, though this is explained more in depth in f(iii). Vowels [a] and [ə] are definitely allophones of the same phoneme, as they occur in the same environment as variances of pronunciation due to talking speed. This is explained further in section 3.4.2 on the remote future tense.

Table 1

Vowels in Nyanja

VOWELS	Front	Central	Back
High T L	i I		u
Mid T L	e ɛ	ə	o
Low		a	

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2.2 Consonants in Town Nyanja

The following table presents all of the consonants present in Town Nyanja.

Table 2

Consonants in Nyanja

CONSONANTS	Bilabials vl	vd	Labiodentals vl	vd	Dentals vl	vd	Alveolars vl	vd	Alveo-palatals vl	vd	Palatals vl	vd	Retroflex vl	vd	Palatal vl	vd	Velar vl	vd
Plosives	p	b			t	d											k	g
Affricates		β					tʃ	dʒ										
Fricatives			f	v	s	z	ʃ											
Laterals						l												
Rhotics						ɹ												
Nasals		m				n												ŋ
Glides		w														y		

2.3 Practical Orthography Notes

Throughout the rest of this analysis, the following phonetics will be written in a practical orthography that had been consensually established by myself and my fellow students who were also performing their own data collection processes, under the guidance of our professor, Lee Bickmore. Part of what informed our decision was also accessibility for native Nyanja speakers, as we wanted to reflect their spellings of their language closely while still examining phonological nuances.

- The phoneme [ʃ] is written orthographically as <sh>.

- The phoneme [tʃ] is written as <ch>.

- The phoneme [dʒ] is written as <j>.

- The phoneme [ŋ] is written as <ng>, or <ng'> when it is word-initial.

- The phoneme [β] is written as <B>. It should be noted that [β] is also possibly an allophone of the phoneme [b], but this is discussed more extensively in section 2.5.

- The phoneme [ɹ] is written as <r>. However, the exact inventory of rhotics in Town Nyanja was not something I had the expertise to produce nor was it the focus of my analysis, and as such there may be some inaccuracies on what sounds were exactly produced by Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo.

2.4   Word Order

Town Nyanja word order is largely very free. While subject-verb-object and subject-object-verb orders are the most common from what I witnessed, topic-comment structures such as object-subject verb are also acceptable. Additionally, the ordering of the subject, verb, object, and indirect object seems entirely flexible, and can allow for any ordering.

This phenomenon leads me to categorize Town Nyanja as a nonconfigurational language. Nonconfigurationality is often found in many polysynthetic languages, though I would hesitate to consider Nyanja polysynthetic, though it is highly agglutinative. More on these characteristics are explained in future sections 5(a) and 5(b).

While I supply some notes and observations about the surface and deep structure of Nyanja syntax, further information regarding syntax (such as comprehensive phrase structure rules, adjunct phrases, etc.) are not included in this analysis.

2.5   Noun Class and how it Manifests in Nyanja

Nyanja, like other Bantu languages, has something known as noun class, which are components of nouns that distinguish themselves from other nouns based on semantic features, such as personhood, animacy, size and shape, etc. Some linguists liken noun class characteristic to grammatical gender, which is present in some Germanic and many Romance languages, though other linguists (especially Bantu-specialists) contend that these are different concepts.

Bantu languages all contain different sets of noun classes out of 22 total possible noun classes. Many Bantu languages have significantly less than 24, averaging at about 7 or 8. Nyanja has 17 noun classes.

The way the Noun class manifests is through the form of morphological prefixes. These prefixes can be different noun class prefixes depending on whether the noun is singular or plural, or even if you are adding augmentative or diminutive emphasis to such a thing. For example:

(1)   mú-màànà   mí-màànà
        C3-river   C4-river
        'River.'   'Rivers.'

This noun has a root, [-màànà], and two different prefixes [mú] and [mí] for whether it is a singular or a plural. Additionally, these prefixes can be stacked with augmentative or diminutive prefixes depending on the word being modified, though this is not the case with every word. Ultimately though, a noun with a noun class 3 morpheme in the singular and a noun class 4 morpheme in the plural would be referred to as a 3/4 noun.

Lastly, it is important to note that adjectives are affected by the noun class of what they are modifying as well and will take on a prefix to agree with the noun it modifies.

(2)   ch- òngò   chi-ng'òònò
           C7-noise   C7.REL-small
           'Small noise.'

The following table is a comprehensive list of the noun class prefixes and adjective agreement markers in order to illustrate this phenomenon present in Bantu languages. For the sake of brevity, however, I am excluding possessive markers and verbal subject and object agreement markers but do know that each noun class has each of these as well.

And yes, there is no class 11 in Nyanja, and as such it has been consciously omitted. Not all noun classes will be present in a given Bantu language.

Table 3

Noun Class and Noun Class Agreement Markers for Adjectives

Noun Class	NC Relative Marker	Adj. Marker 1	Adj. Marker 2
1	[mu-]	[o-]	[mu-]
2	[ba-]	[wo-]	[Ba-]
3	[mu-]	[o-]	[u-]
4	[mi-]	[yo-] [zo-]	[yi-] [zi-]
5	Ø	Ø	[i-]
6	[ma-]	[yo-]	[ya-]
7	[chi-]	[cho-]	[chi-]
8	[vi-]	[vo-]	[vi-] [va-]
9	Ø	[o-]	[i-]
10	Ø	[yo-] [zo-]	[i-]
12	[ka-]	[ka-]	[ka-]
13	[tu-]	[to-]	[tw-]
14	[u-]	[wa-]	[u-]
15	[ku-]	[ko-]	[ku-]
16	[pa-]	[yo-]	[ya-]
17	[ku-]	Ø	Ø
18	[mu-]	Ø	Ø

2.6 Other Phonological Characteristics of Town Nyanja

2.6.1 Tone

Nyanja also has lexical tone. Tone can be high or low, simplistically speaking. Admittedly, it was difficult to differentiate between tone and stress, and whether the tone was indeed lexical initially. However, there are minimal pairs in tone, as exemplified here:

(3)   kà-léézà   ká-léézà
        C12-razor   C12-lightning
        'razor.'   'lightning.'

For your reference as a reader, vowels with diacritics moving downward from left to right are considered low, while diacritics moving upward from left to right are considered high.

This becomes even more relevant in my discussion of tense as it relates to tone in future sections, as minimal pairs in tones for some verbs can indicate a different temporality. I must acknowledge how helpful one of my classmates, Mallory Lincourt, was in determining this, as I had spent a large portion of my research process unaware of this phenomenon. Examples of this phenomenon will be present in Section 3.3.1 regarding the near past tense, as well as future sections contrasting Chichewa and Town Nyanja morphology.

2.6.2 Gliding

Gliding is quite common in Town Nyanja, and occurs on many agreement markers for noun class, such as the Class 1 agreement marker [mu-]. These such occurrences appear to be mandatory. For example, a Nyanja speaker would glide the word for 'child,' [mw-áána], but could not optionally say [mu-áánà], even if the underlying phonemic representation would be [mu-áánà].

However, it does appear to be optional at phrasal levels between word boundaries that have the same vowel.

2.6.2.1 Glides as Allophones of Vowels

Considering the phonological process that governs the insertions of glides, it is logical to assume that the glides are allophones of their respective vowels: i.e. [w] is an allophone of [u],

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and [y] is an allophone of [i]. Therefore, the underlying representation of [mw-aana] may be [mu-aana], even though that explicit pronunciation is unintuitive to Nyanja speakers.

Despite this, in the examples where it matters, I will not be electing to display the underlying phonemic representation and will instead opt for the phonetic pronunciations when possible, just for the sake of clarity.

2.6.3 Tense and Lax Vowels as Allophones

As stated in section 2.1, it is highly probable that [e] and [ɛ], as well as [i] and [ɪ] are allophones of the same phonemes. However, this cannot be firmly asserted, because I did not test specifically whether these phonemes occur in mutually exclusive environments, and to my knowledge neither have any of my classmate-colleagues.

Due to this uncertainty, I will not be displaying an underlying representation that favors one over the other, as I cannot say with certainty that these phonemes are allophonic; I also do not wish to miscommunicate the phonetic distinctions of the language to a reader who may be entirely unacquainted to the language.

2.6.4 Vowel Lengthening

The penultimate syllable in most words and phrases is lengthened:

$(V \rightarrow [+\text{long} / \underline{\quad} C_0 V \#]_p)$

This is predictable throughout what I've examined in Nyanja and will marked by duplication of the vowel in our orthography as we continue further.

2.7   Basic Morphology of Verbs

Nyanja has an incredibly rich verbal morphology. Unlike English, you can communicate entire sentences, with ditransitive verbs and all, in single words. Much like other Bantu languages, Nyanja verbs follow this basic formula:

(NEG) + SM + T(AM) + (OM) + Root + (APPL/PASS/RECIP/etc.) + FV

Where NEG is an optional negation marker, SM is the subject marker, TAM represents tense, aspect, and mood, OM is the object marker, APPL is the applicative form, PASS is the passive construction and RECIP is a reciprocal, and FV is the final vowel. The affix that comes before the final vowel can be a number of different voices that change the relationship of the verb to its arguments and is not examined in depth in this analysis.

