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ASPECT: AN ELEMENT OF INFL PHRASE IN IGBO SYNTAX

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Abstract

This paper examined aspect as an element of INFL phrase in Igbo, the verb forms use in expressing aspect, their inflectional patterns, how they are marked and their tonal behaviours. The work adopted a descriptive method in the analysis of the data. It identified different verb forms, participle verb forms and inflectional affixes used in expressing aspect in Igbo language. The inflectional affixes are bound morphemes which are overtly morphologically marked on the verb stems in the syntactic structures. The aspectual markers are hosted by the verb stems with their distinctive tones. A verb form can mark two aspects simultaneously in the syntactic structures. The auxiliaries *na* and *ga* are employed in expressing progressive and habitual aspects. *Ga* is also used to express future and perfective aspects. The presence of the obligatory harmonizing vowel prefix *a-/e-* is significant in the participle verb forms which are used in expressing aspects in Igbo. The aspectual markers and the auxiliaries which mark aspects in Igbo are dominated in INFL phrase. Tone plays vital role in Igbo aspects. The rule of vowel harmony was also observed.

Key Words: Aspect, INFL Phrase, Aux, X-bar, Progressive Aspect

Introduction

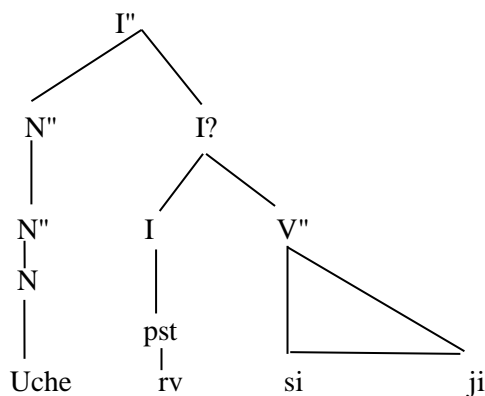
Aspect is an element dominated under INFL phrase. The category INFL was introduced by Chomsky (1981) in his Government and Binding framework. INFL category comprises elements such as tense, aspect, mood, modality, negation, number and gender. Haegeman (1991) contends that INFL is a node which is taken to dominate all verbal inflections that is,

including person and number properties. She further states that INFL dominates not only the tense features of the verb but also its agreement properties (AGR). Ndimele (1992) noted that evidence from languages show that there are certain parameterized differences regarding the content of INFL across languages. Aspect is a universal phenomenon. It is realized differently across languages. Every natural language possesses its ways of realizing aspect. In some language, it can be achieved through the verb and affixes whereas in some it can be achieved with lexical words. The function and meaning conveyed by the term “aspect” is the same in universal grammar (UG).

Theoretical Background

INFL reflects differently in various languages. Chomsky (1981, 1982, 1986), Koopman (1983), Lasnik and Uriagereka (1988) assert that INFL is an obligatory category of the sentence; it is not yet obvious that the nodes dominated by INFL are realized alike in all languages. In the generative grammar of Chomsky (1957), inflection phrase (IP) was then discussed as the auxiliary (AUX). In the government and binding framework, AUX was replaced with INFL because INFL is said to be much more accommodating node than AUX. Now, AUX is harboured within INFL, that is, it is now under INFL. Yusuf (1997) attests that the term “AUX” has gone into disuse and the term “INFL” has come to replace it. The maximal projection IP consists of I and a specifier. I in turn comprises of I and a complement. Now the S node is replaced by inflectional projection (IP) as shown thus:

Fig. 1



The above figure indicates that the sentence is a projection of IP. INFL can account for all sentences with and without over auxiliaries whereas Aux cannot. Chomsky (1981), Ndimele (1992) and Yusuf 1997, p. 42) claim that such verbs as *have* and *may* do not look like inflections although the affixes do, however, there is possibility that they are inflectional in many languages. In Chomsky (1986), he replaced INFL by the single-letter symbol (I). Radford (2004) suggest that the general idea behind this label is that auxiliaries are inflected forms. He illustrates his contention using the sentences.

2. He doesn't know

The auxiliary *doesn't* carries the third person singular present tense *-s*. The infinitival *to* serves much the same function in English as inflection in languages such as Italian, which have overtly inflected infinitive (example, Italian *canta-re* (to sing). He further asserts that under INFL analysis, an auxiliary such as *should* is a finite INFL, whereas the particle *to* is an infinitival INFL, examples:

3.
 - a. It is necessary that Jude should show interest.
 - b. John believes that Luke is very intelligent.
 - c. John considers Luke to be very intelligent.

In the above data (3a and b), the sentences contain tense and finite verbs whereas (3c) contains an infinitive, which does not have tense.

