

**Ekegusii Verb Morphology**  
By Robert Elwell

## 1. Introduction

Ekegusii is a Bantu language spoken by just about a one and a half million people in the West of Kenya. Most of the speakers are bilingual in one of the nations official languages, often Swahili or English, so there is not a great amount of literature in this language. This, however, does not prevent it from being as rich a language as Swahili; morphologically and tonally it has a much richer repertoire. In this paper, I will be discussing the data I have collected so far and giving a formal presentation of the tense, aspect, and mode of Ekegusii verbs. All data has been elicited from Josephine Kiage-Mokaya and at times her husband, Mokaya Bosire, both native speakers of the language, from September through December of 2004. I would like to thank both of them greatly for their time, knowledge, and most of all their patience. I would also like to thank all of the other students in the University at Albany Fall '04 Field Methods class for their data and hard work as well.

It is my goal in this paper to portray Ekegusii's verbs as a rich, morphology-dependent system which takes tense, aspect, mode, subject, object, and negation into account as well as having the ability to alter verbal meaning through the use of verbal extensions. It is important to note that this is still a work in progress and it is my plan to pursue this system for another semester of classes as my Honors Thesis. Therefore, some information may not be present and there may be some irregularities not yet accounted for.

## 2. Theoretical Assumptions

As agreed upon by all of my fellow researchers, in order to make computer transcription easier, the velar nasal sonorant is being represented as [ng'], the alveodental affricate is being represented by [ch], and vowels that are [-tense] are underlined.

- (i) č = <ch>
- ŋ = <ng'>
- ɔ = <o>
- ɛ = <e>
- ñ = <ny>



Vowel”. In this case, it is marking indicativeness, which is fairly safe to assume as it is in its infinitive form. Therefore, here is the morphological breakdown for a simple infinitival verb:

(3)

ó-gò-kór-á

C15 ‘do’ ind.

### B. Person Markers

In order to describe more simple parts of the verb, so that we may delve deeper into the tense, aspect, and mood of the verb, we must now look at how the subject and object are included in the verb.

(4)

Word:

‘Dance’ (present tense)

ó-gò-téng-à ‘To Dance’

	sg	pl
1	n-téng-á	tó-téng-á
2	ó-téng-a	mó-téng-á
3	á-téng-á	bá-téng-á

‘See’ Present tense

ókò-ròr-à ‘To See’

	sg	pl
1	n-dór-á	tó-rór-á
2	ó-rór-á	mó-rór-á
3	á-rór-á	bá-rór-á

Gloss:

	sg	pl
1	I dance	we dance
2	you dance	you pl. dance
3	s/he dances	they dance

	sg	pl
1	I see	we see
2	you see	you pl see
3	s/he sees	they see

It could be assumed that there is a zero morpheme for present tense. This means that present tense is morphologically unmarked, and instead of having a marker to indicate the time frame, its visible form is merely a replacement of the infinitival marker with a subject marker.

These markers, for people, are extremely simple. However, there is more than meets the eye to the first person marker. Here are a few examples:

(5)

<u>Word</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
ng'-é-á	'I give'
m-mó-á	'I give it to her'
n-kó-á	'I give you'

It is apparent, then, that the root for 'to give' is an /e/ that becomes deleted. Therefore, one can assume our view of the verb is being painted by a deletion rule which perhaps may have become historicized irregular forms. The nasal in each, where the first person marker is, has assimilated to its following consonant. I chose [ng'] to be the first person marker because it is what appears before vowels. With this information, we now can discern markers for the subject, which are as follows:

(6)

Subject Markers:

	sg	pl
1	ng'-	to-
2	o-	mo-
3	a-	ba-

Now a brief assimilation rule is needed in order to describe what happens:

(7)			[-syl ]
	[□ cor ]		[□ cor ]
	[□ ant ]		[□ ant ]
[+nasal] -->	[□hi ]	/ _____	[□hi ]
	[□bk ]		[□bk ]
	[□to ]		[□to ]

The word ‘Give’ is a perfect segue from subject marker to object marker. Interestingly enough, there is nothing constant except the [a] in all three phrases in (5), which is, of course, just the final vowel (indicating indicativeness at this point). Here is some more data on this verb:

(8)

<u>Word</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
kó-á	‘To Give’
m-bá	‘I give you (pl)’
bá-tó-á	‘They give us’
ò-ng’-á	‘You give me’
ó-bá-á	‘You give them’
ó-mó-á	‘You give her’
tó-kó-á	‘We give you’
tó-mó-a	‘We give him’
tó-bà-à	‘We give them’

This gives two interesting insights to Ekegusii. The first is that one can make a complete sentence with merely a conjugated verb. This makes it a “Pro-drop” language like many Romance languages. For the case of /m-ba/, there is a lot more going on than what is visible. The actual morphological breakdown and rule which creates its surface image is as follows:

(9)

m - ba - e - a  
 subj obj ‘give’ FV  
 ‘He gives’

(10)

[-hi ]  
 [-lo ] -->Ø /[-syl ] \_\_\_ [-syl ]  
 [-rnd ]  
 [+syl ]

There are two assumptions we can now make from this data – the first being that the root for ‘give’ is actually present at some point as /e/, and the second being the markers for the object as well. Here is a brief table:

(11) Object Markers:

	sg	pl
1	ng'-	to-
2	ko-	ba-
3	mo-	ba-

With the tables in (6) and (11), along with any verbal root, it is possible to create any present tense indicative verb, transitive or intransitive, using the following morphological blueprint.

(12)

Subj - D.O. - Root - F.V.

This finding also goes for the reflexive:

(13) The Reflexive

Word:

Gloss:

n-ny-ée-ròch-è

'I am seeing myself'

m-bw-ée-ròch-è

'You are seeing yourself'

n-ée-ròch-è

'He sees himself'

n-tw-ée-ròch-è

'We see ourselves'

m-w-ée-ròch-è

'You pl. are seeing yourselves'

m-b-ée-ròch-è

'They are seeing themselves'

(Please see the note on the verb 'to see' in the conclusion)

As witnessed in (12), the Subject precedes the Direct Object. It also precedes the reflexive morpheme /-ée-/, which makes perfect sense because in that case the self is the direct object.

(Note that the 3sg. subject marker deletes before the long vowel *ee*) So far, the initial nasal has

not yet been witnessed. This is the first example which contains them. Therefore, the following morphological breakdown for any of these would be as follows:

(14)

IN - Subj - DO - Root - FV

The initial nasal is a difficult thing to discuss and will be addressed later. However, it seems to have something to do with the aspect of the verb. The reflexive can also be used to change meaning to a verb, such as is follows:

(15)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
ó-kò-gér-à	‘to weigh’	ó-kò-gén-à	‘to gasp for air’
ó-kw-ée-gér-à	‘to learn’	ó-kw-ée-gén-à	‘to trust’

The tables we have working with have only been referring to people. Bantu languages are well-known for their class systems which semantically categorize different things. These class prefixes (there are about sixteen) show singularity and plurality as well as a loose semantic characteristic. *oko-* is, in fact, considered Class 15 because that is the prefix for a verb when it is nominalized. Verbs act differently with a non-human subject.

(16)

<u>Class:</u>	<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
Class 1	ómò-rúgí á-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The cook does work’
Class 2	ábà-rúgí bá-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The cooks do work’
Class 3	ómò-bèrè ó-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The body does work’
Class 4	émè-bèrè é-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The bodies do work’
Class 5	ríí-gènà rí-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The rock does work’
Class 6	ámà-gènà á-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The rocks do work’
Class 7	égè-kòndò é-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The monkey does work’
Class 8	ébì-kòndò bí-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The monkies do work’
Class 9	é-ng’ìtì é-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The snake does work’
Class 10	chíí-ng’ìtì chí-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The snakes do work’
Class 11	órò-mémé ró-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The tongue does work’
Class 12	ágà-túútú gà-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The small bush does work’
Class 13	óbò-túútú bò-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The small bushes do work’
Class 14	óbò-kímá bó-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The cornmeal dish does work’
Class 15	<u>ókò-bókò</u> gó-kór-á é-gààsì	‘The hand does work’

All of these sentences follow the fairly cut-and-dry morphological context that follows:

(17)

NCM(1-15) -N	VCM(1-15) - Root - F.V.	NCM(1-15) - N
Subject	Verb	Object

Here is a helpful table which describes the class prefix system:

(18)

	NCM	VCM
1	ómò-	á-
2	ábà-	bá-
3	ómò-	ó-
4	émè-	é-
5	ríí-	rí-
6	ámà-	á-
7	égè-	é-
8	ébi-	bí-
9	é-	é-
10	chíí-	chí-
11	órò-	ró-
12	ágà-	gà-
13	óbò-	bó-
14	óbò-	bó-
15	ókò-	kó-

Note that the Verbal Class Markers for class 1/2 correspond with third person singular and plural. This makes sense because class 1/2 is for nouns that are human beings. The Noun and Verb Class Markers also seem to mainly share the last one or two phonemes. While at one point it may have been easy to postulate a rule for the transference of the marker from noun marker to verb marker, the language has seemed to evolve some of the more common markers into irregularity. Note also that there is no object marker for classes 3-15:

(19)

a)n-chá-èt-è rí<sup>1</sup>-úgà  
IN-‘hit’-past-FV C5-‘bone’  
‘I hit the bone’

b)n-chá-èt-è áamá-úgà  
IN-‘hit’-past-FV C6-‘bone’  
‘I hit the bones’

c)n-chá-èt-è ómò-kò  
IN-‘hit’-past-FV C1-‘fig tree’  
‘I hit the fig tree’

Marking object in a non-human class, therefore, is done grammatically rather than through conjugation.

### C. Verbal Conjugation for Tense

The Ekegusii tense system is much richer than can be described using English analogues.

The past tense is divided into three time frames, recent, near, and distant. The future is also divided into these time frames, but two of the three are done through modal auxiliaries.

Therefore, let us first look at the past tenses.

#### (20) Recent Past

Word: 'to read' gò-sòòm-à 'to dance' gò-tééng-à

	sg	pl		sg	pl
1	n-n-á-sòòm-à	n-to-á-sòòm-à		n-n-á-tééng-à	n-to-á-á-tééng-à
2	n-go-á-sòòm-à	m-mo-á-sòòm-à		n-go-á-tééng-a	m-mo-á-á-tééng-à
3	n-á-á-sòòm-à	m-bá-á-sòòm-à		n-á-á-tééng-à	m-bá-á-tééng-à

Gloss:

1	I danced	we danced		I read	we read
2	you danced	you pl. danced		you read	you pl. read
3	he danced	they danced		he read	they read

The Recent Past refers to something that happened on the same day that it is being discussed. It is constructed as follows:

#### (21)

IN-Subj-á-Root-FV

One can see that this tense is created with two parts, the first being an initial nasal which I believe refers to an ongoing timeframe of the act (possibly like an imperfect tense) and an /a-/ which leads me to believe that that is the actual marker for recent past. The consultant, however, accepted the word without the initial nasal as well without any change in outward meaning.



However, /-et-/ seems to be the marker for past, rather than its longer counterpart.

The final past tense refers to an extremely long time ago – several months or years. This is the Distant Past, and is constructed in a way familiar to the Near Past.

(24) Distant Past

Word:

Gloss:

‘to read’ ó-gò-sòòm-à

n-n-à-sòòm-èt-è	n-tó-à-sòòm-èt-è	I read	we read
n-gó-à-sòòm-èt-è	m-mó-à-sòòm-èt-è	you read	you pl. read
n-à-sòòm-èt-è	m-bá-à-sòòm-èt-è	he read	they read

The difference is simply tone. The original morpheme for past receives no tone, while maintaining the distance given by /-et-e/. This may imply that the high tone is a morpheme which denotes closeness to the present. Therefore, the Distant past follows this morphological form:

(25)

IN - Subj - à - Root - et -e

The rich tense system in the past is also reflected in the future. However, they are more influenced by modal auxiliaries, either presently or synchronically. Because of this, while some may be conjugated instead, I would like to discuss the future tense in the next section after discussion how auxiliaries are formed.

#### D. Modal Auxiliaries and the Future Tense

Ekegusii uses modal auxiliaries for such things as the future tense, the present progressive tense, and negation. First, let us complete our look into tenses before the topic is changed too much.

(26) Recent Future / Present Progressive

Word:

Gloss:

‘to read’ ó-gò-sòòm-à

n-gó-sòòm-à á-r-è	n-gó-sòòm-à tó-r-è	I am reading	We are reading
n-gó-sòòm-à ó-r-è	n-gó-sòòm-à mó-r-è	You are reading	You pl. are reading
n-gó-sòòm-à á-r-è	n-gó-sòòm-à bá-r-è	S/he is reading	They are reading

While this is translated as ‘\_\_\_ is reading’, it contextually takes on the characteristic of the closest future context possible. It follows this morphological pattern:

(27)

IN - C15 - Root - FV Subj - r - FV

The first verb conveys aspect and meaning while the second conveys tense. Because the second verb, which loosely translates as ‘is’, is subordinate to the first verb, its final vowel is subjunctive rather than indicative, so instead of ending with /-a/, it ends with /-e/. The subjunctive mood will be more deeply investigated later. The recent future applies to anything which is occurring on the same day as it is being uttered. On another note, it is difficult to decide whether the copular root is /r/ or /ra/. If the latter were the case, there would be a deletion rule for it next to any final vowel. There is no solid evidence that choosing /ra/ would be better, however, therefore, it is my believe that the root is /r/. The next tense applies to anything occurring after the present day but before several months to years from that time.

(28)Near Future

Word:

‘to read’ ó-gò-sòòm-à

Gloss:

níí-n-ch-é n-sòòm-è	n-té-ch-é tó-sòòm-è	I will read	We will read
nó-ó-ch-é ó-sòòm-è	m-mó-ch-é mó-sòòm-è	You will read	You pl. will read
ná-á-ch-é á-sòòm-è	m-bá-ch-é bá-sòòm-è	S/he will read	They will read

Morphologically, the near future also employs an auxiliary constructed as follows:

(29)

IN - che - Root - FV Subj - Root -FV

The first verb in (28) refers to “Will”, while the second verb refers to the actual action to take place. This is actually the reverse of what we saw in (26), but this may be due to the fact that that was also the present progressive. Another point of interest is the fact that the initial nasal in the singular cases features a vowel in the morpheme too. Historically, the initial nasal comes from /ni/, and therefore in certain cases it can have an effect on vowel lengthening. I would like to postulate the following rules which dictate whether or not the vowel in the initial nasal makes a difference, as well as a rule for assimilation to the vowel next to it. For these two rules, it must be assumed that the /i/ has degraded into merely a kind of empty vowel spot.

(30)  
[+nas] V --> ø / \_\_\_ + CV

(31) [ ] hi ] [+ syl ]  
V --> [ ] bk ] / \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] hi ]  
[ ] lo ] [ ] bk ]  
[ ] rd ] [ ] lo ]  
[ ] rd ]

The vowel lengthening or inclusion, therefore, is only present in cases where root begins with a vowel. The consonant allows for the presence of the first person marker or the second person marker, but doesn’t allow for the vowel slot to appear at all for these cases. It also allows for cases in the plural.

