Leggbó does not have dedicated grammatical forms that primarily encode temporal notions, which implies that it does not have 'tense' as a grammatical category. However, some aspect-mood forms have temporal implications. Like all languages, it has lexical items that refer to time, and specific constructions in which they are used. In this paper, we try to describe as broadly as possible the means which Leggbó offers to locate events in time, namely, lexical expressions, temporal implications of aspectual-modal forms, and temporal notions in particular grammatical constructions. We use as guide the manual provided by Comrie & Smith (1977) for elicitation of data used in this paper.

Keywords: temporality, tense, aspect, deictic, mood
1. Introduction

Linguistic temporality refers to the concept of time which underlies the expression of chronological time relations in natural languages (Klein 1994: 60). It is the visual conceptualization of time as expressed in Comrie (1985) and also concerned with the ways time can be dealt with and expressed by for instance, using verb tenses, nouns that deal with time (e.g. yesterday, tomorrow, next year) and some other lexical items depending on the language. Tense is an integral part of linguistic temporality and it is a grammatical category that locates a situation in time, to indicate when the situation takes place. Although tense grammaticalizes time reference, and seems to be a universal attribute of human languages, not all languages have its tripartite demarcations of past, present and future. Also while, it is pervasively the case cross-linguistically that tense is expressed in the verbal system, there are yet languages where temporality and tense are not morphologically expressed within the verbal system. Leggbo is one of such languages. This paper discusses the phenomena of temporality and tense in Leggbo and observes that Leggbo does not have tense as a grammatical category but expresses temporal by the use of certain lexical items.

The Leggbó language is an Upper Cross language of the Benue-Congo family spoken by the Aggbo people of the Cross River State in the South-South axis of Nigeria by about 60,000 people. It is made up of six varieties: Letatama, spoken in Adadama, Lebamma spoken in Itigidi, Lekuleku spoken in Ekureku, Lem Nabana spoken in Immabana, Leyigha spoken in Assigha and Lenyima spoken in Inyima. The variety described here is Letatama spoken in Adadama. Not much work has been done on the language. Apart from classifications such as Crozier & Blench (1992) and Grimes (2000), there were few other works on the language. Spreda & Spreda (1966) is a phonological sketch of the language. Bendor-Samuel & Spreda (1969) treats the fortis and lenis prosody of the present continuous verb in the language, the first report of the fortis/lenis contrast in Leggbo. Dimmendaal (1978) is a reconstruction of Leggbo consonants, with a view to the classification of the Upper Cross languages as a whole. In recent times also, more descriptive works have been added to the literature on Leggbo grammar such as Hyman, Paster, Narrog & Udoh (2002), Udoh (2003a, 2003b), Hyman & Udoh (2003) and Udoh (2004). The present
The study is the first attempt to provide a descriptive analysis of how temporality and tense are expressed in Leggbo. The remaining part of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses lexical expression of temporality and tense in Leggbo, while section 3 examines the temporal implications of Leggbo aspect-mood forms. Section 4 examines the expression of temporality using syntactic constructions while section 5 is the conclusion.

2. Lexical Expression of Temporality and Tense in Leggbo

Lexical expressions that serve to locate events in time admittedly are of lexical, or sometimes anthropo-linguistical, rather than of grammatical interest. However, in a language without distinct tense marking, they play a salient role to indicate temporality, and this fact may justify their inclusion here. They are listed and exemplified in 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

2.1. Periods of Time

Lexical items used for the expression of periods of time are listed and exemplified in contextual sentences as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Lexical Expression in Leggbo</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Example in a sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>ñkáññkáñ</td>
<td>hour (bell/clock)</td>
<td>ñkáññkáñ - wôl  àfóñ clock 3SG-strike.PRF two It is 2 O’clock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>lèdzil</td>
<td>day</td>
<td>lèdzil  é-sôhó day 3SG-break.PRF It is dawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>(g)èppëá</td>
<td>week (market)</td>
<td>è-vì èppëá  àtán 3SG reach week three It will be up to three weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>week (church)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>è-vì <code>ìkóbàsì</code> àtán</td>
<td>3SG- reach-IRR week three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>It will be up to three weeks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>èppè</td>
<td>moon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>è-vì èppè àtán</td>
<td>3SG reach IRR moons three</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>It will be up to three months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><code>(g)ébitàà</code></td>
<td>year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>è-kkúké gébitàà àzén</td>
<td>3SG-stay-RL year five</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>He stayed there for five years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>kkókkòò</td>
<td>morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>è-móŋó ìi kkókkò</td>
<td>3SG-return-RL in morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>He returned in the morning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><code>(g)éppí̄ón</code></td>
<td>afternoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mê- sén ìi géppí̄ón</td>
<td>1PL-go-IRR in afternoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>We will go in the afternoon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><code>(g)ézóhôn</code></td>
<td>evening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bá-séŋ ìi gézóhôn</td>
<td>3PL-go-IRR in evening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>They will go in the evening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><code>(g)èzùŋí</code></td>
<td>night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bá-fó ìi gèzùŋí</td>
<td>3PL-return-RL in night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>They returned in the night.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><code>àmùŋé</code></td>
<td>first market day of the week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>àmùŋé é-dé lèdžɪ̀l àwó ékò <code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>3SG is day of age group our</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><code>ìkóbàsì</code></td>
<td>Ámùŋé is our age group meeting day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><code>èvòŋè</code></td>
<td>second day of the week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>è-wèl ìi èvòŋè</td>
<td>3SG- be-IRR second day of the week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. `nkwo</td>
<td>third day of week</td>
<td>3SG-come-IRR on second day of the week He will come on the second day of the week.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><code>nkwo é-déep piá ábé </code>nkwo 3SG is market their Nkwo is their market day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. ëkké</td>
<td>fourth day of the week</td>
<td>ëkké é-dééppiá ámán ëkké 3SG is market our ëkké is our market day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. èdzi</td>
<td>dry season</td>
<td>èdzi ébó dry season reach It is dry season.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. (g)ètèyì</td>
<td>rainy season</td>
<td>é-kóní-é ̀í `(g)ètèyì 3SG-plant-3SG in dry season She planted it in the dry season.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. èkòò</td>
<td>harmattan season</td>
<td>èkòò nè hármatàn HAB dry Harmattan is usually dry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. ébitàà-égwà</td>
<td>famine</td>
<td>ìsól e-de ébitàà-égwà last year 3SG was year-hunger Last year was famine.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.2. Deictic Points of Time
Deictic points of time can be lexically marked as shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Lexical Expression of Deictic Points of Time</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Example in Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>légbàl ámmá</td>
<td>now (this time)</td>
<td>légbàl ámmá é-dé áwó é-ní mán time this 3SG- is that 3SG- give us This is the time he gave us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>nmàánà nmàánà</td>
<td>immediately</td>
<td>nàá nmàánà nmàánà come immediately Come immediately!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>légbàl ámmé</td>
<td>that time (past or future)</td>
<td>víná légbàl ámmé é-díí go home time that 3SG- say Go home at the time he said!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ìì ìkáfikánà àfóŋ</td>
<td>at seven clock’</td>
<td>vòhó ìì ìkáfikánà àfóŋ wake up at clock 7 Wake up at 7 o’clock!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>dzémmà</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>víná dzémmà go home today Go home today!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>̀sèn/ìsèdè</td>
<td>yesterday</td>
<td>é-sá ̀sèn/ìsèdè 3SG- finish-RL yesterday It finished yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>kòò</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td>mè-sí ̀yínà sé kòò 1PL- do-IRR conversation the tomorrow We will discuss it tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>lèdziddé ̀sòò ̀sèn</td>
<td>day before yesterday (that other day that dawned yesterday)</td>
<td>é-víná lèdziddé ̀sòò ̀sèn 3SG- go home-RL day 3SG- break yesterday He went home the day before yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>kòò kpòló</td>
<td>day after tomorrow (skipping tomorrow)</td>
<td>bà-wèl kòò kpòló 3PL-come-IRR tomorrow skip They will come the day after tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>ìì lèdzìl ̀ikòbási</td>
<td>on Sunday (church day)</td>
<td>ìì ̀e ìì lèdzìl ̀ikòbási do-3SG on day Sunday Do it on Sunday!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>ìì àjì ákáálá</td>
<td>on Christmas (‘at feast of white man’)</td>
<td>mòŋò ìì àjì ákáálá come back on feast white man Come back on Christmas day!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>kókò̀̀o àmmá</td>
<td>this morning</td>
<td>bëfì-ìì kókò̀̀o àmmá return 3SG in morning this Return it this morning!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>isèdè kókò̀̀o/ kókò̀̀o ̀isèn</td>
<td>yesterday morning</td>
<td>è-vìñà isèdè kókò̀̀o/ kókò̀̀o ̀isèn 3SG- go-RL home yesterday morning He went home yesterday morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>kòò ikókò̀̀o/ kókò̀̀o áá kòò</td>
<td>tomorrow morning</td>
<td>bá-džìñà kòò ikókò̀̀o/kókò̀̀o áá kòò 2PL-go-IRR to farm tomorrow morning You will go to farm tomorrow morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>èzùñi àmmá</td>
<td>tonight</td>
<td>mé-ddà fìdál ̀l èzùñi àmmá 3PL tell-IRR stories night DET We will tell stories this night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>isè(n) èsùñi/ èsùñi ̀isèn</td>
<td>yesterday night</td>
<td>è-vìñà isè(n) èsùñi/èsùñi ̀isèn 3SG-go-RL yesterday night He went home yesterday night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>kòò èsùñi/ èsùñi áá kòò</td>
<td>tomorrow night</td>
<td>wèl kòò èsùñi/èsùñi áá kòò come tomorrow evening Come tomorrow evening!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>(g)èppiòn</td>
<td>in the afternoon</td>
<td>bá-vìñà ìì géppiòn 3P- go home-IRR in afternoon They will go home in the afternoon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>èppÿá àmmá</td>
<td>this week</td>
<td>lègbàl sè èsòñò ìì èppÿá àmmá time DET complete-RL at time DET The time is up this week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>èppÿá èdò</td>
<td>next week (market week)</td>
<td>bá-mòŋò èppÿá èdò 3PL-come back-IRR week another They will come back next week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>èppé àmmá</td>
<td>this month</td>
<td>ìppé àmmá è-dè áwò nì-màñá month DET 3SG is that 1SG born This month is my birthday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>èppé ákè èbólò èsá</td>
<td>last month (month that has just</td>
<td>èppé ákè è- bólò è-sá è-dzúì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>finished)</td>
<td>month that 3SG- just 3SG-finish-RL 3SG- fine</td>
<td>The month that has just finished was fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>ěppé áké ě-ffúi</td>
<td>next month (month that is coming)</td>
<td>ěppé áké ě-ffúi ě-vółó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>month that 3SG-come-IRR 3SG-more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Next month will be much better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>ñ èdzì</td>
<td>in the dry season</td>
<td>ñókoló néè ñëòèyì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Orange is usually sweet during the dry season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Orange HAB sweet in dry season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>ñì gëtèyì</td>
<td>in the rainy season</td>
<td>mìmàngôló néè ku ñì gëtèyì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mango HAB be in rainy season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mango abounds in the rainy season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>ébità ìmmà</td>
<td>this year</td>
<td>ébità ìmmà ñ-séng lëtlé ãwò ãkàlá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>year DET 1SG- home-IRR of white man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This year, I will go abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>fissòól</td>
<td>last year</td>
<td>é- mìmà' lìssòól</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3SG-born last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>He was born last year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.3 Quantifying Temporal Expressions

As shown in the table below, quantifying temporal expressions can also be lexically marked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Quantifying Temporal Expressions</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Example in Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>lèdzìl-lèdzìl</td>
<td>daily/every day</td>
<td>é-nèè fò lèdzìl-lèdzìl 3SG-HAB return everyday 3SG-HAB return everyday. He returns everyday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>kòkòò èkàmèdèdè</td>
<td>every morning</td>
<td>èvvá sè nèè gbò kòkòò èkàmèdèdè dog the HAB bark every morning The dog barks every morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>lègbàl wònì</td>
<td>once</td>
<td>é- zè é-lègbàl wònì 3SG-see 3SG-time one 3SG-see 3SG-time one. He saw it once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>lègbàl mbòó</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>é- nèè è-wèl lègbàl mbòó 3SG-HAB 3SG-come time some 3SG-come time some. He comes sometimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>lègbàl kúlikúli</td>
<td>many times</td>
<td>é- sèngì lègbàl kúlikúli 3SG-go time many 3SG-go time many. He went many times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>lègbàl èkàmàèdèdè</td>
<td>every time</td>
<td>nwé é-lègbàl èkàmàèdèdè wear 3SG-time every 3SG-time every. Wear it every time!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>bbábbá</td>
<td>never/at all</td>
<td>mí-bbábbá e-dahi 1S-at all 3SG-like 3SG-like. I don’t like it at all!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>ńfémèèdèn nwá èkpònóñzám</td>
<td>from beginning to end</td>
<td>tònò ke ñfémèèdèn nwá èkpònóñzám begin from first reach last Begin from the beginning to the end!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>gèźùñì gbàlá</td>
<td>the whole night</td>
<td>é-vèi fìvèl gèźùñì gbàlá 3SG-sing song night long 3SG-sing song night long. S/he sang the whole night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>lèdzìl gbàlá</td>
<td>day long</td>
<td>é- tò fìbból lèdzìl gbàlá 3SG cry cry day long 3SG cry cry day long. S/he wept the whole day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4. Verbs Encoding Temporal Notions in Leggbo