Methodology

X-bar theory is the theoretical framework adopted in this work. The descriptive approach was employed in the analysis of the data. The data used for the study come from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary source was made up of the data drawn largely from the indigenes who are the native speakers of Igbo language that is the L₁ speakers through listening and recording of their natural occurring speeches during discourses, conversations, along the streets and market squares. The researcher as an Igbo native speaker also added her intuitive knowledge for some data.

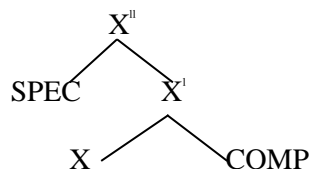
For the secondary source, insights were gained from the library materials, textbooks and journal articles.

Theoretical Framework: X-bar Theory, an Overview

X-bar theory is the theoretical framework adopted in this work. The framework is a system of grammatical analysis that seeks to refine the traditional account of phrase structure. According to the theory, X is a category variable which represents the conventional elements such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition and so on. Mmadike (1998) postulated that X-bar theory specifies how phrases and clauses are built up out of lower constituents. The lower constituents are said to be the head upon which the build-up relies. The central notion of the theory is that each of the major lexical categories (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition) is the head of a structure dominated by a phrasal node of the same category (noun as in noun phrase, verb as in verb phrase, etc.). Following this notion Finch (2000:135) asserts that the basic requirement of this approach is the recognition of intermediate stages in the formation of phrases. In his view, Radford (1997, p.92) argued that X-bar is used to designate immediate projection that is larger than a word but does not project to even larger type of expression like phrase. The X-bar (X¹) captures the endocentric relationship between the phrase and its head. There is indication here that x-bar is head-based. The head which x-bar emphasizes is related to the phrase. The theory makes use of bars such as double bars and single bars in the analysis of

intermediate categories. It occurs in the configuration below as represented by Jackendoff (1977, p.14) thus:

Fig. 2



In the above configuration, X is dominated by X¹, which in turn is immediately dominated by X^{II}, X¹ is the immediate head of X^{II} and X is the ultimate head of X^{II} SPEC is a sister to X¹ and X is a sister to COMP. In this way, COMP exists in a closer relationship to X than SPEC and SPEC has a closer tie to X¹ than COMP. SPEC and COMP appear in different structural positions within the phrase. XP is regarded as the maximal category X¹, the intermediated category and X is the lexical category. This theory permits considerable economy in the formation of phrases.

Aspect

Aspect expresses events or actions which take place through time. It does not tell us a specific time an action or event takes place unlike tense, which talks about a specific time an event takes place. According to Crystal (2007, p. 36) aspect is a “category used in the grammatical description of verb (along with tense and mood) referring primarily to the way the grammar marks the duration or type of temporal activity denoted by the verb.” It indicates whether the event, state, process or action that is denoted by the verb is completed or is in progress. Aspect further refers to events which take place through time, duration may have a beginning, a middle and an end. In this case, we refer to an event at its beginning as inceptive aspect and its termination as perfective or completive aspect. An event may be viewed as continuing through time along the way between termination and initiation or inceptive and termination (duration or progressive. Any action that is in its initiation/inception stage/beginning stage is called inceptive aspect.

Ndimele (1993, p. 82) contended that aspect is “a grammatical category which designates the internal temporal organization of a situation described by the verb.” This is in collaboration with Richards et al (2002, p. 34). They classified aspect into two, lexical and grammatical aspect.

Lexical aspect, according Richards et al, refers to the internal semantics of verbs, which can be grouped into number of categories such as states, activities, accomplishment, achievements and so on. Grammatical aspect according to Richards et al refers to “the resources provided by a language (such as verbal auxiliaries, prefixes and suffixes) to encode different perspectives taken by a speaker towards activities, events and states”. Trask (1993, p. 21) maintained that the aspectual categories often expressed are perfective aspect, perfect aspect and imperfect aspect. The perfective aspect, according to him involves a verb form that hardly expresses

references to the internal temporal constituency of a situation. Trask (1993:204 and 224) illustrates this with the English sentence in below examples 4 and 5.

4. Lisa learned French in Caen.

Furthermore, he points out that this aspectual category has a sub-division, punctual. This expresses an action or state confined to a single instant of time, example.

5. Hillary reached the summit Everest.

The perfect aspect associates with the verb form that expresses a state resulting from an earlier event. Trask explains that in most languages, the same verb form may be used to express related distinct perfect aspect notion, such as experiential, the hot news and the resultative. The imperfective aspect makes reference to the internal structure of the activity expressed by the verb. Trask (1993, p. 135) noted its sub-divisions, which include habitual, progressive, iterative, durative and so.

In his view Radford (2004, p. 323) posits that the term aspect “is typically used to denote the duration of the activity described by a verb (example, whether the activity is ongoing or completed”. He illustrates with the following sentences.