FV refers to the final vowel at the end of the verb. This can change and depending on its expression can indicate an indicative or subjunctive mood to the statement. The infinitive ending is [-à], and the subjunctive ending is [-è]. Verbs with [-à] refer to things the speaker knows to be true and existent, whereas [-è] is used to refer to things that are not actual, such as commands, hypotheticals, and suggestions. Additionally, verbs have been seen to end in [-ì] in some formations of the imperative when the speaker is trying to observe formality.

This is a basic structure of the verbs in Nyanja, but with many constructions, especially the perfect aspect, modal verbs precede the verb and have their own structure rules. More on this will be developed in section 3.

2.7.1 A Note on Negation

Negation markers in Nyanja are expressed as [sí-,], [sá-], or sometimes just the consonant [s-] preceding the subject marker if that subject marker begins with an affricate, glide, or a

vowel. Most of the time, negation is reflected the same way that the basic formula in section 2.7 discusses, however it may occur after an initial morpheme, such as for infinitives and imperatives (discussed in more detail in section 3.5.1 about negative imperatives.

While further examination of negation could reveal more information about the underlying morphosyntactic properties of Nyanja, this was not the purview of this particular analysis, and may be the subject of future analysis.

2.7.2 Subject and Object Markers

The following table displays Nyanja subject and object agreement markers as it relates to personhood. Do note that subject and object **agreement markers for specific noun classes** have **not** been included in this analysis.

Table 4

Subject and Object Agreement Morphemes in Nyanja Verbs

Subj and Obj. Agreement Markers	Subject Markers		Object Markers	
	Sng.	Plural	Sng.	Plural
1st person	[nì-]	[tì-]	[-nì-]	[-tì-]
2nd person	[ù-]	[Bà-][1]	[-mù-]	[-Bà-][1]
3rd person	[à-]	[Bà-][1]	[-kù-]	[-Bà-][1]

---

[1] Interestingly, Nyanja employs the 2nd and 3rd person plural when indicating formality, even when the subject of discussion is singular. In other words, formality is expressed through the plural marker.

3   Morphological Analyses of Tense, Aspect, and Mood

3.1   Infinitive

The infinitive form is marked by the prefix [kú-]. It attaches prior to the root, as shown in the following examples:

(4)   kú-páàs-à   (5)   kú-îmb-à
       INF-give-FV   INF-sing-FV
       'to give'   'to sing'

The tone on this prefix is low, except for verbs with monosyllabic roots. The tone is high, and the vowel in the morpheme is lengthened as in the predictable phonological environment described in section 2.5.4, which explains that the penultimate syllable is lengthened.

Interestingly, for some tense conjugations, the [kú-] actually remains attached to a monosyllabic root. This is distinct from the object pronoun [-kú-], and the habitual morpheme [kú-] since the contexts in which this phenomenon emerges are independent from contexts where either of these morphemes emerge.

(6)   kúù-dy-à
       INF-eat-FV
       'to eat'

Similarly, infinitive verbs can be used as infinitival predicates, such as in the following phrase:

(7)   nì-fúnìk-à   kúù-dy-à
       1s.SM-need-FV   INF-eat-FV
       'I need to eat.'

Lastly, adding this prefix to an adjective and giving it a final vowel as associated with verbs is a form of derivational affixation, turning the adjective into a verb.

(8)   kú-yîpà   (9)   yîpà
        INF-ugly   ugly
        'to be ugly'   'ugly, bad, ill-hearted'

3.2 Present Tense

3.2.1 Present Indicative

Present tense constructions are made with no tense marker; that is, the present tense morpheme is thereby null. For intransitive verbs, the verb consists of merely the subject marker, the root, and the final vowel. For transitive verbs, the verb contains an object marker additionally, occurring after the subject marker and before the root. This is shown in the following examples:

(10)   á-ììmb-à   (11)   à-tì-tàndîz-à
        3s.SM-sing-FV   3s.SM-1p.OM-help-FV
        'He sings.'   'She helps us.'

3.2.2 Present Progressive

Interesting to note is that the present indicative can also be glossed as the present progressive. Therefore, the translations of example (10) and (11) could also be 'He is singing,' or 'she is helping us.'

There is no single, separate morpheme for representing strictly a present-tense progressive aspect. There are also seemingly no tonal differences to distinguish between the two and the distinction appears to be heavily contextual.

Otherwise, morphemes such as [-má-] and [-kú-] can be used to denote progressivity. However, more about these morphemes can be found in several future sections that revisit marked progressives.

3.2.3 Habitual

The present habitual is marked by the morpheme [-má-]. There is much overlap for the present progressive, or that the translation into English is often in the progressive aspect.

(12)   à-má-îmb-à
        3s.SM-HABIT-sing-FV
        'She sings.' (Habitually, frequently, etc.)

(13)   nì-má-kù-   tàndîiz-à
        1s.SM-HABIT-3s.OM-   help-FV
        'I help him.' (Habitually, frequently, etc.)

Very frequently this expression is also translated in the form of a progressive. So, for the prior two examples it would be similar to 'She is singing,' or 'I am helping him,' though also retaining the understanding of habitual repetition, such as a scenario where one could sing for a profession, etc.

The inclusion of the word [-káà-lì] also heavily implies a continuity to the present moment. Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo translated the word to mean something along the lines of 'still' in English, wherein it's presence would imply a translation such as 'He is still dancing.'

[-káà-lì] also includes the subject pronoun marker of the person it is describing, or the relative agreement marker it describes if the subject is not a person.

(14)   à-káà-lì   à-má-   îmb-à
        3s.SM-TEMP-be   3s.SM-HABIT-   sing-FV
        'He is still singing.' (habitually)

The morpheme [kú-] also indicates a form of repetition, or progression, as I more commonly encounter.

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(15) à-káà-lì   kú-féènt-à
       3s.SM-TEMP-be   PROG-faint-FV
       'He is still fainting.' (repetitively, to this very moment)

Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo explained that the difference between these two is that the latter indicates that the event is still ongoing to the moment of speaking. While both are continuous habitual markers, differences in the words employed offers a variety of temporalities.

3.3   Past Tense

3.3.1   Near Past and Simple Past

The near past is characterized as events that have happened within the last 24 hours or so. In other moods and aspects, the boundary between the near past and the remote past can shift.

The ways the near past can manifest is as a couple different explicit morphemes, but also in variation in tones. If one were to explain that someone's action occurred very recently, they would place tone on the first syllable of the root as well as the subject marker. This is shown in example 17, with example 16 serving as a reference of the present indicative.

(16) á-ììmb-à   (17) á-íímb-a
       3s.SM-sing-FV   3s.SM-sing-FV
       'She sings.'   'She sang (just now).'

Otherwise, the near past is expressed as the morpheme [-à-]. It attaches to the root after the SM and before the OM, where many other tense morphemes attach. Additionally, the morpheme for the remote past, [-na-], can refer to events that occur towards the end of that temporal threshold of 24 hours, such as in example (19).

(18) n-à-péènt-à   (19) ní-nà-pèènt-à
       1.sg-PAST-paint-FV   1s.SM-PAST-paint-FV
       'I painted.'   'I painted.'

According to Dr. Mauro Nachilongo, the former implies a temporality that is more recent than the latter, though both can fall within the same parameters that define the recent past tense as a whole.

Furthermore, seeing as how the near past marker is non-consonantal, the subject marker will often assimilate to the near past vowel, and drop its own, such as in the case of (18).

3.3.2 Remote Past

For other remote past tense expressions, verbs will take on the morpheme [-nà-] much like in the construction (19) in section 3.3.1. The remote past refers to events that happen before yesterday as it relates to the speaker.

(20)	tì-nà-segúúl-à	(21)	nì-nà-óón-à
	1p.SM-PAST-open-FV		1s.SM-PAST-see-FV
	'We opened.'		'I saw.'

There is some grey area between when a speaker may opt between a near and remote past construction. Often, the decision to employ one over the other when riding the cusp between the two temporalities is semantically dependent.

3.3.3 Past Perfect and Perfect Progressive

The past perfect is reflected by the modal verb [έὲnzè]. When I asked our consultant, Dr. Mauro Nachilongo, what she would translate this verb as into English, there was a moment of hesitation before she said, "It's like the word 'then,' in English."

Arriving at the conclusion that this was a modal verb that reflects the past perfect was not intuitive. Firstly, when I would elicit translations of sentences and phrases in English that contained the past perfect, it was not always a one-to-one translation reflected in Nyanja.

Additionally, translations of English past-perfects would sometimes result in forms in Nyanja that didn't have the perfect marker at all.

It wasn't until I decided to ask Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo to translate Nyanja forms generated by myself into English (when possible) that I actually received a wealth of nuance in each expression from her. With that in mind, I still want to affirm there are levels of flexibility in translation of different expressions, as demonstrated by example (19) again:

(19)   ní-nà-pèènt-à
        1s.SM-PAST-paint-FV
        'I had painted.'

For the example above, Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo was asked to translate the glossed section there, and the Nyanja form above that was what I received as a possible form. In the English translation you can see the existence of the perfect modal verb 'had,' but there is no one-to-one presentation of this modal to the above example.

Before examining further data entries, it bears mentioning that [έὲnzè] actually takes on relative agreement markers depending on the subject. The following table demonstrates them all:

Table 5

Relative Agreement for the Past Perfect

Rel. Agr. for P.P.	Singular	Plural
1st person	[n-]	[t-],[tw-]
2nd person	[mw-]	[B-]
3rd person	[Ø-]	[B-]

The past perfect can be described as the perfect modal [-ɛ̀ɛnze] and a main lexical verb.

