

〈特集「アスペクト」〉

Aspects in IsiZulu (S42) ズールー語 (S42) のアスペクト表現

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要旨: 本稿は、語研論集 14 号 (2009) 所収の調査票にもとづいて収集したズールー語(バントゥ系; 南アフリカ共和国)のアスペクト表現に関する記述的資料を提供するものである。

Abstract: This article presents descriptive data on aspect constructions in IsiZulu, a southern Bantu language spoken in South Africa. The data was collected through the questionnaire “Aspects” designed in *Journal of the Institute of Language Research* 14, 2009.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15026/0002001491>

キーワード: ズールー語, アスペクト, バントゥ系

Keywords: IsiZulu, Aspect, Bantu

1. Introduction

Aspect refers to the internal temporal constituency of a situation (Comrie, 1976: 3). The aspects indicate whether an event is ongoing, completed, repeated, habitual, etc. Therefore, they have a direct interaction with tense. The aim of this paper is to discuss aspect expressions in IsiZulu (S42). The isiZulu language is a Bantu language spoken by over 12 million speakers (Ethnologue, 2022) in South Africa. The language belongs to the Nguni group of southern Bantu languages. The Nguni group also consists of other mutually intelligible languages such as isiXhosa, isiNdebele and siSwati (Childs, 2003; Maho, 2009). The perfect aspect is expressed using the *-ile* suffix after a verb stem in its disjoint form. The same aspect is marked by the suffix *-e* if the verb is in the conjoined verb form in the perfect aspect.¹ The progressive aspect expressed by the morphemes *wa-* (remote past), *be-* (recent past), *ya-* (present progressive), *zo-* (near future) and *yo-* (remote future).² A companion paper about passives in isiZulu is available in Didi & Lee (2024).

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents data revealing the interaction of different aspect markers with the transitive verb. Section 3 presents data in sentences with transitive verbs. The paper also explores the aspectual constructions in sentences with a stative verb extension in Section 4. The fourth section also reveals that the passive marker may also be employed to form a stative verb. A discussion of the habitual aspects in isiZulu is



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¹ See Van der Spuy (1993); Buell (2005), among others for discussion of the conjoint/disjoint alternation in isiZulu and related languages.

² The examples are presented in four lines. The first line is the example in the official orthography; the second line consists of the examples broken down into the smallest morphemes along the conventions of the Leipzig glossing standards. The third line is a translation of the glossed morphemes. Finally, the fourth line is an English translation of each example.

the topic of Section 5. Section 6 explores data with other types of aspects available in the language and Section 7 is the conclusion.

2. Data with the intransitive verb

The examples in this section are elicited using the intransitive verb *fika* ‘to arrive’. In (1), the perfect aspect is expressed by adding the *se-* prefix and the *-ile* suffix around the verb. The final vowel of the verb is replaced by the suffix *-ile* when the verb is in the perfect in its disjoint form (Buell, 2005). This form of the verb is used when the verb occupies the sentence-final position. Therefore, the disjoint verb form is common in intransitive verbs and it is the aspect marker in these constructions. Regardless of the type of a subject, being a proper noun or a deictic noun, the aspect is expressed in the same manner. In the following sentences the morpheme *se-* directly followed by the verb stem also marks the completive/exclusive aspect which distinguishes whether the event is complete or ongoing.

(1) [Item 2-1]

- a. [Situation: Siphso has arrived]

USiphso usefikile

u-siphso u-se-fik-ile

AUG-1.Siphso SM1-ASP-arrive-PST.DJ

‘Siphso already came.’

- b. [Situation: That person has arrived]

Lowo muntu usefikile

lowo muntu u-se-fik-ile

1.DEM 1.person SM1-ASP-arrive-PST.DJ

‘That person has already come.’

When the continuing aspect is expressed, IsiZulu speakers use the aspectual marker *se* as shown in (2). The meaning of ‘already’ can be expressed with or without the discourse particle *vele* meaning ‘anyway/already/as you know’.

(2) [Item 2-2]

- a. [Situation: Siphso has not yet arrived]

USiphso ubeseza.

u-siphso u-be-se-z-a

AUG-1.Siphso SM1-RT-ASP-come-FV

‘Siphso has already been coming.’

- b. [Situation: That person has not yet arrived]

Lowo muntu ubesevele eza.

lowo muntu u-be-se-vele e-za

1.DEM 1.person SM1-RT-ASP-already SM1-come

‘That person has already been coming.’

The negative sentence of the perfect aspect uses the negative *ka* and the verb ends with the negative final vowel *-i* as shown in (3). When the action of the subject noun is the focus of the negative sentence, *be-* and *nga-* precede the aspect marker *ka-* as in (3). When the non-arrival of the subject is the focus of the sentence, IsiZulu uses the *a- ... -ka* construction without the *nga-* morpheme as in (4). Coincidentally or not, the second person singular agreement marker *ka-* of negation is identical with the completive aspect marker as can be seen in (4), where they cooccur. However, in the perfect progressive aspect (3b) the distinction becomes clear.

(3) [Item 2-3]

- a. [Situation: Siphó's action is the focus of the sentence]

USiphó ubengakezi.

u-siphó u-be-nga-ka-iz-i

AUG-1.Siphó SM1-RT-NEG-ASP.NEG-come-FV

'Siphó hasn't not been coming yet.'

- b. [Situation: That person's action is the focus of the sentence]

Lowo muntu ubengakezi.

lowo muntu u-be-nga-ka-iz-i

1.DEM 1.person SM1-RT-NEG-ASP.NEG-come-FV

'That person hasn't been coming yet.'

(4) [Item 2-4]

- a. [Situation: Siphó's non-arrival is the focus of the sentence]

USiphó akakezi.

u-siphó a-ka-ka-iz-i

AUG-1.Siphó NEG-SM3.SG-ASP-come-FV

'Siphó hasn't come yet.'

- b. [Situation: 'That person's non-arrival is the focus of the sentence']

Lowo muntu akakezi.

lowo muntu a-ka-ka-iz-i

1.DEM 1.person NEG-SM3.SG-ASP-come-FV

'That person hasn't come yet.'

The near future aspect is expressed with the future morpheme *zo* as shown in (5), and the aspect reading is supported by the adverb *maduze* which specifies the urgency of the prospective event of arrival. which is followed by the present indicative form of the verb.

(5) [Item 2-5]

- a. *USiphó uzofika maduze.*

u-siphó u-zo-fik-a maduze

AUG-1.Siphó SM1-FUT-arrive-FV soon

'Siphó will come soon.'

b. *Lowo muntu uzofika maduze.*

lowo muntu u-zo-fik-a maduze
 1.DEM 1.person SM1-FUT-arrive-FV soon
 ‘That person will come soon.’

The announcement about the arrival of Siphso in (6) is expressed with the perfect *-ile* form of the verb. The aspect marker *se-* corresponds to the tense specification marked by the suffix *-ile* which marks an event that has recently completed. The aspect marker *se-* specifies the urgency of the even in a situation where a later arrival was anticipated or suspected.

(6) [Item 2-6]

(Siyabonga!) uSiphso usefikile.
 (siyabonga) u-siphso u-se-fik-ile.
 (Wonderful) AUG-1.Siphso SM1-ASP-arrive-PST.DJ
 ‘(Oh!) Siphso has come!’

When the situation describes the arrival of the subject noun, the past form *-e* is used as in (7). The occurrence of the final vowel *-e* (a variant of the perfect markers) is selected instead of *-ile* because the verb is not sentence final in this construction. The corresponding negative form with *aka-V-nga* is shown in (8). Interestingly, the final vowel adjusts from *-e* to its affirmative form *-a* when it is followed by the negative marker.

(7) [Item 2-7]

USiphso ufike izolo.
 u-siphso u-fik-e izolo
 AUG-1.Siphso SM1-arrive-FV yesterday
 ‘Siphso came yesterday.’

(8) [Item 2-8]

USiphso akafikanga izolo.
 u-siphso a-ka-fik-a-nga izolo
 AUG-1Siphso NEG-3SG-arrive-FV-NEG yesterday
 ‘Siphso didn’t come yesterday.’

This section explored different constructions involving the aspect with intransitive verbs. In the next section we explore these patterns in sentences with transitive verbs.

3. Data with the transitive verb

In this section, examples are examined with the situation where the action displays ‘eating a specific apple’. The deictic object in (9) is preceded by the verb with the *-ile* suffix. The aspect ‘already’ is expressed using the *se-* morpheme before the subject marker. The *se-* aspect morpheme is the perfect variant of the progressive *sa-*.

(9) [Item 2-9]

a. *Sengilidlile lelo aphula.*

se-ngi-li-dl-ile lelo aphula
 ASP-1SG-OM5-eat-PST.DJ 5.that 5.apple
 ‘I already ate that apple.’

In (10), the negative forms are shown. The non-action aspect is expressed with *a SBJ ka* and the verb with the negative final vowel *-i* in (10a). When the speaker expresses the non-volition, the negative form is *ngeke* in (10b), which has the final vowel *-e*.

(10) [Item 2-10]

a. *Angikalidli lelo aphula.*

a-ngi-ka-li-dl-i lelo aphula
 NEG-1SG-ASP-OM5-eat-FV 5.that 5.apple
 ‘I haven’t eaten that apple yet.’

b. *Ngeke ngilidle lelo aphula.*

ngeke ngi-li-dl-e lelo aphula.
 NEG 1SG-OM5-eat-FV 5.that 5.apple
 ‘I won’t eat that apple.’

The progressive aspect in isiZulu is with the adverb *kumanje* ‘right now’ or ‘as we speak’, and the verb takes the indicative form *dla* ‘to eat’ as shown in (11). The adverb may be understood to be replacing the progressive exclusive aspect *se-*.

(11) [Item 2-11]

Uyalidla lelo aphula kumanje.

u-ya-li-dl-a lelo aphula kumanje.
 SM3.SG-DJ-OM5-eat-FV 5.that 5.apple right.now
 ‘He’s eating that apple just now.’

In the following section we examine data in sentences with the verb in its stative form.

4. Data with the stative verb

The standard form of the stative verb is marked by the affix *-ek* after the verb stem. However, the passive marker *-iw* can also express the stative reading with the natural implication of an implicit agent responsible for the situation at hand. Consider the following examples.

(12) [Item 2-12]

a. *Iwindi livulekile.*

i-windi li-vul-ek-ile
 AUG-5.window SM5-open-STAT-PST.DJ
 ‘The window is open.’

b. *Iwindi lalivulekile.*

i-windi la-li-vul-ek-ile.
 AUG-5.window PST-SM5-open-STAT-PST.DJ
 ‘The window was open.’

(13) [Item 2-12]

a. *Iwindi livuliwe.*

i-windi li-vul-iw-e
 AUG-5.window SM5-open-PASS-FV
 ‘The window is open(ed).’

b. *Iwindi lalivuliwe.*

i-windi la-vul-iw-e
 AUG-window PST-open-PASS-FV
 ‘The window was open(ed).’

In the examples above, (12) expresses the canonical verb in its stative form marked by the affix *-ek* after the stem. In (13), on the other hand, the stative marker is replaced by a passive marker *-iw*. Both expressions are instances of a stative verb. The only difference is that (13) has an implicit external argument implied to be responsible for the opening of the window.

5. Habitual aspect

This section examines sentences in the habitual aspect form. The present tense *funda* ‘read’ (14) is used for a habitual action of reading the newspaper.

(14) [Item 2-13]

Ngifunda iphephandaba njalo ekuseni.
 ngi-fund-a i-phephandaba njalo e-kuseni
 1SG-read-FV AUG-5.newspaper always LOC-17.morning
 ‘I read the newspaper every morning.’

The resemblance verb is also expressed in the present tense *fana* as in (15). The habitual sentence describing the earth going around the sun in (16) also uses the present form of the verb.

(15) [Item 2-14]

Ufana nonyoko.
 u-fan-a na-u-nyoko
 SM2.SG-same-FV with-AUG-mother
 ‘You look like your mother.’

(16) [Item 2-22]

Umhlaba uzungeza ilanga.

u-m-hlaba u-zungez-a i-langa

AUG-3-earth SM3-surround-FV AUG-5.sun

‘The earth goes around the sun.’

For a habitual aspect that occurred in the past, the final vowel is *-e* in IsiZulu as shown in (17).

(17) [Item 2-15]

Ngangiyame ukuya esikoleni zonke izinsuku.

ng-a-ngi-vam-e u-ku-ya e-si-kol-eni z-onke i-zi-nsuku

1SG-PST-SM1-use-FV AUG-15-go LOC-7-school-LOC 10-every AUG-10-day

‘I used to go to school every day (back then).’

In the next section we explore other possible constructions involving the aspect markers in isiZulu.

6. Other aspect expressions

Aspects are also expressed in different manners in IsiZulu. This section discusses those constructions. In (18), the experiencer aspect is shown. When the sentence describes the experience of going to Limpopo, the auxiliary verb ends with the *-a* form.

(18) [Item 2-16]

Ngake ngaya eLimpopo.

ng-a-k-e ng-a-y-a e-Limpopo

1SG-PST-AUX-FV 1SG-PST-go-FV LOC-9.Limpopo

‘I have been to Limpopo.’

When the subject of a sentence is beginning a motion as in (19), the verb uses the present form as in *suka* ‘to move’.

(19) [Item 2-17]

Ekugcineni, ibhasi lasuka lahamba.

ekugcineni, i-bhasi l-a-suk-a l-a-hamb-a

Finally, AUG-5.bus SM5-PST-move-FV SM5-PST-go-FV

‘Finally, the bus began moving.’

The description of a continuous aspect in the past as in (20) is expressed with the *-e* suffix. The trial of an action as in (21) is expressed with the *-e* suffix. This suffix marked the aspect in the perfect form. Contrastively, (21) shows the aspect marker with the *-ile* variant of the perfect marker. This further supports the idea that the two morphemes are variants of the same perfect marker.

(20) [Item 2-18]

Ulale usuku lonke izolo.

u-lal-e u-suku l-onke izolo
 1SG-sleep-PST.CJ AUG-5.day 5-whole yesterday
 ‘She slept all day yesterday.’

(21) [Item 2-19]

Ngizamile ukuyidla kancane.

ngi-zam-ile u-ku-yi-dl-a kancane.
 1SG-try-PST.DJ AUG-15-OM9-eat-FV a.bit
 ‘I tried eating it a bit.’

When someone habitually presents gifts to other people, the action is described with the *a-* past tense as in (22). Furthermore, the progressive aspect marker is necessary to express the habitual reading.

(22) [Item 2-20]

Wayezinika wonke muntu.

w-a-zi-nik-a w-onke muntu
 1SG-PST-OM10-give-FV 1-all 1.person
 ‘He was giving them to everyone.’

The hortative form in (23) is also expressed with the *-e* suffix which is generally analyzed as the conjoint verb marker. It was mentioned above that this suffix usually appears in constructions with sentence final verbs. However, the hortative constructions are an exception to this condition.

(23) [Item 2-21]

(M)asihambe(ni)!

(m)a-si-hamb-e(ni)
 let-SM1PL-go-IMP(PL)
 ‘Let’s go!’

The near future aspect is expressed with the infinitive form as shown in *funa* ‘want’ in (24a). Both the near past and present tense forms in both (24a) and (24b) use the *se-* form.

(24) [Item 2-23, 24]

a. [Situation: ‘almost falling down due to a storm’]

Lesiya sihlahla sesifuna ukuwa.

le-si-ya si-hlahla se-si-funa u-ku-wa
 DEM-7-that 7-tree ASP-SM7-want-FV AUG-15-fall
 ‘That tree is about to topple.’

- b. [Situation: almost falling down due to a curb]

Ngase ngicishe ukuwa.

ng-a-se ng-i-cishe u-ku-wa

1SG-PST-was 1SG-almost AUG-15-fall

‘I was almost about to trip.’

A future event is described using the near future marker *zo-* as in (25).

- (25) [Item 2-25]

Si zo ba nezi yakashi kusasa, ngakhoke ngizothenga isinkwa.

si-zo-ba na-i-zi-vakashi kusasa, ngakho-ke ng-i-zo-theng-a i-si-nkwa

SM2.PL-be with-AUG-8-visitor tomorrow so 1SG-FUT-buy-FV AUG-7-bread

‘We will have guests tomorrow, so I will buy some bread.’

In the example (26-28), the sentences describe whether an action took place before or after a trip. When an action (a trip in these examples) has been completed as in (26), the final vowel *-a* is used. It was mentioned above that this is the basic shape of the final vowel which only changes when the nonfinal verb is in the perfect. The *-a-* here marks the verb in the remote past tense. The same *a-* past tense is used when an action is yet to happen as in (27) marking the future tense.

- (26) [Item 2-26]

[Situation: I was in Limpopo]

Ngathenga lesi sikhwama ngiseLimpopo.

ng-a-theng-a lesi si-khwama ng-i-se-Limpopo

1SG-PST-buy-FV 7.this 7-bag 1.SG-PROG-LOC-9.Limpopo

‘I (had) bought this bag when I went to Limpopo.’

- (27) [Item 2-27]

[Situation: ‘before going to Limpopo’]

Lesi sikhwama ngasithenga ngaphambi kokuya eLimpopo.

lesi si-khwama ng-a-si-theng-a ngaphambi kokuya eLimpopo.

7.this 7-bag 1SG-PST-OM7-buy-FV before going LOC.Limpopo

‘I (had) bought this bag before going to Limpopo.’

In (28), the multi-clause sentence has two verbs. The matrix clause has the verb *azi* ‘know’, and the subordinate clause has the verb *thenga* ‘buy’. When the speaker describes some knowledge about a completed action, the matrix verb has the *-i* form and the subordinate verb has the *-e* form. It is important to mention that the final vowel on the first verb *azi* is an irregular form. The *-i* does not indicate a negative final vowel. Therefore, (28) is an isolated exception from the standard structure of isiZulu.

(28) [Item 2-28]

Bengazi ukuthi lesi sikhwama wayesithenge kule makethe.

be-ng-azi u-ku-thi lesi si-khwama w-a-ye-si-theng-e ku-le makethe
 AUX-1SG-knew AUG-15-that 7.DEM 7-bag SM1-PST-OM1-OM7 LOC-9.DEM 9.market
 ‘I knew he (had) bought this bag in this market.’

7. Conclusion

This paper has shown how aspect constructions are formed in IsiZulu. Depending on the position of the verb in the sentence, *-ile* or *-e* forms are used where the former occupies is found with verbs in the sentence final position and the latter with sentence medial verbs. The examples also show that IsiZulu makes use of various aspect markers that are not verbal suffixes. We have also shown that the final vowel *-a* changes its shape to *-e* to express the aspect in the recent past whereas it remains the same in other tenses. We have also presented *se-* and *sa-* as variants expressing completion/noncompletion of an event respectively while *zo-* expresses the aspect in the near future. Detailed studies about the role of these markers await future investigation.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3, ...:	Noun class numbers	IMP:	Imperative
1SG, 2PL, ...:	Person and Number	LOC:	Locative
ASP:	Aspect	NEG:	Negative marker
AUG:	Augment	OM:	Object marker
AUX:	Auxiliary	PASS:	Passive
CJ:	Conjoint form	PROG:	Progressive
DEM:	Demonstrative	PST:	Past
DJ:	Disjoint form	RT:	Relative tense
FUT:	Future	SM:	Subject marker
FV:	Final vowel (default inflectional suffix of the finite verb)	STAT:	Stative

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Acknowledgement

This work was mainly supported by JSPS KAKENHI Promotion of Joint International Research (Fostering Joint International Research (B)) 21KK0005. This study was also supported by JSPS KAKENHI (B) 23K25319, JSPS KAKENHI (A) 25H00465 and the ILCAA joint research projects ‘Phonetic typology from cross-linguistic perspectives: Phase 2 (jrp000294)’ and ‘Diachronic Perspectives on Language Description and Typology in Bantu (jrp000292)’.

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原稿受理 : 2026 年 1 月 29 日

刊行年月日 : 2026 年 3 月 31 日