6. a. He has/had taken the medicine (perfective aspect)
b. He is taking the medicine (progressive aspect)

The auxiliary *has/had* mark the perfective aspect. It marks perfection in sense of “completion” or “termination” of the activity of “taken the medicine”. For analogous reason, *taken* is said to be a perfective participles verb form in example (6a). (though, it is referred to in traditional grammars as the past participle). When we have a perfective structure, we pair the auxiliary *have* with *-en* participle. In (6b), *is* functions as auxiliary which marks progressive aspect because it relates to an activity that is ongoing or in progress. The verb *taking* in (6b) is used to be the progressive participle form of the verb (though it is sometimes known in the traditional grammars as the perfective participle). The progressive is a pairing of the verb *be* with an *-ing* progressive form. From the above data, *has, had, is -en* and *-ing* are under INFL.

Sometimes, the progressive and the perfective aspects can be combined in a sentence thus:

7. a. She has been looking for a house for two years
b. She had been looking for a house for years

It is observed that the progressive and continuous aspect involve in the use of *BE* + a present participle (to be) as shown in examples (6b and 7a) above, whether present or past takes *ing*. The perfective aspect involves *have* + a past participle (*have* + *en*) as shown in (6a). The *en* is attached to the main verb of the sentence to form the past participle form. Thus, the perfective, whether present or past takes the same form.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that aspect is a product of the form and meaning of the verb that is, a product of the morph-syntax and semantics of the verb.

5. Aspect and the Verb Forms in Igbo Language

The verb can be inflected for tense, aspect, mood, number and person in many languages. Igbo verbs bear different inflectional affixes such as tense, aspect and negation. These affixes are bound morphemes. The markers of aspect in Igbo are verb inflectional affixes. This is not surprise because only the verb accepts inflection in Igbo language. Nwachukwu (1983:16) defines inflectional as: “the changes in the internal structure of a word which determines its grammatical or syntactic function”. Emenanjo (1978, p. 167) posited that “it is the verb that carries the aspect marker in the underlying structure”. He further said that the aspect may be deleted in the surface structure. Where in a verb form, there is only one aspect marker explicitly. The inflectional markers that indicate aspect are obligatory. The idea of obligatoriness or obligation was also clarified by Nwachukwu (1983, p.64) when he asserted that obligatory markers must be present in a verb form before it can express the appropriate time meaning. The verb forms use in expressing aspects do not indicate any specific time an action or event take place like tense. In Igbo, the verb is inflected mainly for aspect and minimally for tense. Sometimes, the verb form that expresses aspect in Igbo takes an obligatory harmonizing prefix *a-/e-* and an appropriate suffix. This prefix never occurs as a sole indicator of aspect or tense in Igbo, rather, it is attached to verb root with different suffixes to indicate different time meaning in the language. In Igbo, there are very few verbs that express aspect without any affix. Aspect in Igbo can be progressive, habitual and perfective. Each is expressed in its peculiar way with its verb. Ikekonwu, Ezikeojiaku, Ubani and Ugoji (1999, p.154) posited that there are two ways of expressing aspect in verb morphology: those that take inflectional affixes and those that do not take affixes. They illustrate using below sentences:

8. a. Chikwèrè bù nwanne m.
- b. Chinyèrè bì n’Eddā.
- c. Azù dì nà ngiga.
- d. Achì nò n’ùlò.
- e. Nnàmdì nwèrè egō.
- f. Osisi à tòrò ogologo.

The underlined words indicate aspects, that is, simple aspects. Examples (8e) and (8f) which carry the *-rv* marker like past tense does not indicate tense in the above data, rather, they indicate aspects. Emenanjo (1978:167) asserts that “a simple verb form is one which contains one and only one aspect, while a complex verb form is one which contains more than one aspect marker.”

Expression of Aspects and their Verb Forms in Igbo

In Igbo, different types of aspects can be expressed in the following:

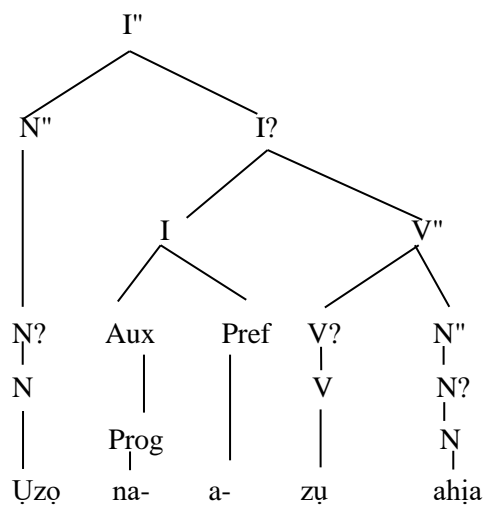
1. Progressive Aspect

This aspect indicates the action that is going on at the time of the utterance and perhaps will continue after. Trask (1993, p. 219) refers to progressive aspect as “an action or event which is in progress at the moment of time serving as the reference point for the utterance.” In Igbo, the auxiliary *na* plus the participle verb is used to express progressive aspect. In other words, the participle verb always follows the auxiliary *na* to express aspect. The auxiliary *na* is consistently on low tone, examples:

9. a. Ụzọ nà-azụ ahịa.
 Ụzò aux-prog-pref –trade market.
 Ụzọ is trading.