(22)   t- ɛ́ɛnzè   tí-nà-víín-à
         1p.SM-Perf.modal   1p.SM-PAST-dance-FV
         'We had danced.'

The perfect progressive can be described as the perfect modal plus a main verb with the progressive affix [ku-] or the habitual affix [-ma-].

(23)   n- ɛ́ɛnzè   kù-víín-à
         1s.REL-Perf.modal   PROG-dance-FV
         'I had been dancing.'

(24)   n-ɛnzéè-lì   kúù-gw-à
         1s.REL-perf.modal-be   PROG-fall-FV
         'I had been falling.'

The only difference between example (23) and (24) is the addition of [-li] as a suffix on the perfect modal; thankfully, Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo supplied some explanation in the difference of temporality. In example (23), she explained that the speaker is referring to a period of time prior to the moment of speaking wherein the person acting continuously during that period. In the latter example (24), she explained that the speaker refers to a condition that was chronic up until a point prior to the point of speaking.

Interestingly, the class-one relative marker for adjectives, [ó-], can substitute for the progressive morpheme [ku-] in constructions of the perfect progressive as well.

(25)   B- ɛ̀ɛnz   ó-vîin-à
         3p.REL-perf.modal   C1.REL-dance-FV

         'They were dancing.' OR   'They had been dancing.'
         OR 'They had been dancers.' (See below)

What should also be noted is that the C1 relative marker is also used as both a nominalizer and a marker for relative clauses as well.

(26)   kú-péènt-à   (27)   ó-péènt-à
       INF-paint-FV   NOM-paint-FV
       'To paint.' (V)   'Painter.' (N)

As a nominalizer, I wondered whether [o-] such as in example (25) could have been potentially translated as 'They had been dancers.' When I asked Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo if this were acceptable, she thought for a moment before agreeing: "You could say that." For now, since the data on this is inconclusive on my end, this remains a possible hypothesis.

In fact, the perfect progressive can be made with several different constructions, all with varying temporalities and moods.

(26)   t - ɛ̀ɛnz   ó-kú-ngò-   îimb- à
       1p.REL-perf.modal   C1.REL-PROG-CNTS   sing-FV
       'We had always been singing.'

(27)   ∅ - ɛ́ɛnzè   á-mà-tì-   tàndîiz-à
       3s.REL-Perf.modal   3s.SM-HABIT-1s.OM-   help-FV
       'He had been helping us.'   OR   'He was helping us.'

Example (27) occurs at a more recent past than example (25).

Additionally, the perfect can be used to described habitual or once-habitual courses of actions. This investigation has also been one where I experimented with Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo on acceptable word order to illuminate some facets of Nyanja syntax.

(28)   ∅ - ɛ́ɛnzè   à-káà-lì   kú-féènt- à
       3s.REL-perf.modal   3s.SM-TEMP-be   PROG-faint-FV
       'He had still been fainting.'

(29) à-káà-lì   Ø - ɛ́ɛ̀nzè   kú-féènt- à
      3s.SM-TEMP-be   3s.REL-perf.modal PROG-faint-FV
      'Still he had been fainting.'

(30) ? kú-féènt- à   Ø - ɛ́ɛ̀nzè   à-káà-lì
      PROG-faint-FV   3s.REL-perf.modal 3s.SM-TEMP-be
      ? 'He had still been fainting.'

(31) * kú-féènt- à   à-káà-lì   Ø - ɛ́ɛ̀nzè
      PROG-faint-FV   3s.SM-TEMP-be   3s.REL-perf.modal
      * 'He had still been fainting.'

In grammatical and intuitive utterances, the modal seemingly must precede the verb.
However, in some sentences, Nyanja speakers can move the verb to the front of the sentence to
construct a topic-comment modality, emphasizing the verb in whatever context the conversation
is occurring. Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo hesitated to refer to example (30) as grammatical but didn't
explicitly confirm that it was ungrammatical. The last example she felt was definitely
ungrammatical, and no speaker of Nyanja could reasonably say so and be understood.

To me and my very novice understanding of morphosyntax, this struck me as interesting
since it implies that [à-káà-lì] is adjunctive (behaving near-adverbially) and can move
accordingly, but the movement of verbs (or the main verb and the modal verb) is relatively fixed,
and modals and lexical verbs cannot, at least intuitively, swap places.

Lastly, and perhaps most interestingly, the perfect modal is not exclusively limited to the
past tense. We do actually see occurrences where the future perfect uses [-ɛ́ɛ̀nzè] as well. Section
III(d)(v) references this in more detail.

3.3.4 Past Progressive

The morpheme for the progressive can be expressed as [kú-] and [-má-], but as seen in section III(c)(iii), there seems to be little to no context of a past progressive existing independently of the perfect progressive. In other words, the past progressive is expressed through the perfect progressive; or, at least, Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo only ever expressed a past progressive through the perfect progressive during our elicitations.

In examples (23) and (27) from the prior section, both of the aforementioned morphemes are present. Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo often would say that an alternative way to translate these Nyanja phrases would be in the past progressive. So, for example (27), instead of 'He had been helping us,' another translation would be 'He was helping us.'

After repetitive analysis, I couldn't determine precisely if there was a morphemic representation that differentiated the past progressive from the forms of progression we have already examined. This leads me to conclude that there is no such morpheme for an exclusive past-tense progressive.

3.3.5 Past Habitual (Continuous + Discontinuous)

The progressive markers [-má-] and [-kú-] also have some overlap in how the habitual aspect is expressed. To apply a past tense to a habitual aspect, other words are employed to change the temporality, such as modals that represent the past perfect.

There are distinctions for whether a habitual action is performed continuously (i.e. to this very day, or even happening this very moment) or discontinuously (similar to an imperfect marker, where an action occurred some time ago in the past for a duration of time).

(32) t- ɛ́ɛnzè   kú-vîin-à
       1p.REL-Perf.modal   PROG-dance-FV
       'We were dancing.'

I was able to elicit a morpheme [-nzú-] describing a discontinuous habitual (such as something one would do as a child and no longer does as an adult, e.g.) in the following examples. According to the data entries I elicited, the presence of this morpheme also marks a high tone on the subject marker preceding it.

(33) ní-nzú-mù-   tàndîiz-à
       1s.SM-DISC.H-3s.OM-   help-FV
       'I used to help him.'

(34) tí- nzú -   lɛ́ɛmb-à
       1p.SM-DISC.H-   write-FV
       'We used to write.' OR 'We were writing.'

(35) ní-nzú-îimb-à
       1s.SM-DISC.H-sing-FV
       'I was singing.'

The temporality of this morpheme, according to Dr. Mauro Nachilongo, was one that fit more within a recent-past paradigm than a more long-term, remote one. More specifically, this form would be used when talking about events that were "today or yesterday." When prompted for a remote past representation of a discontinued habit, Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo gave the following:

(36) t-ɛ́ɛnz   ó-òn-áàn-à
       1p.REL-perf.modal   C1.REL-see-RECIP-FV
       'We used to date.' OR 'We used to see each other' (more literally).

(37) n-ɛ́ɛ̀nze   kú-îmb-à
      1s.REL-perf.modal   PROG-sing-FV
      'I used to sing.' OR 'I used to be a singer.'

3.4   Future Tense

3.4.1 Near Future

Much like past tense in Nyanja, the future also has two tenses that distinguish between the near and remote future. The morpheme [-zá-] represents the expression of the near future, which happens within 24 hours or so within the time of speaking.

(38) nì-zá-vîin-à   (39) ú-záà-dy-à
     1s.SM-FUT-dance-FV   2s.SM-FUT-eat-FV
     'I will dance.'   'You will eat.'

(40) à-zá-nì-tàndîiz-à   (41) nì-zái-îmb-à
     3s.SM-FUT-1s.OM-help-FV   1s.SM-FUT-sing-FV
     'She will help me.'   'I will sing.'

Interesting to note is the presence of a diphthongization in example (37), implying a vowel assimilation due to the adjacent syllable being vowel-initial. This is the only example I had noticed this happening and may instead also be a process similar to glide insertion.

Other occurrences could even see [-zá-] expressed as [-zə-], usually succeeding the first-person subject marker, and usually only when Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo would speak quickly. When prompted to repeat herself for clarity's sake, she would normally revert to [-zá-] when speaking slowly. As such, I would affirm that [-zá-] is the underlying morphemic and phonological representation for the near future.

24

3.4.2 Remote Future

The remote future refers to events that happen anywhere from the day after tomorrow well into the future. At first, my impression was the morphemic boundaries for this expression was [-záká-] as opposed to [-zá-ká-].

However, after eliciting the morpheme [-ká-] independently (as a temporal marker), I determined that [-zá-ká-] was most likely separate morphemes.

(42)   tì-zá-ká-péènt-à
        1p.SM-FUT-TEMP-paint-FV
        'We will paint.'

(43)   nì-zá-ká-   mù-páàs-à   îmbwà
        1s.SM-FUT-TEMP-   3s.OM-give-FV   dog
        'I will give him a dog.'

Additionally, much like present construction, this expression can also be used as a form of the future progressive. Therefore, the gloss of both of the above examples could be 'We will be painting,' and 'I will be giving him a dog,' respectively.

