CHAPTER 5

EKEGUSII ASPECT AND MOOD MORPHOLOGY

Chapter 4 is a layout of the morphology of the tense system of EkeGusii. The purpose of chapter 5 is to circumscribe the aspectual and modal morphology of the language within its TAM system.

5.1 ASPECT MORPHOLOGY

It has been maintained that tense specifically involves the marking of the location of E vis-à-vis S. This means that tense relates one point of time to another. Besides identifying this relation, a clause may also reflect another temporal time segment, E-R, as well as the various phases or sub-events of the event it describes. The grammatical expression of these phases or facets and the E-R relation is the province of aspect. As Dahl (1985) has noted, tenses are typically deictic categories, because they relate time points to UT. Conversely, aspects are non-deictic categories. Comrie (1985:6-7) explains that aspect focuses on “the internal temporal contours” of the event. In this sense, aspect may be concerned with the segmentation of the ‘duration’ of an event into ‘phases’ or its distribution on the time line. This is what Dahl (1985:24) means when he notes that aspect “has to do with the structure of things going on or taking place in the situation described by the sentence” and it is in this respect that, like tense, aspectual categories also entail the time dimension of events. To sum, as Dahl (1985:69) considers, “aspects are different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation.”

The prototypical categories of aspect include, perfective, imperfective, progressive, habitual and generic (Dahl 1985). To these may be added the location of E relative to R and S, which captures the category termed the pluperfect or past perfect in, for example, English1.

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1 The term pluperfect is derived from the Latin adjectival phrase ‘plus quam perfectum’ which means ‘more than perfect’ to denote completion of an event prior to R.
Traditionally, morphological marking of aspect is determined by one crucial property of lexical verbs, namely their inherent aspectuality or aspetual meaning. It is on this characteristic, also referred to as *aktionsart* or lexical aspect, that the Vendlerian (1957) classification of verbs into states, activities, achievements and accomplishments is based. A detailed account of these classes is also attempted in Givón (2001). However, some studies such as Kratzer (2004) and Borer (2005) have questioned this theory, arguing that not all categories of *aktionsart* are contingent upon lexical content. In spite of this criticism, Vendler's verb classes are hitherto of persuasive authority in the study of aspect.

Dahl (1985:28) distinguishes two further broad notions, namely 'dynamic situation' and 'state,' which are reminiscent of the traditional division of verbs into dynamic and stative ones. Activities and accomplishments are examples of dynamic events. Accordingly, dynamic verbs have the capacity to co-occur with aspetual morphology. For example, by virtue of describing ongoing activities, progressive aspect (PROG) can be marked on dynamic but not stative verbs.

It is on the basis of the foregoing characterization of aspetual categories that this section proceeds to analyze aspetual morphology in Bantu and EkeGusii.

5.1.2 The Perfect

Although the perfect (PFCT), and the perfective aspect (PFV) express temporal boundedness or telicity of the events which they describe, both are different. In agreement with Comrie (1976:16), Dahl (1985:78) explains that a perfective verb "will typically denote a single event, seen as an unanalyzed whole, with a well-defined result or end-state, located in the past." It is in this sense that the aorist or past perfective, for example, 'He closed the door', is subsumed under perfective aspect since the event is not segmentable into phases. Similarly, the event described by the perfect is viewed as completed.

In order to draw the subtle distinction between the perfective and perfect, Givón (2001:293-297) identifies four features that characterize the perfect. These include anteriority, perfectivity, counter sequentiality and lingering relevance. Despite the use of these criteria to distinguish between the perfect and perfective aspect, both
categories view the event being described as a completed single whole located in the past. For this reason, some languages make no distinction between the perfect and hodiernal past (P1) as Dahl (1985:136) reports. Although Dahl notes that PFCT and HOD-PAST in Kikuyu, Kamba and LoNkindo are distinct categories, it is worth noting that the semantics of both categories is imprecise. Accordingly, while Polomé (1967), for example, treats Kiswahili /-mel/ as a perfective marker, Lindfors (2003) considers it as the PFCT prefix.

Three main theories of the PFCT have been propounded in the literature. The first is the anteriority theory, first advanced by Reichenbach and further developed by Inoue (1989), Hornstein (1990), Klein (1992, 1994), among others. The thesis of the anteriority theory is that E precedes R. This temporal relation can be expressed as E_S, R, which means that E occurs prior to S and R, and that S is contemporaneous with R. This is the property in which the distinction between the perfect and the past is blurred because both are characterized by anteriority.

The second theory of the PFCT is the result state theory, which holds that the effect of the result state of the event is still felt at R as in:

(1) (a) I have missed the flight.
    (b) I have lost the money.
    (c) The girl has died.

This means that the effect of E remains till S, which is reminiscent of Givón’s (2001) notion of the lingering relevance of E in which E seems very close to S.

The third theory, which can account for the semantics of the perfect, is the Extended Now theory. In this theory, R is viewed as extendable back to a point specified by temporal adverbials as in the sentence:

(2) I have studied syntax since 1987.

This theory makes it possible to account for why R provided by the temporal adverbial in (2), which is remote from S, is nonetheless considered as falling under the semantics of the PFCT.
The Result theory and the Extended theory have advantages over the Reichenbachian model. However, a critique of these theories is beyond the scope of the current research since the analysis of the form of the PFCT is to the fore. Accordingly, an examination of data in which PFCT occurs in Bantu and EkeGusii is in order at this stage.

5.1.2.1 THE BANTU PERFECT

Evidence from Kiswahili is presented in this section to show that PFCT is morphologically marked in the language. Using anteriority, perfectivity and lingering relevance as integral properties, Lindfors (2003) identifies the prefix /-me/ as the morpheme which encodes the category PFCT in Kiswahili as in (3):

3 (Kiswahili, Lindfors 2003:34)
(a) A -me -simam-a
   3SG.SU-PFCT-stand -IND
   'He has stood up.'
(b) Ni -me -siki -a
   1SG.SU-PFCT-hear-IND
   'I have heard.'
(c) A -me -rudi?
   1SG.SU-PFCT-return
   'Has he returned?'

The prefix /-me/ in these data indicates that the events described occur in the immediate past and, therefore, precede S. Dahl (1985), Bybee (1994) and Lindfors (2003) contend that the perfective aspect is restricted to past time reference but PFCT is not. For example, PFCT can co-occur with the past and future markers as in the compound tense in (4):

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(Kiswahili, Lindfors 2003:33)

(a) A -li -ku -w -a a - me -lal -a
3SG.SU-PST-NPX15-be-IND 3SG.SU-PFCT-sleep-IND
'He was asleep'

(b) Ni -ta -ku -w -a ni -me -lal -a
1SG.SU-FUT-NPX15-be-IND 1SG.SU-PFCT -sleep-IND
'I shall be asleep.'

The relative freedom of the PFCT to co-occur with past and future tense is one characteristic in which PFCT can be distinguished from the perfective.

5.1.2.2 EKEGUSII PERFECT

It should be noted at the outset that the PFCT in EkeGusii is a morphologically marked category in the language as exemplified in (5):

5 EkeGusii

(a) Chí-sése chí -á -ráágé -ir -e.
10-dog 10M-PST-eat -PFCT-FV
'The dogs have just eaten.'

(b) Rí-kóru rí -á -ráágé -ir -e.
5-hawk 5SM-PST-eat- -PCFT-FV
'The hawk has just eaten.'

(c) Chí-nyóní chí -á -téér -ir -e.
10-bird 10SM-PST-sing -PFCT-FV
'The birds have just sang.'

(d) Rí-kóru rí -á -téér -ir -e.
5-hawk 5SM-PST-sing -PFCT-FV

(e) Chí-sése chí -á -ráár -ir -e.
10-dog 10SM-PST-sleep-PFCT-FV
'The dogs have just eaten.'