So far, two verbs have been identified as encoding temporal notions in Leggbo. They are the verbs \textit{ffèm} and \textit{pòm}. The verb \textit{ffèm} has three readings: (a) ‘first do V’ (before doing other things), (b) ‘be the first to do V’ and (c) ‘do V for the first time’. All these readings are allowed in the following sentence in (1a).

1a. bá-ffémi bà-yèl ñwéñé sè
   3PL-be.first 3PL-read book DEF
   ‘They first read the book’/‘They were the first to read the book’/‘They read the book for the first time’

Disambiguation of (1a) can take place through context, for instance through a temporal adverbial such as \textit{lègbàl iffèméèden} in the following example (1b).

1b. bá-ffémi bà-yèl ñwéñé sè lègbàl iffèméèden
   3PL-be.first 3PL-read book DEF time first
   ‘They read it for the first time’

The verb \textit{pòm} denotes an activity being performed early by some standard. It seems to require an element of dynamicity as it is not felicitous with stative events (cf.2d). With achievements, or as the main verb, implying an achievement itself, it expresses something happening at an earlier time than was expected (2a & 2b); with activities (2c), it denotes something being done prematurely; that is at an earlier stage than is usual.

2a) \textit{pòm} = main Verb:

é-pòmì éppyà
3SG-be.early market
‘S/he left early for the farm/market’
2b) **pòm** + achievement:

\[
\text{gwànò ámmè è-pòmì è-wèel èppyà}
\]
woman DEM 3SG-be.early 3SG-come market
‘The woman was early at the market’

2c) **pòm** + activities:

(i) \(\text{è-pòmì è-kkpó èttó}\)
3SG-be.early 3SG-build house
‘S/he built the house at an early age/??at an earlier time than expected’

(ii) \(\text{è-pòmì è-sì ìzù}\)
3SG-be.early 3SG-make game
‘S/he started to play prematurely/at an earlier time than expected’

2d) **pòm** + state:

\(\text{è-pòmì è-kpèlè vvóm/è-kkù mmé}\)
3SG-be.early 3SG-know thing 3SG-be there
‘S/he knew something/stayed there earlier than expected’

3. **Temporal Implications of Leggbo Aspect-Mood Forms**

There are three forms of aspect-mood distinctions in Leggbo, namely the perfective, the perfect, and the irrealis and they can be associated with temporal notions.

3.1. **The Perfective**

In Bendor-Samuel & Spreda’s (1969) article on the "continuous" form of the Leggbo verb, the form referred to as "perfective" here, was mistakenly identified as "past". This was not completely unexpected, however, as the perfective of non-stative verbs in statements, like in the following example (3), indeed is usually interpreted as "past".
3). bá-dźi lídzíl
3PL-eat food
‘They ate/eat food’

However, this can be explained as a result of the aspectual meaning of the form. The perfective presents a situation as a whole, and an activity or achievement in Leggbo can be conceptualized as a whole only when already being completed (in the past), or projected ahead (in the future). Unless marked by the "irrealis" the interpretation, will be "past". On the other hand, a perfective-irrealis form in the antecedent of a conditional, for instance, does not necessarily refer to the past. It simply presents an event as a whole (4).

4). é-dédè é-tééí, á-ddómar
3SG-be.EMP 3SG-rain 2SG-get.wet.IRR
'If it rains you will get wet'

Also, with stative verbs, there is no preference for either present or past interpretation, unless the time reference is lexically marked by a temporal adverbial as in (5a-b).

5a). é-kkú nímé isèn
3SG-be there yesterday
‘He was there yesterday’

5b). é-kkú nímé dzëmmà
3SG-be there today
‘S/he is there today’

Stative situations involve no change. Thus, every snapshot of the situation can represent the situation as a whole. Therefore, present stative situations can be conceptualized with the perfective. Depending on the situation encoded, the temporal interpretation of the perfective can vary, referring to completely different tenses, we conclude that it is not a tense, but a purely aspectual form.
3.2. The Perfect in Leggbo

In general linguistic terms, the perfect is a category between aspect and tense. There seems to hold a diachronically directional relationship between aspectual and temporal use of the perfect as in languages like German and French (Comrie & Smith 1977). Perfect constructions have developed primarily tense marking functions. The Leggbo perfect has functions typical of perfects cross-linguistically, and it functions like past event resulting in a state relevant to the present, having a mixed aspectual-temporal character. Thus, arguably, the perfect in (6) with the construction, V (Perfect) dàa…. bèle bòlo V, 'having already done something before something else happened', is closest to a temporal, namely 'anteriority' reading as shown in (6).

6). bá-bbó dàá bèlé m-bòlò m-wèl
   3PL-die already before 1SG-just.do 1SG-come
   ‘They had already died before I arrived.’

However, first of all, the perfect still encodes a resulting state, so its aspectual meaning is not lost. Secondly, the anteriority reading has to be supported by the construction with the conjunction bèlé 'before'. Thus, there are no grounds to assume that the perfect has actually shifted to being a tense marker, even in this particular construction. Still, as we recognize the cross-linguistic tendency of perfect markers becoming past markers, we can acknowledge the possibility of such usage leading towards a more temporal orientation of the form.

3.3. The Irrealis in Leggbo

The irrealis is another form of the Leggbo verb to which a temporal function might be attributed. Thus, in many contexts, the irrealis can be interpreted as "future." For instance, in the following sentence (7), with the adverbial, marking a future event, such an interpretation is natural.
7). é-vvéé’mè kòò  
3SG-leave.IRR tomorrow  
‘S/he will leave tomorrow.’

Besides its arguably potential deictic reference to future, the irrealis mood in complex sentences can also be interpreted as denoting posteriority, which is "relative tense." Compare (8a) and (8b)

8a). mí-vójí-é tà é-wèél  
1SG-want-3SG COMP 3PL-eat  
‘I wanted her/him to come.’

8b). bá-sí-bé tà bá-kkù númè  
3PL-make-3PL COMP 3PL-be there  
‘They made them stay there.’

The matrix verb in the two sentences (8a & b) is in the unmarked (perfective) form, and the verbs in the complement clause are marked as irrealis, although the event marked by each verb might well have actually taken place. The situation encoded by the matrix verb (‘want’, ‘make’) temporally precedes the situation encoded in the complement clause, and thus, the irrealis in this case, can be viewed as marking posteriority. On the other hand, statements about future events always entail a modal element of prediction. Thus, in the sentence with 'leave' above (7), it is predicted that “someone will leave the following day”. Also, depending on the actual context, the reading can also be more clearly modal, like ‘s/he may leave tomorrow’. In the complex sentences with 'want' and 'make', on the other hand in (8a-b), the factivity of the event encoded in the embedded (complement) clause is open, that is, this usage can be viewed as modal as well. Therefore, it is most reasonable to conclude that the irrealis is a mood marker that is used for the marking of future and posteriority in a way that is predictable from its modal function.

4. Expression of Temporality Using Syntactic Constructions

The notion of temporality in Leggbo can also be encoded syntactically. This can be found in the expression of punctual time reference, expression of duration and in the relative ordering of time reference.


4.1. Punctual Time Reference

Punctual temporal reference is usually marked with a prepositional phrase headed by the preposition "i" with a noun denoting a point of time. Sentence (9) below shows marking of general location in time, sentence (10) and (11) mark punctual deictic reference in the future and the past respectively, while sentence (12) shows marking of points in a time period.

9). bá-sí îzù îi lèdzil’ikóbâsì
   3PL-do game in day church
   ‘They played games on Sunday.’

10). móŋó îi ñkáfiñkàñ âfón
    return.IMP in clock two
    ‘Be back in two hours/at two o’ clock!’

11). ñ-kkú mmé îi ñkáfiñkàñ ñfóŋ
    1SG-be there in clock two
    ‘I was there two hours ago/at two o’ clock’

12). ñ-nënî àcècènà àtàn îi ñkáfiñkàñ àtàn àmmá è-bölò è-yòŋọ
    1SG-have.PRF guest.PL three in clock three that 3SG-just.happen
    3SG-pass now
    ‘I have had three visitors in the last 3 hours’

As can be seen (9-12), "i"(on, in, at) is ambiguous between denoting a point of time independent of the speech time (‘on Sunday’, ‘at two o’clock’), or in relation to speech time (‘in two hours’, ‘two hours ago’), or points in a period of time. Thus, for instance, the sentences (10) and (11), like (12), can also refer to a point in a period of time (‘be back within two hours!’, ‘I was there in the
last two hours’).

The preposition ì is fully, overtly and obligatory marked for only those expressions that translate to 'at seven o’clock', 'on Christmas', and 'in the dry/rainy season' as shown in table 2. If a following noun starts with a vowel or nasal, ì can fuse with it, resulting in a lengthening of the initial segment of the noun as shown in (13).

13a) ì àjiakáala => ààjiakáala 'on Christmas'
b) ì èdzi => èèdzi 'in the dry season'
c) ì ńkáítì àzé àfóŋ => ì ńkáítì àzé àfóŋ 'at seven o’ clock'

Also, with the noun kòkkò 'morning', elision takes place, and as result of the elision, ì becomes ikòkkò (short initial vowel).

Anteriority can be expressed in sentences with the subordinating conjunction bèlè..bòlo ‘(just) before’, while posteriority is expressed in sentences with è-dè. The differences in the temporal setting are encoded by the different modal marking of the verbs, rather than using a different construction. Sentences (14) and (16) are set in the past, (15) and (17) are set in the future.

14). ñ-kkù mà bèle abé kê bá-bòlo bà-wèl
   1SG-be here before 3PL LOC 3PL-just.do 3PL-come
   ‘I was here before the others came’

15). ñ-kkù mà bèlè abé kê bá-bòlo ba-wèel
   1SG-be.IRR here before 3PL LOC 3PL-just.do 3PL-come.IRR
   ‘I’ll be here before the others come’

16). è-sènì gëto é-dè é-wàni vvóm è-sà
   3SG-go work 3SG-be 3SG-cook thing 3SG-finish
   ‘S/he went to work after cooking.’

17). è-sènì gëto é-dè é-wàni vvöm è-sà
   3SG-go.IRR work 3SG-be 3SG-cook thing 3SG-finish
   ‘S/he will go to work after cooking.’
bòlè is not omissible in the sentences denoting anteriority. Its elision would lead to a "purpose reading" of the second verb as shown in (18).

18). ń-kkú múmá bèle àbè kέ bá-wèèl
   1SG-be here before 3PL LOC 3PL-come.IRR
   "I was here before so that the others could come"

Another anteriority-related construction is kéné múmè ‘as soon as’, consisting of a grammaticalized verb similar to bòlè, and a focal marker múmè as in (19).

19). ę-kènè múmè ę-dzé gètò é-víná
   3SG-as.soon.as FOC 3SG-finish.PRF work 3SG-go.home
   "As soon as s/he had finished work, s/he went home."

4.2. Expressions of Duration

Periods of time (‘for/within/during, etc) can either be marked with the preposition ë as in (20) & (21) (see 4.1) or remain unmarked (23). Compare the examples in (20), (21), and (22) respectively.

20). ę-z`ú múmá ęttó ı̀mmá  mı́ ́ébità ̀àzén
   3SG-live.PRF here house this in year five
   "S/he has lived in this house for five years"

21). ńtòtòŋ nè ę-dòghò ı̀ lèdžil, ędè nè̀-sì gètò ı̀ gèzùŋì
   rat HAB-sleep in day then 3SG-HAB-do work in night
   "The rat sleeps during the day, and is active at night"

22). ę-k`á ı̀lévàl ébitàà kúfkúlí
   3SG-run.PRF race year many
   "S/he has run for many years"

Anterior duration either in the past or in the future can be marked by the preposition-conjunction tütù ‘until’ (as in 23 & 24). Posterior duration can be marked by the preposition-conjunction ̀aké ‘since’ (only in the past as 25), and the construction ttöńó kέ ‘from’ (subjectless grammaticalized verb ‘begin’ +
locative marker) in the past or future (as in 26).

23). vvóm èè-ttó tútù ikóbási ákè è-bòlò è-sá mmá
thing 3SG-NEG.-fall until week REL 3SG-just.happen 3SG-finish now
‘Nothing happened until last week’

24). vvóm èèé-ttò tútù ikóbási ámmá è-fùù mmá
thing 3SG-NEG-fall.IRR until week that 3SG-come now
‘Nothing is going to happen until next week’

25) è-kkú mmá ákè ëppyà èè-bòlò è-yòŋò
3SG-be.PRF here since week 3SG-just.happen 3SG-pass
‘He has been here since last week’

26a). bá-kkú mmá ttòŋò ké ëtèyì
3SG-be.PRF here begin LOC rainy season
‘They were here from the rainy season’

26b). bá-kkù mmànà ttòŋò ké ikóbási ámmá è-fùù mmá
3PL-stay here begin LOC week DEM 3SG-come now
‘They’ll be here from next week’

Simultaneous events are typically expressed in constructions with é-dè as in
(27).

27). é-dè è-dónnì ëtèwá è-tèéì
3SG-be 3SG-sleep rain 3SG-fall
‘While s/he was sleeping, rain fell’

4.3. Relative ordering of periods of time

Leggbo does not have single lexical items that denote the relative ordering of
periods of time like ‘last’ and ‘next’ (week/month etc.). Given below in (28), is
a very short overview of the syntactic expressions with relative ordering.
28) ‘next’: N ámmá/ámmè (è-bòlò) è-fùì nmá/nmè ‘come (just now/then)’

‘last’: N ámmá/ámmè/ákè (è-bòlò) è-yòŋŋò nmá/nmè/ké ‘passed (just now/then)’

N ámmá/ámmè/ákè (è-bòlò) è-sá nmá/nmè/ké ‘finished (just now/then)’

N stands for a noun denoting a period of time (week/month etc.) while bòlò marks completion. The demonstrative modifying the noun, and the formally and semantically corresponding sentence final deictic adverbs denote the degree of immediacy to the time of the speech event; nmá being ’proximal’ and nmè and ké ‘distal’. Thus, if the point or period of time is remote from the time of the speech event, nmá is replaced by the "remote" locative marker ké, as in the following examples in (29) and (30).

29). ñ-kkú nmá ìi ıkòbàsi ámmá è-bòlò è-sá nmá
1SG-be here in week DEM 3SG-just.happen 3SG-finish now
‘I was here the week that has just finished’ (=‘the week before this week’)

30). ñ-kkú nmá ìi ıkòbàsi ákè è-bòlò è-sá ké
1SG-be here in week DEM 3SG-just.happen 3SG-finish then
‘I was here the week that had just finished’ (=‘the week before last week’)

As can be noted above in (30), ákè (and the corresponding adverb ké) are only used for past events.

If bòlò is removed, the period of time referred to, is not marked as already being passed at the point of time the event takes place. This accounts for the difference in interpretation between (31) & (32).

31). bá-kkùm nmánà tǒŋŋò ké ıkòbàsi ámmá è-bòlò è-fùì nmá
3PL-stay here begin LOC week DEM 3SG-just.happen 3SG-come now
‘They’ll be here after next week’
32). bá- kkù ‘mmanà ttòŋò kè ̀kóbàsì ̀ammá è-fùù nímá
3PL-stay here begin LOC week DEM 3SG-come now
‘They’ll be here from next week’

5. Conclusion

In every language, situations and events are always situated and linked to time reference. However, there are cross-linguistic variations in terms of how time reference is expressed. From the data so far presented here in Leggbo, it is obvious that Leggbo does not have tense as a grammatical category and thus does not have dedicated and inherent inflectional forms used to express tense distinctions. Temporal and tense notions are expressed in Leggbo by the use of certain lexical items which can be used to indicate periods of time, deictic points of time, quantified temporal expressions relating to time and some verbs that can also be used to express different states of affairs (activities, events, achievements, states, etc.). It has also been observed that the perfective, the perfect and the irrealis aspect forms can be associated with temporal notions in Leggbo while expression of temporality via syntactic construction is also very viable option.

Abbreviations
3SG=third person singular
IRR=Irrealis
HAB=Habitual aspect
1PL=First person plural
RL=Realis
3PL=Third person plural
DET=Determiner
1SG=First person singular
V=Verb
DEM=Demonstrative
DEF= Definite
2SG= Second Person Singular
References


**Imelda Udoh**
*University of Uyo, Nigeria*
icheji@gmail.com

**Heiko Narrog**
*Tohoku University, Japan*
narrog@gmail.com
&

**Ogbonna Anyanwu**
*University of Uyo, Nigeria*
ogbonnaanyanwu@yahoo.com/ogboondu@gmail.com