Ikaann tense-aspect-mood: looking beyond the verb

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Ikaann is a dialect of Ukaan spoken in a small community in North-Eastern Ondo State, Nigeria. It has a rather diverse tense-aspect-mood (TAM) system, with the following TAM categories already established:

- tenses: Non-Future, Future
- aspects: Continuous, Habitual, Sequential, Completive
- mood: Imperative, Conditional
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Some of these categories can be combined; instances of Non-Future Completive and Future Conditional are attested in the data.

Ikaann employs a range of phonological, tonological, morphological and syntactic strategies to encode the various TAM categories. From the current research it seems that TAM categories are characterised by some or all of the following:

- a clitic-like marker preceding the verb encoding person, noun class, number and TAM information
- a tonal melody on the verb which is specific for the TAM category
- purely tonal morphemes that either surface on vowels or don't surface but affect the following tones
- additional auxiliary-like morphemes which encode additional TAM information
- sometimes changes in the word order from the standard SVO to SOV

As you would expect with ongoing research, a lot of questions remain open. Firstly, there are a range of TAM categories still awaiting classification. Secondly, there is a strategy for adding and/or refining aspect-like and manner-like distinctions, namely the use of verb-like words. These verb-like words may or may not trigger phonological, tonological, morphological and syntactic changes to the verb. Both the characteristics of these verb-like words themselves and the changes that they trigger have still to be described and analysed.

In the research seminar presentation, I therefore intend to:

1. give an overview of established Ikaann TAM categories
2. show data on categories that have not been classified yet
3. request feedback on (i) how the troublesome TAM forms fit into the TAM system, (ii) whether the audience knows of similar structures in other languages that could help make sense of the Ikaann data.