

Aspect and tense in the Swahili dialect of KiNgome¹

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0 Introduction

This short paper has two primary objectives: the first one is to respond to a call² for a continuation of a monographic description of possible living Swahili dialects as spoken along the south-east coast of Tanzania and its offshore islands. The area is estimated to cover a 500 km of coastline stretching between the Rufiji estuary and the River Ruvuma at the border of southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique. The second objective, in tandem with the first one, is to offer my modest contribution to a seemingly lacunae (lack of field data from the area) in the study of Swahili and Sabaki by Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993).

I begin here with the description of aspect and temporal marking (henceforth AT) of a little known dialect of Swahili known locally as KiNgome³. The data presented in this paper is based on the fieldwork I conducted in the extreme northern part of Mafia archipelago between 1999 and 2002. The dialect of KiNgome (a sub-dialect of Mafian Swahili⁴) is spoken by approximately 8,000 speakers in six isolated villages in the Northern Division of the main Mafia Island. Despite being an active tongue of the majority of Wangome, it has escaped the attention of Swahili descriptivists. My preliminary analysis of KiNgome data shows that it shares many of the phonological and morpho-syntactic traits with other rural Southern Swahili dialects (SD), which are not necessarily found in the Northern Swahili dialects (ND), or Standard Swahili (SSW) in general.

My description of AT system of KiNgome will follow, in principle, the matrix-based framework set up by Nurse and Muzale (1999) and Hewson et al (2000) as applied in Ruhaya and Swahili (with some slight changes). I have altered their original framework by adding the completive aspectual category and omitting the perfective category. However, the classical distinction between perfective and anterior (perfect) aspects will surface in the course of discussion of the anterior aspect. The paper is organised as follows: section 1 describes an overview of the verb structure of KiNgome. Section 2 will primarily demonstrate the broader category of aspect marking. Section 3 describes the temporal marking. Section 4 will briefly describe other categories that fail to adequately fall in either of the two categories above. Conclusions are made in section 5.

1 KiNgome verb template

Aspect and tense along with mood and polarity are among the inherent grammatical categories that find expression in the KiNgome verbal template by means of overt bound affixes along with paradigmatically contrastive but unmarked slots signalled in this paper by a putative null element /Ø/.

¹ I am grateful to Dick Hayward, Pat Caplan and Lutz Marten for their unwavering support and advice. All errors are my own responsibility.

² Hill (1973:17) made the first call. Later Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993:14) reiterated the need for an extensive linguistic research on the area.

³ This paper forms part of a more detailed study of both synchronic and diachronic phonological and morphosyntactic features of KiNgome dialect.

⁴ See Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 12) and Nurse and Spear (1985: 64).

Before we move further into the analysis of KINgome aspect and tense formatives and the meaning they can express, I find it necessary to present the concatenative ordering of aspectual and temporal markers in relation to the affirmative verb stem as follows:

- (1) SM- T(A) -(REL) (OM) -VB -A- FV/A
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Examination of the template architecture relevant to the aspect and tense inflections reveals that the Tense (T) occurs at the second slot after the Subject Marker (SM). Tense (T) may also be collapsed with aspect (A) in the same pre-stem slot, a typical phenomenon in most Bantu languages. This second slot may consist of one of the following discrete forms: a progressive (PROG) morpheme *na/a*, a future (FUT) morpheme *ta*, a past (PAST) morpheme *ri-*, a morphologically unmarked anterior (ANT) perfective (PREV) \emptyset , a situative (SIT) or 'potential' affix *ki-* a consecutive (CONS) dependent morpheme *ka-*, a completive (COMP) marker *-ka-*, none of which can precede an SM. There could also occur a habitual (HAB) prefix *hi-* with a null SM. Additionally, this slot could also be occupied by a composite AT form that consists of either a past *ri-*, a conditional *nge-*, or a situative *ki-* combined with a completive aspect *-ka* to form *ri-sa*, *nge-sa*, and *ki-sa* respectively. Although combined elements are two distinct markers on their own, we proposed them to be treated as a unitary AT form.

The third slot is occupied by the optional category of relative marker. The fourth is the optional object marker's category. The fifth slot contains an obligatory verb root plus optional derivational affixes which forms the verbal base. The verb base denotes the major event, state or action crucial for expressing contrasting tense and aspect meanings. The sixth slot is the regular (non-terminal) position for 'the iterative' Habitual (HAB) aspect suffix *-ag* or *-g*. The seventh slot, which is regularly occupied by the final vowel *-a* or the subjunctive suffix marker *-e*, may be occupied by the suffix vowel variant or 'VI suffix' that typically expresses anteriority aspect.

In general, tense categories precede aspect categories in synthetically one-word forms. Similarly, in a periphrastic construction, tense occupies an auxiliary part, while aspect occupies the pre-stem slot in the main lexical verb. Interestingly, as we noted earlier, tense and aspect categories may occur cumulatively with a tense form preceding an aspect form as in the case of a past completive *ri-sa-*.