3.4.3 Future Progressive

Much like the morpheme boundaries for [-zá-ká-], my initial hypothesis for the morpheme boundaries for the future progressive was [-zámbò-]. However, after eliciting words with the morpheme [-mbò-] (with some success, discussed in section III(e)(xii)), I determined the morpheme boundaries were different. Therefore, I would say that the future progressive is marked by the future tense morpheme and a morpheme that I am dubbing the 'initiative,' for lack of a better label, as opposed to referring to [-zámbò-] as a future progressive marker.

25

(44) tì-zá-mbò-péènt-à   (45) á-zá-mbo-ni-tàndîz-à
     1p.SM-FUT-INIT-paint-FV   3s.SM-FUT-INIT-1s.OM-help-FV
     'We will be painting.'   'He will be helping me.'

Further support that [-zámbò-] is not inherently a future progressive marker is that Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo also stated that these examples could be glossed as 'We will paint,' or 'He will help me.' There is a futurity to this expression, but the act of progression is more often than not pragmatically and semantically communicated. Mwaka provided a helpful deal of insight into this assertion as well, saying nearly as much.

In some cases, the first-person subject marker experiences a vowel deletion and is expressed as a syllabic nasal followed by the future marker. This isn't an uncommon occurrence when a Nyanja speaker is speaking quickly, and when asked to repeat themselves and they enunciate for clarity, they will often re-include any components that were deleted.

(46) n-zá-mbò-îmb-à
     1s.SM-FUT-INIT-sing-FV
     'I will be singing.'

Interestingly, I also elicited a novel form of the future progressive in the example below:

(47) n-zá-káà-lì   kú-péènt-à
     1s.SM-FUT-TEMP-be   PROG-paint-FV
     'I will be painting.' OR 'I will still be painting."

[-lì], as I understand it, is a form of the verb for 'to be.' It appears as a morpheme in other verb expressions as well. This may be a more one-to-one of the English translation 'I will be painting,' but is at least expressed a minority of the time.

3.4.4 Future Habitual

The same habitual markers discussed in section 3.3.5 occur in the future habitual as well. To distinguish between the future and the past, however, varying modal verbs can place the temporality into the future. One of these is the future progressive marker [-zá-mbò-]. When paired with the word [káà-li], a speaker can describe a habit that occurs presently as continuing to a point in the future. Otherwise, a speaker can attach [kú-] to the root of the verb to indicate a progressive to describe a habit. A speaker of Nyanja can also choose to elect to use an indicative verb.

(48)   nì-zá-mbò   nì- káà-lì   nì-lɛ́ɛ̀mb-à
       1s.SM-FUT-INIT   1s.SM-TEMP-be   1s.SM-write-FV
       'I will still be writing.'

(49)   á-zá-mbò   á-káà-lì   kú-féènt-à
       3s.SM-FUT-INIT   3s.SM-TEMP-be   PROG-faint-FV
       'He will still be fainting.'

(50)   nì-zá-mbò   kúù-gw-à
       1s.SM-FUT-INIT   PROG-fall-FV
       'I will be falling.'

3.4.5 Future Perfect

Much like the past perfect is represented by a modal verb, the future perfect is represented by a modal verb or particle known as [níínshì]. Unlike the past perfect modal, however, the future perfect modal does not require relative agreement for the subject's personhood. In other words, it never changes depending on who is being referred to, unlike with [ɛ́ɛ̀nzè].

27

(51)   níínshì   n-à-péènt-à
        fut.perf.mod   1s.SM-PAST-paint-FV
        'I will have painted.' (near future)

(52)   níínshì   ní-ná-péènt-à
        fut.perf.mod   1s.SM-PAST-paint-FV
        'I will have painted.' (remote future)

In the first of this pair, the futurity is within the near future, specifically within the next

day of speaking. The second refers to the day after and beyond.

(53)   níínshì   w-à-vîîn-à
        fut.perf.mod   2s.SM-PAST-dance-FV
        'I will have danced.'

Intriguingly, a phonological phenomenon occurs here for the 2nd person subject marker;

[w-à-] is most likely an amalgamation of the 2nd person subject marker [ù-] and the past tense

marker [-à-]. Instead of being expressed as a disyllabic [ù-à-], the former vowel changes to a

glide and is expressed monosyllabically. The phonological expressions could be written as

follows:

V [+ high] → C [+glide] / _____   V [+high]
   + back   +front   +front

As discussed in section on the past perfect, the future perfect construction can also use

the modal commonly encountered in the past perfect expressions.

(54)   níínshì   Ø- έὲnzè   á-káà-lì   á-lέὲmb-à
        fut.perf.mod   3s.REL-perf.mod   3s.SM-TEMP-be   3s.SM-write-FV
        'She will have been writing.'

It seems as though these forms actually lend themselves to construction of the future

perfect progressive, considering how Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo translated these as such during our

elicitation sessions.

Additionally, acceptable word variation in example (50) is limited. Assume that all of these are meant to convey the same translation as in the aforementioned example.

(55) ? Ø- ɛ́ɛnzè   níínshì   á-káà-lì   á-lɛ́ɛmb-a
      3s.REL-perf.mod   fut.perf.mod   3s.SM-TEMP-be   3s.SM-write-FV

(56) ? á-káà-lì   níínshì   Ø- ɛ́ɛnzè   á-lɛ́ɛmb-a
      3s.SM-TEMP-be   fut.perf.mod   3s.REL-perf.mod   3s.SM-write-FV

(57) * á-lɛ́ɛmb-a   níínshì   Ø- ɛ́ɛnzè   á-káà-lì
      3s.SM-write-FV   fut.perf.mod   3s.REL-perf.mod   3s.SM-TEMP-be

We find this similarity with examples (28) through (31). From these we can glean that while there is some flexibility to ordering of modal verbs, there is a preference; this preference is similar to that of English modal ordering, where the phrase's tense is communicated with the first modal verb. Therefore, reordering the modals could misconstrue the intended meaning. With what limited knowledge I have, and so with reasonable assertion, perhaps this is a facet of left-branching languages.

3.5   Miscellaneous Aspects and Moods

3.5.1 Imperative

The imperative mood is the expression of commands or requests. Its formation is Nyanja is determined by transitivity. Intransitive verbs simply need the root, and transitive verbs also take on the subject marker beforehand. The subject marker is null, as contextually the listener knows they are being told what to do/being referred to.

(58) lɛ́ɛ̀mb-à!   (59) mù-páàs-è!
write-FV   2s.OM-give-FV
'Write!'   'Give it to him!'

When observing formality, the imperative form will also take on the suffix [-ni].

(60) vìnáà-nì
dance-FML
'Dance!'(formal)

While not expanded upon extensively in this analysis (for more info see section 2.8), it is interesting to note that negation for imperatives don't follow normal negation conventions. Typically, negative markers precede the subject marker to a verb, but for negated imperatives (such as 'don't do X'), the negation marker moves before the root.

This phenomenon is similar to negated infinitives, where the negation marker moves after the infinitive marker, as in example (63).

(61) mù-sá-yéènd-à   (62) s-Bá-nà-   vîin-è
2s.SM-NEG-go-FV   NEG-3p.SM-PST-dance-FV
'Don't go.'   'They didn't dance.'

(63) kú-sá-gúùl-à
INF-NEG-buy-FV
'To not buy.'

3.5.2 Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood is reflected by the final vowel [-è]. The subjunctive mood expresses scenarios with desire, imagination, possibility, etc. Many of the moods such as the subjunctive itive, the potential, and imperative all reflect this.

A verb can take on the [-è] to express that the speaker wishes to do something as well.

30

(64)   tì-tàmáàng-è
         1p.SM-run-FV
         'Let's run.'

3.5.3 Subjunctive Itive

The subjunctive itive can be glossed as 'let's go and do X,' where the speaker is including the listener and expressing a wish to do something. As such, it is considered a part of the subjunctive mood. Its formation in Nyanja is characterized by the temporal morpheme and the subjunctive final vowel.

(65)   tì-ká-tàmáàng-è   (66)   tì-ká-vîin-è
         1p.SM-TEMP-run-FV   1p.SM-TEMP-dance-FV
         'Let's go and run.'   'Let's go and dance.'

3.5.4 Temporal/Sequential

The temporal expresses an instance in time being referred to by the speaker. Understanding how it is glossed is essential for understanding how it affects other morphemes with its occurrence. Most notably, the temporal can be paired with the near future morpheme to extend the tense into the remote future.

(67)   tì-ká-tàmáàng-à   (68)   Bà-ká-vîin-à
         1p.SM-TEMP-run-FV   3p.SM-TEMP-dance-FV
         'When we run.'   'When they dance.'

(69)   nì-zá-ká-vîin-à
         1s.SM-FUT-TEMP-dance-FV
         'I will dance.' (Remote Future)

An alternative meaning of the temporal marker could be that of a sequential aspect, such as "after we run" in the case of (67).

3.5.5 Potential

The potential is marked by the morpheme [-ngà-]. The potential marker describes the ability to do something, or the likelihood of something given the fulfillment of certain circumstances. Due to the fact that the potential deals with uncertain and non-actual events, the final vowel [-è] is also used to mark the subjunctive mood. Additionally, the subject marker prior also is marked with a high tone, unless the root is monosyllabic, such as in example (71).

The gloss for verbs with this morpheme is something akin to 'can do X,' or in more hypothetical scenarios such 'would do X.'

(70) ní-ngà-vîin-è   (71) Bà-ngáá-f-è
     1s.SM-POT-dance-FV   3p.SM-POT-die-FV
     'I can dance.' OR   'They can die.' OR   'They could die.'
         'I could dance.'

3.5.6 Conditional

The conditional is marked by the modal verb [sɛ̀ɛ̀mbè]. The conditional describes potential events that may happen, or that the speaker believes ought to happen. In English, this is expressed by modal verbs such as 'would,' 'might,' and 'should.' Much like the past and future perfects, the conditional is reflected by a modal verb, [sɛ̀ɛ̀mbè].

(72) sɛ̀ɛ̀mbè   nì-náá-f-à
     subj.modal   1s.SM-PAST-die-FV
     'I might have died.'

(73) sɛ̀ɛ̀mbè   ɛ̀ɛ̀nzè   á-féènt-à
     subj.modal   Perf.modal   3s.SM-faint-FV
     'I would have fainted.'

(74)   sɛ́ɛ̀mbè   nì-kú-ngò-   zí-vîin-à
          subj.modal   1s.SM-PROG-CNTS NEC-dance-FV
          'I would always be dancing.' (contingent)

The conditional modal precedes the modals for both the past and perfect future modals; Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo mentioned that variation from this pattern would be awkward and not readily understood by native speakers of Town Nyanja. Her strongest dislike was for phrases where the lexical verb was initial.

3.5.7 Necessitative

The necessitative is marked by the morpheme [-zí-] and refers to events that the speaker has to or should be doing.

(75)   nì-zíí-dy-à   (76)   ú-zí-léèmb-à
          1s.SM-NEC-eat-FV   2s.SM-NEC-write-FV
          'I should be eating (now).'   'You should be writing.'

(77)   Bà-zí-nì-tandîz-à
          3p.SM-NEC-1s.OM-help-FV
          'They should be helping me.'

As such, the necessitative's translation can also be likened to 'I need to be eating,' or 'I should eat,' as Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo had put it.

3.5.8 Contingent

The contingent describes scenarios where the speaker feels that something could occur if certain conditions were met. For example, one could say 'I could eat,' implying that they would if they were hungry. Otherwise, someone could say 'I would dance,' whether music started

playing. Contextually speaking, this morpheme reflects an unmet circumstance that would prompt the action described.

(78)   ní-ngá-zí-vîin-è
       1s.SM-POT-NEC-dance-FV
       'I would dance.' (If X happens)

Some observations about this morpheme: the morpheme [-zí -] bears a high tone in every utterance it is found. For strictly the contingent mood, I never noticed an occurrence of the morpheme [-zí-] without the occurrence of the potential marker [-ngà-] occurring before it. In essence, both were needed to communicate a contingent scenario; only one would indicate a different mood, such as the necessitative and the potential, respectively. When asked to describe contingent events in an indicative mood, such as future plans, Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo gave the following forms:

(79)   nì-záá-gw-à   (80)   nì-zá-vîin-à
       1s.SM-FUT-fall-FV   1s.PM-FUT-dance-FV
       'I will fall.' (contingent;   'I will dance.' (contingent;
            once I jump)   once the music starts)

I'm not sure whether to interpret these as strictly contingent verb expressions, but it felt important to note that there may be some grey area with which morpheme or sets of morphemes are employed based on an as-of-yet unknown context.

3.5.9 Continuous

The continuous is a state of progressively and actively performing an action. In Nyanja, it is expressed by the morpheme [-ngò-]. The English gloss for verbs with this affix would be akin to something like the modal verb 'keep.' For example:

(81)   ú-ngò-Bá-tàndîiz-à
        2s.SM-CNTS-3p.OM-help-FV
        'You keep helping them.' OR   'You always help them.'

Interestingly, there are variations in which morpheme Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo prefers to use when referring to the near future and the remote future. The following is an example of the remote future, using the [-ngò-] morpheme.

(82)   ù-záá-mbò   ù-káà-lì   ú-ngò-kúùdy-à
        2s.SM-FUT-INIT   2s.SM-TEMP-be   2s.SM-CNTS-eat-FV
        'You will be always eating.' (Remote Future)

A continuous mood tensed in the near future is expressed as the following:

(83)   ù-zá-mbò-   kú-ngò-   vîin-à
        2s.SM-FUT-INIT-   PROG-CNTS-   dance-FV
        'You will keep dancing.' (Near Future)2

3.5.10   Continuous Progressive

The continuous progressive is characterized by the progressive marker [-ku-] and the continuous marker [-ngo-] stacking together. Like other tense markers and some aspect markers, these morphemes occur after the subject marker and before the object marker if there is one.

(74)   nì-kú-ngò   kúùdy-à
        1s.SM-PROG-CNTS eat-FV
        'I keep eating.'

[-kú-ngò-] frequently occurs after [-zá-mbò-] in the future tense to describe ongoing actions that will occur in the future. Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo stated that [-zá-mbò-] must precede [-kú-ngò-], and that any effort to change the order of these morphemes would be ungrammatical, in several different elicitations.

3.5.11   Continuative

The continuative mood, not to be confused with the continuous progressive, is a mood that is essentially calling for the continuation of an action that is presently occurring.

(75)   nì-lɛ́ɛ̀k-è   nì-ká-   zí-vîin-à
        1s.SM-let   1s.SM-TEMP-NEC-dance-FV
        'Let me keep dancing.'

(76)   tì-énì   tì-ká-   zí-kùgùl-îis-à
        1p.SM-let[2]   1p.SM-TEMP-NEC-buy-CAUS-FV
        'Let us keep selling.'

For transparency's sake, these two examples were the last of which I elicited from Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo during our elicitation sessions. I was trying to find an analogous structure to a Chichewa morpheme, referred to as the continuative progressive. When asking for a translation of the English glosses, Mwaka provided these phrases in Town Nyanja. More on this is found in section 4.2.3.3, amid the Chichewa-Nyanja contrastive analysis.

Furthermore, we see a combination of two morphemes that could contribute to the continuative aspect, found by the temporal aspect [-ka-] and the necessitative mood [-zi-]. I haven't elicited this combination in any other data entries, so it's important to note. However, the exiting data is inconclusive.

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[2] I did in fact find what I believe are two different verbs for the word 'let.'

3.5.12 Initiative

A small disclaimer – I was not precisely sure what to characterize this morpheme as in a single word, but I have settled on the 'initiative' aspect. Essentially, the translation would be akin to 'to start X'ing.'

(77) Bá-mbò-îimb-à
      3p.SM-INIT-sing-FV
      'They started singing.'

However, it seemed like this was an unintuitive or unfavorable construction, as Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo hesitated whether to call this next construction grammatical. It is unknown if a phonological process could govern this to feel more intuitive, or if this form is simply sub-optimal at expressing the intended message (i.e., the glossed translation).

(78) ? ní-mbò-vîin-à
      1s.SM-INIT-dance-FV
      'I started dancing.'

Further support that this may be unintuitive is the use of verbal predicates to communicate the same ideas.

(79) ù-yáàmb-à   kúù-dy-à
      2s.SM-start-FV   PROG-eat-FV
      'You started eating.'

(80) nì-zá-yáàmb-à   kú-pîik-à
      1s.SM-FUT-start-FV PROG-cook-FV
      'I will start cooking.'

Nyanja can employ verbal predicates in lieu of a morpheme such as [-mbò-]. This construction lends itself to a few questions: Does Chichewa or other dialects of Nyanja prefer these such constructions as well? If not, would this imply an influence of English or another

proximal language on Town Nyanja? I would wager that if other dialects of Nyanja and if dialects of Chichewa prefer a construction like (78) over constructions like (79) and (80) (or if perhaps both are fine, just that (78) is more intuitive to a speaker of those dialects more than a Town Nyanja speaker), then perhaps this could hold true.

3.6   A Record of All Discussed Town Nyanja TAM-Related Morphemes

Enclosed in this section is a visual collection of all of the TAMs and modals we have examined thus far.

While it hopefully has been communicated well up to this point, but by no means am I claiming with confidence that this is a comprehensive list of every verbal TAM morpheme in Town Nyanja. There may be morphemes I have never elicited, or failed to elicit, and there may be combinations of morphemes and final vowel variations that could yield different tenses, aspects, or moods. I encourage anyone who may end up reading this to explore this more if they are able!