The above sentence is represented on the tree diagram below:

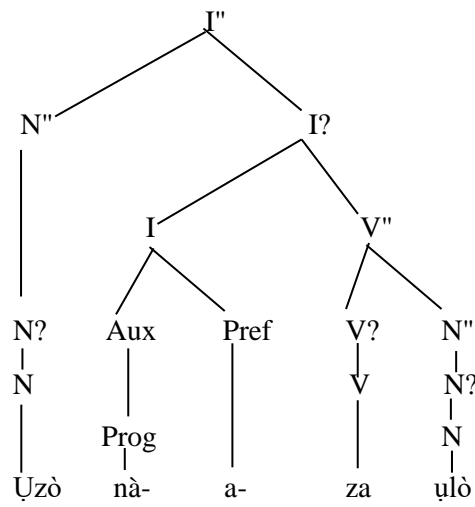
Fig. 3



- b. Nnekà nà-aza ụlò
 Nneka aux-prog-pref-sweep house
 Nneka is sweeping the house

The above sentence is represented on the tree diagram below:

Fig. 4



From the above data, the auxiliary *na* and its participle verb express progressive aspect and they are harboured under INFL phrase. *Na* and its participle verb form can be represented in the notation thus:

Na + [pref + verb root]

The formation of the progressive aspect with the auxiliary *na* involves the tonal contrast of the vowel prefix of the verb which is attached to the verb root. If the vowel of the verb root is high tone, the tone of the vowel prefix becomes low as show in (9a). On the other hand, if the tone of the vowel of the verb root is low, the tone of the vowel prefix becomes high as in (9b).

Furthermore, the same auxiliary *na* and the participle verb used in expressing progressive aspect can be used to express habitual aspect in Igbo. This implies that the progressive aspect and habitual aspect have the same verb form. According to Trask (1993:125), “habitual aspect describes an action which is regularly or consistently performed by some entities. Consider the following examples:

11. a. Ọ nà-èchu mmirī.
3sg aux-prog/hab-pref-fetch water.
He is fetching water.
- b. Ọ nà-èri ji.
3sg aux-prog/hab-pref-eat yam.
He is eating yam.
- c. Azù nà-èbi nà mmirī.
Fish aux-prog/hab-pref-live prep water.

- The fish is living water.
- d. Agū nà-èbi n'òhĩa.
Lion aux-prog/hab-pref-live prep-bush.
The lion is living in the bush.
- e. *Òbi nà-àjọ njọ.
Obi aux-prog/hab-pref-uglt ugly.
Obi is ugly.
- f. *Uchè nà-àma mmā.
Uche aux-prog/hab-pref-beautiful beautiful.
Uche is beautiful.

From the above data, examples (10e and f) are unacceptable in the sense that the progressive marker *na* and the adjectival verbs cannot be used to express progressive aspect. This implies that adjectival verbs or quality expressing verbs cannot be used to express neither the progressive nor habitual aspect.

In some, Igbo dialects, the progressive aspects are expressed using suffixes such as *-ga/gha* or *-ge/ghe* and auxiliary *je* which occurs with the participle verb form to express habitual aspect as in:

12. a. O rigā/righā nri.
3sg eat-prog food.
He is eating food.
- b. *Òbi jògà njọ.
Obi ugly-prog ugly
Obi is ugly.
- c. *Uchè màgà mmā.
Uche beauty-prog beautiful.
Uche is beautiful
- d. O megē/meghē ihe.
3sg do-prog thing.
He is doing something.

- e. O jè-èri nri.
3sg aux-prog/hab pref-eat food.
He is eating food.
- f. Udè jè-ànu ọgwù.
Ude aux-prog/hab-pref-drink medicine.
He is drinking medicine.

In the above data, examples (11b and c) are unacceptable because the progressive marker *ga* cannot be used with the adjective verbs in expressing aspect.

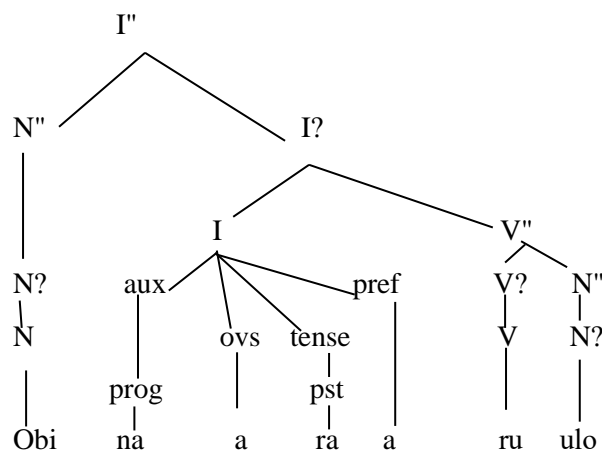
2. Past progressive Aspect

The past progressive aspect expresses an activity that has taken place in the past and is still going on at the time of utterance. The verb form is [CV-stem + VrV suffix]. The VrV suffix is attached to the auxiliary verb *na* to form the verb form *naara*. The same verb form also expresses past habitual aspect. *Naara* is followed by the participle verb to form the INFL phrases, examples:

13. a. Òbi nààrà àrụ ụlò.
Obi aux-pst-prog/hab-pref-build house.
Obi was building a house/He used to build a house.
- b. Ọ nààrà ànụ mmirī.
3sg aux-pst-prog/hab-pref-drink water.
He was drinking water/He used to drink water.
- c. Egō nààrà èsi nri.
Ego aux-pst-prog/hab-cook food.
Ego was cooking food/ego used to cook food.

Example (12a) is represented thus:

Fig. 5



In the above data “nàrà” is consistently on low tone while the participle verbs which follow it retain their tones low-high. Furthermore, apart from reflecting progressively in the past, the verbs can take *-rv* suffix to indicate aspect as in:

14. a. Àda nwèrè egō.
Ada own-pst money.
Ada has money.
- b. Ọ màrà mmā.
3sg beauty-pst beautiful.
She is beautiful.
- c. Ego b̀̀r̀̀r̀̀ ib̀̀.
Ego fat-pst fat.
Ego is fat.

In the above data, the *-rv* does not indicate past tense, rather it indicates aspect. The *-rv* suffixes mapped onto the high tone verbs and they become low tones. The inflectional *-rv* suffix is consistently on low tone, that is why it changes the tone of the vowels of the verb roots in the above examples. The vowels of the CV root harmonize with the vowel of the *rv* suffix. The verbs can further take *VrV* suffix to indicate aspect in the past as in:

15. a. Ọ nweērē akwà.
3sg own-pst cloth.
He used to have clothes.
- b. Ọ maārā mmā.

3sg beauty-pst beauty.

He used to be beautiful.

3. The Perfective Aspect

The perfective aspect expresses an action or state which occurred in past (or completed) but whose influence or effect is still felt in the present. It has the following morphemic structures:

[A + CV + (E) – LA –NA] verb

The perfective aspect has a complex verbal form. The features of the verb are: the vowel prefix (A-), open vowel suffix (-E) and the perfective suffix marker *la/-na*, all attached to the verb root. The suffix *-la* is phonologically conditioned. It can be realized as *-na/-ne* in some dialects of Igbo as in:

16. a. O meēne ya.
3sg do-ovs-perf 3sg.
He has done it.
- b. Nwaanyì ahù àmuona nwa.
Woman Dem pref-birth-perf child.
That woman has given birth to a child.

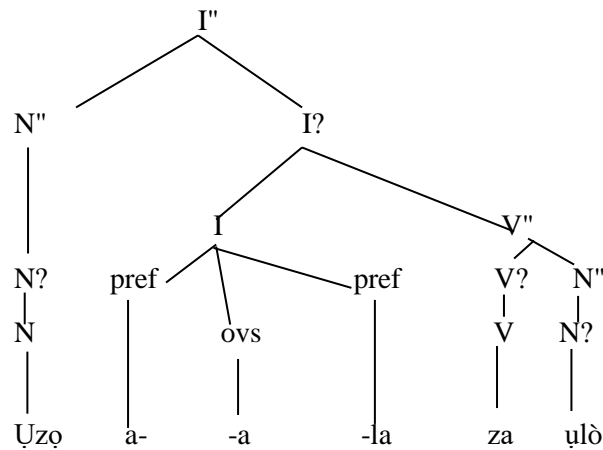
The perfective marker *-la* has an independent high tone irrespective of the tone class of the verb it is attached to. It is preceded by a step tone. The prefix A has high tone with low tone verbs but low with the high tone verbs. Consider the following examples:

18. a. Ụzò azaāla ụlò.
Ụzọ pref-sweep-ovs-perf house.
Ụzọ has swept the house.
- b. Ụba eriēla nri.
Uba pref-eat-ovs-perf food.
Uba has eaten food.
- c. Ọ nọōla ebe a.
3sg stay-ovs-perf here.
He has stayed here.
- d. Ànyì afuola oja.
Ipl pref-blow-pst-ovs-perf flute.

He has blown the flute.

Following the above examples, (17a) can be represented thus:

Fig. 6



From data above, the perfective suffix marker is consistently on high tone. The tonal behavior of the vowel prefix is conditioned by the tone of the vowel of the verb root. The perfective marker *la-* always follows the open vowel suffix. The perfective “*la*” is not to be confused with *-la* of the imperative marker. The two are different. Some dialects of Igbo use perfective suffix markers such as *-go*, *-wo* and *-gwo*, examples:

19. a. Ezènwā egbūgo/wo/gwo ewu.
Ezenwa pre-kill-perf goat.
Ezenwa has killed a goat.
- b. Àda añūwo mmirī.
Ada pref-drink-perf water.
Ada has drink water.
- c. Uchè ejegwo ugbō.
Uche pref-go-perf farm.
Uche has gone to the farm.

4. The Future Aspect

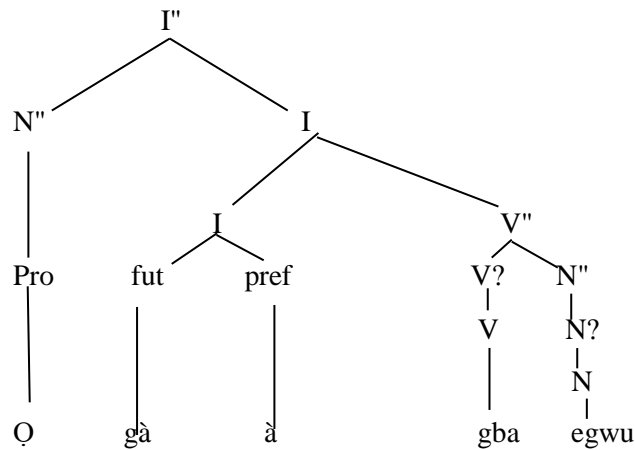
The future aspect expresses an event with a future time reference. It denotes anticipation. Future time in Igbo is expressed with auxiliary verb *ga* and the participle verb, which are housed under

INFL phrase. The auxiliary verb *ga* is consistently on fixed low tone irrespective of the inherent tone of the main verb, examples:

20. a. *Ọ gà-àgba egwu.*
 3sg fut-pref-dance dance.
 He will dance.
- b. *Unù gà-èri nri.*
 2pl fut-pref-eat food.
 You will eat food.
- c. *Ibè gà-àsa itè.*
 Ibe fut-pref-wash pot.
 Ibe will wash the pot.

Example (20a) is represented thus:

Fig. 7



The below examples express the future past aspect that indicates unfulfilled action or condition. It is expressed with the verb *gàràrà*. It is always on low tone and is followed by either participle or infinitive, examples:

23. a. *Ùju gàràrà ije/èje ugbo.*
 Uju would have go to farm.
- b. *Ibè gàràrà ìbja/abja.*
 Ibe would/should have come.

“Ga” takes the inflectional suffix VrV, that is, *ara* and becomes *gàràrà*.

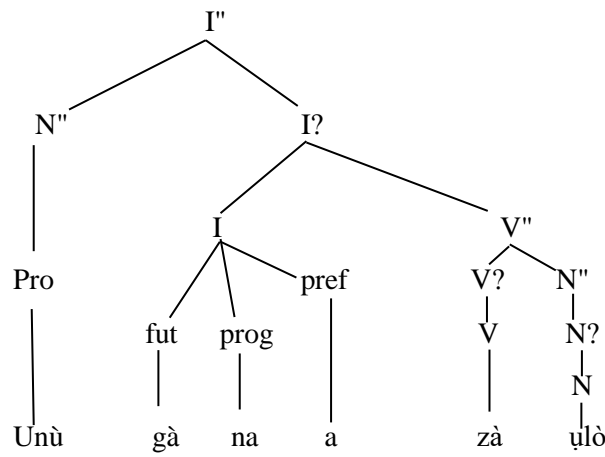
5. The Future Progressive Aspect

This verb form combines with future marker *ga* and the progressive marker *na*. followed by the participle verb as in:

23. a. Unù gà na-azà ulò.
 2pl fut-prog-pref-sweep house.
 You will be sweeping the house.
- b. Ànyị gà na-eje akwụkwọ.
 1pl fut-prog-pref-go book.
 We will be going to school.
- c. Ûju gà na-ede ihe.
 Uju fut-prog-Pref-write thing.
 Uju will be writing something.

The above data can be represented thus:

Fig. 8

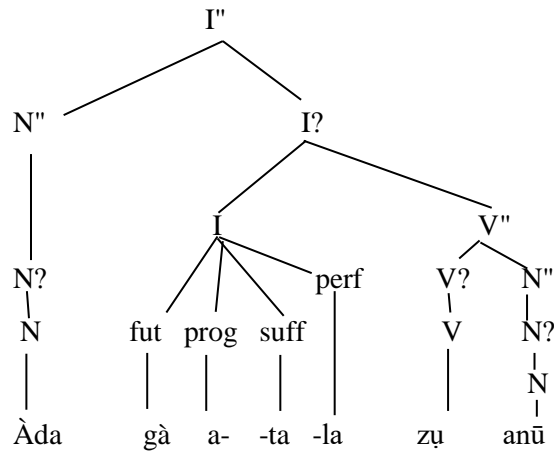


6. The Future Perfective Aspect

The future perfective aspect expresses probability or expectation rather than literal time. It is expressed with the auxiliary *ga* and the participle verb as in

25. Àda gà-azùtala anū.
 Ada fut-pref-buy-suff-perf meat.
 Ada will (already) have bought meat.

Fig. 9



The tone of *ga* is low, while the tone of the participle verb is high.

7. The Progressive Future Perfective

The progressive future perfective expresses an action which is considered to have become completed but is still continuing in the future. Consider below example:

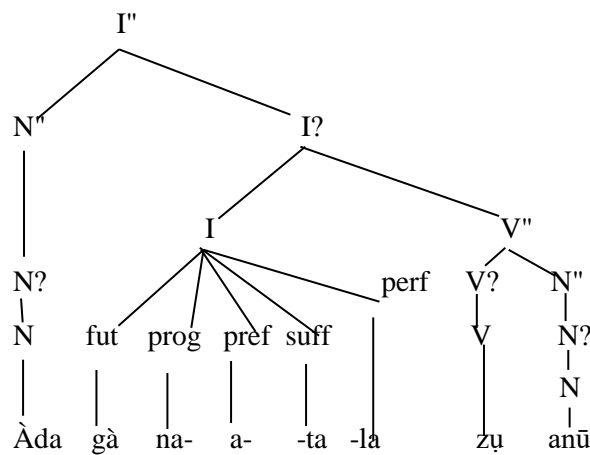
26. Àda gà na-azutala anū.

Ada fut-prog-buy-suff-perf meat.

Ada will probably have already been buying meat and nothing else.

The above example is represented thus:

Fig. 10



The future marker *ga* retains its inherent low tone while the progressive *na* is always on high tone, followed by the participle verb.

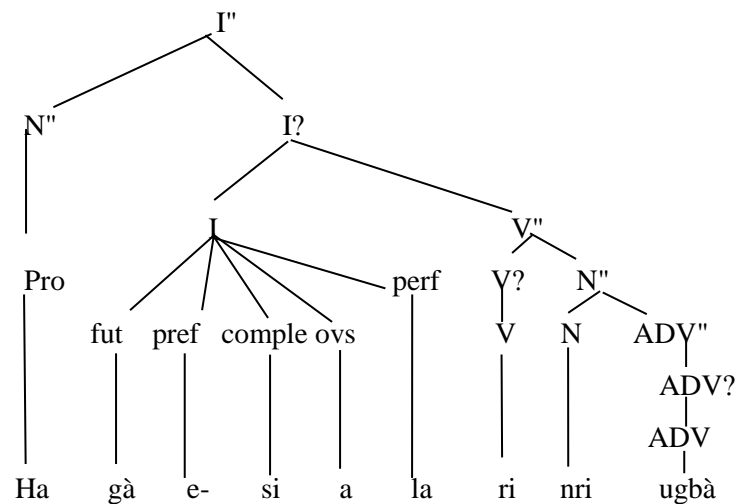
8. The Future Present Perfective Aspect

This aspect expresses an open proposition which is expected to have been realized in the past. The future perfective aspect is expressed by means of the auxiliary verb *ga* and the past participle verb, which are hosted under INFL, examples:

28. a. Ha gà-erisiāla nri ùgbu à.
 3pl fut-pref-eat-comple-ovs-perf food now.
 They will have finished eating food by now.
- b. Ụzò gà-egbusiāla ewu ugbu à.
 Ụzò fut-pref-slaughter-comple-ovs-perf goat now.
 Ụzò will have finished killing the goat by now.

Example (28a) can be represented thus:

Fig. 11



From the foregoing, the tone of *ga* is consistently low. The tone of the vowel prefix can be high or low depending on the tone of the vowel verb root. The *si* which is attached to the verbroot indicates completeness. It bears a high tone, followed by an open vowel suffix *a* and the perfective marker-*la*. *La* indicates an action that has occurred in the past but whose effect is still continuing in the present. It is on high tone.