Let us look at the matrix of tense and aspect in affirmative forms that will reveal the full picture of how aspect and tense work in KINgome verbal structure. I have avoided embedded clauses, infinitives and imperatives:

(2) AT formatives in the verbal paradigms of KINgome

Aspect \Rightarrow Tense \Downarrow	Performative	Anterior (\emptyset ... a/VH)	Completive ($\$a-$)	Habitual (<i>hu-</i> , <i>-ag</i>)	Progressive (<i>a-/na-</i>)
Far past (<i>ri-</i>)	<i>-ri-VB-a</i>		<i>-ri-sa-VB-a</i>	<i>-ri-VB-ag-a</i>	<i>-ri-'be'+</i> <i>-na-VB-a</i>
Recent past (\emptyset)	<i>-\emptyset-VB-a</i>	<i>-\emptyset-VB-VH</i> <i>-\emptyset-VB-a</i>	<i>-sa-VB-a</i>	<i>hu-\emptyset-VB-(ag)-a</i>	
Present (<i>a</i> , <i>na-</i>)	<i>-a-VB-a</i> <i>-na-VB-a</i>			<i>-na-VB-ag-a</i>	<i>-a-VB-a</i> <i>-na-VB-a</i>
Future (<i>ta-</i>)		<i>-ta-VB-a</i>		<i>-ta-VB-ag-a</i>	<i>-ta-'be'+</i> <i>-na-VB-a</i>

The table above shows 18 affirmative verb forms indicating the intersection of tense paradigms (horizontally) and aspect paradigms (vertically). In contrast to Hewson and Nurse's (2001) framework, I have treated a completive aspect *sa-* under a separate category. I have not included the 'underspecified' dependent form *ki-* and consecutive form *-ka-* in the matrix, which I partly assumed to be a subcategory of far past tense *ri-*.

Formally, KINgome distinguishes five aspectual constructions (performative, anterior, completive, progressive, and habitative) and four tenses (far past, recent past, present and future). Comparatively, KINgome (and the rest of SD) has fewer degrees of remoteness distinctions in both the past and future when compared to certain Bantu languages such as gikuyu (Mugane 1997) and Rundi. Haya and Bemba (Hymans and Waters 1984), which among other things exhibit a plethora of tense markers.

Although the aspect category is semantically and morphologically tied up with that of tense, I present the core of my analysis of the AT system in KINgome by examining each category separately, beginning with the broader aspectual system, and followed by the tense system.

2 Aspectual marking in KINgome

By definition, tense is a category of morpho-syntactic properties distinguishing a finite verb's temporal reference i.e. before, simultaneous with, or subsequent to a reference time. A reference time is usually the utterance time, but may also be a past or future time. Aspect is a category of morpho-syntactic properties distinguishing the various senses in which an event can be situated at a particular time interval. Usually, we defined aspect in terms of the beginning, duration, completion, repetitive, resulting, etc. of a verb without reference to its position in time. From another viewpoint, tense can be considered to refer to Universal Time while aspect is considered to refer to Event Time (Hewson et al. 2000:38). We discuss each aspectual category in the following order: performative, anterior, completive, progressive, and habitative.

2.1 Performative

This is a basic form by which other forms within the paradigms are to be interpreted. It is typically segmentally marked by *-a* in the present tense form, but is marked with *-ri* to denote a simple past form and with *-ta* for a simple future form.

- (3) (a) *tu-a-bini* *ngina*
 1pSM-PRES-cultivate rice
 'We cultivate rice'
 (b) *tu-ri-bini* *ngina*
 1pSM-PAST-cultivate rice
 'We cultivated rice'
 (c) *tu-ta-bini* *ngina*
 1pSM-FUT-cultivate rice
 'We will cultivate rice'

The form *-a* carries an equivocal meaning. It tends to invoke a generic meaning when applied in the context of a general question such as 'what do you do for a living?' In the context of 'what are you doing?' the same form will express the present progressive meaning. Both questions can invoke the following identical responses:

- (4) (a) *tu-a-uv-a* *lh'amba*
 1pSM-PST-fish-FV 9-fishsticks
 'We fish lobsters'
 (b) *tu-a-suk-a* *rukiri*
 1pSM-PST-make-FV 11-palm fond material
 'We make palm fond material'

The answers for the present performative will reflect a daily undertaking and not a current event or present progressive expression. The form *-a* may also be drawn to denote habituality. It is a situation that holds at all times but which is not necessarily occurring at the time of speaking as we see in:

- (5) (a) *difu r-a-kwer-a* *majini*
 rher 5SM-PST-float-FV 6-water-loc
 'Fiber leaf floats in the water'.

2.1 Anteriority

One striking area in KINgome aspectual categories which when compared to SSW proves to be distinct is the anterior marking. SSW regularly marks an anteriority with *me-* while KINgome expresses anteriority with a null element i.e. \emptyset .

