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## **Temporality and Tense Expression in Leggbó\***

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 Leggbo 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

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## 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, Lemmabana 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

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 Leggbó

Lexical expressions that serve to locate events in time admittedly are of lexical, or sometimes anthro-po-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.

S/N	Lexical Expression in Leggbo	Gloss	Example in a sentence
1.	ńkáfíkáj	hour (bell/clock)	ńkáfíkáj é- wǒl àfóŋ clock 3SG-strike.PRF two It is 2 O'clock.
2.	lèdzìl	day	lèdzìl é-sòhó day 3SG-break.PRF It is dawn.
3.	(g)éppíá	week (market)	é-vì éppíá àtán 3SG reach week three It will be up to three weeks.

4.	ìkóbàsì	week (church)	<p>é-vì            ìkóbàsì      àtán</p> <p>3SG- reach-IRR week            three</p> <p>It will be up to three weeks.</p>
5.	èppè	moon	<p>é-vì            èppè      àtán</p> <p>3SG reach IRR    moons    three</p> <p>It will be up to three months</p>
6.	(g)ébitàà	year	<p>é-kkúké            gébitàà      àzén</p> <p>3SG-stay-RL      year      five</p> <p>He stayed there for five years.</p>
7.	kkòkkò	morning	<p>é-móḡó            ìí kkòkkò</p> <p>3SG-return-RL in morning</p> <p>He returned in the morning.</p>
8.	(g)éppíón	afternoon	<p>mé- sέη      ìí géppíón</p> <p>1PL-go-IRR in afternoon</p> <p>We will go in the afternoon.</p>
9.	(g)ézóhōn	evening	<p>bá-sέη      ìí gézóhōn</p> <p>3PL-go-IRR in evening</p> <p>They will go in the evening.</p>
10.	(g)èzùḡí	night	<p>bá-fó            ìí gèzùḡí</p> <p>3PL-return-RL in night</p> <p>They returned in the night.</p>
11.	àmúḡé	first market day of	<p>àmúḡé é-dé lédzíl áwó ékó      ámán</p> <p>àmúḡé 3SG is day of age group our</p> <p>Àmúḡé is our age group meeting day.</p>
12.	évòḡè	second day of the	<p>é-wél            ìí évòḡè</p>

			3SG-come-IRR on second day of the week He will come on the second day of the week.
13.	`nkwó	third day of week	`nkwó é-déép píá ábé `nkwó 3SG is market their `Nkwo is their market day.
14.	èkké	fourth day of the	èkké é-dééppíá ámán èkké 3SG is market our èkké is our market day.
15.	èdzi	dry season	èdzi ébó dry season reach It is dry season.
16.	(g)ètèyì	rainy season	é-kóní-é íí (g)ètèyì 3SG-plant-3SG in dry season She planted it in the dry season.
17.	èkòò	harmattan season	èkòò né é' zái ggú harmattan HAB dry Harmattan is usually dry.
18.	ébitàà-égwà	famine	íísól e-de ébitàà-égwà last year 3SG was year-hunger Last year was famine.

## 2.2. Deictic Points of Time

Deictic points of time can be lexically marked as shown in the following table.

S/N	Lexical Expression of Deictic Points of Time	Gloss	Example in Sentences
1.	légbàl ámmá	now (this time)	légbàl ámmá é-dé áwó é-ní mán time this 3SG- is that 3SG-give us This is the time he gave us.
2.	m̀m̀aána m̀m̀aána	immediately	náa m̀m̀aána m̀m̀aána come immediately Come immediately!
3.	légbàl ámmé	that time ( past or future)	vína légbàl ámmé é-d̀i go home time that 3SG-say Go home at the time he said!
4.	̀̀i ñkálíkánj àzè àfónj	at seven clock'	vòhó ̀̀i ñkálíkánj àzè àfónj wake up at clock 7 Wake up at 7 o'clock!
5.	dzém̀m̀a	today	vína dzém̀m̀a go home today Go home today!
6.	̀̀sén/ ̀̀sédé	yesterday	é- sá ̀̀sén/̀̀sédé 3SG- finish-RL yesterday It finished yesterday.
7.	kòò	tomorrow	mé-sí éyína sé kòò 1PL-do-IRR conversation the tomorrow We will discuss it tomorrow.
8.	lédziddé é-sòò ̀̀sén	day before yesterday (that other day that dawned yesterday)	é-vína lédziddé é-sòò ̀̀sén 3SG- go home-RL day 3SG- break yesterday He went home the day before yesterday.
9.	kòò kpóló	day after tomorrow(skipping tomorrow)	bá-wèl kòò kpóló 3PL-come -IRR tomorrow skip They will come the day after tomorrow.
10.	̀̀i lèdzil ìkò̀̀bàsi	on Sunday (church day)	sì- é ̀̀i lèdzil ìkò̀̀bàsi do-3SG on day Sunday Do it on Sunday!

11.	îi àjí ákááálá	on Christmas ('at feast of white man')	mòḡó îi àjí ákááálá come back on feast white man Come back on Christmas day!
12.	kókòò ámmá	this morning	béí-é îi kókòò ámmá return 3SG in morning this Return it this morning!
13.	ìséḡé kókòò/ kókòò ìsén	yesterday morning	é-víná ìséḡé kókòò/ kókòò ìsén 3SG- go-RL home yesterday morning He went home yesterday morning.
14.	kòò ìkókòò/ kókòò áá kòò	tomorrow morning	bá-dzínà kòò ìkókòò/kókòò áá kòò 2PL-go-IRR to farm tomorrow morning You will go to farm tomorrow morning.
15.	èzùḡí ámmá	tonight	mé-ddà ìidàl íl èzùḡí ámmá 3PL tell-IRR stories night DET We will tell stories this night.
16.	ìsé(n) èsùḡì/ èsùḡì ìsén	yesterday night	é-víná ìsé(n) èsùḡì/èsùḡì ìsén 3SG-go-RL yesterday night He went home yesterday night.
17.	kòò èsùḡì/ èsùḡì áá kòò	tomorrow night	wél kòò èsùḡì/èsùḡì áá kòò come tomorrow evening Come tomorrow evening!
18.	(g)éppíón	in the afternoon	bá-víná îi géppíón 3P- go home-IRR in afternoon They will go home in the afternoon.
19.	éppýá ámmá	this week	légbàl sé ésonó îi éppýá ámmá time DET complete-RL at time DET The time is up this week.
20.	éppýá èḡó	next week (market week)	bá-mòḡò éppýá èḡó 3PL-come back-IRR week another They will come back next week.
21.	èppé ámmá	this month	èppé ámmá é-dè áwó m-máná month DET 3SG is that 1SG born This month is my birthday.
22.	èppé áké èbòlò èsá	last month (month that has just	èppe áké é- bòlò è-sá é-dzáí

		finished)	month that 3SG- just 3SG-finish-RL 3SG- fine The month that has just finished was fine
23.	èppé áké è-ffúí	next month (month that is coming)	èppé áké è-ffúí è-vòlò month that 3SG-come-IRR 3SG-more Next month will be much better.
24.	îî èdzì	in the dry season	ìsókòlò nèè dĩđiya îî èdzì orange HAB sweet in dry season Orange is usually sweet during the dry season.
25.	îî gètèyì	in the rainy season	mámàngòlò nèè kù îî gètèyì mango HAB be in rainy season Mango abounds in the rainy season.
26.	ébìtà ámmá	this year	ébìtà ámmá ñ-s-éng lètél āwō ákálá year DET 1SG- home-IRR of white man This year, I will go abroad.
27.	íissòól	last year	é- máná lissòól 3SG-born last year He was born last year.

### 2.3 Quantifying Temporal Expressions

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

S/N	Quantifying Temporal Expressions	Gloss	Example in Sentences
1.	lèdzìl-lèdzìl	daily/every day	é-nèè fò lèdzìl-lèdzìl 3SG-HAB return everyday He returns everyday.
2.	kòkòò ékàmédédé	every morning	èvvá sé nèè gbó kòkòò ékàmédédé dog the HAB bark every morning The dog barks every morning.
3.	légbàl wóní	once	é- zé é-légbàl wóní 3SG-see 3SG-time one He saw it once.
4.	légbàl mbóó	sometimes	é- nèè é-wèl légbàl mbóó 3SG-HAB 3SG-come time some He comes sometimes.
5.	légbàl kúfíkùlì	many times	é- sèngì légbàl kúfíkùlì 3SG-go time many He went many times.
6.	légbàl ékàmàédédé	every time	nwé é-légbàl ékàmàédédé wear 3SG- time every Wear it every time!
7.	bbábbá	never/at all	m-bbábbá e-dahi 1S- at all 3SG-like I don't like it at all!
8.	íffémèèdèn nwá íkponónzám	from beginning to end	tónó ké íffémèèdèn nwá íkponónzám begin from first reach last Begin from the beginning to the end!
9.	gézùjì gbàlá	the whole night	é-véi ìvèl gèzùjì gbàlá 3SG-sing song night long S/he sang the whole night.
10	lèdzìl gbàlá	day long	é- ttó ìbból lèdzìl gbàlá 3SG cry cry day long S/he wept the whole day.

#### 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 **ffèm** and **pòm**. The verb **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    ηwéné sé  
 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 **légbàl iffèméèden** in the following example (1b).

- 1b. bá-ffémi    bà-yèl    ηwéné sé    **légbàl iffèméèden**  
 3PL-be.first 3PL-read    book    DEF    time    first  
 ‘They read it for the first time’

The verb **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) **pòm** = main Verb:

- é-pòmì    éppyà  
 3SG-be.early market  
 ‘S/he left early for the farm/market’

2b) **pòm** + achievement:

gwànò ámmè é-pòmí è-wèel èppyà  
 womanDEM 3SG-be.early 3SG-come market  
 ‘The woman was early at the market’

2c) **pòm** + activities:

(i) é-pòmî è-kkpó èttó  
 3SG-be.early 3SG-buildhouse  
 ‘S/he built the house at an early age/??at an earlier time than expected’

(ii) é-pòmí è-sì ízù  
 3SG-be.early 3SG-make game  
 ‘S/he started to play prematurely/at an earlier time than expected’

2d) **pòm** + state:

é-pòmí è-kpèlè vvóm/è-kkù mímé  
 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 & Sprea’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-dzǐ lǐdzǐl  
 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-ddómò  
 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 mǐmÉ ìsèn  
 3SG-be there yesterday  
 ‘He was there yesterday’

- 5b). é-kkú mǐmÉ dzémmà  
 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** **bèlè** m̀-**bòlò** m̀-**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 **bèlè** '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-*vvéémè* 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). *m-vóŋi-é* tà é-wèèl  
 1SG-want-3SG COMP 3PL-eat  
 ‘I wanted her/him to come.’

- 8b). *bá-sí-bé* tà *bá-kkù mímé*  
 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 "î" 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 ízù î lèdzil ìkóbàsì  
 3PL-do game in day church  
 ‘They played games on Sunday.’

10). mójó î ñkálíkán àfón  
 return.IMP in clock two  
 ‘Be back in two hours/at two o’ clock!’

11). ñ-kkú mmé î ñkálíkán àfón  
 1SG-be there in clock two  
 ‘I was there two hours ago/at two o’ clock’

12). ñ-nèní àcècèná àtàn î ñkálíkán àtàn ámmá è-bòlò è-yòḡo  
 mmá  
 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), "î"(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 **î** 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, **î** can fuse with it, resulting in a lengthening of the initial segment of the noun as shown in (13).

13a) <b>î</b> àjíakáala	=> ààjíakáala	‘on Christmas’
b) <b>î</b> èdzi	=> èèdzi	‘in the dry season’
c) <b>î</b> íkálíkán àzè àfóŋ	=> í`íkálíkán àzè àfóŋ	‘at seven o’ clock’

Also, with the noun **kòkòò** ‘morning’, elision takes place, and as result of the elision, **î kòkòò** becomes **ìkòkòò** (short initial vowel).

Anteriority can be expressed in sentences with the subordinating conjunction **bèlè..bòlò** ‘(just) before’, while posteriority is expressed in sentences with **é-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). **ń-kkú** **ńmá** **bèlè** **àbé ké** **bá-bòlò** **bà-wèl**  
 1SG-be here before 3PL LOC 3PL-just.do 3PL-come  
 ‘I was here before the others came’

15). **ń-kkù** **ńmá** **bèlè** **àbé ké** **bá-bòlò** **ba-wèel**  
 1SG-be.IRR here before 3PL LOC 3PL-just.do 3PL-come.IRR  
 ‘I’ll be here before the others come’

16). **é-séŋì** **gètó** **é-dè** **é-wáni** **vvóm** **è-sá**  
 3SG-go work 3SG-be 3SG-cook thing 3SG-finish  
 ‘S/he went to work after cooking.’

17). **é-séŋì** **gètò** **è-dè** **é-wáni** **vvòm** **è-sá**  
 3SG-go.IRR work 3SG-be 3SG-cook thing 3SG-finish  
 ‘S/he will go to work after cooking.’

**b̀̀l̀̀** 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).  $\acute{n}$ -kkú m̀́má bèle àbè ké bá-wèl̀  
 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 m̀́mé** 'as soon as', consisting of a grammaticalized verb similar to **b̀̀l̀̀**, and a focal marker **m̀́mé** as in (19).

- 19).  $\acute{e}$ -kènè m̀́mé é-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 **ì** as in (20) & (21) (see 4.1) or remain unmarked (23). Compare the examples in (20), (21), and (22) respectively.

- 20).  $\acute{e}$ -z`úí m̀́má éttó ámmá ì ébìtá àzén  
 3SG-live.PRF here house this in year five  
 'S/he has lived in this house for five years'

- 21).  $\acute{n}$ t̀̀t̀̀ǹ̀ ǹ̀ è-dògh̀̀ ì l̀̀dzil, èdè ǹ̀ è-sì gètò ì gèzùní  
 rat HAB-sleep in day then 3SG-HAB-do work in night  
 'The rat sleeps during the day, and is active at night'

- 22).  $\epsilon$ -k`á l̀̀évàl̀̀ ébìtáà kúfíkúli  
 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 **t̀̀t̀̀** 'until' (as in 23 & 24). Posterior duration can be marked by the preposition-conjunction **áké** 'since' (only in the past as 25), and the construction **ttónó ké** 'from' (subjectless grammaticalized verb 'begin' +

locative marker) in the past or future (as in 26).

23). vvóm è è-ttó            tùtù ikóbàsì ákè    è-bòlò            è-sá            mímá  
 thing 3SG-NEG.-fall until week REL 3SG-just.happen 3SG-finish now  
 ‘Nothing happened until last week’

24). vvóm é è-é-ttò            tùtù ìkòbàsì ámmá    è-fùì            mímá  
 thing 3SG-NEG-fall.IRR until week that 3SG-come now  
 ‘Nothing is going to happen until next week’

25) é-kkú            mímá ákè    èppyà    è è-bòlò            è-yòṅò  
 3SG-be.PRF here since week 3SG-just.happen 3SG-pass  
 ‘He has been here since last week’

26a). bá-kkú            mímá ttòṅó    ké    ètèyì  
 3SG-be.PRF here begin LOC rainy season  
 ‘They were here from the rainy season’

26b).bá-kkù    mímánà ttòṅó    ké    ìkóbàsì    ámmá è-fùì            mímá  
 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-dónní            ètèwá    è-tèèì  
 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.



- 32). bá-kkù ʼmmanà ttòṅṅò kè ìkóbàsì ámmá è-fùì mímá  
 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

COMP = Complementizer  
 IMP = Imperative  
 PRF=Perfective  
 LOC=Locative  
 FOC =Focus  
 NEG =Negative

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