

Resultatives, progressives, statives, and relevance: The temporal pragmatics of the *-ite* suffix in Totela

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Abstract

This article presents the verbal suffix *-ite* in Totela (Bantu, Namibia and Zambia), which has variable temporal interpretations based both on lexical aspect (situation type) and on discourse context. The same *-ite*-marked predicate may be interpreted as referencing a situation that is past (resultative-like readings) or present (progressive-like readings) with respect to utterance time. The suffix is analyzed as having the aspectual function of a stativizer, asserting a relevant property of the utterance's subject. Temporal interpretations with respect to utterance time (or other perspective time) are derived from principles of relevance: the state described by an *-ite*-marked predicate is interpreted so that it answer the current question under discussion in discourse. The *-ite* suffix, most likely related to a historical resultative, still specifies a result state, but the temporal specifications of that result state are weakened and must be inferred through context. Cross-linguistic comparison of *-ite* with other markers that have both perfect/resultative and progressive readings suggests that the pragmatic notion of relevance – and not only commonalities in temporal semantics (e.g. focus on post-state; stativizing functions) – may be a key factor in the perfect/resultative/progressive connection.

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1. Introduction

The aspectual suffix *-ite* in the Bantu language Totela has semantics and pragmatics that defy a strictly temporal analysis. A predicate marked with *-ite* can be translated into English variously as resultative/stative, progressive, or perfect, depending on the predicate and the discourse context. This temporal variability raises the question of whether *-ite* can be given a monosemous analysis, or whether *-ite* has several different meanings. In this paper, I argue that *-ite* can in fact be given a monosemous analysis. Specifically, I propose that *-ite* functions as a stativizer with a semantically free temporal variable relating the *-ite*-state with situation time, which is filled in through principles of conversational relevance.¹

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Before proceeding to the analysis, I will briefly outline the complexities involved in the temporal interpretation of *-ite*.

With some predicates, *-ite* typically gives a stative or resultative reading, as in (1). In the resultative cases, the situation described in the predicate took place in the past, but its results continue.²

(1) Stative and resultative uses

a. Stative:

ndilíbwènè

ndi-li-bwene

1SG-PRES.STAT-see-ITE

'I see'

b. Resultative:

ndilízimènè

ndi-li-zim-ene

1SG-PRES.STAT-stand.up-ITE

'I am standing' (because I have stood up)

c. Resultative:

ndilibiikìtè

ndi-li-li-biik-ite

1SG-PRES.STAT-REFL-hide-ITE

'I am hiding' (because I have hidden myself)

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² The *-ite* suffix has numerous allomorphs, as can also affect the verb stem. See section 3.1 for further details. Forms of *-ite* are underlined throughout the article. Glosses are as follows:

1SG	first person singular	NR	nominalizer
2PL	second person plural	PASS	passive
CL3	noun class 3	PERS	persistent ('still')
CMPL	completive	PFV	perfective
COM	comitative	POSTHOD	posthodiernal future (after today)
COMP	complementizer	PREHOD	prehodiernal past (before today)
COP	copula	PRES	present
COUNTER	counterfactual	PST	past
DEM	demonstrative	RC	relative clause
FV	final vowel	REFL	reflexive
INF	infinitive	RECIP	reciprocal
IPFV	imperfective	SBJV	subjunctive
LOC	locative	SIT	situative
NEG	negative	STAT	stative
		V	verb

For ease of writing and reading, a practical orthography is used in this study. When reliable tonal data are available, all surface tones, both H and L (as well as HL falling), are marked. For details about vowel-length conventions, see Crane (2011). Differences from IPA are as follows:

IPA Practical
Symbol Orthography

b	bb
ɲ	ny
ɺ	ñ
β	b
ʃ	sh
tʃ	ch
ɖʒ	j
h ^w u	hu

Other abbreviations used: C = Coda, NT = Namibian Totela, N = Nucleus, O = Onset, PT = Perspective Time, TAM = Tense, Aspect, and Mood, ZT = Zambian Totela.

With other predicates, such as those in (2), the reading is more progressive-like, with the situation described still underway at perspective time.

- (2) Progressive uses
- a. *ndiliyèndètè*
 ndi-li-yend-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-walk-ITE
 'I am walking'
 - b. *ndilinèngètè*
 ndi-li-neng-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance-ITE
 'I am dancing'

The resultative–progressive split is not completely accounted for by the situation type (*Aktionsart*, lexical aspect) of the predicate in question. With at least some *-ite*-marked predicates, speakers vary in their judgments of temporal interpretation when context is not provided. For example, consultants offered both a resultative and a progressive interpretation for the verb *-nenga* 'to dance':

- (3) a. *ndilinèngètè*
 ndi-li-neng-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance-ITE
 'I am dancing' (ZT2007Elic113)
- b. *ndilinèngètè*
 ndi-li-neng-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance-ITE
 'I have danced' (ZT2007Elic101)

As a final complicating factor, speakers in elicitation sessions often deem *-ite* unacceptable with certain predicates. However, the same *-ite* examples deemed ungrammatical in elicitation sessions were sometimes accepted by other speakers – or even by the same speakers at other times. More tellingly, many *-ite* forms rejected in elicitation are attested in spontaneous discourse. For example, the utterance in (4) was rejected by a speaker in elicitation but accepted by other speakers and attested in conversation.

- (4) *?tuliponete*
 tu-li-pon-ete
 1PL-PRES.STAT-live-ITE
 (intended): 'we are living' (ZT2007.AN)

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. Section 2 gives a brief typological and sociolinguistic introduction to the Totela language, followed by a discussion of situation-type distinctions in Totela and the event-structure schemata used to portray them in this article. Section 3, after presenting basic details of its morphosyntax (section 3.1), argues for the analysis of *-ite* as a stativizer (section 3.2). Section 3.3 gives more exact specifications of precisely what an *-ite*-state entails, and its conversational functions. Finally, section 3.4 argues that *-ite*'s temporal role is underspecified, but can be recovered via principles of discourse relevance. The paper concludes in section 4 with a summary of the proposal and its potential cross-linguistic implications.

2. Background

2.1. Totela

Totela is a Bantu language spoken in parts of Zambia's Western Province and the Caprivi Strip in northern Namibia. It is listed as K.41 in the Guthrie (1967–1971) classification system, which is widely acknowledged to be useful referentially, but not a "linguistic-genetic" system Maho (2009:4).³ There are likely fewer than five thousand Totela speakers in the Western Province in Zambia (Crane, 2011:56), and the language is highly endangered, with very little intergenerational transmission. Lozi (Guthrie number K.21, but more closely related to the S Group of South Africa) is the primary language of communication in most Totela communities.

³ When other Bantu languages are referred to throughout this article, their Guthrie numbers will also be given.

Totela is a typical Bantu language in that it has flexible SVO word order with obligatory subject marking on the verb and optional dropping of overt subject and object(s) in the sentence, a large number of noun classes with pervasive agreement patterns, and a highly agglutinative verbal structure with many possible tense, aspect, and mood prefixes and suffixes.

2.2. Situation type, event structure, and other terminological issues

In this article, the label “situation” is employed as a neutral term, encompassing both EVENTS (spatio-temporal particulars) (Davidson, 1967) and STATES. SITUATION STRUCTURE OF EVENT STRUCTURE refers to the composition of PHASES that comprise an event, discussed below. SITUATION TYPE is used to refer to the internal temporal structuring of a particular predicate; in the literature it is also referred to as *Aktionsart* or lexical aspect.

Because interpretation of *-ite*-marked verbs is sensitive to situation type as well as to context, a few words must be said about the organization of lexical aspect in Totela and the terminology that will be employed here to refer to it.

Vendler’s (1957) eventuality-type classification (augmented in Smith, 1997) is problematic for studies of Bantu languages. Rather than having a basic telic/atelic distinction, many Bantu languages appear to make an important distinction between what some have termed non-inchoative verbs (roughly, though not exactly, corresponding to Vendler’s STATES, ACTIVITIES, and ACCOMPLISHMENTS) and inchoative verbs, which encompass many of Vendler’s ACHIEVEMENTS, along with other verbs that express “a change of condition or location of the experiencer or patient”, including a “change or transition from one state to another” (Botne and Kershner, 2000:165, whose verb-structure analysis follows Beuchat, 1966; Freed, 1980; Botne, 1983, among others).

Most stative verbs in Totela are actually inchoative in nature. For example, the verb stem *-bomba* is best translated as ‘soak’ or ‘get wet’, rather than ‘be soaked/wet’. The main difference between inchoative and non-inchoative verbs, as described by Botne and Kershner (2000), is the representation of the so-called NUCLEAR PHASE, as discussed below.

The contrast between these two verb types has been noted by many as primary in Bantu (see e.g. Botne and Kershner, 2000; Seidel, 2008; Nurse, 2008) although details of the categorization vary. As is virtually always the case with attempts to categorize situation type, many finer-grained distinctions are possible, and certain verb constellations seem to straddle the lines or shift categories based on context. In addition, the categorization of particular verb constellations may be highly language-specific.

In this article, in an effort to best approximate the actual behavior of Totela verbs, while also avoiding a particularity of categorization detail that might obscure the main arguments, I will focus on what I consider the two overarching situation types in Totela, which I label DURATIVE and CHANGE-OF-STATE. “Durative” can be understood as an umbrella category for activities and (non-inchoative) statives, as well as telic verbs that do not express a change-of-state of the verb’s subject. “Change-of-state” is used in this article only to refer to a change undergone by the *subject*. Thus, ‘die’ is a change-of-state verb, but (agentive) ‘cook’ is not. This difference from Botne and Kershner’s inchoative/non-inchoative distinction, in which inchoative verbs also include changes (of state, location, etc.) of the *experiencer*, seems to better capture the actual facts in Totela.