- (6) (a) *ki- \emptyset -j-a* *retu*
 1sgSM-ANT-come-FV today
 'I have come today'

- (b) *ka- \emptyset -ri-tum-u*
 3sgSM-ANT-5OM-pick-VH
 'She has picked it'

Two ways of marking anterior: $\emptyset \dots a$ and $\emptyset \dots VII$ emerge in (6a&b). Here anterior refers to an earlier action, which produced a state, which either lives on, or whose consequences or relevance live on. In other words, it is a past event with present relevance. Let us now turn to each of this form in turn:

2.1.1 $\emptyset \dots a$ formative

KINgome corpus has the following examples:

- (7) (a) *hi- \emptyset -nu-on-a* *ni'oro*
 1sgSM-ANT-2sgOM-see-FV 1-child
 'I have seen a child/I saw a child'
 (b) *maji* *ya- \emptyset -aruk-a*
 6-water 6SM-ANT-rise-FV
 'The water/tide has risen/rose'
 (c) *tu- \emptyset -rim-a* *vuvuu* *retu*
 2pSM-ANT-cultivate-FV 5-farm our
 'We have cultivated /cultivated our farm'
 (d) *tu- \emptyset -zingiz-a* *niego*
 2pSM-ANT-set-FV 3-trap
 'We have set /set a trap'
 (e) *kisu* *ki- \emptyset -h-anguk-a*
 7-knife 7SM-ANT-2sgOM-drop-FV
 'I've dropped/dropped the knife'
 (f) *ki- \emptyset -j-a* *retu*
 1sgSM-ANT-come-FV today
 'I have come/came today'
 (g) *tu- \emptyset -ceng-a* *poti*
 2pSM-ANT-clear-FV 5-bush
 'We have cleared / cleared the bush'
 (h) *ka- \emptyset -tandawar-a* *ponte* *piano*
 3sgSM-ANT-reign-FV all over here
 'S/he has reigned/ reigned all over here'

The pre-stem \emptyset and the final *-a* in (7a-h) are used to express present perfect and recent past interpretations. In all examples above, the events took place earlier than the time of reference. This feature of collapsing an anterior and a (near) past is not idiosyncratic to KINgome, for a somewhat similar situation is obtained in closely related Coastal Sabaki members such as KiVumba, Pokomo, Mwani, and Comorian. Northern Swahili dialect of KiVumba and Lower Kipokomo display the following

examples:

- (8) (a) *ka-Ø-fu* or *ka-Ø-fwi*
 3sgSM-ANT-die
 'S/he has died/she died'⁵
- (b) *ni-Ø-dz-a*
 1sgSM-ANT-come-FV
 'I have come/ came recently'⁶
- (c) *hu-Ø-gw-a*
 2plSM-ANT-fall-FV
 'We have fallen/ we fell'⁷

SSW and other major dialects of Swahili have a *me-* marker for present perfect and a *ri-* for simple past tense (see Mazrui (1976:18) and Drole (1992: 83)).

2.1.1.1 Ø...a stative anterior.

Bantu usage of stative verbs entails the use of anterior event. KiNgonje is no exception, the form Ø...a (except in *-fu die*) is used with stative verbs to portray a static meaning such as:

- (9) (a) *wa-Ø-rar-a*
 3plSM-ANT-sleep-FV
 'They are sleeping'
- (b) *ka-Ø-potek-a*
 3plSM-ANT-strand-FV
 'S/he is stranded'
- (c) *ya-Ø-aruk-a*
 6SM-ANT-raise-FV
 '(Tide) is raising'
- (d) *mu-Ø-ranuk-a?*
 2plSM-ANT-awake-FV
 'Lit. How are you awakening?' (used as 'good morning?')
- (e) *ka-Ø-fu*
 3sgSM-ANT-die
 'S/he is dead'

Both stative verb and dynamic verb such as *dau ri-Ø-f-a* 'a boat has arrived' employ Ø...a form.

⁵ See Lambert (1953: 19)

⁶ See Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 424)

⁷ See Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 428)

2.1.2 Ø...VH formative

The second most striking fact about the KiNgonje anterior is the presence of a pre-stem zero and final vowel variant (as governed by a verb root vowel) both in positive and negative forms⁸.

- (10) (a) *ka-Ø-ri-ćum-u*
 3sgSM-ANT-5OM-pick-VH
 'S/he has picked it'
- (b) *ki-Ø-mw-on-o kaeni kwake*
 1sgSM-ANT-2sgOM-see-VH 9-home-loc. his
 'I have seen him/her at his/her home'
- (c) *ku-Ø-mu-ibir-i nani?*
 2sgSM-ANT-3OM-steal-VH who
 'Who have you stolen from?'
- (d) *ki-Ø-r-i kwangu*
 1sgSM-ANT-eat-VH my place
 'I have eaten at my place'
- (e) *ki-Ø-wa-on-o woñeñekyana*
 1sgSM-ANT-2plOM-see-VH terrified
 'I have seen them terrified'
- (f) *kate ka-Ø-ri-pik-i nani?*
 5-bread 3sgSM-ANT-5OM-cook-VH who
 'Who has baked the bread?'
- (g) *ka-Ø-n-ćom-o hong'o*
 3sgSM-ANT-1sgOM-sting-VH 9-back
 'It has stung my back'
- (h) *ka-Ø-rwar-a tumbo*
 3sgSM-ANT-feel ill-FV 5-stomach
 'S/he has suffered from stomachache'
- (i) *ka-Ø-rwar-a tumbo*
 3sgSM-ANT-feel ill-FV 5-stomach
 'S/he has suffered from stomachache'

