

TAM in Isfasori [i.'sfa.so.,ri]

Verb Classes

Before we get into the details of TAM markers, it should be established that *Isfasor* verbs behave differently based on whether a verb is **stative** or **non-stative** (termed **dynamic** in *Isfasori*). However, whether a verb is stative or dynamic depends upon the context, and there are several verbs that can behave like either of those. These verbs are hereby called **semi-stative** verbs.

Additionally, *Isfasori* also has auxiliaries (in particular two copulae: *kri*, *zgo*) that combine with the non-finite forms to encode specific TAM meanings.

Tense

Isfasori is a tenseless language and thus has no tense markers. Instead, if necessary, the time of an action is denoted using adverbs; though the context is often enough to determine tense.

Aspect

Without tense, it often falls to the aspect markers to orient the action in time. *Isfasori* has four aspect markers: **Perfective** (*ai-/a-*), **Imperfective** (*e-*), **Frequentative** (*-o/-cho*), and **Habitual** (*e- ... -o/-cho*)¹. Notice that the Habitual aspect is a combination of Imperfective and Frequentative, which has been reanalysed in the modern form.

While a dynamic verb is marked for all four of those aspects, a stative verb doesn't take the Perfective marker, thereby only existing in the Imperfective, Frequentative and Habitual forms.

Now, the tense is often derived from the context, however, in isolation, the Perfective and Imperfective aspects sometimes do exhibit inherent tenses. While the Perfective defaults to a Past tense, the Imperfective defaults to the Factative (Past for dynamic, Present for stative).²

Furthermore, when these aspects are combined, they can help orient two actions in time — whether they occur simultaneously, successively, or within the timeframe of each other.

¹ Frequentative has an inherent Telic meaning and Habitual has an inherent Atelic meaning.

² See Yoruba & Igbo.

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|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>īsfēt</i>
IPFV-sing-AN | <i>īli</i>
squirrel | <i>ēluat</i>
IPFV-jump-AN | <i>geim</i>
rabbit |
| “While the squirrel was singing, the rabbit was jumping” | | | |
| 2. <i>īsfēt</i>
IPFV-sing-AN | <i>īli</i>
squirrel | <i>aidluat</i>
PFV-jump-AN | <i>geim</i>
rabbit |
| “When the squirrel was singing, the rabbit jumped” | | | |
| 3. <i>aisfēt</i>
PFV.sing-AN | <i>īli</i>
squirrel | <i>aidluat</i>
PFV-jump-AN | <i>geim</i>
rabbit |
| “After the squirrel sang, the rabbit jumped” | | | |
| 4. <i>aisfēt</i>
PFV.walk-1SG | <i>īli</i>
squirrel | <i>ēluat</i>
IPFV-jump-AN | <i>geim</i>
rabbit |
| “After the squirrel sang, the rabbit was/began jumping” | | | |

Mood

Isfasori also has one modal marker, the **Irrealis** (*ta-/sa-*). When used with the aspect markers, the Irrealis marker conveys a **Subjunctive** mood; when used independently of the aspect markers, it conveys an **Imperative** mood.

Similar to the stative verbs, the modal marker can be combined with all of the aspect markers except the Perfective. This results in Imperfective Subjunctive, Frequentative Subjunctive, and Habitual Subjunctive.³

Example Dynamic Verb Conjugation Paradigm

<i>wō</i> “to go”	Indicative	Subjunctive
Perfective	<i>aīwō</i> (<i>went</i>)	—
Imperfective	<i>ewō</i> (<i>was going</i>)	<i>esawō</i> (<i>should have gone</i>)
Frequentative	<i>wōcho</i> ⁴ (<i>went sometimes</i>)	<i>tawōcho</i> (<i>needed to go</i>)
Habitual	<i>ewōcho</i> (<i>used to go</i>)	<i>esawōcho</i> (<i>would have gone</i>)
Imperative	<i>tawō</i> (<i>go!</i>)	

³ The Frequentative and Habitual (along with their Subjunctive counterparts) may take on further Intensive/Necessitative and Iterative/Distributive/Gnomic/Conditional meanings, respectively.

⁴ <ch> is pronounced as /x/.

Example Stative Verb Conjugation Paradigm

<i>krua</i> "to know"	Indicative	Subjunctive
Perfective	—	—
Imperfective	ekrua (<i>know</i>)	esakrua (<i>should know</i>)
Frequentative	kruacho (<i>learn</i>)	takruacho (<i>need to know</i>)
Habitual	ekruacho (<i>used to know</i>)	esakruacho (<i>would know</i>)
Imperative	takrua (<i>learn!</i>)	

Example Semi-stative Verb Conjugation Paradigm

<i>chisē</i> "to stand"	Indicative	Subjunctive
Perfective	aihisē (<i>stood up</i>)	aisahisē (<i>should have stood up</i>)
Imperfective	ehisē (<i>is/was standing</i>)	esahisē (<i>should be standing</i>)
Frequentative	chisēcho (<i>stood up sometimes</i>)	tahisēcho (<i>need to stand</i>)
Habitual	ehisēcho (<i>used to stand</i>)	esahisēcho (<i>would be standing</i>)
Imperative	tahisē (<i>stand up!</i>)	

Further musings on Imperative: As shown, the Imperative mood displays a lack of aspect markers, however, the inherent aspect is mostly Perfective. Furthermore, the exact realisation of the Imperative depends upon the pronouns. With the first person, it has a hortative meaning; with the second person, it has an imperative meaning; with the third person, it has a jussive meaning. Though, often the person marker is dropped which can lead to fun ambiguities.

5. *taisfēt*

IMP-sing-AN

"Sing!" or "Let's sing!" or "Let him sing!"

Agreement

Verbs in *Isfasori* agree with the noun class (animate/inanimate) of their subjects. For animate subjects, the suffix (-òt/-t) is used; for inanimate subjects, the suffix (-ehl/-hl) is used.

Additional Context on TAM expression in *Isfasori*

Isfasori can express other TAM as well through periphrasis with the copulae and the non-finite forms. However, most of these are only found in literary sources and not used in colloquial speech.

Non-Finite Forms

Isfasori has four non-finite forms for dynamic verbs and three non-finite forms for static forms.

Example Non-finite Verbal Paradigm

	wō “to go”	krua “to know”
Infinitive	dewō	dekrua
Active Participle	hewō	hekrua
Perfect Participle	wō	krua
Passive Participle	waiwō	—

Copulae

Isfasori has two copulae, namely the equative copula *kri* and locative copula *zgo*. They are always required in a sentence without verbs. Additionally, when used to define states, the locative copula can also be used for transient/contingent meanings for states that are temporary as opposed to the equative copula being used for permanent states.

6. *ekrit* (ezgot) *hīsfē* *īli*
IPFV-COP-AN (IPFV-LOC.COP-AN) APRT-sing squirrel
“The squirrel was (temporarily) singing”

Both equative and locative copula can be used in copular constructions along with the aforementioned finite forms to encode finer TAM distinctions (often only found in literary sources). These exact meanings of these forms are oft debated but the best available meanings of the constructions are given as follows:

Equative Copula + Non-finite constructions

	IPFV-COP	IPFV-SUBJ-COP	IMP-COP
	<i>ekri</i>	<i>esakri</i>	<i>takri</i>
Infinitive	Gnomic	Conditional	Obligative
Active Participle	Continuous / Progressive	Potential	Permissive
Perfect Participle	Perfect (Voluntary)	Presumptive	Optative
Passive Participle	Resultative (Involuntary)	Counterfactual Conditional	Benedictive

Locative Copula + Non-finite constructions

	IPFV-LOC.COP	PFV-LOC.COP
	<i>ezgo</i>	<i>òzgo</i>
Infinitive	Inchoative	Prospective
Active Participle	Progressive (Transient)	Durative (Transient)
Perfect Participle	Cessative (Voluntary)	Pausative (Voluntary)
Passive Participle	Cessative (Involuntary)	Pausative (Involuntary)