Table 6

All Aforementioned Town Nyanja TAMs

Town Nyanja TAMs + Modals	Name of Morpheme	Monomorphemic	Dimorphemic	Auxiliaries	Notes
Tense/Aspect/Mood					
Tense	**Remote Past**	[-ná-], [-náà-]			
	Past	[-à-]			
	Near Past	[-à-], or H tone on root			
	Present	Ø, Base-[à]			
	Future	[-zá-]			
	Remote Future		[-zá-ká-] *FUT + TEMP*		
Aspect	**Past Perfect**			[-έὲnzè]	prefixed with subj agreement
	Future Perfect			[nîinshì]	
	Progressive	[-kú-]			
	Future Progressive		[-zá-mbò-] *FUT + INIT*		
	Habitual	[-má-]			
	Continuous Habitual			[-káà-lì] *-TEMP + 'be'*	prefixed with subj agreement
	Discontinuous Habitual	[-nzú-]			
	Temporal	[-ká-]			
	Initiative	[-mbò-]			
	Continuous	[-ngò-]			
	Continuous Progressive		[-kú-ngò-] *PROG + CNTS*		
Mood	**Infinitive**	[kù-] or [kúù-]			
	Subjunctive	Ø, Base-[è]			
	Subjunctive Itive		[-ká-], Base-[è] *TEMP + SBTV*		
	Imperative	Ø, no SM, Base-[à]			
	Potential	[-ngà-]			
	Necessitative	[-zí-]			
	Contingent		[-ngà-zí-] *POT + NEC*		Can be paired with Base –[a] OR Base –[e]
	Conditional			[séὲmbè]	

4   Town Nyanja + Chichewa Contrastive Morphological Analysis

This next section includes a cross-reference between the verbal TAMs of Town Nyanja and that of its closely related language in Chichewa.

In many circles, even one as public as Google's search engine, Chichewa and Nyanja are considered the same language. The analysis I've supplied here, plus the lived experiences of our consultant Mwaka Mauro-Nachilongo, I hope will serve as evidence to the contrary – these two languages are rich with differences, especially in their verbal morphologies; it ought to be known how both languages differ so that we may afford them the respect and knowledge they deserve.

It should be noted that this section exclusively examines the morphological affixations to verbs and makes no comparisons between modal and auxiliary verbs across the two languages/dialects. This is due in part to lacking much data on Chichewa modals and auxiliaries. Regardless, there is plentiful analysis to be conducted on strictly the verbal affixes of both languages.

4.1   Similarities

It would be prudent to mention the scope of Chichewa data relevant to this analysis - data present in Downing & Al Mtenje's *Phonology of Chichewa* (2017). This information I'm cross-references is not a complete corpus of data from which I'm drawing from, like that from which I derived my analysis of Town Nyanja. Nonetheless, a great bit of information can be gleaned from this information and the Town Nyanja database compiled by the efforts of the working academics here at SUNY Albany.

4.1.1 Equivalent Morphemes across Chichewa and Town Nyanja

It should come as little to no surprise that Chichewa and Town Nyanja share a great deal of morphology in terms of verbal TAMs. What counts as being shared in this analysis is an identical construction, with identical or nearly identical interpretations/translations of these forms. Now, whether they are identical or not is limited by the perspective I have of Chichewa, but we will be relying on the data from Downing & Al Mtenje (2017). Therefore, any and all Chichewa data enclosed in section 4 will be from Downing & Al Mtenje (2017).

Table 7

Identical Morphemic Constructions in Town Nyanja and Chichewa

Tense, Aspect, or Mood	Construction (w/ morpheme) *SM-(morpheme)-(OM)-Base-FV*
Infinitive	[kú] -Base-[à]
Indicative	SM-∅-(OM)-Base-[à]
Subjunctive	SM-∅-(OM)-Base-[è]
Imperative	(OM)-Base-[è]
Potential	SM-[ngà]-(OM)-Base-[è]
Present Progressive	SM-[kú]-(OM)-Base-[à]
Habitual	SM-[mà]-(OM)-Base-[à]
Remote Past	SM-[náa]-(OM)-Base-[à]

We can see from this data that Chichewa and Town Nyanja same many of the same morphemes and constructions that denote different moods. Additionally, the two languages share many analogous morphemes that are only differentiated by phonological expression; this is discussed more in the section IV(b)(i).

4.2   Differences

4.2.1 Phonological Differences in Morphemes

This section includes the morphemes in both Chichewa and Town Nyanja that resemble the same exact meanings, presumably aside from some phonological differences. It is to this point that I would argue these morphemes are the same aside from these differences in phonological expression.

The morphemes are as follows:

Table 8

Phonological Differences in Chewa/Nyanja Morphemes

Verb Affix	Chichewa Morpheme	Town Nyanja Morpheme
First Person Subject Marker	[ndì-]	[nì-]
Future/Remote Future Tense Marker	[-dzá-]	[-zá-]
Necessitative Mood Marker	[-dzí-]	[-zí-]

In each of the Nyanja morphemes, we notice a deletion of the consonant [-d-]. While generalization might be premature, and if we assume that Nyanja is a language or dialect derived from Chichewa (since we are only examining morphological data in verbs), Nyanja may tend to prefer breaking up consonant clusters via deletion of plosives.

Important to note as well, is that although these morphemes possess phonological differences, the interpretations of them are the same if not nearly the same (such as in the case of the future/remote future [-dzá-]).

4.2.2 How Tone affects Tense

We know from examples (16) and (17), from section 3.3.1 on the Near Past tense, that tone is contrastive in Nyanja verbs. When tone is placed on the root of the verb in the present indicative, it shifts the temporality from the present indicative to the near past.

However, when this is done in Chichewa, instead of shifting the tense to the past, the speaker expresses a near future tense.

(16)	á-ììmb-à	(17)	á-íímb-à
	3s.SM-sing-FV		3s.SM-sing-FV
	'She sings.' (Nyanja)		'She sang (just now).' (Nyanja)
	'She sings.' (Chichewa)		**'She will sing.' (Chichewa)**

This is a relatively polar contrast between the tense systems of both languages. For future investigations, it would be interesting to know how a bilingual speaker of both languages interprets these variations, or what mutual intelligibility, if any, there would be between a speaker of Chichewa and a speaker of Town Nyanja and how they communicate differences in tense. Is there some flexibility in interpretation (i.e., would a Nyanja or Chichewa speaker pick up on what a Chichewa or Nyanja speaker would be saying, respectively)? Seeing where speakers of these different languages understand and/or misinterpret the other could provide much insight in this sense.

4.2.3 Chichewa Morphemes Absent in Town Nyanja

Just as a note – the following sections discuss specific morphemes that express a respective tense, aspect, or mood, and not either language's capacity to construct any specific tense, aspect, or mood. That is to say, that even though Nyanja may not have a dedicated Past Habitual morpheme, this does not mean that Nyanja is incapable of expressing a past habitual

tense and aspect; it simply employs different methods for the same result. These sections are meant to contrast these methods.

Additionally, with our limited perspective, we cannot speculate as to why these differences occur, or why one language contains a morpheme, and another does not.

4.2.3.1 Past Habitual – [-nká-]

While Town Nyanja has ways of expressing the past tense and the habitual aspect, Chichewa possesses a second dedicated morpheme designed to fit that bill, which Nyanja lacks.

(81)   {Chichewa[3]} mù-nká-   péèz-à
                        2s.SM-PAS.H-feel-FV
                        'You used to find.'

(82)   {Chichewa}   ndì-nká-yáng-   'áàn-à
                        1s.SM-PAS.H-look-   APPL-FV
                        "I used to look at."

Town Nyanja and Chichewa both share the morpheme [-má-], which denotes a habitual aspect really only applicable in the past tense, but Town Nyanja lacks the morpheme [-nká-] as it is used in Chichewa. In fact, our consultant had no recognition of the morpheme when I offered her forms of verbs with the Chichewa morpheme affixed to Nyanja verbs.

4.2.3.2 Sequential Perfective – [-tá-]

Another morpheme that Chichewa contains which Nyanja lacks is [-tá-], which is used in Chichewa as a sequential perfective. The closest analogous structure I could find in Town Nyanja that implied any kind of sequential aspect was the Temporal [-ká-], though neither I nor

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[3] Any and all Chichewa entries in this paper come from Downing & Al Mtenje (2017)For accuracy's sake, I sought not to find pieces of Chichewa data that weren't also being examined in a similar linguistic context. However, I did make an effort to use verbs that are also found in the Nyanja lexicon as well.

Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo found it to be perfective. The differences in translation demonstrate the semantic differences:

(83)   {Chichewa}   à-tá-   fòtòkóòz-à
                      3s.SM-SEQ.P-   explain-FV
                      'After he/she had explained.'

(84)   {Chichewa}   mù-tá-   méèny-à
                      2s.SM-SEQ.P-   hit-FV
                      'After you had hit."

(67)   {Nyanja}   tì-kà-tàmáàng-à
                      1p.SM-TEMP-run-FV
                      'When we run.' OR 'After we run.'

Mwaka did not recognize the morpheme [-ta-] when I had supplied her with examples of verbs affixed with it and did not provide any sort of translation for these examples.

4.2.3.3 Continuative – [-báà-]

Since we have a continuous habitual, a continuous progressive, and now a continuative mood, we ought to distinguish how they're different. In simple terms, the former describes a habit that continues to this day, the second implies an ongoing action that has been or will be repetitive, and the subject of this section, the continuative, represents a mood that urges the listener to allow something to continue.

A morpheme for the continuative mood is present in Chichewa, and not in Town Nyanja, as you could expect.

(85)   {Chichewa}   ndì-báà-ph-à
                      1s.SM-CTNV-kill-FV
                      'Let me continue killing.'

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(86)   {Chichewa}   á-báà-namîiz-à
                      3s.SM-CTNV-deceive-FV
                      'Let him/her continue deceiving.'

Interestingly, the English gloss moves the subject to an accusative case, in terms of "letting someone continue doing something." However, in Chichewa, the subject marker associated with each person is employed as opposed to the object marker.

