

Persistentive in Luruuli/Lunyara

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This paper deals with persistentive aspect in Luruuli/Lunyara. Luruuli/Lunyara is a Bantu language (Niger-Congo) spoken in the central region of Uganda by 160 000 people.

As many Bantu languages, Luruuli/Lunyara has a rich tense-aspect-system. One of the typologically interesting categories is the persistentive aspect. The persistentive expresses a situation that *'has held continuously since an implicit or explicit point in the past up to the time of speaking'* (Nurse 2008:145). In many languages the persistentive aspect is expressed lexically, for example, in English it is expressed with the adverb *still*, e.g. *We were buying bananas and we still are* (Nurse 2008:146). The persistentive aspect is widespread in Bantu languages and it is expressed morphologically as a prefix on a verb, e.g. *-ki-* (Nurse & Philippson 2003, Nurse 2008). In the general linguistic literature, the persistentive does not occur frequently, and it is rather considered as a tense category, for example, in Comrie (1985). According to Nurse (2008), the persistentive has to be treated as an aspect rather than a tense category. Persistentive can take its *'temporal point of reference the tense mentioned or understood elsewhere in the utterance, and this point frequently not the present.'* More often, however, the persistentive does not have a time reference and can be combined with different tenses, which is, according to Nurse (2008:123-124) is typical for an aspect rather than a tense category.

The persistentive aspect in Luruuli/Lunyara is expressed by prefix *-ku-/-kya-*. I will consider the persistentive in Luruuli/Lunyara as an aspect rather than a tense category. As in other Bantu languages, the persistentive can be combined with different tenses, for example, it is combinable with habitual (1) and also with perfective. However, most of the time the persistentive is used without any specific time reference (2).

(1) a-ku-kob-a-nga e-saawa zini a-kya-li mu topu kilasi
3sgS-**PERS**-say-FV-**HAB** AUG-time(9) this 3sgS-**PERS**-be &-LOC top class(9)
'She says, at this time, she is **still** in top class'.

(2) Omwana a-iz-a ku-bba-a a-sumbirw-a a-kya-li mu-to
child(1) 3sgS-go-FV INF-be-FV 3sgS-marry-FV 3sgS-**PERS**-be 1-young
'The child **will** marry while still young.'

The persistentive marker occurs with all verbs and is frequently used in the different genres, e.g. conversations, narration, etc. In this paper I will present the function and semantics of persistentive aspect based on corpus. Many constructions with persistentive marker are often translated by native speakers as ordinary progressive. Interestingly, the persistentive *-ku-/-kya-* can be used also with stative verbs such as 'be', 'have', 'want/need/love/like' and have only persistentive meaning. The question arises here whether the persistentive also take the function of progressive? How often it occurs in the corpus as progressive?

Bibliography:

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