



## Phasal Polarity items in Datooga (Nilotic) Interactions with tense, aspect, and participant expectation

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In Datooga, a Southern Nilotic language of Tanzania, the PhP concepts STILL and NO LONGER are encoded by means of a continuative verbal prefix *ud(u)-*, e.g.:

- (1) *g-úd-dá-gáw-ì-s-chì*  
AFF-CONT-1SG.SBJV-milk-PLUR-TERM-AP  
'I'm still milking'

The concept ALREADY is encoded in one Datooga dialect by means of an auxiliary verb, but appears only rarely in my corpus of conversational Datooga. There is no specialized item for NOT YET, a concept typically expressed by means of the negative perfect. Such a gap in the PhP system is not predicted by Van Baar's (1997) "expressibility hypothesis".

This paper first looks at formal characteristics of PhP items in Datooga and then explores the semantics of the continuative *udu-* prefix, showing that its meaning interacts with tense, polarity, and, importantly, lexical aspect. While verbs denoting states and activities combine with *ud(u)-* to give straightforward STILL or NO LONGER meanings, verbs denoting achievements and accomplishments behave differently. Of particular note is the use of the negated continuative prefix with achievement verbs, which indicates that a state of affairs was expected to take place, but did not (and will not) occur. This PhP expression, which exclusively codes counterfactual scenarios, presents a configuration of phasal polarity that has received minimal attention in the literature.