In any sense, there is no equivalent morpheme or mood present in Town Nyanja that be classified as the Continuative as far as I was able to elicit and test for. To express a continuative mood, Nyanja employs compound verb tenses with verbs like [kú-énì], such as that seen in example (76), or [kú-lɛ̀ɛkè] as seen in (75).

Potentially, the employment of the Temporal aspect marker, along with the Necessitative mood marker could create an equivalent Continuative aspect as found in Chichewa.

(75)   nì-lɛ̀ɛk-è   nì-ká-   zí-vîin-à
        1s.SM-let   1s.SM-TEMP-NEC-dance-FV
        'Let me keep dancing.'

(76)   tì-énì   tí-ká-   zí-kùgùl-îis-à
        1p.SM-let   1p.SM-TEMP-NEC-buy-CAUS-FV
        'Let us keep selling.'

4.2.4 Town Nyanja Morphemes Absent in Chichewa

As a reminder, the Chichewa data I am examining is not a full corpus that I collected or contributed to collecting (like in the case in the Town Nyanja examination thus far) – in a perfectly thorough scenario, I would double-confirm with a native Chichewa speaker about the morphemes discussed in this section.

Considering this, I want the reader to keep in mind that the Town Nyanja morphemes I claim are not present in Chichewa may not entirely be absent from the language as a whole. Rather, I am identifying the morphemes in Town Nyanja that I know weren't included where I'd expect them to be in Downing & Al Mtenje (2017). That is to say, since I examined (author)'s section regarding the recent past and saw no mention of an analogous or exact Chewa morpheme present in Nyanja, I find it reasonable to assume that it simply isn't found in Chichewa and *is* found in Town Nyanja. Again, a similar research process conducted with a speaker of Chichewa could banish or validate these doubts; nonetheless, the following are my findings.

4.2.4.1 Temporal Aspect [-ká-]

From the data set I examined, Chichewa seems to lack a temporal marker, or a morpheme that highlights to the listener a moment in time the speaker is bringing attention to. However, the existence of the temporal marker as found in its dedicated section 3.5.4 wasn't something I could rule out of Chichewa due to the relatively smaller data set I was examining. What supplied further evidence, in my opinion, of this morpheme being absent from Chichewa entirely was not only the lack of a section known as the Temporal (or something of another name) in Downing & Al Mtenje's work, but the fact that the remote future in Chichewa does not employ the temporal morpheme like it does in Nyanja.

Instead, Chichewa employs a high-toned subject marker for the near future, and a morpheme analogous to Nyanja's future marker [-zá-] for the remote future tense (as discussed in the section 4.2.1).

(42)   {Nyanja}   tì-zá-ká-péènt-à
                        1p.SM-FUT-TEMP-paint-FV
                        'We will paint.'

(67)   {Nyanja}   tì-kà-tàmáàng-à
                      1p.SM-TEMP-run-FV
                      'When we run.'

4.2.5 Constructions in Both Town Nyanja and Chichewa with Different Meanings

4.2.5.1 Recent past vs. Perfective - [-à-]

Chichewa's morpheme for the near, simple, and remote past is the same as the Nyanja

morpheme for the remote past [-náà-], but Chichewa employs varying levels of prosody, or

emphasis/tone to distinguish among them (Downing & Al Mtenje, 2017).

{Chichewa}: (87-89)

(87)   mù-nà-mèèny-à
           2s.SM-NPAS-hit-FV
           'You hit.' (Near Past)

(88)   mù-ná-mèèny-à
           2s.SM-PAS-hit-FV
           'You hit.' (Simple Past)

(89)   mú-náà-méèny-à
           2s.SM-RPAS-hit-FV
           'You hit.' (Remote Past)

The near past in Chichewa is marked with low tone, the simple past does contain high

tone, and the remote past contains high tone, vowel lengthening, and a high tone extension on the

subject marker that precedes it and the first syllable of the root (Downing & Al Mtenje, 2017).

We've already examined how tone affects tense differently in Chichewa and Town

Nyanja in section 4.2.2. In addition to variation in how the near past is expressed, the simple past

also differs in Town Nyanja. Where Chichewa employs the morpheme [-náà-], Town Nyanja

employs the morpheme [-à-].

{Nyanja} : (18, 53)

(18)   n-à-péènt-à   (53)[4] w-à-   vîin-à
                1.sg-PAST-paint-FV   2s.SM-PAST- dance-FV
                'I painted.'   'I danced.'

In Chichewa, the morpheme [-a-] is a mark of the past perfective.

{Chichewa}: (90, 91)

(90)   nd-à-sòkònéèz-à   (91)   t-à-yàng-   áàn-à
                1s.SM-PERF-mess up-FV   1p.SM-PERF look-APPL-FV
                'I have messed up.'   'We have looked (at)."

While there may be interpretations of this morpheme containing a perfective aspect in Town Nyanja, it was infrequent enough for me to feel comfortable ruling it out as a perfective marker. Whether or not Chichewa speakers regard it with the same flexibility in interpretation remains to be seen from the work of Downing & Al Mtenje (2017). Whether it could be interpreted in such a way or not, and was simply omitted, or whether exclusively the morpheme's use as a perfective was analyzed via a phonological lens (and as such phonological differences in its expression could differentiate between a perfective aspect and a simple past tense) also remains unclear. My personal intuition is that Chichewa simply does not employ [-a-] as a simple past, whereas Nyanja does. Intuitions aside, I do grant that this is a hypothesis that could be more thoroughly tested.

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[4] Do note that the original example with (53) included a modal future verb. I omitted it to focus on the form of the past tense here.

4.2.5.2 Continuous Progressive vs. 'just, merely' Mood - [-ku-ngo-]

This was a morphemic expression that I found during my investigation of Chichewa that exhibited the same phonological expression and same affixation patterns as that in Nyanja, with two entirely different interpretations and translations.

(74)   {Nyanja}   nì-kú-ngò   kúùdy-à
                         1s.SM-PROG-CNTS eat-FV
                         'I keep eating.'

(90)   {Chichewa} ndì-kú-ngóò-ph-à
                         1s.SM-PROG-merely-kill-FV
                         'I am just/merely killing.'

As can clearly be seen by our examples, in Nyanja, the morphemes [-ku-ngo-] indicate a continuous progressive. However, in Chichewa, they indicate a mood resembling the English adverbs "just" or "merely."

For such a construction to exist in Nyanja, explicit non-verbal descriptors are employed to suit the mood.

(91)   {Nyanja}   nì-káàmb-à   cháàbè
                         1s.SM-talk-FV   just, merely
                         'I am just talking.'

At the moment, with my limited knowledge on Chichewa, I wouldn't know exactly what would be required to create a construction with a similar interpretation as the Nyanja form in (74).

4.3 Summation of Contrastive Analysis

The largest differences we see between the TAM morphemes of Chichewa and Nyanja can be most observed in the variations in how tense and aspect are expressed, and the most prominent similarities are present in how either language expresses different moods.

The purpose of defining and differentiating between these two languages or dialects serve to understand them with as accurate a picture as possible, something any sociocultural group with a shared language and experience deserves. It is my belief as a researcher that there is significant evidence, at least in terms of verbal morphology, that Chichewa and Town Nyanja are highly contrastive.

Table 9

Chichewa-Nyanja Morphological Contrasts

Chichewa - Town Nyanja Contrastive Analysis			
Tense, Aspect, Mood	**Morpheme**	**Chichewa**	**Town Nyanja**
Tense	**Remote Past**	[-náà-]	[-ná-]
	Simple Past	[-ná-]	[-à-]
	Near Past	[-nà-]	SM-Base-à
	Present	Ø	
	Near Future	SM-Base-à	[-zá-]
	Distant Future	[-dzá-]	[-zá-ká-] *FUT + TEMP*
Tense/Aspect	**[-à-]**	Perfective	Simple Past
Aspect	**Present Progressive**	[-kú-]	
	Habitual	[-má-] Past [-mà-] Pres	[-má-]
	Past Habitual	[-nká-]	*absent*
	Perfective	[-à-]	*absent*
	Sequential Perfective	[-tá-]	*absent*
	Continuative	[-báà-]	*absent*
	Temporal	*absent*	[-ká-]
Aspect/Mood	**[-kú-ngò-]**	"just, merely" Mood	Continuous Progressive
Mood	**Indicative**	Ø, SM-Base-à	
	Subjunctive	Ø, SM-Base-e	
	Imperative	Ø, Base-a	
	Infinitive	[kú-]	
	Potential	[-ngà-]	
	Necessitative	[-dzí-]	[-zí-]
	"just, merely" Mood	[-kú-ngò-]	*absent*
(Inconclusive)	Past Perfect Future Perfect Initiative Continuous Subjunctive Itive Contingent Conditional		

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5   Morphosyntactic Observations

A very necessary preface must occur before continuing this next section – my knowledge on syntax is limited, and my skills in the field are underdeveloped. Regardless, I wanted to throw my hat in the ring on some of the morphosyntactic opinions that will likely develop as the study of Town Nyanja and related dialects continue.

These are primarily observations in the literal sense of the word – hypotheses yes; conclusive assertions I will tend to steer away from. It is with the hope that any of these observations may prove useful to an interested syntactician that I pen them here as an afterthought.

