THE PRAGMATIC CONDITIONS FOR PRESENT PERFECT AND SIMPLE PAST SENTENCE-MAKING IN AKAN

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In the simple past in Akan, an event gets ‘completed’; in the present perfect, it has ‘continued (or current) relevance’. Common to these two sentences is the idea that an event ‘occurred anterior to the time of speech’ (Osam 1994) by virtue of which they both can be said to possess the element of pastness. But, what in an event gets completed in the simple past? or has continued relevance in the present perfect? and are these two senses without any shared foundations? The need for answers to these questions is the main drive for this paper. The claim of this paper is that the quest for the simple past and the present perfect sentence meanings and meaning-difference in Akan lies in the discovery of the event situations that are evaluated for continued or current relevance; and that an event (i.e., a happening or non-happening) in the simple past is not without the situation(s) that are evaluated for present perfect sentence-making in Akan. The paper takes a situation-motivated approach in its discovery of these pragmatic situations. In the end, it identifies three situations, namely the outcome or state, context and time of a happening or non-happening as bases for present perfect and simple past sentence-making in Akan. It therefore concludes that the currency of an outcome or state, context and/or time of a happening or a non-happening from a speaker’s point of view – i.e., a speaker’s view that one or combinations of these situations persist(s), or is/are evident, as at utterance – is/are the motivation(s) for a present perfect sentence-conclusion/making. Its affirmative and negative are different with the former being a happening, but the latter, a non-happening. Same distinction underlies the simple past affirmative and negative sentence differentiation. In the simple past, one or combinations of the three situations is/are viewed as presently not evident (i.e., not persistent). From the above conclusions, a proposal to the effect that a- and -ɪ, as in the simple past, are non-evidential markers, with a- and -ɪ as in the present perfect as evidential markers, is appropriate.

1. Introduction
In his PhD dissertation, Osam (1994) extended the idea of continued (or current) relevance as it relates to present perfect constructions in other languages to the present perfect in Akan.1 While this is an extension in order, the event factors that are evaluated for current relevance are not yet clearly and fully established for Akan. As obtained in Osam (1994) and subsequently in Osam (2008), in the simple past2 in Akan, an event is said to have been ‘completed’ – i.e., in the sense of the whole event being anterior to the time of speech, but the question still remains as to what the term ‘whole’ actually entails and, more importantly, what the pragmatic basis for any such conclusion is. Common to the simple past and present perfect sentence-meanings is the idea of an event occurring anterior to the time of speech by virtue of which both can be said to possess the element of pastness; but, are their semantic differences as mentioned above (Osam 1994, 2008) without any shared pragmatic foundations? The

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1 Note: This article was initially named, ‘On Current Relevance in perfect and past constructions in Akan: The pragmatics’, but I later found the current title to be more befitting; the content is the same. The term ‘present’ is used with ‘perfect’ in the sense that the pragmatic factor that leads the speaker to issue the perfect sentence-conclusion is evident or does persist as at utterance (see footnote 3 below). Also, Akan has past perfect as in the sentence: Na madware ‘I had bathed’ which, therefore, makes it also possible and also useful to use the term ‘present’ with ‘perfect’ so to distinguish it from the past perfect.

2 I do not use the word ‘past’ in the sense of ‘past tense’. Past as used in the current study references a situation whereby a pragmatic factor in view and in focus is no longer evident, or does not persist as at utterance; the fact that outcome/state, context or time of a happening or a non-happening does not persist or is not evident is what makes the utterance, past (see footnote 3). The term ‘simple’ has been used to disclose my focus on strictly basic (i.e., non-serial) past sentences.
claim of this paper is that the situations that are evaluated for continued relevance for present perfect sentence-making are the very situations in consideration for simple past sentence-making; and that the simple past sentence is issued while the situation(s) in focus is/are viewed to no longer persist (i.e., to be presently not evident for which reason that/those situation(s) is/are viewed to lack continued/current relevance), with the present perfect sentence issued when (or with the view that) the event situation(s) in focus does/do persist (or is/are presently evident, which gets interpreted as continued/current relevance). Therefore, the quest for the simple past and the present perfect sentence meanings and meaning-difference in Akan lies in our discovery of the very pragmatic situations that are evaluated for present perfect sentence-making (or sentence-conclusion). This paper takes a pragmatic approach (i.e., a situation-motivated approach) to this discovery.

Evidentiality is the theory of choice for the current study; and is employed to spell out the event pragmatic factors or situations that serve as the evidential windows or zones (i.e., which serve as the bases or sources of knowledge) for both present perfect and simple past sentence-making in Akan. Aikhenvald (2004) said, ‘[t]hose who cannot get their evidentials right are in trouble: they are considered linguistically incompetent and generally not worth talking to’; and to the non-native speaker (e.g., the second/foreign language learner) to whom these pragmatic situations cannot easily be inferred, this is very much difficult. Therefore, this study will bring some determinacy into when and when not to speak in the simple past or the present perfect on a happening or a non-happening (i.e., an event that occurred or an event that was expected to have occurred). A speaker’s choice of a construction to express a happening or a non-happening (i.e., the choice to express him- or herself in either the simple past or the present perfect) must be evidenced-based, and sometimes he or she may be invited to pragmatically (i.e., situationally) justify his or her sentence preference in a given speech scenario.

The rest of the paper is organized into six sections. Section two focuses on perfect and past sentences, structurally. Section three reviews these four accounts on present perfect and simple past constructions in Akan: Osam (1994, 2008), Boadi (2008), Ofori (2006a, 2006b) and Duah and Savić (2020) (chiefly among them are works by the first two authors). Section four provides a brief review of the linguistic literature on simple past and present perfect constructions, focusing especially on the ones that use or reference the term current or continuing relevance. Also in brief description in that section is the pragmatic notion of evidentiality, and the extent of its significance to this study. Section five is a pragmatic analysis of perfect and past (affirmative and negative) constructions in Akan. In that section, event situations are presented and the pragmatic factors that are evaluated for current relevance and, therefore, for present perfect sentence-making are established; and same pragmatic factors are extended to account for simple past sentence-making in Akan. Section six is the conclusion where I provide a summary, tabular illustrations of shared and unique situational properties, and the diverse instantiations, of/for present perfect and simple past sentence-making in Akan.

2. On the structure of the verb-stem in present perfect and simple past sentences

This section briefly outlines basic structures of present perfect and simple past sentences in Akan. Below in (1) and (2) are illustrations on, and explanation of, the present perfect and the simple past sentence structures in Akan. Also discussed at the footnotes are the phonological processes associated

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3 There are three pragmatic factors based on which present perfect and simple past sentence-conclusions may be offered or issued. These are outcome/state, context and/or time of a happening or a non-happening; when one or combinations of these in focus persist(s) or is/are evident as at utterance then the sentence must be in the present perfect; in a situation where the aspect(s) of these in focus is not evident (i.e., does not persist) then the utterance must be in the simple past.
with these constructions like many other constructions in Akan. The morphemes within the present perfect and simple past verb-stem are: (i) a prefix which is a- with the [+ATR] counterpart [æ-] when the following vowel is underlyingly [+ATR]; (ii) the negative marker which is underlyingly an alveolar (i.e., n-), which is homorganic with the verb-root’s initial consonant; (iii) the verb root, which as represented here are CV or CVC – a verb-root with the CVC structure changes to become CVCC when followed by a vocal suffix (i.e., past-affirmative/perfect-negative). The suffix is orthographically -i or -e (-e is phonemically [i] with [i] as its counterpart due to [+ATR] harmony. There are several other phonetic variants as discussed below and at the footnotes.

(1) Past and perfect sentences in Akan

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<th>Column 1: Past – Past Affirmative</th>
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<td>c. Kofi tone-e</td>
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<td>d. Kofi kumu-i</td>
<td>Kofi kumu-i</td>
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<td>e. Kofi nomo-e</td>
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<td><strong>Verb</strong>§/Repeat.Final.Sound +Object.</td>
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<td>g. Kofi hu-u no.</td>
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<td>i. Kofi kum-m no.</td>
<td>Kofi kum-m no.</td>
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<td>j. Kofi nom-m nsuo</td>
<td>Kofi nom-m nsuo</td>
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4 Akan operates homorganic nasal assimilation by which a nasal consonant harmonizes with a preceding consonant in its place of articulation. By this process, the consonant sequences: np, nf, nb, nm change to become mp, mf, mb and mm, and it is so in the phonetic, and the orthography. Also, Akan operates voiced consonant nasalization by which a voiced consonant is nasalized after a nasal consonant in a stem. Examples are the consonant sequences: mb, nd, ngy becoming mm, nn and nny, respectively. In the data, nda, ndidi, mba become nna, midii and mma, respectively.

5 a- ([ATR]) changes to [æ-] ([+ATR]) when the next vowel in the verb stem is [+ATR], e.g. /a-di/ → [ædi] ‘has/have eaten’; -i ([ATR]) changes to [-i] to agree with a preceding vowel in [+ATR], e.g. /hu-u/ → [hui] ‘has/have eaten’ (Dolphyne 1988, Ofori 2018).

6 There is another phonetic variant of -t which is a copy (i.e., a segmental duplicate) of a preceding vowel or consonant of -t. This is realized when the verb root is followed by an object, or by -ye. Dolphyne (1988) treats -ye [-je] as an alternative past marker in Asante, but, according to Ofori (2018), the functional variant of -t when the verb takes the suffix -ye or is followed by an object, is rather the segmental duplicate as described above. Following is Ofori’s (2018) derivational account of -ye [-je]. In Asante, the emphatic form -e is augmented after -t which then transforms it (i.e., -t) to [j], the palatal glide, as in the formation of the following forms: /ba-t-e/ becomes [ba-a-je] ‘came home’; /n-ba-a-e/ becomes [m-ma-a-jə] ‘has/have not come’ – [-je] is orthographically represented as -ye. So, outputs are represented orthographically as: baaye and mmaaye. When the verb is clause final (i.e., without -ye or an object/complement to occur after it), -i is represented in the orthography as -e (but phonetically as -t) when the preceding vowel of the verb-root is unadvanced, but as -i (orthographically and also phonetically) when the preceding vowel is advanced. See Dolphyne (1988), Osam (1994) and Ofori (2006a, 2006b, 2018) on other allomorphs of the morpheme.
### Some notes on the data above:

(a) Verb-roots and vowel insertion/resumption: The verbs in use above are: *ba* ‘come’; *hu* ‘see’; *tɔn* ‘sell’; *kum* ‘kill’; *nom* ‘drink’. The CVC verbs: *tɔn*, *kum* and *nom* with the suffix, -e or -i, to occur after them are realized as: *tɔne*-e, *kumu*-i, and *nomo*-e respectively.

(b) The negative marker and its realizations: The negative marker is *n-*., underlyingly, but due to homorganicity with the following consonant is realized as: [m] before labial consonants ([p, b]); [ŋ] before velar or back consonants ([k, h]); and as [n] before alveolar consonants ([n]).

(c) Realizations of the suffix for marking past affirmative and perfect negative form of the verb, orthographically and phonetically:

(c-i) The suffix is realized orthographically as -e to be immediately preceded by a [-ATR] vowel of the verb at the sentence final position; phonemically and phonetically, -e is transcribed as -i. (See 1a-1e.)

(c-ii) It is realized as -i at the sentence final position and to be immediately preceded by a [+ATR] vowel of the verb – it is phonemically realized as /i/, but phonetically [i] due to [+ATR] influence from a preceding vowel. (See 1a-1e.)

(c-iii) It is a copy of the verb-root’s final sound when it occurs before a noun (which is the object of the sentence). (See 1f-1j.)

(c-iv) It is a copy of the verb-root’s final sound when an emphatic form -e is introduced after [i] – the verb-root’s final sound is lengthened/doubled and deletes [i] as a result, [i] converts to [j] [-Syllabic] to onset -e the emphatic marker (as je). (See 1k-1o.)

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<td>n. Kofi kumu-u-ye</td>
<td>Kofi kumu-u-je</td>
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<td>q. Kofi a-n-hu.</td>
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<td>r. Kofi a-n-ton.</td>
<td>Kofi a-n-ton.</td>
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<td>s. Kofi a-n-kum.</td>
<td>Kofi a-n-kum.</td>
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<td>t. Kofi a-n-nom.</td>
<td>Kofi a-n-nom.</td>
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(2)
(d) Realizations of the prefix for perfect affirmative sentence formation and past negative sentence formation. The prefix is \( a- \)\([-\text{ATR}] \) and is phonetically realized as \([\text{æ}-]\) due to regressive \([+\text{ATR}] \) harmony.

(e) The perfect verb stem structure:
Affirmative: \( a- + \text{VERB} \)
Negative: \( n- + \text{VERB} + \text{a suffix} \)(i.e., one of the suffixal forms which must satisfy the requirements of the verb both phonologically and morpho-syntactically).

(f) The past verb stem structure:
Affirmative: \( \text{VERB} + \text{a suffix} \)(i.e., one of the suffixal forms which must satisfy the requirements of the verb both phonologically and morpho-syntactically.)
Negative: \( a- + n- + \text{VERB} \)(i.e., a prefix, a negative and a verb root.)

I limit the formal description to just what is above and at the footnote since the current focus is pragmatic, not structural.

3. A brief review of simple past and present perfect sentences in Akan
Following is a review of Osam (1994, 2008), Boadi (2008), Ofori (2006a, 2006b) and Duah and Savić (2020) on simple past and present perfect sentences in Akan. Following are Osam’s (1994) positions on simple past (i.e., his completive) and present perfect sentence meanings and my responses to them. He calls as completive aspect the sentence category most Akanists have labelled past tense. Note that these terminological differences among Akanists are less important to our current pragmatic focus. Below is Osam’s semantic stance on this category of sentences for which he prefers the term completive aspect. He says,

I use the term 'completive' in the sense in which Comrie (1976) uses the label 'perfective'. It should, therefore be understood that in this study 'completive' and 'perfective' are alternate labels. When a verb is marked as completive, it means that the event it codes "is presented as a single unanalyisable whole, with beginning, middle, and end rolled into one." In other words, we do not have the opportunity to view the event from within and separate it into the various phases that make it up. The event is presented as a single whole, with the various stages condensed into an integral unit. [53]

He adopts Dahl’s (1985:79) position on perfective (i.e., completive aspect in his terms) as given below to clarify his position on this category of sentences as rather completive aspect (i.e., Perfective), not past tense. This is Dahl (1985):

There is a strong tendency for PFV [perfective] categories to be restricted to past time reference. I interpret this restriction as a secondary feature of PFV ... In other words, for all languages it holds that 'past time reference' characterizes prototypical uses of PFV -- single, completed events will in the 'typical cases' be located in the past. [79]

That is, according to Osam,

[even though] ‘the use of the completive suffix locates the event under consideration in a time frame prior to the time of speaking’. [That is], the implication of the use of that suffix is … that the said event occurred anterior to the time of speech’. [its usage] ‘... in Akan [however] implies more than time. It also indicates the event so described as being an integrated whole; one that is completed. When this suffix is used, the event is always a completed one. The suffix
is never used to code past imperfective event. For example, it is never used if the event is coded as being in progress in the past. In other words, it is only completed or perfective events that are marked this way. We can therefore describe the primary feature of this morpheme as being aspetual, with time being only a secondary characteristic. [53 - 55]

The sense in which the term completive is used by Osam (1994) is not very clear in his work. How is his claim on this category of sentences (i.e., events) as completed different from his position on them as ‘anterior to the time of speech’, or as events located in ‘a time frame prior to the time of speaking’? Is it not the reason that these sentences (i.e., events) are viewed to get completed before utterance time that they (i.e., the events) are also in consideration as ‘anterior to the time of speech’? Is it not their content – i.e., the view on them as having been completed – which when in view guarantees them this spot within time? Time cannot be a secondary factor in the formation of these sentences. I argue here that time is an important conditioning/pragmatic factor in the expression of events this way (i.e., in the past or as completive), but also is not the only (conditioning pragmatic) factor in the expression of events this way. Also, his claim that ‘[t]he suffix is never used to code past imperfective event’ in Akan and for that matter it functions in this context as a completive aspect, not as a past tense marker, is not the most reliable diagnosis. Languages have different formal strategies for expressing their past progressive sentences and the fact that Akan does not deploy this suffix just like nearly similar markers in other languages alone does not warrant this conclusion. It is just a matter of preference: the fact that Akan has its own system of constructing its past progressive constructions. Therefore, what one language is doing, but Akan is not doing, should not become the basis for reaching a functional conclusion on a form in Akan. It is known that Akan forms its past progressive sentences by introducing na ‘a conjunctive/definite stem’ before the present progressive form of the sentence as shown in (3) below. The sentence in (4) is the past perfect in Akan, also, with na ‘as.at.that.time’ prefixed to the present perfect sentence. Also, as obtained in (5) and (6), the past progressive sentence, may be formed by introducing a relativized adverbial phrase of time (e.g., Bere a mɛkɛ no… ‘The time I went…’, or Bere a mɛrekɔ no… ‘The time I was going…’) to be followed by na (i.e., the conjunctive morpheme: ‘as.at.that.time/by.then’) before the present progressive sentence.

(3) Past progressive
Na Kofi re-didi
past Kofi PROG-eat
‘Kofi was eating.’

(4) Past perfect
Na Kofi a-didi
PAST Kofi PERF-eat
‘Kofi had eaten.’

(5) Past progressive
Bere a me-kɔ-e no na Kofi re-didi.
time that I-go-PAST DEF CONJ(by.then) Kofi PROG-eat
‘When I went (by then) Kofi was eating.’

(6) Past progressive: (i.e., with Kofi not eating now)
Bere a me-re-kɔ no na Kofi re-didi
time that I-PROG-go DEF CONJ(by.then) Kofi PROG-eat
‘When I was going/leaving (definite) (by then) Kofi was eating.’
Note that the NP in (5) and (6) both end with no, and followed by na, which cast the content of the relativized-NP as definite, known or established knowledge for which reason progressive sentences get their past readings. In (7) is a past perfect sentence also with the relativized-NP na augment occurring before the present perfect sentence. The past progressive sentence in (3) could be considered a reduced form of the sentences in (5) and (6) – i.e., the relativized-NP denoting time is rendered null in this case with the conjunctive na having to absorb the temporal function of it (i.e., the relativized-NP) fully but also covertly. Sentence (4) is also suitably a reduced form of (7). The reader should not mistake my positions against Osam’s arguments in support of his completive aspect analysis of the suffix as my position against his aspectual analysis of the form. The completive or past could be aspectual just like he has said, but his formal and semantic positions in support of that claim, like I have demonstrated above, fall short. Even English on which his argumentation is based does not inflect the progressive form of the verb with the past-ed. English has simply developed separate forms for expressing the past progressive – e.g., was, were, etc. (just like na is evolving close to performing similar purposes in Akan). Much as some linguists believe it, there is no formal overt evidence of these forms having undergone the -ed inflection in English; the progressive verb stem with the -ing suffix is never the target for past inflection in the progressive in English.

Comrie (1976:52) describes the perfect aspect as indicative of "the continuing present relevance of a past situation." Such is the position of Osam (2008) on the present perfect in Akan also. Osam further explains the present perfect as follows:

In fact, some treatments of the Akan tense-aspect system, (for example, Essilfie 1977, 1986) adopt the view that the perfect is a tense and so argue for a perfect tense in Akan. … I take the position that the perfect is an aspect.’ The perfect in Akan is atemporal by implication. The perfect links a past event to a present situation by showing that an event that took place in the past is of relevance to the present. This means that the perfect uses an event to link two temporal frames. [T]he use of the perfect means that … [some events] took place prior to the time of speaking but they are of relevance to the present. For example, in (13a) [i.e., 8] the event of my having bought some took place prior to the time of speech, however the result of that action persists in the present situation.

The way in which the present relevance of that past action is demonstrated is that since I already bought some it is not crucial for me to buy more now. [75]
sentence making in Akan. There are pragmatic factors (inclusive of result) that are significant bases for both present perfect affirmative and negative sentence-making in Akan. Time is one of those present perfect sentence-making pragmatic factors, and therefore cannot be ruled out from the analysis of perfect sentence meaning/function in Akan. There are still others to be established and explained how they motivate perfect sentence-making in Akan.

From the above, a big omission in Osam (1994) is his failure to extend his semantic analysis on present perfect and simple past affirmative sentences to present perfect and simple past negative sentences. Two questions that arise and need to be addressed are: (a) if the present perfect is about result having continued relevance, what is the result (i.e., with continued relevance) then in the present perfect negative sentence? Also, (b) if the simple past (i.e., completive) is about an event getting completed, what gets completed then in the simple past/completive negative sentence? For a unified analysis on past or perfect constructions, functional properties that are adjudged to significantly define or qualify a construction as past or perfect must inhere in both its affirmative and negative sentence counterparts. However, this is not what we see in the study presented above and the ones that follow. A pragmatic approach to past and perfect sentence-making will provide the situational factors that motivate either past (affirmative and negative) sentence-making, or perfect (affirmative and negative) sentence-making in Akan. The goal is to establish the shared functional properties of affirmative and negative sentences in the past, or as in the perfect; and, at the same time, to show ways in which the four constructions – i.e., past affirmative, past negative, perfect affirmative and perfect negative – are functionally similar and also different in Akan. The term continued (or continued) relevance (as was first used by Comrie and later adopted by Osam (1994) for Akan) which suggests that in the present perfect sentence some past situation persists in the present time will be significant in this pragmatic escapade. Eventually, the study will uncover fully those factors (which from the current study are pragmatic in nature) that offer this linkage between the past and the present situation as in perfect constructions (i.e., affirmative and negative).

Following is a brief review of Boadi (2008) who says,

The obvious similarity in meaning as well as common phonemic and graphic representation shared by the Past and Perfect provides an opportunity to introduce the two affixes together before proceeding to examine their respective linguistic properties in separate sections. Both the past and perfect depict the event described by a verb as having completed at, and as having occurred prior to, the time of speaking. [24]

Boadi’s acknowledgment of the fact that there is some semantic similarity between the past and the perfect is reassuring. However, there is an aspect of his position above which would not always hold true, which is the element of event completion. This is not completely so in every perfect sentence in Akan, even in the affirmative. For example, even though the perfect sentence below is viewed to have been initiated prior to the time of speaking, it cannot also be taken as having been completed at the time of speaking.

(9)  Present perfect affirmative
    Kwame a-da.
    Kwame PERF-sleep
    ‘Kwame has slept.’ (Kwame has been sleeping.)

This present perfect affirmative sentence is offered when Kwame indeed began to sleep before utterance and he is still sleeping at the time of speaking. Present perfect affirmative sentences, therefore, cannot always be said to be semantically similar to the past sentence in this regard. It is also in order to point out, at this juncture, that the perfect, in the negative, does not denote or even suggest
event completion. At the same time, it is equally important to point out that there are event occasions whereby a simple past and a present perfect activity (in the affirmative) can be said to have both preceded utterance and to have also (been) completed before it (i.e., utterance), as in the contexts of sentences in (10) and (11) below.

(10) Present perfect affirmative

Kwame  a-didi.
Kwame  PERF-eat

‘Kwame has eaten.’

(11) Simple past affirmative

Kwame  didi-i.
Kwame  eat-PAST

‘Kwame ate.’

That the activity (i.e., the act of eating) occurred and became completed prior to the time of speaking are semantic properties the two sentences share and Boadi is right in this regard; but also, there is a semantic difference between the two sentences. In the following, Boadi isolates the simple past and present perfect events for discussion that will significantly reveal his stance on how the two sentences are semantically different. He refers to the past as past aorist, with -e, the past suffix performing an aspectual function. He argues that the past aorist in Akan has two main uses:

(a) it can assert that ‘the event described by the verb took place at a time earlier than the time of utterance. Its most frequent use is for narrating events in the past. (b) It always applies to completed happenings, and everything it applies to is an event or episode viewed as a total entity (Leech 1971: 9). [That is, it presents] the totality of the situation” without reference to its internal contours or constituency. [26]

According to him, the present perfect relates two time points: (i) a point in time of the state which results from an earlier situation which is being witnessed at present; and (ii) the time of the earlier situation itself. He argues that the most significant feature of the meaning of the affix [i.e., a-] is probably not so much the completion of an event as the currency of its relevance, interest or truth-value that results from a prior event. So, Boadi views the past events as completed happenings – i.e., the event described by the verb is viewed to take place earlier than the time of utterance and to lack internal contours. For the present perfect, there is a result from an earlier situation which is witnessed at present; the significant feature is not so much the completion of the event whose result is in view as the currency of its relevance. The perfect sentence signals a persistence of result, a valid present relevance of the effect of an earlier event. Boadi (2008) is not different from Osam (1994) on their views on the present perfect and, therefore, the same arguments and questions raised against Osam are equally relevant here.7

7 Boadi just like Osam focuses on perfect and past affirmative sentences/events to the neglect of their negative versions in his semantic analysis. The events discussed are viewed as happenings (i.e., completed events or results of an event that occurred in the past), meanwhile negative sentences are not events that occurred such that semantic conclusions based on happenings cannot be automatically extended to them (i.e., perfect and past negative sentences). There is also the strict focus on the result from a happening as the only significant factor in defining the present perfect sentence meaning, and on the fact of a happening having been completed prior to the time of speech in defining the simple past sentence/event meaning. The question is, is there a result in the present perfect negative sentence? What is the result in the present perfect negative sentence? It will be shown in this paper that the present perfect and simple past sentence meanings in Akan cannot be defined solely on the basis of result of a past event persisting as at utterance for the present perfect, and events having been completed before utterance for
Another Akanist with his own unique synchronic derivational account of perfect and past sentence formation in Akan is Ofori (2006a, 2006b). In Ofori’s account, the perfect and past forms (which he calls recent-past and remote-past respectively) are empty floating moras (with each mora equal to a syllable). He uses the term ‘completive moras’ to refer to the two morphemes together based on the same view Boadi holds on the two sentences as getting completed prior to speech time. Ofori assumes this morpheme order for the bound forms – negative, recent-past and remote-past which the verb-root must inflect for to derive either a perfect (affirmative/negative) verb stem or a past (affirmative/negative) verb stem. Below is his hierarchy that underlies morpheme order in perfect and past verb stems in Akan.

(12) Ofori’s past and negative morpheme order (or hierarchy):

\[(\text{Negative} \gg \gg) \text{Recent-Past (Perfect)} \gg \text{Remote-Past (Past)}\]

The hierarchy as given in (12) above, he claims, reveals how these empty completive morphemes are relevant to the verb’s meaning such that an item higher on the hierarchy has more relevance to the verb’s meaning than an item lower on the hierarchy. A morpheme that is higher on the hierarchy is more relevant to the verb’s meaning for which reason it must be adjacent to the verb-root (i.e., must be edge-sharing with the verb-root) than an item lower on the hierarchy and less relevant to the verb’s meaning. An item that appears at the slot before the verb-root must be more important to the verb’s meaning than an item that appears after the verb-root slot; and an item that is adjacent to the verb-root is more relevant to the verb’s meaning than an item that is not adjacent to the verb-root. By this hierarchy the implication is that the negative is the highest in terms of its relevance to the verb and must always immediately precede the verb in the perfect and past negative sentences. This requirement pushes the recent-past which is the next significant morpheme to the verb’s meaning to occur after the verb-root where it is adjacent to the verb-root. The remote-past then being the least relevant to the verb’s meaning then comes to be relocated to before the negative morpheme. Not relocating the recent-past will violate the terms of the hierarchy on the negative, and not relocating the remote-past will violate the requirement of the hierarchy on the recent-past. In the affirmative, where there is no negation, the recent-past being the higher ranked and therefore more relevant to the verb meaning than the remote-past rightfully appears before the verb-root where it is adjacent to the verb-root. The remote-past (i.e., past) takes the slot after the verb-root where it becomes adjacent to the verb-root for being the least important of the two morphemes in terms relevance to the verb’s meaning.

The implication of Ofori’s hierarchy is that, in Akan, the recent-past (perfect) is more important to the verb’s meaning than the remote-past. He also argues that the form an empty morpheme takes in Akan is simply a function of how it is distributed as prescribed by the hierarchy (i.e., the morpheme order). A prefixing empty mora (either recent-past or remote-past) is filled with [a] (i.e., the low vowel) since in Akan a high-vowel or a mid-vowel at stem-initial will be deleted such that the empty mora will not be phonetically realized. A suffixing empty mora (i.e., the recent-past or the remote-past) receives the basic segment [i], i.e., the default-vowel in Akan. Note that it has been shown that [i] has several phonetic variants in Akan. That is, in Ofori’s account the hierarchy underlies the distribution of the perfect and past bound morphemes and dictates how they come out segmentally. Much as Ofori’s the simple past. It will be shown that there are other factors of continued relevance with either act independently or combine with result to motivate perfect sentence-making; and also, that same pragmatic factors to be identified as responsible for present perfect sentence-making have relevance also in simple past sentence-making. Coming to this discovery will bring certainty on the factors that Akan speakers really focus on in issuing either a present perfect or a simple past, an affirmative or negative, sentence-conclusion, and will help establish the true functions and therefore the actual semantics of these sentences in Akan.
account is insightful in defining the relative importance of the bound morphemes to the verbs meaning and therefore how they must be distributed with respect to the verb which consequently dictates how they are formally realized, he does not pursue any serious semantic/functional analysis of the perfect and past sentence meanings and meaning-difference other than his use of the term completive as a cover for the perfect (i.e., recent-past) and past (i.e., remote-past) stems in Akan. The current study is different from Ofori (2006a, 2006b) by focusing on present perfect and simple past sentences in Akan pragmatically.

In their (2022) paper, Duah and Savić (2022) aim to re-examine Osam’s use of the term completive and recommend that the term past tense be reinstated in Akan grammar. Below is their conclusion after performing some tests:

In the present paper, we have shown that Akan has a past tense marker, a verbal suffix (-V) in the affirmative (and a prefix (a-) in the negative), which is used to encode events that have a reference time that is anterior to the moment of speech (R_S). Although an event marked by the past tense form may be interpreted as completed, the interpretation of completion appears to be a pragmatic effect that is associated with past events in general but does not constitute the underlying semantics of the form. [91 – 92]

The fact of the matter is that not all events marked with a past tense form in Akan may be interpreted as completed. A state of affair which is a non-happening cannot be interpreted as completed in the sense of the event having been carried through. Also, they end their paper with tense (specifically time) as the only basis for past sentence conclusion. The question is: Do I say Wo-a-m-ma (literally: you-PAST-NEG-come; ‘you did not come’) solely because time is over? Can I not say Wo-a-m-ma also because the context for you to come is non-existent as at utterance? or when the evidence (or state) of you not coming is closed to verification? In the current work, it will be shown that there are factors other than time that motivate simple past sentence-making in Akan; and that the concept of continued/current relevance which has been used with respect to the present perfect has relevance also in the past. It is claimed in this paper that there are three pragmatic windows that native speakers of Akan evaluate for both simple past and present perfect sentence-making and conclusions. Claims made in the current study significantly accommodate negative constructions in the way Duah and Savić (2022) and the rest of the works mentioned here do not. They basically neglect negative sentences in their studies. Also, the approach in the current work, which is pragmatic, helps to establish the present perfect and the simple past sentence meanings and meaning-differences more meaningfully than they have been presented in any of the works cited here.

4. Current relevance, evidentiality and context

In the literature on present perfect and simple past constructions, a present perfect construction is viewed as a past event that has current relevance; and the simple past event is viewed to focus on a past event that is currently not relevant (Jespersen 1931, Reichenbach 1947, McCawley 1971, Comrie 1976, McCoard 1978, Li, Thompson and Thompson 1982, Anderson 1982, Dowty 1991) – current is the moment of speech. In the current work, I argue that the factors in evaluation for continued/current relevance for the present perfect are the same factors in evaluation for the simple past. The goal in this pragmatic analysis of these sentences therefore is to identify these pragmatic factors that have been so elusive for Akan. Here, I argue that, that a factor (which is pragmatic) is evident, or not evident, as at speaking or utterance is the basis for the present perfect and simple past sentence-meaning difference. This observation underlies my choice of evidentiality as the preferred frame of analysis for the present study. Immediately below are some of the prevailing viewpoints on the semantics of present perfect and simple past sentences. The goal is to explore how the concept “current relevance” has been used in the literature and to ask the questions that will help shape it into a more definite tool for our current
The pragmatic focus on simple past and present perfect constructions in Akan. The section ends with a brief description of what evidentiality entails. The following theories/positions on present perfect and simple past sentences are in brief review: the anteriority theory (Reichenbach 1947), the extended-now theory (McCoard 1978, Dowty 1991), Comrie’s (1976) four perfect subtypes and the current relevance theory (Jespersen 1931).

The anteriority theory associated with Reichenbach (1947) is the viewpoint that E (i.e., event time) precedes R (reference time) which is the same as S (speech time) in the present perfect construction (e.g., E < R, S). Within Reichenbach’s tense system, both E and R precede S in the simple past (e.g., E, R < S). Event time is the time during which the event unfolds; Reference time is the time to which adverbs refer; and Speech time, also the utterance time, is the moment in which the past or perfect construction is expressed. In Reichenbach’s (1947) account, how Reference time is ordered with respect to utterance/speech time is what separates simple past and present perfect constructions: Reference time is ordered before utterance/speech time (as in: E, R < S) for the simple past, but extends to utterance/speech time (i.e., has continuing relevance as at the moment of speech hence E < R, S) for the perfect. The extended-now theory (McCoard 1978, Dowty 1991) holds that the perfect serves to locate an event within a period of time that began in the past and extends up to the present moment. The simple past (i.e., perfective) specifies that an event occurred at a past time that is separated from the present. The above position focuses only on time to the neglect of other pragmatic factors that independently, may equally extend to the present situation, or which may end before the present situation and serve as motivations for speaking in the present perfect or in the simple past respectively in Akan.

Following are Comrie’s (1976) four perfect subtypes, namely perfect of result, experiential perfect, perfect of persistent situation and perfect of recent past. Below are definitions of them and my comments.

(13) The four perfect types (Comrie 1976)
(a) Perfect of result is when the perfect sentence is a state resulting from the action.
(b) Experiential perfect indicates that an event has occurred at least once in the past.
(c) Perfect of persistent situation is a past situation that continues up to the present moment.
(d) Perfect of recent past is a past event which is relevant to the present situation because it so very recent.

In the current study, the present perfect sentence is not a state resulting from an action. The state resulting from an action only serves as the basis for speaking in the present perfect about an event that occurred before utterance. That is, the fact that the state or result persists as at utterance is the basis for speaking about the event that underline this result in the present perfect. On the experiential perfect, it is not different from the perfect of result; it is equally an emergent situation from some past event just as what is in description (i.e., the resultant state) in the perfect of result. The perfect of persistent situation cannot be an independent category. In the current study, result (as in the perfect of result), experiential (as in the experiential perfect), time (as in perfect of recent past) (and many more) are all event situations; and in order for each of these situations to motivate perfect sentence-making, they each must persist to the moment of speech. What has been called perfect of recent past is simply described here as an event time that persists to utterance. What is missing from Comrie (1976) is how positions in his four perfect-types can be extended to negative sentences which are also categorizable as present perfect.

The current relevance theory on the other hand holds that the perfect is used to describe an event which has more present/current relevance than events described by the past (Jespersen 1931, McCawley 1971, Li, Thompson and Thompson 1982, Anderson 1982). That is, the event in the perfect has relevance to the present context, a semantic property that the past sentence lacks. This position is
vital to the current study, but the question is how is current relevance determined or assessed? In what way(s) is an event that occurred in the past or an event which was expected to occur in the past but did not occur has current relevance? What is evaluated for continued/current relevance? What does it mean for a situation to be presently/currently relevant? How could an event in the negative (i.e., an event did not occur in the past) could have current/continued relevance? The current study is unique for addressing these questions for Akan.

Evidentiality, a pragmatic notion, is a useful framework for establishing the bases for present perfect and simple past sentence-making and, therefore, their meanings in Akan. That certain pragmatic factors (to be established) are evident, or not evident, as at utterance, is the basis of the present perfect and simple past functional differentiation. Aikhenvald (2015) introduces evidentiality in pragmatics as follows:

> Every language has a way of saying how one knows what one is talking about, and what one thinks about what one knows. In some languages, one always has to specify the source on which the information is based – whether the speaker saw the event, or heard it, or inferred it based on visual evidence or on common sense, or was told about it by someone else. This is the essence of evidentiality, or grammatical marking of information source. [239]

That is, evidentiality is a significant pragmatic notion in this study for the fact that it is on the basis of a speaker’s (direct or indirect) persistive or non-persistive view on a happening or a non-happening both of which must be evidence-based that either the present perfect or the simple past sentence-conclusion respectively is issued. The pragmatic situations as identified in section (5) below are outcome or state, context and/or time. For the present perfect, from the speaker’s view, it is either the outcome or state of a happening or a non-happening is evident (i.e., persistive), or the context of a happening or a non-happening is evident (i.e., persistive), or the time of a happening or a non-happening is evident (i.e., persistive). That is, the present perfect sentence is issued with one or combinations of these pragmatic factors being presently persisting (i.e., being presently present, available, evident or abiding) from the speaker’s perspective, based on the information available to him or her about the event (which is either a happening or a non-happening). That is, either one or combinations of the three situations in focus must be evident (i.e., must persist), from the sentence-author’s perspective in order for him or her to couch his sentence-conclusion on either a happening (affirmative) or a non-happening (negative) in the present perfect. Let us go to section (5) for sentence and situational evidence after which we will extend the claims to be made to the simple past sentence.

5. On the conditions for present perfect and simple past sentence-making
The goal in this section is to provide a situation-motivated account of perfect and past sentence making in Akan. This entails examining the perfect and past state of affairs as they exist in the real-world (i.e., the Akan socio-cultural context) to understand the contextual factors that warrant their making. The term ‘state of affairs’ is used here interchangeably with the word ‘sentence’, and in the sense of van Valin and LaPolla’s (1998:83) as ‘phenomena in the world’. There are two fronts in meeting this broad objective. Subsection (5.1) is devoted to establishing the situational factors that motivate present perfect and simple past sentence-making in Akan, which are also significant in establishing their basic meanings and meaning-differences. Subsection (5.2) briefly outlines the key semantic differences between the present perfect and the simple past and the rest of the sentences (progressive, future, stative, habitual) in Akan.

5.1 Situations for perfect and past sentence making in Akan. The goal in this subsection is to make more determinate the pragmatic factors that are evaluated for either a present perfect sentence-
conclusion or a simple past sentence-conclusion. I begin this by offering a situational account of the conditions for present perfect sentence-making and later extend the findings to account for the simple past. Note that the focus here is on the situational context of perfect and past sentence-making. Crystal (1992:82) defines situational context as ‘features of the non-linguistic world in relation to which linguistic units are systematically used’. I use the term state of affair as it relates to the present perfect and the simple past as either a happening or a non-happening in Akan. A happening is an occurrence before utterance; a non-happening is a non-occurrence (contrary to expectation) before utterance. The term outcome will be used in the sense of the result/state/outcome of a happening (i.e., an occurrence) before utterance, or the state of a non-occurrence (i.e., expected but a non-occurring event situation before utterance). Context is the physical or metaphorical (i.e., non-temporal context) of a happening or a non-happening. Time is either the specific time, or the period, of a happening or a non-happening. To the current study, these are the pragmatic factors which when evident (i.e., persist) at utterance motivates the present perfect sentence-making; a sentence is expressed in the simple past just because the aspect(s) of these pragmatic factors in focus is/are viewed to be non-evident (or non-persistent) as at utterance. These concepts will become clearer as we apply them to actual situations.

I begin my analysis of the situations that motivate the making of either a present perfect or simple past sentence with one of my favorite childhood scenarios. I was raised in a small town where as early as five years children could be seen roaming about in the neighborhoods unaccompanied, or could go to their friends’ house to visit them uninvited and unaccompanied. The purpose of such largely evening gatherings was to play with friends, and the place of gathering was usually in my house (i.e., my grandfather’s house). It was on one of such gatherings that the dialogue below was taken from. A boy of our age (6 years then) came to play with us at around 5:30 or 6pm and openly shouted whiles he walked towards us that he had bathed and that we should come and observe his body. That was trouble for us because then, our parents who were near-by could have instructed us to go and bath as well, against our will. So, we started to interrogate him for the evidence with the aim to nullify his claim of having bathed just to escape the negative upshot of his claim. The dialogue (from 14 to 21) below is close to what happened as I remember it.

A dialogue for determining the factors for current relevance and present perfect sentence-making

(14) Kwabena: Obiara m-me-hwe. Everyone should-come-look.
   ‘Everybody should come and look/see.’

(15) M-a-dware. I-PERF-bath
   ‘I have bathed.’

(16) Yaw: e-deen na e-kyere se wo-a-dware? e-atorofo. what is.it.that it-show that you-PERF-bath liar
   ‘What shows that you have bathed? Liar.’

(17) Kwabena: Mo-ni-hwe me ho e. You.PL.-should-look.at my body ok (for evidence).
   ‘You should look all around my body.’

(Having spoken as in (17), he started turning his body around just for us to observe him, and we also began to move around him just to look for any counter evidence. We could hardly find any evidence against his claim, but Kwadwo (who hated to take his bath in the evening) would not let him win that evening. He instructed him to pull his long-sleeve up so we could inspect his elbow. Then Kwadwo spotted the evidence that we needed to support our side. Kwabena’s elbow looked very white, there was no cream there and for
us that was our evidence right there of a no bath, hence the statements from (18) to (21) from Kwadwo.)

(18) Kwadwo: Wo-se wo-a-dware.  
You-said that you-PERF-bathed.  
‘You said you have bathed.’

(19) Nanso hwɛ wo batwɛ.  
but look at your elbow.  
‘but, look at your elbow.’

(20) ehɔ fitaa. (i.e., ehɔ ayɛ fitaa ‘There has.become white’)  
there (be)white/dry  
‘It is very white there.’

(21) Wo-n-nware-e. (n-dware-e becomes n-nware-e)  
you-NEG-bath-PERF  
You have not bathed.’

In the above dialogue, the report on bathing in the perfect, as in (15), is based on the fact of there being evidence of bathing as expressed in (14), which is Kwabena’s invitation to his playmates to come and observe his body, with him confidently turning round, to submit his body for inspection, as proof (i.e., evidence) of his bath. In other words, the output (or effect) of the bath according to the speaker persisted as at utterance and was what led him to express the state of affair (i.e., the fact of him having bathed – i.e., a happening) in the present perfect affirmative. The fact that output was what motivated the perfect sentence-making as in (15) is further evinced by the question in (16) in which one of his doubters, Yaw, was demanding the evidence that supported the claim as in (15) right there (i.e., edeen na e-kyere se… ‘what is the – direct bodily – evidence denoting that…’). In (17), Kwabena, who insisted on having bathed challenged them to look for the evidence to his claim as in (15) on his body/person to which his friends obliged, did their inspection on his body, gathered their facts as in (18) to (20), which then led to their contrary position as in (21), in a present perfect negative sentence. Their use of the present perfect negative was to suggest that the evidence of Kwabena not having bathed was available (i.e., persisted) in the time and/or context of speech. The evidence that led them (i.e., us) to the present perfect negative sentence conclusion was the fact of his elbow being white/dry as expressed in (20) at the time and/or context of making the perfect negative sentence.

There are situations whereby the outcome of a happening or a non-happening is viewed to persist forever (i.e., or as the speaker envisages it) and so the state of a happening or a non-happening is expressed in the present perfect. In Christianity for example, there is the claim of new converts having been washed in the blood of the lamb (i.e., Jesus) as expressed in (22) below; and non-coverts, not having been washed in the blood of the lamb as expressed in the perfect negative in (23).

An example of a Christian belief in the present perfect:

(22) Affirmative: Ye-a-dware no wɔ oguammaa no mogya no mu  
Unspecified.Subj-PERF-bathed him in lamb the blood the in  
‘He has been washed/bathed in the blood of the lamb.’
(i.e., He is washed in the blood of the lamb.)

(23) Negative: Ye-n-nware-e no wɔ oguammaa no mogya no mu  
Unspecified.Subj-NEG-bath-PERF him in lamb the blood the in  
‘He has not been washed in the blood of the lamb.’
(i.e., He is not washed in the blood of the lamb.)
The focus is not on when or where the washing occurred; the focus is on the belief that the outcome (i.e., the state) of the happening persists as at where and when the statement in (22) was made; or on the belief that the outcome (i.e., the state) of the non-happening persists as at the context and/or time of the utterance in (23). That is, in (22) and (23), the outcome – either positive or negative – remains as it is (i.e., persists) as at the moment of speech (and if there is no backsliding or conversion, will remain so forever to the Christian believer. That is, present perfect (affirmative and negative) sentences as discussed above are expressed within a period and/or a context that an outcome – i.e., the state of a happening or a non-happening – of a state of affair is viewed to persist.

The fact of a state of a happening or a non-happening persisting as at utterance, as discussed above, cannot be the only basis for a present perfect sentence conclusion. A present perfect (affirmative or negative) reporting can equally be made merely on the basis of the context of a happening or a non-happening; which is the fact that the context of the happening or non-happening persists as at utterance. Let me state the following possible scenario in the communities where the Akan language is often in use. It is often the norm in some rural communities that children like Kwabena do not often like to bath in the bathrooms, but in the open. So, they bring their sponges, soaps, towels and buckets of water to the open to have their bath, and after the bath they send these items back in to where they once were. Let us call this the context of the bath which from the previous statement is not a permanent context, but one which will be dismantled after the bath. In the current scenario, Kwabena finishes bathing and afterwards the context ceases to be, just because the entities or units that have defined them are no more (i.e., they have been sent back in).

\(24\)

**Present perfect affirmative:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kwabena</th>
<th>a-dware</th>
<th>(adware → phonetic: [a-dצ_hr])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena</td>
<td>PERF-bath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Kwabena has bathed.’ (A happening, conclusion based on context of bath which persists)

\(25\)

**Present perfect negative:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kwabena</th>
<th>n-dware-e</th>
<th>(nnwaree → phonetic: [n-ɲצ_hr-t])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena</td>
<td>NEG-bath-PERF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Kwabena has not bathed.’ (A non-happening, conclusion based on context of bath which persists)

A perfect affirmative sentence will be issued in the event of Kwabena having taken his bath, but the context of the bath still persisting as in (24) – i.e., for example, when the soap, sponge and bucket (though empty) are all in the place of the bath. It is either indirect evidence of the bath such as an empty bucket and/or a wet sponge, etc., or the speaker possessing direct knowledge of the bath that motivate(s) the claim of a happening (i.e., a bath) hence the expression of the state of affair in the affirmative. In terms of the present perfect expression of this happening (i.e., the affirmative state of affair) by the speaker, it is motivated by the fact that the context of the bath is viewed to persist to the making of the perfect affirmative utterance (i.e., for example, the fact of the bucket, sponge and soap all being in some place – or some state – that is suggestive of there having been a bath within utterance time). A perfect negative sentence (as in 25) is offered when the context of the state of affair (i.e., Kwabena taking his bath) is viewed (i.e., known or believed) to persist, but when from the speaker’s perspective there is no evidence of the bath; that is, there is a non-happening as at utterance. So, in perfect negative sentence-making, the context of (i.e., the context indicating, suggesting or denoting) a non-happening is viewed to persist to the making of the utterance. In the above instances, perfect (affirmative and negative) sentence conclusions (i.e., 24 and 25) are not based on outcome (i.e., the state or effect of a happening or a non-happening as on an event participant), the body of Kwabena, is not under-
examination here for these conclusions. What is important here is the speaker’s viewpoint on the context of the happening or non-happening, as persisting, as at utterance.

The sentences in (26) and (27) denote other scenarios in which the persistence of context is the determining factor for perfect sentence-making. The statements as in (26) and (27) are set in the context of a party that is currently in session, with the speaker present at the setting of the party as at the utterance. Two persons, Kwabena and Kofi, were invited to attend the party. Kwabena has arrived at the party (i.e., as at the utterance in (26)), but Kofi has not yet arrived, hence the perfect negative statement in (27).

(26) Present perfect affirmative
Kwabena a-bа.
‘Kwame has come/arrived.’

(27) Present perfect negative
Kwabena n-bа-e. (n-bа-e → mmae → phonetic: [m-mа-i])
Kwabena NEG-come-PERF
‘Kwame has not come/arrived.’

At this juncture where the focus is on context, it is not the fact that Kwabena had arrived and Kofi has not yet arrived (i.e., the fact that there is a state of a happening or a non-happening respectively) at the setting of the party which is in focus here and therefore leads the speaker to speak in the perfect (i.e., affirmative or negative respectively).\(^8\) What is important here, and is in focus, is rather the fact that the speaker is on the ground of the party and does not see the party ending as at utterance and is what leads him or her to speak in the perfect – in the present perfect affirmative as in (26), because there is a happening, but, in the present perfect negative, as in (27) because there is a non-happening. That is, what is in focus in (26) and (27) just as in (24) and (25) and motivates perfect sentence conclusions is the fact that the speaker has a persistive view of the context (i.e., the party event as in (26) and (27)) in which there is an indication of a happening or a non-happening.

Let us consider the question and answer on context below.

(28) Progressive affirmative
Aponsɔ no re-kɔ so anaa?
party the PROG-go top/on question (yes/no)
‘Is the party (currently) going on?’

(29) Progressive affirmative
(a) Aane, aponsɔ no re-kɔ so. Or (b) Aane, e-si so.
Yes party the PROG-go on Yes it-be on
‘Yes, the party is ongoing.’ ‘Yes, it is on (-going).’

With the context of a state of affair (i.e., a happening or a non-happening) in focus, a question on persistence of context (for 26 and 27) will be couched in the progressive as in (28) (or in the stative),

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\(^8\) Note that I am in no way discounting the fact that outcome (i.e., the state of a happening or a non-happening) is equally applicable here – either direct or indirect knowledge of a happening or a non-happening like we have discussed earlier can also (or solely) become the basis for a perfect sentence conclusion. Persistence of the evidence of Kwabena having come/arrived or the evidence of him not having come/arrived are equally grounds for perfect sentence making (i.e., perfect affirmative and perfect negative respectively), but that is not the focus here; the focus here is on context, the fact that its persistence (in the midst of a happening or a non-happening, not the state of them) also attracts the perfect sentence conclusion in Akan.
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and the answer to it will also be expressed in the progressive as in (29a) (or in the stative as in 29b) just because the context of a happening or a non-happening is viewed to persist for these perfect sentence-conclusions. It is direct knowledge of context persisting (for the fact that the speaker is on the grounds of the party) that leads him or her to respond to the question in (28) as in (29) (i.e., in the progressive). With context as our main source for determining the certainty of a happening or a non-happening, the only reason we are able to reach any of the two conclusions is the fact that context precedes utterance and, therefore, is what informs their making. In conclusion, for the context window, it is the view on it as preceding of utterance and as persisting to utterance that the speaker takes on simultaneously in his or her issuance of a present perfect sentence-conclusions.

There are situations where a speaker possesses no evidence of outcome (i.e., a state/result of a happening or a non-happening), nor evidence of context of a happening or a non-happening persisting, and when what he or she focuses on to issue a perfect (affirmative and negative) sentence conclusion is time. Below in (30) and (31) is a repeat of sentences in (24) and (25) for the discussion of when time is the speaker’s focus for the perfect sentence-making.

(30) Present perfect affirmative
Kwabena a-dware.
Kwame PERF-bath
‘Kwabena has bathed.’

(31) Present perfect negative
Kwabena n-hware-e.
Kwame NEG-bath-PERF
‘Kwabena has not bathed.’

To demand the time of bath for the present perfect affirmative sentence as in (30), the sentence of the question would have to be expressed in the past (as given in (32) below). In (32), the present perfect affirmative sentence underlyingly represents time as persisting as at utterance, with the simple past question sentence demanding the point within the persistent time that the event occurred.

(32) Present perfect affirmative event (Request for the time of the bath is in the past)
Kwabena a-dware; na ṭdware-e bere ben?
Kwabena PERF-bath so he-bath-PAST time which
‘Kwabena has bathed; so, what time did he bath?’

(33) Present perfect negative event (Request for the time for the bath is in the future)
Kwabena n-hware-e; na ṭ-br-hware bere ben?
Kwame NEG-bath-PERF so he-FUT-bath time which
‘Kwabena has not bathed; so, what time will he bath?’

To demand the time of bath for the present perfect negative as in (31), the sentence of the question would have to be expressed in the future as in (33). That is, the two questions (32 and 33) help to construct the time frame for perfect sentences – with (32) defining it as preceding of utterance, and (33) defining it as persisting to utterance. That is, the perfect time precedes utterance for which reason a question on the time of a happening (i.e., the perfect affirmative) must precede utterance (i.e., must be expressed in simple past), and (i.e., the present perfect time) persists at utterance for which reason a question on the time of a non-happening (i.e., the present perfect negative) must be expressed accordingly (i.e., with the view that time persists), hence in the future, but not in the past. In summary, a present perfect time window is viewed by a speaker as preceding of and persisting at utterance, and sentences in (32) and (33) are examples of the formal expression and evidence of this time span. With
time as the basis of a present perfect sentence-conclusion, (30) denotes time as preceding and persisting at utterance with a happening, with (31) denoting the same idea as expressed for (30), but with a non-happening.

From the above analysis, the same present perfect sentence structure can be offered with either: outcome (i.e., state/result of a happening or a non-happening), context of a happening or a non-happening, or time of a happening or a non-happening, in focus. It must also be noted that any two of these factors or all three could be in view in issuing a single perfect affirmative or negative sentence-conclusion. That is, a speaker may issue the statement: *Kwabena adware* ‘Kwabena has bathed’ with both outcome and context in view, or both outcome and time in view, or context and time in view, or with all three (i.e., outcome, context and time) in view (or with each of the three factors independently in view as reported earlier).

At the instance of structural ambiguity, we can formally disambiguate to focus strictly on outcome or state of a happening or a non-happening. This is illustrated in (34) and (35) below. With this augmentation, the perfect clause comes to focus strictly on outcome (or state) of a happening or a non-happening.

(34) A call to examine a so-called outcome or state of a happening.

(a) Present perfect affirmative:

\[ Hwɛ Kwabena ho a ɔse w-a-dware. \]

Look at Kwabena.POSS body that he-say he-PERF-bath.

‘Look at Kwabena’s body that he/someone claims he has washed (it).’

(b) Present perfect affirmative:

\[ Hwɛ cha a ɔse w-a-pra. \]

Look at this.place that he-say he-PERF-sweep.

‘Look at this place that he/someone claims he has swept (it).’

(Context: In contestation in sentences in (34) are strictly the outcomes – i.e., states of happenings – that motivated these perfect affirmative sentence conclusions. The speaker’s position in both sentences is the fact that the windows – i.e., the states – which are viewed to underlie these perfect affirmative sentence conclusions are simply not there.)

(35) A call to examine a so-called outcome or state of a non-happening.

(a) Present perfect negative:

\[ Hwɛ Kwabena ho a ɔse z-n-dware-e. \]

Look at Kwabena.POSS body that he/someone-say he-NEG-bath-PERF.

‘Look at Kwabena’s body which he/someone claims he has not washed (it).’

(b) Present perfect negative:

\[ Hwɛ cha a ɔse z-m-pra-e. \]

Look at this.place that he/someone-say he-NEG-sweep-PERF.

‘Look at this place that he or someone claims he has not swept (it).’

(Context: In contestation in sentences in (35) are strictly the outcomes – i.e., states of non-happenings – that motivated these perfect negative sentence conclusions. The speaker’s position in both sentences is the fact that the windows – i.e., the states – which are viewed to underlie these perfect negative sentence conclusions are simply not there.)

Sentences in (34) and (35) are a call on an addressee to affirm the state (or output) that triggered the present perfect clausal-conclusions as given in the lower parts of these sentences. In (34a), it is concluded that someone has bathed; in (34b), it is said that a place has been swept; in (35a), one is said to have said that one has not bathed; and in (35b), it is said that a place has not been swept. These conclusions are all based on the state of a happening or a non-happening persisting. The speaker by
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augmenting these VPs (*Hwe Kwabena ho a ɔse... and Hwe ɛha a ɔse...*) on these present perfect states invites his or her addressee(s) to examine and to affirm the certainty of the state that has called for a given present perfect sentence-conclusion – i.e., a call to affirm an alleged state/result of a happening as in (34a), or of a non-happening as in (35a). This involves observation of persitent states/results of a happening or a non-happening. That is, it is a persistent view of the output window that strictly motivates the making of these present perfect sentence conclusions. That is, a state/result of a happening or non-happening is viewed to persist as at utterance and is what motivates the making of these present perfect sentences and, consequently, the call on an addressee (as in 34 and 35) to examine in order to affirm the evidence that underlie these present perfect conclusions.

Also, we can focus the event strictly on time by introducing time words such as the following: *enn* ‘today’, *anɔ pa yi* ‘this morning’, *nnansa yi* ‘these days/nowadays’, *bosome yi* ‘this month, *afe yi* ‘this month’, *saa bere yi* ‘by now’, *seesei ara* ‘right now’, *mekasa yi* ‘as I speak’, etc. Below in (36) and (37) are sentences to illustrate this. Here, it is the fact that the time words or phrases as introduced designate a time period that extends from before utterance to utterance that leads the speaker to view and to speak about an event in the present perfect. Below is an explanation of the function of yi which often accompanies most of these time words.

(36) Present perfect affirmative (with a focus on time of a happening – adverb of time)
(a) Present perfect affirmative:

Anɔ pa yi Kwabena a-dware
morning this Kwabena PERF-bath
‘This morning, Kwabena has bathed.’

(b) Present perfect affirmative:

Kwabena a-dware anɔ pa yi.
Kwabena PERF-bath morning this
‘Kwabena has bathed this morning.’

(37) Present perfect affirmative (with a focus on time of a happening – adverb of time)
(a) Present perfect affirmative:

Kwabena a-ba Ghana bosome yi.
Kwabena PERF-come to Ghana morning this
‘Kwabena has come to Ghana this morning.’

(b) Present perfect affirmative:

Bosome yi Kwabena a-ba Ghana.
morning this Kwabena PERF-come Ghana
‘This morning, Kwabena has come to Ghana.’

The addition of yi after the time word as in (36) to (37) reconfigures time frame (e.g., *anɔ pa, bosome, afe*) to include the moment of speech, that is, by making the time word to become an adverbial phrase that references a persistive (i.e., currently-relevant) temporal state. The fact that present perfect sentences take these temporal phrases is the very evidence of their (i.e., the present perfect and the adverb) temporal persistiveness. A permissible replacement of yi by *no* (i.e., a definite determiner, equivalent to ‘the’ in English) reconfigures a time word to an earlier (or a known) period of time; that is, it reconfigures it to a time period which precedes and is exclusive of present time (i.e., utterance time), and this is the basis for the ungrammaticality of sentences in (38).

(38) Present perfect affirmative
(a) *Anɔ pa no* Kwabena a-dware.
morning the Kwabena PERF-bath
‘In the morning, Kwabena has bathed.’
(b) *Kwabena a-dware Anɔ pa no.*
Kwabena PERF-bath morning the
‘Kwabena has bathed in the morning.’

The condition(s) for perfect sentence-making – in the above examples, the time at/within which the situation demanding the present perfect sentence-conclusion is observed – must either be same as, or
overlapping of, utterance time. However, in the sentences in (38) the adverbial phrase designates a temporal context that precedes and is exclusive of utterance time. These sentences are ungrammatical for the fact that the perfect sentence-conclusions and the utterance time frames are non-overlapping. That is, the adverbial phrase presents the present perfect sentence-conclusion time (frame) as non-persisting at utterance for which reason these sentence-conclusions must not and cannot be offered in the present perfect, except in the past where this adverbial phrase cannot be done away with. The sentences from (36) to (38) attest to the fact that time – i.e., the fact that it precedes and persists to utterance – is indeed pragmatically one of the bases (i.e., windows) for offering a perfect sentence conclusion in Akan.

There are instances whereby events terminate with their contexts. In Ghana, it is a practice for new churches to meet and fellowship in classrooms on Sundays. When a church meets on Sunday to fellowship in this classroom, the place is to them, a place of fellowship, not a classroom. From Monday to Friday, the students resume school, and the same place becomes to them, a classroom; and the turns continue like that. For the period the church is in session anything which happened (or did not happen as it was expected) in the church could be viewed and talked about in the present perfect for the fact that the church setting persists as at utterance and the event in focus occurred before utterance. The event will be expressed in the present perfect because it preceded utterance and the context of the church persists. Here, it can be said that the event terminates with the context for the fact that the setting ceases to be what it is to the church after their meeting – i.e., their coming creates the context and their departure ends it. However, it is not always like this; not all events may end with their contexts. Let us consider the following situational contexts. (i) At a party: here, the setting is bigger than any one person who attends it. One can leave the party ground without necessarily terminating the context (e.g., so long as he is not the reason for the party/gathering). Let us also project this context as the one in which the state of affairs as in (30) Kwabena adware and (31) Kwabena nnwaree are situated. Let us imagine these as sub-scenarios within a situation where several people must engage in this act (i.e., bath) or can engage in other acts. For example, the bathhouse at a boarding house in a secondary school in Ghana, with everybody bathing. The persistence of context here is indicated by the fact that there are several people bathing, or several people who are taking turns to bath as at utterance. The sentence Kwabena adware (i.e., present perfect affirmative) or Kwabena nnwaree (i.e., present perfect negative) would be offered to denote the persistence of the context of bath. That is, the fact that the context for one to bath persists – with Kwabena either bathed or not bathed – that leads the speaker to express the events in the present perfect for the fact that the context for bathing is not yet over (even though Kwabena bathed or did not bath). A terminative view on context of bath will lead to a past expression of the situation (i.e., of the happening or a non-happening). Expressions that speak to the persistence of context can be augmented on the perfect clause to make context as strictly the basis for the perfect sentence conclusion.

(39) Present perfect affirmative (with the progressive affirmative suggesting the persistiveness of context)
(a) Mmofra no re-dware.
(b) Kwabena a-dware.
children the PROG-bath
‘The children are bathing.’
Kwabena PERF-bath
‘Kwabena has bathed.’

(40) Present perfect affirmative (with the progressive affirmative suggesting the persistiveness of context)
(a) Mmofra no re-dware.
(b) Kwabena nnwaree.
children the PROG-bath
‘The children are bathing.’
Kwabena NEG-bath-PERF
‘Kwabena has not bathed.’

The sentence, Mmofra no redware, in a conversation, to be followed by the sentence, either Kwabena adware, or Kwabena nnwaree presents the context of bath as persisting as when the utterance was made. The context of bath for Kwabena indirectly comes to be perceived as one and the same as
that of the children (and for that matter as stretching from some period preceding the utterance to the period of the utterance). That is, it is this viewpoint on context (i.e., as preceding of, and persisting as at, utterance time) that leads the speaker to express the event (of a happening or a non-happening) involving Kwabena in the present perfect. With the party scenario, we can say that Kwabena adidi ‘Kwabena has eaten’ just because the event of eating at the party is ongoing, not over yet. That is, Kwabena ate, the context for eating of which persists as at utterance. It is the view that the context for eating persists as at when the utterance was made that leads the speaker to express the event of Kwabena’s eating (i.e., a happening) which occurred before utterance, in the present perfect, not in the simple past.

The analysis so far has focused on establishing the pragmatic factors (or views) which when in place leads the Akan speaker to talk about a state of affair in the present perfect. It has been argued here that in Akan it is these pragmatic factors that the speaker focuses on to determine the continued (i.e., current) relevance of a state of affair that is known, believed, or expected to have happened earlier (i.e., a happening or a non-happening). These pragmatic factors, it has been established are, outcome (i.e., the state of a happening or a non-happening), context (i.e., the physical or metaphorical context of a happening or a non-happening) and time (i.e., the temporal context of a happening or a non-happening). These have been called pragmatic windows for the fact they are the means (i.e., grounds or traces) to a given sentence conclusion. A window for a present perfect sentence-making must precede the present perfect utterance for the fact that the present perfect utterance is a conclusion on the terms of that window. It is the fact that this window also persists (or is evident) as at utterance that leads the speaker to speak about its state of affair (i.e., a happening or a non-happening) in the present perfect, but not in the simple past. Below is a summative account of the Akan speaker’s view on the three windows that are evaluated for continued relevance and consequently present perfect sentence-making – either one, or two, or all three may underlie a present perfect sentence that is issued:

(41) Situations/Conditions for present perfect sentence-making in Akan

(a) **Outcome:** The speaker holds the view that some prevailing situation (i.e., the state of a happening, or of a non-happening) that precedes utterance persists (i.e., is evident, or continues to be present) as at when the present perfect utterance is made.

(b) **Context:** The speaker holds the view that the context of a happening or a non-happening before utterance persists (i.e., is evident, or continues to be present) as at when the present perfect utterance is made.

(c) **Time:** The speaker holds the view that the time (period/frame) of a happening or non-happening persists (i.e., is evident, or continues to be present) as at when the present perfect utterance is made. That is, the present perfect sentence-statement is made whiles the time of the present perfect event persists, or is present.

The windows as given above for present perfect sentence-making are equally what are evaluated for the simple past sentence-making in Akan. Below are the conditions for the simple past sentence-making. In simple past sentence-making:

(42) Situations/Conditions for present perfect sentence-making in Akan

(a) **Outcome:** The speaker holds the view that an outcome (i.e., the state of a happening or a
non-happening in view – a pragmatic window) precedes utterance, but \textbf{DOES NOT} persist (i.e., is not evident) as at utterance.

(b) **Context:** The speaker holds the view that the context of a happening or a non-happening (i.e., a pragmatic window) precedes utterance, but \textbf{DOES NOT} persist (i.e., is not evident) as at utterance.

(c) **Time:** The speaker holds the view that the time (period/frame) of a happening or non-happening (which is a pragmatic window) precedes utterance, but \textbf{DOES NOT} persist (i.e., is not evident) as at utterance.

Below in (43), Column 1, are some of the sentences that were given to illustrate the situations for present perfect sentence-making. In column 2 are their past sentence versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column 1 – Present perfect sentences</th>
<th>Column 2 – Simple past sentences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Amma nnyaa sika. ‘Amma has not acquired money/wealth.’</td>
<td>b. Amma a-n-nya sika. ‘Amma did not acquire money/wealth.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>*Anɔpa no Kwabena a-dware; Kwabena a-dware anɔpa no. ‘In the morning, Kwabena has bathed; Kwabena has bathed in the morning.’</td>
<td>e. Anɔpa no Kwabena dware-Kwabena dware-e anɔpa no. ‘In the morning, Kwabena bathed; Kwabena bathed in the morning.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>*Anɔpa no Kwabena n-dware-e; Kwabena n-dware-e anɔpa no. ‘In the morning, Kwabena has not bathed; Kwabena has not bathed in the morning.’</td>
<td>f. Anɔpa no Kwabena a-n-dware; Kwabena a-n-dware anɔpa no. ‘In the morning, Kwabena did not bath; Kwabena has not bathed in the morning.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Kwabena a-ba Ghana bosome yi; Bosome yi Kwabena a-ba Ghana. ‘Kwabena has come to Ghana this morning; This morning, Kwabena has come to Ghana.’</td>
<td>g. 10 Kwabena ba-a Ghana bosome yi; Bosome yi Kwabena ba-a Ghana. ‘Kwabena came to Ghana this morning; This morning, Kwabena came to Ghana.’</td>
</tr>
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</table>

\[9\] The past sentence makes a claim of a non-happening before utterance; the time of the non-happening is viewed to precede, but not persist to utterance. The past sentence with \textit{anɔpa no} is grammatical because the time window (\textit{anɔpa no}) just like the past sentence is preceding and exclusive of utterance time.

\[10\] With this construction, it is either Kwabena is in Ghana or not in Ghana this month. If Kwabena is in Ghana as at utterance, the focus is on time and/or context (i.e., the view on the time and/or context of his coming as preceding and exclusive of utterance time and/or context). If Kwabena is not in Ghana, but somewhere as at utterance, the focus is on either the outcome of his coming not persisting at utterance; or the context of his coming, not persisting, and/or the time of his coming, not persisting.
Past sentence in Column 2, (a), (c), (e) and (g), focus on a happening which occurs before utterance. That is, these sentences are in the affirmative. By virtue of their happening which is before utterance these sentences could go either perfect or past; they are expressed as past by virtue of the fact that their windows in focus for the conclusion are non-persistent (i.e., are not evident) as at utterance – hence the expression of the utterance in the simple past. In sentence (a) in Column 2, the claim is that the state of wealth existed but is no more; or the contextual factors that were testaments to her being wealthy are no more, or the period of time within which she was considered wealthy or the that the time period within which she was wealthy is not (as) the present time (i.e., does not persist, or is non-existent, or is not evident). The view that the window of a happening precedes but does not persist to utterance (i.e., is not evident as at utterance) is core to simple past affirmative sentences in (c), (e), (g), and any other past affirmative sentence in Akan. This idea extends to past negative sentences with the only difference being that the simple past negative sentence is a non-happening – i.e., a state of affair which that was expected to occur before utterance (but did not) and whose window – either outcome (i.e., state), context, or time – is non-persistent (i.e., not evident) as at utterance. The simple past negative sentences in Column 2 – (b), (d), (f) and (h) are offered in a situation where the state, context or time of a non-happening is non-persistent as at utterance. In (f), ṁwɔ no ‘(in) the morning’ is grammatical with sentence (f) in Column 2 when the clause is in the past, but ungrammatical in (f) – Column 1 where the clause is in the perfect, and this is because the past clause just as the adverbial phrase (i.e., ṁwɔ no) focuses on time as preceding and exclusive of (i.e., non-persistent to) utterance. The phrase, ṁwɔ no, is a possible encoding of the simple past sentence time for the fact that ṁwɔ no designates a time frame that precedes but which does not persist to (i.e., which terminates before) utterance. The present perfect time must persist to utterance for which reason ṁwɔ no cannot be adjoined to the present perfect sentence as in Column 1 – (f). While the phrase bosome yi ‘this month’ can be adjoined to both perfect and past sentences as in (g) and (h) (respectively) – in the past, it is a time/period/context before utterance which is intended – a time/period within (i.e., belonging to) this month (bosome yi); this time or period is viewed to have ended before the period of this month for the utterance. In the perfect, however, the focus is on the entire period/duration of the month, which is viewed to persist as at utterance.

Significant in this sub-section is the identification of these three situational factors which are argued to be evaluated in Akan grammar for both present perfect and simple past sentence-making in Akan – these conditions have been significant in establishing the present perfect and simple past sentence meanings and meaning-differences in Akan. The perfect versus past sentence meaning-difference rests on when or where the utterance is made with respect to either one or combinations of the three factors. It is argued that the three factors are the purposes (or the motivations) for which present perfect and simple past sentences are made in Akan. A sentence is offered in the present perfect when either one or a combination of the three factors is/are viewed to persist (i.e., to be evident). A simple past sentence-conclusion is offered based on a terminative standpoint of the speaker on the factor(s) under evaluation in a given scenario. For the past, the fact that these windows are viewed to precede but are not evident

| h. | Kwabena n-با-ا [mmaa] Ghana bosome yi; Bosome yi Kwabena n-با-ا [mmaa] Ghana. ‘Kwabena has not come to Ghana this morning; This morning, Kwabena has not come to Ghana.’ | h. | Kwabena a-ن-با [امما] Ghana bosome yi; Bosome yi Kwabena a-ن-با [امما] Ghana. ‘Kwabena did not come to Ghana this morning; This morning, Kwabena did not come to Ghana.’ |

\[11\] It is either the time of this month that he usually comes is over or the month is almost over from the speaker’s point of view such that this person cannot or is not likely to come. So, the period for him to come, to this speaker, is over, or is almost over (i.e., not here).
(i.e., are non-persistent) as at utterance is the trigger. In summary, it is a speaker’s view on these windows such as described above that is all important in his or her making of either a present perfect or a simple past sentence in Akan. In offering present perfect or simple past sentence-conclusions, the Akan speaker focuses on the windows as identified, not on the affairs (i.e., happenings or non-happenings) themselves; the windows are the sure means of determining/establishing precedence and persistence or non-persistence to utterance, and consequently in offering either a present perfect sentence-conclusion or a simple past sentence-conclusion on a state of affair (i.e., a happening or a non-happening).

5.2 On the formal and functional differences between five basic sentences in Akan. This subsection briefly outlines formal and semantic means by which the present perfect and the simple past sentences are different from progressive, future, habitual and stative in Akan. Two verbs are used to illustrate the formal differences between the progressive, future, habitual and stative verb-stems in Akan: wɔ ‘possess’ which is strictly stative, and nya ‘acquire’ which is the non-stative counterpart of wɔ.12 The progressive is marked by re- in the affirmative and in the negative by n- (which is homorganic) before the verb-root. The progressive denotes a present, or an ongoing, change in state or location, or the absence of it at the moment against expectation. The future is bɛ- (or be- due to [+ATR] harmony) in the affirmative and in the negative by n- (homorganic with a high tone). The future denotes an event yet to be fulfilled or not to be fulfilled. The present perfect and the simple past have already been discussed in section (2). The sentences below illustrate the progressive and the future.

(44) Stative
   (a) Stative (affirmative)
       Amma wɔ̀ sika.
       Amma possess money
       ‘Amma has money/wealth.’
   (b) Stative (negative)
       Amma nni sika.
       Amma NEG. possess money
       ‘Amma does not have money’

(45) Habitual
   (a) Habitual (affirmative)
       Amma nyá sika.
       Amma HAB-acquire money
       ‘Amma acquires/obtains money.’
   (b) Habitual (negative)
       Amma n-nya sika.
       Amma NEG. HAB-acquire money
       ‘Amma does not acquire money.’

(46) Progressive
   (a) Affirmative:
       Amma re-nya sika.
       Amma PROG-acquire money
       ‘Amma is acquiring money.’
   (b) Negative:
       Amma n-nya sika.
       Amma NEG. PROG-acquire money
       ‘Amma is not acquiring money.’

(47) Future
   (a) Affirmative:
       Amma bɛ-nya sika.
       Amma FUT-acquire money
       ‘Amma will acquire money.’
   (b) Negative:
       Amma ñ-nya sika.
       Amma NEG. FUT-acquire money
       ‘Amma will not acquire money.’

12 Where the same verb has stative and habitual usage, the habitual usage of the verb comes with a high tone and the stative usage with the underlying tone of the verb.
Perfect

(a) Affirmative: Amma a-nya sika. Amma PERF-acquire money
Amma a-nya sika. Amma PERF-acquire money
‘Amma has acquired money/wealth.’

(b) Negative: Amma n-nya-a sika. Amma NEG-acquire-PERF money
‘Amma has not acquired money/wealth.’

Past

(a) Affirmative: Amma nya-a sika. Amma acquire-PAST money
‘Amma got/acquired money/wealth.’

(b) Negative: Amma a-n-nya sika. Amma PAST-NEG-acquire money
‘Amma did not acquire wealth.’

Below in (50) is a brief semantic distinction between these sentences based on the feature-values:
(i) [+Precede], [+Persist], [+Continue] and [±Repeat]. Below are their definitions – with [+] as the
presence of a feature; [-] as an absence of a feature; and [0] as the non-applicability of a feature. Only
the [+] values have been defined below, with the [-] and [0] values to be inferred.

Distinctive features for the present perfect, simple past, progressive, future, habitual and stative sentences in Akan
(a) [+Precede]: The outcome/state, context, and/or time of an event (i.e., a happening or a non-happening)
    precedes utterance.
(b) [+Persist]: The outcome/state, context, and/or time of an event (i.e., a happening or a non-happening)
    is evident as at utterance.
(c) [+Continue]: The internal state of an event situation continues or persists.
(d) [+Repeat]: The event is (not continue but) a repeat of a previous event.

The table below demonstrates how these attributes apply to the sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+ Precede</th>
<th>± Persist</th>
<th>± Continue</th>
<th>± Repeat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the present perfect and the simple past are different from the rest of the sentences in being [+Precede] – that is, they are either a happening or a non-happening with their outcomes or states, contexts and times preceding the making of their sentences; the rest of the sentences cannot be specified for [+]+ or [-] Precede and Persist for the fact that they are not based on outcomes/states, contexts and times of a happening or a non-happening hence their specification as ‘0’. The present perfect and the simple past are different in the present perfect being [+Persist] and the simple past being [-Persist]. The stative and the habitual are [+Continue] – these states of affairs persist; their internal states persist and are available for viewing. The habitual is [+Repeat] and this is how it is different from the future.

In the present perfect and the simple past, it is not the state of affair (i.e., the happening or non-
happening) that is the focus of the conclusion. It is their outcome or state, context and time which are
in evaluation as preceding of utterance and, in turn, in evaluation for their persistence as at utterance.
In the progressive, future, habitual and stative, the focus is on the state of affair itself which is either
[+] or [-] Continue, or Repeat. That an outcome or state, context or time of a happening or a non-
happening precedes utterance is not applicable to the progressive, future, stative and habitual, and is a
distinctively shared feature of the present perfect and the simple past in Akan. The present perfect and
the simple past are different in that their outcomes or states, contexts and times are distributed differently in relation to their utterances – for the present perfect their outcomes or state, contexts and times are inclusive of their utterance, whereas with the simple past these pragmatic factors are exclusive and preceding of their utterance. For the progressive, the state of affair which is unfolding is inclusive of its utterance; in the future, the utterance is exclusive and preceding of its state of affair; whereas in the habitual, the utterance is intermediate of a repeated state of affair (the latter of which is pending).

6. General conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has identified three pragmatic factors (or windows) that underlie present perfect and simple past sentence-making and interpretation. These are namely, outcome or state, context and time of (A) a happening or (B) a non-happening. (A) A happening has been defined as an event which occurred before utterance (i.e., an affirmative sentence): (A-a) where this event’s outcome or state, context and/or time is viewed to persist (i.e., to be evident, or to continue abide) as at utterance, the utterance is issued in the present perfect affirmative – that is, for the fact that either one or combinations of these pragmatic factors in focus is evident or persists. (A-b) On the other hand, where this event’s outcome or state, context and/or time is viewed to not persist (i.e., to be not evident or to continue to abide) as at utterance, the utterance is issued in the simple past affirmative – that is, for the fact that either one or combinations of these pragmatic factors in focus is/are not evident or does/do not persist. (B) A non-happening is a non-event state before utterance (i.e., a negative sentence) – it is an event which was expected to have occurred before utterance but which had not occurred as at utterance: (B-a-i) with the outcome or state (i.e., the non-occurrence situation) being present (i.e., evident or persisting) as at utterance, (B-a-ii) with the context of/for it to occur being present (i.e., evident or persisting) as at utterance, (B-a-iii) with the time of/for it to occur being present (i.e., evident or persisting), the utterance must be expressed in the present perfect negative. (B-b) On the other hand, for: (B-b-i) the fact that outcome or state (i.e., the non-occurrence) is no longer present (i.e., is not evident or does not persist) as at utterance, (B-b-ii) the fact that the context for it to happen is no longer present (i.e., is not evident or does not persist) as at utterance, (B-b-iii) the fact that the time for it to happen is no longer present (i.e., is not evident or does not persist) as at utterance, the utterance will be expressed/issued in the simple past negative. Below are more graphic/tabular representations of the situations that motivate either present perfect or simple past sentence-making in Akan.

The shaded areas under [+PRECEDE] and [+PERSIST] in the tables below are the situational/pragmatic factor(s) in focus (i.e., being evaluated) for a sentence-conclusion in a given event situation (S). The unshaded cells with subscripted + (under [+PRECEDE] and [+PERSIST]) are not under evaluation for sentence-making in the different situations. A single sentence-conclusion (or sentence-making) could be motivated/cause by seven different event situations (i.e., depending on which one of the three pragmatic factors (or which combinations of them) is/are in focus (i.e., is/are being evaluated) for the conclusion. There are seven possible event situations (S1-…) that could be responsible for a single basic present perfect or simple past sentence (structure) in Akan. For example, there are seven possible event situations each of which can trigger, or be responsible for, the present perfect affirmative sentence: Kwabena adware ‘Kwabena has bathed’, as in (52) below. This is the idea behind the seven rows specified as S1- etc. on each sentence table. Beneath each table are interpretations of the situations in that table.
Present perfect affirmative sentence table: Seven situations for present perfect sentence-making in the affirmative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present perfect affirmative (PPA)</th>
<th>+HAPP.</th>
<th>+PRECEDE</th>
<th>+PERSIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OUT/ST</td>
<td>CONTE.</td>
<td>TIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OUT/ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CONTE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena adware. ‘Kwabena has bathed.’</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation: For a present perfect affirmative sentence-conclusion: A situation has:

(a) a happening [+HAPP];
(b) it has an outcome or state (OUT/ST), a context (CONTE) and a time (TIME) which precedes utterance [+Precede];
(c) one or combinations of the following (i.e., outcome/state, context, time) in focus is/are viewed to persist (i.e., to be evident) as at utterance, either:

(i) Outcome or state, (S1-PPN)
(ii) Context, (S2-PPN)
(iii) Time, (S3-PPN)
(iv) Outcome/state and context, (S4-PPN)
(v) Context and time, (S5-PPN)
(vi) Output/state and time, or (S6-PPN)
(vii) Outcome/state, context and time (all three factors) (S7-PPN)

13 A Fuller interpretation – present perfect affirmative:

Single factor situations: S1-PPA: There is a happening, the output/state of which precedes utterance, and persists (i.e., is evident) at/to utterance. S2-PPA: There is a happening, the context of which precedes utterance, and persists (i.e., is evident) at/to utterance. S3-PPA: There is a happening, the time of which precedes utterance, and persists (i.e., is evident) at/to utterance.

Double factor situations: S4-PPA: There is a happening, the output/state and context of which precede utterance, and persist (i.e., are evident) at/to utterance. S5-PPA: There is a happening, the context and time of which precede utterance, and persist (i.e., are evident) at/to utterance. S6-PPA: There is a happening, the output/state and time of which precede utterance, and persist (i.e., are evident) at/to utterance.

Triple factor situations: S7-PPA: There is a happening, the output/state, context and time of which precede utterance, and persist (i.e., are evident) at/to utterance.
### Present perfect negative sentence table: Seven situations for present perfect sentence-making in the negative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present perfect negative (PPN)</th>
<th>+HAPP.</th>
<th>+PRECEDE</th>
<th>+PERSIST</th>
<th>S (Situations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OUT/ST</td>
<td>CONTE.</td>
<td>TIME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena nnwaree.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S8-PPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Kwabena has not bathed.’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S9-PPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S10-PPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S11-PPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S12-PPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S13-PPN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S14-PPN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:** For a present perfect negative sentence-conclusion: A situation has:

(a) a non-happening [-HAPP];

(b) it has an outcome or state (OUT/ST), a context (CONTE) and a time (TIME) which precedes utterance (+Precede);

(c) one or combinations of the following in focus (i.e., outcome/state, context, time) is/are viewed to persist (i.e., to be evident) as at utterance, either:

(i) Outcome or state,  
(ii) Context,  
(iii) Time,  
(iv) Outcome/state and context,  
(v) Context and time,  
(vi) Output/state and time, or  
(vii) Outcome/state, context and time (all three situational factors).

### Simple past affirmative sentence table: Seven situations for simple past sentence-making in the affirmative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple past affirmative (SPA)</th>
<th>+HAPP.</th>
<th>+PRECEDE</th>
<th>+PERSIST</th>
<th>S (Situations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OUT/ST</td>
<td>CONTE.</td>
<td>TIME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena dwaree.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S15-SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Kwabena bathed.’</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S16-SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S17-SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S18-SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S19-SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S20-SPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>S21-SPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(57) **Interpretation:**\(^{14}\) For a simple past affirmative sentence-conclusion: A situation has:
(a) a happening [+HAPPENING]
(b) it has an outcome or state (OUT/ST), a context (CONTE) and a time (TIME) which precedes utterance ([+Precede])
(c) one or combinations of the following (i.e., outcome/state, context, time) in focus is/are viewed to not persist (i.e., to be not evident) as at utterance, either:
   (i) Outcome or state, \((S15\text{-}SPA)\)
   (ii) Context, \((S16\text{-}SPA)\)
   (iii) Time, \((S17\text{-}SPA)\)
   (iv) Outcome/state and context, \((S18\text{-}SPA)\)
   (v) Context and time, \((S19\text{-}SPA)\)
   (vi) Output/state and time, or \((S20\text{-}SPA)\)
   (vii) Outcome/state, context and time (all three factors) \((S21\text{-}SPA)\)

(58) **Simple past negative sentence table:** Seven situations for simple past sentence-making in the negative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple past negative (SPN)</th>
<th>+HAPP</th>
<th>+PRECEDE</th>
<th>+PERSIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OUT/ST</td>
<td>CONTE</td>
<td>TIME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwabena annware. ‘Kwabena did not bath.’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(59) **Interpretation:** For a simple past negative sentence-conclusion: A situation has:
(a) a non-happening [-HAPP];
(b) it has an outcome or state (OUT/ST), a context (CONTE) and a time (TIME) which precedes utterance ([+Precede]);
(c) one or combinations of the following in focus is/are viewed to not persist (i.e., to be not evident) as at utterance, either:
   (i) Outcome or state, \((S22\text{-}SPN)\)
   (ii) Context, \((S23\text{-}SPN)\)

---

\(^{14}\) A Fuller interpretation – Simple past affirmative:

**Single factor situations:**
- **S15-SPA:** There is a happening, the output/state of which precedes utterance, but does not persist (i.e., is not evident) as at utterance.
- **S16-SPA:** There is a happening, the context of which precedes utterance, but does not persist (i.e., is not evident) as at utterance.
- **S17-SPA:** There is a happening, the time of which precedes utterance, but does not persist (i.e., is not evident) as at utterance.

**Double factor situations:**
- **S18-SPA:** There is a happening, the output/state and context of which precede utterance, but do not persist (i.e., are not evident) as at utterance.
- **S19-SPA:** There is a happening, the context and time of which precede utterance, but do not persist (i.e., are not evident) as at utterance.
- **S20-SPA:** There is a happening, the output/state and time of which precede utterance, but do not persist (i.e., are not evident) as at utterance.

**Triple factor situations:**
- **S21-SPA:** There is a happening, the output/state, context and time of which precede utterance, but do not persist (i.e., are not evident) as at utterance.
Current or continued relevance, from the current study, is the view or observation that outcome or state of a happening or a non-happening, the context of a happening or a non-happening, and/or the time of a happening or a non-happening persist(s) (i.e., is evident or continue(s) to abide) as at utterance – therefore, the utterance is offered whiles these factors persist (or are evident). That is, in Akan, pragmatic factors other than time are involved in the making of present perfect and simple past sentences, as listed above. It is the currency of an outcome or state, context and/or time of a happening or a non-happening from a speaker’s point of view – i.e., a speaker’s view that one or combinations of these situations persist(s), or is/are evident as at utterance – that motivate(s) a present perfect sentence-conclusion/making. Its affirmative and negative are different with the former focusing on a happening, but, the latter, on a non-happening. The happening vs. non-happening dichotomy is exactly the reason for the simple past affirmative and negative sentence-conclusions. In the simple past, one or combinations of these situations, of either a happening or a non-happening, is/are viewed as presently (i.e., as at when the utterance is made) not evident (i.e., not persistent). In summary, the window of verification in view for a happening or a non-happening persists for present perfect sentence conclusions, but does not persist for simple past sentence-making. From the above conclusions, a proposal to the effect that -ɪ and -ɪ are non-evidential markers in simple past sentences, with a- and -ɪ, as in the present perfect, as evidential markers, is appropriate for Akan.

List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+ATR]</td>
<td>Advanced Tongue Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+HAPP]</td>
<td>A happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[-ATR]</td>
<td>Unadvanced Tongue Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[-HAPP]</td>
<td>A non-happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>First Person Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFF</td>
<td>Affirmative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONJ</td>
<td>Conjunction</td>
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<td>CONTE</td>
<td>Context</td>
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<td>DEF</td>
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<td>Future</td>
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<td>Habitual</td>
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<td>Happening</td>
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<td>NEG</td>
<td>Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Noun Phrase</td>
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<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERF</td>
<td>Perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFV</td>
<td>Perfective</td>
</tr>
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<td>POSS</td>
<td>Possessive</td>
</tr>
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<td>PPA</td>
<td>Present Perfect Affirmative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPN</td>
<td>Present Perfect Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROG</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Situation(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Situation one (S2 = Situation two, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>Simple Past Affirmative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPN</td>
<td>Simple Past Negative</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The pragmatics of present perfect and simple past in Akan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST</th>
<th>SUBJ</th>
<th>Transc</th>
<th>VP</th>
<th>VPs</th>
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</thead>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Transcription</td>
<td>Verb Phrase</td>
<td>Verb Phrases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Osam, Emmanuel Kweku. 2008. Akan as an aspectual language. In Ameka, Felix & Kropp-
Dakubu, Mary Esther (eds.), *Aspect and modality in Kwa languages*, 69–89. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.


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