(32) Distant Future

Word:

Gloss:

‘to read’ ó-gò-sòòm-à

ní-n-dà-sòòm-è	n-tó-rá-sòòm-è	I will read	We will read
nó-ó-rá-sòòm-è	m-mó-rá-sòòm-è	You will read	You pl. will read
ná-á-rá-sòòm-è	m-bá-rá-sòòm-è	S/he will read	They will read

Note that /r/ changes to /d/ next to an /n/, which is a matter of orthographic choice. From this we can conclude the following morphological information:

(33)

IN - Subj - ra - Root - FV

The literal meaning of this phrase is not only, ‘will read’ but ‘will be reading’ as well.

The consultant said that it was indeed applicable and proper to use the verb as in “This is a long book I am reading; I will be reading it a year from now.”

While this tense seems to be in the subjunctive, with part of the middle section as having the indicative final vowel ending, it is decidedly so that it is probably a single word. While it may be possible that the morpheme itself evolved to take on that characteristic, there would have to be some kind of prefix on the root of the action taking place for there to be an auxiliary involved. Therefore, it is a possibility that this specific form is actually a fossilized evolution of the near future or present progressive, where the /-ra-/ was at one point the copular verb but over time became a morpheme with a meaning specific to this tense.

### E. Verbal Conjugation and Aspect

So far, most of the verbs have either begun with or can begin with an initial nasal. I have said that this is a denoting characteristic of the action still taking place. To further reinforce this fact, I would like to offer verbs in the perfect tense:

#### (34) Perfect Tense

Word:

Gloss:

‘to dance’ ó-gò-téèng-à

nà-à-téèng-ìr-è	tw-á-téèng-ìr-è	I have danced	We have danced
gw-à-téèng-ìr-è	mw-à-téèng-ìr-è	You have danced	You pl. have danced
ó-téèng-ìr-è	bà-à-téèng-ìr-è	S/he has danced	They have danced

The initial nasal is not present in any of the conjugations, and the Final Vowel is overtaken by a different morpheme, just like in the past tense. These conjugations are roughly equivalent to ‘\_\_\_ has danced’ and follows this morphological pattern:

#### (35)

Subj - a - Root - ir - e

As you can see, the *-a-* infix which we have seen before is also present here. This usually denotes past, but in this case may be referring to the verb already having happened. The *ire* may actually be *ir* - FV, but there is no conclusive data on this as of yet.

In Ekegusii, the perfect tense is only present in the present. This tense works for the future out of context as well, while the past tenses function as past perfect.

## F. Negation

The first sense of negation is in the infinitival, where we see the negative morpheme  $t+V$ .

### (36) Infinitival Negation

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
gò-sàri-à	‘to spoil’
gò-tà-sàri-à	‘not to spoil’

Making infinitival negation morphologically:

### (37)

C15 - ta - Root - FV

Negation is done in two ways – modally and morphologically. Both serve the same purposes, but this one has undergone an interesting morphological process.

### (38) Morphological Negation

Word:  
‘Dance’ (any past, negative)

tíin-téèng-èt-ì	ntó-téèng-èt-ì
tó-téèng-èt-ì	mó-téèng-èt-ì
tá-téèng-èt-ì	mbá-téèng-èt-ì

Gloss:

I didn’t dance	We didn’t dance
You didn’t dance	You pl. didn’t dance
S/he didn’t dance	They didn’t dance

Now my reason is apparent for the decision for the morphology in (22). /-et-i/ appears in the same place /-et-e/ would. One morpheme is staying constant and denoting past while the change in the vowel at the end may be agreeing with negation. Therefore, it follows this morphological pattern:

### (39)

Subj - Root - et - FV

This is not the preferred way to negate a verb in the present tense. While one may assume that one could simply negate any verb, Ekegusii is more reflective of the way words are negated in modern English (“Doesn’t work” as opposed to “Works not”). They follow at “Does not \_\_\_” pattern such as the following examples:

(40) Modal Negation

Word:

Gloss:

‘Dance’ (present, negative)

tíín-d-í gó-téèng-à	ntó-r-í gó-téèng-à
tó-r-í gó-téèng-à	mó-r-í gó-téèng-à
tá-r-í gó-téèng-à	mbá-r-í gó-téèng-à

I don’t dance	We don’t dance
You don’t dance	You pl. don’t dance
S/he doesn’t dance	They don’t dance

These further reinforce my belief that *-i* is the suffix that agrees with negation.