The contrast between the two situation types may be seen in the interpretation of the completive *-a-* marker in Totela. This marker gives (hodiernal) past-tense readings with durative verbs (e.g. *ndânêngà* ‘I danced’), while change-of-state verbs typically carry an implicature of continuing state, e.g. *châbômbâ* ‘it is wet/soaked’ (see also Crane, 2011.) (For convenience of reference, when I refer to e.g. “change-of-state verbs”, it may be understood as shorthand for “verbs that refer to change-of-state situations”.)

Following Botne and Kershner (2000) (see also Moens and Steedman, 1988), I use a basic temporal structure for situations that takes into account three potential phases: the onset phase, the nuclear phase, and the coda phase.

All situations have at least a nuclear phase, which Botne and Kershner characterize as “constituting the characteristic and prominent feature of the event” (2000:165). The coda consists of a final (often resultant) phase or state, if such a phase exists – as it often does for telic verbs, and always does for change-of-state verbs. The onset phase, which again may or may not be included in a situation’s temporal structure, is defined as a preliminary phase. Note that all situations (aside perhaps from permanent states) have an onset, but not all necessarily have a temporally-extended (non-punctual) onset *phase*. When I note “optional” onsets and codas, I refer to the temporally-extended onset phases, and not to the starting and ending *points* themselves.

Change-of-state situations and durative situations, according to Botne and Kershner (2000:166), differ primarily in how they treat the situation nucleus. With durative verbs, the nucleus is generally extended (except in the case of punctual/semelfactive verbs), and the onset and coda phases may or may not be part of the representation, as in Fig. 1. O represents the onset phase, N the nuclear phase, and C the coda phase. Parentheses indicate optionality.

In contrast, change-of-state situations have a punctually-constructed nucleus, an obligatory coda phase (the entered state), and an optional onset phase. A schema is shown in Fig. 2.

An example of a change-of-state situation with an onset phase is *-bomba* ‘get wet, soak’, mentioned above, where the soaking process has clear temporal duration, although the duration may vary from (e.g.) the time of a splash of water to

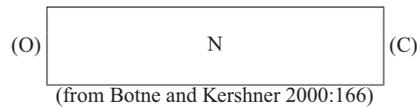


Fig. 1. Durative situation event structure.

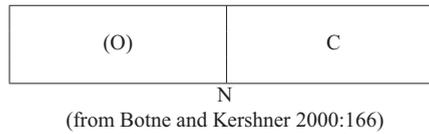
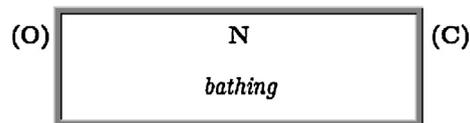
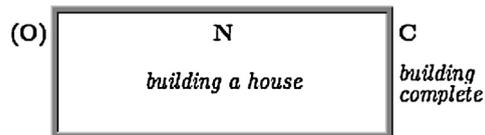


Fig. 2. Change-of-state situation event structure.

Fig. 3. Event structure for *-samba* 'bathe' → +[extended nucleus], -[(lexically-entailed) onset, coda phases].Fig. 4. Event structure for *-yaaka iñandu* 'build a house' → +[extended nucleus, result/coda], -[onset].

clothing, to (e.g.) the several days' soaking required for cassava preparation. The onset phase for situations like *-komokwa* 'be (=get) surprised' or *-taba* 'become happy' is less clearly defined, as the situations leading to surprise and happiness are less well delineated.

Because statives and perception statives behave somewhat differently from other duratives, I treat them separately in this paper. "Duratives", when not specifically noted to be the umbrella category covering statives and duratives, should be understood to refer to non-stative duratives. Perception statives and other statives will be labeled as such.

Throughout this paper, internal temporal structures associated with particular situation types (and thus with particular verbs) are schematized based on insights from Botne and Kershner (2000). As noted above, the durative/change-of-state distinction made in this paper is determined by the *subject's* activity or state, and diagrams also reflect the subject's perspective.

An example is given in Fig. 3 for the root *-samba* 'bathe'. The thick solid lines represent the situation's (relatively) clear starting and ending points. The onset phase (O) is depicted as optional (as indicated by the parentheses). There may also be preparatory phases, but these are not necessarily encoded in the verb. The same holds for the coda (C). Bathing typically has a result state of cleanliness, but it is not an inherent or necessary part of the situation's inherent temporal structure. The main phase, then is the nuclear phase (N), consisting of the bathing activities themselves.

Fig. 4, schematizing *-yaaka iñandu* 'build a house', represents a telic situation with a tangible result. This situation's event structure has an inherent completion point and (usually) a result/coda phase, which is typically construed as having more-or-less permanent duration (although this is not necessarily the case in the actual world). Thus, the onset phase is optional (represented by parentheses around the O), but the coda phase, in which a house has been built, is a part of the event structure proper. Of course, this coda phase may, in some cases, never be reached. Because the coda phase does not represent the activity or state of the subject, I do not represent it as enclosed it in solid lines, as I do with change-of-state verbs (see below).

Change-of-state verbs, also following Botne and Kershner (2000), are represented somewhat differently. An example is seen with the verb *-komokwa* 'get surprised' in Fig. 5. Here, the onset phase is not inherently part of the situation, and is represented by wavy lines.⁴ A punctually-construed nucleus occurs at the onset of the coda state of being surprised. Wavy

⁴ With verb types such as these, where the situation proper seems to begin with the nucleus, the onset phase is not included in diagrams in this study.

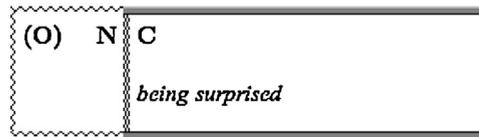


Fig. 5. Event structure for *-komokwa* 'get surprised' → $[-\text{extended nucleus, onset}], +[\text{coda}]$.



Fig. 6. Event structure for *-bomba* 'get wet, soak' → $[-\text{extended nucleus}], +[\text{onset, coda}]$.

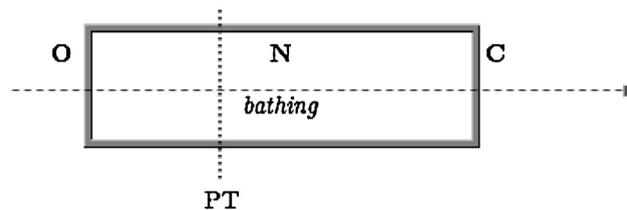


Fig. 7. Present time reading with *-samba* 'bathe': Perspective time is nucleus internal.

vertical lines at the nucleus indicate that “complete” entry into the state may be somewhat more subjective than it is with many durative verbs. The point of entry into a happy state is less clearly defined than is commencing an activity such as building or bathing. Similarly, there is no clear exit point from the coda state, so the end of that phase is also depicted with a wavy line.

A second kind of change-of-state verb is depicted in Fig. 6, which schematizes *-bomba* 'get wet, soak'. As in Fig. 5, the nucleus is construed as basically punctual, subjectively defined by the speaker's perception of when soaking is complete. That is, the *transition point* can be understood as punctual, marking the boundary between the time at which the object would be considered not (yet) soaked, and the time at which the object would be described as being soaked. Unlike Fig. 5, however, the onset phase is also defined, with a clear beginning.

In addition to these conventions for representing event structure, I follow Condoravdi (2002) in using the term PERSPECTIVE TIME to refer to the time from which a proposition's truth value is assessed (see also Cover, 2010:50; Tonhauser, 2006). Typically, this time is equivalent to utterance time. For example, a person making a claim about the future or past is assessing its probability or prior occurrence from the perspective of the time of making that claim. However, perspective time may not always be the same as utterance time, e.g. in certain embedded clauses or when used in narration. Perspective time differs from Klein's (1994) notion of Topic Time, which Klein defines as the time referred to by the utterance, *for* (and not *from*) which a proposition's truth value is assessed.

In diagrammatic representations, I represent perspective time (PT) as a dotted vertical line running “across” the timeline, and sometimes through a phase of the situation itself. The timeline itself runs from left to right “through” the situation referenced, and is represented by a dotted arrow. In Fig. 7, PT runs through a nuclear-internal part of the situation, so the situation is represented as obtaining at perspective time, which would result in a present time reading in the default case.

Finally, the terms COMPLETIVE and NON-COMPLETIVE are used to describe certain verbal markers in Totela, referring to the (non-)completion of the situation *nucleus*. Completive *-a-* behaves in some ways similarly to markers of perfective aspect, but analysis of *-a-* as a perfective is inadequate (Crane, 2011).

As will be seen in section 3, situation type is important in understanding *-ite*'s temporal interpretations; however, it is not completely predictive of them.

3. Analysis of *-ite*

3.1. *-ite*'s morphosyntax and distribution

In the general case, *-ite*'s form is *-ite* or *-ete*, with the first vowel harmonizing for (mid-) height with the verbal root vowel (*-ite* after *i*, *u*, and *a*; *-ete* after mid vowels *e* and *o*). Other forms are the result of imbrication (a process in which the suffix

“moves inside” the root, causing vowel coalescence and consonant loss; see e.g. Bastin, 1983; Botne and Kershner, 2000:168), consonant mutation (CM), and consonant harmony. Passive *-w-* occurs before the final vowel of *-ite*, suggesting (though by no means demanding) a bimorphemic analysis, i.e. *-it-* . . . *-e*. Monosyllabic verbs and some others end in *-ile*. A handful of forms seem to be simply irregular. A sampling of forms is given in (5).

(5) Some of *-ite*'s realizations

	Stem	Gloss	<i>-ite</i> form
Vowel Height	-zimba	'swell'	-zimb <u>ite</u>
Harmony:	-luka	'be good'	-luk <u>ite</u>
	-penga	'suffer'	-pen <u>gete</u>
	-yoba	'get lost'	-yob <u>ete</u>
	-taba	'be(come) happy'	-tab <u>ite</u>
CM:	-ikuta	'be(come) full'	-ik <u>usi</u>
Imbrication:	-ikala	'stay'	-ik <u>e</u> le
	-shekela	'sink to bottom'	-shek <u>e</u> le
	-tontola	'be(come) cold'	-tont <u>w</u> ele
	-hupula	'think, remember'	-hup <u>w</u> ile
	-zimana	'stand up'	-zim <u>e</u> le
Passive:	-chiswa	'get hurt, sick'	-chis <u>i</u> t <u>w</u> e
<i>-ile</i> forms:	-fwa	'die'	-f <u>w</u> iile
	-suwa	'hear, understand'	-su <u>w</u> ile
Irregular:	-iziba	'come to know'	-izi

When *-ite* is used with hodiernal (today) non-past temporal reference, verb macrostems – which include the verb root and any pre-root object markers – are preceded by *-li-* in affirmative main clauses. The *-li-* marker, glossed as PRES.STAT, is transparently derived from the verb *-li* 'to be'.

