

## MODAL CATEGORIES IN MOFU-GUDOR

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This article presents the basic surface structures of the indicative moods in Mofu-Gudur (a Chadic language) of Cameroon. Of the categories of non-indicative, only the imperative is "grammaticalized." The other modal categories found in Mofu (wish or intention, necessity or obligation, and certainty or possibility) are not inflected, but realized by "modal adjectives" or "parenthetical word-forms."

Dans cet article l'auteur présente deux syntagmes simplifiés pour faire ressortir les différences entre les modalités de l'indicatif et l'imperatif dans la langue Mofu-Gudur (langue Tchadique) de la Cameroun. Les autres modalités qui marquent le souhait ou l'intention, la nécessité ou l'obligation, et la certitude ou la possibilité ne sont pas indiquées par un verbe conjugué mais cependant sont marquées par des mots de modalité.

## 0. INTRODUCTION

When one looks at a language there is normally a modal dichotomy in the form of indicative/non-indicative<sup>1</sup> with the latter category having sub-categories of "necessity and possibility" usually described as imperative, hortative (subjunctive), condition negatives, future, etc. The two-way dichotomy of indicative/non-indicative describes very adequately the Mofu-Gudur<sup>2</sup> modal system.

In this paper<sup>3</sup>, I would like to outline the indicative/non-indicative dichotomy as found in Mofu-Gudur, an SVO language. We will briefly describe the indicative and then describe in more detail the 'non-indicative' modals.

## 1. INDICATIVE

The surface structure of the Mofu-Gudur indicative verb phrase is much like one would expect for the indicative: the subject is expressed and the whole range of tense/aspect (t/a) possibilities is found.

Chart A contains a display of a simplified indicative verb phrase. It should be noted that for the indicative the subject is always marked either by one of the subject pronouns--*ya* (1st person), *ka* (2nd person) or *a* (3rd person)--or by a tense/aspect (t/a) marker (Mode 1) taking on the 3rd person marker meaning in addition to its t/a properties. Plural subjects are marked by *-am* when verb final or by *-ma* when followed by object or directional suffixes. The subject inclusive (speaker + hearer or 1+2) is marked by the *-kwa* verb suffix in addition to the pronoun *ya*.

There is another inclusive form which encompasses speaker, hearer, and person spoken about (1+2+3) which is marked by **-makwa** in addition to **ya**. A verb root without any specific suffix ends in **-ey** (Unspecified Suffix).

Chart A - SIMPLIFIED TRANSITIVE INDICATIVE VERB PHRASE

+subj	+ Mode <sub>1/2</sub>	+ Verb	+ US	+ other suffixes	+ Tense-Aspect ADVERBIAL
<b>ya</b>	<b>fa/da</b>	Verb	<b>-ey</b>	location/ causitive suf	<b>lá</b>
<b>ka</b>	<b>ta/ma</b>	stem		plural suffix	<b>cáy</b>
<b>a/∅</b>				subj incl suf	<b>sém</b>
				obj pron	<b>sát</b>
				benefactive suf	
				obj spec suf	
				directional suf	

Barreteau (1983b:382) gives us some definitions of the Adverbials:

**lá** - accompli

**cáy** - accompli terminatif (procès achevé volontairement)

**sém** - accompli irréversible (v.partir, mourir, pourrir)

**sát** - accompli (avec une nuance de départ)

1) **ya gárv - ey vagay** 'I dance for the funeral.'  
I dance-US funeral

2) **Ndəhay céw a kam máway.**  
men:PL 2 they make:PL name:of:game  
'Two men play Maway.'

3) **Ya kád - kwa.** 'We hit.'  
we hit - INCL

4) **A kád - ma - ká** 'They hit you.'  
they hit - PL - you (sg)

The indicative is found with all the t/a oppositions used in the language, namely, (to use Wolff's terms, 1979) *grundaspekt*, perfective/completive, and imperfective/incompletive.

The *grundaspekt* is "unmarked" t/a:

5) **Yá daw á lúma.** 'I go to market.'  
I go to market

- 6) Yá daw á lúma bá. 'I do not go to market.'  
I go to market NEG

The perfective/completive ( $M_1$ ) is most clearly seen when in its "past" sense:

- 7) Mádárlam káa ná, ta taréy lá ánda máslaŋ-cəved.  
servant there TOP  $M_1$  become:US ADVL as messenger  
'As for the servant there, he had become a messenger.'

The imperfective/incompletive ( $M_2$ ) is most clearly seen in its "habitual" or "progressive" sense:

- 8) Ya fá daw á lúma 'I am going to market.'  
I PROG go to market
- 9) Lúma lúma ya fá daw áa lúma Cembey.  
week week I HAB go to market Cembey  
'Every week I go to Cembey market.'