Morphologically, ‘does not dance’ in this language is as follows:

(41)

Subj - r - FV C15 - Root - FV

Note that because the suffix for negation is not indicative, the second verb still has *-a* as its final vowel. Also, note that the first verb has nothing on it about a negation morpheme. That is because the data is held in a new set of subject markers, which are as follows:

(42)

	sg	pl
1	tíín-	ntó-
2	tó-	mó-
3	tá-	mbá-

Many of these subject markers are actually markers for other persons or have other morphological meaning. With the final *-i*, however, there is little confusion as to what it is referring. What seems to have happened is that the subject and negation markers may have merged into a portmanteu morpheme.

Negation occurs modally for other classed subjects as well. For example:

(43)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
égè-kòndò n-ké-r-í gó-téèng-à	‘The monkey doesn’t do work’
égè-kòndo ké-r-é n-gò-téèng-à	‘The monkey is doing work’

What is being seen, morphologically, follows this pattern:

(44)

égè-kòndò	n-ké-r-í	gó-téèng-à	égè-kòndo	ké-r-é	n-gò-téèng-à
C7-‘monkey’	IN-C7-‘be/do’-FV	C15-‘dance’-FV	C7-‘monkey’	C7-‘be/do’-FV	IN-C16-‘dance’-FV
‘The monkey	doesn’t	dance’	‘The monkey	is	dancing’

It can therefore be assumed that negation in the copular verb for such situations is merely a change in final vowel, fitting with the plural subject markers that have been found as well.

### G. Verbal Extensions

Like in many Bantu languages, the Gusii can enrich the meaning of the verbs in theirs by adding a morpheme which functions in a specific manner. There are many different verbal extensions, all of which have different uses. The first is the applicative. Here is an example of how they work:

(45)

<u>Infinitive:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Applicative:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
gò-kór-à	‘to do’	gò-kór-ér-à	‘to do for’
gò-téèng-à	‘to dance’	gò-téèng-ér-à	‘to dance for’

It is plain to see the morphological construction of a verb with an applicative extension:

(46)

... - Root - er - FV

Any information relating to tense or person comes before the root, with the exception of the past marker /-et-/ and the perfect marker /-ir-/, which may in fact be a kind of extension in the language for all intents and purposes (more research is necessary). The main interaction of the extensions are between the root and the final vowel. The same extension can be added multiple times over to give certain different meanings to a verb.

(47)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
ó-gò-sàb-à	‘to ask or pray’	ó-kw-éé-g-à	‘to imitate’
ó-gò-sàb-èr-à	‘to pray for’	ó-kw-éé-g-èr-à	‘to learn’
ó-gò-sàb-èr-èr-à	‘to beg’	ó-kw-éé-g-èr-èr-à	‘to favor’

The next extension is actually an extension on the applicative – the reciprocal:

(48)

<u>Applicative:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Reciprocal:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
gò-kór-ér-à	‘to do for’	gò-kór-ér-án-à	‘to do for eachother’
gò-téèng-ér-à	‘to dance for’	gò-téèng-ér-án-à	‘to dance for eachother’

The reciprocal is rather cut-and-dry, following this morphological structure:

(49)

... - Root - er - an - FV

Here *-er-* is the applicative and *-an-* is the morpheme which makes it reciprocal. The next extension, the passive, gives the verb the same meaning as ‘to be \_\_\_ed’. It may actually be possible to get the reciprocal without the applicative if the verb is already transitive, but more work is needed on that topic.