(6) *ndilíbhwèné*

ndi-li-bwene

1SG-PRES.STAT-see-ITE

'I see' (stative) (ZT2007Elic113)

-ite can also occur without *-li-*, which is absent in non-main-clause and non-affirmative contexts. In contrast, *-ite* may occur in both of those contexts, as shown in (7) and (8).

(7) *ndilíbhwèné àbàntù bàfúmìtè*

ndi-li-bwene

abantu

ba-fum-ite

1SG-PRES.STAT-SEE-ITE CL2.person CL2-be.rich-ITE.RC

'I see people who are rich/rich people' (ZT2009Elic28)

(8) *tânditâbitè*

ta-ndi-tab-ite

NEG-1SG-become.happy-ITE

'I am not happy' (ZT2009Elic39)

It should also be noted that *-li-* is absent entirely from *-ite* constructions in the Namibian variety of Totela (noted in example references as NT). Examples from NT without *-li-* may be viewed as equivalent to Zambian Totela (ZT) examples with *-li-*. The presence or absence of *-li-* in Zambian Totela is syntactically conditioned, and does not bear on *-ite*'s temporal interpretations. It appears in the same contexts as non-completive *-la-*.⁵ Both *-li-* and *-la-* are clearly related to markers of “disjunctive” verbal focus (see e.g. Hyman and Watters, 1984; Güldemann, 2003), although their focus function seems to be weakening (Crane, 2011).

⁵ The *-la-* marker is analyzed as a marker of NON-COMPLETION in Crane (2011), and that terminology is retained here. For the purposes of this paper, readers may also think of *-la-* as a non-past marker.

Table 1
-ite's distributional properties.

<i>-ite</i> occurs in/with	<i>-ite</i> does not occur in/with
Present stative <i>-li-</i>	Hodiernal non-past <i>-la-</i>
Prehodiernal imperfective <i>ka-</i>	Prehodiernal completive <i>-a-ka-</i>
Persistent ('still') <i>-chi-</i>	Completive <i>-a-</i>
Situative (participial) <i>na-</i>	Hodiernal past <i>-na-</i>
Main clauses	Posthodiernal future <i>na-</i>
Relative clauses	Subjunctive clauses
Negatives	
Questions	
Direct objects	

When speakers refer to situations before the day of perspective time, *-ite* co-occurs with imperfective prefix *ka-*, as in (9).

- (9) *katupengeṭe*
ka-tu-peng-ete
 PREHOD.IPFV-3PL-suffer-ITE
 'we were suffering' (ZT2007Elic113)

As will be discussed in section 3.2, *-ite* is incompatible with completive forms; however, it can co-occur with situative (participial) *na-* (10) and persistent ('still') *-chi-* (11).

- (10) *sùnù àwá ndináli, ndàbòná òmùntù nàititè*
 sunu awa ndi-na-li nda-bon-a omuntu na-it-ite
 today while 1SG-PST-eat.FV.PST 1SG.CMPL-see-FV CL1.person SIT.CL1-pass-ITE
 'today while I was eating, I saw a person passing by' (ZT2009Elic28)
- (11) a. *tùchimùlindilè*
 tu-chi-mu-lindile
 1PL-PERS-3SG-wait-ITE
 'we are still waiting for him' (ZT2009Elic173)
- b. *ndichiyaakite afuwi nomulonga*
 ndi-chi-yaak-ite afuwi nomulonga
 1SG-PERS-build-ITE near COM.CL3.river
 'I [my house] am still built close to the river' (ZT2007Elic123)

Finally, *-ite* does not occur with the posthodiernal dissociative marker *na-*.⁶ The distributional properties of *-ite* are summarized in Table 1.

The *-ite* suffix also occurs more frequently with verbs of some situation types than others: it is frequently seen with change-of-state verbs and "true" statives (including perception statives). It is used less often with duratives, especially atelic duratives, and is virtually unattested with punctual verbs. The interactions of *-ite* and situation type are discussed in greater detail in section 3.2.1.

3.2. *-ite* as a stativizer

In this section, I argue that *-ite*'s primary aspectual function is that of a stativizer. That is, *-ite* picks out a phase resulting from some part of a situation's event structure, and presents it as a stable, undifferentiated property. As I will argue in section 3.4, the temporal relationship between the situation itself and the phase selected by *-ite* is semantically underspecified, and is determined by conversational relevance.

In analyzing *-ite* as a stativizer, it is important to keep in mind the distinction between lexical and aspectual stativity. Many arguments have been made against the common conflation of statives and progressives (e.g. Bertinetto, 1994; Smith, 1997; Glasbey, 1998). These arguments hinge on the important observation that statives are a kind of lexical

⁶ It may be possible in certain periphrastic constructions, but such use has never been attested outside of elicitation for Zambian Totela.

aspect – stativity is an inherent feature of certain verbs or verb constellations – while the progressive is an aspect, i.e. a grammatical temporal relation imposed on predicates of various types.

While this distinction is crucial, statives and progressives share an important commonality: statives, like progressives and resultatives, refer to a “stable” situation (Smith, 1997:84). Statives do so by virtue of inherent lexical properties, while in progressive and perfect or resultative aspects, a subpart of a predicate’s event structure is presented as stable and ongoing.

A number of grammatical aspects have been analyzed as introducing a state, not least the resultative and the progressive, both of which represent possible English translations of *-ite* forms in various contexts. See (among others) Parsons (1990:234ff), Michaelis (2003), and Nishiyama and Koenig (2004, 2010) for discussion of the English Perfect as a stativizer (but cf. “Extended Now” theories of the Perfect, including McCoard (1978) and Portner (2003) for explanations of the Perfect that do not involve a “perfect state”); Vlach (1981) and Parsons (1990) for arguments that the English Progressive is a stativizer (but cf. Smith (1997), Bertinetto (1994), and Glasbey (1998) for arguments against this stance); Nishiyama (2006) for the Japanese resultative, perfect, and progressive marker *-te-i* as a stativizer; and Kratzer (2000) for German stativizers. Jackson (2005) gives a general overview of stativizers with data from Chichewa, German, and Pima.

Thus, in analyzing *-ite*’s aspectual contribution as “stativizing”, I claim not that *-ite* creates lexical items having a particular event structure, but rather that it “picks out” or selects one subinterval within or subsequent to a predicate’s event structure and presents it as a stable and relevant property, a state of affairs that is ongoing and may be expected to continue unless other conditions arise to change it. (For discussion of the term “relevance” as used in this paper, see section 3.3.1.)

-ite can select phases to present as states in any of three ways: it can select a stative phase that is part of a situation’s inherent event structure; it can select a phase subsequent to the nucleus of a situation and present it as a stative result of that situation; or it can assert a stative property that results from an ongoing non-stative phase of a situation (often triggering a progressive translation in this last case). In section 3.4, I will argue that the way in which *-ite* selects its temporal phase is determined by the interplay of the input predicate’s lexical situation type and conversational relevance.

In the remainder of this section, I present evidence for the stativity of *-ite* predicates, regardless of the inherent situation type of the verb stem to which *-ite* attaches. I will then argue, in section 3.3, that these *-ite* states describe properties associated with the subject of the verb.

3.2.1. Interactions with situation type

-ite’s interactions with various situation types are to some extent – but by no means entirely – predictable. The following discussion will deal only with the most common interactions of *-ite* with each situation type; as will be shown in section 3.4, *-ite* allows for interpretive variability with some predicate types.

3.2.1.1. *Change-of-state.* *-ite* occurs most frequently with verbs depicting states. Most of these verbs are in some way inchoative, denoting entered states, thus belonging to the change-of-state situation type category. With such verbs, *-ite* picks out the state brought about in the inchoative situation and gives a resultative-like reading. An example is shown in (12), which shows an example from a text with the verb *-seswa* ‘get married’.⁷ The *-ite* form depicts an ongoing, previously-entered state and is used to set up the ensuing action.

- (12) ...*kabasesetwe omuntu eenke*
 ...*ka-ba-ses-et-w-e* omuntu eenke
 ...PREHOD.IPFV-3PL-marry-ITE-PASS-ITE CL1.person CL1.one
 ‘...they were married to one [the same] person’ (ZT2007Narr24.CS)

-ite’s interactions with change-of-state predicates can best be illustrated through its contrasts with the markers *-la-* (non-completive) and *-a-* (completive). While the *-la-* marker does *not* depict a state with these predicates, and the *-a-* marker need not do so, *-ite*-marked change-of-state verbs always describe states.

The first member of each pair in (13)–(15) shows a possible reading of the verb with non-completive (non-past) *-la-*, which locates perspective time prior to the situation nucleus (see Crane, 2011). In contrast to *-la-*, *-ite* creates a state within the post-nuclear coda phase of a change-of-state verb, depicting the result of the state change, as shown in the second member of each pair. Recall that the nucleus of change-of-state verbs is construed as punctual, with an onset phase that may or may not be part of the lexical meaning, and a lexically-entailed coda phase.

In (13a), the subject (cassava) is not presented as having fully attained the coda-state property ‘be [sufficiently] soaked’. In contrast, the subject of the *-ite*-marked verb in (13b) has already reached the point where it may be referred to as soaked – the cassava is in a soaked state, and is ready for further processing.

⁷ The passive form, *-seswa*, is used for women, while the active form *-sesa* is used for male subjects.

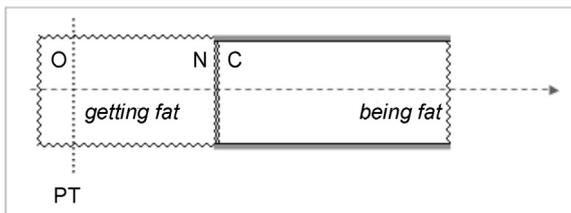
- (13) a. *òmwanjà ùlàbòmbà*
 omwanja u-la-bomb-a
 CL3.cassava CL3-NONCMPL-soak-FV
 ‘the cassava is soaking/the cassava will soak’ (ZT2007Elic89)
- b. *òmwanjà ùlibòmbète*
 omwanja u-li-bomb-ete
 CL3.cassava CL3-PRES.STAT-soak-ITE
 ‘the cassava is soaked’ (ZT2007Elic89)

Examples (14) and (15) show similar contrasts.

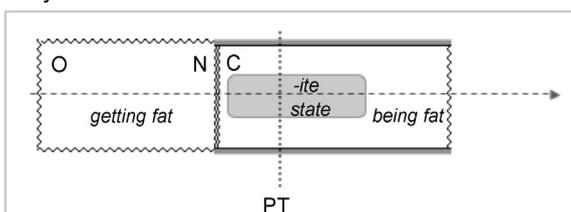
- (14) a. *ndilàtábà*
 ndi-la-tab-a
 1SG-NONCMPL-become.happy-FV
 ‘I’ll become happy’
- b. *ndilítàbitè*
 ndi-li-tab-ite
 1SG-PRES.STAT-become.happy-ITE
 ‘I am happy’ (ZT2009Elic39)
- (15) a. *tùléézibànà*
 tu-la-izib-an-a
 3PL-NONCMPL-come.to.know-RECIP-FV
 ‘we will get to know each other/we’re getting to know each other’
- b. *tùlíizibènè*
 tu-li-izib-ene
 1PL-PRES.STAT-come.to.know-RECIP-ITE
 ‘we know each other’ (ZT2007Elic31)

Example (16) gives illustrations of event-structure construals of a change-of-state verb with the markers *-la-* and *-ite*, respectively. (16a) depicts a typical interpretation of *-nuna* ‘get fat’ with *-la-*. The perspective time (PT) is located in the pre-nuclear phase, depicting the process leading up to the state. (16b) shows the same verb with *-ite*, which is depicted as picking out a state within the coda phase (C) and presenting it as an ongoing property of the subject. Perspective time is located inside the *-ite* state.

- (16) a. *balanuna*
 ba-la-nun-a
 3PL-NONCMPL-get.fat-FV
 ‘they’re getting fat’



- b. *balinunite*
 ba-li-nun-ite
 1SG-PRES.STAT-get.fat-ITE
 ‘they’re fat’



In addition to contrasting with *-la-*, *-ite* also contrasts with completive *-a-* when occurring with change-of-state predicates. The *-a-* marker is often used with change-of-state verbs to indicate a state that is ongoing at perspective time (17a). However, it may also be used in describing a state that held earlier in the day, but which no longer holds (17b). *-ite*-marked change-of-state verbs in the present tense, in contrast, must indicate a state that is ongoing at perspective time, as in (18).

- (17) a. *ndakomokwa!*
nda-komok-w-a!
1SG.CMPL-surprise-PASS-FV
'I'm surprised!' (ZT2007Elic116)
- b. *ndakomokwa sunu!*
nda-komok-w-a sunu!
1SG.CMPL-surprise-PASS-FV today
'I got surprised [earlier] today!' (ZT2007Narr27.VK)

- (18) *ndilikomoketwe!*
ndi-li-komok-et-w-e!
1SG.PRES.STAT-surprise-ITE-PASS-ITE
'I'm surprised!' (ZT2007Elic116)

3.2.1.2. "True" statives. While non-inchoative stative verbs are rare in Totela, *-ite* occurs with some frequency with many of them.⁸ As expected, *-ite* marked statives pick out a time frame within the single-phase stative situations, as shown in examples (19) and (20).

- (19) *ano tulilindile okuti aba abakwayamasta beeze*
ano tu-li-lind-ile okuti aba aba-kwayamasta ba-iz-e
now 1PL-PRES.STAT-wait-ITE that CL2.DEM CL2-choir.masters CL2-come-FV.SBJV
'now we're waiting for those choirmasters to come' (ZT2007Narr22.VB, *Sunu*)
- (20) *ndilihupwile*
ndi-li-hupwile
1SG-PRES.STAT-think/remember-ITE
'I remember' (ZT2009Elic39) (also attested: 'I am thinking')

Interpretations with perception statives are similar to interpretations with "true" statives. An example is shown in (21), which contrasts a *-la-* form (21a) – with relatively free temporal interpretations – with the corresponding *-ite* form (21b), which references a time after the state has begun.

- (21) a. *ndilasuwà*
ndi-la-suw-a
1SG-NONCMPL-hear-FV
'I hear/am hearing/will hear'
- b. *ndilisuwile*
ndi-li-suw-ile
1SG-PRES.STAT-hear-ITE
'I hear' (or: 'I understand')

In Totela, perception statives are sometimes construed as inchoative (change-of-state), i.e. the nucleus represents punctual entry into the coda-phase state. The *-ite* form of *-suwa* 'hear, feel, understand' is very commonly used with the resultative-type meaning 'I understand' (because I have understood). On this reading, an inchoative construal seems

⁸ Notably, *-ite* is rare with *-saka* 'want'. However, it is attested with this root, as in the following example:

- (1) *kambe tandisakite, kambe naandamiwambila kale.*
kambe ta-ndi-sak-ite, kambe naa-nda-mi-wamb-il-a kale
COUNTER NEG-1SG-want-ITE, COUNTER COUNTER-1SG.CMPL-2PL(OBJ)-speak-APPL already
'If I didn't want [to work with you], I would have told you already' (ZT2009Elic69)

likely, with the nucleus representing the point at which understanding is attained. These differing construals are not of particular importance in the understanding of *-ite*, which always picks out the stative phase, and does not in general seem to distinguish inchoative from “truly” stative perception statives.

The occurrence of *-ite* with stative verbs (and, indeed, any verbs with stative phases in their event structure) impels the question of what *-ite*'s stativizing function adds semantically. This question will be addressed in section 3.3, where I argue that *-ite* asserts a (relevant) property of the subject, rather than merely describing a state in itself.

3.2.1.3. *Durative*. In general, *-ite* occurs less frequently with durative verbs than with stative or change-of-state verbs. It seems to be more compatible with duratives that typically entail a coda state, such as *-biika* ‘hide’, as in (22), which entails a state of being hidden.⁹ Similarly, (23) shows the result state of having built one’s house somewhere, i.e. living in that location.

- (22) *ndililibiikítè*
 ndi-li-li-biik-ite
 1SG-PRES.STAT-REFL-hide-ITE
 ‘I am hiding [hidden]’ (ZT2007Elic129)

- (23) *tuliyaakite afuwi nomulonga*
 tu-li-yaak-ite afuwi nomulonga
 1PL-PRES.STAT-build-ITE near COM.CL3.river
 ‘we [my house] are built close to the river [i.e. we live close to the river]’ (ZT2007Elic123)

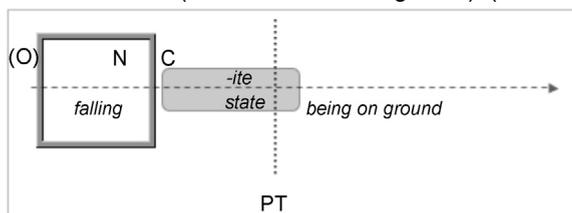
Use of *-ite* is less common with durative verbs without a result state, although such examples are attested. Typically, these kinds of verbs are given progressive English translations when marked with *-ite*, as in (24), produced by a consultant in conversation.

- (24) *ndifonete*
 ndi-fon-ete
 1SG-telephone(v)-ITE
 ‘I’m phoning/I’m on the phone’ (NT2007Elic74, *conversation*)¹⁰

In section 3.3, I will argue that these “progressive” forms do not refer directly to the situation-in-progress itself, but rather assert a property of the subject that results from the ongoing situation.

As is the case with change-of-state verbs, the requirement that a state be associated with *-ite* is unbreakable, as shown by the contrast in (25). The *-ite* form is only felicitous with *-wa* ‘fall’ if uttered while the subject is still on the ground (25a). A speaker uttering (25b), formed with the completive marker *-a-* used for hodiernal pasts, may or may not still find herself in the coda phase resulting from the fall (i.e. being on the ground).

- (25) a. *tuliwiile*
 tu-li-u-iile
 1PL-PRES.STAT-fall-ITE
 ‘We have fallen (and are still on the ground)’ (ZT2007Elic123.VK)



⁹ The object need not be coreferential with the subject. Acting upon an object may still create a resultant state for the subject that is relevant in discourse. For example, *ndilichibiikítè*, with class 7 object marker *-chi-*, would mean ‘I am hiding it’.

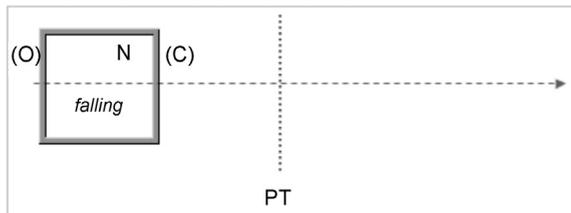
¹⁰ An anonymous reviewer suggests that this form might also have a resultative interpretation, i.e. ‘I have called up’ (and am therefore on the phone). Although this is not the translation or sense recorded in my fieldnotes, further research would be required to tease apart this contrast. Either reading would support the argument that the subject’s asserted property results from the situation described, as detailed in section 3.3.

Table 2

-ite's distributional properties (repeated).

<i>-ite</i> occurs in/with	<i>-ite</i> does not occur in/with
Present stative <i>-li-</i>	Hodiernal non-past <i>-la-</i>
Prehodiernal imperfective <i>ka-</i>	Prehodiernal completive <i>-a-ka-</i>
Persistent ('still') <i>-chi-</i>	Completive <i>-a-</i>
Situative (participial) <i>na-</i>	Hodiernal past <i>-na-</i>
Main clauses	Posthodiernal future <i>na-</i>
Relative clauses	Subjunctive clauses
Negatives	
Questions	
Direct objects	

- b. *ndawa*
 nda-u-a
 1SG.CMPL-fall-FV
 'I fell (and possibly got up again)'



3.2.1.4. *Semelfactive*. I have no examples in my data of *-ite* occurring with semelfactive predicates in natural discourse, and many consultants rejected them during elicitation sessions. Consultants who accepted them as grammatical gave them a progressive-like, iterative interpretation.

Construed as completely punctual (though of course having duration in the actual world), semelfactive verbs cannot be associated with a state of any duration, unless the situation repeats for a period of measurable duration, as in (26), which was dispreferred by consultants but consistently given an iterative interpretation.¹¹

- (26) ?*tulikambite*
 tu-li-kamb-ite
 1PL-PRES.STAT-clap-ITE
 'we are clapping' (ZT2007Elic124.SM)

It is important to reiterate that examples with durative and semelfactive verbs are often rejected by consultants in elicitation. Still, rejection is variable, and examples rejected in elicitation are sometimes attested in actual discourse. In addition, consultants are virtually always able to give a temporal interpretation of the examples they reject. Noteworthy is that the rejected examples tend to be predicates where, in the absence of context, an associated result state is difficult to construe. When such a context presents itself in the real world, *-ite* is (often) freely used. For further discussion, see section 3.3.

3.2.2. Further evidence for *-ite*'s stativity

A further piece of evidence for *-ite*'s stativity comes from its co-occurrence restrictions. Recall Table 1, repeated here as Table 2.

As seen in the table, *-ite* cannot co-occur with completive *-a-* or with non-completive *-la-*, with which it is contrasted above in examples (25) and (21), respectively. These markers situate perspective time (representing a punctual point in

¹¹ In theory, a punctual verb could be given a resultative reading with *-ite*, if the consequences of the punctual event were such that they created an ensuing state. As noted, I have no such examples in my extensive corpus of *-ite* uses, and was unable to construe a rich enough context in elicitation sessions to provoke such a use or interpretation. This possibility is a question for future research.

time) with respect to a situation's nucleus (Crane, 2011), and refer to the situation itself. *-ite*, on the other hand, creates a non-punctual state that *results from* – but is not coreferent with – the situation nucleus.

Prehodiernal *-ka-* (used with situations before the day of perspective time) and completive *-a-* conspire to produce a past perfective reading (marked with *-a-ka-*). Prehodiernal completives are therefore incompatible with *-ite* because a state ongoing at perspective time (evoked by *-ite*) is incompatible with perfective semantics. Thus, *-ite* may co-occur with prehodiernal imperfective prefix *ka-* as in (27a), but not with prehodiernal completive marking (also *-ka-*, but occurring in a post-subject-marker position following completive *-a-*), as in (27b).¹²

- (27) a. *katupengete*
 ka-tu-peng-ete
 PREHOD.IPFV-2PL-suffer-ITE
 ‘we were suffering’ (ZT2007Elic113)
- b. **twakapengete*
 **twa-ka-peng-ete*
 1PL.CMPL-PREHOD-suffering-ITE
 (intended): ‘we were suffering’ (or ‘we suffered’) (ZT2007Elic136)

The impossibility of *-ite*'s co-occurrence with subjunctive (28) and future (29) marking is similarly evidence for *-ite*'s stativity requirement. In non-past contexts, *-ite* requires that situations are interpreted as states that hold at perspective time, whether perspective time is real or imagined. The subjunctive and the future both indicate that the situation referenced is *not* yet realized at perspective time, so the state referred to by an *-ite*-marked verb cannot hold at perspective time, as is required.

- (28) **ndisaka mutabite*
 **ndi-sak-a mu-tab-ite*
 1SG-want-FV 2PL-become.happy-ITE
 (intended): ‘I want you to be happy’ (ZT2009Elic39)¹³
- (29) **nandilalwalite/nandililwalite*
 **na-ndi-{la}/{li}-lwal-ite*
 POSTHOD-1SG-{NONCMPL}/{PRES.STAT}-be.sick-STAT
 (intended): ‘I will be sick’

3.2.3. *-ite* as a stativizer: summary

The preceding sections have shown that *-ite* can take any situation type (with the possible exception of semelfactives) as its “input”, and that the output is always a state. The *-ite* state can be temporally located either within a situation's nucleus (for situations with non-punctual nuclei) or after it (for any situation type). The English translation can be stative/resultative (even perfect) or progressive. In the next section, I will argue that despite the variety in English translations, *-ite* is, in fact, monosemous. The “*-ite*-state” does not describe the situation itself, but instead asserts a property of the subject that *results from* the *-ite*-marked situation. The *-ite*-state's temporal “location”, either within the nucleus or as a post-nuclear coda state, are underspecified and determined by principles of conversational relevance, as I will argue in section 3.4.

3.3. *-ite* asserts a property of the subject, resulting from the referenced situation

There is strong evidence that *-ite* has historical roots as a resultative marker (see Crane, 2012). The marker retains many of the characteristics of the resultative. For example, as Dahl (1985:134–138) notes, perfects are incompatible with ‘still’, while compatibility with ‘still’ is hallmark of resultatives. Some attested examples of *-ite* with ‘still’ are given in example (30), which is repeated from (11).

¹² Prehodiernal *-ka-* and prehodiernal imperfective *ka-* may be related, as both serve as “dissociative” markers (Crane, 2011), but they are distinguished both in their verbal position and in the associated tonal patterns.

¹³ The correct subjunctive form would be *ndisàkà mùtábè* ‘I want you to be(come) happy’. Possible as the complement of *-saka* is an *-ite* form as a headless relative clause, as in (1):

- (1) *ndisàkà chilúkìtè*
 ndi-sak-a chi-luk-ite
 1SG-want-FV CL7-be.good-STAT.RC
 ‘I want the good one’ (ZT2009Elic39)

- (30) a. *tùchìmùlìndìlê*
 tu-chi-mu-lindile
 1PL-PERS-3SG-wait.ITE
 'we are still waiting for him' (ZT2009Elic173)
- b. *ndìchiyaakìtê afuwi nomulonga*
 ndi-chi-yaak-ite afuwi na=omulonga
 1SG-PERS-build-ITE near COM=CL3.river
 'I [my house] am still built close to the river' (ZT2007Elic123)

Contrast the above *-ite* examples with the corresponding sentences in the English Present Perfect:

- (31) '#We have still waited for him'
- (32) '#I have still built my house next to the river'

The co-occurrence of resultatives, but not perfects, with 'still' is related to the primary reference of these aspects. Perfects describe a (usually) past situation with current relevance, sometimes described as a "perfect state" (e.g. Nishiyama and Koenig, 2010). Although present relevance is involved, the perfect still primarily refers to the situation itself. Resultatives, in contrast, refer to the state *resulting from* the situation, rather than to the actual situation. Bybee et al. put it as follows:

A resultative. . . expresses the rather complex meaning that a present state exists as the result of a previous action. An anterior, in contrast, expresses the sense that a past action is relevant in a much more general way to the present moment (Bybee et al., 1994:69).

In this section, I will argue that *-ite*, like the resultative, asserts a state that exists as a result of the situation described by the verb (constellation). Unlike resultatives, however, the *-ite*-state does not require that the situation precede the resulting state. Rather, *-ite* asserts a state, or property, of the subject that is relevant within current discourse. This state can either be within the (ongoing) situation nucleus, or in a post-nuclear coda state, and can be permanent or (more often) temporary. Although this loosening of the resultative's temporal restrictions is not mentioned Bybee et al. (1994), it is a logical development of the resultative's uses, especially when pragmatic functions such as conversational relevance play a stronger role, as I will argue in section 3.4.

The following subsections describe evidence that *-ite*-states describe conversationally-relevant properties of subjects. Before delving into the details of the evidence, I will give a brief outline of the term RELEVANCE as it is employed throughout this paper, especially in the current section, which argues that *-ite* asserts a property of the subject that is relevant within the current discourse, and in section 3.4, in which I propose that conversational relevance is responsible for determining *-ite*'s temporal interpretations.

3.3.1. Relevance

This article takes its definition of relevance from Roberts (1998), who defines it using concepts of discourse topic and common ground (see also e.g. Stalnaker, 1979; Heim, 1982; Ginzburg, 1996, among others). Arguing that INFORMATION STRUCTURE relates to communicative strategy, rather than to individual units of communication, Roberts proposes that information structuring in cooperative conversation can be viewed as a "game" in which interlocutors work together to answer what she terms THE BIG QUESTION, namely, "*what is the way things are?*" (Roberts, 1998:4).

Particular conversations have more constrained DOMAIN GOALS that make up specific parts of this ultimate goal. Domain goals involve the evaluation of a set of propositions that constitute the IMMEDIATE QUESTION UNDER DISCUSSION; in other words, the DISCOURSE TOPIC. Each utterance can be viewed as a "move" toward the achievement of a domain goal, accomplished by answering a question raised by a discourse and thereby reducing the CONTEXT SET. The context set is defined as the set of worlds for which the COMMON GROUND – i.e. the set of propositions accepted by all interlocutors – holds. An utterance is RELEVANT if it provides a complete or partial answer to the salient question in the current discourse ("the immediate question under discussion").

For an example of how Roberts' definition of relevance can be employed in the analyses of tense and aspect markers, we can turn to Portner's (2003) analysis of the English Perfect. Crosslinguistically, the perfect is known for having numerous interpretations. In English, these include at least PERFECT OF RESULT ('Simon has sent us his article' → therefore we have the article), EXPERIENTIAL PERFECT ('Simon has been to New York' → he has had this experience), PERFECT OF PERSISTENT SITUATION ('Simon has taught history for almost a year' → he is still teaching), and PERFECT OF RECENT PAST ('Simon has (just) returned to Bundu') (see Comrie, 1976:56ff, among others).

Perfect forms are often associated with relevance. Portner (2003) proposes to unite the various interpretations of the English Perfect through an analysis that involves underspecified temporal semantics and a modal *presupposition* of relevance:

...while the past may indicate a current result of relevance to the discourse topic, it does not linguistically presuppose that it does so. ...[A] speaker can use the perfect in a situation in which it is not obvious how the presupposition is satisfied in order to prod the hearer into uncovering (and accommodating) the type of discourse topic that he or she has in mind (Portner, 2003:502).

Under Portner's account, the Perfect's temporal semantics are limited and based on a TEMPORAL SEQUENCING PRINCIPLE involving situation type: non-stative situations occurred prior to reference time, while stative predicates may hold either at or before reference time. Specific interpretations are determined by speakers' use of temporal adverbials and by negotiation with the presupposition of relevance. Portner argues that while non-Perfect aspects may, of course, be used in utterances that are relevant to the immediate question under discussion, the Perfect presupposes the utterance's relevance, thereby forcing hearers to match one of Comrie's categories to the immediate discourse context.¹⁴

Relevance also plays a crucial role in Nishiyama and Koenig's (2010) analysis of the English Present Perfect. Their analysis, in contrast to that of Portner, does not rely on a presupposition of relevance, but instead asserts that the differing readings associated with the Perfect can be derived through principles of conversational relevance, which serve to fill in variables in a semantically-underspecified perfect state.

In the remainder of this section, I give evidence that *-ite* asserts a relevant state (or property) of the subject; then, in section 3.4, I will argue that relevance also accounts for *-ite*'s varying temporal interpretations, filling in the temporal details in a temporally-underspecified stativizing function. The increasing role of relevance in *-ite*'s interpretation, and the decreasing force of the resultative's temporal specifications, indicates strengthening of the marker's pragmatic, information-structuring functions. I remain agnostic as to whether the role of relevance amounts to a presupposition, as in Portner's analysis of the English Perfect, or whether it can be regarded as a general interpretive principle, supplying missing details through pragmatics. What is important is the observation that the role of pragmatics is increasing as the temporal requirements lose their strength.¹⁵

3.3.2. Distribution

The distribution of *-ite* gives key clues to its semantic and pragmatic functions. *-ite* occurs quite frequently with verbs that depict temporary states, such as 'tired' or 'hungry'. Such predicates depict properties immediately relevant to the subject's state of being. An example is given in (33), where the question about the subject's state of being is overt, and the *-ite* form leads to an answer:

- (33) [context: Q: do you think the king will go to sleep? A: (yes), he BE TIRED]¹⁶
umfumu akangitwe
umfumu a-kang-it-w-e
 CL1.chief CL1.tire.out-ITE-PASS-ITE
 'the chief is tired [so he'll go to sleep]' (adapted from Dahl, 1985:Q58) (NT2007Elic17)

On the other hand, *-ite* occurs far less frequently with verbs like *-bala* 'read' and *-ñola* 'write', which do not immediately suggest a resulting state for the subject. In contrast, the passive form of 'write' does have an easily inferable result state (being written), and the *-ite*-marked passive form of *-ñola* is fairly common. An example is shown in (34). Furthermore, the state of not being written is relevant in (34) to answering the question about the subject (the Totela language), in this case, why it has low prestige and is not learned by children.

¹⁴ Portner's analysis contains another pragmatic component, as well, based on the EXTENDED NOW theory of McCoard (1978) (cited in Portner, 2003).

Portner claims that the present tense component of Present Perfect temporal semantics carries a presupposition that the situation described falls within an interval of which the time of utterance is "a final subinterval" Therefore, the Present Perfect must be used for something within a time interval where literal present time is plausibly a part (Portner, 2003:406). The interval included in the Extended Now is contextually determined, based on the speaker's goal of communicating "nearness" to an event (Portner, 2003:496–497).

¹⁵ See Crane (2012) for further discussion of the diachronic pragmatic pathways of *-ite* and similar makers.

¹⁶ Dahl (1985) uses uninflected forms in all caps for the target tense/aspect/mood forms in his survey, in an effort to avoid, as much as possible, undue English influence.

- (34) *tachiñoletwe mwimbukka*
 ta-chi-ñol-et-w-e mwimbukka
 NEG-CL7-write-ITE-PASS-ITE CL18(LOC)-CL10.book
 ‘it’s not written in books’ (ZT2007Elic124, given as an explanation for Totela’s low prestige)

In (35) we see another example in which *-ite* describes a property of the subject that is relevant to current discourse. A consultant offered (35) as an explanation for her refusal of the handful of roasted groundnuts I was offering.

- (35) *alimanite ameeno*
 a-li-man-ite ameeno
 CL6-PRES.STAT-finish-ITE CL6.teeth
 ‘[my] teeth are all gone’ (ZT2007Elic116)

-ite may also be used to depict a characteristic state, as in (36) with *-zinguluka* ‘encircle’ (from *-zinga* ‘twist, braid, roll’). Characteristic states also reference relevant properties of the discourse subject.

- (36) *chizingulukite*
 chi-zinguluk-ite
 CL7-encircle-ITE
 ‘it’s round’ (NT2007Elic57)

As noted, speakers tend to reject the context-free use of *-ite* with activity verbs. Their reluctance to accept such examples is not unexpected under the current analysis: unless speakers can construe a relevant property of the subject resulting from the situation referenced, use of *-ite* is infelicitous. Still, numerous real-life examples are attested in which *-ite* is used with verbs that do not typically have an associated state. In these cases, *-ite* depicts a property of the subject that results from the situation referenced. This property is relevant in answering a question posed overtly or covertly in discourse. An example is given in (37), which was volunteered as an answer to the (embedded) question of whether the speaker’s brother was busy. The answer, with *-ite*, describes the brother’s (active) state, implicating that he was, in fact, busy.

- (37) [context: ‘what did your brother say yesterday when you asked him if he was busy?’]
nabatí ye kababezete zipula
 na-ba-ti ye ka-ba-bez-ete zi-pula
 PREHOD.IPFV-3PL-say COMP PREHOD.IPFV-3PL-carve-ITE CL8-chair
 ‘he said that he was carving chairs’¹⁷ (adapted from Dahl, 1985:Q156) (NT2007Elic17)

In most cases, e.g. if the activity itself had been questioned, a progressive or general present construction would be favored with this predicate. It is notable, then, that this otherwise marked form of an activity verb was volunteered in a context where a person’s state of being busy is under question. Here again, an *-ite* form answers a question overtly posed in the discourse.¹⁸

Another example is given in (38), repeated from (24). This utterance was produced by a Namibian consultant as an explanation for why he was unable to talk with me at the moment: he was making a brief phone call, but his attention would be back on our elicitation session shortly.¹⁹

¹⁷ The third person plural subject marker is used here with the 3sg subject ‘my brother’ as a sign of respect.

¹⁸ The contrast between progressives with *-ite* and more common progressive constructions is similar to that found in Mandarin Chinese between equative constructions used as resultatives, and perfective constructions, as illustrated in Hengeveld (2011):

- (1) a. *Tā (shi) zuótiān lái de.*
 Tā (shi) zuótiān lái de
 3SG (COP) yesterday come NR
 ‘he arrived yesterday’
 b. *Tā zuótiān lái le.*
 Tā zuótiān lái le
 3SG yesterday come PFV
 ‘he came yesterday’ (Li and Thompson, 1981 in Hengeveld, 2011)

Hengeveld notes that the sentence in (1a) means something like, “He is someone (now) characterized by his arriving yesterday”, and would be an appropriate response to, “Why couldn’t he speak English?”, while (1b) would answer a question like “Has he arrived yet?” (Hengeveld, 2011).

¹⁹ In fact, (38) was uttered when the consultant was *just about* to make a phone call. Still, his state at the moment was that of being in the process of making a phone call, and he was unavailable for other activities.

- (38) *ndifonete*
 ndi-fon-ete
 1SG-telephone(v)-ITE
 'I'm on the phone' (NT2007Elic74, *conversation*)

Similarly, (39) was uttered in response to a question about whether a message had been delivered; the subject of the sentence is the child who had been instructed to deliver it. Here, as in (37) and (38), *-ite* picks out a state located temporally within the situation nucleus.

- (39) *akanite kuyenda*
 a-kan-ite ku-yend-a
 3SG-refuse-ITE INF-GO-FV
 'she is refusing to go' (NT2007Elic56, *conversation*)

Here, the relevant issue is not the act of refusing itself, but rather the child's state of obstinacy, leading to the failure of the message to be delivered.

Thus, *-ite* is used with predicates – including those that do not reference stereotypically stative situations – in cases where the referenced situations are the causes of a property, temporary or permanent, of the subject that is relevant to current discourse.

3.3.3. Context creation

Recall from previous sections that *-ite*'s temporal interpretations contrast with those of either non-completive *-la-* or completive *-a-* in some cases, and overlap with one of the two in other cases. When the temporal interpretations overlap, *-ite* displays special pragmatic effects. For example, *ndilásùwà* can mean 'I hear/am hearing/will hear' (or possibly '... understand'), while *-ite*-marked *ndilísùwìlè* means 'I hear', or, even more commonly, 'I understand', and is usually given as an answer to a question such as 'Do you understand?'

Change-of-state verbs marked with *-a-* typically carry an implicature that the coda state continues at perspective time. Thus, temporal interpretations of change-of-state verbs with *-a-* often overlap with *-ite*'s temporal interpretations, as in (40):

- (40) a. *ndakatala*
 nda-katal-a
 1SG.CMPL-tire-FV
 'I am tired' (~ I have become tired) (ZT2007Elic101)
- b. *ndilikatele*
 ndi-li-katele
 1SG-PRES.STAT-tire-ITE
 'I am tired' (ZT2007Elic101)

When asked about such pairs, with no additional context given, speakers found the differences between *-a-* and *-ite* pairs somewhat difficult to express. They generally suggested that *-ite* use implied a state that was more salient (e.g. 'very tired') or more immediate (e.g. 'tired *right here and now*'). Tellingly, consultants often tried to construct contexts for the *-ite* utterances. For example, for (40b), a speaker described a scenario in which the sentence's utterer was lying on a mat after a hard morning's work and wanted to explain his inability to do more work at that time. The speaker, in essence, described a situation in which a state of the subject was relevant to current discourse. In contrast, the utterance in (40a) was generally explained by consultants as merely describing a fact, and no additional context was offered. Recall also from section 3.2 that *-a-*'s continuing-state implicature is cancelable, while the *-ite*-state is not.

The specific content – which varied considerably – of the contexts provided is less significant than the fact that speakers repeatedly invented contexts for the use of *-ite*-marked verbs. Context creation is expected if *-ite* must reference a state, or property of the subject, that is relevant to current discourse, and no context is otherwise given that indicates why it would be relevant to assert that property.

3.3.4. Use of *-ite* with "true" statives

As noted in section 3.2.1, *-ite* also occurs with "true" (non-change-of-state) statives. Because these verbs already depict states, the use of *-ite* might be redundant if its only function were as a stativizer; additional nuances of meaning are expected. Indeed, special interpretive effects are in evidence when *-ite* is used with statives.

For example, with verbs like *-hupula* 'think, remember', the *-ite* form appears more commonly in contexts in which the mental state of thinking is relevant to some other issue in the discourse situation, as in 'be quiet – I'm thinking!' or the following example:

- (41) *handilahupwile bamayo hanu masakusiku ndatalika kulila*
ha-ndi-la-hupwile ba-mayo ha-nu ma-sikusiku nda-talik-a ku-lil-a
 when-1SG-IPFV-think.ITE 3PL-my.mother CL16(LOC)-now CL6-morning 1SG.CMPL-start-FV INF-cry-FV
 ‘while I was thinking about my mother this morning, I started to cry’ (NT2007Elic76)

Here, as with other verb types, *-ite* describes a current property of the subject that is relevant within the discourse context. The *-ite*-state of thinking about her mother was relevant to the speaker’s subsequent action – starting to cry.

Another example of a stative with *-ite* is given in (42), in which *-ite* use seems to mark a contrast between a temporary and a (more) permanent location of the respective subjects. In this example, the speaker seems to have construed the temporary stay as the relevant property in current discourse.

- (42) *ndiikele haKachansi inviki zobile; baClement baikala haKachansi*
ndi-ikele ha-Kachansi inviki zobile; baClement **ba-ikal-a** ha-Kachansi
 1SG-stay.ITE CL16(LOC)-Kachansi CL10.week CL10.two; 3PL.Clement 3PL-stay-FV CL16(LOC)-Kachansi
 ‘I’m staying in Kachansi for two weeks; Mr. Clement stays [=lives] in Kachansi’ (NT2007Elic57)

Thus, *-ite* not only creates relevant states from non-stative predicates, but also lends special relevance effects to true states.

3.3.5. Counterfactuals

-ite’s function of asserting a conversationally relevant property is also evident in its use in counterfactual clauses. In the protasis of (43), the speaker imagines a state (being busy) that would be relevant to explaining the imagined, non-obtaining situation (not coming) in the apodosis. The speaker imagines a world in which she is in a busy state, and then describes the consequences of that state in the imagined world. Since those consequences do not hold, they serve as evidence that the state also does not hold in the actual world. Here, the question under discussion is ‘aren’t you too busy to be here?’

- (43) *kámbe ndilipâtêhêtê, kámbe sinézá*
 kambe ndi-li-pateh-ete, kambe si-na-iz-a
 COUNTER 1SG-PRES.STAT-be.busy-ITE, COUNTER 1SG.NEG-PST-COME-FV
 ‘if I were busy, I wouldn’t have come’ (ZT2009Elic39)

-ite can be used in the apodosis of a counterfactual, as well. In (44), the speaker imagines a state (not knowing Totela) that would result from the imagined protasis (going to Samisisi).²⁰ In this case, the apodosis describes a property of the speaker in the imagined world, answering a question like ‘what would the world have been like if I hadn’t gone to Samisisi?’

- (44) *kámbe ndákáyá kwáSamisisi, kámbe tândiizí èchiTótèlà*
 kambe nda-ka-y-a kwa-Samisisi, kambe ta-ndi-izi echiTotela
 COUNTER 1SG.CMPL-PREHOD-go-FV CL17(LOC)-Samisisi, COUNTER NEG-2SG-know.ITE CL7.Totela
 ‘if I had gone to Samisisi, I wouldn’t know Totela’ (ZT2009Elic40)

3.4. *-ite* locates its target state via relevance

The previous sections have given evidence that *-ite* is a stativizer, and that the *-ite*-state asserts a conversationally relevant property of the subject of the utterance. Situation type plays a role in the temporal interpretations of *-ite*, since *-ite* can describe a post-nuclear result state, or a result state that is temporally within a situation’s nucleus, if a situation has a non-punctual nucleus. *-ite* therefore typically selects from the coda phase of change-of-state verbs, and the nuclear phase of statives and durative verbs of activity. With durative verbs that have entailed result (coda) phases, or with natural endpoints (“telic duratives”), *-ite* often selects from the coda phase.

However, the distinction between telic and atelic duratives does not sufficiently account for possible temporal interpretations with *-ite*. For example, *-ite* in many cases has resultative interpretations with durative verbs that do not have natural endpoints, as shown in the following examples (Table 3).

²⁰ In fact, there were a number of excellent Totela-speaking consultants in Samisisi, although the variety spoken there is slightly different.

Table 3
Common temporal associations with *-ite* by situation type.

Situation type	Phase commonly selected from by <i>-ite</i>
CHANGE-OF-STATE TELIC DURATIVE	CODA
STATIVE ATELIC DURATIVE	NUCLEUS

- (45) a. *ndilichaabite* (*inkuni*)
 ndi-li-chaab-ite (inkuni)
 1SG-PRES.STAT-collect.wood-ITE (wood)
 'I have collected wood' (ZT2007Elic101.VK)
- b. *ndilinywinè*
 ndi-li-nyw-ine
 1SG-PRES.STAT-drink-ITE
 'I have drunk' (ZT2007Elic113.VK)

The important thing to note about the examples in (45) is that both locate the *-ite*-state after the situation's nucleus, although the predicates do not have inherent endpoints or lexically-entailed result states. In addition, neither of the predicates occur frequently with *-ite* in unmarked conversational contexts. When they do occur, as in the examples above, they describe a resultant property of the subject that is relevant to the discourse. According to speakers, example (45a) could be used in a situation where, for example, a speaker had worked long and collected enough wood to keep a fire for many days. The utterance in (45b) might be an excuse for not accepting further food or drink.

Conversely, some verbs with natural nuclear endpoints and clear result coda phases tend, in the absence of detailed context, to receive progressive-like interpretations with *-ite*, as in (46). In the case of (46) (which is not a common usage), speakers seem to be construing the state caused by ongoing killing as a more relevant property for the subject than the aftermath.

- (46) *ndihayite*
 ndi-ihay-ite
 1SG-kill-ITE
 'I am killing' (NT2007Elic66)

Similarly, path verbs like *-iza* 'come' generally have a progressive reading with *-ite*, even though 'come' has an inherent endpoint. The most natural interpretation is illustrated in (47).

- (47) *ndiliizite*
 ndi-li-iz-ite
 1SG-PRES.STAT-come-ITE
 'I am coming' (ZT2007Elic113)

Statements like (47) are commonly said in response to utterances such as, 'where are you?' or 'get over here!', that is, demands regarding the state (including location) of the addressee.

Most strikingly, varying temporal interpretations were sometimes attested for the same verb, with the *-ite* state being located either in the situation nucleus, as in (48a), or in an *-ite*-derived coda state, as in (48b).

- (48) a. *ndilinengete*
 ndi-li-neng-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance-ITE
 'I am dancing' (ZT2007Elic89)
- b. *ndilinengete*
 ndi-li-neng-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance-ITE
 'I have danced' (ZT2007Elic101)²¹

²¹ The speaker who offered the interpretation in (48b) offered a scenario in which the speaker had been up all night dancing and was now too exhausted to move.

Table 4
Interpretations of *-ite* by situation type.

Situation type	Temporal interpretation	Examples
STATE	STATIVE (relevant property)	chi-zimbuluk- <u>ite</u> CL7-circle(v).NEUT- <u>ITE</u> 'it's round' (NT)
"ATELIC" DURATIVE	PROGRESSIVE (often understood as a property of the subject)	ndi-li-neng- <u>ete</u> 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance- <u>ITE</u> 'I am dancing'
	PAST (selects from relevant result coda phase)	ndi-li-chab- <u>ite</u> inkuni 1SG-PRES.STAT-collect.wood- <u>ITE</u> CL9.wood 'I have collected [plenty of] wood'
"TELIC" DURATIVE	PAST (selects from coda phase)	ndi-li-yaak- <u>ite</u> afuwi nomulonga 1SG-STAT-build- <u>ITE</u> near COM.CL3.river '[My house is] built close to the river'
	PROGRESSIVE (selects from nuclear phase)	ndi-li-iz- <u>ite</u> 1SG-STAT-come- <u>ITE</u> 'I am coming'
CHANGE OF STATE	STATIVE (selects from coda phase)	ndi-li-tab- <u>ite</u> 1SG-STAT-become.happy- <u>ITE</u> 'I am happy'

Such clashing interpretations arose with several predicates in elicitation sessions. For example, 'read two books-*ite*' was interpreted as both a past and a present action, as shown in (49).

- (49) *ndibalite imbuka zobile*
 ndi-bal-ite imbuka zobile
 1SG-read-ITE CL10.book CL10.two
 a. 'I am reading two books'
 b. 'I have read two books' (NT2007Elic79)

All of the above examples suggest that speakers' interpretations of *-ite*-marked predicates are dependent on the context set they imagine for the utterance.

Table 4 summarizes attested interpretations of *-ite* with various situation types. Note that both telic and atelic durative verbs (i.e. verbs with and without an entailed completion point/result state) may receive varying interpretations with *-ite*. Not all of the interpretations and uses in Table 4 are equally common, but all are possible, at least for some speakers.²²

I propose that when predicates allow for more than one temporal possibility with *-ite*, interpretations are determined by conversational relevance. That is, *-ite* asserts a stative property of the subject that results from the situation referenced in the predicate. As long as those requirements are fulfilled, *-ite*'s temporally-free variable can be filled in by pragmatics.

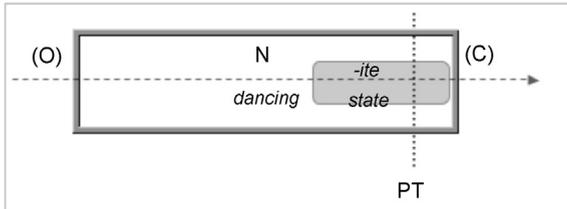
Because *-ite*'s temporal interpretations are determined pragmatically through context, they can vary from verb to verb, and even with the same verb in varying contexts, depending on what is viewed as most relevant for answering the current question under discussion. The answer may be provided by a state that is either the result of a past situation or change-of-state (resultative-like reading), or a state that results from an ongoing situation (progressive-like reading). Possible context sets and interpretations are illustrated in (50) and (51).²³

²² As noted in previous sections, the most common uses of *-ite* are with states and change-of-state verbs, as well as with verbs with an entailed result state ("telic duratives"). Less favored, but still attested in both naturalistic contexts and elicitation sessions, is *-ite* with atelic duratives. More conservative (i.e. older speakers, especially in Zambia) speakers are less likely to use *-ite* with verbs without entailed result states, while less conservative (i.e. younger speakers, especially in Namibia) speakers accept and use *-ite* freely with a far larger range of predicates. See Crane (2011) for further details.

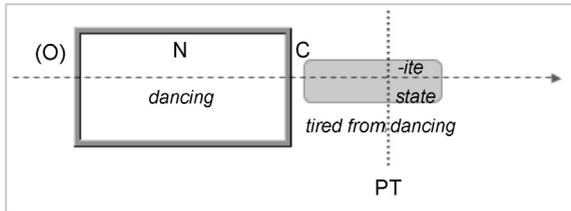
²³ The context sets in these examples were constructed by the author based on speaker comments about the examples. They may not perfectly match native speaker intuitions, and are merely meant to serve as examples of a possible interpretation process. It should be noted that both of these examples were judged marginal by some speakers in elicitation, but that all speakers were able to give them interpretations nonetheless.

- (50) a. *ndilinèngètè*
 ndi-li-neng-ete
 1SG-PRES.STAT-dance-ITE
 'I {am dancing}/{have danced}' (ZT2007Elic101)

- b. [Context set 1: Someone has asked why the speaker is busy and unable to attend to other duties.]
 Utterance: *ndilinèngètè*
 Reading: 'I am dancing'

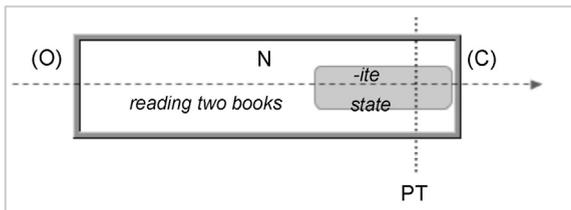


- c. [Context set 2: The speaker is exhausted after being up all night. The speaker is lying on a mat. The speaker is unable to do any work at the moment. Someone has inquired why the speaker can't do work.]
 Utterance: *ndilinèngètè*
 Reading: 'I have danced (/have been dancing)'

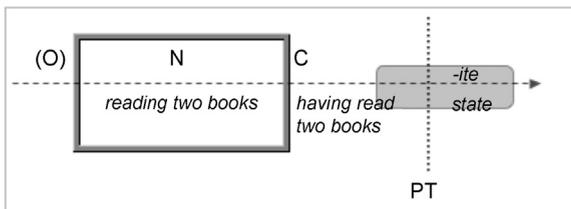


- (51) a. *ndibalite imbuka zobile*
 ndi-bal-ite imbuka zobile
 1SG-read-ITE CL10.book CL10.two
 'I {am reading}/{have read} two books' (NT2007Elic79)

- b. [Context set 1: I am busy. I don't have time to help my neighbor with her chores. My neighbor has asked me to help with her chores.]
 Utterance: *ndibalite imbuka zobile*
 Reading: 'I **am reading** two books'



- c. [Context set 2: I had a productive week, and I learned a lot. I want to illustrate my expertise.]
 Utterance: *ndibalite imbuka zobile*
 Reading: 'I **have read** two books'



4. Conclusion and implications

4.1. Summary of proposal

I have argued that *-ite* is a stativizer (section 3.2), and that the *-ite*-state represents a property of the subject, resulting from the referenced situation, and relevant to the current discourse (section 3.3). *-ite*'s temporal specifications are underdetermined, and are filled in via Gricean principles of conversational relevance (section 3.4). The shift from *-ite* as a resultative (see Crane, 2012) to a marker with increasing temporal freedom highlights a process of semantic weakening, along with the strengthening of information-structuring functions.

4.2. Perfects (and similar puzzles) in other languages

Although I argue that *-ite* was historically a resultative marker, and does not show prototypical characteristics of the perfect (such as referring primarily to a situation rather than its resulting state, being incompatible with 'still', etc.; see Bybee et al., 1994; Dahl, 1985), allusions to works dealing with perfects in various languages have been important in this paper, and *-ite*'s grammaticalization pathways and synchronic semantics may assist in shedding light on issues with the perfect (or 'anterior') in other Bantu languages, and in non-Bantu languages, as well.

Bantu aspects labeled perfect or anterior²⁴ tend to have temporal interpretations of either past or present based on situation type, according to Nurse (2008)²⁵:

For an action verb, for example, anterior represents a situation that is completed but relevant, whereas for a stative verb anterior represents the continuing state resulting from an action initiated in the past (Nurse, 2008:73).

The relative lack of in-depth semantic and pragmatic descriptions of Bantu tense and aspect makes Nurse's claim hard to evaluate. It may be the case that, as in Totela, the stative/non-stative contrast holds for the most common predicates, but that there is variation. Detailed descriptions of other Bantu languages (e.g. Machobane, 1985; Seidel, 2008; Brisard and Meeuwis, 2009; Botne, 2010) tend to show that – although the distributional details vary considerably – possibilities for temporal interpretations of "anterior"-like forms are more complex than would be predicted by a simple division along situation-type lines, and that some additional interpretive principle is required. The present analysis of *-ite* in Totela suggests that an examination with pragmatic, information-structuring principles in mind might prove fruitful in analyses of other Bantu languages, as well.

Bantu languages are not alone in having complex temporal associations with "perfect" or "resultative" forms. Ebert (1995) lists numerous languages – Mongolian, Arabic, Seneca, and Nepali, among others – in which perfect/resultative and progressive forms overlap or are ambiguous in meaning.²⁶ Particularly intriguing is the Japanese *-te-i* marker, described in detail by (e.g.) Shirai (1998) and Nishiyama (2006). Like Totela's *-ite*, *-te-i* can contribute progressive or resultative meaning; additionally, *-te-i* may have existential and experiential perfect readings.²⁷ According to Shirai's characterization, achievement verbs generally have a stative resultative reading with *-te-i*, while activity and accomplishment verbs are usually progressive.²⁸ Apparently, all verbs also have the potential for existential perfect readings (Nishiyama, 2006:188).²⁹ *-te-i* can also be used as a pluperfect.

It is not altogether surprising that overlaps between progressive, resultative, and perfect forms are found cross-linguistically. As Kudo (1989, 1995; discussed in Shirai, 1998:680) points out, the three types of aspect share some

²⁴ The term "anterior" is employed by some authors to avoid conflation of perfect and perfective aspect; "anterior" is used more-or-less synonymously with "perfect".

²⁵ Nurse (2008:154) further notes that in many non-Bantu Niger-Congo languages, the *perfective* aspect has the same temporal interpretations he claims for the Bantu perfect. Cover (2007, 2010) examines these temporal interpretations in detail for Badiaranke, an Atlantic language of Senegal, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau, offering a modal account: the crucial feature of the Badiaranke perfective is not merely completion, but *completion in the actual world* (or the world treated as actual). That is, "the situation has developed to its fullest extent" and is not expected to change (Cover, 2007:8). Because stative situations do not change without extra energy (as opposed to non-stative situations, which typically require energy to continue on their course), statives with perfective aspect hold at perspective time, and are further expected to continue to hold.

²⁶ Ebert notes that most of the languages in which resultative and progressive readings overlap are found in Asia; however, the use of *-ite* in Totela suggests that this overlap may not be a purely areal phenomenon.

²⁷ The exact contexts that condition which reading obtains are somewhat disputed, as might be expected when pragmatics are crucially involved.

²⁸ Nishiyama (2006:187–188) refers to achievement verbs as "punctual" or "change-of-state"; the interpretation of these verbs as resultative parallels the interpretation of Totela change-of-state verbs as resultative.

²⁹ Whether the form is merely ambiguous between progressive/resultative and existential perfect, or whether two homophonous forms exist (or, as in Nishiyama, 2006, whether a monosemous account is possible), is heavily debated in Japanese linguistics.

common features: progressives and resultatives are durative and imperfective, while resultatives and perfects both focus on the posttime of a situation. Michaelis (2003) and others further note that both progressives and the perfect have “stativizing” functions.

In addition to the common features mentioned above, this article suggests that the information-structuring functions of relevance associated with resultative (as well as perfect) semantics should also be taken into account in explaining the resultative/progressive connection, and that, as seems increasingly to be the case with *-ite* in Totela, the component of relevance may become foremost in a tense/aspect/mood marker's functions.

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