Noted here are patterns of Ø--VH suffix that express perfect action as seen in the affirmative form. Swahili scholars have attempted to offer explanations on the environments to which VH suffix seems to be associated: Maganga 1990:152 asserts that speakers of Kitiunbaru 'may opt to use either the long verb which involve the tense marker or the short verb forms which make use of vowel harmony'. He cites the following examples to support his claims:

⁸ All five vowels appear as VH suffix in nonpast negatives in KiNgonje (as indeed other rural SD):

- si-Ø-rw-a* 'I am not going/ do not go'
si-Ø-fag-u 'I am not keeping animals'
si-Ø-nwon-o 'I don't/ never see him'
si-Ø-pik-i 'I am not going to cook/ I don't cook'
si-Ø-wen-e 'I don't/ never see them'

(11) (a) *si-na-kwimb-a*
NEG-PST-to sing-FV
'I do not sing'

but

(b) *ni-O-jimb-i*
1sgSM-ANT-sing-VH
'I sang/have sung'

Is it really a question of shorter vs longer verb stems? The following cases counterexamples the above claim (ibid.:219-21):

(12) (a) *si-na-ya-k-a*
NEG-PST-get-FV
'I do not get'

(b) *si-na-sunk-a*
NEG-PST-run-FV
'I do not run'

but

(13) (a) *ni-O-val-a*
1sgSM-ANT-get-VH
'I got/have got'

(b) *ni-O-sunk-u*
1sgSM-ANT-run-VH
'I ran/have run'

It is not the length of the stem that determines the occurrence or non-occurrence of the VH suffix vs. overt AT marker + a suffix as evident in (11a & b) vs. (12, 13a & b). Rather his data suggest the other way round, i.e., if you use an overt AT marker, you have to use –a suffix, and can't use the VH suffix. Interestingly, though such argument may seem convincing, the following KINgome data object such constraint:

(14) (a) *u-ta-zi-on-o*
2sgSM-FUT-100M-see-VH
'You will see them'

(b) *ha-ku-ni-čim-u*
NEG-3sgSM-SOM-pick-VH

(c) *ku-ni-ñong-o*
INF-SOM-twist-VH
'to twist it'

Presumably, KINgome case in (14) may be considered as 'development's', nevertheless, they disclaim both arguments on overt AT markers and length of the verb stems. A plausible argument for the occurrence of the VH suffix is provided by Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993:390-1). They suggest that VH suffix may be associated with 2/3 sg SM *ku-*, *ka-* or other singular SM other than *ni-*. This brings us to the

question of the existence of the two sets of affirmative singular SM (human beings only) in non-SSW⁹. I present Set A (similar to SSW) and Set B for singular SM in KINgome as follows:

(15)

	SET A	SET B
1 st Person singular	<i>ni-</i> or <i>ni-</i>	<i>ki-</i>
2 nd Person singular	<i>u-</i>	<i>ki-</i> , <i>ku</i>
3 rd Person singular	<i>a-</i>	<i>ka-</i>

Subject markers in Set A co-occur with both overt and null AT forms whilst SM in Set B are restricted with null AT form. This implies that the *O--VH* will definitely appear with SET B SM and optionally in SET A. Again the shape of the SM offers slightly explanation on what exactly motivate VH suffix. Further research is required to establish the environment that motivates *O--VH* (and indeed *O--ele*) in Bantu languages.

Historically, the *O--VH* is an old inherited Bantu feature. Along with –ele suffix is used for Past/Perfect reference. KINgome has only VH suffix but no –ele suffix. It displays all five variable vowels including –a suffix. Its appearance in synchronic data signifies an areal feature that groups KINgome along with other SD (excluding Kitlangua/SSW), and other peripheral Sabaki members such as KIPokomo, Comorian and Kimwani.

A more vivid picture of an areal feature of VH suffixation that expresses perfectivity is presented by Whiteley (1959: 58-59) for KIMakunduchi and KITumbatu:

- (16)
- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>m-vi-i</i> | 'I have climbed' |
| <i>ni-val-a</i> | 'I have obtained' |
| <i>ni-iz-u</i> | 'I have sold' |
| <i>ni-okor-o</i> | 'I have come across something' |
| <i>ni-fugu-u</i> | 'I have opened' |
| <i>n-kwel-e</i> | 'I have climbed (T) |
| <i>ni-m-tafu-u</i> | 'I looked for him' |
| <i>ka-yon-o</i> | 'Have you seen?' |

Although Whiteley (ibid.) has not indicated zero anterior form at pre-stem slot, we are aware that between SM and VB there is a null element for AT (anterior) expression. In addition, all Sabaki members except SD and Comorian have the –ele/-ile suffix, but no VH suffix. SD and Comorian have only the VH suffix and no –ele/-ile for the anterior suffix. Just across the Indian Ocean on the mainland, the neighbouring Bantu of KIMwera¹⁰ (Harriss 1950: 79) shows the reflexes of *-ile anterior aspect:

⁹ I adopt Kristina Riedel's (2001/2002: 13) presentation of similar sets of (singular) SM from her report of the Northern Unguja Swahili dialect of KINgome.

¹⁰ Despite the fact that the prehistoric inhabitants of Mafia have been identified in the Kiwa Chronicles as Wambwera, my observation of KINgome dialect shows minor influences of KIMwera on KINgome speech.

(17)

lienden-e 'they are alike'
inemet-e 'they are stuck'
indim-ede 'they are crooked'
legen-e 'they are stuck fast'

This feature has not crossed over to the island of Mafia.

2.1.3 Future anteriority

So far we have discussed present anteriority alone. KINgome has no discrete form for future anteriority. In such case, KINgome has to use a periphrastic construction to express such a reference as provided by the following examples:

(18) (a) *tu-ta-kuj-a tu-ki-fik-a*
 1pISM-FUT-come-FV 1p1 SM-SIT-arrive-FV
 'We will come to you if we have arrived'

(b) *n-ta-kwit-a n-ki-fik-a*
 1sgSM-FUT-call-FV 1sg SM-SIT-VB-FV
 'I will call you when I arrived'

Closer to such a meaning is provided by the following case that involves a conditional *nge-ll* and a completive *ša-*

(19) (a) *kama si jiuwa, tu-ngeša-bini* *ponte pano*
 if Neg 9-sun 1pISM-COND-COMP-cultivate- all over here
 'were it not for the sun, we would have cultivated all over here'

(b) *Muda huu, ki-ša-fik-a Kisiju*
 This time, 3sg-COMP-arrive-FV Kisiju
 'at present he has already arrived at Kisiju'

For the present state that is related to the imminent future event, I have heard the following expressions using *hi-0-ja* 'I have come':

(20) (a) *ni-0-ja ku-perək-a madafari*
 1sgSM-ANT-come-FV INF-send-FV 6-note books
 'I have come to bring note books'

(b) *ni-0-ja kukutweša*
 1sgSM-ANT-come-FV INF-2sgOM-cause to carry-FV
 Lit: 'I have come to say goodnight to you'

2.3 Completive

Another widespread feature of KINgome aspectual marking is the use of *ša-* that encodes the completion of an event. Although this category best fit as part of the anterior aspect, I find it suitable to place it in a separate category. This distinction is synonymous with the use of the adverbial 'just' vs. 'already', which have been elsewhere noted to denote different aspectual functional meanings (see Cinque 1997).

¹¹ The conditional *Nge-* is regular in KINgome: *tu-nge-rima tu-nge-pat-a nga kidogo* 'If we had cultivated we could have got at least a bit'

Marten (1998:160) regards *ša-* as a new member of the Swahili AT system that is used as completive aspectual auxiliary to signal anteriority. It can combine with the situational tense marker *-ki* or past form *li-* (in our case *ri-*). When *ša* is used as the only AT marker it acquires both temporary and aspectual information. I also consider *ša-* as a completive aspect that expresses an event that has recently finished and still has a relation to another subsequent events as the following examples from KINgome illustrate:

(21) (a) *ka-ša-rim-a*
 3sgSM-COMP-cultivate-FV
 'S/he has already cultivated'

(b) *mu-ša-ravy-a?*
 2pISM-COMP-eat-FV
 'Have you already eaten?'

(c) *juwa ri-ša-zam-a uka u-fene-ko!*
 9-sun 9SM-COMP-set-FV 2sgSM-stand 2sgSM-go-CLIT
 'The sun has already set, get up and go there then!'

The completive formative *ša-* in the form of *kisa/rika/ngeša* within a one-word form is found in the following cases:

(22) (a) *mu-kiša-ravy-a mu[r]uke*
 2pISM-SIT-COMP-eat-FV 2sgSM-go-SUBJ
 'once you finish eating go away'

(b) *mu-riša-ravy-a*
 2pISM-PAST-COMP-eat-FV
 'you had already eaten'

(c) *mu-ngeša-ravy-a*
 2pISM-COND-COMP-eat-FV
 'you would have already eaten'

It should be borne in mind that by considering the complex form *kisa/ngeša* and *rika* as a unitary AT form we are about to regard *rika* as a discrete form for a pluperfect in KINgome and indeed in SSW in the form of *riša*. This is against a popular belief that SSW has no distinct form for pluperfect notion as assumed in literature.¹²

2.4 Progressive

I have collected the following examples to mark the progressive aspect that stands for an ongoing or progressive action.

(23) (a) *a-na-rim-a*
 3sgSM-PST-cultivate-FV
 'S/he is cultivating'

¹² See Comrie (1985: 80).

- (b) *lw-a-rim-a*
 2plSM-PST-cultivate-FV
 'We are cultivating'
- (c) *plaka-a-na-yug-a*
 9-cat 9SM-PST-cry-FV
 'The cat is crying'
- (d) *tu-ri-kuwa lw-a-rim-a*
 1plSM-PAST-be 1plSM-PST-cultivate-FV
 'We were cultivating'

The use of *na-* or *a-* in (23) has a present progressive interpretation. However, *na-* or *a-* may denote a habitual or continuous situation when a temporal adverbial is added:

- (24) (a) *a-na-rim-a* *kira siku*
 3sgSM-PST-cultivate-FV every day
 'she cultivates every day'
- (b) *lw-a-rim-a* *kyaka hadi kyaka*
 2sgSM-PST-cultivate-FV year after year
 'We cultivate every year'

However, some use of *na-* in KIPemba, KIMiang'ara and Rural Zanzibar Swahili (both SD members) differs from the use of *na-* in KINgome and indeed SSW.

- (25) (a) *ka-na-uk-a*
 3sgSM-PERF-return-FV
 'S/he has returned'
- (b) *ku-na-ondok-a*
 2sgSM-PERF-go-FV
 'you have gone out'
- (c) *ka-na-kuLy-a*
 3sgSM-PST-eat-FV
 'he is eating'

In (25a & b) the formative *na-* is used to express the perfective rather than progressive. As for (25c), in Rural Zanzibar Swahili, the formative *na-* is denoting a progressive aspect but in the environment of a preceding 3sg SM *ka-*. KINgome like SSW disallows the co-occurrence of the progressive *na-* along with the 3sgSM *ka-* as seen in (25c). Typical cases in KINgome (when 3sgSM *ka-* or *ku-* are involved) are exemplified below:

- (26) (a) *ka-o-nudi*
 3sgSM-ANT-return
 's/he has returned'

- (b) *ku-o-nudi rini weye?*
 2sgSM-PAST-return you
 'when did you return?'

Parallel to other Swahili dialects, the progressive aspect in KINgome may refer to the past and future time as well. In those cases, tense and aspect expressions require a periphrastic construction which adds the auxiliary 'be' encoding past *ri-* or future *la-* tense followed by the lexical verb marked with an aspect *na-* in the pre-stem slot.

- (27) (a) *ni-ri-kuwa na-rima daweni*
 1sgSM-PAST-be 1sgSM/PROG-cultivate 5 meadow land-LOC
 'I was cultivating at the meadow land'
- (b) *ni-ta-kuwa na-rima daweni*
 1sgSM-FUT-be 1sgSM/PROG-cultivate 5 meadow land-LOC
 'I will be cultivating in the meadow land' (so, when you come, you will know where to find me).

2.5 Habitative

The prefix *hu-* and a suffix *-og* typically expressed habituality in KINgome. They may denote an event occurring regularly, iteratively or expressing timeless truth or facts.

- (28) (a) *sive hu-rim-a afaa*
 we HAB¹-cultivate-FV afaa
 'We (used to) cultivate afaa'
- (b) *yeye hu-rim-ag-a faya*
 him HAB¹-cultivate-HAB²-FV faya
 'S/he used to cultivate faya'
- (c) *lw-a-rim-ag-a afaa*
 1plSM-PST-cultivate-HAB²-FV afaa
 'We cultivate afaa regularly'
- (d) *wa-ri-rim-ag-a*
 3plSM-PAST-cultivate-HAB²-FV
 'They cultivated repeatedly'
- (e) *tu-na-rim-ag-a*
 2plSM-PST-cultivate-HAB²-FV
 'We cultivate habitually'
- (f) *tu-ta-rim-ag-a*
 2plSM-FUT-cultivate-HAB²-FV
 'We will cultivate habitually'

Noted above are various examples containing habitual *hu-* and *-og* in one-word forms. The form *hu-* may stand on its own (28a) or co-occur with the habitual suffix *-og* (28b). It should also be noted that in KINgome, unlike in KITUngujaSSW, the form *hu-* is restricted in its use. Semantically the form *hu-* refers to timeless events

while *-ag* may have a range within a specified time, i.e. it may denote 'habituality' or 'iterativity' in the past, present or future. In Kingome *hu* may be replaced by subject concord modified with a temporal adverbial as in *boi i-0-ja kira sika* 'the boat comes every day'. The standard form would be *boi huja kila sika* 'the boat comes every day'.

The *-ag* aspect may appear with other tense markers as seen in (28c-f). In imperatives the form *-ag* follows the root and ends with the final indicative *-a* or the subjunctive *-e* (in a polite imperative):

- (29) (a) *rim-ag-al*
cultivate-HAB²-FV
'cultivate then!'
- (b) *pand-ag-a!*
climb-HAB²-FV
'climb then!'
- (c) *fung-ag-a!*
close-HAB²-FV
'close then!'
- (d) *nu-rim-ag-e*
2pSM-cultivate-HAB²-FV
'cultivate then!'

Surprisingly, neither a 'habitual' sense nor an 'iterative' sense is present in the above imperatives expressions. Similarly, KIMakunduchi (Whiteley 1959:62), another rural SD, displays *-g* (imperative) form without 'a habituality or repeating sense' as the following examples illustrate:

- (30) (a) *onja-g-a!*
taste-HAB-FV
'taste then!'
- (b) *njo-ni-g-a vano*
come-PL-HAB-FV here
'come here then!'
- (c) *m-lol-e-g-a uyoko*
2sgOM-see-SUB-HAB-FV here
'see that fellow there!'

As not in (29) and (30), KINgome and KIMakunduchi use *-ag* in imperative forms to express a sort of polite command without necessarily requiring the addressee to resume the activity s/he has been doing previously. This may speculate the diachronic discussion that probably an *-ag* that refers to habituality is different from the one that refers to a polite command. Further cross-linguistic evidence is needed to validate this proposition. Whiteley (ibid: 56) further reported that KIMakunduchi has a *-ga* form appearing at pre-stem slot as the following cases show:

- (31) (a) *na-ga-tend-a*
1sgSM-PST-HAB-do-FV
'I'm working'

- (b) *si-na-ga-tend-a*
1sgNEG-PST-HAB-do-FV
'I'm not working'

It seems this is idiosyncratic to KIMakunduchi and not such case is present in my KINgome corpus or SD in general. There is no clear indication that this particular *ga-* stands for habituality.

3 Tense marking in KINgome

A two-fold opposition of past vs. non-past is found in KINgome. The non-past is an incomplete action, either present or future. We have seen that KINgome has two primary forms of reference to past time: *ri-* for a far past and *O* for a near past which extends and overlaps with reference to anterior. For non-past, KINgome has only one discrete future tense *-ia* and a general present tense *-a-*, which speakers freely alternate with *na-* to convey present or habitual expressions.

3.1 Pasts

The basic past tense distinctions for KINgome are between two past reference forms: *recent* and *far* past. Recent past (similar to perfective aspect) is unmarked in KINgome See section 2.1.1 for exemplification.

3.1.1 Recent past and far past

- (32) (a) *tu-O-ceng-a* vava
1pSM-ANT-clear-FV thicket

- 'we cleared /have cleared the thicket'
- (b) *tu-ri-ceng-a vava*
1pSM-PAST-clear-FV thicket
'we cleared the thicket'

The forms *O-* and *ri-* express distinct grammatical categories that posit the degree of remoteness of the past tense reference in KINgome. As can be seen the typical cut-off point in KINgome (and indeed other SD except for KILingua/SSW) is that between 'today' and 'before today'. The *ri-* far past in KINgome represents an event which occurred before today. The zero form represents a near past and refers to an event which occurred very recently or today, which leads one to expect its current relevance for the present.

3.2 Non-pasts

As we have seen non-pasts are represented by present and future tenses.

3.2.1 Present tense

The present tense is used to express simultaneity of a situation with the present moment. The combination of this tense and various aspect categories are realized in the following in KINgome: simple present, present progressive, and present perfect. In simple present, we have *tu-a-rya nondora* 'we eat leftover (food)' (SM-a-VB-a) which is different from *tu-O-rya* 'we ate/have eaten' (SM-O-VB-a), which expresses

a general fact and is not necessarily reporting an event occurring at the time of utterance. Here we speak of an act of eating which holds at present and may have begun before and may well continue beyond the present moment. In the present progressive, we have two alternating patterns in the shape of SM-*na*-VB-*a* and SM-*Q*-VB-*a*, which basically express an ongoing action at the time of utterance. Examples are: *tu-na-rima /tu-a-rima* 'we are cultivating'. The present anterior is associated with the pattern SM-*Q*-VB-*a* VH and even extended to completive SM-*ša*-VB-*a* as exemplified below:

- (33) (a) *tu-Q-rim-a*
1pISM-ANT-cultivate-FV
'We have cultivated'
(b) *ki-Q-mwon-o*
1sgSM-ANT-see-VH
'I have seen him'
(c) *tu-ša-rim-a*
1pISM-COMP-cultivate-FV
'we have already cultivated'

Ways of expressing present time are not solely based on the forms we have described above. For instance, when we have the following question and answer forms:

- (34) (a) *mu-na-rar-a-?*
2pISM-PST-sleep-FV
'are you sleeping?' (spending the night?)
(b) *tu-na-rudi*
1pISM-PST-return
'we will return' (i.e. we are not spending the night)

The *na*-form in (35 a & b) is expressing the imminent futurity and not something that is going on at that time of speaking. This makes it hard to exactly equate the form and meaning it can always convey in every context.

3.2.2 Future tense
KiNgame, like other SD, displays a morphologically discrete future form with *ta-* (*ta-* for KiMakunduchi). It expresses events in future time.

- (36) (a) *tu-ta-rim-a* peka etu
1pISM-FUT-cultivate-FV our selves
'We will cultivate ourselves'
(b) *n-ta-kwend-a* Kidakuri
1sgSM-FUT-go-FV Kidakuri
'I will go to Kidakuri.'
(c) *n-ta-rim-a* n-ki-flk-a
1sgSM-FUT-cultivate-FV 1sgSM-SIT-arrive-FV
'I will cultivate if I arrive'

As an exception to the common form above, I found one case of expressing future reference without a discrete morpheme *ta-*, which may sound awkward to the SSW speakers.

- (37) *kešo a-Q-ñi-flk-a hapa*
tomorrow 1sg SM- O-1sgOM-VB-FV here
'the will come to me here tomorrow'

There is no discrete *ta-* form above. The future expression is here portrayed by a zero form, the combination of the adverbial temporal expression and indicative mood marked by final vowel *-a*.

The subjunctive construction marked by a suffix *-e* at the FV slot may also be associated with some future reference without including the form *ta-*.

- (38) *u-je-kešo*
2sgSM-come-SUBJ tomorrow
'come tomorrow'

4.0 Formatives *ki-* and *ka-*
We now look briefly at *ki-* and *ka-* AT forms. We treat them separately due to their characteristic of failing to exactly fall into the two categories we have specified in our matrix in (2).

4.1 *ki-* 'situational' tense
The form *ki-* at the AT slot in KiNgame (and indeed SSW) commonly marks 'if' conditional with future interpretation.