5.1   Town Nyanja's Nonconfigurational Word Order

We have seen much variability thus far with the order of arguments in Nyanja sentences. For years, languages with relatively free word order or word scrambling have challenged the central theories of generative linguistics and universal grammar. However, over the last 30-35 or so years, efforts have been made to adapt our understanding of languages we initially held to be largely different from those more familiar within the study of syntax.

Languages with these characteristics of loose word order are considered nonconfigurational; we can presume that Nyanja fits these characteristics based on what we have examined thus far. Highly agglutinative languages, where the verbs take on most of the adjuncts and arguments of the language as morphemes, are considered polysynthetic; however, I don't believe Nyanja or Chichewa could be considered full-fledged polysynthetic languages like Mohawk would be, due to the fact that nouns, adjectives, conjunctions, etc., do not agglutinate into Nyanja verbs.

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The pronominal argument hypothesis (also known as the radical pro-drop hypothesis), first coined by Eloise Jelinek in 1984, and then later expanded upon by James Baker's *The Polysynthesis Parameter* (1996), is a syntactic hypothesis that refers to the phenomenon within syntax wherein verbs in some languages contain all of the necessary arguments for a grammatically complete phrase. That is to say, much like languages such as Spanish and Italian, Town Nyanja (and Chichewa for that matter!) allow for null preverbal subjects. Instead of needing explicit arguments as separate phrases, the agreement markers that we have examined thus far in Nyanja verbs are actually the arguments themselves, coindexed with null pronouns that may be optionally expressed as the explicit subjects and objects we're familiar with. In James Baker's words, "the verbs *are* the syntax." Figure (2)[5] is an illustration of this phenomenon.

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[5] This tree is an appropriation from Carnie's (2013) pedagogical work, *Syntax: A Generative Introduction*. This tree is his simplification of the phenomenon to illustrate the underlying mechanism of null pro arguments. My own appropriation replaced Carnie's use of a Mohawk example with a Nyanja one that looks much like the data entries we have examined in prior sections so as to see exactly how the pronominal argument hypothesis applies to Town Nyanja specifically.
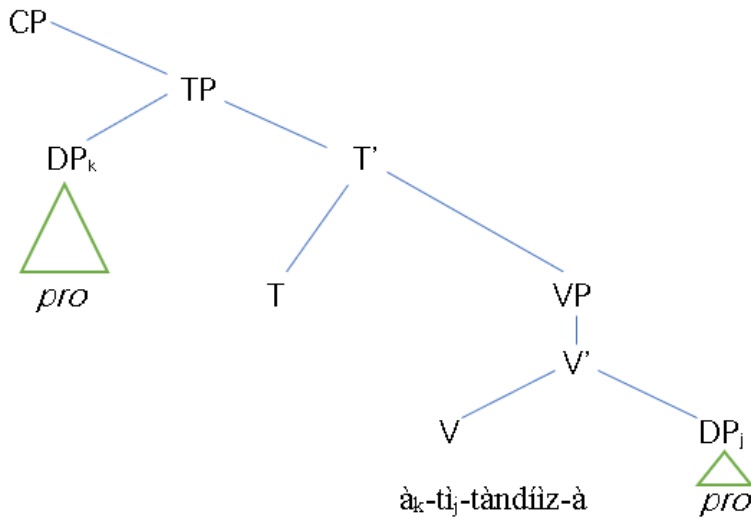
Figure 2

Illustration of Radical Pro-drop Hypothesis

This elaborates on much of Nyanja's relatively flexible ordering of phrases within sentences, where you can have SVO, SOV, and even VSO and OSV sentences. The order of subject, object, and indirect object largely seems interchangeable, and their explicit expression can reorganize much like how adjuncts do in other languages, considering that the arguments themselves are morphologically encoded in the verbs. As far as the verbal phrases we have examined thus far, however, the sequence of modal verbs matters in ensuring some degree of grammaticality. In sum, the word order that matters most is that of auxiliaries and lexical verbs.

5.2   Movement Hypotheses

We know that the morphological agglutination occurs via the process of incorporation, where the verb head moves upward along the tree to each phrase head. The point at which this stops, I believe, is at T, or the tense-phrase head.

The ordering of morphemes within words is mandatory – swapping tense and aspectual markers within a verb will produce an ungrammatical utterance that a Nyanja speaker would not understand or endorse. This supports our hypothesis that incorporation occurs, and it also provides us an outline for where morphemes are located within the tree (or essentially which marker precedes which in the tree).

{Nyanja} : (92, 93)

(92) nì-zá-ká-   máàng-à   (93) *nì-ká-zá-   máàng-à
      1s.SM-FUT-TEMP-build-FV   1s.SM-FUT-TEMP   build-FV
      'I keep building.'   '*I keep building.'

If we assume that incorporation from left to right is chronological, considering that Nyanja is a left-branching language, then we know that AspP (aspect-phrase) is closer to VP than TP. This process can apply to several of the different di- and multi-morphemic tenses, aspects, and moods in Town Nyanja to construct a more complete picture of the morphosyntactic processes that occur in Town Nyanja's deeper structure.

I'll admit to some uncertainty to where/how exactly the subject marker is incorporated into the verb. There's no head-level that the verb is moving to where the subject marker is generated unless it incorporates the subject at one of its traces when non-explicitly expressed, or that Nyanja observes a syntactic convention beyond my immediate familiarity. Objects may be incorporated into verbs by moving into the verb head themselves. Alternatively, neither subjects nor objects may be incorporated via movement, and instead might be generated at the head of the verb phrase just as simply as in Figure (2).

Negation may provide clues as to when or where within the tree the subject marker is incorporated into the verb; seeing as how negation markers precede the subject, we can presume that NegP is actually higher up along the tree than TP.

(94)   sí-ní-   zá-ká-   máàng-à
                NEG-1s.SM- FUT-TEMP- build-FV
                'I will not build.'

5.3   Compound Verb Phrases

Word order patterns with auxiliaries and compound verbs have highlighted the importance of verbs to a Nyanja speaker. As examined through several examples (28-31, 55-57), the order of auxiliary and modal verbs is much less flexible than the ordering of explicit subjects and objects.

For compound verb phrases and auxiliaries to precede the verb, they need to be somewhere in the tree to the left of where the verb stops moving (so at T, as per my current hypothesis). This either means that auxiliaries also move to a point higher than the lexical verb, or that the auxiliary verb is higher up the tree than the entire TP as a whole.

Admittedly, I have not drafted a comprehensive analysis for how modal verbs operate syntactically within Town Nyanja to a point where I can confidently supply my findings here. I advise any future syntactician or syntax student who examines Town Nyanja to consider the dynamics of modals and auxiliaries when drafting hypotheses or theories.

5.4 Miscellaneous Observations

5.4.1 Underlying Tense-Aspect Morpheme Boundaries with [-za-mbo-ku-ngo-]

The stacking morphemes of [-zá-mbò-] and [-ku-ngò-] offer a potential insight in the underlying morpheme boundaries in the mind of a Nyanja speaker.

Considering the pattern we have established where Tense morphemes/phrases are higher on the tree to Aspect morphemes/phrases, there are two possible conclusions we can derive from the existence of [-zá-mbò-kú-ngò-] verbs.

The first is that Nyanja allows for multiple phrase levels of Tense and Aspect, which can stack (i.e., {TP AspP TP AspP} for [-zá-], [-mbò-], [-kú-], and [-ngò-], respectively), or that the underlying morphemic boundaries to a Nyanja speaker may vary from what we have written here and in prior sections (where a speaker of Nyanja may affirm that the morpheme boundaries are [-zámbò-kúngò-], wherein the single {TP AspP} structure would be preserved).

I believe the latter hypothesis is further supported when we consider the word boundaries Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo provides when assessing written Nyanja words. To her, "-zámbo" is one word, and "kúngo" is another, whereafter the subsequent lexical verb root is another word altogether. Like much of the fluidity among the distinctions between tenses and aspects in Nyanja (such as the difference between when a Nyanja speaker employs [-ná-] versus [-à-]), a fluidity in morpheme boundaries may be another characteristic of this language, which makes for interesting syntax, and an overall fluid character to the language as a whole.

5.5   Summation of Morphosyntactic Observations

Needless to restate, while I have not provided a theory or model for how Nyanja syntax operates, I believe I have brought forward observations that would be crucial for any future syntactician to consider when examining the morphology of Town Nyanja verbs.

Examining word order variation suggests to an observer that Nyanja and Chichewa both behave similarly to languages that utilize radical pro-drop into their grammars, with arguments in their syntax being reflected predominantly in the morphology of the verbs. Additionally, word and morphemic boundaries can be parsed via Nyanja surface structure, such as in the case of the [-zá-mbò-kú-ngò-] versus [-zámbò-kúngò-] discussion in the prior section.

Regardless, one student's analysis is bound to be only one step in unraveling the mysteries of this language; I am grateful for the opportunity to apply myself and everything I have learned up to this point to this academic endeavor.

6   Final Thoughts and Conclusions

Moving forward, it is my hope that this piece of research supplies some evidence towards the suggestion that Nyanja and Chichewa are two different languages, with limited mutual intelligibility if any.

The verbal morphemes of Town Nyanja and Chichewa are sufficiently contrastive to support this claim, as has been discussed thus far. Additionally, I hope that the morphological inventory of Town Nyanja, derived from data provided by Dr. Mauro-Nachilongo, provides a frame of reference of Town Nyanja verbal morphology for future researchers.

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