(f) Chí-ngóko chí -á -ráár -ir -e.
10-hen 10SM-PST- sleep-PFCT-FV
'The hens have just slept.'

In these examples, the perfect marker /-ir/ locates the events being described in the past but close to S because their effects still hold. The occurrence of the suffix /-ir/ in combination with the verb final /-e/ prompts Whiteley (1960) to consider that /-ir/ is a 'tense' in EkeGusii. However, in view of the fact that Whiteley uses the term 'tense' as shorthand for TAM, this line of investigation will not be pursued here. For Guthrie (1970), /-ir/ marks completion in Bantu, a conclusion that Maganga & Schadeberg (1992) as well as Thornell (2002) draw in their analyses of Kinyamwezi and Kikerebe, respectively. Considering that PFCT also encodes completion of an event, these conclusions are not entirely inaccurate. This notwithstanding, it appears more prudent to suppose that /-ir/ marks PFCT in EkeGusii.

On the basis of Dahl's (1985:129) sample of 64 languages drawn from diverse typological domains, it appears that PFCT is predominantly marked periphrastically. However, Dahl cites Niger-Congo, to which Bantu belongs, as preferring morphological marking of this category. In the sample, Akan in Ghana and Kikuyü in Kenya exhibit this phenomenon (Dahl 1985: 130). Lindfors' (2003) analysis of Kiswahili also corroborates this view.

It is worthwhile to note that while PFCT in Kiswahili occurs without the past tense marker, the EkeGusii past tense marker co-occurs consistently with PFCT, /-ir/.

5.1.3 THE EKEGUSII PERFECTIVE

Although the distinction between the PFCT and the perfective (PFV), is elusive, Dahl explains that, "[a] perfective verb will typically denote a single event, seen as an unanalyzed whole, with a well-defined result or end-state, located in the past. More often than not, the event will be punctual, or at least, it will be seen as a single transition from one state to its opposite, the duration of which can be disregarded" (Dahl 1985:78). In agreement with Dahl, Nurse views PFV as a category.
which “presents the past as a single act” (Nurse 2006:96). For this reason, PFV is sometimes employed as a cover term for the simple past, aorist and preterite tenses as well as the perfect because their uses denote completion of past events. Noting such indeterminacy, Katamba (1993:223) explains that the rendition of Latin amavi, for example, is either ‘I loved’ or ‘I have loved’, in which case the distinction between the simple past and perfective aspect is subtle.

As already indicated, the supposition that two markers of the past occur in EkeGusii, as reasoned in Ogechi (2002), begs the question of double marking of PAST. It also seems convincing to consider that the a-marker and the et-marker in the language express the past and the recent as well as remote past, respectively. However, in the present research, /-et/ is considered a PFV marker since the distinction between the recent and remote pasts is maintained by tone. The data in (6) involving P3 are the evidence for this postulate:

6 EkeGusii

(a) Chi-gari n -chí -á -ch -et -e.
10-vehicle FOC -10SM -PST -com -PFV -FV.
'The vehicles came (recently).'

(b) Aba-gambi m -bá -á -so -et -e nyomba.
2-leader FOC -2SM -PST -enter -PFV -FV house.
'The vehicles came (recently).'

(c) Eke-rongo n -gí -á -kw -et -e.
7-porcupine FOC -7SM -PST -die -PFV -FV
'The porcupine died (recently).'

(d) Chi-seese n -chí -á -raager -et -e.
10-dog FOC -10SM -PST -eat -PFV -FV
'The dogs ate (recently).'

If EkeGusii verbal morphology is consistent with Bantu template morphology,
then the postulation that the pre-verbal position which \(-a/-\) occupies is a tense slot is a valid claim. What then remains to be accounted for is the suffix \(-\text{et}/\). That this is a discontinuous element of the past, as has been proposed in Ogechi (2002), is imprecise. Further, it should be recalled that EkeGusii also prefers the post-verbal position in which \(-\text{et}/\) occurs for the PFCT but not tense. It appears that PFCT and PFV are in complementary distribution in the language, that is, once \(-a/-\) occurs as the past marker, then the selection in suffixal position is either PFCT \(-ir/-\) or PFV \(-\text{et}/\).

One reason for treating \(-\text{et}/\) as the perfective suffix rather than a tense morpheme is that it is tone which signals the temporal difference between the recent and remote pasts in EkeGusii. As noted earlier, a high-toned \(-a/-\) and low-toned \(-\text{et}/\) marks P3 while a low-toned \(-a/-\) and a high-toned \(-\text{et}/\) expresses P4 as in (7):

7 EkeGusii

(a) Chi-gari n -chí -a -ch -\text{et} -c.
10-vehicle FOC -10SM -PST -come -PFV -FV.
‘The vehicles came (long time ago).’

(b) Aba-gambi m -bá -a -so -\text{et} -c nyomba.
2-leader FOC -2SM -PST -enter -PFV -FV house.
‘The leaders entered the house (long time ago).’

(c) Eke-rongo n -gí -a -kw -\text{et} -c.
7-porcupine FOC -7SM -PST -die -PFV -FV
‘The dogs ate (long time ago).’

(d) Chí-seese n -chí -a -raager -\text{et} -c.
10-dog FOC -10SM -PST -eat -PFV -FV
‘The dogs ate (recently).’

In a nutshell, the morphemes \(-\text{et}/\) in (6) and \(-\text{et}/\) in (7) express perfective aspect but not tense. Further, that the differentiation of P3 from P4 hinges solely on tone should be borne in mind in the explication of EkeGusii TAM morphology.
5.1.4 IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT

In contradistinction to the PFV stands the imperfective aspect (IMPFV). Comrie explains that “the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation” (Comrie 1976:16). As such, IMPFV expresses events which are not punctual. This means that the imperfective focuses on the event, not as a time-bound whole, but its durational properties. Therefore, IMPFV categories are atelic because they specify neither the beginning nor the end point of an event. Two less controversial examples of IMPFV are the progressive (PROG) and the habitual (HAB). PROG and HAB are used here in the sense of Comrie (1976) in which both categories are subsumed under IMPFV rather than treating the three as co-ordinate terms, which leads to confusion. As Givón (2001) and Lindfors (2003) also consider, HAB is a sub-category of IMPFV. The fluidity of IMPFV has been noted by Nurse who has correctly observed, “it is currently impossible to state IMPFV categories common to all Bantu languages with certainty” (Nurse 2006:98). Accordingly, only the salient and uncontroversial ones have been selected for study in this research.

5.1.4.1 The Progressive

The category PROG has been described imprecisely as ‘the continuous tense’ in Cammenga (2002) and Ogechi (2002). It should recalled that, unlike tense which encodes the temporal termination of a event, the progressive indicates an ongoing event, that is, an event that has neither a definite beginning nor end point on the time line. To begin with, in PROG, the time of the event being described, E, coincides with R, which is also identical to S. In PROG, R may be either present or past. This means that the expressions E<R, S, for the present, and E, R<S, for the past, hold in the expression of PROG and, accordingly, PROG can occur with PRES and PAST.

5.1.4.1.1 THE PROGRESSIVE IN BANTU

Following Comrie (1976), among others, PROG is considered one of the prototypical categories of IMPFV. Lindfors (2003) considers that PROG describes an event which is ongoing at R. Sometimes PROG expresses “an ongoing action at the point that some second event occurs” (Nurse 2006:98). Nurse argues that many Bantu languages make a distinction between PROG and “continuous” activity, which
English does not. In English, both sentences in (8) express PROG while in some Bantu languages, (a) expresses PROG and (b) a “continuous” event and, therefore, a different category:

8  (Nurse 2006:98)
(a) We were fishing when you saw us.
(b) We were fishing all week.

PROG suggests concurrence of events but a “continuous” event need not be yoked with the occurrence of another. Nurse concludes that mere translations of sentences from English into Bantu languages, for example, without the contexts of use, will certainly lead to a misrepresentation of the intended categories.

With the foregoing observations in mind, an attempt is made here to shed light on the morphology of PROG in some Bantu languages. For example, as Lindfors (2003) explains, PROG occurs in the prefixal fourth position of the Kiswahili verbal template and can co-occur with PAST and FUT as well as both dynamic and stative verbs in Kiswahili as in (9):

9  (Kiswahili, Lindfors 2003:37)
(a) Wa -toto wa -na -chez -a ki -wanja -ni
NPX2 -child NC2-PROG-play -IND NPX7-plot -LOC
‘Children are playing on the plot of ground.’
(b) Tu -li -po -ku -w -a tu -na -tazam-a
1PL-PAST-SUBO-NPX15-be -IND 1PL.SU-PROG-look -IND
(c) Elimu i -ta -ku -w -a i -na -anz -a nyumba -ni
Education SC9-FUT-NPX15-be-IND SC9-PROG-begin-IND house-LOC
‘Education will begin in the house.’
(d) Koti l -angu li -na -chafu -ka
coat NC5-POSS.1SG-SC5-PROG-make.dirty-STAT
‘My coat is getting dirty.’
(e) A -na -ku -w-a m -zee
3SG.SU-PROG-NPX15-be-IND NPX1-old
‘He is becoming old/ an old man.’* “He/she is old.”

(f) Ng’ -ombe wa -na -ku -l -a ma -jani
NPX10-cow NPX2-PROG-NPX15-eat-IND NPX6-leaf
‘The cows eat/ are eating leaves’ * “Cows (in general) eat leaves”

That the morpheme /na/- in (9) is the PROG marker in Kiswahili is the contention of this section. Despite this fact, it is worthwhile to note that /na/- is increasingly assuming the function of PRES, thereby replacing the canonical PRES marker, /a/-, except in generic expressions (Lindfors 2003; Polome 1967; 1965; cf Katamba 1993).

5.1.4.1.2 THE PROGRESSIVE IN EKEGUSII

The prototypical PROG morpheme in EkeGusii is /-kó/, which form has also been associated with PRES and infinitive marking. In Ogechi (2002), PROG is referred to as the “present continuous tense” (Ogechi 2002:65). Since this is not a fitting description of tense, Ogechi’s label is, needless to state, imprecise. Further, progressive events are not characterized by temporal boundedness as the data in (10) show:

10 EkeGusii
(a) Chí-sése chí -kó -ráágér-a.
10-dog 10SM-PROG-eat- FV
‘The dogs are eating.’

(b) Chí-nyóni chí -kó -ráágér-a.
10-bird 10SM-PROG-eat- FV
‘The birds are singing.’

(c) Chí-nkóroro chí -gó -téér-a.
10-warrior 10SM-PROG-sing- FV
‘The warriors are singing.’
(d)  Rí-rúma  rí-  -gó  -téér  -a.
   5-dove  5SM-PROG-sing-  FV
   ‘The doves are singing.’

(e)  Chí-sése chí  -gó-  -kóg  -a.
   10-dog  10SM-PROG-bark-FV
   ‘The dogs are barking.’

(f)  E-nyóni  े-  -kó  -búg  -a.
   9-bird  9SM-PROG-sing-FV
   ‘A bird is singing.’

(g)  E-chae  á-  -kó  -roosi  -a.
   9-vehicle  9SM-PROG-make-  FV
   ‘S/he is making tea.’

Apparently, the morpheme ‘-/kol/’ in these data marks PROG. However, it is necessary to note, as Whiteley (1960:28) explains, that constructions of this kind “[m]ay be translated by a relative though this is frequently omitted in English.” The morpheme occurs frequently in wh-questions as in, for example:

11  (Adapted from Whiteley 1960: 28)
(a)  ṇái  ो  -kó  -gend-a.
Where  1SM-PROG -go  -FV
   ‘Where are you going?’
(b)  Ndi  ọ  -kó  -gend  -a.
   When  1SM-PROG -go  -FV
   ‘When are you going?’

Ex-situ wh-questions of this kind provide further compelling evidence for postulating ‘-kol’ as the marker for progressive aspect in EkeGusii. That PROG and PRES sometimes cross-classify needs mention. For example, in Chichewa (Mchombo 2006) ‘-/kul/’, has PRES reading as in:
Kalulú a- ku- phík-á maúngu
1a-hare 1SM-PRES-cook-fv 6-pumpkins
'The hare is cooking the pumpkins.'

As in most Bantu languages, /-ku/ in Chichewa marks not only PRES but also infinitives. Kingston (1983:34) is cognizant of this fact when he writes, "[i]n those languages where -ku- is a tense morpheme, it also typically marks infinitives." This means that form is deceptive in the identification of verbal categories.

While in English PROG is marked on the lexical verb and tense on the auxiliary, it appears that in Chichewa, the single morpheme /-ku/ can be used to mark PRES as well as PRES PROG in appropriate contexts. This minimizes the distinction between PRES, on one hand, and PRES PROG, on the other. Katamba (1993:224) reports that such conflation of PROG and PRES PROG occurs in Luganda in which, for example, 'ba-ko-l-a' is interpretable as either 'they work' or 'they are working'. This means that Luganda /-ko/ is ambiguous as it marks the tense category PRES as well as PRES PROG. It is in this respect that the semantics of PROG vis-à-vis that of PRES PROG becomes imprecise. Dahl (1985:94) captures the imprecision of both categories thus, "[i]t is an open question whether PRES PROG should be treated as a variety of PROG or a category in its own right." In spite of the semantic overlap between both categories, the postulation that /-ko/ in EkeGusii is a PROG morpheme is beyond controversy.

5.1.4.1.3. The Habitual in Bantu

The habitual (HAB) expresses unbounded recurrent activity, which is not going on at S. Among others, Ashton (1944) and Dahl (1985), consider that HAB expresses situations that are describable by the English adverbs 'usually', 'always' and 'generally' to denote a set of occasions. As in Aghem (Anderson 1979), for example, HAB in Kiswahili is marked morphologically to describe events that occur habitually or repeatedly (Lindfors 2003). Polomé (1967), Ashton (1944) and Lindfors (2003) identify /hu/, which occurs in slot number 4, as the HAB marker in the language as in (13):
Kiswahili, Lindfors 2003:35-36

(a) Ma -yai hu -pat-ika -na soko -ni.
NPX6-egg-HAB-get-STAT-REC market-LOC
‘Eggs are **usually** to be got in the market.’

(b) Yeye hu -j-a hapa mara kwa mara.
He/she HAB-come-IND here time of time
‘He/she frequently comes here.’

(c) Ng'-ombe hu -l-a chakula gani?
NPX10-cow HAB-eat-IND food what
‘What sort of food do cows eat as their staple food?’

13 (c) raises the question of whether /hu-/, in addition to its HAB sense can also be used in a generic sense. In spite of this impression, it seems prudent to maintain that /hu-/ retains its prototypical properties of HAB in Kiswahili.

5.1.4.1.4 HAB in EkeGusii

HAB in EkeGusii is not morphologically marked but may be expressed by high tone on the final vowel. Although Bickmore imprecisely describes HAB as a tense, his observation is nonetheless relevant here, “the Habitual tense lacks an overt tense marker, taking the form: subject marker - verb root - final vowel” (Bickmore, forthcoming p.8). For example, the HAB sense is conveyed by the high-toned verb final /-a/ as in (14):

14 (Bickmore, forthcoming p.15)

(a) tô- sàb- á (Bickmore, forthcoming p.15)
1SM- ask- FV
‘We ask.’

(b) tô-òmòk-á
1SM-rest-FV
‘We rest.’
(c) tò- tám- á
ISM-run away-FV
‘We run away.’
tò-tákún-á
ISM-chew-FV
‘We chew.’

The habitual meaning of these sentences is conveyed by the high-toned final vowel, which phenomenon confirms that the verbal tone system of EkeGusii interacts with the TAM morphology to express various nuances of meanings.

It should be noted that habitual and generic categories are also expressible using /ko-/ which has already been identified elsewhere as a PROG morpheme in EkeGusii as in (15):

15 EkeGusii
(a) Igo á- kó- mo- it- a.
It is that 1SM-HAB- 1OM- beat-FV
‘It is that s/he beats him/her.’

(b) Igo á- kó- bóóka maambia.
It is that 1SM-HAB-wake up dawn
‘It is that I wake up at dawn.’

(c) N-Kísii á- gó- sóómi- a.
FOC-Kísii 1SM-HAB-teach-FV
‘S/he teaches at Kísii.’

These data indicate that, by varying context, the semantic category PROG may be used to express other aspectual meanings. In other words, the occurrence of the morpheme /ko-/ in such contexts to mark a category other than the PROG is instructive that one form may have multiple functions.
To sum, it has been argued here that aspectual categories are evident in Bantu languages. What emerged is that although there is a semantic overlap between these categories context of use can aid in the identification of their functions. Further, it is not the case that all categories are morphologically marked.

Finally, tense and aspect often interact intricately with mood in the EkeGusii verb group. Section 5.2 is an attempt to identify the expressions of modality that are relevant to the verbal morphology of the language and Bantu in general.

5.2 EKEGUSII MODALITY

The terms mood and modality seem interchangeable with each other in the literature. However, delineation of the distinction between both is feasible. Mood is an obligatory verbal category through which modality is realized (De Haan 2004). On the other hand, modality refers to the meanings expressible by mood. This means that mood is a formal feature realized on the verb while modality is its semantic correlate. For example, common semantic categories such as obligation, permission and prohibition, among others, refer to modality since they convey modal meanings. The grammatical expression of these meanings on the verb is what is termed mood.

Notwithstanding this strict definition, the term mood is often employed in the literature to encompass morphological, lexical and syntactic expression of modality. Morphological expression can be illustrated by, for example, the Russian imperative which is marked verb-finally as paradigm (1) shows:

(1) rabota-t  (De Haan 2004:15)
  work -INF
  rabota-j
  work -IMP.2SG
  rabota-jte
  work -IMP.2PL

In this example, the verb rabota-t is inflected to encode direct command modality by changing it into either the singular rabota-j or plural rabota-jte, thereby marking the imperative mood on the verb by means of the suffixes /-j/ and /-jte/.
Accordingly, modality in Russian is said to be morphologically marked and this grammatical realization of modality on the verb is termed mood.

De Haan has rightly remarked that the demarcation of mood and a modal affix is not easy to determine. He proposes “degree of cohesion” as one diagnostic that can be tested in order to detect the subtle distinction between both. According to this criterion, the cohesion between a verb stem and mood is so strong that the latter is arguably an integral part of the word. In such a case, modality can be said to be marked by mood rather than an affix. Languages which are characterized by mood include, among others, Sanskrit, Classical Greek, Latin, Icelandic, German, Gooniyandi, Mangarayi, Kiswahili and Russian as shown in (1) (De Haan 2004).

In contrast to these languages is Tamil, for example, in which modality is marked by modal affixation as in:

2 (Tamil, De Haan 2004:16; Asher 1979:170, emphasis mine)
avan peeca -laam
3SG speak-PERM
‘He is allowed to speak.’

It is not immediately obvious why the Russian suffixes /-j/ and /-tje/ in (1) are to be treated as mood while Tamil /-laam/ in (2) should be considered a modal affix. Therefore, it would be prudent to maintain, as De Haan has, that precise conclusions as to the status of these morphemes be drawn only after in-depth research into the phenomena has been conducted.

Besides morphological modification of verbs, which yields mood, modality can be expressed syntactically. Syntactic expression of modality involves the use of modal auxiliary verbs such as, for example, English may, must and can, among others, as in (3):

(3) (Palmer 2003:7)
They must be in the office. (epistemic modality)
They must come in now. (deontic modality)
Lastly, the use of lexical items such as *probably*, *possibly* and *perhaps*, among others, is another option available for the expression of modality. Since syntactic and lexical means of encoding modality lie outside the focus of this study, no further discussion of the same will be attempted here.

### 5.2.2 SEMANTIC TYPES OF MODALITY

As De Haan (2004) has observed, typological literature pertaining to modality revolves around semantics. However, scope in the current research has been widened to bring formal aspects within view as well. A further conundrum which characterizes modality research is terminological discordance. One of the longstanding traditions in descriptive grammar is the distinction maintained between deontic and epistemic modality. Deontic modality denotes the degree of force brought to bear on the hearer to perform an action (De Haan 2004). A notable example of this type of modality is the modal auxiliary verb *must* in English in which the speaker ‘commands’ the hearer as in:

4. You *must* resign before you seek re-election.

Such speaker-oriented modality obtains in directives, imperatives, prohibitions, optatives, admonitions and permission (De Haan 2004).

In contrast to deontic modality is epistemic modality, which is concerned with the degree of certainty the speaker assigns propositional truth-value. In other words, epistemic modality entails notions of possibility, probability and inferred certainty. Two clear ways of encoding epistemic modality is the use of adverbs and modal tags as in:

5. The plane was *probably* attempting to land when it crashed. (*adverb*)
6. *I think* the pilot made an error of judgment. (*modal tag*)

Under both broad categories of deontic and epistemic modality, finer subcategories have also been recognized. These include the indicative, imperative, subjunctive, negative, optative, conditional, hypothetical and generic. Of these, the most common, which are also relevant to Bantu morpho-syntax, include the
indicative, imperative, subjunctive, optative and negative. These will be the concerns of section 5.3.

Another division which is also relevant to the analysis of modality is the distinction between realis and irrealis mood. A realis mood denotes real eventualities while irrealis mood marks unreal events. Example (7) from Muyuw illustrates this phenomenon:

7 (Muyuw, Bugenhagen 1994:18; De Haan 2004:28)
  yey b-a-n Lae nubweig
  I      IRR-ISG-go L. tomorrow
  ‘I will go to Lae tomorrow.’

In Muyuw, the irrealis morpheme /b(i)-/ is used for future events as opposed the realis marker n(i)- which denotes realis events (De Haan 2004). This lends credence to the view that in some languages, future events fall under the province of irrealis mood and are accordingly marked.

In sum, by reason of encoding unreal events, negation, imperative, future, conditional and hypothetical moods can be subsumed under the broad division termed irrealis mood.

It is within this conceptual framework that section 5.2 proceeds to address the morpho-syntactic aspects of Bantu modality in general and EkeGusii in particular.

5.2.3 MOOD AND THE BANTU FINAL VOWEL

Nurse (2006) has rightly pointed out that systematic research into the morpho-syntactic systems of Bantu verbal categories is still necessary. From this scanty literature, still less can be gleaned about modality. The locus of mood in Bantu is the final vowel. The prototypical Bantu verb is characterized by the obligatory occurrence of /-a/ suffixally as in the Kiswahili bare infinitives in (8):

8 (Kiswahili)
  øt-a  dream
  øn-a  see
  tem-a  spit
teg-a trap
tend-a do
teng-a set aside

Divergent analyses have been propounded to explain the semantic load of this vowel and its syntactic position within Bantu verbal template morphology. One such proposal has been to consider that the verb final position is a TAM slot, specifically, a mood slot. Informed by this reasoning, Ashton (1944), Loogman (1965), Ogechi (2002) and Lindfors (2003), among others, analyze the Kiswahili verb final vowel as an indicative mood marker while Anderson (1979) associates it with the [-Completive] feature in Aghem. This claim seems tenable since some types of modality are morphologically marked in this position in the Kiswahili verb. However, a counter-example is the indicative mood which appears with the characteristic /-a/ suffix and, therefore, the mood is unmarked as in (9):

9 Kiswahili

(a) Wa-toto wa -li -som -a.
   2-child 3PL -PST-read -FV
   'The children read.'

(b) Wa -geni wa -me -fik -a.
   2 -visitor 2SM-PFCT-arrive-FV
   'The visitors have arrived.'

(c) M-toto a - li -lal -a.
   1 -child 1SM-PST -sleep-FV
   'The child slept.'

(d) Wa -toto wa -na -imb -a
   2-child 2SM-PROG-sing -FV
   'The children are singing.'

Considering that the indicative mood is unmarked and the verbs in (9) contain the /-a/ suffix, which also characterizes bare infinitives as in (8), the argument that the verb final position is a domain of TAM categories appears untenable. Therefore, more convincing evidence for this conjecture is required to sustain this supposition.
One of the most reliable pieces of evidence comes from the marking of irrealis categories, for example, the subjunctive. Many Bantu languages exhibit an alternation of the suffix /-a/, on one hand, and /-e/ as well as /-i/, on the other. For example, the subjunctive is expressed by change of verb final /-a/ to /-e/ as in the Kiswahili embedded clauses in (10):

10 Kiswahili

(a) A -na -wa -omb-a wa -lal -e.  
3SG-PROG-3PL-urge-FV 3PL-sleep-FV  
‘S/he is urging them to sleep.’

(b) Wa-me-lal-a.  
3PL-PFCT-sleep-FV  
‘They have slept.’

(c) A -na -wa -omb-a wa -l -e.  
3SG-PROG-3PL-urge-FV 3PL-eat-FV  
‘S/he is urging them to eat.’

(d) Wa-me-ku-l-a.  
3PL-PFCT-INF-eat-FV  
‘They have eaten.’

(e) A -na -wa -omb-a wa -end -e.  
3SG-PROG-3PL-urge-FV 3PL-go-FV  
‘S/he is urging them to go.’

(f) Wa-me-end-a.  
3PL-PFCT-go-FV  
‘They have gone.’

(d) A -na -wa -omb-a wa -j -e.  
3SG-PROG-3PL-urge-FV 3PL-come-FV  
‘S/he is urging them to come.’

Wa-me-ku-j-a.  
3PL-PFCT-INF-come-FV  
‘They have come.’
These data confirm that the verb final position is a mood slot. The forms of the indicative and the bare infinitive are morphologically indistinct, that is, /-a/ occurs verb finally in both but when the verb is in subjunctive use, the final vowel becomes /-e/. These phenomena indicate that the final vowel position is a slot where mood is realized.

Further evidence that the verb final position is reserved for TAM semantics comes from negation of present tense constructions in Kiswahili. In negation, the verb final vowel /-a/ changes to /-i/ as in (11):

11 Kiswahili

(a) Wa-toto ha -wa -lal -i.
   2 -child NEG1-2SM-sleep-FV
   ‘Children do not sleep.’

(b) M-toto ha -l -i.
   1 -child NEG1-cat- FV
   ‘The child does not eat.’

(c) Wa -vulana ha -wa -lal -i.
   2 -boy NEG1-2SM-sleep-FV
   ‘Boys do not sleep.’

(d) Wa-sichana ha -wa -imb -i.
   2 -girl NEG1-2SM-sing-FV
   ‘The girls are not singing/The girls do not sing.’

Considered together with the subjunctive mood facts, the occurrence of /-i/ verb-finally in the negation of the present, habitual, progressive and generic categories in preference to the characteristic /-a/ ending is an indication that the verb final position is reserved for certain TAM morphemes, specifically mood. Besides Kiswahili, it has also been reported that final /-i/ occurs in negative forms in EkeGusii, the only interlacustrine language with morphological alternation of this kind (Nurse and Philippson 2006). This phenomenon indicates that the final vowel in the Bantu verb is an integral part of the TAM system.
To sum, it may be postulated that the final vowel is a theme vowel whereby the occurrence of some mood markers are realized. The apparently semantically void \-a/ has prompted Katamba to consider that “because of the requirement that words must end in a vowel, there is a virtually meaningless vowel (usually it is a, but in a few tenses and in the subjunctive it is e) that is found at the end of every verb. This vowel is sometimes called the basic verbal suffix (BSV)” (Katamba 1993:111). He further contends that the “semantically empty formative \-a/, the basic verbal suffix, is attached to a verbal word to ensure that it meets the wellformedness requirement that words end in a vowel” (Katamba 1993:112). This argument is congruous with the proposal that \-a/ is the default vowel in cases where mood is not marked. Given this reasoning, the view that \-a/ is a theme vowel withstands counter-proposals.

To argue that that mood is marked on the final vowel has been the purpose of section 5.2.3. The focus of section 5.2.4 is on the types of modality expressible of on the verb.

5.2.3.1 THE BANTU SUBJUNCTIVE

The subjunctive mood denotes “unreal, hypothetical events” (De Haan 2004). Accordingly, the mood is an irrealis category. It expresses desirable situations and is appropriate for making requests and conveying emotions but it is more polite than the imperative. This mood typically occurs in subordinate clauses “after verbs of hoping, fearing, volition and surprise, among others” (De Haan 2004:13). The final vowel of the verb in the subordinate clause changes from \-a/ to \-e/ to mark the subjunctive mood. This inflection has been reported in Chichewa (Mchombo 1998, 2006), Kiswahili (Steere 1961, De Haan 2004), Kikerebe (Thornell 2002), Rundi (Nurse and Philipsson 2006) and Zulu (Buell 2005), among others. Examples (12) and (13) illustrate this phenomenon:

12 (Zulu, Buell 2005:78)
...ukuze a -cul -e
in.order ISBJ-sing-FV
‘...in order for him to sing.’
13 (Chichewa, Mchombo2006:28)

...kuti mi-kango i-dza-b-e mi-kanda

that 4-lions 4SM-fut-steal subjunctive 4-beads

‘...that the lions steal (at a future date) some beads.’

Considering that the Zulu verb ‘cui-a’ and Chichewa ‘b-a’ in (8) and (9) express a desire, the characteristic final vowel /-a/ in them is replaced by /-e/ to indicate that the verbs are in their subjunctive mood. The alternation between /-a/ and /-e/ provides irrefutable evidence that mood is a category of the verb in both languages and Bantu in general.

5.2.3.2 THE EKEGUSII SUBJUNCTIVE

It has already been noted that the subjunctive mood denotes unreal events and therefore can be subsumed under irrealis categories. In EkeGusii, it prototypically occurs in embedded CPs with or without the complementizer ng’ a. Further, the final vowel appears as /-e/, a phenomenon attributable to irrealis mood as has already been postulated in the case of other Bantu languages. In other words, the subjunctive expresses events which are desirable and therefore yet to occur as in:

14 (EkeGusii)

Tu-a-mo-iteeib-i (ng’a) a-gend-e
1PL-PST-3SG-tell-FV (that) 3SG-go SUBJ

‘We told him/her that he should go.’

Ba-to-iteeib-a (ng’a) to-gend-e
3PL-1PL-tell FV (that) 1PL go -SUBJ

‘They told us that we should go.’

Ba-bug-a (ng’a) ba-gend-e
3PL-feel-FV (that) 3PL-go -SUBJ

‘They felt that they should go.’

The occurrence of /-e/ verb-finally in the embedded clauses in (10) is consistent with the view that the canonical context of the subjunctive mood is the
subordinate clause. Further, following De Haan (2004), it is arguable that the replacement of the characteristic /-a/, which is part of the verb, by /-e/ lends credence to the view that the marking of the subjunctive in EkeGusii should be analyzed as mood rather than a modal affix.

5.2.3.3 THE BANTU OPTATIVE

The optative mood, also termed (co)hortative, is used to denote wishing and hoping (De Haan 2004). It expresses a desire to realize an action in which the speaker intends to participate. By reason of also being characterized by change of the final vowel from /-a/ to /-e/, the optative mood is often confused with the subjunctive and is frequently analyzed as the latter in the literature (cf. Loogman 1965:206). In Kiswahili, the optative mood occurs as below:

15 (EkeGusii)

Tu -fal -e
1PL-sleep-OPT
‘Let us sleep.’

Tu -imb -e
1PL-sing-OPT
‘Let us sing.’

Tu -end -e
1PL-go -OPT
‘Let us go.’

Syntactically, the optative mood contains the subject which includes the speaker, the verb stem and the final mood suffix, /-e/. The consistent occurrence of /-e/ in the optative, which is also evident in the subjunctive, explains why both moods are sometimes considered coterminous in the literature. Additionally, it brings into question the rationale for associating the morpheme with a specific mood if it can mark more than one. This question is addressed in section 5.4.3.
5.2.3.4 THE EKEGUSII OPTATIVE

The syntax and semantics of the EkeGusii optative mood is the same as that obtaining in other Bantu languages. The subject-stem-final vowel structure which obtains in the subjunctive can also occur in embedded clauses expressing the optative. It appears that in the absence of other criteria, the use of the first person plural in subject position may suffice to characterize this mood. The data in (16) confirm these observations:

16 (EkeGusii)
   To -raar -e
   1PL-sleep-OPT
   'Let us sleep.'
   
   To-teer-e
   1PL-sing-OPT
   'Let us sing.'
   
   To-gend-e
   1PL-go-OPT
   'Let us go.'

As is apparent, the suffix /-e/ which, as will be argued in section 5.4.3, also marks other irrealis categories in EkeGusii occurs in the optative in (16).

5.2.3.5 THE BANTU NEGATIVE

The present tense seems to exhibit bipartite negation in Bantu. For example, the Kiswahili preverbal negator /ha-/ occurs as the leftmost constituent of the clause and the final vowel in the verb changes to /-i/ as in:

17 (Kiswahili, Lindfors 2003:25)
   Ha- tu- sem-i
   NEG-1SG.SU-say- IND.PRES.NEG
   'We do not say.'
Lindfors considers that /-i/ is the indicative present tense but in view of the fact that change in the final vowel has also been attributed to the subjunctive and optative moods, which are irrealis categories, it is prudent to analyze the vowel as a negative irrealis marker and /ha-/ as the actual negator. Such double marking of negation is reminiscent of French and Caddo:

18 (French, Buell 2005:100)
Elle ne chante pas
She NEG sings NEG
'She does not sing.'

19 (Caddo, De Haan 2004:40; Chafe 1995:335)
kuy t’aybah
kuy-t’a-yi=bahw
NEG-1.AG.IRR-see

De Haan notes that the occurrence of the irrealis form of the pronominal prefixes in Caddo is determined by the presence of the clause-initial negative morpheme, /kuy/. This means that in Caddo negation is encoded by the negative prefix /kuy-/ while irrealis meaning is signaled by different morphemes. Similarly, French expresses negation doubly by the use of a preverbal morpheme, ne, and a postverbal one, /pas/. This phenomenon is comparable to the Bantu clause-initial and final positions in which the morphemes associated with negation occur.

5.2.3.5 EKEGUSII NEGATIVE

It has become standard to consider negation an irrealis category since it denotes non-existent events. As is characteristic of Bantu, two slots are available for negation marking in EkeGusii. In this research, it is maintained that the clause-initial position is for the negator while the clause-final position is a mood slot. The positive declaratives in (20) and their negative counterparts in (21) provide evidence for the bipartite negation argument:
(EkeGusii)

(a) N -chi -a -teer-a.
FOC-3PL-PST-sing-FV
‘They sang.’

(b) M -ba -raager-a.
FOC-3PL-eat -FV
‘They ate.’

(c) N -gi -a -teng -a.
FOC-3PL-PST-dance-FV
‘It danced.’

(d) N -di -a -tam -a.
FOC-3SG-PST-run away-FV
‘It ran away.’

21

(a) Ti - chi- teer-et - i.
NEG-3PL-sing-PFV-FV
‘They did not sing.’

(b) Ti - ba- raager -et - i.
NEG-3PL-eat -PFV-FV
‘They did not eat.’

(c) Ti - ge -teng -et - i.
NEG-7SG-dance-PFV-FV
‘It did not dance.’

(d) Ti - ri -tam -et - i.
NEG-5SG-run away-PFV-FV
‘It did not run away.’
That EkeGusii verb final /-i/ is restricted to specific tenses is reminiscent of Zulu and Kiswahili (Buell 2005; Lindfors 2003). Without detailed discussion, Buell identifies the present, the subjunctive and infinitive as the Zulu forms in which the /-i/ suffix occurs while Lindfors considers and labels the morpheme the indicative present in Kiswahili.

Besides the perfective aspect, the suffix /-i/ in EkeGusii occurs in the negation of present events, the habitual and present progressive aspect. However, in these forms, the morpheme attaches to the auxiliary verb re ‘be’ in which the vowel /-e/ changes to /-i/ as in:

22 EkeGusii
   (a) Ti -chi -r -i go -teer-a.
       NEG-3PL-be-FV INF-sing-FV
       ‘They are not singing/They do not sing.’
   (b) Ti -to -r -i ko -raager-a.
       NEG-1PL-be-FV INF-eat -FV
       ‘We are not eating/We do not eat.’
   (c) Ti-ke-r-i go-teng-a.
       NEG-3SG-be-FV INF-sing-FV
       ‘It is not singing/It does not sing.’

While /-i/ occurs in the lexical verb in (21), it attaches to the auxiliary in (22). Evidence that it is theoretically sound to analyze /-i/ in (22) as a negative mood suffix comes from the positive declarative counterparts in (23) which retain the vowel /-e/:

23 (EkeGusii)
   (a) N -go -teer-a chi -r -e
       FOC-INF-sing-FV 3PL-be-FV
       ‘They are singing/They sing.’
(b) N -ko -raager-a to -r -e
     FOC-INF-eat -FV 1PL-be-FV
     'We are eating/ We eat'

(c) N -go -teeng-a ke -r -e
     FOC-INF dance -FV 3SG-be-FV
     'It is dancing/ It dances.'

In sum, the data in this section indicate that the EkeGusii suffix /-i/ occurs in negative constructions involving specific tenses and aspects.

5.2.3.5 THE BANTU IMPERATIVE

The imperative is an unmarked mood. It consists in the use of the bare verb stem and the characteristic final vowel as in Chichewa:

24  (Chichewa, Mchombo 2006:33)
(a)  Gon  -a!
     Sleep -FV
     'Sleep!'

(b)  Lum-a!
     Bite -FV
     'Bite!'

(c)  Thamang-a!
     Run  -FV
     'Run'

(d)  Sek  -a
     Laugh-FV
     'Laugh'
As in Kiswahili, the suffix -ni is used in Chichewa for second person plural. This means that (24) may be modified as in (25), particularly in the expression of “politeness or formality” (Mchombo 2006:33):

25 (Chichewa, Mchombo 2006:33)
(a) Gona-ni ‘Lie down, sleep’
(b) Luma-ni ‘Bite’
(c) Thangama-ni ‘Run’
(d) Seka-ni ‘Laugh’

5.2.3.5 THE EKEGUSII IMPERATIVE

As has already been explained, the imperative is characteristically unmarked as the verb stem occurs with the theme vowel /-a/ and the verb has no clause-mate as (22) shows:

26 (EkeGusii)
(a) Ramam -a!
   Lie down-FV
   ‘Lie down’

(b) Rar -a!
   Sleep-FV
   ‘Sleep’

(c) Kir -a!
   Keep quiet-FV
   ‘Keep quiet’

Conversely, negative imperatives contain the negative prefix, the infinitive marker, the verb stem and the theme vowel as in:
(a) Ta -ko -ramam -a!
   NEG-INF-run -FV
   ‘Do not lie down.’

(b) Ta -ko -rar -a!
   NEG-INF-sleep-FV
   ‘Do not sleep.’

(c) Ta -go -kir -a!
   NEG-INF-keep quiet-FV
   ‘Do not keep quiet.’

Apparently, the difference between the affirmative imperative and its negative counterpart is that in the latter, the verb stem co-occurs with prefixes while in the former, the bare verb is sufficient for the expression of directives or commands.

While the shape of the theme vowel in the intransitive examples as in (26) and (27) is consistent with the canonical form of the imperative and therefore can be described straightforwardly, imperative transitive verbs pose a question for this approach. The conundrum is that the final vowel appears in the form /-e/ in transitive imperative affirmative constructions containing an object agreement marker as in (28) (cf Mchombo 2006:34-35):

28 EkeGusii

(a) Mo -ak-e!
   3SG-hit-FV
   ‘Hit him!’

(b) Ba -ak-e
   3PL-hit-FV
   ‘Hit them!’
(c) Ri tur -e!
3SG.AUG-wake up-FV
‘Wake him/her (huge person) up!’

Since transitive as well as intransitive affirmative imperatives express states that are yet to be executed and therefore desirable, further investigation is required in order to account for the appearance of the irrealis form, /-e/, in transitive imperatives as opposed to /-a/ in the bare imperatives.

5.2.4 MODALS

5.2.4.1 MODAL AFFIXES IN BANTU

Besides mood, modality can be expressed by modal affixes. Mchombo’s (2006) analysis of Chichewa indicates that Bantu uses modal affixes to mark modality. To express epistemic and deontic modality, /-nga/ and /-zi/ are used, respectively, as in:

29 (Chichewa, Mchombo 2006:30-31, emphasis mine)
(a) Mu- nga ndi-thandiz e
2PL.mod 1SG-help-SUBJUN
‘You can/may help me.’
(b) M-kango u zi -b -a mi-kanda
3-lion 3SM-must-steal-FV 4-beads
‘The lion must (should) steal beads.’

In 30 (a), the modal /-nga/ may be glossed as ‘can/may’ to express possibility while in (b), /-zi/ is interpretable as ‘must/should’, which denotes compulsion or obligation.

5.2.4.2 EKEGUSII MODAL AFFIXES

Expression of modality by modal affixes in EkeGusii does not occur but in addition to its prototypical function, the negation morpheme /-ta/ may be used for making appeals or wishes. It occurs in preverbal position as in (31):
EkeGusii

(a) O -ta -ko -gw-a!
2SG -NEG-INF-eat -FV
‘I wish you fall!’ (lit. Why don’t you fall!)

(b) To -ta -re ko -many-a!
2PL-NEG-be INF-know-FV
‘We wish we knew!’ (lit. Why didn’t we know!)

(c) E -ta -go -tw-a
9SM-NEG-INF-rain-FV
‘I wish it rains.’ (lit. Why doesn’t it rain!)

(d) Mo -ta-go-kir-a
2PL-NEG-INF-keep quiet-FV
‘Can’t you keep quiet!’

The affix /-ta/ has already been identified as a negation marker elsewhere. Despite its association with modal function in (31), it seems inappropriate classify the prefix as a prototypical modal affix.

5.2.5 LEXICAL EXPRESSION OF MODALITY

It is also possible to express modality lexically. Modal tags are the most common lexical means of expressing modality. For example, epistemic modality in Kiswahili is expressed by using verbs such as *dhani* and *fikiri* which are translatable as ‘think’. Additionally, adverbs can also be used. (32) illustrates both phenomena:

32 (Kiswahili)

(a) N -a -fikiri wa -me -ondok-a
1SG-PRES-think 3PL-PFCT-leave -FV
‘I think they have left.’
(b) N-a-dahani wa-me-tu-on-a
1SG-PRES-suppose 3PL-PFCT-1PL-see-FV
'I suppose they have seen us.'

(c) Labda wa-me-lal-a
Perhaps 3PL-PFCT-sleep-FV
'Perhaps they have slept.'

(d) Huenda ikawa wa-me-ku-f-a
May be 3PL-PFCT-INF-die-FV
'May be they have died.'

The tags and adverbs in these examples are about the truth-values of the propositions they precede. These observations also hold for EkeGusii lexical expression of modality as can be seen in:

33 EkeGusii

(a) O-raage-ir-e n-go-kager-a.
3SG-eat-PFCT-FV 1SG-INF-suppose-FV
'He has eaten, I suppose.'

(b) Ba-a-raar-ir-e n-go-kager-a.
3PL-PST-sleep-PFCT-FV 1SG-INF-suppose-FV
'They have slept, I suppose.'

(c) Chi-a-y-ir-e n-go-kager-a.
10SM-PST-cook-PFCT-FV 1SG-INF-suppose-FV
'They have cooked, I suppose.'

The modal tags are an expression of the speaker's degree of conviction as to the truth contained in the proposition.
5.2.6 DEONTIC AND EPISTEMIC MODALITY

An important relic in the literature is the semantic distinction which descriptive grammar has maintained between deontic and epistemic modality. A characterization of EkeGusii modality along both parameters is possible.

Deontic modality prototypically denotes compulsion and, as such, encapsulates such moods as imperative, directive, prohibitions, permission, optatives and admonitions, among others.

Although it is unmarked, the imperative mood is arguably considered universally an instance of deontic modality. As already noted, the mood consists in the use of the bare verb stem together with the final vowel in EkeGusii as in (26), repeated here as (34):

34 (EkeGusii)

Ramam -a!
Lic down-FV
‘Lie down!’

Rar -a!
Sleep-FV
‘Sleep’

Kir-a!
Keep quiet-FV
‘Keep quiet!’

On the other hand, epistemic modality denotes the speaker’s degree of certainty about a proposition as well as his/her preferences. In this category may be included forms used for making requests, suggestions, appeals and wishes, among others. Other uses include the expression of probability. For example, in making an appeal or wish, the negation affix may be used as in (35):
EkeGusii

Mo -ta -ko -raager-a! (lit. Won’t you eat!)
2PL-neg-INF-eat -FV
‘You should eat.’

O -ta -go -kir -a! (lit. Won’t you keep quiet!)
2SG-neg-INF-keep quiet-FV.
‘You should keep quiet.’

Ge -ta -gw -at -ek -a (lit. Why doesn’t it break!)
7SM-neg-INF-break-STAT-FV
‘I wish it breaks.’

As the data show, the subject marker occurs clause initially while the negation prefix /ta/ which bears modal meaning appears after it in the position before the infinitive marker /ko/ and its allomorphs /-go/ and /-gw/.

In addition to such affixation processes, epistemic modality may also be expressed by modal tags as in (36):

36 EkeGusii

(a) O -ch -ir -e n -go -kager -a.
3SG-come-PFCT-FV 1SG-INF-suppose-FV
‘He has come, I suppose.’

(b) O-bwen-ir-e n-go-kager-a.
3SG-recover-PFCT-FV 1SG-INF-suppose-FV
‘He has recovered, I suppose.’

(c) O -ig -ur -e n -go -kager -a.
3SG-hear-PFCT-FV 1SG-INF-suppose-FV
‘He has heard, I suppose.’

In sum, modal tags are an expression of the speaker’s conviction about the truth-value of the proposition. Such assessment of propositional truth-value is the
province of epistemic modality. While the deontic-epistemic distinction works well for the semantic characterization of modality, the realis-irrealis division seems to correlate well with morphological marking of modality. Accordingly, these types of modality are discussed in section 5.2.7.

5.2.7 REALIS-IRREALIS MODALITY

Although De Haan (2004) correctly notes that the term irrealis, for example, is a broad categorization of modal phenomena, the realis-irrealis dichotomy is relevant because of the morphological similarity of the final vowel in some irrealis moods. Irrealis categories which exhibit morphological sameness in EkeGusii include such moods as subjunctive, optative and conditional. The same morpheme is also found in the aspectual categories. Some of these categories are outlined in this section.

It has already been noted that the subjunctive, optative and negative, among others, denote unreal events and therefore can be subsumed under irrealis categories. Considering that the final vowel changes to /-e/ in the subjunctive, optative and future tense, it would be inappropriate to assign this suffix to any one of these categories to the exclusion of the rest. Disregarding the occurrence of /-i/ verb finally in negative constructions, the marking of the subjunctive, optative and future are characterized by change of unmarked /-a/ to /-e/ as in (37):

37 EkeGusii
(a) Tu -a -anch -ir -e a -gend-e. (subjunctive)
1PL-PST -agree -PFCT-FV 1SG-go -FV
'We have agreed that s/he go.'

(b) M-ba-bug-a ng’a ba-gend-e.
FOC-3PL-feel-FV that 3PL-go-FV (subjunctive)
'They felt that they go.'

(c) To -teer -e. (optative)
1PL-sing-FV
'Let us sing.'
The occurrence of /-e/ in the three categories provides compelling evidence for postulating that the suffix be characterized as a marker for a wide range of irrealis categories because its semantics is not confined to any specific TAM category.

5.2.8 THE INTERACTION BETWEEN MODALITY, TENSE AND ASPECT

The purpose of this section is to show that modality interfaces with tense and aspect in ways which sometimes blur the distinction between the three. The data are drawn from constructions involving the expression of future and negation in EkeGusii.

5.2.8.1 MODALITY AND TENSE

By reason of denoting future time, FUT may be subsumed under irrealis categories since the events described are non-existent. De Haan (2004) analyzes this tense as such, arguing that FUT is a prototypical irrealis category. He further takes cognizance of the interaction between FUT and epistemic modality. Quite often, EkeGusii epistemic modality expressing a wish is packaged together with denotation of FUT as in (38):
In these examples, the suffix /-e/ not only denotes future but also a wish or confidence on the part of the speaker that what is being predicated will certainly happen. It is at this point that tense and modality shade into each other, thereby coalescing into irrealis mood. An analysis of the sort proposed by Ogechi in (39) raises the question of how and where subjunctive and optative expression fits into the overall TAM system of EkeGusii:

Change in the final vowel from /a/ to /e/ to mark FUT as well as the subjunctive and optative provides persuasive evidence that a reduction of the denotation of the morpheme to any one the several irrealis categories is imprecise. Accordingly, Ogechi’s (2002) analysis in (39) is inaccurate as it cannot account for the occurrence of /-e/ in the subjunctive and optative moods besides marking FUT.

Besides FUT, modality also seems to interact with PRES. The verb re, ‘be’, exhibits the kind of alternation which occurs in constructions involving perfective aspect. In affirmative sentences, the verb appears as re but in the negative counterparts, it changes to ri. (40) and (41) illustrate this phenomenon:
EkeGusii

(a) N -go -som-a a -r -e.
FOC-INF-study-FV 3SG-be-FV
'S/he studies.'

(b) N -go -kwan-a a -r -e.
FOC-INF-talk -FV 3SG-be-FV
'S/he talks.'

(c) N -ko -raager-a a -r -e.
FOC-INF-eat -FV 3SG-be-FV
'S/he talks.'

EkeGusii

(a) T- a -r -i go -som -a.
NEG-1SG-be-FV INF-study-FV
'S/he does not study.'

(b) T- a -r -i go -kwan-a.
NEG-1SG-be-FV INF-talk -FV
'S/he does not talk.'

(c) T- a -r -i ko -raager-a.
NEG-1SG-be-FV INF-eat -FV
'S/he does not eat.'

Apparently, negation of present events involves the dropping of the focus marker which licenses the raising of the lexical verb in (40) and movement of the auxiliary verb re to its canonical preverbal position where it co-occurs with the final vowel /-i/, which marks negative mood, /-i/, as in (41).
5.2.8.2 MODALITY AND ASPECT

As in the case of tense, negation exhibits evidence of the interaction between mood and aspect in respect of the final vowel. As already established, two clause positions, one initial and another final, are relevant to the marking of negation. Of concern here is the final position because it is the slot where mood is realized. In affirmative clauses involving the perfective, the final vowel is /-e/ as in (42):

42 EkeGusii
(a) N -tu -a -teer-et -e.
   FOC-1PL-PST-sing-PFV-FV
   'We sung long time ago.'
(b) M -ba -ø -raager-et -e.
   FOC-3PL-PST-eat -PFV-FV
   'We ate long time ago.'
(c) M -mw-a -ch -et -e.
   FOC-2PL-PST-come-PFV-FV
   'You came long time ago.'

To negate the sentences in (42), the final vowel changes to /-i/ as in (43):

43 EkeGusii
(a) Ti -to -ø -teer-et -i.
   NEG-1PL-PST-sing-PFV-FV
   'We did not sing.'
(b) Ti -ba -ø -raager-et -i
   NEG-3PL-PST-eat -PFV-FV
   'They did not sing.'
(c) Ti -mw-a -ch -et -e
   NEG-2PL-PST-come-PFV-FV
   'You did not come.'

The alternation of /-e/ and /-i/ as in (42) and (43) results from the mood expressed in the sentences. Negation of PFV involves the use of verb final /-i/ while
in the affirmative PFV, the form of the vowel is /-e/. Further, the possibility of segmenting /-ete/ into PFV and FV in the alternation between affirmative and negative clauses provide evidence that the form of the PFV morpheme is /-et/ but not /-ete/ as presented in the literature (cf Whiteley 1965; Cammenga 2002; Ogechi 2002). In a nutshell, the data in (42) and (43) indicate that negation has formal consequences on the final vowel in EkeGusii, and, as a corollary, that mood interacts with other TAM categories.

Considering that /-e/ occurs in clauses involving PFCT as well as in (44), it seems apt to posit that the morpheme is not sensitive to the aspectual morphology of any kind:

44 EkeGusii
(a) O-ø-ch-ir-e.
   3SG-PST-Ccome-PFCT-FV
   ‘S/he has come.’
(b) O-ø-k-ur-e.
   3SG-PST-die-PFCT-FV
   ‘S/he has kept quiet.’
(c) O-ø-kor-ir-e.
   3SG-PST-finish-PFCT-FV
   ‘S/he has finished.’

In-depth research is necessary to unravel the semantics of the Bantu final vowel which Good (2006) admits is unclear. As has been suggested in this section, the answer to the lack of clarity rests with the interaction of TAM categories.

In conclusion, modality in EkeGusii is expressible by mood as well as lexical means. Although the deontic-epistemic modality distinction can be made on semantic grounds, it is the realis-irrealis dichotomy which has a bearing on verbal morphology. The marking of mood verb finally confirms the argument that this position is occupied by a theme vowel which is sometimes deleted to pave the way for the appropriate mood morpheme.