## 2. NON-INDICATIVE: NECESSITY AND POSSIBILITY

Lyons (1977:452ff) says that modality is an expression of the basic notions of necessity and possibility. These can be realized in a language in various ways:

- paralinguistic features (gestures, etc.)
- prosodic features (intonation)
- grammatical mood (verb inflection)
- set of modal verbs ("may, must")
- set of modal adjectives ("possible, probably, doubtful")
- parenthetical word-forms ("perhaps," or "I hope so")

In this section we want to look at how the different modal sub-categories are manifested in Mofu-Gudur. Of all sub-categories found, only imperative would be considered to be grammaticalized according to Lyons' list. The imperative is marked in contrast to the indicative by the absence of a subject pronoun. The other modal sub-categories are realized by "modal adjectives" or "parenthetical word-forms".

The non-grammaticalized modalities fall neatly into Lyons' (1968:308) list of three possible "scales of modality": 1) wish or intention, 2) necessity or obligation, and 3) certainty or possibility. We may express all three modalities in Mofu-Gudur by using "modal adjectives" or "parenthetical word-forms" which I call opinion words<sup>4</sup> because they give the opinion of the speaker.

In looking at all the non-indicative modalities, it seemed much more helpful to treat the negative with its positive counterpart even though some might consider the negative as a separate modality. Future, in Mofu-Gudur, seems better treated as a tense implied by aspect and context rather than a modality and is thus, beyond the scope of this paper.

## 2.1 THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

The positive imperative differs structurally from the indicative in that the non-negated form has no expressed subject pronoun, as in English.

- 10) cá zána 'Weave the cloth!'  
weave:it cloth

Also, it can have no modal particles, and only the lá Adverbial can co-occur with it. The contrasts between imperative and indicative are easily seen when the Simplified Positive Transitive Imperative Verb Chart (Chart B) is compared with the Simplified Transitive Indicative Verb Chart (Chart A).

Chart B - SIMPLIFIED POSITIVE TRANSITIVE IMPERATIVE VERB PHRASE

-subj	- Mode <sub>1/2</sub>	+ Verb	± US	± other suffixes	± Tense-Aspect ADVERBIAL
		Verb stem	-ey	location/ causitive suf plural suffix subj incl suf obj pron benefactive suf obj spec suf directional suf	lá

As in the indicative, the imperative verb can take the whole range of suffixes. Depending on the plural and inclusive suffix combinations one can say:

- 11) 2nd person singular cá '(You (singular)) weave.'  
2nd person plural cám '(You (plural)) weave.'  
1 + 2 cákwa 'Let's weave.'  
1 + 2 + 3 cáməkwa 'Let's (all) weave.'

- 12) fá (location suf)      Da, hətfa      da har Simon  
go find:LOC in hand Simon  
'Go, find it on Simon.'
- 13) dá (causitive suf)      Sərda      banay.  
know:CAUS      suffering  
'Suffer!'
- 14) -arawa (benefactive      Carawa      zana!  
and directional)      weave:BENE:DIR cloth  
(the directional is      'Weave me cloth!'  
often used for 1st  
per BENE in some dialects.)

The third person or first person alone cannot be expressed. The negative Imperative looks like the 2nd person indicative.

- 15) Ka cá      zána ba!      'Don't weave the cloth!'  
You weave:it cloth NEG

## 2.2 WISH

The word kúsé is used at the beginning of the clause to express a wish.<sup>5</sup>

- 16) (Anjá) Kúsé banáy ka á ndəv-ey.  
when I:wish suffering your it ends-US  
'I wish that your suffering will end.'

Kúsé always implies 'I wish.' Kúsé is not used to indicate another person, the speaker must subordinate the wish with 'He wants,' 'He says', etc. God as agent requires the construction nga 'for' plus the verb root.

- 17a) Andre á wúd - ey ka hət - ey dala ga.  
Andre he wants-US you find-US money much  
'Andre wishes that you will find much money.'
- 17b) Gazlavay nga vəlka dala ga.  
God for give:you money much  
'May God give you much money.'

We have found kúsé to be used only with the Indicative mood and not used with any Mode (fa, da, ta, ma) or Adverbial. It is not often used in everyday speech.

Kúsé may not be negated, although a sentence containing kúsé may be negated.

- 18) Kúsé banáy ka á ndəv-ey ba.  
I:wish suffering your it end-US NEG  
'I wish that your suffering will not end.'  
\*'I do not wish you suffering to end.'

## 2.3 NECESSITY OR OBLIGATION

Cámá, ndézl, and sí are used to express necessity or obligation. Cámá and ndézl are synonyms used for intense obligation and are seldom heard. Sí has the flavor of a strong suggestion and is often heard. Cámá and ndézl may appear with either Indicative or Imperative, at either the beginning or

end of a clause in Indicative, but only at the end of Imperative. They are often found in dialogue after a prohibition. *Sí* occurs only in Indicative and only at the beginning of sentence.

Imperative examples:

- 19) \**Cámá cá zána.*  
must weave cloth
- 20) *Cá zána cámá.* 'You must weave the cloth.'  
weave cloth must
- 21) \**Sí cá zána.*  
must weave cloth
- 22) *Cá zána ndézi./ \*Ndézi cá zána.*  
weave cloth must

Indicative examples:

- 23) *A cá zána cámá.*  
he weaves cloth must
- 24) *Cámá a cá zána.*  
must he weave cloth
- 25) *Sí a cá zána.* 'He should weave the cloth.'  
must he weave cloth
- 26) *Ndézi a cá zána./ A cá zána ndézi.*  
must he weave cloth
- 27) *Sí á cá zána ndézi (cámá)*  
must he weave cloth OBLIGATION

*Cama*, *ndézi*, and *sí* are not used with negative forms.

- 28) \**sí a cá zána bá* 'He must not weave the cloth.'  
must he weave cloth NEG
- 29) \**cámá a cá zána bá.*  
must he weave cloth NEG

The negative obligation is expressed by *da* of Mode<sub>1</sub> or *kwa* 'even'.

- 30) *A da cá zána bá. / Kwa a cá zána bá.*  
he Mode<sub>1</sub> weave cloth NEG even he weave cloth NEG  
'He should not weave the cloth.'

Grammatical Mode and Adverbial combinations in the Indicative mood are generally acceptable when used with *cámá*, *ndézi*, and *sí*. *Cámá* may precede *lá*. No Mode or Adverbial combinations have been found to co-occur with these 'obligation words' in the Imperative mood.

- 31) *Ka cá zána cámá lá.* 'You must weave the  
you weave cloth must ADVL cloth completely.'  
\**Cá zána cámá lá.* (IMPERATIVE)

- 32) Ka cá zána lá cǎmá. 'You must weave the  
you weave cloth ADVL must cloth completely.'  
\*Cá zána lá cǎmá. (IMPERATIVE)
- 33) Sí ka cá zána lá. 'You must weave the  
must you weave cloth ADVL cloth.'  
\*Sí cá zána lá. (IMPERATIVE)

#### 2.4 POSSIBILITY

In the Mokong dialect possibility is expressed by *da kaa* or *da...kwa*. *Da kaa* is placed at the head of a clause; as for *da...kwa*, *da* is placed at the head of a clause and *kwa* at the tail.

- 34) Dá ya céy kwá.  
if I weave even  
'Perhaps I will weave.'
- 35) Da káa ya hǎtndákwar cek lá.  
if there I find:for:us something ADVL  
'Perhaps I will find something for us.'

*Da kaa* and *da...kwa* may only be used with the Indicative mood. it may be used with any grammatical mode or adverbial combination. It is not usually combined with other opinion words.

- 36) da ta céy lá kwá  
if Mode<sub>1</sub> weave ADVL even  
'Perhaps he wove.'
- 37) da fá da céy kwá  
if Mode<sub>2</sub> Mode<sub>1</sub> weave even  
'Perhaps he will be weaving.'
- 38) da káa ya céy zána dǎa bá  
if there I weave cloth NEG  
'Perhaps I will not weave cloth.'

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Lyons (1968:307-308) classes interrogative sentences as standing in contrast to declarative sentences "by virtue of their modality." Interrogatives are beyond the scope of this paper, but they differ syntactically from the indicative mood basically by use of a question word at the end of the sentence.

yá yamǎma 'I eat it.'  
I eat:it

yá zama daw? 'Do I eat it?'  
I eat:it QUES

<sup>2</sup>Mofu-Gudur is a Chadic language spoken in northern Cameroon (west of Maroua) and belongs to the Biu-Mandara branch. It is grouped by BARRETEAU (1981) in the Mafa group in a sub-grouping with Guiziga. My language helpers at different stages of this paper were Mssrs. Daniel Gamsouloum, Jean-Claude Selong, and Alioum Bayo Mana.

<sup>3</sup>This paper was presented at the 16th West African Languages Congress March 25-29, 1985 at Yaoundé, Cameroon.

<sup>4</sup>This analysis differs from my earlier analysis (1981) where opinion words were considered a separate mood.

<sup>5</sup>The verb *mepəskéy* plus *mey* ('mouth, word') is used for a strong wish or urging. It is used to exhort as in:

ya fa pəskey méy, ámba ka njéy máaya  
I M<sub>2</sub> detach word so:that you remain well

dáa méy ngá Gázlavay.  
in word of God

'I urge you to remain strong in the word of God.'

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