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# Aspects of deixis in Cicipu: evidence from real-time video commentary

Stuart McGill<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

This article is concerned with spatial deixis in Cicipu, a Benue-Congo language of Nigeria, focusing on the demonstrative adverbs. The five-term system is in itself unusual cross-linguistically, but it is also of interest because of the use of two of the five demonstratives in the system of verb aspect. The distal term *ʔu* and the near-hearer term *lêe* both form periphrastic constructions with the verb, resulting in aspectual categories that may be glossed as ‘perfect’ and ‘completive’ respectively. The primary aim of this article is a descriptive one: to present the system of spatial deixis as encoded in the demonstrative adverbs, and to provide evidence in support of the characterisation of the two verbal constructions.

The second part of the article is more relevant to documentary linguistics since it concerns the documentary corpus which was used as the basis for this study, and in particular the important role that the genre of real-time video commentary played in arriving at the analysis presented here. The discussion of the completive hinges on its distribution in video commentary, in particular the way in which it coincides with the completion of the most salient events of the festival.

### 1.1. The relevance of the Kezzeme commentaries

Language documentation projects, particularly those where the speech community is experiencing rapid cultural change, often see it as part of their mandate to document endangered cultural activities. Many such activities focus not on speech but on spectacle and action. However much fieldworkers

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may wish to concentrate on more mundane tasks, it will often be the case that the community whose language they are documenting will direct their attention to events that, no matter how culturally-salient they may be, seem less likely to lead to interesting discoveries about the language.

It was in this position that I found myself when I was invited to video the Kezzeme beating festival of the Orisino division of the Acipu people. This festival appears to be unique to the Acipu, and it is iconic to such a degree that the spiked sticks used to beat the participants have even been suggested as the emblem for the recently-established Cicipu Language Project. The video, which as described in §4.4.1 is next-to-useless as a linguistic resource, suffered from two deficiencies as an archival object. First, since it is linguistically uninteresting, the material is likely to be unattractive to an endangered languages archive. Secondly, while the video by itself certainly makes for an interesting spectacle, the meaning of the events would be opaque to anyone outside the Cicipu language community.

The problem of meaning is of course a general one faced by documenters of endangered languages, even when they are working with video of linguistic rather than non-linguistic events. This is true even when videos are accompanied by time-aligned, interlinear annotation. Evans and Sasse (2007) discuss the problem at length and recommend the structuring of documentary corpora so as to cater for networks of commentaries on individual texts, or portions of texts.

The degree to which commentaries are likely to add value naturally depends on the nature of the speech event. On the one hand, speech events produced under controlled conditions (for example a re-telling of the Pear Film (Chafe 1980)) are likely to be relatively simple to interpret without recourse to in-depth cultural-specific knowledge, and there would be little to be gained in recording further commentaries on the original, which is itself a commentary on the film. At the other end of the scale lie ‘culturally-dense’ speech events. One example I can think of from my own fieldwork are the call-and-response songs of mockery that are sung at Cicipu festivals in the dry season. These songs, which may last for five minutes or more, usually consist of a single repeated line, obliquely and often metaphorically referencing some recent and local act of wrongdoing. The meaning of the songs is utterly opaque without specific knowledge of the relevant peccadilloes, and thus uninterpretable to cultural outsiders without an accompanying commentary. While this could be condensed into a ‘notes field’ in the text annotations by the linguist, a recorded commentary by a native speaker (ideally the singer) would result in much richer documentation. At the extreme end of the scale are events such as the Kezzeme, where the useful linguistic material resides solely in the accompanying commentary.

Thus the main aim of recording the commentaries was to make the meaning of the various components of the festival explicit for posterity. An altogether unexpected side effect was the discovery, while transcribing the commentaries, of a new periphrastic aspectual construction based on the near-hearer demonstrative adverb *lêe*. This had failed to draw attention to itself (more accurately, I had failed to detect it) in sixteen thousand clauses of previously transcribed and translated texts, a failure that is all the more remarkable given that I was well-aware of the periphrastic aspectual construction based on the *distal* demonstrative adverb *û*. To anticipate the discussion, one of the reasons that the *lêe* construction remained unnoticed for so long was due to a deficiency in the corpus: in particular, the lack of any speech events where (i) the interlocutors discuss very recent events, and (ii) these events hold significance for them.

The recording of these commentaries had numerous non-linguistic benefits. However the distinct properties of the Kezzeme commentaries as opposed to the other text types that make up the corpus also led to significant linguistic discoveries. As mentioned above, Evans and Sasse (2007) have already made the case on semantic grounds for the inclusion of commentaries in documentary corpora; this can be viewed as part of the ‘thick metadata’ conceived of by Nathan and Austin (2004). In this article I present evidence from Cicipu which show that commentaries themselves may provide future linguists with data that can be hard to come by through more conventional documentation methodologies.

## 1.2. Overview of the article

The first goal of the article is a descriptive one: to present the system of spatial deixis as encoded in the demonstrative adverbs of the Cicipu language of northwest Nigeria. Cicipu is a member of the Kambari subgroup of West Kainji (Benue-Congo) and is spoken by approximately 20,000 people. Virtually all of these are fluent in Hausa, the *lingua franca* of northern Nigeria. The examples in this paper are in the Tirisino dialect unless otherwise stated. The Cicipu spatial deictic system is cross-linguistically unusual due to the number and type of distinctions encoded, and also due to the role that the demonstrative adverbs play in the aspect system. The deictic system is described in §2, and then §3 briefly sets out how the deictic contrast is reflected in other areas of Cicipu grammar. Section 4 focuses on the relevant aspectual constructions. The second goal of the article is to illustrate the utility of the video commentaries with respect to the analysis arrived at in this article (§5), and also more generally (§6).

## 2. A five-term contrast in spatial deixis

Spatial deixis involves more than just the contrasts displayed by demonstratives, and several aspects of this phenomenon in Cicipu are necessarily ignored here. These include the ventive verbal suffix *-nA* (McGill 2009:224), the ostensive manner adverb *híndè* which is used to draw attention to an iconic gesture such as indicating the height of a child, and may be glossed ‘like this’ or ‘like so’, and the ‘goose-file’ model of spatial orientation which is shared by speakers of Hausa (Hill 1982) and other African languages (Heine and Leyew 2007:23). In this article the discussion is limited to the deictic distinctions encoded by Cicipu demonstratives.

Cicipu demonstratives show a five-way contrast in spatial deixis, encoded in demonstrative adverbs, modifiers, and pronouns. This section is concerned with the distinctions in meaning and concentrates on the adverbs, but the same five distinctions are found in all three of these word classes, as shown in §3. The analysis presented here has been arrived at through various kinds of mechanisms: monolingual elicitation sessions informed by the cross-linguistic questionnaire set out in Wilkins (1999), participant observation during twelve months’ fieldwork, and analysis of a mixed-genre corpus of approximately 20,000 clauses (including the commentaries mentioned above). The structure of the corpus can be seen in McGill (2009:44), although it has been augmented recently, mainly by the commentaries themselves, but also by historical/anthropological interviews which arose out of the material in the commentaries – see §6. Despite (perhaps because of) the enormous number of deictic terms present in these commentaries, and the advantage of having the accompanying video, a detailed study is yet to be done (see §5), and the main contribution of the commentaries relates to the aspectual constructions discussed in §4. The bulk of the remainder of the text corpus consists of interviews, historical narrative, riddles and folktales, songs, staged communicative events based on various kinds of non-linguistic stimuli, and recorded elicitation sessions. The major genre lacking is conversation, especially between women<sup>2</sup>. Some of the advantages of this corpus will be seen in the various examples given in Table 1, while some of its deficiencies will be discussed in §5.

The basic distinctions in Cicipu spatial deixis can be seen in the list of demonstrative adverbs given in Table 1. The third and fourth columns indicate how the adverbs and the corresponding demonstrative modifiers are glossed in the examples in this paper.

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<sup>2</sup> An hour of conversations was recorded in 2010, but this has yet to be transcribed.

Table 1: Cicipu demonstrative adverbs

Adverb	Definition	Gloss	Modifier gloss
<i>pâa</i> <sup>3</sup>	‘here (near speaker)’	here	this
<i>lêe</i>	‘there (near hearer)’	there	that
<i>’îndè</i>	‘yonder (far from both)’	yonder	yon
<i>’û</i>	‘very far away (from speaker)’ or ‘out of sight’	far_away	far_off
<i>dôo</i>	‘over here, back here, home’	over_here	this_over

Leaving aside the fifth term *dôo* for the moment, which is very much the odd one out, the distinctions in Cicipu are similar to the four-term system which has been described for Hausa (Jaggar and Buba 1994, Abdoulaye 2008, see also Jaggar 2001:323-330, 645-647). Although at first there might seem to be four degrees of distance involved, this can be reduced to three by assuming two deictic centres – the speaker and the hearer. As Diessel (2008:171) writes, ‘a person-oriented system with four demonstratives can be seen as a conceptual variant of a distance-oriented system with three distance terms’. The three degrees of distance involved are (i) close to one of the reference points – *pâa* and *lêe*, (ii) far away from both reference points (*’îndè*), and (iii) very far away from the speaker (*’û*).

## 2.1. *Pâa* ‘here’ and *lêe* ‘there’

*Pâa* and *lêe* are not distinguished from each other by any measure of distance, but rather by the speech-act participant functioning as the deictic anchor – the speaker for *pâa*, the hearer for *lêe*. Example (1) shows *pâa* being used to refer to a location on the speaker’s (in this case a hawk) body.

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<sup>3</sup> In the Cicipu words and examples in this article the symbol **y** stands for the palatal approximant [j], **c** and **j** for the affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ] respectively, and the apostrophe for the glottal stop [ʔ]. Tonal downstep within words is marked by ↓.

- (1) 'əpɔ́                    *pâa* 'əpɔ́                    è-vélù      há-mpà      hó-vôo!  
 take\_hold\IMP<sup>4</sup> **here** take\_hold\IMP NC2-wing    AG2-this    AG2-1S.POSS  
 'grab **here**, grab these my wings!'  
 [saat001.006.116]

In the exchange in (2), both speakers refer to the other's location using *lêe*.

- (2) Q:    *t-tá'à*                    *m-âyà*                    *lêe*                    *sú?*  
 2S-want\RLS                    1S-come\IRR                    **there**                    Q  
 'do you want me to come **there**?'  
 A:        *ɔ́ò*,                    *isànú*                    *lêe*  
 no                    stand\IMP                    **there**  
 'no, stay **there**'  
 [2008-04-19.06]

This exchange could be used no matter how far apart the interlocutors are. Conversely, if they are right next to each other then *lêe* can refer to the location of something within touching distance of the speaker, as long as it is closer to the hearer.

Recent work on spatial deixis has emphasised the role played by physical contact (or perhaps a more general notion of access) in addition to straightforward measures of distance (e.g. Hanks 2009, Ashmore 2009). Certainly this seems to be significant in influencing the speaker's choice of *pâa* or *lêe*. For example, when I was holding a pen and sitting across a table from my consultant, he would not refer to the pen's location (from his point of view) using the near-speaker term *pâa*, but insisted on *lêe*. When the pen was placed on the edge of the table on my side, he still preferred *lêe*, but this time

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4 The abbreviations used in the examples are 1 = first-person, 2 = second-person, 3 = third-person, AG = agreement prefix, APPL = applicative, ART = article, COP = copula, FUT = future, HAB = habitual, IMP = imperative, IRR = irrealis, LOC = locative, NC = noun class prefix, NEG = negation, NMLZR = nominaliser, P = plural, PFV = perfective, POSS = possessive, PRO = pronoun, PST = past, Q = question, REL = relativiser, RES = resultative, RLS = realis, S = singular, TOP = topicaliser, VENT = ventive. @ indicates laughter. The cross-references are in two formats: examples from the text corpus are indicated by a text-identifier and annotation number e.g. [tats005.001.193], while examples from unrecorded elicitation sessions are given in date format e.g. [2008-04-19.06]. Most of the textual examples can be viewed and listened to at <http://www.cicipu.org/texts.html>.

*pâa* was said to be at least possible. The converse is not true – when the pen was on his side of the table he would not use *lêe* at all.

Although when asked to contrast *lêe* with the other deictics consultants will always give ‘close to the hearer’ as the basic meaning, it also functions as the unmarked demonstrative. It is by far the most frequent in the corpus, it is readily mixed with terms invoking other deictic contrasts (3), and it can even be used to denote the location of the *speaker* (4).

- (3) Q: *hán*      *Ìsháyà?*  
           where [name]  
           ‘where’s Ishaya?’

A: *évvè*            *lêe*,      *ó/ = cù-kûu*      *tí/ = ù-dángà*      *wú- "índè*  
       3S.PRO:LOC    **there**    LOC=NC6-waist    AG6=NC7-tree    AG7-**yon**  
           ‘**there** he is, at the foot of that tree **over there**’

[2008-04-19.06]

- (4) *ámbe*            *lêe/pâa/dôo/#'índè/#'û<sup>5</sup>*  
       1S.PRO:LOC    **there**/here/over\_here/#yonder/#far\_away  
           ‘here I am’

[2008-01-28.08]

It is possible, as (5) illustrates, to ask the hearer to ‘come there’, provided that the indicated destination is more-or-less in a straight line between the interlocutors, and that it is not too close to the speaker (in role-plays my consultant stopped using *lêe* and starting using *pâa* ‘here’ when the items were placed half-way or closer to him).

- (5) *àyá*            *lêe*                    *ík-kàbà-nà-wà = mù*  
       come\MIMP    **there**                2S.IRR-take\IRR-VENT-APPL=1S.PRO

*ì-tàngì*            *yí-vôo*  
       NC3-item      AG3-1S.POSS

‘come **there** [said with pointing gesture] and bring my things for me’

[2008-04-19.06]

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<sup>5</sup> The latter two cannot be used with the straightforward interpretation that the speaker is actually present in the speech situation (rather than, say, in a photograph or video).



## 2.2. 'índè 'yonder' and 'û̂ 'far away'

The third term in Table 1, 'índè 'yonder', denotes locations which are neither near the speaker nor near the hearer. Its use is illustrated by the following command addressed to some children who were interrupting a recording:

- (6) *dùkwá-nà*                      *'índè!*  
 go\IMP-P.IMP                      **yonder**  
 '[you (p.)] go **over there!**'

[tats005.001.193]

The range of reference of 'índè overlaps with that of the other far deictic, 'û̂, as can be seen from (7), and in fact there is also a complex deictic phrase 'û̂ 'índè, shown in (8). This is viewed by native speakers as equivalent in meaning to just 'û̂ on its own.

- (7) 'û̂                      á↓ = kù-sáa                      kù-ttù                      *'índè*  
**far\_away**    LOC=NC9-mountain    AG9-1P.POSS    **yonder**  
 '**there** on our mountain **there**'

[tats005.002.251]

- (8) *ìndúu*    à-zá                      'û̂                      *'índè*  
 there\_is    NC2-person    **far\_away**    **yonder**  
 'there are some people **way over there**'

[ovkz003.687]

An even greater degree of distance can be suggested by pronouncing 'û̂ with a 'strained' or 'hoarse' voice<sup>6</sup>, but this is a more general means of intensification in Cicipu (and perhaps other languages in northern Nigeria).

In examples such as (7) there is a much greater tendency for speakers to supply a pointing gesture with 'índè rather than 'û̂. This has previously led me to speculate that it was impossible to use the latter in explicitly presentational constructions using the introducer *ìndúu*. One advantage of recording the

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<sup>6</sup> I do not know how to describe this more precisely, except to say that the (voiced) vowels are accompanied by glottal friction (and – at least when I attempt to reproduce the sound – abdominal tension). Abdoulaye (2008:13) discusses a fifth Hausa adverb *cáán*, used to denote locations at the very limit of visibility, but he does not mention anything unusual in its articulation beyond the iconic increase in pitch and vowel length.

video commentaries is that they contain several constructions involving  $\hat{u}$  that are otherwise absent from the corpus, and therefore hard to elicit with confidence. These include both the presentational construction *indúu X  $\hat{u}$*  ‘here is X’ and the demonstrative modifier. The latter is illustrated in (9), which was said in response to the camera focusing on some houses perched on a rock far above the festival field.

- (9) *’indè, kw-á’á kú-’ $\hat{u}$ , Kángú k-è*  
 yonder NC9-house AG9-**far\_off** [name\_of\_village] AG1-COP  
 ‘over there, that house, it’s Kangu’

[ovkz004.054]

Perhaps surprisingly, while  $\hat{u}$  can only be used for reference to somewhere distant from the speaker, there is no such restriction with respect to the hearer’s location. So example (10) is equally as appropriate as the equivalent example involving the near-hearer term *léé* (see (2) above); *’indè* ‘yonder’ is not possible in this context.

- (10) Q: *t-tá’á m-âyà  $\hat{u}$  / \*’indè sù?*  
 2S-want\RLS 1S-come\IRR **far\_away** / yonder Q  
 ‘do you want me to come **there far away** [from me]?’

- A: *’ò, isànú  $\hat{u}$  / \*’indè*  
 no stand\IMP **far\_away**/yonder  
 ‘no, stay **there far away** [from me]’

[2008-04-19.06]

In this respect Cicipu is similar to the Papuan language Yélí Dnye (Levinson 2004:109-110), in that it can be described neither as a straightforward distance-oriented system, nor as a person-oriented system ‘where distal is interpreted as distal from both S[peaker] and A[ddressee]’. Another parallel is provided by Hausa, at least according to Abdoulaye’s (2008) recent account. While the standard accounts gloss *cán* (the closest equivalent to Cicipu  $\hat{u}$ ) as ‘over there (remote from me and you)’ (Jaggar 2001:645) or ‘yonder (way far away)’ (Newman 2000:38), Abdoulaye argues that ‘*cán* is a general distal marker that can refer to any location that is not speaker location’ (2008:6), on the basis of examples such as *tsà’á cán!* ‘stop there!’ (2008:4), where *cán* denotes the hearer’s location.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 together provide a schematic summary of how the four demonstratives discussed so far carve up the spatial field. In the situation diagrammed in Figure 1 the speaker and hearer are relatively close to each other, and in this context  $\hat{u}$  functions similarly to *’indè*, but denotes locations

even further away. The horizontal hatching illustrates the domain of reference of 'indè, the vertical hatching that of 'û. In Figure 2 the hearer is located far away from the speaker, so far that it becomes possible to use 'û to denote the hearer's location (as in (10) above). In this second scenario there is overlap in the range of reference of 'û and 'indè, shown on the diagram by the crossed hatching.

Figure 1: Speaker and hearer close to each other

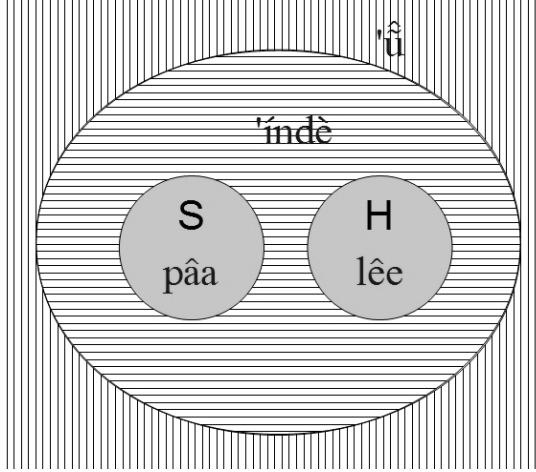
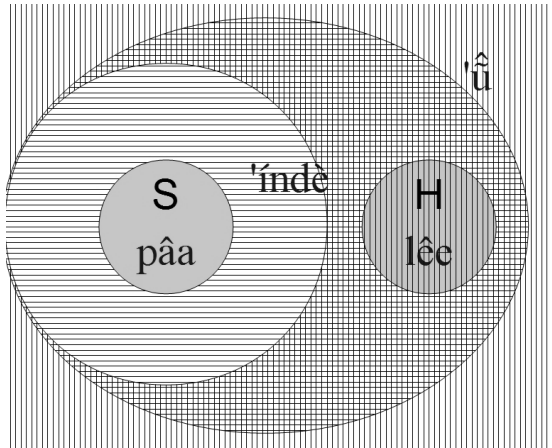


Figure 2: Speaker and hearer far apart



The meaning of  $\hat{u}$  involves more than just distance, however. Levinson (2004:109) writes that '[s]ystems with more than four terms combine other semantic dimensions, like visibility or vertical distance relative to the speaker, or shape of the referent'. This is the case for Cicipu, as the definition that was given for  $\hat{u}$  in Table 1 suggests. If the location in question is out of sight and thus cannot be indicated by the speaker, then  $\hat{u}$  may be used, regardless of distance. For example it can denote the location of something held by the speaker immediately behind her back, or a closed drawer in a desk she is sitting at, or inside someone's clothing (11), or even something inside the human body (12). It is also the usual deictic when speakers refer to the location of other villages.

- (11) *sée* *ś-kàtìlò* *kù-ízá* *kú-nà*  $\hat{u}$  *á/ = kù-róonò*  
 unless 3P-fold\IRR NC9-tail AG9-ART **far\_away** LOC=NC9-loincloth  
 'they had to fold up the tail **there** in the loincloth'  
 [svtmg001.226]

- (12) *k-ádándá* *kà'-ísànù*  $\hat{u}$   
 NC1-thorn AG1-stand\RLS **far\_away**  
 'the thorn stayed **there** [under the skin of someone's back]'  
 [ovkz004.509]

Again there is a parallel with Hausa *cán*, which as well as denoting the location of objects very far from the speaker, can also be used in reference to non-visible objects (Abdoulaye 1992:251).

### 2.3. *d̄d̄o* 'over here'

The four terms we have discussed so far, although complex, form a coherent subsystem by themselves. These are the terms that are usually offered as translations of the four Hausa demonstrative adverbs: *nân*, *nán*, *cân*, and *cán*. By contrast, I was six weeks into my initial fieldwork before I recognised the fifth term listed in Table 1 above, or rather, had it handed to me on a plate through the remarkable incident of a young Cicipu man (Mohammed Mallam, now working for the Cicipu Language Project) presenting me with a sheet of paper, on which he had written an alphabet of his language plus a series of examples illustrating contrasts in spatial deixis! He had included four of the five terms under discussion here, omitting only  $\hat{u}$ . The new term *d̄d̄o* has proved to be different from the others in a number of respects, as will be seen shortly. In particular, it does not add any new distance contrasts not already

covered by the other four terms. Nevertheless, it overlaps in meaning with the demonstrative adverb *pâa* ‘here’, and any description of Cicipu spatial deixis would be incomplete without it.

The meaning of *dõo* involves an interesting combination of spatial and social deixis, and at various stages of my research I have understood it as meaning *here*, *back here*, *over here*, and *home*. At first glance it might seem to be a synonym for *pâa* ‘here’, as the following examples suggest. The first sentence was said to me by a walking companion at night, as I was about to stray into a ditch, while the second was said by an elder seated on a log as I hesitated at the far entrance to his guest hut while greeting him. As he said the sentence he pointed to the space next to him on the log.

- (13)    *âyá*                    *dõo*  
           come\IMP            **here**  
           ‘come **here**’

[2007-01-30.02]

- (14)    *dõonú*                    *dõo*  
           sit\IMP                **here**  
           ‘sit **here**’

[2007-01-30.02]

Note, however, that both situations involve the idea of movement towards the speaker, and away from some other salient (and in these examples undesirable) place – in the first case the edge of the ditch, and in the second the doorway of the hut. In a more neutral scenario, where the focus is simply on the endpoint of the movement, *âyá pâa* or *dõonú pâa* would be more appropriate. Better translations of (13) and (14) would be *come over here* and *sit over here*, and a better gloss for *dõo* is ‘over here’.

Situations encoded using *dõo* often do involve the idea of actual movement, as in the above two examples. This is not necessary, however: virtual movement may be involved instead. For instance, if one party is looking for a book and asks *hán kà-tákàddá?* ‘where’s the book?’, then if the other party knows the location he can immediately reply with (15a). If, however, he has to look in several places before finding it, and finds it in a different place to where he started looking, he is more likely to reply with (15b). The relation of the speaker to the place in which the book is found is identical in (15a) and (15b). The difference is that in (15b) there is a contrast between the place the speaker started looking, and the place (‘over here’) in which the book is eventually found.

- (15) (a) *ndúu* *k-è* *pâa*  
 here\_is AG1-PRO **here**  
 ‘here it is **here**’
- (b) *ndúu* *k-è* *dđo*  
 here\_is AG1-PRO **over\_here**  
 ‘here it is **over here**’

[2008-04-19.06]

The following scenario was offered by a Cicipu research assistant in order to explain the difference between *pâa* and *dđo*. The former is given a concise and straightforward explanation – all that is required is for the speaker to be in the same location as the person being located. In the description of the latter, on the other hand, a contrast is set up between the current location and another.

- (16) *ni* *y-yô* *kù-yéyé* *ni* *z-zá /* *v-ú-hyâa*  
 and 2S-be\RLS NC9-together with NC8-person 2S-FUT-say\IRR
- ‘pâa’ / àmáa* *ín* *z-zá* *bá’â* *ù-’wâa /*  
**here** but if NC8-person already\RLS 3S-pass\RLS
- tò* *ìn* *ínà* *z-zá* *w-áyà /* *‘wáani*  
 OK when certain NC8-person 3S-come\RLS so-and-so
- w-áyà* *dđo?’ /* *‘óo* *ù-kámàa* *dđo’ /* *v-índà,*  
 3S-come\RLS **over\_here** yes 3S-be.PST/RLS **over\_here** 2S-see\RLS
- dđorí* *évvè* *dđo /* *ámáa* *ù-dúkwa /*  
 formerly 3S.PRO:LOC **over\_here** but 3S-go\RLS
- ‘if you’re together with someone / you’d say “**here**” / but if someone has already left / then when someone else comes / “so-and-so came **over?**” / “yes, he was **over here**” / you see, formerly he was **over here** / but he left /’

[eamoh001.008]

It might be objected that the use of *any* locative adverb implies that the relevant referent or event is at some place and not at another, and so involves implicit contrast. The difference is that in the case of *d̄d̄o*, something more specific can be said about the ‘other place’, rather than just ‘not near the speaker’. In the examples discussed so far these other places are *the place where you are lingering* (13), *the ditch you are about to fall into* (14), *the other places I looked* (15), and *the home town of the visitor* (16)<sup>7</sup>.

The English gloss ‘over here’ suggests a horizontal movement, and indeed *d̄d̄o* is often found in collocation with the verb *pasa* ‘cross’ or the adjective *ùpásù* ‘across’. The following example comes from a historical narrative describing how the speaker’s older brother crossed a river and founded a settlement on the other side – the settlement in which the speaker currently lives, and the setting for this recording.

(17) *Gàlájúu*      *w-áyà*                      *ù-yâa-nà*                      *Ø-húusì /*  
 [name]      3S-come\RLS      3S-do\RLS-PFV                      NC8-anger

*w-áyà*                      *ù-pásà-nà*                      *d̄d̄o*  
 3S-come\RLS                      3S-cross\RLS-VENT                      **over\_here**

‘then Galaju became angry / then he crossed **over here**’

[sayb001.708]

However *d̄d̄o* is also found in examples involving a contrast between two vertically-opposed locations, such as the top or bottom of a hill or a tree, in which case ‘down here’ would be a more accurate translation. In the following example taken from a folktale, the subject referent is a monkey which is remaining up a tree to evade Spider, who is the main protagonist and deictic centre of the narrative at this point.

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<sup>7</sup> Using concepts from Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987), we might say that, like *pâa*, *d̄d̄o* PROFILES the location of the speaker, and so the denotata of the two terms are identical. The difference lies in the ELABORATION SITE that forms part of the BASE of *d̄d̄o*, allowing the specification of some other privileged location, separated by an obstacle from the speaker’s location.

- (18) *ù-dóonù* *ú* / *w-útò* *Ø-hárákà* *n = Ø-náatà*  
 3S-sit\RLS far\_away 3S-go\_out\RLS NC8-business AG8=NC8-spider

*d̩̩o* *á↓ = ì-d̩̩á*  
**over\_here** LOC=NC3-ground

'he sat up there / he ignored Spider **down here** on the ground'

[saat002.002.550]

Contrast in the opposite direction can be seen in (19), again from a folktale, in which *d̩̩o* denotes the higher of the two locations. Here the speaker is angry because his companion has brought him to a festival in the sky but then left him stranded up there.

- (19) *èví* *gó* *w-áyà-nà* *n̄ = àmú* *d̩̩o,* *ká'à*  
 3S.PRO TOP 3S-come\RLS-PFV and=1S.PRO **over\_here** now

*ù-íngò* *ù-náhà = mù* *d̩̩o?!*  
 3S-go\_home\RLS 3S-leave\RLS=1S.PRO **over\_here**

'he brought me **up here**, now he's gone home and left me **up here**?!'

[saat001.008.059]

In English, the use of the phrases *over here* and *down here* in sentences encoding motion events invokes the implicature that the trajector in question is not simply returning to a previous location. For example, the English translation of (17), *he crossed over here*, does not mean the same thing as *he crossed back here*. In contrast, *d̩̩o* may be used when encoding such events. The following example comes from a folk history of the enlightenment of the Acipu, and concerns one of the first people to leave Acipuland and visit a town. The denotatum of *d̩̩o* is the land of the Acipu, where the recording was made.

- (20) *ánà* *ù-íngò-nò* *ù-dúkwà* *ú* *w-áyà*  
 when 3S-got\_up\RLS-PFV 3S-go\RLS far\_off 3S-come\RLS

*w-índà* *tí-nà* *à-sí-yâa /*  
 3S-see\RLS AG6-REL 3P-HAB-do

*w-áyà* *w-áyà* *d̩̩o*  
 3S-come\RLS 3S-come\RLS **over\_here**

'when he went out he went there, then he saw what they were doing / then he came **back here**'

[samoh001.170]



*dɔ̃o* can denote either the goal or the source of the motion, depending on the verb used. In (20) it denotes the goal, whereas in (21) below it denotes the source. In the latter there is no geophysical boundary, simply movement away from the deictic centre of the story; *dɔ̃o* denotes the source of the motion, and the location of the now-deserted participant.

(21) Amos: Ø-*náatà*      ù-*ʒpð*                      ù-*súmà*  
 NC8-spider    3S-take\_hold\RLS    NC7-run  
 ‘Spider took off’

Ishaya: ù-*náhà*      kù-*lóngí*                      ***dɔ̃o***              *n = ì-rívà*  
 3S-leave\RLS    NC9-monitor\_lizard    **over\_here**    and=NC3-stare  
 ‘he left Lizard **back here** staring!’

[saat001.006.206]

This possibility of referring to a referent left behind might be related to a puzzling difference between the Tirisino dialect and its close neighbour (both geographically and linguistically) Tidipo. In my discussions with Tidipo research assistants it became clear that the extension of *dɔ̃o* in the spatial field is quite different for them than for Tirisino speakers. Rather than denoting a zone close to and centred on the hearer, *dɔ̃o* in Tidipo seems to refer to a zone *behind* the speaker. How this relates to their use of *ù* (the Tidipo equivalent of *ù*) is a matter for further investigation.

Coming back to the Tirisino dialect, *dɔ̃o* has a further sense which may also be linked to its use in situations such as the ‘back here’ example encoded in (21) above, where the location denoted by the deictic is one that has been ‘left behind’. In this additional sense, *dɔ̃o* may denote a location which is associated with the speaker, even though he or she may not be physically present at the time of utterance. This can be seen from the way in which the Acipu discuss their home village. If two Acipu from the same village are at home, then they can use either *páa* ‘here’ or *dɔ̃o* ‘over here’ to refer to their village. If they travel to a nearby Kambari town, then not surprisingly *páa* ‘here’ can no longer be used to refer to their home village. However they can continue to use *dɔ̃o* in this way, regardless of their geographical location at the time of utterance. For inhabitants of different villages, the range of locations that can be referred to using this deictic is different, and so determining the extensional meaning of *dɔ̃o* (in this usage) still requires deictic anchorage, but of the social rather than spatial kind. In this respect *dɔ̃o*

is similar to the English expressions *home* or *back home*, which like *dõo* can vary as to the extent of the location denoted, from a country down to an individual house<sup>8</sup>. In summary, while *dõo* generally refers to the physical location of the speaker, it has a wider meaning in that it can also refer to the physical location of the speaker's home or some other place strongly associated with the speaker.

One final difference between *pâa* and *dõo* is that only the latter may be used to refer to a place the speaker is *about to be*. In Cicipu the speaker can say to a colleague standing next to her, while indicating a place close by: *come let's go over here*, as in (22), which comes from a conversation nested in a folktale.

- (22) *àyá*            *túukwà*    *dõo*  
       *àyá*            *tí-dùkwà*   *dõo*  
       come\IMP 1P-go\IRR **over\_here**  
       'come let's go **over here**'

[saat002.002.521]

A similar scenario was suggested by a research assistant as a way of distinguishing between the meanings of *pâa* and *dõo*. If in a crowded setting such as a festival, a speaker asks somebody to *àyá pâa* then she can only mean for the addressee to come nearer to the place where she currently is. If, however, the speaker wishes to have a private word with the addressee, then she can say *àyá dõo*, and then they will both move away from the group to the place indicated.

Finally, we may note that speakers can take advantage of the existence of two near-speaker deictics in gestural contrastives (Levinson 2004:108), without the suspension of the spatial contrast that occurs in languages such as English with only one near-speaker term e.g. *this one hurts, and so does that one*. This is particular true of the corresponding demonstrative pronouns and modifiers, but adverbs may also be used in this way as shown in (23). This use of *dõo* to provide contrast is of course in line with the characterisation given above.

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<sup>8</sup> In the list that was presented to me by Mohammed Mallam, he had glossed *dõo* as 'permanent place', which was presumably based on this sense of the word.

(23) *in*     ***páa***     'ə́sónì,     n = ìn-zízzúvù /  
and     **here**     close     with=NC5-finger

*in*     ***dḡo***     'ə́sónì,     *in*     *kù-lúngù*  
and     **over\_here**     close     with     NC9-shoulder

'**here** next to the fingers, and **over here** next to the shoulder'

[ovkz004.726]

While I do not know of another language with a term precisely comparable to *dḡo*, there are cross-linguistic parallels for certain aspects of its meaning. For example, Anderson and Keenan (1985:285-286) give the example of the demonstrative modifier *náú* in Nama Hottentot, which is only ever used for contrast, either with proximal *nee* 'this' or distal //nāá 'that'. *Da*<sup>2</sup> in the Vietnamese language Sre performs a similar function (Anderson and Keenan 1985:287). Gerner (2009:74-75) also gives the example of Romanian.

I am uncertain whether to say Cicipu has a four-term system of spatial deixis or a five-term one. Perhaps it is best just to say that there is a four-way contrast with respect to distance and person, but with a choice of terms for the near-speaker zone, depending on whether or not a contrast with some other specific location is intended. Systems with four or more deictic distinctions in demonstrative modifiers are rare cross-linguistically, accounting for only 12 of Diessel's (2008) sample of 234 languages. The number of spatial deictic distinctions in a language has been correlated with various aspects of the sociocultural setting, such as the naturalness of the environment and the level of literacy (see Weissenborn and Klein (1982:4) for a brief discussion). While Cicipu fits the usual pattern (high degree of differentiation correlated with a natural rather than built environment, and low literacy), it should be borne in mind that despite similar sociocultural settings, the West Kainji group as a whole shows considerable variation in this respect. Ut-ma'in, for example, has just a single basic demonstrative modifier *-ín*, which can be further modified by the adverb *jít* 'far', as in the following phrase meaning 'those trees': *fārə̀s s-ín sē jít* literally 'trees **this the far**' (Smith 2007:75). Given the similarities with the Hausa system noted above, it may be that the complex spatial deictic system of Cicipu owes as much to language contact as to the way of life of its speakers.

### 3. Linguistic expression of spatial deixis

In this section I will demonstrate how the five deictic distinctions discussed in §2 are expressed in the grammar of Cicipu. The treatment here is very brief, the aim being simply to demonstrate the systematicity of these five distinctions in Cicipu grammar.

#### 3.1. Demonstrative adverbs

The five demonstrative adverbs have already been discussed at length in §2. Here I will just add that it appears that each term can be reduplicated with the effect of intensification, as shown in Table 2. The semantic effect of this is not really understood yet, however<sup>9</sup>.

Table 2 Reduplicated demonstrative adverbs

Reduplicated form	Gloss	Basic adverb	Gloss
<i>pàmpâ</i>	right here	<i>pâa</i>	here
<i>lèllê</i>	right there	<i>lêe</i>	there
<i>'indè'indè</i>	?	<i>'indè</i>	yonder
<i>ûû</i>	?	<i>û</i>	far away
<i>dôndô</i>	right over here	<i>dôo</i>	over here

#### 3.2. Demonstrative modifiers

The demonstrative adverbs have noun modifier counterparts encoding the same five distinctions. These usually occur after the noun and take the high-tone gender agreement prefix characteristic of the associative construction<sup>10</sup>. They can have any of the four cross-linguistic functions of demonstratives identified by Diessel (1999): exophoric, anaphoric, discourse deictic, and recognitional. The modifier roots are shown in **bold** in Table 3.

<sup>9</sup> The third and fourth terms have not been observed in the corpus, and it is hard to guess at their meaning. They should be considered suspect.

<sup>10</sup> The noun plus demonstrative modifier is almost certainly derived from an associative construction involving the adverb e.g. 'hut of here'. This derivation also accounts for the root-initial long consonants – see McGill (in prep.) for details.

Table 3 Demonstrative modifiers

Example	Gloss	Basic adverb	Gloss
<i>k-áyá ká-mpà</i>	this hut	<i>pâa</i>	here
<i>k-áyá ké-llè</i>	that hut	<i>lêe</i>	there
<i>k-áyá ké-"índè</i>	yon hut	<i>'índè</i>	yonder
<i>kw-á'à kú-"û</i>	that far off house	<i>'û</i>	far away
<i>kw-á'à kú-df'ò</i>	this house over here	<i>d'òo</i>	over here

The demonstrative modifiers may also occur before the noun, in which case they are more restricted in function, either introducing new discourse topics, or reactivating old discourse topics. This positional choice is not generally the case for Cicipu modifiers, apart from two other determiners: the article *-nà* and the interrogative quantifier *-èn'é* 'which' (McGill 2009:424-436). Pre-nominally, these determiners can occur with either PERSON/NUMBER agreement morphology or GENDER agreement, although for the demonstrative modifiers this only seems to be possible with the three proximal deictics: *-mpà*, *-llè*, and *-d'ò*.

### 3.3. Demonstrative pronouns

The singular demonstrative pronouns are compounds consisting of the contracted form *é* of the independent 3PS pronoun *éví*, together with one of the demonstrative adverbs, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Demonstrative pronouns

Pronoun	Gloss	Basic adverb	Gloss
<i>é-mpè</i>	this one	<i>pâa</i>	here
<i>é-llè</i>	that one	<i>lêe</i>	there
<i>é-"índè</i>	yon one	<i>'índè</i>	yonder
<i>é"û</i> or <i>ó"û<sup>1</sup></i>	that one far off	<i>'û</i>	far away
<i>ó-nd'ò<sup>12</sup></i>	this one over here	<i>d'òo</i>	over here

<sup>11</sup> Either form is possible. An example of usage might be in referring to someone who has gone abroad.

<sup>12</sup> There is a puzzle about the direction of vowel harmony in these words, since in *é-mpè* the vowel quality [e] appears to have spread rightward from the *é-* to the following deictic *pâa*, whereas in *ó-nd'ò* the situation is reversed: the [o] seems to have spread leftward from the *d'òo* deictic to the *é-* 3PS pronoun.

#### 4. Deixis and aspect

From the point of view of grammaticalisation, Cicipu is of interest because both the perfect and completive aspects are expressed by means of a periphrastic construction involving one of the demonstrative adverbs introduced in §2. Both these aspects are encoded periphrastically by placing a post-verbal demonstrative adverb either clause-finally, or in the highly-unusual position between the verb and its complement, if there is one. Two of the five demonstrative adverbs may occur in this position: *û* ‘far away’ (24) and *lêe* ‘there (near hearer)’ (25): the latter appearing with a geminated consonant. In these constructions the deictics have lost their original locative meaning and now serve aspectual functions.

- (24) *m-pándà*                      *û*                      *kò-mísòoní*  
 1S-forget\RLS                      **far\_away**                      NC1-story  
 ‘I’ve forgotten folktales’

[saat001.002.109]

- (25) *ù-râa*                      *llêe*                      *éllè,*                      *r-úamá*  
 3S-eat\RLS                      **there**                      that\_one                      NC3-war  
 ‘he’s defeated that one in battle’

[ovkz004.870]

After a brief summary of tense, aspect, and mood in Cicipu (§4.1), the *û* construction is described in §4.2. This is the more obviously perfect in meaning of the two, since it is found in a wider variety of contexts that are associated with resultative perfects cross-linguistically. In §4.3 I will turn to the *lêe* construction, the meaning of which is more debatable. The discussion will focus on its use in the Kezzeme video commentaries.

##### 4.1. Summary of TAM system

The basic grammatical distinction in the Cicipu verb is one of mood rather than tense or aspect, with realis and irrealis being expressed by different tone patterns (e.g. *n-dúkwa* ‘I went’, *n-dùkwa* ‘I should go’). There is a future morpheme (*m-ù-dúkwa* ‘I will go’), but this may only occur in conjunction with the irrealis tone pattern. There is no past tense – in the case of active verbs the realis forms are usually interpreted as having past reference, unless the continuous aspect auxiliary *yo* ‘be’ is used (*n-yô á↓ = údúkwa* ‘I am at going’). Stative verbs do not occur with the continuous aspect, and their realis forms may be used to refer to either past or present situations. A number of other aspects are expressed either through affixes (the habitual, the perfective

and the progressive) or tone/vowel change (the dependent imperfective). Further details can be found in McGill (2009:214-220).

## 4.2. The $\hat{u}$ perfect

The  $\hat{u}$  perfect is illustrated in (26b), where the ‘kill’ clause differs from its basic realis counterpart in (26a) only by the insertion of the demonstrative adverb  $\hat{u}$  ‘there far off’ between the verb and the object NP. The sentence in (26b) was uttered by one folktale character to another and illustrates what McCawley (1971) called the ‘hot news’ use of the perfect. Example (26a), on the other hand, comes from the same story later on, and invokes a proposition which is already familiar to the addressee.

- (26) (a) *v-índà*      *gó*      *ń-húnà*      *k-káa*      *v-vôo...*  
 2S-see\RLS    TOP    1S-kill\RLS    NC8-woman    AG8-1S.POSS  
 ‘you see, because I killed my wife...’

[saat002.002.603]

- (b) *ń-húnà*       $\hat{u}$       *k-káa*      *v-vôo*  
 1S-kill\RLS    **far\_away**    NC8-woman    AG8-1S.POSS  
 ‘I have killed my wife’ [said on the same day]

[saat002.002.346]

Dahl and Velupillai (2008) distinguish between two related uses of the perfect: resultative and experiential. The Cicipu perfect only has the resultative use, which occurs when referring to ‘an event, often but not always a recent one, which has results that hold at the time of speech (or any other time serving as reference point)’ (Dahl and Velupillai 2008). Experiential situations e.g. *he remembered that he had already come* are instead usually encoded with the verb *tabukwa* ‘touch’ (from Hausa *taba*, which has the same experiential function – see Jaggar (2001:358) for an example).

Comrie (1976:56-61) and Dahl (1985:132-133) further distinguish between the ‘perfect of result’ and the ‘perfect of recent past’ (McCawley’s ‘hot news perfect’), although Dahl points out that there is considerable overlap between the two with respect to the situations they specify, since recent events are more likely to have results persisting into the present (Dahl 1985:136).

While the majority of instances of the Cicipu perfect in the corpus encode recent events, as in (26b) above, in other cases the event is clearly in the distant past, as in (27). Not all the recent events encoded by the perfect can be classified as ‘hot news’. Example (28), which comes from a riddle-telling

session, refers to a recent event, but one that is known to the hearer, and so cannot be considered hot news. The event does however have continuing relevance for the present situation – the implication being that the guesser is not going to be let off the hook another time. Thus it seems that the  $\hat{u}$  perfect is best glossed as a ‘perfect of result’.

- (27) *ká'á*    *yí-'índè*    *yì-dóohò*     $\hat{u}$   
 now    AG3-yon    AG3-disappear\RLS    **far\_away**  
 ‘now that other [kind of iron ore] has disappeared’  
 [sama001.774]

- (28)  $\emptyset$ -*lápà*    *gó*    *n-cáa = vù*     $\hat{u}$     *kù-táa*  
 2S-know\RLS    TOP    1S-give\RLS=2S.PRO    **far\_away**    NC9-debt  
 ‘you know I’ve already given you a let-off’  
 [saat001.005.078]

Perfects of result carry the implication that the state resulting from the action encoded by the perfect is still continuing. This can be seen from the formulaic early morning greeting exchange:

- (29) A:  $\emptyset$ -*úngò*     $\hat{u}$ ?  
 2S-rise\RLS    **far\_away**  
*have you got up?*  
 B: *íí,*    *n-úngò*     $\hat{u}$   
 yes    1S-rise\RLS    **far\_away**  
*yes, I’ve got up*  
 [2006-12-21.01]

It would not be possible to use this exchange if B had gone back to bed. Similarly, on arriving at someone’s compound and asking *hán z-zá k-kwá'á?* ‘where’s the man of the house?’, a common reply is the perfect *ù-dúkwa*  $\hat{u}$  ‘he’s gone out’, but never *ù-dúkwa* ‘he went out’.

Example (30) is metalinguistic in nature, taken from an elicitation session on the deictic *dôo* (§2.3), but it illustrates the same point – the speaker’s concern is with the fact that the subject referent of *ùkámàa dôo* is no longer at the utterance location.



- (30) *àmáa* 'ù-*kámàa* *dõo'* / *lêe* ù-*núunà-nù* *kámá*  
 but 3S-be.PST\RLS over\_here there 3S-show\RLS-RES like  
 ù-'*úngò* / ù-'*úngò* ù-'*náhà* **û** '*ásù*  
 3S-go\_home\RLS 3S-go\_home\RLS 3S-leave\RLS **far\_away** place  
 'but "he was over here" / this suggests he went home / he went home  
 and **has left** the place'

[eamoh001.089]

In contrast, on the main 'event line' (Grimes 1975) of a past narrative only the basic realis forms are found. Perfects *are* found in past narratives, but these are either within direct speech or limited to the encoding of 'pluperfect' situations. As with many other perfects cross-linguistically, both the encoded time and the reference time may be in the past. In Cicipu there is no difference in coding between present perfect and past perfect: the following two examples show past reference to an even older situation.

- (31) *kámí* *mò-ní* *mà-yâa-nà*  
 before NC4-water AG4-arrive\RLS-VENT  
*hári* ù-'*yâa* **û** *kà-bíkkà*  
 even 3S-do\RLS **far\_away** NC1-shelter  
 'before the rain fell he had made a shelter'

[Tidipo, saat002.005.048]

- (32) *ánà* ù-'*dúkwà-nà*, *èsée*,  
 when 3S-go\RLS-PFV actually

*Ø-náatà* *Ø-ní'wà* **û**  
 NC8-spider AG8-rehydrate\RLS **far\_away**

'when he went, Spider had already rehydrated'

[saat001.008.104]

Example (33) is similar, but this time there is no dependent clause. It is again taken from a folktale. Spider, the guitar-playing protagonist, has eloped with someone else's fiancée, who is now sitting on his bed. Before singing the song, the narrator explains that Spider had already brought his guitar:

- (33) *èvi*      *dá'à*      *ù-kábà-nà*      *û*  
 3S.PRO    moreover    3S-take\RLS-VENT    **far\_away**

*m-ólò*      *m-évi*  
 NC4-guitar    AG4-3S.POSS  
 'he had brought his guitar'

[saat002.005.048]

A similar constellation of functions is found in the related language Central Kambari (Crozier (in prep.)), where the 'Perfect/Relative Past' suffix *dɛ̃* (cf. the Central Kambari distal demonstrative adverb *dɛ̃*) is used in both pluperfect situations and for greetings equivalent to (29). Thus it seems that the use of these perfect constructions date back to at least Proto-Kambari.

Concerning the well-known prohibition (in English) of perfects and specific reference to the time of the past situation, Comrie (1976:54) comments that it is 'not clear that the mutual exclusiveness of the perfect and specification of the time of a situation is a necessary state of affairs in a language', and gives Spanish and Russian as counter-examples (see also Dahl 1985:137-138). In Cicipu the perfect can occur with specific reference to time, as (34-35) show, although the matter has not been thoroughly investigated.

- (34) *túntùní*      *n-râa*      *û*  
**long\_ago**      1S-eat\RLS      **far\_away**  
 'I have **long since** eaten [it]'

[saat002.002.629]

- (35) *ánà*      *n-húnà*      *û*      *k-káa*      *v-vôo*  
**today**    1S-kill\RLS    **far\_away**    NC8-woman    AG8-1S.POSS  
 '**today** I have killed my wife'

[saat002.002.346]

Recall that *û* may occur either immediately after the verb (the perfect) or clause-finally, in which case the meaning is a straightforward locative: 'far away' or 'invisible'. It can also occur in both positions simultaneously, in which case the one expressing perfect occurs post-verbally but before the object NP, and the one expressing location usually occurs clause-finally (clause-initially is the other possibility). This can be seen from the fact that the second instance may be replaced by an alternative locative adverb e.g.

'*índè*, but the slot for the deictic indicating perfect aspect does not admit a free choice of demonstrative adverb, as (36) shows.

- (36) *ń-húnà*     *'û/\*'índè*     *k-káa*     *v-vôo*     *'û/'índè*  
 1S-kill\RLS     **far\_off/\*yonder**     NC8-woman     AG8-1S.POSS     **far\_off/yonder**  
 'I have killed my wife {way over there/over there}'  
 [2010-03-18.07]

### 4.3. The *llêe* completive

As mentioned above, the near-hearer deictic *lêe* may also be found between the verb and its complement, albeit with a geminated first consonant viz. *llêe*. As I discuss in §5 below, I was not aware of this possibility until I transcribed the Kezzeme video commentaries, hence there is no mention of it in McGill (2009). In contrast to the situation with the far deictic *'û*, minimal pairs such as (37a) and (37b) are usually given contrasting translations by consultants. In the former the deictic adverb functions as a straightforward locative and is translated accordingly with the Hausa near-hearer locative *nán*. The latter sentence says nothing about the location of the death, and is consistently translated using *kèè nán*.

- (37) (a) *éllè*     *ù-kôo*     *llêe!*  
           that\_one     3S-die\RLS     **there**  
           'that one died there' [Hausa: *wannan ya mutu nán*]

- (b) *éllè*     *ù-kôo*     *llêe!*  
           that\_one     3S-die\RLS     **there**  
           'that one has died' [Hausa: *wannan ya mutu ke nan*]

[sama001.522]

Hausa *kèè nán* is composed of the relative continuous marker *kèè* and the near-hearer locative *nán*, with the composite phrase being glossed by Jaggard (2001:463) as an 'invariant copular phrase'. It seems likely that the Cicipu construction has been calqued from Hausa, particularly since there is also a parallel at the level of the NP. In Hausa, *kèè nán* also occurs after nouns in equational clauses e.g. *Múusáa kèè nán* 'it's Musa' (lit. 'Musa is there'). The

Cicipu translation is most likely to be *Múúsá llêe*, with the geminate in the Cicipu construction having arisen from a contraction of the alternative *Múúsá v-ì lêe*, where *v-ì* is the copula with the AG8 ‘neutral agreement’ prefix *v-ì*<sup>13</sup>. The AG8 agreement prefixes are the ones used with atypical agreement controllers, including names and entire clauses (Corbett’s (1991) ‘neutral agreement’, see McGill (2009:306) for examples), and so the gemination on *llêe* in (37b) is just what we would expect to find if this construction has come about through an extension of the equational [X copula *lêe*] to the clause level.

The position of the demonstrative between the verb and its complement is unexpected, however. As the translation of (38) illustrates, *kêe nán* always occurs at the end of its clause, whereas Cicipu *llêe* can be found either between the verb and the object NP, or clause-finally. The only elements other than the *û* perfect that have been found bisecting the verb and its complement are the Wackernagel clitic *dáâ* ‘moreover’ (from Hausa *dadâ*), which may occur between sentence-initial verbs and their objects, and the clausal negator *cé*, which always occurs immediately after the verb.

- (38) *ò-kótò*                      *llêe*                      *k-ívè*  
 3P-finish\RLS                      **there**                      AG1-3P.POSS  
 ‘they’ve finished theirs [bout]’ [Hausa translation *sun gama nasu ke nan*]  
 [ovkz003.515]

Morphosyntactically, then, the *û* of the perfect construction and the *llêe* in (38) make up a single distributional category, which is suggestive that (historically, at least) speakers may have perceived some common ground functionally. It is also arguable that the syntactic possibility illustrated in (38) makes an analysis of aspectual marker more appropriate for Cicipu *llêe* than for the corresponding Hausa *kêe nán*, which (when it has clausal scope) is restricted to the usual position for adverbs in Hausa, namely clause-final.

So is it appropriate to analyse *llêe* as just another marker of perfect aspect, as has been done in the case of post-verbal *û*? In favour of this analysis is the fact that in certain situations the two appear to be interchangeable. For example, consider the Cicipu clauses in (39) and (40) and their Hausa translations:

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<sup>13</sup> The sound change *\*vi > C* (where C denotes a consonantal weight unit) has occurred in several Cicipu formatives – see McGill (in prep.) for details.

- (39) *ù-ʒpò*                      *û*  
 3S-take\_hold\RLS        **far\_away**  
 ‘he’s taken hold [of him]!’ [Hausa translation *ya kama ke nan*]  
[ovkz003.776]

- (40) *ù-húnà*                    *llée*  
 3S-kill\RLS                **there**  
 ‘he’s killed [him]!’ [Hausa translation *ya kashe ke nan*]  
[ovkz003.587]

There is no dedicated perfect in Hausa (Jaggar 2001:156), and examples such as (39) are often translated using the simple perfective<sup>14</sup>, regardless of whether the adverb *û* is present or not e.g. *ya kama* ‘he took hold/he’s taken hold’. However on some occasions the phrase *kèè nán* is added, as was in fact done in the translation of (39), just as in (40).

Nevertheless, there is no evidence that *llée* occurs in the majority of the situations in which the *û* perfect is found. It does not occur in greetings or pluperfect situations, and in narratives it is almost always found on the main event line. But what we can we say about the environments in which it *does* occur? Here it will be helpful to consider the contribution of Hausa *kèè nán* to the clauses in which it occurs. Neither of the two recent reference grammars in English say much about the use of *kèè nán* in verbal clauses, but what is said is suggestive of completive aspect. Newman (2000:547) observes that ‘[w]hen used at the end of a verbal sentence, *kèè nán* commonly adds a notion of finality’. Jaggar (2001:463) writes that the ‘emphatic’ *kèè nán* ‘has a conclusive force to it and is pragmatically stronger than the copula’. These statements are interesting in the light of Bybee et al.’s (1994:57-61) characterisation of ‘completive’ aspect as marking ‘an action has been performed thoroughly or to completion’ (Bybee et al. 1994:18). Furthermore, they also note that completives often have an emphatic use, such that ‘[t]he action is reported with some emphasis or surprise’ (Bybee et al. 1994:57). I will argue here that the *llée* construction in Cicipu is best understood as a completive, first by presenting examples from the corpus in general, and then (§4.4) by considering its distribution in the Kezzeme commentaries with respect to the events being reported on.

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<sup>14</sup> Confusingly (for this paper, at least) this category is often called the ‘completive’ (e.g. Newman 2000:569). Jaggar’s gloss ‘perfective’ (2001:155) seems more in keeping with the distinctions made in Bybee et al. (1994).

Bybee et al. (1994:61) note that completives ‘may be lexically restricted’, and while I do not know to what extent certain combinations may be considered ungrammatical by speakers, it is certainly true to say that *Ilêe* has a fairly narrow range of collocations, as can be seen in Table 5. Moreover, most of the verbs with which it occurs lend themselves to the encoding of actions construed as completed or performed thoroughly e.g. *finish*, *pass by*, *die*, *win*, *kill*, and *escape*. In total there are 36 occurrences in the corpus, 19 of which come from the video commentaries. This is despite the fact that the commentaries account for only about a fifth of the corpus in terms of number of clauses.

Table 5: Verbs marked by the *Ilêe* completive in the Cicipu corpus

Verb	Gloss	No. of occurrences
<i>kətɔ</i>	<i>finish</i>	10
<i>'waa</i>	<i>pass by</i>	4
<i>uto</i>	<i>take out (i.e. in combat)</i>	2
<i>koo</i>	<i>die</i>	3
<i>raa</i>	<i>win</i>	2
<i>huna</i>	<i>kill</i>	1
<i>lawa</i>	<i>escape</i>	1
<i>hasala</i>	become angry	1
<i>kondo</i>	enter	2
<i>hwaara</i>	start	1
<i>'ungo</i>	get up	1
<i>yãa</i>	do	1
<i>zamukwa</i>	happen/come about	7

In contrast, the *'û* perfect occurs with a more varied range of verbs, the glosses of which are: *eat* (5), *finish* (4), *forget* (2), *arrive* (2), *leave*, *run*, *come*, *take hold*, *snap*, *pass by*, *give*, *escape*, *bring*, *go home*, *rehydrate*, *kill*, *make*, *weave*, and *disappear*. In total there are 29 occurrences in the corpus, 8 of which come from the video commentaries<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> I did not include ambiguous cases when counting. These were mainly intransitive verbs of motion followed by *'û*, since in such cases it is hard to distinguish between the

The idea of completion can be seen in the following two examples. The first is from a folktale. The two main characters are hunting rats, and the speaker complains that his companion's incompetence has allowed every single rodent to escape. As in all of these examples, the use of the completive is not obligatory here; the simple realis form of the verb would have been grammatical, but it would have lacked the force of the original.

- (41) 'à-ãââ hò-kôo cé v-índà hà-láwà = tû **llêe!**  
 NC2-rat AG2-die\RLS NEG 2S-see\RLS AG2-escape\RLS=1P.PRO **there**  
 'the rats didn't die, and now you see they've altogether escaped us!'  
 [saat001.006.057]

The next example shows the completive with the verb 'waa 'pass by' in the sense of 'finish', to describe the ending of a festival. (Note too that the verb is in the realis mood: all the previous verbs specified in the context below are in the irrealis mood).

- (42) [Context: They do[IRR] the Ciciya festival / then the following day they carry on[IRR] with Ciciya / until they do[IRR] eight nights / on the eighth day... /]  
 Cicíyá tí-'wâa **llêe**  
 [name\_of\_festival] AG6-pass\_by\RLS **there**  
 '...Ciciya has finished'  
 [Tikula dialect, sami001.305]

It was mentioned above that completives may also encode actions reported with emphasis or surprise, and this seems to be the case for Cicipu *llêe*. Thus it may be found in emphatic responses to comments or questions by other speakers. Example (43) comes from a discussion of the wooden defensive traps that the Acipu used to set against their enemies. On expressing surprise that such a trap could kill someone, I was given an emphatic response marked with *llêe* – which of course contrasts with the unmarked clause given in Musa's previous turn. In (44) *llêe* is used affirmatively rather than contrastively, but still with emphasis.

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locative and the perfect readings (e.g. he arrived there, he had arrived). For *llêe* there was less of a problem since there is a difference in consonant length, as well as the consistently different Hausa translations.

(43) Musa: *v-ú-zàa = vì*                      *ù-yúwó-ní,*                      *ù-kôo*  
 2S-FUT-find\IRR=3S.PRO    NC7-fall-NMLZR    3S-die\RLS  
 ‘you’d find him fallen, he died’

Stuart: *ù-kôo?*  
 3S-die\RLS  
 ‘he died?’

Musa: *ée*                      *ù-kôo*                      *llêe !*  
 yes                      3S-die\RLS                      **there**  
 ‘yes he really died!’

[sama001.470]

(44)  
 A: *ù-hyâa*                      *tò*                      *‘m-ú-dòonù*                      *ù-láhà*                      *ù-nɔɔ = vì’*  
 3S-say\RLS    OK    1S-FUT-sit\IRR    1S-leave\RLS    NC7-give=2S.PRO  
 ‘he said OK “I’m sitting down, I’m not going to give you [any]”’

B: *ù-hásàlà*  
 3S-become\_angry\RLS  
 ‘he got angry’

A: *@ée*                      *ù-hásàlà*                      *llêe!*  
 yes                      3S-become\_angry\RLS                      **there**  
 ‘yes he really got angry!’

[Tidipo dialect, saat002.003.063]

As well as emphasis, *llêe* can be used to express surprise, as in the following example. The event being encoded is participation in the Cicipu ritual of the Akula division of the Cicipu, during which young men hide in caves and the elders have to seek them out. The speaker is interviewing an elder who is claiming not to be able to sing any of the ritual songs, and so he goads him by expressing fake surprise that he has never taken part in the festival.

(45) *áá!*                      *vù-yâa*                      *cé*                      *Cìcìyá*                      *llêe?!*  
                                         2S-do\RLS                      NEG                      [name\_of\_festival]                      **there**  
 ‘Eh? You haven't done the Cicipu?!’

[Tikula dialect, sami001.319]



#### 4.4. The *llêe* completive in the Kezzeme commentaries

The most persuasive evidence that *llêe* is marking actions ‘performed thoroughly or to completion’ comes from its distribution in the Kezzeme commentaries with respect to the events shown in the video. It will be shown below that there is a striking co-incidence between the marking of clauses with *llêe* and the completion of the salient events of the festivals, including the explosive start, the individual bouts between veterans, and the end.

##### 4.4.1. The Kezzeme commentaries

The Kezzeme commentaries were provided in February 2010 by two speakers of the Tirisino dialect of Cicipu, Markus Yabani (aged in his early 30s) and Mohammed Mallam (aged 26), hereafter referred to as MY and MM respectively. The material on which they commentated was a 42-minute video of the Kezzeme festival, edited from footage which I had filmed two years previously on Korisino hill, the ancestral home of the Orisino division of the Acipu. The Kezzeme is a coming-of-age festival, and also a remembrance of the wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Older youths and men represent the attackers, and they run up to be beaten with spiked sticks by younger boys, who form a defensive line along the remnant of the stone fortifications which surround Korisino (Figure 3). The transition from beater to beaten takes place at around fourteen years old, and marks the beginning of the responsibilities and privileges of manhood.

*Figure 3: The defensive line on the old stone kùcìngà ‘fortified wall’ (Photo by Markus Yabani).*



After the beating has finished, the participants adjourn to a nearby clearing where they watch the *ilábà yí-cìpári* ‘game of stalking’, in which pairs of veterans perform war-dances armed with dane guns, swords, spears, or machetes (Figure 4). After stalking each other for a minute or two, the bouts climax by one of the participants clutching the other – at this point an officiating elder fires a gun and two more elders take their place. The video contained six such bouts, lasting for ten minutes in total<sup>16</sup>

*Figure 4: Ilábà yí-cìpári ‘game of stalking’ with Mogobiri Katintun (left) and Danjuma Galadima (right). The squatting spectators are the Kezzeme initiates. (Photo by Markus Yabani).*



The festival is extremely noisy, with constant cries of *ihù* (from Hausa) from the attackers, interspersed with sporadic gunshots. The difficulty of recording any speech is exacerbated by the general chaotic movement of the attackers.

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<sup>16</sup> See [http://www.cicipu.org/gallery#Kazzeme\\_festival](http://www.cicipu.org/gallery#Kazzeme_festival) for further details and photographs.

The defenders, although stationary, remain silent. In short, the festival itself offers little of linguistic interest: the focus is on action not speech<sup>17</sup>.

Both commentators watched the video once through first. They then watched again, this time describing both what was happening, and the meaning of what was happening, so that future generations of Acipu would understand what they were seeing in the video. The commentators wore closed headphones so they could hear the sound of the video without the recording microphone picking it up. They both proved to have a remarkable rate of delivery, particularly MY: MM's commentary contained 3898 words, MY's a staggering 7442 words, which works out at 93 and 177 words per minute respectively (pauses included), sustained over the 42 minutes. The annotated recordings comprise 2,286 intonation units altogether, and since many of these intonation units contain multiple clauses, at a rough estimate this corresponds to around 4,000 clauses – approximately 20% of the total Cicipu corpus.

How 'authentic' these video commentaries are is an interesting question. The genre is presumably entirely new and therefore not ecologically-valid, but at the same time the degree to which the commentators immersed themselves in the task (one told me later that he didn't sleep at all after doing the recording) resulted in sharp stylistic differences from the rest of the corpus, most notably a passion that is largely absent from the other narratives in the corpus<sup>18</sup> – but certainly not in real life. One thing that can be said about the commentaries is that in one sense they minimise the 'observer paradox' – it doesn't make much sense to give a video commentary *without* someone being there to record it. I do not know if there is another, more obviously 'authentic' Cicipu text type in which *llêe* constructions are found with similar frequency. However in a sense it doesn't really matter – it is presumably a universal property of language that humans can linguistically encode completed culturally-salient events. If an artificial genre such as real-time video commentary increases the chances of this happening then it has the potential to throw constructions such as the Cicipu completive into relief, and therefore merits its place in a documentary corpus. This is all the more so if it proves to be a genre valued by the speech community (see §6).

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<sup>17</sup> Before the festival the boys who are about to enter for the first time are given a preparatory talk by the priest of their village. I was not however permitted to record this.

<sup>18</sup> There are several spoken texts delivered with feeling (e.g. sermons, prayers, laments about language shift, and historical narrative both humorous and wondrous), but none of these are narratives concerning the present or recent past.

#### 4.4.2. The distribution of completives in the commentaries

As mentioned in §4.3, *//êe* is disproportionately common in the commentaries. As a first hypothesis, it might be supposed that this correlation is due to some special linguistic property of real-time commentary. In Müller's (2007:ch. 2) overview of the structural properties of sports commentary he notes that it is usual for researchers to make a distinction between what he calls DESCRIPTION and ELABORATION (Müller 2007:170-172). The former refers to the description of the events and situations that occur on the field of play at, or immediately before, the time of speaking, while the latter refers to commentators' higher-level analysis and the provision of background information. Description is far more subject to time constraints than elaboration, although this depends on both the nature of the sport and broadcast traditions. Research on time-constrained description has shown fairly consistent results with respect to intonation: commentators use a higher pitch but (perhaps surprisingly) with less variation (see Müller 2007:25-26, 29, 39-40 for references). Time-constrained description has also been shown to have special morphosyntactic properties when compared to other kinds of speech, including use of tense, non-verbal clauses, formulaic expressions, and the position of adverbs (Müller 2007, chapter 2).

As one would expect, the Kezzeme commentaries are a mix of description and elaboration, with the latter naturally predominating at moments of heightened action such as the individual bouts. Indeed, the descriptions (in Müller's sense) of the individual bouts are the most time-constrained parts of the commentaries. Here the speed of speech can be extremely rapid (approaching 300 words per minute in places, including the pauses between intonation units), and the pitch is very high and yet flat.

All but one of the nineteen commentary instances of *//êe* occur in passages of description. Of these eighteen, fourteen occur just after the end of the bouts, even though these occupy only ten of the forty-two minutes. However, *//êe* clauses are *not* found during the most time-constrained portions of the bout descriptions – this is a natural outcome of their function as completives: once the event they are encoding has completed, the time pressure is off, and in the commentaries they are usually found in periods of relative calm after the climax of the event.

Thus the evidence does not support the hypothesis that the use of *//êe* is related to the particular time-constraints imposed by descriptive as opposed to elaborative commentary. Instead, it seems more likely that it is the nature of the events being described that leads to the use of the completive. The distribution of the fourteen completives encoding the end of the six bouts is given in Table 6. The glosses of the verbs are also given (see Table 5 for the Cicipu forms).

Table 6: Distribution of completives in bout descriptions according to speaker

Timestamp	Bout	MM	MY
21:50-23:00	1	3 ( <i>take out, finish, take out</i> )	0
23:00-24:11	2	3 ( <i>win, finish, finish</i> )	0
24:11-26:29	3	2 ( <i>kill, finish</i> )	1 ( <i>win</i> )
34:00-35:35	4	2 ( <i>pass by, finish</i> )	0
35:35-37:52	5	1 ( <i>finish</i> )	0
37:52-39:25	6	2 ( <i>finish, finish</i> )	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>

It is immediately apparent that the completives are far from evenly distributed across the speech of the two speakers. In MM's commentary there are sixteen instances altogether (13 in bout descriptions plus 3 others), but MY's commentary contains only three (1 in a bout description plus 2 others). This individual variability is not surprising with an optional aspectual category such as the completive, and it is important to stress that the use of the completive is not simply an artefact of MM's speech. MM was an important contributor to the corpus, and has additionally contributed a lengthy historical narrative of 684 clauses, during which the completive did not occur at all. Furthermore, the non-commentary corpus examples of *llêe* are found in the speech of six additional speakers, of widely-differing ages and representing all three corpus dialects<sup>19</sup>.

MY's three instances all clearly relate to completed actions, and in two cases these are salient events of the festival: one is the ending of the free-for-all beating (the first part of the festival, before they adjourn for the individual bouts), described with the verb *kɔtɔ* 'finish': *ɔ-kɔtɔ llêe* 'they've finished' [ovkz004.666], while the second is said at the end of one of the individual bouts described in §4.4.1: *ù-râa llêe* 'he's won' [ovkz004.870]. The third use of *llêe* marks a less important event in the context of the festival, but nonetheless a completed action. The verb was *waa* 'pass by', and it was used when a group of people on whom MY was commentating departed from the field of view: *â-wâa llêe* 'they've passed by' [ovkz004.693].

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<sup>19</sup> If the completive construction was calqued from Hausa, as suggested above, then it does not seem to have happened recently.



(2002), Heine and Reh (1984), nor Dahl (1985) mention demonstratives as possible sources for perfects. However Bybee et al. (1994:55) do mention an intriguing parallel to the Cicipu completive in Tahitian, where [t]here is also one case of a copula plus a proximal demonstrative (the demonstrative that points to things near the speaker) yielding an anterior [i.e. perfect – S.M.]'. So there is an attested grammaticalisation path [copula + proximal demonstrative > perfect], in addition to the more general [completive > perfect] path proposed by Bybee et al. (1994), and it may be that the Cicipu completive is following a similar grammaticalisation path to Tahitian.

It may be tempting to look for a metaphorical extension of the spatial deictic meaning in aspectual terms, but the provenance of the two constructions argues against this approach. The *ʔ* perfect appears to be a case of language-internal grammaticalisation, while the *llêe* completive is probably a calque from Hausa, which happens to use the near-hearer term in the *kêe nân* construction. Thus the existence of deictic contrast in the Cicipu aspectual system is most likely accidental.

## 5. Linguistic benefits of video commentary

In sections §2-4 I outlined various aspects of the spatial deictic and aspectual systems of Cicipu. I arrived at this analysis partly through observation, partly through monolingual elicitation, and partly through inspection of the corpus. As far as the corpus was concerned, the two video commentaries mentioned in the introduction were of particular significance, particularly with respect to the *llêe* completive. In this section I will reflect on what it is that distinguished these commentaries from the other narratives and commentaries in the corpus.

In general, the study of the use of spatial deixis in video commentary is complicated by the fact that neither the speaker nor the hearer is literally present in the 'storyworld' in which the events being reported are taking place. Nevertheless, the commentaries did show some interesting results. One of these has been mentioned in §2: the 'far away' demonstrative *ʔ* was observed both as a modifier and in presentational constructions (e.g. (9)). A second observation is that *ʔ* seems to be used more frequently when the figure being located is oriented away from the camera, regardless of difference. There is a clear potential for further research based on the video and accompanying commentaries, in part due to the extremely high frequency of demonstrative use. In MY's commentary alone there are over five hundred demonstratives from all five of the deictic categories discussed in §2 – almost a rate of one every other intonation unit. The very factors that made the filming of the festival so difficult encourage varied use of the demonstratives. These include the physical space in which the festival was conducted – a large open field bounded by ridges on two sides, the fortified wall and the summit

of Korisino to the front, and a graveyard to the back, the sheer number of participants in different locations and with differing and constantly-changing orientations, and the numerous groups of spectators dotted at distant locations. The inclusion of the video commentaries in the corpus makes it possible for useful work to be done on this topic at any point in the future, regardless of the presence (or even continued existence) of native speakers. Nevertheless, so far the main linguistic benefits of the video commentaries relate to the completive aspectual construction discussed in §4

### **5.1 The genre-dependence of grammatical constructions**

The most obvious benefit of recording the commentaries with respect to the completive aspect was of course the discovery of this construction in the first place. Language documenters are agreed on the necessity of including a wide variety of genres in a documentary corpus, and this is at least partly because the frequency of grammatical constructions is often genre-dependent. The passive in English is a well-known case (e.g. Mair and Leech 2006:331), but the principle is a general one, and can also be illustrated by an example from my own fieldwork on Cicipu. As part of an investigation into participant reference I recorded nine re-tellings of the Pear Film (Chafe 1980). These were notable for a high incidence of one particular construction, which occurred more often in these short (1-2 minute) narratives than in several hours' worth of previously-transcribed folktales, riddles, songs, historical narratives, interviews, prayers, and sermons.

This construction was the 'dependent imperfective' aspect (McGill 2009:216), which as the name suggest, marks dependent clauses encoding events which are viewed as incomplete. Up until transcribing the Pear Stories, I had tentatively glossed it altogether more exotically as some kind of evidential marking, based on discussions with native speakers of the very few textual examples. The Pear Film is slow-paced, and a great deal of screen time is devoted to the repetitive picking of pears by the farmer, during which the boy steals one basket. It was mainly the farmer's picking that was encoded using the dependent imperfective. It is not hard to see why – if ever there was an event made for the dependent imperfective, it is the opening scene of the Pear Film – especially when the speakers had been asked to describe the film as carefully as possibly.

The point is not that dependent imperfective constructions did not occur in the rest of the corpus – they did, but not in sufficient number, and not in such clear-cut situations as those of the Pear Film, where the context throws into relief the meaning of the construction. A great advantage of analysing discourse stimulated by something like the Pear Film is that the analyst knows exactly what events the speaker has in mind, whereas in the case of more



traditional narrative genres such as folktales or oral history, there is no way for the analyst to get at the events being described except through the text itself.

Concerning real-time video commentary, Lüpke (2006) found that the inclusion of this genre in her Jalonke corpus led directly to the discovery of new grammatical constructions. The corpus contains ‘action descriptions’: real-time commentary on videos of everyday activities, the inclusion of which ‘greatly increased the topics and the number of lexical items present’ (Lüpke 2006:86). Although her main goal seems to have been lexically-oriented, the resulting texts also appear to have been quite different from the rest of her corpus in terms of the frequency of grammatical constructions: speakers ‘give very fine-grained event descriptions which uncover many lexemes and constructions otherwise rare or absent from the corpus’ (Lüpke 2006:86).

## 5.2. Previous failure

It is of course reasonable to ask why I did not spot the seventeen examples of *llêe* that occur in the rest of the corpus (not to mention the many more that were probably addressed to me in direct speech), when much rarer constructions such as the progressive were readily identified fairly early on. Several factors no doubt led to me putting *llêe* to one side and leaving it there, with the tolerance for opaque constructions which is the requisite of fieldworkers studying previously-undescribed languages. These include: (i) the generality of meaning of *llêe* (recall from §2.1 it is the ‘unmarked’ demonstrative) compared to *û*, (ii) the length of time it took me to get to grips with the myriad functions of gemination in Cicipu, (iii) the restricted function of the completive, (iv) its optionality, (v) the periphrastic rather than morphological expression of aspect, and no doubt (vi) obtuseness. The unusual pre-complement position of *llêe* is not as obvious a clue as it might seem, since the majority of Cicipu clauses in the corpus lack overt objects (either because the verb is intransitive or because one of the semantic roles is unexpressed). Looking back at the corpus, I had made isolated comments about gemination, a gloss of ‘perfect’ aspect, and even translations as *kêe nân*, but the events being encoded were not sufficiently clear to lend themselves to the correct interpretation.

My failure to discover the Cicipu *llêe* completive should not be seen as altogether surprising. In their discussion on Dahl’s (1985) questionnaire methodology, Bybee et al. (1994) draw attention to the far greater incidence of completive aspect in their own survey (compiled using reference grammars) compared to Dahl’s. They (Bybee et al. 1994:34) attribute this difference to the fact that:

[c]ompletive grams are not central inflectional grams that are obligatory, nor are they necessarily of high text frequency in the languages in which they occur, but they are not entirely marginal either...[t]o discover these completives with a questionnaire would require many more sentences than it would be practical to use.

Of course, the use of a decent-sized text corpus such as the Cicipu one *should* allow greater scope for rarer aspectual forms such as completives to surface – but only if the corpus is well-balanced (in style as well as genre).

### 5.3. Distinguishing property of the Kezzeme commentaries

The Kezzeme commentaries are not the only kind of commentary in the Cicipu corpus. The retellings of the Pear Film have already been mentioned, although this is quite different in nature since speakers are asked to describe events *after* they have watched the video. Therefore they are no longer under any time constraints, and they are giving an account based on their memory of a composite text already constructed in response to the stimulus, rather than a blow-by-blow account of the action. Thus the resultant texts have more in common with those from more conventional narrative genres. There were no instances of the completive in any of the nine Pear Film retellings (640 clauses).

Other than the Kezzeme commentaries, the only kind of ‘online’ video commentary in the Cicipu corpus comes from a small experiment (with two subjects) that I carried out with Tomlin’s (1995) Fish Film in 2008, two years before the Kezzeme commentaries were recorded. Tomlin’s film is designed to investigate the effect of thematic structure on morphosyntax, rather than anything to do with aspect. Nevertheless, it has some interesting properties in common with the video of the Kezzeme bouts, as noted below. This does not however translate to a similar incidence of the use of the completive.

In §4.2 I argued that the disproportionate use of *llêe* in the video commentary is not in fact due to the linguistic properties of descriptive as opposed to elaborative real-time commentary. Instead it seems to be related to the nature of the events being marked. In genres such as historical narratives or folktales, there is less need to focus on the internal structure of events than when speakers are reporting events that have either just taken place, or are taking place before their eyes. I have already noted a consequence of this in the propensity of the dependent imperfective to occur in the more sedate parts of the Pear Film. The decision to mark an event with the optional completive *llêe* suggests that, in addition to paying attention to the moment at which an event is thoroughly complete (e.g. when the warriors finish the bout), one has also, at least to some degree, been paying attention to the moments leading up to that point (e.g. when they have not quite finished the bout).

If one wanted to test this hypothesis, one might design a laboratory experiment along the lines of the Fish Film. The subject is told to give a real-time commentary of the events that are taking place in a video. On a computer screen, two opposing figures appear and gradually approach each other. As they approach, the subject is given a visual prompt to encourage him or her to concentrate on the scene. At the moment the figures meet, one of them (to be decided arbitrarily) performs an action on the other with decisive effect: an act that is carried out thoroughly and to completion. After the victorious figure has left the screen, two different figures appear and carry out the same action. This continues until a sufficient number of ‘bouts’ have taken place. In this way we could model the essence of the Kezzeme bouts without the attendant chaos of the festival. If our hypothesis about *llée* is correct, then *a priori* we would expect a high incidence of events to be marked with the completive aspect marker.

The above description is, I believe, also a reasonable depiction of the Fish Film. The two showings resulted in the linguistic encoding of sixty-four fishy ‘bouts’, where one of the two fish is swallowed whole by the other – an event carried out thoroughly and to completion, if ever there was one. Not one of these was encoded using the completive (or the perfect, for that matter) – instead the basic realis form is always used. The number of encoded events and of speakers are smaller than one would want to make a really convincing case – and of course it would be interesting to see how an experiment explicitly designed to test for completive aspect would fare. Nevertheless certain aspects of grammar are sensitive to the speaker’s ‘intrinsic interest’ (Dooley 2007) in referents and events, and speakers may apply different strategies accordingly – it may be that the Cicipu completive falls into this category. In such cases stimuli such as the Fish Film may be less appropriate as a means of investigation than less sophisticated methods of enquiry. While speakers unused to such experiments may have a tendency to anthropomorphise Fish Film fish and other animated stimuli (Lüpke 2009:78), it seems unlikely that they will be overly concerned as to their fate, or the outcomes of the events in which they are reporting.

Whether one uses a completive or not (or a perfect, for that matter) is in part a cultural affair – to code an event as performed thoroughly, completely, or relevantly (not to mention emphatically or surprisingly) implies a personal investment that may well be absent from laboratory situations. Recent cross-linguistic discourse-based studies (e.g. Strauss (2003), and especially Strauss and Xiang (2009) on the Shishan dialect of Lingao) have demonstrated a relationship between completive aspect (in the sense of Bybee et al. 1994) and subjective factors such as the speaker’s emotional stance and the perceived newsworthiness of events being encoded; it is here that the advantage of using a culturally-iconic stimulus such as the Kezzeme is apparent. Much of the content of documentary corpora focused on event-reporting is either removed

from the interlocutors' present experience (e.g. folktales, songs, historical narrative), or concerned with artificially-manipulated events about which the speakers are relatively unenthusiastic. However much of everyday discourse is about the here-and-now or recent past, and concerns things which the speakers have a strong emotional involvement in. Of course it is just such kinds of event-reporting that it is so hard to capture in language documentation. I have written at length in this paper about how the completive construction came to my attention. The corresponding moment with respect to the perfect was when a child said to me one morning *Tanko ù-kôo 'û* 'Tanko has died'. One wonders how many Gigabytes of recordings the corpus will need to stretch to before it contains a comparable utterance.

## 6. General benefits of the video commentaries

The recording of the Kezzeme video commentaries had a number of other diverse benefits. The degree to which they have augmented the corpus in terms of number of clauses has already been quantified in §4.4.1. The content was relatively easy to transcribe since it was based on the video and did not stray from the topic of the Kezzeme. Moreover the style of the recordings is qualitatively different to anything else I have collected to date – in its intonational properties, its concern with situationally-evoked entities, its speed, the frequency of non-verbal clauses, the use of direct speech and rhetorical questions addressed to an imaginary audience, and in being entirely monologic. There are no doubt other patterns that would emerge from a detailed study of the time-constrained portions of descriptive commentary, just as Müller (2007) and others have found for sports commentary in general. Thus the Cicipu documentary corpus was significantly expanded from around 16,000 to 20,000 clauses, a novel genre was introduced, and relatively little transcription effort was expended.

As one would expect given our primary purpose in creating them, the commentaries also provide explanations of the various events recorded in the video, and of the role that the festival plays in initiation and in the demonstration of manhood. The video itself has thus become an important part of the documentary 'bundle' for archiving, rather than a curio of limited cultural value, and virtually no linguistic value. Furthermore, in addition to the cultural elaboration directly present in the commentaries, in many places the discourse hints at (and provides an initial basis for) orthogonal lines of ethnographic enquiry. Topics that have subsequently been followed up using the commentaries as the basis of discussion include the sacrificial obligations of the bereaved and the construction of the fortified wall surrounding Korisino; although in this respect the commentaries are largely an untapped resource. In this way the cultural content of the documentary corpus includes

what some members of the speech community themselves (admittedly a demographically-unrepresentative subsection thereof) have highlighted and wish to pass down to posterity. Ideally this approach should be complemented by an ethnography of speaking, as stressed by Himmelmann (1998) and Seifart (2008), although in reality many fieldworkers lack appropriate training in anthropology to achieve this. In any case, there are both ethical (e.g. Dwyer 2006:56) and methodological (e.g. Himmelmann 1998) reasons for allowing local concerns to shape the corpus.

In addition to enhancing the documentary corpus, the production of these commentaries was useful for various kinds of what Nathan (2006) has called ‘mobilization’. With the collaboration of the two commentators, the commentaries were given time-aligned annotations and Hausa and English translations using the software programs Transcriber and Toolbox. Subtitles generated by ELAN were imported into the DVD-authoring program Adobe Encore, and DVDs were then produced for dissemination both within and outside the community.

These efforts have had a number of positive effects. Following a private showing of one of the videos with Cicipu commentary, the Sarkin Kasa (‘ruler of the land’) of the Acipu in Kebbi State responded enthusiastically to the ongoing local language support efforts which had led to the production of the DVD. One practical outcome of the Sarkin Kasa’s response was that he called together almost two hundred men from six of the seven dialects for an orthography workshop, which in turn resulted in the agreement of a provisional orthography and opened the way for the first large-scale production of books. A further outcome was the gift of land, materials, and labour to build a Cicipu Language Project office in the Cicipu town of Sakaba. Public showings of the video have been well-received and have helped communicate the work of the language project to the general public. It can also be anticipated that the existence of prestige products such as DVDs in the Cicipu language will have a positive effect on the Acipu’s attitudes towards their heritage tongue. Since there are virtually no privately-owned computers or DVD players in Acipuland<sup>20</sup>, the general usefulness or otherwise of the Hausa/English/Cicipu subtitles remains to be seen, but it is at least feasible that they may have both entertainment and educational value as the technology becomes more widely available.

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<sup>20</sup> During the dry season (January to April) TVs and DVD players are frequently hired for entertainment at the numerous weddings and festivals of that period. In the village I stayed in the showings usually attract well over a hundred viewers, which makes DVDs an attractive means of mobilisation.

## 7. Conclusion

Much of the linguistic research currently being carried out on endangered or minority languages has a motivation which is largely opaque to the speech community, with the products of little direct use to the community in terms of language support and revitalisation. Linguists have debated whether this really matters. Some (e.g. Newman 1998) have argued that it is not appropriate to view the subjects of our linguistic research as the beneficiaries of our 'linguistic social work'. Others such as Austin (2010:25-26) have asked whether the degree of effectiveness with respect to language support and revitalisation shouldn't be regarded as the *primary* measure of the success of a documentation project. Most documenters likely fall somewhere in between these two extremes, with much of their corpora 'externally-motivated', in the sense of Seifart (2008), in that it is being driven by the desires of the speech community. Furthermore they may spend a considerable proportion of their time collaborating with native speaker activists or documenters in applying the corpus in the service of language support and revitalisation. If this is the case, then the kind of real-time commentaries discussed in this article may serve as a compromise between relevance to the concerns of the current linguistic research community and desirability to the speech community.

The analysis presented in this paper has relied heavily on use of the corpus, in particular the Kezzeme video commentaries. Note that these video commentaries were not created with linguistic research of any kind in mind, let alone the specific topics treated in this paper – the emergence of the completive was an accidental by-product. It is of course an unfortunate reality that much of the language documentation being carried out today is by Western linguists based in universities far from their field sites. However for many of today's endangered languages, one day that is all that will be possible. If language documenters are serious about Woodbury's (2003:45) 'philologist of 500 years from now', then we should expect (and indeed hope) that the most important linguistic discoveries based on our corpora will be made not by us, but by others, serendipitously, and in the distant future.

As mentioned in the introduction, a strong case has already been made for including commentary in documentary corpora (Evans and Sasse 2007, Nathan and Austin 2004), quite apart from any linguistic benefits that may accrue. What I hope to have shown in this article is that, even on a small scale, the inclusion in a documentary corpus of real-time descriptive commentaries on culturally-salient events has the potential to throw into relief grammatical constructions that otherwise might remain obscure, or even undetected.

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