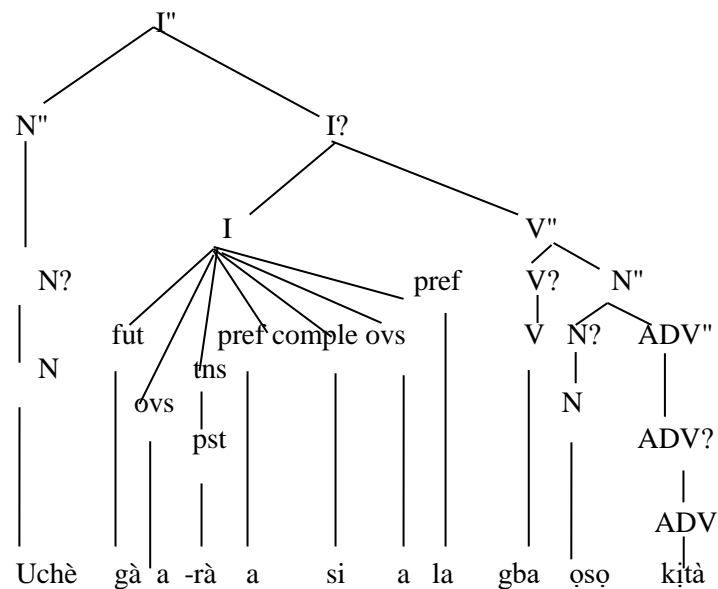
9. The Future Past Perfective Aspect

The future past perfective aspect verb form is used to demonstrate action which is considered likely to have become completed before another action takes place in the future. It is expressed by means of the auxiliary *ga* and the suffix *-ra*, and the past participle verb, examples:

30. a. Uchè gàrà agbaşıala ọsọ kịtà.
 Uche fut-pst-pref-run-comple-ovs-perf run now.
 Uche would have finished running by now.
- b. Ọ gàrà edesịala ihe kịtà.
 3sg fut-pst-pref-write-comple-ovs-perf thing now.
 He would have finished writing something by now.

The above data is represented using example (30a) thus:

Fig. 12



From the above data, it is observed that *ga* takes the inflectional suffix *-na* to reflect the past form of the future past perfective aspect. The suffix “*-ra*” assumes all the features of *ga*. That is, the vowel in *-ra* harmonizes with the vowel of *ga*. The *gàrà* is consistently on low tone. The completeness marker *şı* is on high tone as well as the perfective marker.

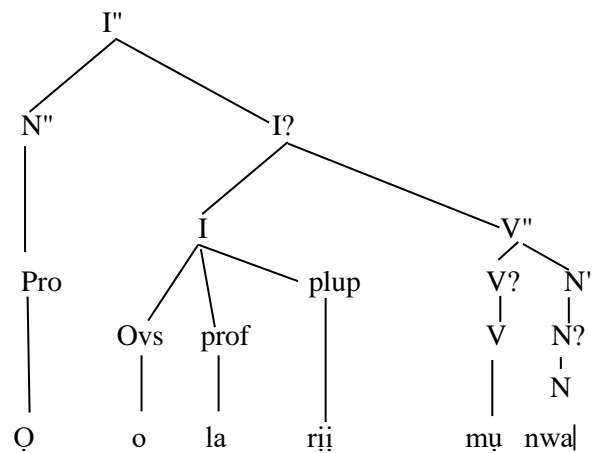
10. The Pluperfective

This expresses an action that has been quite completed in distant past and has no present relevance. The inflectional suffix *-rii* is attached to the simple past to form it, examples

32. a. O rielariì nri.
 3sg eat-ovs-perf-plup food.
 He had eaten the food.
- b. O muōlarìi nwa.
 3sg birth-ovs-perf-plup child.
 She had given birth a child.

The above data can be represented thus using example (32a) thus:

Fig. 13



The pluperfective marker *-rii* is on low tone.

From the foregoing, it is noted that all the future time meanings, both present and past involve the use of the auxiliary *ga* and the appropriate participle verb forms in their different constructions to reflect different time meanings. Different verb forms take appropriate suffixes to reflect aspect. The forms of the verbs are realized differently as well as their tones. The progressive marker *na* is also used to express progressive aspect.

Conclusion

The paper examined aspect as an element of INFL phrase in Igbo. The result of the analysis shows that Igbo aspect is dominated under INFL phrase in Igbo. The Igbo verb forms bear the inflectional affixes that express aspectual markers. These markers are bound morphemes. The expression of aspectual readings depends on the verb forms. Suffixation is strongly attested in

Igbo verb forms which express aspect than prefixation. All of them are harboured under INFL phrase. With the exception of quality-expressing verbs or adjectival verbs the auxiliaries *na* and *ga* are used with other verbs to express progressive/habitual, future and perfective aspects respectively. Tone plays vital role in Igbo verb forms which express aspect. The rule of vowel harmony is also observed.

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