Title: Interface of the Akan Future Tense Marker ‘Bε-’ and Modality

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Abstract: Future tense is marked in Akan by the morpheme ‘Bε-’. It has also been described by Christaller (1875), and Dolphyne (1971; 1988) as, marking an ingressive aspectual morpheme. The semantics of this so-called ingressive aspect “indicate a previous coming or a previous going required for the action indicated by the verb stem” (Dolphyne 1971). However, (Osam 2002) has rejected this label, calling it motional prefix. This is because, as noted by (Osam 2002), “this morphemes does not express any aspect.

In this study, we present other functions of ‘bε-’ as expressing modality in Akan. It has been found in this study that ‘bε-’ has the ability to (i) express epistemic modality of probability, when it is attached to certain verbs of state, and (ii) express deontic modality of permission, when attached to the verb ‘tumi’ (to be able to).

The study is descriptive, based on self created corpus data, from Akan literature.

References: