

# Grammatical Paradigms Realisation in the Predicates of Conditional Sentences in Dholuo in Systemic Functional Grammar

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## ABSTRACT

Sentences, being the largest units of language, are useful in talking about events, actions and situations in terms of when they took place, their state of completion as well as the language user's disposition. These three critical variables, other than being marked by different morphemes, are domiciled within the predicate which may or may not comprise both the main verb and an auxiliary. These three grammatical categories that are considered language universals, are marked differently by different languages and are also known to greatly influence the syntax and the semantics of any given type of sentences. Dholuo, a Western Nilo-Saharan language spoken in the Western part of Kenya and also in other countries in East Africa has its unique way of marking and expressing tense, aspect and modality. Since this has not been conclusively described and documented, this paper sought to describe, examine and explain the realisation of these three categories in conditional sentences in Dholuo. This study used descriptive-analytic research design and adopted Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) theory for its theoretical framework. The data upon which the findings were based on, was collected using elicitation frame administered on two native speakers and verified by the author as a native speaker of Dholuo. The data analysis adopted was both thematic and textual analysis to explain the manifestation and the ordering of the three grammatical paradigms within the predicates of the different categories of conditional sentences in Dholuo. The data showed that Dholuo has three distinct morphemes- *ne*, *se*, and *de*, that are used within the verb complex to mark tense, aspect and modality respectively in a manner that reflects the interplay between morphology, syntax and semantics. These findings make a contribution to the knowledge on Dholuo grammar generally and conditional sentences in Dholuo in particular.

**Keywords:** - Grammatical paradigm, tense, aspect, modality, language universal

## INTRODUCTION

Available literature confirms that in all the natural languages, the grammatical paradigms are realized within the finite, which is the second most essential constituent of the mood component. The other one is the subject. The finite is mainly realized through finite verbal operators, though lexical verbs, may also carry the finite element in cases where a sentence lacks an overt finite marker. In such a case, the finite and the predicator get marked on the same lexical verb. Its primary function is to anchor the proposition in a manner that not only makes it arguable but also definite with respect to time, status of action and the reflection of a language user's attitude towards their message (Eggins, 2004). A clause can only have one finite under which all the grammatical categories are domiciled and realized. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) identify two categories of finite verbal operators; temporal and finite modal operators. These two categories of finite operators can each be realized in either clause of the conditional sentences. The temporal finite operators accord the proposition the ability to make reference to time, giving tense- either past or present- to the verb complex. The modal operators introduce modality to the clauses.

### The Language

Dholuo, is a Western Nilotic language from the Nilo-Saharan family of languages. It is spoken not only by *Joluo* (the Luo), an ethnic group in Kenya whose cradle, according to Stafford (1967), is believed to be Bahr-el –

Ghazal in Southern Sudan, but also by the Allur, Padhola, Acholi and Lang'o of Eastern Uganda. Dholuo is also spoken by the Shilluk, Jur, Anuak, Bori, Thuri, Pari, Achuli, Lagoro and Nuer in the Upper Nile and Equatorial regions in the present-day South Sudan. (Madut, 2020; Ogot, 1967). Other speakers of Dholuo like the Luwo, Alur and Jo-Nam are also found in the Mara region in Tanzania, parts of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Eastern region of Congo Brazzaville respectively (Madut, 2020). Together, all these groups form the larger Lwo family of Nilotes.

In Kenya, according to Ochieng (1975) the Luos are mostly located on the Eastern shores of Lake Victoria previously known as Nyanza Province. Cohen (1974) and Madut (2020) document that the Luos, who migrated from Central Uganda, probably settled in this area around 1500 and 1800 AD in four groups namely: Joka Jok, Joka Owiny, Joka Omolo and Joka Wanga and occupied Sakwa, Asembo, Uyoma, parts of Alego, Ugenya, Gem, Nyakach, and Kisumu. Presently, the speakers of Dholuo, whose population is estimated at 5,066,966 by the 2019 Kenya Population and Household Census, are predominantly found in the four counties of Nyanza Region namely: Migori, Homa Bay, Kisumu and Siaya. Still, due to reasons of marriage, migration and settlement speakers of Dholuo can also be found in other parts of the country and in the diaspora.

Stafford (1967) observes that Dholuo has two primary dialects- the Trans- Yala and Kisumu – South Nyanza (KSN). Trans- Yala dialect is spoken in Ugenya, Alego, Yimbo and Gem in the present day Siaya county while Kisumu- South Nyanza dialect is spoken in what is now known as Migori and Homa Bay counties as well as parts of Central Nyanza which are not part of the Trans- Yala areas. These two dialects according to Okombo (1997) have got high degree of mutual intelligibility even though they may exhibit some instances lexical and phonological differences. These dialectical variations, however, have no effect at all on the structure or meaning of any construction, and conditional sentences in Dholuo are no exceptions. That, therefore, is the reason this study did not focus on any of the two dialects. The other reason is that the dialects have no direct bearing on the two variables- syntax and semantics- which are the focus of this particular study of Dholuo conditional sentences. The findings that were drawn from this study, therefore, were generalizable to the two dialects.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mood, which is exclusively made up of the subject and the finite, is a very critical and essential component of a clause because it is the element that syntactically distinguishes different clause types. Within the mood component, tense and modality find expression. Alongside these two, an expression of polarity may also occur. However, polarity can easily be ellipted without endangering the argument. Aspect can also be realised within or outside the mood. Banks (2020) and Eggins (2004) argue that the structuring of the Mood component involves the organization of functional constituents within a specified part of a clause-the mood.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) point out that the subject is that element that is 'held responsible' for the success or failure of a proposition; an element through which a proposition can be denied or affirmed. They further claim that even though there may only be one subject in a clause, a variety of items may occupy the slot set aside for the subject. It is possible that a subject is realized by a single word- noun or pronoun.

Since these three categories are language universals, Dholuo, has a well-established grammatical system for anchoring actions and situations in time and reality. In other words, in every language, a clear distinction is made as to when an action occurred or a situation obtained, demarcating the time space in the past, the present and even the future possibility. This in effect means that tense, especially in subjunctive conditionals, makes a stronger contribution to the sense of the sentence. Subjunctive conditionals, in order to express hypotheticality, possibility, probability and contra factuality, rely heavily on tense marking and the presence of modal operators in their clauses (Anderson, 1951; Egan, Garcia-Maduga and Byrne, 2009; Payne, 2011; Quirk et al, 1985).

Modality, the other grammatical paradigm that is expressed by the finite element within the mood component is described by Brinton (2000) and Quirk et al (1985) as the category that enables a sentence to express a speaker's relationship with his message. As an essential part of the mood element, modality which is encoded by means of modal auxiliaries can be viewed from two perspectives- deontic and epistemic perspectives. Deontic modality entails the means by which the speaker can express meanings that involve interactions, while epistemic modality, on the other hand, encodes a speaker's own personal views and judgement of the validity of their messages in

terms of their factuality or non-factuality. This in effect indicates a speaker's attitude towards what he or she is saying (Brinton, 2000; Givon, 2001; Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002; Quirk et al, 1985).

On the whole, modality is a semantic paradigm that language users resort to, to express modal concepts like possibility, volition, permission, obligation, necessity, assumption, probability, hypotheticality, reality, factuality, non-factuality and ability all of which are a matter of perspective (Brinton, 2000; Brinton & Brinton, 2010; Carnie, 2011; Burton-Robert, 2011; Givon, 2001; Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002; Herbst & Schuller, 2008; Payne, 2011; Quirk et al, 1985; Tesner & Eston, 2007).

While modality is primarily realized by modal auxiliaries there are some other contexts that a combination of the modal auxiliaries and the lexical verbs may also encode modality thus giving rise to three moods: the indicative; that is instrumental in the expression of facts, the subjunctive; the non-fact mood and the imperative; which is critical in the issuing of directives and making of requests. Apparently, by means of these moods, a language user is enabled to carry out crucial communicative functions of evaluating and commenting on the interpretation of reality, as well as intervening and bringing changes to events in the world around them. In many languages across the different language families, the broad semantic spectrum of meaning covered by modality can therefore be expressed not only via modal auxiliaries but also through lexical modal verbs and semi modals (Brinton, 2000; Brinton & Brinton, 2010; Burton-Robert, 2011, Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002; Quirk et al, 1973).

All languages of the world functionally encapsulate their user's experiences and viewpoints on situations or events that take place around them by means of their clauses and sentences. The grammatical paradigm that enables these structures do this, is aspect. As studies in other languages have shown, aspect, a grammatical category, is syntactically realized through a category of auxiliary verbs and plays a critical role in the encoding of the way in which events in a sentence are viewed with regard to considerations such as completion and duration, greatly leveraging on the differences in viewpoint and focus of attention. An event or situation in this understanding, is conceptualized and presented either as complete or on-going (Brinton, 2000; Brinton & Brinton, 2010; Burton-Roberts, 2011; Carnie, 2011; Comrie, 1976; Givon, 2001; Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002; Quirk et al, 1973; Quirk et al, 1985).

Since aspect is realized on the verb forms in the clauses, some of the auxiliary verbs that realize this grammatical category may form part of the mood, or may also be realized outside it. Dholuo verbs encodes both perfective and progressive aspects.

### **Systemic Functional Theory**

In SFG, language is perceived as both a meaning-making resource and a social phenomenon that is functionally organised and whose use must take into account the unique dynamics attendant to each situation and how such usage is tailored to meet an individual language user's goals or objectives. The theory views language as a social semiotic system that focuses on how language functions in real-life communication rather than just the formal structure (Fontaine, 2013; Gotzsche, 2009).

There is a close structural-functional relationship between form and meaning in which structures are seen as products of the choices that a language user makes from among the network of systems in a language. This is to mean that the structures are reflective of a user's functional communicative intentions within a given set up. Halliday (1976) aptly captures this relationship thus; 'the internal organisation of language is not arbitrary but embodies a positive reflection of the function that language has evolved to serve in the life of a social man.' This points to the fact that meaning can either be formal or contextual since the realization of structures follows a language's grammatical rules as much as it is an impact between a user's consciousness and his environment. It is therefore right to assert that the mainstay of SFG is the belief that meaning is borne out of the interplay between systemic choices and the rules of a language. These systems, realised by different word categories, are said to be in an interactive, interdependent and a logical semantic relationship that are governed by the entry conditions attached to each one of them (Butler 2003, Eggins 2004, Fontaine 2013).

The theory is hinged on critical paradigms that underlie the view of what is ingrained within a clause- three meanings, three meta-functions and three grammatical systems. These three paradigms are in a tripartite connection and relationships which make it possible for their simultaneous realization in the clause.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study used the descriptive-analytic research design. Descriptive analytic design describes a phenomenon and explains why and how it exhibits particular characteristics with a view to identifying and establishing trends, relationships and patterns in the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This study presented a systematic description of the data on different syntactic and semantic aspects in Dholuo conditional sentences. Moreover, the study also explained how Dholuo marks, realises and expresses the three grammatical paradigms- tense, aspect and modality- in the predicates of the conditional sentences.

### Sampling Method and Sample Size

A sample, is usually drawn from the accessible population not only because it bears characteristics that are representative of the target population but also because of their readiness, acceptance and availability to participate in the research (Kothari, 2003; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). A sample of two competent native speakers of Dholuo; one male and one female, from Maranda Division of Bondo Sub County, Siaya County was purposively sampled for this study. The consideration that guided the choice of the respondents by the researcher was first and foremost, their native speaker competence in Dholuo; every native speaker of a language is deemed to possess the same linguistic competence in that language with other competent native speakers and that the number of respondents may not affect the substance of the data. However, it should be understood that using just one native speaker of Dholuo would still yield the same result one would get when working with more than one. The use of two native speakers from either gender helps in guarding against the study reporting on speech characteristics that are unique to one gender or one individual. Also, the smaller sample size will ensure that the study does not generate repetitive, replicated and superfluous data from many informants because the data collection tool seeks to generate the same data from the respondents. Thirdly, since it was not possible to reach the universal population of Dholuo speakers, it would be easy to work with two willing and available respondents to the completion of data collection in good time for its analysis and reporting on the findings.

### Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Different techniques and procedures can be employed in collecting data depending on whether the research method is quantitative or qualitative (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This study largely generated qualitative data. The data for this study was collected through elicitation using an elicitation frame. An elicitation frame, Vaux and Cooper (2003) as well as Berthelin (2002) argue is a controlled set up that helps in the discovery and testing of particular linguistic phenomenon and its various patterns in an appropriate paradigm. In its structuring, it consists of a stimulus or a task and a target response which is largely left to the discretion, knowledge and creativity of the respondent.

In this study, elicitation frame was used to generate sentential data and was deemed the most appropriate instrument because the target in the research is native speaker competence. The elicitation frame contains sentence starters or fill-in-the blank activities, in the form of conditional clauses in Dholuo that prompt the respondents to complete the sentences with the remaining part of the sentence using their own knowledge, ideas, preferences of hypothetical scenarios in the language. In the elicitation frame used in this study, the subordinate or the conditional clauses are already provided and the respondent was required to complete the remaining part by supplying the result clause or the consequent using hypothetical outcomes of their own.

The researcher allowed the respondents to familiarize themselves with the contents of the elicitation frame in order to stimulate their thought processes then read out each of the conditional clauses to each of the respondents. Each respondent was allowed up to a minute to come up with a possible response to each of the antecedent read out to them. The researcher noted down each of the responses in the spaces provided on the elicitation frame.

## Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

The data for this study was collected from two respondents using elicitation frames. The researcher read out the sentence starters for the respondents. Then, using their creativity, the respondents provided the result clause for each of them. The sentence starters were drawn from all the categories of conditional sentences in Dholuo. The preliminary data analysis entailed data verification, and cleaning up by first replaying the voice recording of the elicitation sessions in order confirm what is useful data and to expunge whatever is repeated, inconsistent or inaccurate.

The data was later subjected to testing for purposes of establishing the consistency of the trends and features in them. Then sorting out of the conditional sentences into their broad categories of indicative and subjunctive categories followed. Thereafter, this was then followed by a further classification of the conditional sentences into their respective sub-categories in each of the categories. Each of the sub category of Dholuo conditional sentences was subjected to content, text as well as thematic analyses to find out the unique characteristics and patterns in them that relate to word and clause ordering, tense, aspect and modality marking and realisation.

The data analysis was largely thematic and textual and it was presented by way of descriptive write ups in which the examples were presented in three tier formats. The examples were also given a combination of morpheme-by-morpheme glossing and word-by-word alignment. The final tier is the free translation.

### Tense Marking in Dholuo Conditionals

The section that follows presents how the different categories of Dholuo conditional sentences express the concept of time within their predicates.

### Tense Marking in Zero Conditionals

Zero conditionals are used to express widely accepted facts or habits. Their uniqueness lies in the kind of verb forms in the two clauses. Consider the data in example (1) and (2).

1) *Ka i-madh-o kwiri to i-tho*

If 2Sg-take-IND poison, then 2Sg-die

If you take poison, you die

2) *Ka ok i-madh-o kwiri to ok i-tho*

If not 2Sg-take-IND poison then not 2Sg-die

If you do not take poison, you do not die

In example (1), tense is carried by the lexical verbs *madho*, ‘take’, and *tho*, ‘die’, in the two clauses, *ka imadho kwiri*, ‘If you take poison’, and *to itho*, ‘you die’, respectively. The two verbs, *madho*, ‘take’ in the antecedent and *tho*, ‘die’, in the consequent are in their base forms which in effect enables the sentence to express both temporal and non- temporal situations thus contributing to their semantic characteristic of being factual. The data in example (2) presents a negation of the data in example (1). In (2) *ok*, ‘not’, the marker of negative polarity occurs before the subject marker in both clauses; *Ka ok imadho kwiri*, ‘If you do not take poison’ and *to ok itho*, ‘then you do not die’. The data in examples (1) and (2) not only talk about facts that are accepted and held to be true but also those that are timeless in reference. The verb forms in the two examples, *madho*, ‘take’ and *tho*, ‘die’ in (1) and *ok...madho*, ‘do not take’ and *ok...tho*, ‘do not die’, though negative, also locate the events in the present moment and immediate reality. The data in the two examples is also an expression of something of a habitual occurrence.

### Tense Marking in First Conditionals

The first conditional sentences like in example (3a) and (3b) have verb forms that make the sentence receive a different interpretation in terms of temporal location of events.

3) a) *Ka a-yud-o omenda kiny, to wabiro dhi wuoth*

If 1Sg-get-IND money tomorrow, then 1Pl-will-go journey

If I get money tomorrow, then we shall travel.

3 b) *Ka ok a-yud-o omenda kiny, to ok wa-bi-dhi wuoth*

If not 1Sg-get-IND money tomorrow, then not 1Pl-will-go journey

If I do not get money tomorrow, then we will not travel

In examples (3a) and (3b), tense is marked on the two verbs, *yudo*, ‘get’, in the antecedent and *dhi*, ‘go’ in the consequent. Even though the verb forms in this example are also in their base form as are those in examples (1) and (2), the data in examples (3a) and (3b), however, receive different semantic reading; the futuristic interpretation. What makes example (3a) and (3b) an expression of a prediction of a likely outcome in the future is the inclusion of the modal auxiliary, *biro*, ‘will’ in (3a) and *bi*, ‘will’ in (3b) in their respective result clauses and the temporal adjunct *kiny*, ‘tomorrow’ in their conditional clauses. These two, place the situations encoded by the two clauses in the future with a possibility of occurrence and non-occurrence. Note that the two examples present the opposite of each other and the modal auxiliary is realized as *biro* in (3a), the affirmative form and *ok...bi* in (3b), the negative form. The modal auxiliary ‘will’, in the two clauses, is just a periphrastic way of indicating future time and not a marker of tense; present or past.

### Tense Marking in Second Conditionals

In second conditional sentences like the data in example (4) demonstrates, the presence of the modal auxiliary verb and the past tense morphology enable this sentence and those of its kind to signify hypothetical and contrafactual meaning referring to either present or future imaginary states or events of relative remote possibility, which according to Adams (1987) and Fraser (2003), give this kind of sentences a degree of tentativeness. Consider the data in example (4).

4) *Ka ne a-yud omenda moromo, de-a-nyiew-o nyamburko*

If Pst 1Sg-get money enough, would 1Sg-buy-IND vehicle

If I got enough money, I would buy a vehicle

In example (4), the form of the verb *yudo*, ‘get’, in the antecedent is not marked for tense. Instead, a morpheme, *ne*, which is a past tense marker affix is introduced to give the lexical verb a sense of a temporal reference in the past. This morpheme also introduces hypotheticality to the clause. In the consequent, on the other hand, the modal auxiliary *de*, ‘would’, occurs as a prefix alongside the subject marker, *a-*, ‘I’, and the indicative form of the lexical verb, *nyiewo*, ‘to buy’ in a verbal construction that brings together morphemes that express different semantic or grammatical functions. Semantically, in example (4), the presence of the temporal marker *ne* in the antecedent and the modal auxiliary *de*, ‘would’ in the consequent, enables the sentence to express a wish for some things which is probably out of reach, *Ka ne ayud omenda moromo*, ‘If I got enough money’, and *danyiewo nyamburko*, ‘I would buy a vehicle’, both of which are contrafactual to the reality of his or her present situation which is; ‘that he does not have money at present and therefore cannot afford to buy a vehicle’.

### Tense Marking in Third Conditionals

Third conditional sentences express hypothetical situations in the past that never happened together with their imagined outcomes. The verb forms in third conditional sentences are therefore quite different from those previously discussed in the foregoing sections. Consider the data in examples (5) and (6).

5) *Ka ne an in, de-a-timo gino ma-opogore.*

If Pst am you, would-1Sg-do that thing REL-differently

If I were you, I would do that thing differently.

6) *Ka ne an in, de ok a-timo gino ma-opogore.*

If Pst am you, would not 1Sg-do that thing REL-differently

If I were you, I would not do that thing differently

In examples (5) and (6) tense is marked by the inclusion of the morpheme *ne*, which makes the main verb, *an*, 'were', in the antecedent express a past situation with a remote possibility. The data in this example talks about identity substitution which is an impossibility. The modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would', in the consequent, brings out the impossibility of the outcome and makes the situation largely hypothetical. It also makes the clause finite because the clause gets to makes reference to a possible situation in the past. The verb in the result clause *timo*, 'to do', however remains in the base form. The data in the two examples represent different polarity. The data in example (5) is in the affirmative, while (6) presents negative polarity which is marked by *ok*, 'not' in the consequent just after the modal auxiliary. The negator *ok*, 'not', may also be part of the antecedent. However, if this were to happen in the case of example (5), *Ka ne ok an in*, 'If I were not you', would negate the original semantics of the sentence that was originally designed to encode a totally unlikely and impossible scenario. The speaker is not the listener and therefore, using *ok*, 'not' in the antecedent just states the obvious. The data in these examples also reveal that the combination of the past tense morphology in the antecedent and the presence of a modal auxiliary in the consequent, are critical in the semantic characterization of this kind of sentences.

### Tense Marking in Mixed Conditionals

Mixed conditional sentences in Dholuo, like their counterparts in other languages, express hypothetical situations by combining two different tense elements configuration of the different conditional structures, usually the second and the third conditionals, to express relationships across different time frames. The data in examples (7) and (8) are used to illustrate the two possible pairing of clauses in this category of conditionals. Consider the data in examples (7) and (8) to exemplify these possible clause pairings.

7) *Ka ne a-som maber ka jo-moko, de-koro a-dak maber ka gin*

If Pst 1S- study well like people-some would-now 1Sg-live well like them

If I studied hard like some people, I would be living well like them

In (7), a past condition, *Ka ne asom maber ka jomoko*, 'If I studied well like some people' precedes a present result, *de koro adak maber ka gin*, 'I would now be living well like them'. The data in example (7) also shows that the past tense marker *ne*, occurs alongside the lexical verb, *som*, 'study' in the antecedent to express a past condition, *Ka ne asom maber ka jomoko*, 'If I studied hard like some people', while in the consequent, the modal auxiliary *de*, 'would' together with the non-finite lexical verb *dak*, 'live', and the adverbial, *koro*, 'now', enable the result clause to express an outcome in the present, *de koro adak maber ka gin* 'I would now be living well like them. The data in (7) therefore presents a mixed conditional sentence in which a past condition that affects a present situation.

8) *Ka a-ngé namba-ne mar simo to de-a-gocho-ne*

If 1Sg-know number-POSS for phone, then would-1Sg-call-APPL

If I knew her/his phone number, I would call her/him

Example (8) is also a mixed conditional like (7). However, unlike (7), the data in (8) expresses a present condition, *Ka ang'e nambane mar simo*, 'If I knew his/her phone number' that has a past outcome, *to dagochone*, 'I would call him/her'. The present tense is expressed by the lexical verb *ng'e*, 'know' in the antecedent while in the consequent, the modal auxiliary *de*, 'would', together with the verb *gocho*, 'call' make reference to an event that did not materialize in the past because of a failed condition. In (8), the antecedent makes reference to a present condition while the consequent makes reference an expected outcome in the past. This reference to the past is more ingrained in the modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would' and the past tense marker morpheme *ne* and not the lexical verb.

The data in the two examples demonstrate that the contrastive tense sequencing between the two clauses in the sentences, a feature which is derived from tense elements of the second and third conditionals, not only anchors the two clauses in different time frames but also accords them the ability to express the more complex cause-and-effect relationship that is not limited to one time frame.

### Tense Marking in Concessive Conditionals

Concessive conditionals which are used in the expression of contrast or opposition between two situations, typically show that one action occurs despite another. This situation, however, is not in any way related to the verb forms in the clauses but the presence of the negating connective *Kata ka*, 'even if', which as has been observed, dilutes the whole essence of conditionality. However, these kinds of sentences can also have a temporal orientation, mostly the past and the future. In all their manifestations, the antecedent retains the past and the present forms of the verb, while the consequent, can bear varied verb phrases depending on the time frame in question. The data in examples (9) and (10) are illustrative of these cases.

9) *Kata ka koth o-chwe godiechieng' to wa-bo-gweyo adhula*

Even if rain it-rain during day, then 3P-will-play soccer

Even if it rains during the day, we will play soccer

The data in example (9) shows the verb *chwe*, 'rain' is used in the conditional clause and in its base form, it can still express present tense since Dholuo has no mechanisms to overtly mark present tense on a verb. In the result clause, the modal auxiliary, *bo*, 'will', is used alongside the lexical verb *gweyo*, 'kick' to make a reference to the future.

10) *Kata ka ne o-som matek, ok de-o-kal-o penj.*

Even if Pst 3Sg-study hard, not would-3Sg-pass-IND examinations

Even if she studied hard, she would not pass the examination.

In example (10), the verb *som*, 'study' is in its base form but with the introduction of the morpheme *ne*, in the clause, the sentence is marked for past tense. The consequent has a negative polarity denoted by the negator *ok*, 'not'. The modal *de*, 'would', makes the outcome not only hypothetical but also sound obvious.

In summary, the data in the preceding examples show that Dholuo sentences can be marked for tense. The morpheme *ne*, which is the marker of past tense is largely restricted to the antecedent. The semantic characteristics of conditionals of being contrafactual and hypothetical largely derive from the presence of the modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would' in their consequents and *ne*, in the antecedent. The data also confirms the multiple manifestation of the auxiliary verb that is used to express the future. The verb can manifest as *biro*, *bi* or *bo* in specific linguistic environments. Finally, the negator, *ok*, 'not', which is used when the intention is to express negative polarity can occur in the two clauses alternately or even at once in both clauses.

### Modality in Dholuo Conditional Sentences

Through modality, a language user is able to express their attitude, belief and opinion about what they are saying. The section that follows, modality in the different categories of conditional sentences

### Modality in Zero Conditionals

Zero conditionals are the only class of conditionals that express modality even with the absence of an overt modal auxiliary. Consider the data in example (11).

11) *Ka i-madh-o kwiri, to i-tho*

If 2Sg-take-IND poison, then 2Sg-die

If you take poison, then you die

In the data in (11), there are two lexical verbs, each in either clause; *madho*, ‘take’, in the antecedent and *tho*, ‘die’, in the consequent. Since, there are no auxiliary verbs in the clauses, the modal responsibility then rests with the lexical verbs. The two verbs, though with no overt marking, express the simple present tense that enables the sentence to express factuality; that ingesting poison automatically results to death.

### Modality in First Conditionals

First conditional sentences basically encode likely or even certain future events or situations whose outcome is a foregone conclusion. The data in example (12) illustration of this scenario.

12) *Ka ok a-yudo omenda kiny to ok wa-bi-dhi wuoth.*

If not 1Sg-get money tomorrow then not 1Pl-will-go journey

If I do not get money tomorrow, then we will not travel

In example (12), the burden of modal meaning in this sentence is carried by the lexical verb *ok...yudo*, ‘do not get’, in the antecedent as well as the modal auxiliary *bi*, ‘will’, the marker of future time in the consequent. In the antecedent, the verb, talks about ‘not getting money’ with certainty. The auxiliary verb, *bi*, ‘will’, together with the lexical verb, *dhi*, ‘go’, in the consequent, also enable the sentence to talk about a possible outcome in the future with a tone of certainty. The presence of this modal auxiliary in the sentence brings out a semantic sense of dependency, certainty, probability and possibility. The data in the example is predictive of a probable outcome, *to ok wabidhi wuoth*, ‘then we will not travel’, which is wholly dependent on a certain condition, *Ka ok ayudo omenda kiny*, ‘If I do not get money tomorrow’. Other than the prediction, the speaker is also certain that the possibility or chance of their travelling is wholly hinged on their getting money the following day. Note that the data in example (12), is one of such cases in which the two manifestations of the future time marker, *bi* and *bo*, can be used interchangeably in the same slot in the result clause.

### Modality in Second Conditionals

This category of conditional sentences express that which is not only hypothetical but also those situations which are considered unlikely or even impossible. The scope of their events is either in future or present times. Consider the data in example (13).

13) *Ka ne a-yud omenda moromo, de-a-nyiewo nyamburko*

If Pst 1Sg-get money enough, would-1Sg-buy-IND vehicle

If I got enough money, I would buy a vehicle

Example (13) has both the past tense form as well as a modal auxiliary verb, each in either clause. The modal auxiliary verb is marked by *de*, ‘would’ in the consequent. The main verb in the antecedent, *yud*, ‘get’, the base form, is interpreted as expressing past by virtue of its co-occurrence with the past tense marking morpheme, *ne*. Note that the intended meaning of the clause as a reference to a past event only permits the base forms of the lexical verb *yud*, ‘get’ in the antecedent and not the indicative form, *yudo*, ‘to get’. *Ka ne ayud pesa* translates to

'If I got money' while *Ka ne ayudo pesa*, would translate to 'When I got money'. The latter equivalent then ceases to be a conditional clause but a declarative reference to a past event. The modal meaning and the semantic feature of this sentence lies with the modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would'. It is the modal *de*, 'would', that makes the situation in the sentence hypothetical, contrafactual and unreal. These semantic features reinforce the fact that the sentence is an expression of a wish that would be difficult to fulfil given the speaker's existing shortcomings. The past tense marker *ne*, together with the lexical verb, *yud*, 'get', in the antecedent also contribute to the semantic sense of the sentence as a wish. The data in example (13) thus expresses the speaker's wish to buy a vehicle *danyiewo nyamburko*, 'I would buy a vehicle', if only he could get sufficient funds to do so, *Ka ne ayud omenda moromo*, 'If I got enough money'.

### Modality in Third Conditionals

Third conditional sentences are an expression of unreal or hypothetical past situations. The data in example (14) illustrates this.

14) *Ka ne a-bed in d-a-timo gino ma-opogre*

If Pst 1Sg-were 2Sg would-1Sg-do-IND that thing REL-differently

If I were you, I would do that thing differently

Example (14) expresses a situation in the past whose consequences are evaluated at the time of speaking. This is made possible by the combination of verb forms in the two clauses. In the antecedent the verb form, *ne...bed*, 'were' is in the past tense. This introduces hypotheticality, unreality and a past time reference to the clause. The modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would', in the consequent not only makes it hypothetical but also adds to the contrafactual nature of the sentence; that the speaker is not another person. The situation encoded by the sentence is thus considered imaginary, unreal and against the accepted facts because one person cannot be the other. Semantically, the sentences may be applied in the expression of regrets, blames and also criticism for a failure to execute something that ought to have been in the past.

### Modality in Mixed Conditional

As their name suggests, these types of conditional sentences combine tense features from two types of conditional sentences- second and third conditionals, through which they express hypothetical situations that connect the past, present and future events Their mixed nature enables them to encode causality across different times (Murphy, 2019; Quirk et al, 1985; Swan, 2005). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) and Swan (2005) characterize them as structures through which causality is expressed across different times and further explain that mixed conditionals can be employed in the utterance of two situations of events: the expression of present results of past actions and the encoding of how present general condition could have caused different past outcome. The data in examples (15) and (16) are an illustration of the two realizations of mixed conditionals in Dholuo and how modality is encoded in each of them.

15) *Ka ne a-som matek ka jo-moko, de koro a-dak maber ka gin*

If Pst 1Sg-study hard like people-some, would now 1Sg-live well like them

If I studied hard like some people, I would be living well like them

Example (15) presents an unmet past condition, *Ka ne asom matek ka jomoko*, 'If I studied hard like some people', with a present result, *de koro adak maber ka gin*, 'I would be living well; like them'. The antecedent, *Ka ne asom matek ka jomoko*, 'If I studied hard like some people', bears the features of a third condition where the past tense marker, *ne*, by virtue of co-occurring with the lexical verb, *som*, 'study' in the same clause captures a sense of hypotheticality and a missed opportunity in the past. The consequent, *dekoro adak maber ka gin*, 'I would be living well like them', exhibits the features of a second conditional namely the presence of a modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would', completing the sense of impossibility and contra factuality introduced in the matrix clause. These mixed features, other than enabling the expression of imagination also bring out the semantic sense of

assumption, certainty and probability. The speaker makes the assumption, expressed with certainty, that the chances of him or her living well at present are pegged on a past event of *somo matek ka jomoko*, 'studying hard like some people'. Somehow, this sentence is also predictive, however, with the benefit of hindsight.

The data in example (16) also presents a mixed conditional.

16) *Ka a-ng'e namba-ne mar simo d-a-gocho-ne*

If 1Sg know number his phone Aux 1Sg call him

If I knew his phone number, I would call him

Example (16) is the opposite of (15). The data in (16) combines a present unmet condition, *Ka ang'e nambane mar simo*, 'If I knew his phone number', in the antecedent with a past outcome, *dagochone*, 'I would call him', in the consequent. The verb in the conditional clause, *ng'e*, 'know', is in the base but is used in the expression of the present tense. It expresses a speaker's present wish to have another person's number. In the consequent, the modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would' together with the lexical verb, *gocho*, 'call', combine to give the clause a past time reference. Semantically, the speaker seems to be expressing causality between a present condition which had not made it possible for the speaker to make a call at an earlier time. The sentence also brings out hypotheticality because the actions referred to are imaginary and even unreal. The speaker's certainty that having the other person's number would facilitate his make a call is also brought out.

Other than mixed time reference, derived from the second and third conditionals, the data in (15) and (16) also indicate a blend of hypothetical situations that describe a past cause with a present result or vice versa.

### Modality in Concessive Conditionals

Concessive conditionals are introduced by the connective 'Even if', which Quirk et al (1985) argue, introduces a clause that concedes the possibility of the condition, but asserts that the result will still occur. This class of sentence is unique in their departure from the semantics of the ordinary conditionals sentence in the sense that they acknowledge a condition while insisting that the outcome would not change despite the condition (Huddleston and Pullum 2002; Swan, (2016); Thomson and Martinet, 1986; Quirk et al,1985). The data in example (17) is an illustration of a concessive conditional sentence in Dholuo.

17) *Kata ka koth o-chwe godiechieng', wa-bo-gwey-o adhula*

Even if rain 3Sg-rain during day, 1Pl-will-play-IND soccer

Even if it rains during the day, we will play soccer.

The data in (17) makes a concession that regardless of the prevailing conditions, the speaker will still carry on with their intention to play soccer. The sentence is an expression of the speaker's belief and certainty, *wabogweyo adhula* 'we shall play soccer', while overlooking the expected effect of the change in the condition, *Kata ka koth ochwe godiechieng'*, 'Even if it rains during the day'. This then turns out to be counter expectational because the outcome is in conflict with what one would normally expect in the circumstances.

### Aspect in Dholuo Conditional Sentences

Aspect which relates to the status of actions, events and situation as either complete or ongoing is also expressed by a morpheme that is domiciled within the mood component. This is demonstrated by the data presented in the following section.

### Aspect Marking in Zero Conditionals

Zero conditionals express a language user's experience and perception of general truths, timeless facts, regular habits or even repeated actions when certain conditions are met. The verb forms in each of the two clauses enable

it to express these meanings. In this category of conditionals, the actions encoded by the clauses can also be evaluated for their completeness or not. The data in example (18) illustrates this.

18) *Ka i-se-madh-o kwiri, to i-tho*

If 2Sg-have-take-IND poison, then 2Sg-die

If you have taken poison, you die

The lexical verbs *madho*, ‘to drink’, and *tho*, ‘die’, which are in their base form, are not indicative of any time frame or even the duration of the action and it is not possible to talk about them in terms of whether the actions they encode are completed or are ongoing. However, the inclusion of the aspect marker morpheme, *se*, ‘have’, in the antecedent, introduces perfectivity in talking about a completed action, *Ka isemadho kwiri*, ‘If you have taken poison’, to that part of the clause. The clause expresses a situation in which something must be done to completion first as a precedent to the outcome, *to itho*, ‘then you die’. Note that the aspect marker, in this case, cannot be used in the consequent because it would not only interfere with the cause-and-effect relationship between the two clauses due to temporal mismatch, but also the grammaticality of the sentence as the data in example (19) shows.

19) \**Ka i-se-madh-o kwiri, to i-se-tho*

If you have taken poison, you have died

Unlike (19), the factuality of the data in (18) is not interfered with because the cause-and-effect relationship that obtains between the two clauses still remains.

### Aspect Marking in First Conditionals

This category of conditional sentences is instrumental in enabling a language user to pronounce themselves on real and possible future possibilities. Consider the data in example (20).

20) *Ka a-se-chiem-o godhiambo, to a-bo-gocho-ni.*

If 1Sg-have-eaten-IND in the evening, then 1Sg-will-call-IND

After I have eaten in the evening, then I will call you

The data in example (20) talks about a possible future event, *ka asechiemo godhiambo*, ‘If/After I have eaten in the evening’, and its outcome in the future, *to abogochoni*, ‘then I will call you’. The future outcome is encoded in the consequent by the morpheme *bo*, ‘will’. The perfective aspect expressed in this example is thus expressed in the antecedent by *se*, ‘have’. The clause talks about an action, *chiemo*, ‘eating’, that should be completed, *sechiemo*, ‘have eaten’ before the result in the consequent, *gochoni*, ‘call you’ can be actualized. Since, first conditionals talk about reality, other aspects may also be expressed in them as the data in (21a), (21b) and (21c) illustrates.

21) a) *Ka koth chwe, to ok wa-bo-dhi wuoth*

If rain raining then, not 1pl-will-go travel

If it is raining then we will not travel

In example (21a), the antecedent has the progressive aspect while no aspect is marked in the consequent, only negative polarity. The progressive aspect in the conditional clause is expressed by the base form of the lexical verb, *chwe*, ‘is raining’ in the antecedent to indicate an ongoing situation. Note that to express the progressive aspect, the verb must drop the initial pronominal prefix *o-*, ‘it’. The result clause on the other hand, has the verbal element *bodhi*, ‘will go’, which encodes a future outcome. Note, however, that Dholuo has no specific overt

morphological marking of the progressive aspect on its verbs but employs the base form of the lexical verb to express this aspect. The data in (21b) also illustrates the possible aspectual variation in the antecedent while retaining its consequent.

21b) *Ka koth o-se-chwe, to wa-bo-dhi komo oduma*

If rain it has rain, then 1pl-Aux-go plant maize

After it has rained, then we will plant maize

The antecedent in (21b) has perfective aspect in the present which is marked by the morpheme, *se*, 'has' which is conflated with the lexical verb, *chwe*, 'rain', in the verb phrase, *osechwe*, 'has rained'. Note that the morpheme, *se*, that is used to mark aspect in Dholuo does not vary its form to reflect the variation in time. The data in example (21c) is yet another realization of another aspect; the perfective aspect in the past.

21c) *Ka ne koth o-se-chwe, de wa-se-kom-o oduma*

If Pst rain IND-have-rained, would 1Pl-have-plant-IND maize

If it had rained, we would have planted maize

The data in (21c) indicates that in order for the sentence to express the perfective aspect in the past, the past tense morpheme, *ne*, has to be introduced in the antecedent alongside the aspect marker, *se*, 'had', which is occurs between the neuter, *o-*, 'it' and the lexical verb, *chwe*, 'rain'. The presence of the past tense morpheme in the clause changes the form of both the auxiliary verb, *se* to 'had', and the lexical verb, *chwe*, to 'rained', to reflect the past. In the consequent, the presence of the modal auxiliary *de*, 'would', alongside the aspect marker, *se*, makes the sentence talk about a hypothetical outcome which is yet to be realized. The data in (21d) presents a confluence of the two aspects- the perfective and the progressive- in one instance to express a situation that was ongoing in the past but has since abated and its present result.

21 d) *Ka koth o-se-bed-o kachwe matek, to nderni-wa ok nyal luwo-re*

If rain it-has-been-IND raining heavily, then roads-POSS not able pass-IND

If it has been raining heavily, then our roads are impassable

In (116d), a number of differences with the other three sentences are identifiable. The verb phrase in the antecedent is a complex one, bringing together three morphemes- *se*, 'has', *bedo*, 'been', *kachwe*, 'raining'. *Se*, 'has' is the marker of aspect while, *bedo kachwe*, 'been raining' are markers of the progressive aspect in the past. This verb phrase is preceded by the subordinator, *ka*, 'if', and two correfrential subjects, *koth*, 'rain' and the pronominal prefix *o-*, 'it'. The result clause brings forth the attendant present outcome to the condition that obtained in the past, *to nderniwa ok nyal luwore*, 'then our roads are impassable'. Aspect in (21d) is only marked in the conditional clause.

The four examples, (21a), (21b), (21c) and (21d) confirm the possibility of the realizations of the two aspects- progressive and perfective- either separately or together in sentences in Dholuo. They also reveal the critical roles played by the aspect marker, *se*, 'has/have/had', past tense marker morpheme, *ne*, the modal auxiliary, *de*, 'would', and the auxiliary verb, *bedo*, 'been', in the expression of the perfective and progressive aspects in the present and in the past.

### Aspect Marking in Second Conditionals

Second conditional sentences express unreal, unlikely or impossible situations in the present or future. The verb forms in the two clauses are therefore different. This accounts for the aspectual differences in the two clauses. The data in example (22) is an illustration of this.

22) *Ka ne a-yud omenda moromo, de-a-se-nyiew-o nyamburko*

If Pst 1Sg-get money enough, would-1Sg-buy-IND vehicle

If I got enough money, I would have bought a vehicle

In the antecedent, the inclusion of the morpheme *ne*, changes the lexical verb, *yud*, 'get', to express a past time reference and hypotheticality, while in the consequent, the aspect marker, *se*, and the lexical verb, *nyiew*, 'buy', which occur alongside the modal auxiliary *de*, 'would', express the hypothetical, contra factual and unreal situations in the past that are associated with this category of conditional sentences. However, the data in example (22), as it were, carries an overt realization or expression of aspect only in its consequent. Semantically then, the data in example (22) is an expression of a desire in the past, which has not been met and whose chances of realization are highly unlikely or even impossible. Still, the data in example (22) can be presented with an aspect marker in both clauses to bring out the variations in aspect. Consider the data in example (23).

23) *Ka ne a-se-yud omenda moromo, de-a-se-nyiew-o nyamburko*

If Pst 1Sg-have-get money enough, would 1Sg-have-buy-IND vehicle

If I had got enough money, I would have bought a vehicle

The data in example (23) differs from that in example (22) in that aspect is marked in the two clauses. The past aspect is marked in the antecedent by a combination of the morphemes *ne*, which marks the past, *se*, which is the aspect marker and the base form of the lexical verb, *yud*, 'get' in the verb phrase *ne... se yud*, 'had got'. In the consequent *se*, is the aspect marker, which together with the modal auxiliary *de*, 'would' and the lexical verb *nyiewo*, 'buy' express the perfective aspect in the past. Semantically then, the data in example (23) can be interpreted to be an expression of a desire or a wish whose hypotheticality and unreality is encoded by dint of the past tense marker *ne* and the modal auxiliary *de*, 'would' alongside the respective lexical verbs. Note that the morpheme *se*, which is an aspect marker, remains unchanged, as data in examples (21), (22) and (23) show, even when there is a variation in the number of subject and time reference. In its unchanged form, it can be realized as 'has/have/had' as determined by the environment of its use.

### Aspect Marking in Third Conditionals

In talking about imaginary and impossible situations and events in the past, third conditions are used. The events in this category of sentences did not happen in the past and their possible outcome are only imagined. Consider the data in example 24.

24) *Ka ne a-bed in, de-a-se-tim-o gino ma-opogre*

If Pst 1Sg-were 2Sg, would-1Sg-have-do-IND that thing REL-differently

If I were you, I would have done that thing differently.

Aspect in example (24) is overtly marked in the result clause, *de asetimo gino mopogre*, 'I would have done that thing differently', by the morpheme *se*, which is sandwiched between the subject marker, *a*, 'I' and the lexical verb, *timo*, 'do', in the verbal construction *de...setimo*, 'would have done'. The antecedent does not have an aspect marker because its inclusion would make the clause ungrammatical. The presence of the modal auxiliary verb *de*, 'would' in the result clause and the past tense marker, *ne*, in the conditional clause introduces hypotheticality to the clauses and the sentence. In this example, the situation which ought to have obtained in the past or even in the present, *Ka ne an in*, 'If I were you' and which has not been actualized in in the present time, is both impossible and unlikely. Semantically, the situation encoded by the data in example (24) is one that is not only impossible but also unreal, hypothetical and contrafactual.

## Aspect Marking in Mixed Conditionals

The usage of this category of conditional sentences reveals a difference in the temporal reference in their two clauses; in one instance of these sentences, a language user may express an unreal past condition with a present result while in another, they may express an unreal present condition which has an effect on a past result. The data in example (25a) and (25b) illustrate different realization of the first scenario.

25) a *Ka ne a-som matek ka jo-moko, de koro a-se-dak maber ka gin*

If Pst 1Sg-study hard like people-some, would now 1Sg-have-live well like them

If I studied well like some people, I would have lived well like them

The data in example (25a) brings out a situation that ought to have been completed some times in the past but which was not and which has a bearing on the present. This interpretation stems from the presence of varied verb forms in the two clauses. In the antecedent, *Ka ne asom matek ka jomoko*, 'If I studied hard like some people', the verb is in the past tense form, '*ne...som*', 'studied' which hypothetically talks about some action that was not actualized in the past and which is still the case even at present. *ne*, is the temporal pointer which helps the lexical verb *som*, 'study', express past tense. In the consequent, *de koro asedak maber ka gin*, 'I would have lived well like them', expresses a regret in the present. The verbal construction in the clause, *di...se...dak*, 'would have lived', comprises the following morphemes: *de*, 'would', a modal auxiliary, *se...* aspect marker, and a lexical verb, *dak*, 'lived', encode a perfect aspect in the present; a situation that would have been at present, *de koro asedak maber ka gin*, 'I would have lived well like them', had a condition in the past been met.

The data in example (25b) is an illustration of a second realization of the first scenario of mixed conditionals in Dholuo.

25 b) *Ka ne a-se-som-o matek ka jo-moko, de koro a-dak maber ka gin*

If Pst 1Sg-have-study-IND hard like people-some, would, now 1Sg-live well like them

If I had studied hard like some people, I would now live well like them

In (25b), the aspect marker shifts to the antecedent, *Ka ne asesomo matek ka jomoko*, 'If I had studied hard like some people', to express a sense of regret by the speaker because of a non-fulfilment of a past condition. The presence of the past tense marker *ne*, in the clause inflects both the aspect marker, *se* and the lexical verb, *somo*, 'study', to enable them to express the past. The consequent, *de koro adak maber ka gin*, 'I would be living well like them', remains without an aspect marker and through the adverbial, *koro*, 'now', expresses a present outcome.

The data in examples (26a) and (26b) are two realizations of the second scenario of mixed conditionals in Dholuo.

26) a) *Ka a-ng'e namba-ne mar simo, de a-se-gocho-ne*

If 1Sg-know number-IND for phone, would 1Sg-have call-IND

If I knew his phone number, I would have called him

The data in (26a) expresses a situation in the present which stands in the way of an action that ought to have been executed awhile back. The condition, *ka ang'e nambane mar simo*, 'If I knew his phone number', is laid in the present time while the outcome, *de asegochone*, 'I would have called him', which ought to have happened earlier, is situated in the past as a wish. The speaker does not have the phone number at present and that is why he did not make a phone call earlier on. This comes out clearly in the consequent which hosts the verbal construction *de...se-gocho*, 'would have called'. The presence of the aspect marking morpheme, *se*, 'have',

enables the verb phrase, *de...se-gocho* and the clause, *de asegochone*, ‘I would have called him’, to express an inconclusive action in the past.

26b) *Ka ne a-se-ng’e namba-ne mar simo, de a-se-gocho-ne*

If Pst 1Sg-have-know number-POSS for phone, would 1Sg-have-call-APPL

If I had known his phone number, I would have called him

In (26b), aspect is marked on both clauses. The interpretation of the sentence then varies slightly from (26a); it talks about a failed past condition and an unrealized present outcome. The speaker, does not know the phone number from back then and as such has not been able to make a call.

## CONCLUSION

The three grammatical paradigms- tense, aspect and modality- all of which are grammaticalized on the verbal words and largely realized by specific morphemes in Dholuo, affect each other within the verb phrase to a greater extent. The data presented in this chapter has shown that even though, each may have a distinct role and may be marked by different morphological elements, they may not be considered separately because their combination is responsible for the semantic characterization of the conditional sentences in Dholuo as is the case in other languages. The data has thus confirmed that semantic features and interpretation of these sentences in Dholuo are pegged largely on the collective role played by the three grammatical categories of tense, aspect and modality. The findings in this study makes a contribution to the broader understanding of the unique linguistic features of Dholuo in general and conditional sentences in particular.

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