- (39) (a) *n-ki-rim-a* n-ta-vun-a
1sgSM-SIT-cultivate-FV 1sgSM-FUT-harvest-FV
'If I cultivate, I will harvest'.
(b) *n-ki-flk-a* keso n-ta-kup-a pesa zako
1sgSM-SIT-arrive-FV tomorrow 1sgSM-FUT-give-FV your money
'if I arrive tomorrow I will give your money'
(c) *a-ki-i-a* m- p-e
1sgSM-SIT-come-FV 2sgSM-give-SUBJ
'when she comes, give to her'.
(d) *k^huku a-ki-kuñcor-a* u-ta-po haraka
9-chick 9SM-SIT- peck-FV 2sgSM-FUT-heal quickly
'when a chick pecks you, you quickly get better'
(e) *viñagi vi-ki-ñi-kumbuw-a* na-tetem-a
8-drizzle 8SM-SIT-1sgOM-soak-FV 1sgSM-tremble-FV
'when drizzle soaks me, I tremble'.
(f) *vire u-ki-ñi-on-a* ñi-kinw-a
when 2sgSM-SIT-1sgOM-see-FV 1sgSM-get angry-FV
'(that time) when you saw me, I was angry'.

(40)

- (a) *ni-ni-mw-on-a* *a-ki-end-a* Bweni
 1sgSM-PAST-2sgOM-see-FV 1sgSM-SIT-go-FV
 'I saw him going to Bweni.'
- (b) *ni-ni-kuon-a* *u-ki-ry-a*
 1sgSM-PAST- see-FV 2sgSM-SIT-eat-FV
 'I saw you eating'
- (c) *ni-ni-mw-on-a* *a-ki-rar-a*
 1sgSM-PAST-3sgOM-see-FV 3sgSM-SIT-sleep-FV
 'I saw him sleeping'
- (d) *ncana* *u-ta-kuwa-pi?*
 3-afternoon 3SM-FUT-be-where
 'Where will you be in the afternoon?'
- (e) *n-ta-kuwa* *dawe-ni* *n-ki-ring-a* *mnpunga*
 1sgSM-FUT-be 5-farm-LOC 1sgSM-SIT-see-FV 3-rice paddy
 'I will be in the farm (watching) guarding rice paddy'

ki- in (39 a-d) gives the sense of 'if' and 'when' and all this is considered to have referential meanings. Here *ki-* occupies tense slot. Whilst in (40 a-d) shows what is regarded by Marten (1998:149) as a temporally underspecified form, *ki-*. The formative *ki-* is now in a subordinate position and fully depending on the preceding matrix clause for its contextual information. *ki-* forms in (32 a-d) denote progressive sense similar to *ni-* / *-i-* forms.

It is evident in our data that the function of *ki-* form in KINgome matches that of SSW (See Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 367).

4.2 Consecutive *ka-*

KINgome displays *ka-* form in the following contexts:

- (41) (a) *nend-e-ni* *mu-ka-ry-e*
 go-SUBJ-PI 2plSM-CONS-eat-SUBJ
 'go and eat'
- (b) *ka-ry-e* *mačaza*
 2sgSM-eat-SUBJ 6-rice
 'go and eat rice'
- (42) (a) *tu-ri-kury-a* *tu-ka-šib-a*
 SM-PAST-VB-FV SM-CONS-VB-FV
 'we ate and we got full'
- (b) *ni-ni-čeng-a* *pori,* *ni-ka-bini* *harafu* *ni-ka-vun-a*
 1sgSM-PAST-clear-FV 5-bush 1sgSM-CONS-cultivate then harvest-FV 1sgSM-CONS-
 'I cleared the bush, cultivated and then harvested.'

The form *ka-* in (41 a & b) displays what is known as 'go and V(erb)' function (Botne 1999: 476-477) in Bantu languages whilst in (42 a & b) the form *ka-* is associated with the notion of consecutiveness. It gives narrative meaning to single observations that are recounted. In such narratives, the first verb establishes the time framework, which normally is far past *ri-*. The sequencing is then represented by the form *ka-*.

5 Conclusion

This preliminary description of AT system in KINgome, though sketchy and rudimentary, is an important addition to the study of SD features, which essentially contrast with NID and SSW in general. AT marking in KINgome consolidates a typical rural SD feature of *Ø...* Vh/a suffix and lacks of *-ete* suffix. To some extent, I believe, I have offered missing data in the study of Sabaki and Swahili in general as pioneered by Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993). More in-depth discussion of semantic extension and pragmatic interpretation of AT formatives are needed. I have simply attempted to present in this paper the association between AT formatives and the meanings they can express.

Abbreviations

AT	Aspect and tense system
CLIT	Clitic
COMP	Completive aspect
COND	Conditional marker
CONS	Consecutive
FUT	Future tense
FV	Final vowel
LOC	Locative marker
ND	Northern Swahili dialects
PAST	Past tense
PI	Plural marker
PST	Present tense
SD	Southern Swahili dialects
SIT	Situational marker
SM	Subject marker (concord)
SSW	Standard Swahili
SUBJ	Subjunctive
VH	Vowel harmony

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