(50)

<u>Infitive:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Passive:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
ó-kò-ròk-à	‘to name’	ó-kò-ròk-w-a	‘to be named’
gò-síbí-á	‘to wash’	gò-síbí-gw-à	‘to be washed’
kò-ròòsì-à	‘to fix or make’	kò-ròòsì-gw-à	‘to be fixed’

The extension here, therefore, is */-gw-/* (once we take into account the deletion of the *g* next to the *k* in the first example) and follows the same morphological pattern:

(51)

... - Root - gw - FV

Another possible view of the last two examples may be as follows:

(52)

<u>Infitive:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Stative:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
gò-síb-í-á	‘to wash’	gò-síb-í-gw-à	‘to cause to be washed’
kò-ròòs-ì-à	‘to fix or make’	kò-ròòs-ì-gw-à	‘to cause to be fixed’

The short causative is a combination of the passive as well as the stative, the single */i-/* or */y-/* morpheme which essentially means “to cause to” or ‘to make’.

(53)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
kò-òm-y-à	‘to make dry’
kò-mìnyòòk-y-à	‘to chase (to make run)’

It's a difficult thing to say whether or not, therefore, the examples in (52) have the *i*-morpheme in the root or as an extension, as the difference between 'to wash' and 'to cause to wash' does not have an extremely clear difference in many cases. Oftentimes the speaker has difficulty discerning this as well. The morphological pattern for the Stative would be:

(54)

.... - Root - i - gw -FV

Essentially, it is a combination of the Causative with another extension – the Passive, which was seen in (50) and whose morphological pattern would be as follows:

(55)

... - Root - i/y - FV

The application of extensions interacts in an expectable way with morphemes which convey tense, such as the perfect /-ir-/ or past /-et-/. In fact, the fact that they behave the way they do may have caused previous scholars (Whitely, 1956) to assume that /ire/ and /ete/ took the final vowel position.

(56)

Word:

Gloss:

bà-kór-ér-àn-ír-è

'They have done for eachother'

bà-téèng-èr-àn-ír-è

'They have danced for eachother'

The tense marker always has a place before the final vowel. Therefore, one can morphologically described the activity in the verb as follows:

(57)

Morphemes:	(IN)	Subj	(DO)	Tense	Root	Ext.	Tense	FV
Describes:	Aspect	Agent	Patient	Time	Action	Meaning	Time	Mood

This is a great amount of data that can be gained merely from a single verb. This can often lead to fossilizations such as follows:

(58)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
ó-kò-gèèch-à	‘to hate’
ó-kò-gèèch-ì-gw-à	‘to be sad’

When asked, the consultant felt that the latter phrase was simply ‘to be sad’, rather than having any sort of connection with ‘to hate’. Apparently, though, some time ago this may have meant ‘to cause to be hated’.

## **H. The Imperative**

There are two ways to form the imperative. One is rather simple and follows this morphological order:

(59)

(D.O.) - Root - a

Therefore, leaving out the subject gives a sense of a command, such as in the following examples:

(60)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
kòr-à	‘Do’
mínyóók-à	‘Run’

There is a distinct change that occurs happens when a direct object or a reflexive is included in an imperative:

(61)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>	<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
ók-w-è-é-gé-én-à	‘to trust’	ng’-á-é-kà-rá-àmù	‘give me the pen’
ng’-é-é-gé-én-é	‘trust me’	mò-é-é-kà-rá-àmù	‘give him the pen’
tó-é-é-gé-én-é	‘trust us’	tò-é-é-kà-rá-àmù	‘give us the pen’
bá-è-é-gé-én-é	‘trust them’	bá-è-é-kà-rá-àmù	‘give them the pen’
mò-é-é-gé-én-é	‘trust him’		

That the final vowel is in subjunctive, which does double work in representing the imperative mood.

### G. The Subjunctive

I have essentially described the subjunctive in earlier sections as merely being an /-e/ in the final vowel position. Subjunctive, in this language, works both for desire as well as for subordinate clauses as well as, possibly, certain tenses such as the past and perfect. I would just like to confirm some of the less described senses of the mood with the following examples.

(62)

ómò-rúgí	n-gò-kòr-à	á-r-é	é-gáàsì
C1 ‘cook’	IN C15 ‘do’ FV	3sg ‘is’ FV	C9 ‘work’
‘The cook is doing work’			

There are, however, other cases where the subjunctive appears in this language.

(63)

Gloss:

Word:

‘I want you to hit him’

n-tágèt-é ò-mw-áàk-è

‘I want you to hit me’

n-tágèt-è ó-ng’-áàk-è

‘He wants me to hit him’

á-tágèt-é mw-áàk-è

‘I want that they see the child’

n-tágèt-è bá-ròr-è ómw-ààná

‘I want that they cook the meal’

n-tágèt-è bá-rùg-è é-ndààgèrà

‘I want that they dance’

n-tágèt-è bá-téèng-è

When the subjunctive is used to describe desire, both verbs are placed in the subjunctive form and the verb of the agent is placed before the verb of the patient.

(64)

Word:

Gloss:

n-góòg-èt-è á-gw-á

‘I’m happy that he fell’

n-gééchír-é búná ó-gò-sòòm-à

‘I’m sad that you read’

m-bwét-é óbò-ròrò àsèèngènchò go-á-téèng-a

‘I’m angry because you danced’

When the subjunctive is used to describe emotion, it only affects the verb involving the subject or agent. The patient’s verb is still in the indicative.

This information makes our final vowel chart to be:

(65)

FV:	Mood:
-a	Indicative
-e	Subjunctive/ Imperative
-i	Negative

### H. The Initial Nasal

It's very difficult to describe the initial nasal in a proper manner with as few sessions as I have had with the consultant. However, from the examples such as (62) 'The cook is doing work', it seems that we have isolated its initial sense as a marker of aspect – that is, that the action is not yet complete. Description is further made difficult by such elicitations as follows:

(66)

<u>Word:</u>	<u>Gloss:</u>
ní-n-gw-á	'even if I fall'
ntó-gw-á	'even if we fall'
ntò-gw-á n-tó-téèng-è	'even if we fall we will dance'
ní-n-dór-á	'even if I see'
ní-ny-éé-róóch-é	'I am seeing myself'
ní-ny-éé-rór-á	'even if I see myself'

This points to the fact that 'even if' and a marker for continuous aspect share almost the same exact morpheme. What this means is that much more extensive work will be necessary to fully understand the initial nasal.

#### 4. Conclusion

Ekegusii is a language very rich in morphological resiliency; it is capable of building meaning upon meaning – creating whole sentences with tacit noun and prepositional phrases. However, it is also an exceedingly vast language and a single semester of work upon it would not do the language the justice it deserves in a descriptive arena. Therefore, I will be continuing my studies with this language in the next semester in an attempt to make this discussion on the tense, aspect, modality, and morphological richness of the verb more in-depth and accurate, with more examples and bestowing a greater understanding of the language upon the reader.

As it is now, I have specific questions and qualms with the Initial Nasal situation as well as endings which do not correspond with the intention of the final vowel, such as *-ete* or *-ire*. That is why I have broken down these endings to allow for the Final Vowel spot to always have a position. Also, more work on the difference between the two versions of the imperative must be done. Are they based on formality, or merely upon whether or not it takes a direct object? If that is the case, then why is there *ng'-áá i-kàráàmù* instead of *ng'-é i-kàráàmù*? Or is there a lengthening process involving the /e/ root occurring?

Two different verbs for to see, /o-ko-ror-a/ and /o-ko-rooch-a/ seem to share a kind of complimentary relationship. Perhaps one is a borrowed word that became fossilized, because they are never found in the same tense interchangeably.

I have many unanswered questions, however, I hope that I have managed to shed light on a great amount of information regarding the very ornate verbal system of the Gusii people.

## **5. Appendix**

Definition of Terms:

C# - Class number

D.O. - Direct Object

Ext - Extension

F.V. - Final Vowel

I.N. - Initial Nasal

NCM - Noun Class Marker

Subj - Subject

VCM - Verbal Class Marker

### **References:**

Whitely, W. H. (1956) A Practical Introduction to Gusii. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau.