

4

VERBAL MORPHOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the morphology of the Pondi verb. The structure of verb phrases is covered in (§6.2).

4.1 Basic verbal morphology

A verb in Pondi consists, minimally, of a verb stem. Verbs generally also contain a single suffix, typically either one of three finite suffixes that indicate tense-aspect-mood (TAM)¹ distinctions or a dependent-marking suffix that affixes to a medial verb. (Only some imperatives and some medial verbs may occur without any overt suffix.) Although there seems to exist just a single morphological slot available for suffixes, there is a small, closed class of auxiliary verbs, which follow the main verb with which they are associated (§6.2.1). The degree to which these are independent words, however, as opposed to, say, suffixes may be a diachronic question. Preceding the verb stem there is also a slot available for prefixes, the functions of which are not entirely clear. Object-marker proclitics may come before the affixed verb, cliticising typically to the beginning of the verb stem (when no prefix is present) or to the prefix (when present) (§5.3.2).

1 The label ‘TAM’ is overly general for the Pondi verbal categories, since the three basic suffixes encode only aspect and mood—not tense. It is used here given its usefulness in crosslinguistic comparison.

Pondi exhibits a basic three-way TAM distinction, which corresponds to a set of three basic verbal suffixes. The three basic categories are imperfective (§4.2), perfective (§4.3), and irrealis (§4.4). The associated morphemes for these grammatical categories are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Basic TAM suffixes in Pondi.

Aspect/mood	Verbal suffix
imperfective [IPFV]	-ĩ ~ yĩ
perfective [PFV]	-apĩ ~ -ngapĩ
irrealis [IRR]	-la ~ -nda ~ -(y)a

Since, phonetically, word-final *-ĩ* is always pronounced [ə] (§2.2.6), it should be noted that the surface forms for the imperfective and perfective suffixes are [ə] and [apə] ~ [ngapə], respectively.

The irrealis suffix has the allomorph *-nda*, which occurs when following a nasal. Similar irrealis suffix allomorphy is found in Ulwa, where the alternation is between *-na* and *-nda*, the latter occurring whenever the preceding consonant is a sonorant. The conditions for *-nda* in Pondi are, however, slightly different, as they are conditioned by the immediately preceding segment (whether a consonant or a vowel) and they are conditioned not by all sonorants (liquids and glides do not trigger the allomorph *-nda*), but rather by nasals alone. Additionally, the form *-ya* sometimes occurs as an allomorph of the irrealis suffix *-la*. It is seen in verbs with stems ending in *-l* plus a high vowel, such as *kili-* ‘die’ and *oli-* ‘cut, chop’, and seems to represent a sort of haplology taking the form of palatalisation (i.e. $l \rightarrow y / l V [+high] _$). In other words, underlying forms such as /kilila/ and /olila/, are realised as [kiliya] and [oliya], respectively. In an alternative analysis, the /l/ is simply deleted, and the [y] emerges as an epenthetic glide (§2.5.6).²

The perfective suffix *-apĩ* has a phonologically conditioned allomorph *-ngapĩ*, which appears with verbs whose stems end in a nasal. (There is no apparent general phonological rule underpinning this allomorphy, as this alternation does not appear elsewhere in the grammar of the language.) For example, the verb *am-* ‘eat’ has the form *amĩ* in the imperfective, but the form *amngapĩ* in the perfective. Similarly, the verb *nan-* ‘wash’ has the form *nangapĩ* in the perfective. Note that the alveolar nasal assimilates and

2 The stem-final front vowel /i/ or /ĩ/ does seem to play a role in conditioning this allomorph, though, since we do not find such haplology in verbs like *la-la* ‘put [IRR]’ or the several compounds containing it (§6.2.2).

deletes before a following prenasalised velar stop. A similar phonological process occurs in the irrealis forms: all stem-final nasals successfully trigger the irrealis allomorph *-nda*, but alveolar nasals delete before the following prenasalised alveolar stop. Furthermore, verbs with stems ending in the alveolar nasal *-n* exhibit the imperfective suffix [yĩ] as an allomorph of /ĩ/—that is, the final nasal palatalises before the imperfective suffix. This allomorphy is unique to this suffix; it does not occur with the homophonous imperative ending [-ĩ] (§4.5). These changes are all illustrated in the paradigms for verbs with nasal-final stems (Table 4.2). Here, the examples of verbs with stem-final alveolar nasals (‘give’ and ‘take’) are both irregular, exhibiting suppletive or missing forms (shown with brackets and a null sign, respectively). Note also that the bilabial nasal does not delete before heterorganic prenasalised stops (thus the perfective and irrealis forms for ‘eat’).

Table 4.2. Paradigms for verbs with nasal-final stems.

Gloss	Verb stem	Imperfective	Perfective	Irrealis
‘eat’	am-	amĩ	amngapĩ	amnda
‘wash’	nan-	nanyĩ	nangapĩ	nanda
‘cough’	kusan-	kusanyĩ	kusangapĩ	kusanda
‘count’	tĩn-	tĩnyĩ	tĩngapĩ	tĩnda
‘give’	an-	[ale] (< ala-)	Ø	anda
‘take’	n-	[liyĩ] (< li-)	Ø	nda

Verbs that exhibit nonfinite forms ending in *-m* (§4.8, §8.1.4) also exhibit this allomorphy. It is thus not clear whether [m] is a nonfinite suffix or part of the verb stem. The verbs whose stems putatively end in *-m* are presented in Table 4.3 (note that brackets indicate suppletive forms, and the null sign indicates a missing form).

Table 4.3. Paradigms for verbs with stems ending in (covert) *-m*.

Gloss	Verb stem	Imperfective	Perfective	Irrealis	Nonfinite
‘sew’	ka(m)-	ke ³	kangapĩ	kanda	?
‘see’	andi(m)-	[ale]	Ø	andinda	andim
‘hit/kill’	asi(m)-	asiyĩ	asingapĩ	asinda	asim
‘carve/blow’	lu(m)-	luwĩ	luwapĩ	lumunda ⁴	lum

3 /a + i/ → [e] (§2.5.1).

4 This irrealis form is anomalous in that it retains the /m/, adding an epenthetic [u] to separate the /mnd/ cluster.

The available data are unfortunately limited. First, I do not have any examples in my corpus of *ka(m)*- ‘sew’ being used in a nonfinite way, nor with the ending *-m*, so its inclusion is speculative. Second, the verb *asi(m)*- ‘hit, kill’ exhibits variation in the perfective form: my corpus contains some examples of this verb with the *-api* suffix and some examples with the *-ngapi* suffix, without any apparent semantic difference.⁵ Nevertheless, based on the current state of the evidence, I offer what I see as the best account of the data: there is a small set of verbs ending in a covert *-(m)*. This underlying final nasal is seen in the surface forms of nonfinite verb forms, but otherwise is not overtly present, even though it triggers suffix allomorphy in the perfective and irrealis finite forms. The verb *am*- ‘eat’ does not belong to this class, since the status of its final *m* is not in question (it is always present). The variability seen in the perfective form of *asi(m)*- ‘hit, kill’ may reflect the loss (perhaps due to grammatical attrition) of this underlying final *-(m)*.

Finally, some allomorphy is also apparent in the imperfective suffix. A phonological rule of vowel coalescence produces the ending *-e* in the form *ke* ‘sew [IPFV]’, from the root *ka*- ‘sew’: /a/ + /i/ = [e]. Also, glide insertion results in forms such as *usiyi* ‘split [IPFV]’, from the root *usi*- ‘split’.

In addition to these three basic finite TAM suffixes, there are medial verb suffixes, which affix to verbs heading the predicate of dependent clauses. These include the simultaneous suffix *-e* (§4.9) and the conditional suffix *-se* (§4.10).

The prefix slot may include one of the following prefixes (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Verbal prefixes.

Prefix	Function?
a-	perfect [PRF]
l-	detransitiviser [DETR]

The functions of these two prefixes remain largely obscure to me. The prefix *a-* is discussed in §4.6 and the prefix *l-* is discussed in §4.7.

5 The form *asiyi* (which looks morphologically imperfective and is indeed the form used to encode imperfective aspect) is frequently used with apparent perfective meaning. This behaviour is similar to that of some deponent verbs, which lack designated perfective forms, instead relying on imperfective morphology to encode both imperfective and perfective meaning (cf. *mal-i* ‘go [IPFV/PFV]’, §4.12).

4.2 The imperfective aspect

The imperfective aspect presents states and events as unbounded in time. The imperfective suffix *-i* signals that the event or state to which the verb refers is or was continuous, habitual, iterative, or otherwise without defined end. Imperfective-marked verbs are not encoded in any way for tense: they may refer either to past or present time (they may not, however, refer to future time, since future time is always indicated with the irrealis suffix).

The following examples illustrate some uses of the imperfective aspect.

An uncompleted event.

- (4.01) meyamba tatī kapī **usī**
 meyamba tatī kapī us-**i**
 yesterday papa house build-IPFV
 ‘Yesterday papa was building a house (but he didn’t finish it).’

A habitual event.

- (4.02) mī kadam nambi **amī**
 mī kadam nambi am-**i**
 3SG.SUBJ sugarcane water eat-IPFV
 ‘He eats (tends to eat) sugar.’ (literally ‘water-eats’, i.e. ‘drinks’)

An iterative action.

- (4.03) alkī kulam mī **lasiyī**
 alkī kulam mī l-asi-**i**
 person boy 3SG.SUBJ DETR-hit-IPFV
 ‘The person is hitting the boy.’

A continuous or progressive action.

- (4.04) anale kanam minjame **ndamī**
 anale kanam minjame ndī=am-**i**
 woman.PL now banana.PL 3PL.OBJ=eat-IPFV
 ‘The women are eating bananas now.’

4.3 The perfective aspect

The perfective aspect, on the other hand, is applied to events that are viewed as having reached their logical conclusion. The perfective suffix *-apī* - *-ngapī* signals that the event to which the verb refers has concluded. Like the imperfective aspect (§4.2), the perfective aspect does not encode tense per se, although it is almost always associated with past time. When perfective-marked verbs occur with adverbs like *kanam* ‘now’, the event is most likely being viewed by the speaker as having just occurred. The perfective aspect can—also like the imperfective aspect—never refer to future time.

The following sentences illustrate some uses of the perfective aspect.

A completed event.

- (4.05) meyamba tatī kapī **mawsapī**
 meyamba tatī kapī ma=us-**apī**
 yesterday papa house 3SG.OBJ=build-PFV
 ‘Yesterday papa built the house.’

A past action with present consequence.

- (4.06) o awse **amngapī**
 o aw-se am-**ngapī**
 2SG.SUBJ Q-thing.PL eat-PFV
 ‘What have you eaten?’

An action that has immediately transpired.

- (4.07) kanam alkī kulam mī **lasiyapī**
 kanam alkī kulam mī l-asi-**apī**
 now person boy 3SG.SUBJ DETR-hit-PFV
 ‘Just now, the person hit the boy.’

4.4 The irrealis mood

In contrast to the two other major TAM suffixes, the irrealis suffix *-la -nda* does not encode aspect, but rather mood. While the irrealis suffix is the only verbal suffix available to the speaker when referring to future time, this same suffix can also be used when referring to present or past time. It is used whenever encoding something nonfactual (events in future time are necessarily nonfactual). The following sentences illustrate some uses of the irrealis mood.

Future time/prediction.

(4.08) kimbilo alkī kulam mī **lasinda**

kimbilo	alkī	kulam	mī	l-asi- nda
tomorrow	person	boy	3SG.SUBJ	DETR-hit-IRR
‘The person will hit the boy tomorrow.’				

Future time/intention.

(4.09) kimbilo nyī name **asinda**

kimbilo	nyī	name	asi- nda
tomorrow	1SG	pig.PL	hit-IRR
‘I’ll kill lots of pigs tomorrow.’			

Volition (‘want’, ‘would like’, etc.).

(4.10) wan kadam nambi **amnda**

wan	kadam	nambi	am- nda
2PL	sugarcane	water	eat-IRR
‘Would you like to eat some sugarcane?’ (literally ‘drink’)			

Necessity (‘should’, ‘must’, etc.).

(4.11) kanam nyī kapī **usila**

kanam	nyī	kapī	us- la
now	1SG	house	build-IRR
‘I should build a house now.’			

Ability (‘can’, ‘could’, etc.).

(4.12) kanam nyinjin kulam ambo **kawla**

kanam	nyi-njin	kulam	ambo	kaw- la
now	1SG-POSS.NPL	boy	NEG	sleep-IRR
‘My son can’t sleep now.’				

4.5 The imperative mood

The imperative form of a verb is (generally) simply the verb stem—that is, there is often no overt TAM suffix on the verb, as seen in the following example.

- (4.13) kapī **maws**
 kapī ma=**us**
 house 3SG.OBJ=build
 ‘Build the house!’

Although imperative forms generally take no suffix, the prefix *a-* (§4.6) may appear on the verb, as in the following.

- (4.14) ke **alik**
 ke a-lik
 sago PRF-prepare
 ‘Prepare the sago!’

Verb stems that end in a covert *-m* exhibit this final segment in their imperative forms, as seen in examples (4.15) and (4.16).

- (4.15) **anandim**
 an=**andim**
 1PL=see
 ‘Look at us!’

- (4.16) namal **asim**
 namal **asim**
 pig hit
 ‘Hit the pig!’

An epenthetic suffix *i* may occur at the end of the imperative forms following certain consonants (such as /l/), presumably to aid in pronunciation or add stress to the final segment, as in the following.

- (4.17) **amali**
 a-mal-**i**
 PRF-go-IMP
 ‘Go!’

The irregular imperative form of *p-* ‘be (at)’ is discussed in §4.11. The verb *am-* ‘eat’ also seems to have an irregular imperative form. It appears to have the detransitiviser prefix *l-* (§4.7) fossilised to the verb root (cf. the basic TAM paradigm for Ulwa ‘eat’: *am* [IPFV], *amap* [PFV], *landa* [IRR]). To confuse matters, it seems that the verb *am-* ‘eat’ always takes the perfect prefix *a-* in its imperative forms, giving the appearance (perhaps only superficially) that the prefixes *a-* and *l-* are co-occurring. The following sentences exemplify the imperative forms of ‘eat’.

- (4.18) minjamo **alam**
 minjamo **a-lam**
 banana PRF-eat.IMP
 ‘Eat a banana!’

- (4.19) **malam**
 ma=**a-lam**
 3SG.OBJ=PRF-eat.IMP
 ‘Eat!’ (literally ‘Eat it!’)

More examples of imperatives are provided in §8.3.

4.6 The perfect prefix *a-*

The prefix *a-* is one of only two prefixes in the language (the other, *l-*, is discussed in §4.7). It only occurs with perfective or imperative forms in my corpus, and it never seems to be obligatory. Perhaps cognate with the Ulwa adverb *ta* ‘already’, this prefix may indicate that an event occurs or occurred before some reference point (i.e. perfect aspect). Its exact aspectual nuances are, however, not fully known, and it could perhaps instead be considered a completive marker. The fact that it is morphologically part of the verb (and not simply an adverb meaning ‘already’ that precedes the verb) is apparent in example (4.19), since it (along with the verb stem) hosts the object-marker proclitic. The following pairs of sentences contrast perfective-marked verbs that contain this prefix (4.21, 4.22) with those that do not (4.20, 4.23).

- (4.20) tatī nīm luwapi
 tatī nīm lu-apī
 papa canoe carve-PFV
 ‘Papa carved the canoe.’

(4.21) tatī nīm **aluwapī**

tatī	nīm	a-lu-apī
papa	canoe	PRF-carve-IPFV

‘Papa already carved the canoe.’

(4.22) Peter ngol **ayī**

Peter	ngol	a-i-ī
[name]	village	PRF-come-IPFV

‘Has Peter already come home?’

(4.23) meyamba mī ngol iyī

meyamba	mī	ngol	i-ī
yesterday	3SG.SUBJ	village	come-IPFV

‘He came home yesterday.’ (This is the response to the question in example 4.22.)

The perfect prefix *a-* may serve the clarifying function of marking perfective aspects in verbs that make no morphological distinction between perfective and imperfective forms (such as for the verb *i-* ‘come’, as in examples 4.22 and 4.23; see §4.12). For example, the verb *si-* ‘sit’ is deponent in that it only has the two basic TAM forms: *si-ī* ‘sit-IPFV’ and *si-la* ‘sit-IRR’, lacking a designated perfective form. The perfect prefix may thus help signal perfective aspect, as in the following example.

(4.24) kulam min **asiyī**

kulam	min	a-si-ī
boy	3DU	PRF-sit-IPFV

‘The (two) boys have already sat down.’

In imperatives, I assume that the prefix *a-* adds some urgency to the command (i.e. ‘do it already!’) (§8.3).

4.7 The detransitiviser prefix *l-*

Pondi has no known morphological means of increasing valency. There are no applicatives in the language, nor does it seem that causatives can be formed with less than two clauses (this is, however, speculative, based solely on how permissive constructions are formed in the language, §8.1.3). There may, however, be a morphological means of decreasing valency (or, perhaps better put, of signalling a relatively low level of semantic transitivity). I do not know whether passive constructions (of any

sort) exist in the language,⁶ but there do seem to be some constructions that resemble antipassives. The prefix *l-*, which is glossed here as ‘DETR’ (‘detransitiviser’) is indeed hard to decipher. Based on its likely cognacy with Ulwa *na-* ‘DETR’,⁷ I present here a discussion of some of its possible morphosyntactic functions.

In Ulwa, the presence of an immediately preverbal oblique necessitates the demotion of the logical object to oblique status (Barlow 2019b). In Ulwa this demotion to oblique status is signalled through an oblique-marking enclitic (=n) on the demoted object, without any additional verbal morphology. The transitivity-reducing prefix *na-*, on the other hand, is typically employed in Ulwa *without* any demoted object. In Pondi, too, the presence of an immediately preverbal oblique can trigger a sort of valency reduction. Here, however, no oblique marking is necessary on the logical object;⁸ rather, the prefix *l-* appears on the verb.

The following pair of sentences seems to illustrate this sort of ‘detransitivisation’. Here, the verb *nambi pu-* ‘bathe’ has a grammatical object when it functions as a transitive verb (e.g. ‘bathe the child’); the theme argument (that which is bathed) occurs between the two elements (4.25); when, however, the theme is not in this position, the verb takes the prefix *l-* (here exhibiting a phonologically conditioned allomorph *li-*, with the high central vowel breaking up the word-initial consonant cluster /lp-/) (4.26).

(4.25) meyamba nanĩ **nambi kulam** mapwapĩ

meyamba	nanĩ	nambi	kulam	ma=pu-apĩ
yesterday	mama	water	boy	3SG.OBJ=bathe-PFV

‘Mama bathed the boy yesterday.’

(4.26) meyamba nanĩ kulam nambi **lipwapĩ**

meyamba	nanĩ	kulam	nambi	l-pu-apĩ
yesterday	mama	boy	water	DETR-bathe-PFV

‘Mama bathed the boy yesterday.’

6 See Barlow (2019a) for discussion of the typologically unusual ‘syntactic passive’ construction in Pondi’s sister language Ulwa.

7 The prefix *na-* in Ulwa functions much like an antipassive marker, signalling that the event encoded by the verb has reduced transitivity—that is, that it deviates from the common semantic properties of prototypical transitive clauses (Barlow 2019b).

8 It must be pointed out that overt oblique marking is only permitted on pronouns and determiners (§7.3), and I do not have examples of ‘detransitivised’ sentences with demoted object NPs containing such word classes.

The following pair of sentences illustrates a similar detransitivisation. In (4.27), the oblique argument *pemo* ‘arrow’ appears in the canonical position following the subject but preceding the object. In (4.28), on the other hand, the oblique is fronted to immediately preverbal position. Here the detransitiviser prefix *l-* appears on the verb. While the logical object (*njinulam* ‘bird’) appears to have been demoted to an oblique, it seems that the oblique argument *pemo* ‘arrow’ has been promoted not to an object but rather to a second subject (as signalled by the subject marker *mī*). This, too, which is difficult to explain fully, seems to parallel a similar phenomenon in Ulwa (Barlow 2019a), perhaps one akin to double nominative constructions in languages like Japanese.

(4.27) tatī **pemo njinulam** masiyī

tatī	pemo	njinulam	ma=asi-ī
papa	arrow	bird	3SG.OBJ=hit-IPFV
‘Papa shot the bird with an arrow.’			

(4.28) tatī **njinulam pemo mī** lasiyī

tatī	njinulam	pemo	mī	l-asi-ī
papa	bird	arrow	3SG.SUBJ	DETR-hit-IPFV
‘Papa shot the bird with an arrow.’				

(For other examples of this phenomenon, see 4.03, 4.07, 4.08, and 8.24.)

Other uses of the prefix *l-*, however, are harder to account for in terms of any reduction in valency or transitivity. Furthermore, there are also instances in which one might expect the presence of *l-* (based on its presence elsewhere with orderings of logical objects preceding obliques), but no such prefix is found, as in the following example (which may be compared with 4.28).

(4.29) tatī **sewawi pemo** ndasiyī

tatī	sewawi	pemo	ndi=asi-ī
papa	bird.PL	arrow	3PL.OBJ=hit-IPFV
‘Papa shot the birds with an arrow.’			

Perhaps the detransitiviser prefix only appears when the logical object is non-plural (whereas here it is plural: ‘birds’). It is also interesting to note that, in (4.29), it seems that the object-marker proclitic refers to the logical object *sewawi* ‘birds’ (despite being separated from the verb) and *not* to the immediately preceding oblique *pemo* ‘arrow’ (the plural form of this noun is *peme* ‘arrows’). The grammar of this sentence is thus not entirely accounted for.

4.8 Nonfinite verb forms

Nonfinite verb forms in Pondi are here understood to be those that are unmarked for TAM. I exclude imperative forms (§4.5), which, although sometimes lacking overt suffixation, are understood to have a particular modal force. Also, auxiliary verbs, two of which may occur without TAM marking, are discussed separately (§6.2.1).

In certain medial verb constructions, there is a finite verb (marked for TAM), which sits at the end of a sentence, while—somewhere in the middle—sits a nonfinite (medial) verb (unmarked for TAM). In such constructions, the action encoded by the medial, nonfinite verb is understood to precede that of the finite verb at the end of the main clause. Verbs with otherwise covert final *-m* in their stems (§4.1) exhibit this final consonant in their nonfinite forms. Nonfinite verb forms are covered in greater detail in the discussion of subordination in §8.1.4 (see examples 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, and 8.13).

4.9 The simultaneous suffix *-e*

Although medial verbs, which imply a sequential temporal relationship with a final verb, are unmarked for TAM distinctions (§4.8), verbs in dependent clauses that imply a simultaneous temporal relationship with the verb in a main clause receive the simultaneous suffix *-e*. This suffix affixes to the verb in the dependent clause, without any other suffix permitted. The following sentences illustrate the use of the simultaneous suffix *-e*.

(4.30) o **kawe** name ngol ol amali

o	kaw- e	name	ngol	ol	a-mal- <i>i</i>
2SG.SUBJ	sleep-SIM	pig.PL	village	from	PRF-go-IPFV

‘While you were sleeping, the pigs left the village.’

(4.31) nyi minjamo **ame** kokun kapĩ iyĩ

nyi	minjamo	am- e	kokun	kapĩ	i- <i>i</i>
1SG	banana	eat-SIM	snake	house	come-IPFV

‘When I was eating a banana, a snake came into the house.’

- (4.32) komblam moko **male** alkĩ ndindi asiĩ
 komblam moko mal-**e** alkĩ ndindi asi-ĩ
 child little go-SIM person dog hit-IPFV
 ‘The person hit the dog when the child went.’

Simultaneous clauses are discussed further in §8.1.5.

4.10 The conditional suffix *-se*

There is at least one other dependent-marking verbal suffix: the conditional suffix *-se*, which affixes to the verb in the protasis of a conditional sentence. This suffix, which takes the same slot as the simultaneous suffix (§4.9), indicates that the verb to which it affixes forms (part of) the predicate of a protasis in a conditional sentence (§8.6). As this suffix (generally) affixes directly to the verb stem, the verb is not in any way marked for tense, aspect, or mood (e.g. forms such as ‘if it rained’ and ‘if it is raining’ would be expressed with the same verb forms).

The conditional suffix *-se* may, perhaps, be analysable as containing a conditional element *-s(a)* plus the simultaneous suffix *-e*. Under this assumption, the conditional element would likely be cognate with the conditional suffix *-ta* in Ulwa (there are other *s:t* correspondences found between cognate forms in Pondi and Ulwa). The following sentences illustrate the use of the conditional suffix *-se*.

- (4.33) kin **lapise** nyĩ kapĩ mapĩla
 kin lap-**se** nyĩ kapĩ ma=p-la
 rain fall-COND 1SG house 3SG.OBJ=be-IRR
 ‘If it’s raining, I’ll stay home.’

- (4.34) o ambo ke **amngase** mun winda
 o ambo ke amnga-**se** mun u=i-nda
 2SG.SUBJ NEG sago eat-COND hunger 2SG.OBJ=hit?-IRR
 ‘If you don’t eat, you’ll be hungry.’ (literally ‘eat sago’)

In this second example, it seems that the stem *am-* ‘eat’ has been reanalysed (by analogy from the perfective form *amngasi*) as being *amnga-* ‘eat’.

More examples of conditional sentences are provided in §8.6.

4.11 The locative verb *p-* ‘be (at)’

The common locative verb *p-* ‘be (at)’ shows some minor stem variation. Although the imperfective form simply adds the regular ending *-i* to the stem *p-* (4.35), the perfective form exhibits the stem *pi-*, producing the form /pi-apĩ/ ([piyapĩ]), as opposed to the expected form /p-apĩ/ ([papĩ]) (4.36). The irrealis form is regular in that it adds the ending *-la*, although it is common for speakers to pronounce the form as [pĩla] as opposed to [pla] (4.37)—that is, these speakers insert an epenthetic *i* despite the fact that /pl/ is generally a permitted consonant cluster (§2.3).

(4.35) tatĩ ambo kapĩ **pĩ**

tatĩ	ambo	kapĩ	p-ĩ
papa	NEG	house	be-IPFV
‘Papa is not at home.’			

(4.36) mĩ Angoram **piyapĩ**

mĩ	Angoram	pi-apĩ
3SG.SUBJ	[place]	be-PFV
‘He was in Angoram.’		

(4.37) mĩ Madang **pĩla**

mĩ	Madang	p-la
3SG.SUBJ	[place]	be-IRR
‘He will be in Madang.’		

The imperative of the verb *p-* ‘be at’ has the irregular form *alap*, as seen in (4.38) and (4.39).

(4.38) o ambinjin kapĩ **alap**

o	ambin-njin	kapĩ	alap
2SG.SUBJ	NPL.REFL-POSS.NPL	house	be.IMP
‘Stay in your own house!’			

(4.39) **malap**

ma= alap
3SG.OBJ=be.IMP
‘Wait!’ (literally ‘Be here!’)

4.12 The motion verbs *i-* ‘come’ and *mal-* ‘go’

Two very common verbs of motion (*i-* ‘come’ and *mal-* ‘go’) display interesting suppletive behaviour in Pondi and thus deserve special attention. Morphologically, they have the following forms (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Paradigms for *i-* ‘come’ and *mal-* ‘go’.

Gloss	Verb stem	Imperfective	Perfective	Irrealis
‘come’	<i>i-</i>	<i>iyi</i> (/i-i/)	<i>ayī</i> (/a-i-ī/) ⁹	<i>ila</i> (/i-la/)
‘go’	<i>mal-</i>	<i>malī</i> (/mal-ī/)	(i) <i>yapī</i> (/i-apī/) ¹⁰	<i>mīla</i> (/mal-la/)

The imperfective and irrealis forms of *i-* ‘come’ are entirely regular. This verb, however, lacks a designated perfective form. It is not alone in having such a deficit, as there are several other verbs that are deponent and use imperfective morphology to encode both imperfective and perfective aspect. Interestingly, in the case of ‘come’, however, this perfective form has migrated to become the (suppletive) perfective form of the verb *mal-* ‘go’. This verb *mal-* ‘go’ forms its imperfective quite regularly (*malī*), but has the suppletive perfective form /i-apī/. The irrealis form shows vowel mutation in the stem, a change which I believe serves a practical function. Without any such stem change, the irrealis form would be pronounced (after degemination of the consecutive / consonants) as **mala*; and, since final /a/ is usually reduced to [i], this would often lead to the form **malī*, thereby creating a confusing homophony with the imperfective form of the same verb. The irregular change in the stem vowel of the irrealis form, however, prevents this confusion and results in an interesting metathetic relationship between *malī* ‘go [IPFV]’ and *mīla* ‘go [IRR]’.

The adoption of *(i)*yapī* ‘come [PFV]’ as the suppletive form to fill the perfective gap in the *mal-* ‘go’ paradigm seems, however, not to have been fully accepted, as speakers sometimes use the imperfective form *malī* with perfective meaning (sometimes even adding the perfect prefix *a-* to clarify its perfective aspect). Similarly, as alluded to in §4.6, the perfect prefix can also be used with the morphologically imperfective form of *i-* ‘come’ to clarify that it has perfective meaning (the morphologically perfective form of *i-* ‘come’ would be, of course, unusable, since it has developed the meaning of ‘go’ instead).

⁹ This is the imperfective form plus the perfect prefix *a-*.

¹⁰ This is a suppletive perfective form (< *i-* ‘come’); (a)*malī* may also be used to mean ‘go [PFV]’.

This text is taken from *A Sketch Grammar of Pondi*, by Russell Barlow,
published 2020 by ANU Press, The Australian National University,
Canberra, Australia.

doi.org/10.22459/SGP.2020.04