

Tense, Aspect and Negation (TAN) in Ìgáṣí

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Abstract

Studies that are available on Ìgáṣí have only classified the speech form as one of the speech forms under the Akòkòid language cluster but none has examined tense, aspect and negation in the speech form. The present study provides a descriptive account of tense, aspect and negation in the speech form. It maintains that tense in Ìgáṣí polarises future and non-future. It establishes, among other things, that the speech form uses the pre-verbal particle *á* to mark its future tense and demonstrates that aspects in the speech form are divided into perfect and imperfect. The study also claims that Ìgáṣí has three basic negative morphemes which are *kpa*, *se* and *àgè* and shows that the future tense, perfect and habitual aspects have overt morphemes that reflect their presence in negative sentences. It is further claimed that *àgè* which is divisible into nominal prefix (*à*) and negator (*gè*) functions as the lexical negator in the speech form. Data in this study were obtained from native speakers of Ìgáṣí through oral interviews and their responses were recorded. It is hoped that this study, throws more light on the relationship among the functional categories (tense, aspect and negation) in Ìgáṣí speech form and document its syntax for posterity as nothing has been in that category.

1 Introduction

Functional categories are words without idiosyncratic descriptive content or properties; they primarily serve as information carriers coded in the grammatical properties of expression within the sentence Radford (1997). Functional categories belong to the closed class of words as a result, new entries either through lexical borrowing or morphological derivations are not allowed into their class Ilori (2010). Scholars such as Awoyale (1995) have identified the following as functional categories in languages: preposition, determiner, conjunction, complementizer, tense, aspect, modal, agreement markers, negators, focus markers and genitive markers. In this present paper, we examine three functional categories in Ìgáṣí namely: tense, aspect and negation for the purpose of documentation.

Ìgáṣí is a speech form spoken in one of the communities in Àkókó North West Local Government Area of Oṅdó State. The community is bounded by Eritì, Àjowá and Arigidi. Scholars such as Hoffman (1974) have classified the speech form as the Northern Akokoid Cluster while Akinkugbe (1976) refers to it as Akokoid. Capo (1989) in his work proposes Àmgbè as the nomenclature for the speech form and Fadoro (2010, 2012) regards the speech form as Arigidi Òwòṅ. However, Olaogun (2016) proposes Njo-Koo language for a group of mutually intelligible speech forms formally known as Amgbe/Arigidi cluster spoken in six towns (Òkè-àgbè, Ìgáṣí, Àjowá, Arigidi and Erúṣú) in the Northwest of Àkókó in Oṅdó State. The six towns are

made up of nine settlements which are Ìgá sí, Arigidi, Erú sù, Oyín and Urò in Àjowá and Áfá, Ògè, Àjè, Udò in Òkè-àgbè. Very little is published on Ìgá sí. The available works on the speech form are on classification without any thorough exploration into the structures of the speech form. This is not to say that there are no myriads of scholarly works on tense, aspect and negation on Akokoidlects. However, no work exists or has been published on tense and aspect in Ìgá sí.

This present paper is an effort to fill this gap and it is prompted by Crystal's (2000) clarion call that linguists should explore endangered languages for the purpose of documentation before the languages go into extinction.

2 Tense

Tense relates events to the time of an action and it specifies the time of the event. It creates a link between the time of an action and the period of utterance. Lyons (1979:304) notes that the essential characteristic of the category of tense is that it relates the time of an action, event or state of affairs referred to in the sentence to the time of utterance, the time of utterance being now. Comrie (1985) claims that tense is a grammaticalised expression of location in time. Omasor (1982) identifies three points with reference to time; the points are retrospective point (RP), the time anterior to the time of initiation of speech, anticipated point (AP), the time posterior to the point of initiation of speech and the point present (PP), the point of initiation of speech. The summation from the definitions shows that tense relates the time of an action, event or state of affairs in languages. Having said this, the next section will be dedicated to the examination of how tense relates the time of an action, event and states of affairs in Ìgá sí.

2.1 Past tense in Ìgá sí

Past tense signifies an event that occurs prior to the time of the utterance. Yuka and Omorege (2011) state that past tense signals an event frame that precedes the moment of speech. In Ìgá sí, there is no overt phonetically visible morpheme for marking past tense; the past action is assumed to reflect on the verb in the sentence because it shows a completed action. See the examples below:

- 1a Adé vè
Adé go
'Adé went.'
- 1b Òjò jwu ìtí
Òjò eat yam
'Òjò ate yam.'
- 1c Bòdé di bàtà
Bòdé buy shoe
'Bòdé bought shoes.'
- 1d Dúpé şwè mí
Dúpé call 1st SG OBJ
'Dúpé called me.'

It is evident in 1 that the action expressed by the verb is anterior to the time of the utterance. The verbs in the sentences show a completed action prior to the time of discussion. A careful observation shows that no item is phonetically visible between the subject NP and the verb in 1 above. Interestingly, this situation is not strange to Benue Congo languages. It is reported in

Bamgbose (1990) that Yorùbá does not have overt marker for past tense. Consider the following examples:

- 2a *Délé rí wọn*
 Délé see 3rd PL OBJ
 ‘Délé saw them.’
- 2b *A ra aṣọ*
 1st PL buy clothes
 ‘We bought clothes.’

Bamgbose (1990:167)

Similarly, Ogunmodimu (2013) also reports that Àhàn language has no overt morpheme for marking past tense; see the examples below:

- 3a *Má gbe usu*
 NP plant yam
 ‘I planted yam.’
- 3b *Kólé kó ode*
 Kólé build house
 ‘Kolé built a house.’

Ogunmodimu (2013)

From the examples 2 and 3 in Àhàn and Yorùbá, one notices that null phonetic item for past tense is not strange to the Defoid group of the Benue Congo languages. Moreover, to locate the appropriate time of the past time adverbs such as *inúra* ‘yesterday’ *òrun górin* ‘this morning’ *òsé nẹ kọja* ‘last week’ are often employed. It must be noted, however, that African languages such as Nweh morphologically distinguish between the past tense types, that is, immediate past (past within ‘today’), near past (past restricted to ‘yesterday’) and distant (remote) past (any time in the past prior to ‘yesterday’), Nkemnji (1995).

2.2 Future tense

The future tense locates events in some time ahead from the moment of speech (Yuka and Omorege 2011). Future tense is morphologically marked in Ìgáṣí, the morpheme *á* is used to mark future actions and it precedes the verb in the sentences. This is illustrated in the examples below:

- 4a *Adé á vè*
 Adé FUT go
 ‘Adé will go.’
- 4b *Òjó á ju ití*
 Òjó FUT eat yam
 ‘Òjó will eat yam.’
- 4c *Bòdé á di bàtà*
 Bòdé FUT buy shoe
 ‘Bòdé will buy shoe.’
- 4d *Dúpé á ṣwè mí*
 Dúpé FUT call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpé will call me.’

As shown in 4 the actions indicated by the verbs in the sentences are posterior to the time of the utterance. The presence of the preverbal particle (*á*) which precedes the verbs in the examples 4 shows that the events discussed in the sentences indicate future occurrences. It can be observed that 1 and 4 are declarative sentences in Ìgáṣí. The occurrence of the preverbal particle in 7 and its non-occurrence in 4 may tentatively prompt an argument that declarative sentences can be divided into two based on their tenses (future or non-future). However, the division of tenses into future and non-future is common to some Defoidlanguages and their dialects. Ogunmodimu (2013) claims, that in Àhàn, affirmative sentences are divided into future and non-future tense. Similarly, Bamgbose (1990) notices a similar situation in Yorùbá. However, Nkemnji (1995) claims that future tense are graduated in Nweh where he identified three types of future tense type, that is, immediate (today) future, near (tomorrow) future and distant (remote) future.

3 Aspect

Aspect is one of the functional categories that is attested in Ìgáṣí. According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002:117) aspect applies to a system where the basic meaning has to do with the internal temporal constituency of the situation. Aspects in Ìgáṣí are divided basically into two namely: imperfect and perfect.

3.1 Progressive aspect in Ìgáṣí

Progressive aspect primarily shows that the action specified by the verb is ongoing as at the time of the utterance or was on-going in the past. Obiamalu (2015) succinctly describes progressive aspect as an on-going process at the time of speaking, traditionally referred to as present continuous. It could also refer to an on-going action at a point in time in the past, traditionally referred to as past continuous. Ìgáṣí uses *ró* as a progressive marker. The preverbal particle occurs between the subject DP and the verb as exemplified in the examples below:

- 5a *Adé ró vè*
 Adé PROG go
 ‘Adé is going.’
- 5b *Òjó ró jwu ìtí*
 Ojó PROG eat yam
 ‘Òjó is eating yam.’
- 5c *Bòdé ró di bàtà*
 Bòdé PROG buy shoe
 ‘Bòdé is buying shoes.’
- 5d *Dúpé ró ṣwè mí*
 Dúpé PROG call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpé is calling me.’

As shown in 5 the presence of the progressive aspectual marker in the examples indicated that the action of the verb is happening as at the time of the utterance, that is, the action is on-going when the utterance is made. Progressive aspect sometimes may have the semantics of habitual aspect based on the context of use. As stated earlier, progressive aspect can indicate past actions/events. See the examples below:

- 6a' *Olú ró òṣẹ́ ùvọ́ ifọ́ ni vadi*
 Olú PROG sleep hand duration CPA arrive
 'Olú was sleeping when I arrived.'
- 6a'' *Ifọ́ ni vadi olú ró òṣẹ́ ùvọ́*
 Duration PART arrive Olú PROG sleep hand
 'When I arrived, Olú was sleeping.'
- 6b' *Adé ró fọ́ aḥọ́ inúra ifọ́ ni oji*
 Adé PROG wash clothes yesterday duration CPA rain
ró tẹ́
 PROG fall
 'Adé was washing clothes yesterday when rain was falling.'
- 6b'' *Ifọ́ ni oji ró tẹ́ Adé ró*
 duration PART rain PROG fall Adé PROG
aḥọ́ inúra
 clothes yesterday
 'when rain was falling, Adé was washing clothes yesterday'

As illustrated in 6 the progressive aspect is not limited to on-going actions in the present but also in the past actions. The examples in 5 and 6, represent two events while one is foregrounding the other is backgrounding. In effect, one can argue that progressive aspect in Ìgáṣí relate on-going actions or events in the present in 5 while 6 shows an on-going event in the past, using the same *ró* as progressive marker. The examples in 6 present two events, while 6b' is backgrounding, 6a'' is foregrounding. The same thing is applicable to 6b' and 6b''. The particle *ni* that occurs immediately after *ifọ́* in the sentences is complimentizer adjunct.

3.2 Habitual Aspect

Habitual aspect indicates an action that occurs often or regularly. Fabunmi (2009) refers to habitual aspect as an action with an indefinite occurrence. *ré* is used to mark this particular action in Ìgáṣí. Consider the examples below:

- 7a *Adé ré vẹ́ aja*
 Adé HAB go market
 'Adé used to go to the market.'
- 7b *Ọ́jọ́ ré ju ìtì*
 Ọ́jọ́ HAB eat yam
 'Ọ́jọ́ used to eat yam.'
- 7c *Bọ́dẹ́ ré di bàtà*
 Bọ́dẹ́ HAB buy shoe
 'Bọ́dẹ́ used to buy shoes.'
- 7d *Dúpẹ́ ré ṣwẹ́ mí*
 Dúpẹ́ HAB call 1st SG OBJ
 'Dúpẹ́ used to call me.'

In 7, the actions of the verb described by the habitual marker are events that occur often. It is important to note that Ìgáṣí has a peculiar habitual aspect marker which is monosyllabic unlike some Defoid languages such Standard Yorùbá and Yorùbá Àkókó where the habitual aspect polysyllabic, that is, *máa nì* and *mà í* respectively (see Fabunmi 2009).

3.3 Perfect aspect

Perfect aspect indicates a completed action of the verb. In Ìgá sí, the preverbal particle *kais* is used as the perfect aspect. See the examples below:

- 8a *Adé ka vè*
 Adé PERF go
 ‘Adé has gone.’
- 8b *Òjò ka jwu ití*
 Òjò PERF eat yam
 ‘Òjò has eating yam.’
- 8c *Bòdé ka di bàtà*
 Bòdé PERF buy shoe
 ‘Bòdé has bought shoes.’
- 8d *Dúpé ka şwè mí*
 Dúpé PERF call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpé has called me.’

As shown in 8, the presence of the preverbal particle indicates that the action of the verb is completed and it is in the past because the action of the verb is anterior to the time of the utterance. It is important to note that present perfect tense is not attested in Ìgá sí just like Yorùbá where there is no visible morpheme for present tense.

3.4 The relationship between tense and aspect in Ìgá sí

The co-occurrence of pre-verbal particles such as tense and aspect among others has been reported in Benue-Congo languages such as Yorùbá, Ìgbò and Àhàn. Ìgá sí, the language, under discussion is not excluded as aspects and tense are allowed to co-occur in well-formed sentences. Based on this fact, the examination of the relationship between aspects and tense and their order of occurrence in sentences becomes necessary in this study.

3.4.1 Co-occurrence of aspects in Ìgá sí

Two aspectual markers are allowed to co-occur in a well-formed sentence. Perfect aspect can co-occur freely with both progressive and habitual aspects. Consider the examples below:

- 9a *Adé ka ró ko òşę*
 Adé PERF PROG sing song
 ‘Adé has been singing song (s).’
- 9b *Olú ka ró òşę*
 Olú PERF PROG sleep
 ‘Olú has been sleeping.’
- 10a *Adé ka ré si dèndè*
 Adé PERF HAB run surpass
 ‘Adé used to run often.’
- 10b *Adé ka ré jà dèndè*
 Adé PERF HAB fight surpass
 ‘Adé used to fight often.’
- 11a **Adé ró ka ko òşę*
 Adé PROG PERF sing song

- 11b **Adé ré ka vè*
 Adé HAB PERF go
- 11c **Olú ró ré vè*
 Olú PROG HAB go
- 11d **Olú ré ró vè*
 Olú HAB PROG go

As shown in 9 and 10, perfect aspect occurs freely with progressive and habitual aspect in the sentences. It is observed in the data that there is order of precedence in terms of the occurrence of the aspectual markers in the sentences. Perfect aspect occurs first before any other aspectual marker; however, the reversal of this ordering may lead to ungrammaticality as shown in 11a and 11b. Note that the co-occurrence of Ìgáṣí aspectual marker is restricted, apart from the perfect aspect that occurs freely, no other aspectual marker can co-occur in a well formed sentence; hence the ungrammaticality of 11c and 11d. The occurrence of two aspectual markers in a well-formed sentence is not strange in Defoid languages. Bamgbose (1990) reports that two aspectual markers are allowed to co-occur in Yorùbá sentence as illustrated in the examples below:

- 12a *Wón ti n lẹ*
 3PL PERF PROG go
 ‘They have been going.’
- 12b *Wón ti máa n lẹ*
 3PL PERF HAB go
 ‘They are used to go.’

3.4.2 Co-occurrences of Tense and Aspect in Ìgáṣí

Tense and aspectual markers are allowed to co-occur in a well-formed sentence in Ìgáṣí. It must be noted that the arrangement of the preverbal particles are not haphazardly done, they are arranged one after the other in a pattern that is considered permissible on account of style and meaning in the language. Consider the examples below:

- 13a *Olú ka á de Èkò*
 Olú PERF FUT get Lagos
 ‘Olú would have got to Lagos.’
- 13b *Akin ka á jwihọ*
 Akin PERF FUT eat food
 ‘Akin would have eaten food.’
- 13c **Bayo á ka jwihọ*
 Bayo FUT PERF eat food

As evident in 13, it can be observed that the perfect aspect precedes the future tense marker in the sentence. However, the reversal of the arrangement as shown in 13c leads to ill-formed sentence. Observe also that it is only perfect aspect marker that can co-occur with tense marker in a well-formed sentence. The occurrence of other aspectual markers with tense in Ìgáṣí will result in ungrammatical sentence. From the arrangement of the future tense and perfect aspect in examples 13a and 13b one can say that tense establishes the time framework and aspect sets out how the situation is distributed within the time framework. Having explained tense and

aspect in relations to verbs in Ìgáṣí, the next section will be dedicated to the relationship between negation, tense, aspect and focus in Ìgáṣí.

4 Negation

Negation implies the contradiction of the assertions made in a sentence. Crystal (2008) asserts that negation is a process or construction in a grammatical or semantic analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence meaning. Scholars have divided negation into two; they are constituent negation and sentence negation. Constituent negation presupposes the contradiction of some or parts of a sentence while sentence negation implies the negation of a whole sentence (see Payne 1992). Ìgáṣí manifests both the constituent and sentence negation. Ìgáṣí has the three basic negative markers. They are *kpa* ('not'), *se* ('don't') and *gè* ('un-'). Note that perfective, progressive, habitual and future actions have overt morphemes that show their presence in negative sentence. Consider the examples below:

4.1 Sentence negation (indicating past action)

Sentence negation which indicates past action implies denying the action of the verb that is anterior to the time of the utterance. This is shown in the sentences below:

- 14a *Adé kpa vè*
 Ade NEG₁ go
 'Ade didn't go.'
- 14b *Òjó kpa ju ití*
 Òjó NEG₁ eat yam
 'Òjó didn't eat yam.'
- 14c *Bòdé kpa di bàtà*
 Bòdé NEG₁ buy shoes
 'Bòdé didn't buy shoes.'
- 14d *Dúpé kpa swè mí*
 Dúpé NEG₁ call 1st SG OBJ
 'Dúpé didn't call me.'

In 14, it is observed that the negative marker *kpa* surfaces between the subject DP and the verb. The negative marker denies/negates the assertion of the verb in the sentence. It is important to note that the tense of the sentence is reflected on the negative marker. This observation is similar to Bamgbose's (1967) claim with respect to Yorùbá. He submits that in Yorùbá sentences where a negator is followed by a verb in the positive unmarked tense; it normally indicates the unmarked tense. That is, the negativemarker in the sentence reflects the tense which could be past or non-past irrespective of whether the verb is an "action" verb or not.

4.1.1 Sentence negation (indicating future action)

Sentence negation which shows future action presupposes that the action of the verb that is posterior to the time of the utterance is negated. This is illustrated below:

- 15a *Adé kpà romi vè*
 Adé NEG₁ FUT go
 'Adé will not go.'

- 15b *Òjọ̀ kpà romi ju ìtí*
 Òjọ̀ NEG₁ FUT eat yam
 ‘Òjọ̀ will not eat yam.’
- 15c *Bọ̀dẹ̀ kpà romi di bàtà*
 Bọ̀dẹ̀ NEG₁ FUT buy shoes
 ‘Bọ̀dẹ̀ will not buy shoes.’
- 15d *Dúpẹ̀ kpà romi şwè mí*
 Dúpẹ̀ NEG₁ FUT call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpẹ̀ will not call me.’

In 15, there is a phonetically visible element (*romi*) that occurs after the negative marker between the subject DP and the verb which shows that the negative sentence is discussing a future action. It is observed that the form of future marker has a different shape in the negative sentence as shown in examples 15. In the positive sentence in 4 the future marker is *á* and it precedes the verb but in the negative sentence in 15 the shape of the future tense marker is *romi*. The difference in the shape of future marker as shown in 4 and 15, is not strange in languages. A similar situation is reported in Yorùbá. Consider the Yorùbá examples below:

- 16a *Olú máa lọ*
 Olú FUT go
 ‘Olú will go.’
- 16b *Olú kò nìí lọ*
 Olú NEG FUT go
 ‘Olú will not go.’

In the Yorùbá examples, the shape of the future maker is deferent in the negative sentence. It is *máa* in the positive sentence as shown in 16a while the morpheme is *nìí* in the negative sentence in 16b. A keen observer will also notice that Ìgá sí negative marker carries (*kpà*) low tone in 15 compared to its basic mid tone as shown in 14. The simple explanation for the change in the tone as noted in 15, can probably be attributed to the reflection of the future tense in the sentences which has resulted in tone lowering.

4.1.2 Sentence Negation (indicating progressive aspect)

Sentence negation which shows progressive aspect presupposes that the action of the verb that is on-going as at the time of the utterance or in the past is negated. See examples 17 below:

- 17a *Adé kpà vè*
 Adé NEG₁ go
 ‘Adé is not going.’
- 17b *Òjọ̀ kpà jwu ìtí*
 Òjọ̀ NEG₁ eat yam
 ‘Òjọ̀ is not eating yam.’
- 17c *Bọ̀dẹ̀ kpà di bàtà*
 Bọ̀dẹ̀ NEG₁ buy shoes
 ‘Bọ̀dẹ̀ is not buying shoes.’

- 17d *Dúpé kpà swè mí*
 Dúpé NEG₁ call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpé didn’t call me.’

It is evident in 17 that the action of the verb is negated. It is also observed that there is no overt manifestation of progressive marker in the sentences as shown in the positive counterparts in 5. As rightly observed in Bamgbose (1990), when Yorùbá verb without an overt marker of tense is negated in a sentence, the tense is always reflected on the negative marker. This process is applicable to aspect without overt marker in Ìgáṣí as shown in 17, the aspect is reflected on the negative marker. A careful observation shows that the negative marker in the sentences that contain progressive aspect in 17 and the past tense in 14 is the same. The reason for this is not farfetched, Ìgáṣí has no visible morpheme for past action and the progressive aspect with visible morpheme in the positive sentence may on several occasions refer to present events because it indicates an ongoing action at the time of the utterance (the on-going events can either be in the past or present). However, in 17, the marker of progressive aspect is not shown in the negative sentences. This, we believe, must have prompted the same negative marker for the two sentences but the negative marker indicates two different things in the two sentences while one indicates past action, the other shows an on-going action. This argument may lead us to suggest that *kpa* in the two sentences are homonyms or that same element (*kpa*) performs the two functions. This observation is not peculiar to Ìgáṣí alone, a similar situation is observed in Yorùbá. In Yorùbá, sentences which reflect past tense and progressive aspect have the same negative marker. See the examples below in Yorùbá:

- 18a *Adé lọ* Adé went. positive sentence (past)
 18b *Adé kò lọ* Adé did not go. negative sentence (past)
 18c *Adé n lọ* Adé is going. positive progressive
 18d *Adé ko lọ* Adé is not going. negative progressive

4.1.3 Sentence Negation (indicating perfect aspect)

Sentence negation which has a reflection of perfective aspect means that the action of the verb that is temporarily completed is negated. This is illustrated in 25 below:

- 19a *Adé kpà ma vè*
 Adé NEG₁ PERF go
 ‘Adé has not gone.’
 19b *Òjọ kpà ma jwu ití*
 Òjọ NEG₁ PERF eat yam
 ‘Òjọ has not eaten yam.’
 19c *Bòdé kpà ma di bàtà*
 Bòdé NEG₁ PERF buy shoes
 ‘Bòdé has not bought shoes.’
 19d *Dúpé kpà ma swè mí*
 Dúpé NEG₁ PERF call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpé has not call me.’

In 19, the sentences indicate that the perfective actions of the verbs are negated. One observes that the form of the perfect aspect in the negative sentence is *ma* compared to its positive counterparts in 8 where *kais* is used as perfect aspect. It is also noticed that the tone of the negative

marker changes from mid to high. The simple explanation for this tonal change can probably be that Ìgáṣí prohibits the contiguous occurrence of two mid tone preverbal particles. This may probably be the rationale for raising the mid tone of the negative marker to high tone when it is followed by another preverbal particle with a mid-tone.

4.1.4 Sentence Negation (indicating habitual aspect)

Sentence negation which reflects habitual aspect simply suggests that the action of the verb that indicates indefinite action is negated. This is exemplified in (26) below:

- 20a *Adé kpà ré vè aja*
 Adé NEG₁ HAB go market
 ‘Adé did not use to go market.’
- 20b *Òjò kpà ré jwu ìtí*
 Òjò NEG₁ HAB eat yam
 ‘Òjò did not use to eat yam.’
- 20c *Bòdé kpà ré di bàtà*
 Bòdé NEG₁ HAB buy shoe
 ‘Bòdé did not use to buy shoes.’
- 20d *Dúpé kpà ré ṣwè mí*
 Dúpé NEG₁ HAB call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘Dúpé did not use to call me.’

As shown in 20 above, it is observed that the predicates of the sentences which reflect habitual aspects are negated. It is evident in the examples, that the shape of the habitual marker remains constant and its high tone is retained just like the positive counterparts. Worthy of explanation is the tonal variations observed in the negative marker indicating future action and perfective aspect that is not applicable to the negative marker in 20. The simple reason for this is that the habitual marker maintains its high tone just like as it were in the positive sentence. Thus, the consistency of the tone of the negative and the habitual markers block the process of tone lowering and raising of the negative marker as illustrated in 15 and 19.

4.2 Focus Negation

Focus negation implies negating the emphasized constituent in a sentence. The negated constituent could either be the subject, object, verb, adverb, or adjective in a sentence (Adeoye 2018). In Ìgáṣí, the focused constituent negated is always preceded by the negative morpheme *kpá* (neg) *si* (negative particle). It must be noted, that Ìgáṣí has two focus markers which occur in complementary distribution, while *úwọ̀n* focuses only subject NP, *wín* focuses any other constituents in the sentence. Consider the examples below:

4.2.1 Subject NP negation

Subject NP focus negation, entails the movement of the subject NP to sentence initial position and it is preceded by negative marker *kpá* (NEG) *si* (negative particle) and followed by the focus marker. See the examples below:

- 21a *Kpá si Adé úwọn vè aja*
 NEG₁ PART Adé FOC go market
 ‘It wasn’t Ade that went to market.’
- 21b *Kpá si Òjó úwọn jwu ití*
 NEG₁ PART Òjó FOC eat yam
 ‘It wasn’t Òjó that ate yam.’
- 21c *Kpá Si Bòdé úwọn di bàtà*
 NEG₁ PART Bòdé FOC buy shoes
 ‘It wasn’t Bode that bought the shoes.’
- 21d *Kpá si Dúpé úwọn şwè mí*
 NEG₁ PART Dúpé FOC call 1st SG OBJ
 ‘It wasn’t Dúpé that called me.?’

4.2.2 Object NP Negation

Object NP focus negation presupposes that the object of the verb is moved within the IP to sentence initial position and it is preceded by the focus negative marker and followed by the focus marker. This is illustrated below:

- 22a *Kpá si aja win Adé vè*
 NEG₁ PART market FOC Adé go
 ‘It wasn’t the market that Adé that went to.’
- 22b *Kpá si ití win Òjó jwu*
 NEG₁ PART yam FOC Òjó eat
 ‘It wasn’t yam that Òjó ate.’
- 22c *Kpá si bàtà win Bòdé dà*
 NEG₁ PART shoes FOC Bòdé buy
 ‘It wasn’t shoes that Bòdé bought.’
- 22d *Kpá si emí win Dúpé swè*
 NEG₁ PART I FOC Dúpé call
 ‘It wasn’t me that Dúpé called.’

4.2.3 Verb Negation

Verb focus negation involves the process of copying the verb and the addition of a prefix to it before for purpose of nominalisation. The nominalised verb is moved to sentence initial position where it is preceded by the negative marker. See the examples below:

- 23a *Kpá si àve win Adé vè*
 NEG₁ PART going FOC Adé go
 ‘It wasn’t the act of going that Adé performed.’
- 23b *Kpá Si àju win Òjó jwu ití*
 NEG₁ PART eating FOC Òjó eat yam
 ‘It wasn’t eating that Òjó ate yam.’
- 23c *Kpá si àda win Bòdé di bàtà*
 NEG₁ PART buying FOC Bòdé buy shoe
 ‘It wasn’t buying that Bòdé bought shoes.’

- 23d *Kpá si àṣwe win Dúpé ṣwè mí*
 NEG₁ PART calling FOC Dúpé call 1st SG OBJ
 'It wasn't calling that Dúpé called me.'

As shown in 21, 22 and 23 different constituents are focused and negated. In 21, the subject NP is focused and moved to sentence initial position and it is preceded by the negative marker *kpá* (neg) *si* (negative particle). In 22, the focused object NP of the verb is negated while the verb is left stranded. In 23, the focused verb is negated; the verb is copied and it takes a nominal prefix (*à*) before it is moved to sentence initial position and it is also preceded by the negative marker. A careful observer will notice that the choice of the focus markers in the IP is dependent on the position occupied by constituents.

4.3 Lexical Negation

Lexical negation in Ìgáṣí involves the nominal prefix *à* and lexical negator *gè* to the verb. The prefix changes the lexical category of the verb to a noun. Consider the examples below:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|---|----------------|
| 24a | <i>À</i> | <i>gè</i> | <i>vè</i> | → | <i>Àgèvè</i> |
| | Nominal Prefix | NEG ₂ | go | | |
| | The act of not going | | | | |
| 24b | <i>À</i> | <i>gè</i> | <i>ṅṣẹ</i> | → | <i>Àgèṅṣẹ</i> |
| | Nominal Prefix | NEG ₂ | sleep | | |
| | The act of not sleeping | | | | |
| 24c | <i>À</i> | <i>gè</i> | <i>gwó</i> | → | <i>Àgègwó</i> |
| | Nominal Prefix | NEG ₂ | drink | | |
| | The act of not drinking | | | | |
| 24d | <i>À</i> | <i>gè</i> | <i>vadi</i> | → | <i>Àgèvadi</i> |
| | Nominal Prefix | NEG ₂ | return | | |
| | The act of not returning | | | | |
| 24e | <i>À</i> | <i>Gè</i> | <i>ṅgba</i> | → | <i>Àgèṅgba</i> |
| | Nominal Prefix | NEG ₂ | wise | | |
| | The act of not wise. | | | | |

In 24, it is observed that the prefix is a disyllabic item and the occurrence of the element is restricted to verb negation in isolation. It is assumed in this study that *à* is the nominal prefix while *gè* is the negator. This assumption is borne out of that fact that nominalisation process in Ìgáṣí involves *à* prefixation to a verb. Thus, in the derivation of the examples in 24, it is observed that *gè* is prefixed to the **verb** to yield **Negative Phrase**. Afterwards, the nominal prefix *à* is added to Verb Phrase to give **Nominal Phrase** as the output. This implies that the prefix *à* is the head. It changes the lexical category from a Verb to a Noun.

4.4 Imperative Negation

Imperative sentence indicates command or order and the subject of the sentence is always the second person singular or R-expression. Ìgáṣí uses *sẹ* that precedes verbs for this purpose. See the examples below:

- 25a *Sẹ vè*
 NEG₃ go
 Don't go.

- 25b *Sɛ dédí*
 NEG₃ steal
 Don't steal.
- 25c *Sɛ ñsɛ*
 NEG₃ sleep
 Don't sleep.
- 25d *Sɛ jwihɔ*
 NEG₃ eat
 Don't eat.
- 25e *Sɛ gwoűji*
 NEG₃ drink water
 Don't drink water.

As shown in 25, the imperative negator always precedes verb just like the lexical negator. One needs to explain that while lexical negator is a prefix and it changes the lexical category of the verb that gets attached to it, a noun. The imperative negator on the other hand, does not change the status of verb to a noun but maintains its status as a sentence despite the ellipsis of the subject NP. It must be noted that imperative negator is restrictive in its occurrence and it is in complementary distribution with *kpa*. It is also observed that *sɛ* occurs predominantly in an imperative sentence (command), while *kpa* with other designated morphemes occurs elsewhere.

5 Conclusion

In this article, we have examined the structure of tense, aspect and negation in Ìgáṣí. It is shown in the paper that tense in Ìgáṣí polarises future and non-future tense. It is further established, that the speech form uses the preverbal particle *á* to mark its future tense. It is also demonstrated that the speech form has designated morphemes for future tense, perfective, progressive and habitual aspects in negative sentences just like their positive counterparts. The study claims that Ìgáṣí has three basic negative markers which are *kpa*, *sɛ* and *àgè*. It is shown in this study that two preverbal particles with mid tone cannot occur side by side, as a result, the negative marker undergoes tone lowering or tone raising

List of Abbreviations

- 1st, 2nd, 3rd first, second, and third person pronoun respectively
- CPA complementizer adjunct
- FOC focus marker
- FUT future tense for affirmative (*á*) and negative future tense (*romi*)
- IP inflectional phrase
- HAB habitual aspect marker for both affirmative and negative
- NEG₁ sentence negation
- NEG₂ lexical negation
- NEG₃ imperative negation
- NP noun phrase

OBJ	object
PART	particle for negative particle (<i>si</i>)
PERF	perfective aspect marker for affirmative (<i>ka</i>) resp. negative sentences (<i>ma</i>)
PL	plural
PROG	progressive aspect marker
SG	singular
VP	verb phrase

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