

2.3.2. Tenses and Aspects

In the affirmative, independent verb forms can be marked for the following tenses or aspect:

- i. the Future (k'égo 'he will work')
- ii. the Present (k'edigo 'he is working')
- iii. the Simple Past (k'eyo 'he worked')
- iv. the Perfect (k'éko 'he has worked')
- v. the Hortative (nana k'eya 'he ought to work')
- vi. the Imperative (k'en 'Work!')

There are negative forms for at least the Future, the Present, and the Simple Past (I have no evidence for negatives for the Perfect and the Hortative). The different tense forms are marked partly by affixes and partly by tone;⁸ verb stems can be grouped into one of four tone classes on the basis of their behavior in the Affirmative Future and the Affirmative Perfect:

A. Verbs of tone class "A" have the pattern MHM for the Future:

cenšino	'I'll boil'
katsino	'I'll cook'

and the pattern MMM for the Perfect:

cenškino	'I have boiled'
katskino	'I have cooked'

B. Verbs of tone class "B" have the pattern HMM for the Future:

cánino	'I'll break'
hákino	'I'll harvest'

and the pattern HMM for the Perfect:

cánkino	'I have broken'
hákikino	'I have harvested'

C. Verbs of tone class "C" have the pattern HHM for the Future:

álino	'I'll sit'
bééno	'I'll drink'

and the pattern MMM for the Perfect:

alkino	'I have sat'
bekino	'I have drunk'

D. Verbs of tone class "D" have the pattern (H)HM for the Future:

Monograph No. 5
Occasional Papers Series
Committee on Ethiopian Studies

The [Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia]

Edited by M. Lionel Bender
Acting Series Editor, John Hinnant

Please send two copies of your review to
the African Studies Center, MSU, E.
Lansing, Mi. 48824

Copyright © 1976 by the Board of Trustees, Michigan State University
All rights reserved

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 76-42008

Printed in the United States of America

Published by the
African Studies Center
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

In cooperation with
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois