

Journal of West African Languages XVII, 2 (1987)

BASIC MOOD IN IFE

Hélène Boëthius

Summer Institute of Linguistics, Togo

In section 1, a general description is given of the Ifè¹ verb phrase. The structure of the verb phrase is described, and the forms of the five basic moods are given. It is shown how the basic moods co-occur with the other preverbal particles. The terms Tense, Mood and Aspect are defined, and there is a general description of how time is indicated in Ifè discourse. The concept of foregrounding and backgrounding is explained.

Section 2 consists of a description of the five basic moods. For each mood we consider: a) its semantic meaning and use; b) how it serves to relate the text to possible worlds and c) how it signals back- and foregrounding in the discourse. In section 3 the findings are summarised and a conclusion made.

La première section comprend une description générale de la phrase verbale en Ifè. La structure de la phrase verbale est décrite ainsi que les formes des cinq modes principaux. Il est démontré comment les modes principaux s'emploient avec les autres particules préverbales. Les termes Temps, Mode, et Aspect sont aussi définis, suivi d'une description générale de l'indication du temps dans un texte en Ifè. Le concept de mise en relief est aussi expliqué.

La deuxième section comprend une description des cinq modes principaux. Pour chacun des modes, sa signification et son utilisation sémantique, son rapport entre le texte et d'autres mondes potentiels et sa façon d'indiquer le degré de mise en relief dans le texte sont expliqués. La troisième section comprend un résumé des résultats ainsi qu'une conclusion.

0. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to give a comprehensive description of the five basic moods in Ifè, showing how each of these moods function in discourse, and describing their semantics.

It will be shown that the basic distinction made in the Ifè verb phrase is one of mood, rather than tense or aspect. The basic moods serve to relate clauses to 'possible worlds' and to signal back- and foregrounding in the discourse.

Marking of time is not obligatory in the Ifè clause. There is no tense, and aspect marking is secondary and optional. In this respect Ifè seems to differ from standard Yoruba, which is generally described as having tense and/or aspect marking in the verb phrase (Bamgboṣe, 1966:90; Ogunbowale, 1970:99; Abraham, 1962).

In many descriptions of African languages, very little information is given as to how the different tense-mood-aspect (TMA) categories listed are actually used in discourse. A basic assumption behind this paper is that such categories can only be adequately described in terms of how they operate within the framework of an unelicited discourse.

1. THE VERB PHRASE

1.1 STRUCTURE

The Ifè verb root is a free form, which carries no inflectional affixes. The first verb of the clause may be preceded by preverbal particles² indicating the modality of the verb. As in many West African languages, a clause may contain more than one verb in a so-called serial construction. The preverbal particles are not repeated before any additional verbs in the clause. A number of 'postverbs', i.e. secondary verbs or adverbs describing the nature of the event may occur at the end of the clause.

There are also 'serial clauses' in Ifè which are different from serial verbs. A number of elliptic clauses can be added to a main clause in order to describe a complex event or a series of related events. An elliptic clause shares its subject and preverbal particles with the main clause. Thus the domain of the modality, i.e. of the preverbal particle(s) is the clause or the serial clause.

Example:

- (1) **Nkèé** **à** **náa wé** **ilá á**
 finally 3pl HAB rinse okra definite
- tsí làá**
 then split-it
- tsí rée**
 then slice-it
- tsí ré igbómá gbo**
 then slice kind-of-leaf also
- tsí wèé**
 then rinse-it

'Finally one rinses the okra, then splits it, then slices it, then slices the leaves also, then rinses them.'

1.2 THE BASIC MOODS

There are fifteen preverbal particles in Ifè³ which fall into five distributional sets (see chart 3 below). One of these sets, the 'basic moods', will be treated in this paper. Each clause or serial clause needs to be marked for one of the five basic moods. These are: The indicative (IND), subjunctive (SUBV), predictive (PRED), habitual (HAB) and contrafactual (CONT). The basic mood is marked by preverbal particles and/or by the form of the subject pronoun. In some instances the subject pronoun merges with the preverbal particle, as illustrated by the following chart:

Chart 1. The basic moods

	IND		SUBV		PRED		HAB		CONT	
	pn	part	pn	part	pn	part	pn	part	pn	part
1sg	̀		n		màa		mà		̀	má
2sg	ò		o		nàa		nà		ò	má
3sg	ó		kó		nákó		náa		ó	má
1pl	àa		ká		àa nákó		àa náa		àa	má
2pl	è		e		è nákó		è náa		è	má
3pl	à		ká		à nákó		à náa		à	má

There are also corresponding negative forms for four of the basic moods, as follows:

Chart 2. Negatives

	Indicative	Predictive	Habitual	Contrafactual
1sg	̀ kò	̀ kàa/kàkó	̀ kà	̀ kàá
2sg	ò kò	ò káa/kàkó	ò kà	ò kàá
3sg	kò	kàkó	kà	kàá
1pl	àa kò	àa kàkó	àa kà	àa kàá
2pl	è kò	è kàkó	è kè	è kàá
3pl	à kò	à kàkó	à kà	à kàá

(in the first and second person singular of the predictive, two alternative particles have been found, **kàkó** and **kàa**.)

1.3 CO-OCCURRENCE

Most of the clauses in the data contain only one or no preverbal particles. However, approximately one out of every 25 clauses contains two or occasionally three particles. A study of these clauses reveals that the fifteen different particles fall into five distributional sets, as shown in chart 3 on the following page.

Each column in the chart corresponds to a position in the verb phrase. The particles listed in each column can be preceded and followed by the particles in the columns to the left and right of it respectively. The particles in set D have not been found co-occurring with particles from sets C and E as shown by the chart.

Not all possible combinations of particles have been found. In some cases this may be due to lack of sufficient data, but in many cases there are semantic restrictions as to which particles may 'cooperate' within the same clause.⁴ The chart 4 shows the co-occurrences that have been found.

Chart 3. Distributional sets of preverbal particles

A.

Ø 'indicative'
 kó 'subjunctive'
 náko 'predictive'
 náa 'habitual'
 má 'contrafactual'

B.

bòkó 'inceptive'

C.

sì 'intensifier'
 ti 'contraexpectation'
 tó 'repetitive'

D.

nyáa 'abilitative'
 yáa 'precipitative'
 máa 'prohibitive'
 káa 'exgressive'
 wáa 'ingressive'

E.

wà 'progressive'

(3rd person singular forms are given in set A)

Chart 4. Co-occurrences of particles

	i	s	p	h	c	i	i	c	r	a	p	p	e	i	p
	n	u	r	a	o	n	n	o	e	b	r	r	x	n	r
	d	b	e	b	n	c	t	n	p	i	e	o	g	g	o
indicative						x	x	x		x				x	x
subjunctive						x			x		x	x	x	x	
predictive						x	x		x	x				x	x
habitual						x	x			x				x	x
contrafactual						x				x					x
inceptive									x					x	x
intensifier															x
contraexpectation															x
repetitive															x
abilitative															
precipitative															
prohibitive															
exgressive															
ingressive															
progressive															

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TENSE, MOOD AND ASPECT

Before considering the TMA categories in Ifè, it is necessary to define the terms as they are used in this paper. Tense is defined as the category which relates the time that 'is talked of' in the sentence to the time of the speech act, the deictic centre (Dahl, 1985). For aspect Comrie's definition is followed: 'Aspect

is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation.' (Comrie, 1976)

Most of the discussion below will deal with mood. The following quotations from Chung and Timberlake (1985:202,241) give an explanation of mood which fits the Ifè data very well:

'Tense, aspect and mood are all categories that further specify or characterize the basic predication, which can be referred to as the event. Tense locates the event in time. Aspect characterizes the internal temporal structure of the event. Mood describes the actuality of the event in terms such as possibility, necessity, or desirability.' (Chung and Timberlake, 1985:202)

'As the concept of event was defined earlier, a predicate is associated with an event world (or set of worlds) in which the predicate occurs. Mood characterizes the actuality of an event by comparing the event world(s) to a reference world, termed the actual world. An event can simply be actual (more precisely, the event world is identical to the actual world); an event can be hypothetically possible (the event world is not identical to the actual world); the event may be imposed by the speaker on the addressee; and so on. Whereas there is basically one way for an event to be actual, there are numerous ways that an event can be less than completely actual.' (ibid.:241)

The concept of possible or hypothetical worlds is very useful in explaining Ifè moods. This is an almost science-fiction-like concept, where a series of possible worlds are assumed to exist in the mind of the speaker. The actual world or text world is the world in which the 'story' of the text takes place. But there are also a series of other possible worlds, such as an imagined world (what may be), a predicted world (what will be), a generalised or abstracted world (how things are), an alternative, unrealised world (how things could have been).

1.5 TIME IN IFÈ DISCOURSE

As has been previously stated, tense is not marked in the Ifè verb phrase. In a narrative text, for example, it seems to be taken for granted by the speaker that the text refers to events that have taken place previously to the speech act and thus no overt markers need to be used. Sometimes there is a temporal clause or phrase at the onset of the action in a narrative text which serves to give a temporal setting to what follows. The temporal setting can be anything from a detailed description of date and time to a general reference to past time.

Examples:

(2) ó ɔi ní⁵ èdzìitsé tsí boba á òḡe
 it becomes in Tuesday then father def. get-up
 'On the Tuesday, the father got up' (from a narrative text, after a description of the general background, as the action sets in.)

(3) dzòó dzòó bí é Obìtí ní bí
 before before here def. 0. it-is give-birth
 Yàwù é
 Y. def.
 'Long time ago here, it was Obiti who gave birth to Yawu.'

In isolated utterances or conversation, the time of the action spoken of is made clear by the context or by temporal phrases. Unless the context indicates otherwise, an isolated utterance with an action in the progressive is usually understood as ongoing at the time of the speech act, i.e. present. Similarly an isolated utterance in the subjunctive or predictive will be understood as referring to the future. This cannot be taken as proof that these particles are actually tense markers, but should rather be understood as 'semantic side-effects'. As will be seen below, time is not in focus in the basic moods. This is also true for the other preverbal particles, with the exception of the particle *wà*, which describes progressive or continuous action.

There are also a number of 'postverbs', i.e. secondary verbs or adverbs which may occur at the end of the clause, to indicate aspect, i.e. the internal temporal structure of the event.

The 'postverbs' in the first three examples below can also function as the main verb of a clause.

Examples:

làkòò 'go, go-progressively' (continuous or repeated action)

(4) ó wà wò ilè làkòò
 he progr. scrape ground go
 'He kept scraping the ground'

si 'put' (state or permanent result)

(5) èkíqã á dzokó si
 girl def. sit put
 'the girl sat down/the girl was sitting down'

tá 'finish' (perfective)

(6) ònyà kú si tá
 person die put finish
 'the person is completely dead'

ró 'again' (repeated action)

(7) kó máa qúgbe b́é ró
 subjunc. prohib. scream like-that again
 'he mustn't scream like that again'

ná 'already'

- (8) è b̀ wá ná à
 2pl return come already polar quest.
 'have you already come back?'

1.6 FOREGROUNDING AND BACKGROUNDING

Although the main function of the Ifè basic moods is to relate the propositions to possible worlds, they also signal backgrounding and foregrounding of information in the discourse.⁶

When the term foregrounded is used below it refers to propositions in a text which serve to carry the main line of the story forward, i.e. new events in the story. Backgrounded information is information about setting, explanations and comments, and information about events that are 'script predictable', i.e. the intended hearer can predict from the context (or the cultural setting) that the event would occur.

It is important to separate the idea of foregrounding from that of peak. The peak is the point in the discourse where the story culminates, where the tension that has gradually been built up reaches its climax and is released. The peak contains foregrounded information, but so does every event throughout the story which serves to carry the story forward. Peak and tension do not affect the use of the basic moods.

The term 'basic moods' has been chosen for the preverbal particles of set A. They are basic in the sense that they are more common than the other preverbal particles, and in that every clause has to be marked for basic mood (taking the absence of a particle as the marking for the indicative).

In the following description of each of the basic moods, an exhaustive description will be given of the meaning and use of each of the five basic moods. Each mood will be considered in terms of possible worlds and foregrounding in discourse.

2. THE BASIC MOODS

2.1 THE INDICATIVE

The positive indicative is marked by the 'unmarked' subject pronouns, and by the absence of any of the other particles from set A. The negative indicative is marked by the particle kò following the unmarked pronouns.

The positive indicative is used to indicate an event or a state which took/takes/will take place in the world of the text, i.e. an actual event within the framework of the text. It is used in fiction as well as in factual texts.

All foregrounded events in narrative texts are in the indicative. The indicative is also used for some types of backgrounded information, e.g. background states, background events and in flashbacks, which report events that took place prior to the time of the events in the story.

In the following examples, which are extracts from longer texts, the subject pronoun and the main verb are underlined in each main clause. The type of information in the clause is given in brackets before each clause.

(9) a) (background state)

Ní ɔdzó-ɲè òruku wà tse.
in day-that heat prog. do

b) (background event)

Tsí ṅ ṅde, tsí sù si ní kpàtá-mi si.
Then 1sg get-up then lie state in yard-my state

c) (background state)

Tsí ó ɔi ní oru ní ɲàáɲà,
then it become in night in dead-of-night

d) (foreground event)

tsí ṅ rí ṅnyà-kà gbà ní igbèrí
then 1sg see person-one pass in above

éwo-mi wáa làkóò,
head-my ingress. go

e) (foreground event)

tsí ṅ ṅde
then 1sg get-up

f) (foreground event)

tsí ṅ kpalewo ɛnɛ nyè ɲè.
then 1sg look-at person that

'One day, it was hot. I got up and slept in my yard. Then in the night, in the dead of night, I saw a person passing above my head. Then I got up and looked at that person.'

(10) a) (background event)

Aa wà tā kóko làkóò wò ní oru é
1pl progr. search bush go search in night def.

b) (foreground event)

títí àa lɔ káa rí ɔmɔ adzá tsígíqí-kañ.
until 1pl go exgr. see child dog little-one

c) (flashback)

A mú okù si ní ṅgèrè-è,
3pl take rope put in neck-his

d) (flashback)

tsí ó wé má egi si.
then 3sg wind attach tree state

e) (foreground event)

Tsí àa nyaá ñde.

then we take-it get-away

'We were searching the bush on the night, until we came across a small puppy. They (=somebody) had put a rope around its neck, and it had wound (itself) around a tree. Then we took it away.'

The indicative is one of the four basic moods that has a corresponding negative form (only the subjunctive lacks this form, see chart 2). There is no 'general' or neutral negative form. Each negative clause, like the positive ones, has to be in a basic mood. As will be seen below, the negative particles correspond closely in meaning to their positive counterparts.

The negative indicative (N.IND) cannot be defined as indicating an event or state which did not take place in the text world, since that definition would be equally true of the positive forms of all the other basic moods. It is better to say that it describes in a negative way an event that took place in the text world. In other words, it describes a 'non-event' in the text world. This can be seen by the fact that every negative proposition in the indicative can be restated as a positive event which took place in the text world.

(11) ñ kò nyaá s̄rũ ní òru nyèṅè d́á inó
lsg N.IND abilit. sleep in night that cut stomach
'I couldn't sleep deeply (lit. cut stomach) that night'.
= 'I slept badly/
lightly that night.'

(12) àwa kò tse ìtsédzú méεta
3pl N.IND do minute three
'We didn't spend three minutes' = 'We spent less than
three minutes'.

(13) ñ kò gba afò nyèṅè gbó rere
lsg N.IND take word that hear well
'I didn't believe that word well' = 'I doubted that
word/hardly believed that word.'

(14) ñ kò pàséeè
lsg N.IND. pass-it
'I didn't pass it' (an exam) = 'I failed it'

2.2 THE SUBJUNCTIVE

The subjunctive⁷ is used to describe an event which is still in the mental world of the speaker. It is similar to the predictive in that it has to do with as yet unrealised events, but while the predictive communicates a certainty about an event that will take place (or has taken place), the emphasis of the subjunctive is on the possibility, i.e. the uncertainty of the event.

The primary use of the subjunctive is to report a possibility, wish, purpose or necessity, or a command in indirect speech; all of these are different facets of the mental, imagined world.

As in European languages, there are certain constructions that obligatorily take the subjunctive. They all have to do with the mental meaning of the subjunctive, i.e. wish, purpose or possibility. The constructions are:

- wò 'want' (16)
 tsùgbée 'in order that' (17)
 ó wà ní 'it is necessary that, it must be that' (19)
 kò né 'it must not be that' (20)

Examples:

possibility:

- (15) Yèé ò sì bí ɔmɔ-èè é, ò kàa
 since 2sg intensif. bear child-your def. 2sg N.PRED
 dzé ní kó rà né?
 accept that SUBV perish rhetoric-quest.
 'Since you gave birth to your child, you won't accept
 that she perish, will you?'

wish:

- (16) ò wà wo n rí é ní afò-kà
 1sg prog. want 1sg-SUBV see 2sg in matter-one
 'I want to see you about a matter.'

purpose:

- (17) 0 sá dúkù tsùgbée ká máa ríi
 3sg flee hide in-order-that SUBV prohib. find-him
 'He hid, so that they would not find him.'
- (18) a náa se àgú, tsí wáa n ló fúu
 3pl HAB cook fufu then ingress. of-it go give-him
 táná kó dzéé
 before SUBV eat-it
 'They used to cook fufu and go and give of it to him,
 so that he would eat it.'

necessity:

- (19) 0 wà ní n dzéé
 3sg be that 1sgSUBV eat
 'I must eat/ it is necessary that I eat.'
- (20) kò né o dzé ònyà láyé ró ní arū
 neg have 2sgSUBV be man never again in mouth
 yiyá yèé wà fú-é si bée é
 quick which be for-you state like-that def.
 (From a folktale. God speaks to the talkative chimpanzee:)
 'It mustn't be that you become man ever again with that
 quick mouth of yours.'

command in indirect speech:⁸

- (21) Tsí ó ní òò, kó lɔ káà tse ewé yèé wá gé.
 then 3sg that no SUBV go exgr. pick leaf that come just
 'Then he said no, that he (hearer) should just go and pick
 that leaf and come back'.
- (22) Tsí ó ní ká qóro ònṣèé
 then 3sg that SUBV stop at-once
 'Then he said that they should stop at once/ Then he said
 let's stop at once.'

The subjunctive is also found in a couple of parting greetings:

- (23) n lɔ tsí n wá
 1sgSUBV go then 1sgSUBV come
 'I go in order to come back/ may I go in order
 to come back?'
- (24) ká lɔ ká wá
 pl.SUBV go pl.SUBV come
 'We go/let's go/may we go in order to come back?'

Here the subjunctive seems to imply a question or asking permission: 'is it all right that...?' The 'going' is still in the mental world of the speaker, and he suggests it to the hearer. Only if the hearer agrees will it actually take place.

A secondary use of the subjunctive is in clauses indicating time or setting. Here the subjunctive serves to indicate that the proposition is backgrounded, i.e. it does not inform about a new event in the narrative, but merely gives the setting for the following event. Such clauses always precede the clause(s) for which they provide the setting.

One place where this usage occurs is in clauses with the connective *títí* 'until, when'. When the clause following *títí* is in the indicative, it contains foregrounded information, and the connective is best translated 'until'.

If the clause is in the subjunctive the connective can usually be translated 'when', and the clause is backgrounded.

títí followed by indicative:

- (25) Tsí àa méedzi méedzi é, àa wá tá kóko
 then lpl two two def. lpl prog. search bush
 làkóò wò ní òru é títí àa lɔ káà
 go look in night def. until lpl go exgr.
rí ɔma adzá tsígíqí-kà.
 find child dog little-one
 'Then the two of us were searching the bush in the night,
 until we found a small puppy.'

títí followed by subjunctive:

- (26) Tsí ɔqẽ bu èkèlè-kà bɔ ní àkpò.
 then hunter break mouthful-one put in bag.
Títí kó bɔ oqé ró, ó wáa làkóò ró
 When SUBV remain little again it ingress. go again
 (Balls of porridge are being thrown through the forest. As
 each ball flies past, hunter breaks off a mouthful and puts
 it in his bag.)
 'Then hunter broke off a mouthful and put it in the bag.' In
 a little while (lit. when it remained a little) again, it was
 coming again.'

The use of the subjunctive in backgrounding is not restricted to clauses with the connective títí, as can be seen from the following example. It comes from the same story as (26) above. The throwing of balls of porridge is now known information, i.e. it is 'script predictable'. Thus the coming of the fourth ball is not on the event line, but merely provides the setting for a new event.

- (27) Títí kó bɔ oqé tsí ekéerẽ kó wáa
 when SUBV remain little then fourth SUBV ingr.
làkóò é. Egìdà tamá-é.
 go def. turtle hug-it
 'In a little while, when a fourth (ball of porridge) was
 coming, turtle hugged it'.

It is difficult to see how the mental meaning of the subjunctive can have been extended to clauses indicating setting. The most plausible explanation seems to be that historically, this is not the subjunctive at all, but an assimilation of the particle kí 'as, when, since' and ó '3sg subject'. Following the normal rules for assimilation, this becomes kó 'as he, when he'. Later, people seem to have come to perceive this kó as identical with the subjunctive kó and have started to use the subjunctive in the other persons in similar clauses, as in the examples below. (This reconstruction is, of course, a pure conjecture, which can hardly be proved or disproved, unless studies of related dialects would shed light on the issue).

- (28) Títí ká bɔ wá á, ñ bèrè nyè.
 when p1SUBV return come def. 1sg ask information
 'When they had come back, I asked for information'
- (29) N dá isò fú àtò. Tsí ó mú odzú
 1sg fire gun for chimpanzee. Then 3sg take eye
 dé ilè bè. Títí n tó é, àtò
 close ground there when 1sgSUBV reach def. chimp
 é, bɔqée kó mú mi.
 def. almost SUBV take me
 'I shot at a chimpanzee. Then he lay on the ground
 (lit. he closed the ground with his eye). When I reached
 him, the chimp almost took me.'

In clauses with connective *táná* the whole range of the 'mental' meaning of the subjunctive is found, as well as the backgrounding function.

- (30) A wáa kpàdè ñdĩ-è táná ká tse inε na á
 3pl ingr. meet in-place-his before SUBV do divinity pl.def.
 'They met in his house in order to worship the divinities.'
 (purpose)
- (31) Tsí ó ní òṅu bòkó sáré táná kó mú àṅa dzé.
 then 3pl that 3sg incept. flee before SUBV take them eat
 'Then he (a boy) said that he was going to flee before he
 (the monster) would catch and eat them.' (possibility)
- (32) Tsí ɔmɔ é kpèé ní tódé-kà káà rii.
 then child def. call-him - uncle-one exgr. find-him.
 A rè tó itsékòlò mēedzɔ táná ká
 3pl walk reach kilometer seven before SUBV
rii ní àṅírī kóko.
 find-him in middle-of bush
 'Then the child who called him an uncle found him. They had
 walked seven kilometers before they found/in order to find
 him in the middle of the bush.' (backgrounding.)

The first clause has already informed us of the finding. Thus it can be backgrounded in the third clause, where it simply serves to give a setting for the walking.

When a *táná*-clause is in the indicative, it is foregrounded. In some instances it is difficult to see what makes the author decide on the choice between the subjunctive and the indicative in *táná*-clauses, as in the following two extracts from the same recipe. In the first example, *táná* is followed by the subjunctive, while in the second one it is followed by the indicative.

- (33) Táná ká mú ilá òṅu ìgbómá dà ínè é.
 before SUBV take okra and leaves pour in-it def.
à náa mú ekpo dà ní ɔbè é si.
 3pl habit. take palm-oil pour in stew def. state
 'Before pouring the okra and the leaves in it, one pours the
 palm oil in the stew.'
- (34) A náa tóó rí ní ó dè nàmí kó dè
 3pl HAB taste-it see that be good or N.IND be-good
táná nya oṅu si ínè.
 before take salt put in-it
 'One tastes it, to see (if) it is good or (if) it isn't
 good, before putting salt in it.'

It is interesting to note, that the okra and the leaves in (33) have already been mentioned earlier in the recipe, but not the salt in (34). The author may assume that the reader knows that the gombo and the leaves are to be added to the stew, and thus makes the event into background information, whereas the adding of the salt is totally new information.

2.3 THE PREDICTIVE

A. The positive predictive

The primary use of the predictive is to predict an event which the speaker is certain will happen, in other words, it places the event in a predicted or expected world, 'the world to be', as it were. It may presuppose a condition (35), or just the passing of time (36). It may be the speaker's or subject's intention to perform the action (35,36) or the prediction may concern an event outside the speaker's and subject's control (37). The prediction may concern a single event (38), a continuous state (37 last clause) or a repeated pattern (39).

- (35) **bí à wá à nákó ta okù**
 if 3pl come 3pl PRED throw rope
 'When/if they come, they will set up (lit.throw) the rope.'
- (36) **Iṅé èse fú òṅu ni à nákó ta ɔfà**
 thing law for him it-is 3pl PRED throw arrow
á kpó, tsí nákó tá ní ɔwó-ṅa ni.
 def. all then PRED finish in hand-their it-is
 'His rule/law is that they will throw all the arrows, and (until) they will finish in their hands'.
- (37) **Bí màa kú gbo, bí màa là gbo,**
 if lsgPRED die too if lsgPRED live too
màa wà nnè gé ni.
lsgPRED be in-it just it-is.
 'Whether I die or whether I live, I will just be in it.'
 (=I will keep doing it)
- (38) **N kò ma ní itó é nákó dā bò é ni.**
 lsg N.IND know that spittle def PRED pour cover you it-is.
 'I didn't know that the spittle would cover you.'
- (39) **Bí ó bɔ oḍé nákó nyí wo ànyì, bí**
 of 3sg remain little PRED turn look back if
ó bɔ oḍé nákó nyí wo ànyì.
 3sg remain little PRED turn look back
 'After a little while, she would turn and look back; after a little while (again) she would turn and look back'.

A secondary use of the predictive is to describe a behaviour which 'would' or 'will' always take place in a given situation, either in the past or at any time, i.e. given the situation the behaviour can be predicted. The predictive is used this way to carry the main line of argument in expository discourse. This is illustrated by the following paragraph about the behaviour of girls in the good old days:

- (40) Dòó dzòó é yèé inéé dzí ní àwúrò
 before def. when mother-your wake-up in morning
 é, nákó dzíé ní ñde tsí o gba ilè.
 def. PRED wake-you that get-up then 2sgSUBV sweep ground.
 Tsí nàa ñde tsí nàa gba ilè.
 then 2sgPRED get-up then 2sgPRED sweep ground
 Bí ó tsi odò ní è nákó ló. Bí è
 if 3sg be river it-is 2pl pred. go if 2pl
 ló ní odò tá á, nákó wí fíé ní
 go in river finish def. PRED say to-you that
 iwó kó wé íya. Tsí nàa se íya, tsí wé.
 2sg SUBV wash things then 2sgPRED cook things, then wash

'Before, (= in the old days) when your mother woke up in the morning, she would wake you up saying "get up and sweep the ground". Then you would get up, and you would sweep the ground. If it was the river, you(pl) would go. When you had finished going to the river, she would say to you that you should wash the things. The you would cook the things then wash yourself.'

In the 2nd person singular, the predictive may also be used to carry the line of command in hortatory discourse. (When the hortatory discourse is in the 3rd person singular, the line of command is carried by the subjunctive).

- (41) Nbèé iwó okó-èé méèdzì, bí ò dzí nàa
 now, you husband-your two if 2sg wake-up 2sg-pred.
 kii.
 greet-him

'Now you and your husband, the two of you when you (sg) wake up, you should greet him.'

The predictive is hardly ever found in narrative text, except in quotes, where it can be said to form a small embedded discourse, and in the conclusion, which also falls outside the main narrative. When it is found in the main narrative, as in (39) above, it describes a background event. When it is used in 'behavioural' discourse as described above, it is used to carry the foregrounded line of events.

Although the predictive often implies that the action is in the future (except when used in hortatory or expository discourse), it would be wrong to consider it as a future tense. The 'future' idea is rather a semantic side-effect of the prediction. Furthermore, the 'future' idea does not relate the time of the event to the time of the speech act; rather it relates the event to the other events of the sentence. In (38) for example, the 'covering' had already taken place at the moment of speaking, but was in the future at the time of 'not knowing'. There are also many cases where the predictive carries no future connotation at all, as in (39) and (40) above.

The meaning and use of the predictive borders on and sometimes overlaps with the subjunctive (intention) and the habitual (regular behaviour).

B. The negative predictive

The negative predictive (N.PRED) **kàkó** with the phonological variant **kòkó** is used to predict what (regularly) would not or will not happen in a given situation (42,43). Like the positive, it can also be used in expository and hortatory discourse (44,45). It has also been found expressing a negative wish, where it seems to function almost as a negative of the subjunctive (46), and a negative intention, where it comes close to the inceptive (**bàkó**) (47). However, it has only been found explicitly contrasting with a positive clause in the predictive (43). Until it has been found explicitly negating a clause in the subjunctive and/or the inceptive, it seems best to consider it to be the negative of the predictive only.

- (42) **Bí iḡé-kà kò sà, yofó ḡa kàkó wà nnè.**
 if thing-one N.IND be-good white pl. N.PRED be in-it
 'If something isn't good, the white people will not be in it.'
- (43) **Nákó wà wùé nà mí kàkó wùé ?**
 PRED prog. please-you or N.PRED please-you
 (In such and such a situation) 'would it please you, or wouldn't it please you?'
- (44) **Dzòó dzòó ò kàkó né atso tsí bò**
 before 2sg N.PRED have cloth then wear
 'Long time ago, you (=people) didn't have any cloth to wear.'
- (45) **Bí ò má dze eḡé-kà giḡi, tsí olí eḡé wá,**
 if 2sg CONT accept debt-one even, then owner debt come
tsí wà bú-èè giḡi, ò kàkó múu ní ànyì-è
 then prog. insult-you even, 2sg. N.PRED take-it in back-his
 'Even if you would have a debt, and the creditors would come and even insult you, you should not take it (the money to repay the debt) behind his (your husband's) back.'
- (46) **ègiḡá náa wáa ká àtábú ní ikú kàkó kpa**
 turtle HAB ingr. pick promise that death N.PRED kill
ɔmɔ òḡu lélé.
 child his never
 'Turtle used to promise that death would never kill his child.'
- (47) **Bí òḡu kò lɔ ɔkà bè kpáà, óḡu kòkó**
 if 3sg N.IND grind flour there ideoph. 3sg. N.PRED
dzeḡé ní ilé bí ró.
 eat in house here again
 'If she (speaker) doesn't grind the flour there, she (speaker) will never eat at home again.' (Indirect speech. A girl has decided to grind her flour on a certain millstone, and announces the finality of her decision).

As shown in chart 2, the predictive negative has an alternative form, **kàa** in 1 and 2 person singular. (**Kàkó** has also been found in 1 and 2 pers. sing.) **kàa** is used in an expository or hortatory sense, often contrasting with the positive predictive forms **màa** '1sgPRED' and **nàa** '2sgPRED'

(48) **Tsí Bùkúù gbàé fee, ò dzé nàa sómá-é**
 then God take-you 1sg claim 2sgPRED approach-him
nàmi ò kàa sómá-é ?
 or 2sg N.PRED approach-him
 'If God saved you, I think you would approach him/wouldn't you approach him?'

(49) **Tsí ò bè mí fee, màa rà wá fée**
 then 2sg send me - 1sgPRED buy come for-you
màmi ò kàa rà wá fée?
 or 1sg N.PRED buy come for-you
 'If you sent me, would I buy something and bring back for you/wouldn't I buy something and bring back for you?'

2.4 THE HABITUAL

The habitual could also be called iterative or repetitive. Its basic use is to describe an action which is/was repeated over and over again. It covers a wide range, from actions that may have taken place a dozen times or less in one particular situation (50) over regular habits (51) to generalisations about what always happens (52).

In terms of possible worlds, the habitual can be said to describe an abstracted or generalised world. From a series of observations, a generalisation is made about 'how things are/were'.

The habitual is used in backgrounding in narrative discourse. It is often used to describe background patterns of events i.e. what people used to do before the main story set in. In one folk-tale there is quite an elaborate little story preceding the main action, describing how the monster used to get his food, and how the hunter used to steal food from him (example 53 gives a short extract). In this background story, all the main events are in the habitual form. The action of the main story is in the indicative.

(50) **Títí kó bókó nyí wò béè, nàa tsáki**
 until SUBV incept. turn look like-that HAB seize
ògòrò-é bamé.
 neck-her hold
 'When(ever) she was about to turn and look like that, he used to seize her neck and hold it.' (A background event embedded in a story, describing repeated action during a walk)

- (57) **Nbí ní nà dóro tsí nà rí idzε nà mí bé**
 here it-is 2sgHAB stand then 2sgHAB find food or what
fáà?
 how

'So it's here you stand and find food, or what?' (From the story about the flying porridge. Turtle says this when he finds out what Hunter - habitually - is doing.)

- (58) **Bí ò wà wò o tse oko bàfó, nà kpa**
 if 2sg prog want 2sgSUBV do field corn 2sgHAB beat
àdzibà, tsí ré egi tsígíqí ɣa ñde.
 weeds then cut tree small plur leave
Bí à gbē nà tãná gu oko é.
 if 3pl be-dry 2sgHAB burn burn field def.

'If you want to make a corn field, you dig up the weeds, then you cut down the small trees. When they are dry, you burn the field.' (From a procedural discourse, explaining how to grow corn.)

- (59) **Nbè báàyí é nà làkóò, tsí owó náa**
 there now def 2sgHAB go then money HAB
káà tá ní ɔwɔ-èè kpó. Nà wí fú mi ni...
 exgr. finish in hand-your all 2sgHAB say to me that

'Now there, (supposing) you are going (somewhere), and all your money runs out for you. Tell me that...' (From a discourse explaining what friendship is, with the focus on the friendship between the speaker and the hearer.)

The use of the 2nd person habitual in procedural discourse moves it one step closer to hortatory discourse than the use of the impersonal 3pl habitual. It shifts the emphasis from 'this is how it is done' à náa, to 'this is how you (ought to) do it', nà. In one discourse describing how the Ifè people fish, the speaker changes from à náa to nà halfway through the discourse as he gets more emotionally involved in what he is talking about. In another text, on how to bring up girls, there is a vacillation between the 2sg predictive and the 2sg habitual, as if the speaker was uncertain whether to make her discourse hortatory or procedural.

The 2sg habitual is also used in commands. The 'pure' or direct 2sg imperative consists of the verb stem without a subject pronoun.

- (60) **lɔ ñlé**
 go home 'Go home!'

However, this direct imperative is usually used only in speaking to children, or in situations when the imperative does not need any mitigation. The most common way of giving a command to an equal or superior is to employ the 2sg habitual, as in the following examples:

- (61) O wà kó ɔd̩f̩ ní 'hòwá, bí ó wáa
 3sg prog teach hunter that 'wow' if 3sg ingress.
 làkòò gé, nà f̩f̩ kùkù, nà f̩f̩
 go just 2sgHAB hug-it hard 2sgHAB hug-it
 kùkù!
 hard
 'He taught hunter, saying: 'wow, when it's coming, just hug
 it hard, hug it hard!'
- (62) Nà kí ilé
 2sgHAB greet house
 'Greet the people at home' (parting greeting)

It is interesting in this context to note how vague and sometimes nonexistent the border between procedural and hortatory discourse can be. In a uniform culture with little change, describing how things are done and prescribing how they ought to be done is virtually the same thing. And once the form is perceived of as prescribing rather than describing behaviour, it becomes easy to start using it as an imperative.

The negative form of the habitual, *kà*, is often used for generalisations about what never happens (63), or what someone/people don't do (64,65). It may take on a prescriptive tone (65) like the 2nd person singular positive, but it can also be used to express an ordinary habitual pattern of what didn't happen regularly in a certain situation (66).

- (63) E mà ní ɔkp̩l̩ kà dzí ní
 2pl know that oracle-string N.HAB fall on
 il̩ tsí kó máa rí t̩ f̩.
 ground then SUBV prohib. see to-you say.
 'Know that the oracle string doesn't fall/never falls on the
 ground without having something to tell you.' (proverb, i.e.
 a universal fact)
- (64) Awa ɔm̩l̩ma Idàyè ɲa àwa kà dzɛ à`
 1pl grandchild Idaye pl 1pl N.HAB eat grey-heron
 n̩mbɛ ñn̩ɛ.
 today this-is
 'This is (why) we, the grandchildren of Idaye don't/never/
 eat grey heron today.' (explaining a custom/cultural norm)
- (65) nà r̩ fúu ní à kà tse béè.
 2sgHAB tell to-her that 3pl N.HAB do like-that
 'You should tell her that one doesn't do like that.'
 (cultural norm)
- (66) Nb̩ɛ́ olí kp̩t̩á á n̩áa rí owó héɲú
 how owner compound def HAB see money much
 àmá kà gbé ní ɔw̩-ɛ̩.
 but N.HAB stay in hand-his.

'Now the compound owner used to see (=earn) a lot of money, but it didn't stay in his hand.' (From the backgrounded introduction to a story, explaining what always used to happen to the man before the main action started. Same story as (51).

2.5 THE CONTRAFACTUAL

This mood is considerably more rare than the other basic moods. It only occurs 31 times in our data, which consists of over 6000 clauses. It is marked by the particle *má*.⁹

A. The positive contrafactual

The positive contrafactual occurs most frequently in conditional constructions, where it can be found both in the antecedent and the consequent. In terms of possible worlds, it could be said to suggest an alternative world, how things could have been, but how they aren't. A sentence with *má* is always false (i.e. contrary to what took/takes/will take place in the text world) whether *má* appears in the antecedent or in the consequent. One example has been found where the meaning seems to be hypothetical (69), but the fact that the speaker uses *má* might indicate that he considers the event extremely unlikely.

- (67) O *má* dzɛ tɛmi ná, ñ *má* bàdzé ɔsɛ̀̀̀ é.
3sg CONT be mine 1sg CONT destroy idol def.

'If it had been mine, I would have destroyed the idol' (A man telling about what he would have wanted to do. Since the idol didn't belong to him, he couldn't destroy it.)

- (68) Bí kò tsi òṅṅu nómbè yèé ilè má báàyí
if N.IND be 3sg today when ground shine now
é àkúdà *má* dzɛ ɲa ni.
def monster CONT eat them it-is.

'If it hadn't been for him today when it is light, the monster would have eaten them.' ('today when it is light' is a formula used in the conclusion of a folk tale; at the conclusion of the story, the teller gives an alternative: this is what would have happened, if it wasn't for such an event)

- (69) Bí ò *má* dzɛ ɛṅè-kà gìdì, tsí olí
if 2sg CONT accept debt-one even then owner
ɛṅè wá, tsí wà bú-èè gìdì, ò kàkó
debt come then prog. insult-you even 2sg N.PRED
múu ní ànyì-è.
take-it in back-his

'Even if you would have a debt, and the creditor would come and insult you, you should not take it (the money to pay) behind his (your husband's) back.

(Sketching a hypothetical situation the contrafactual seems to be the author's device here to indicate how highly unlikely it is that 'you' would have a debt at all.)

The contrafactual does not occur in conditionals only; it can also be used to sketch an alternative world in other types of sentences. In the following example the speaker, frustrated by what actually happened, uses a whole paragraph to describe how it could have been, consistently using the contrafactual to carry the story line. The text has a very sarcastic tone.

(The speaker's friend had gone to another town, and came back without having bought any cloth for the speaker, as the speaker had hoped.)

- (70) Kíbí ó lᵛ báàyí é, ó má tsi atso kàá
 when 3sg go now def 3sg CONT be cloth N.CONT
 sà gìḍì gé, tsí ó má d'áa ɔwó-kà
 disappear even just then 3sg CONT buy-it hand-one
 (A wà ta d'úkù ní ilú é, à wà ta
 3pl prog sell scarves in town def. 3pl prog sell
 lokpó ní ilú é). Tsí ó má rí
 hand-made cloth in town def. Then 3sg CONT see
 atso-ká títí atso é má dzɔdzú odzú-é. Tsí ó
 cloth-one until cloth def CONT please eye-her. Then 3sg
 má d'áa, tsí ó má fò ní: 'gbà ìmaru itserú
 CONT buy-it then 3sg CONT say that take about 5-days-ago
 b'é ní ñ d'áa á.' Títí ɔd'ó kó kàà nyí
 there it-is 1sg buy-it def. Until year SUBV exgr. turn
 é, èmi gbo ñ má sã ɛŋè-è fúu.
 def 1sg also 1sg CONT repay debt-her to-her.

'Now, when she went, it could have been that the cloth just hadn't disappeared. Then she could have bought one yard. (They sell scarves in town, they sell handmade cloth in town). Then she could have bought it, and she could have said: "It was approximately five days ago that I bought it". Before the year is over, I would have paid it back to her.'

B. The negative contrafactual

The negative contrafactual, kàá, is very rare in the data. In all the examples found except one, it occurs in a conditional sentence. The odd one out is a supplication (75).

Like má, kàá can occur in the antecedent (71), the consequent (72) or in both (73). When it occurs in the antecedent it means 'if it wasn't for' or 'if X hadn't happened'. In the consequent it indicates what would not have taken place, if it wasn't for what was stated in the antecedent. It is sometimes used in the conclusion of folktales to explain the relevance of what happened in the folktale (74).

- (71) ñ kàá wà ní ilé nɔmbé olè ŋa má fò ilé-mi.
 1sg N.CONT be in house today thief pl CONT break house-my
 'If I hadn't been at home today, the thieves would have
 broken into my house.'
- (72) N má mà ní b'éè ní ò wà á ñ kàá
 1sg CONT know that like-that it-is 2sg be def 1sg N.CONT
 wà sɔmá-è ró
 prog. approach-you again
 'If I had known that you were like that, I wouldn't have
 approached you again.'

- (73) kàá tsi òṅu wà díre ìqì-è fú mi é ò
 N.CONT be 3sg prog. show place-its for me def 1sg
kàá wà ríi láyé ró.
 N.CONT prog. find-it never again
 'If it wasn't that he showed its place to me, I would never
 have found it again.'
- (74) Kàá tsi ìnǝǝ ṅa ní, (...) ó má lɔ
 N.CONT be mother-her pl. it-is 3sg CONT go
 oláàkéèdzì ró, ó má ñ dzɛ.
 second-time again 3sg CONT of-her eat.
 (A girl has escaped from a monster that she married by
 mistake) 'If it wasn't for her mothers (...) she would have
 gone a second time and it would have eaten her.'
- (75) óò, ò tsikálè, ònyà-kà kàá tu
 oh 1sg beg person-one N.CONT pull-out
 iká-è fú òṅu dé è ?
 wing-his give him please question
 (Turtle would like to fly and asks the birds:) 'Oh, I beg
 you, couldn't one of you pull out his wing and give it to
 me, please.'

3. CONCLUSION

We will now return to our original claims and see how our analysis has justified them:

3.1 TEMPORAL REFERENCE

First of all we claimed that the basic moods do not contain any temporal reference, which could justify calling them tense or aspect.

We have seen that the indicative is used to report events that take place in the world of the text. This usually entails that an event in the indicative takes place in the past or present, and seldom in the future. It would be wrong to infer from this that the indicative is a non-future tense; rather, we have to do with a 'semantic side-effect' of its basic meaning, that of signalling reference to a specific event in the world of the text.

The subjunctive was found to have two functions: that of signalling that the event took place in the mental world of the speaker, and that of making a proposition into background information in the discourse. Neither of these two functions have to do with time. The backgrounded clauses may contain events that were simultaneous to the foregrounded event (27), preceding it (28) or following it (32). Thus we again find a total absence of reference to time.

We have already discussed the possibility of considering the predictive as a future tense (section 2.3), and found that we had to reject it on similar grounds as for the indicative. Although a prediction by its very nature often refers to the future, we cannot infer from that, that time is in focus in its meaning.

The habitual is clearly divorced from temporal connotations in that it is used for generalisations. Where it is used as an imperative it refers to the future, but again we have to do with a 'semantic side-effect'. It is futile to give commands about the past.

The contrafactual is the only one of the basic moods which has a clear past time reference. It tells us how things could have been (done), but how they weren't (done). But like with the other basic moods, the focus lies heavily on possible worlds rather than on time.

3.2 FOREGROUNDING - BACKGROUNDING

Our second claim was that the basic moods can be used to signal whether the proposition contains information which is foregrounded or backgrounded in the discourse. With foregrounding we mean the propositions that make up the backbone of the text. In a narrative text this will be the events that move the story forwards. In a procedural text it is the various steps in the procedure. In a hortatory text it is the commands, and in an expository discourse it is the claims of the speaker.

In a narrative text, the indicative is used to carry the line of events, i.e. the foregrounded propositions. It is also used in background information that indicates state, or introduces participants. It is used in flashbacks and in explanatory information. Foregrounded clauses in the indicative are marked by the connective tsí. (This should not be confused with serial clauses, where tsí can occur also in backgrounded information, see p.1)

The subjunctive is used in narrative text for backgrounded material only. Apart from being very frequent in quotes, which are best seen as miniature embedded discourses. it occurs in clauses which provide a setting for a preceding or following proposition.

The predictive rarely occurs in narrative text, apart from quotes. When it does, it is always in backgrounded material, which gives additional information about people's behaviour (39).

The habitual, as we have seen, is often used at the beginning of a narrative text to give background information about what people used to do. It establishes a pattern which is then broken when the main action sets in (53).

The contrafactual is used in backgrounded material, for evaluations or suggestions about alternative events.

For some languages it is possible to set up a sort of 'scale' for backgrounding, where different verb forms or other syntactic means are used to signal different degrees of backgrounding. This seems hard to do for Ifè. The dividing line goes between foregrounding and backgrounding. The backgrounded material can hardly be divided into more or less backgrounded, but rather into different types of background material. It is hard to say if any type is more backgrounded than the other.

<u>type:</u>	<u>mood used:</u>
stage (state and participants)	indicative
explanations/flashback	indicative
setting	subjunctive
behaviour	predictive
background pattern	habitual
evaluations	contrafactual

We have already commented on how the different moods are used to carry the main line of foregrounded information in other genres. Here is a summary:

expository:	predictive
procedural:	3sg habitual, 2sg habitual (2sg)
hortatory:	3sg subjunctive, 2sg predictive, 2sg habitual

3.3 POSSIBLE WORLDS

Finally we claimed that the main function of the basic moods is to signal possible worlds. This is clearly the primary function of the basic moods, from which the other functions spring. Since this has already been discussed in the treatment of each mood, we will only give a summary here:

indicative:	the text world (i.e. the 'real world' of the text).
subjunctive:	the imagined, mental world.
predictive:	the predicted, expected world.
habitual:	the generalised, abstracted world.
contrafactual:	the alternative, unrealised world.

We thus find that the basic distinction that an Ifè speaker has to make in every proposition is not one of time, whether in relation to the speech act, to the internal structure of the event or to the temporal relationship between the propositions. What concerns the Ifè speaker is to communicate how his speech relates to the worlds that are possible in logical thinking. The Ifè speaker needs to specify whether he is talking about things as they are (indicative), as he would like them to be (subjunctive), as he is sure they will be/are (predictive), as they tend to be (habitual) or as they were not (contrafactual).

It would be interesting to know if this way of categorising propositions is unique for Ifè, or if similar systems exist in other languages. Descriptions of tense, mood and aspect categories in African languages are often restricted to purely morphological and syntactic descriptions. Although the reader is informed about the form of the habitual, the past or the future, one seldom discovers how they function semantically.¹⁰

NOTES

¹This study is based mainly on 38 texts of different genres and by various speakers, recorded in 1982-1984. They were transcribed by Mr. Kabo Mawuena Akoma, who also wrote some of the texts and supplied additional examples. Without his invaluable help this study would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Longacre and Dr. Ivan Lowe, international consultants with the Summer Institute of Linguistics as well as many of my other SIL colleagues for their valuable help and suggestions.

The Ifè language is spoken in central Togo by approximately 100,000 people, in the town of Atakpamé and in the region east, south and north of Atakpamé. It is also spoken in Benin, mainly in the town of Tchetti. Ifè has been classified as a Yoruba dialect (Armstrong, 1956; Akinkugbe, 1976). Yoruba is a Niger-Congo language of the Kwa branch.

²The preverbal particles in Ifè correspond to what Bamgboṣe (1966) terms 'preverbs' for the Yoruba verb phrase or verbal group. However, as far as Ifè is concerned, the term 'preverb' could be misleading, since the particles in question do not function elsewhere as full verbs. Therefore the term 'preverbal particles' will be used in this paper.

³In addition to these 15 preverbal particles, three more have been found. They are extremely rare, and it is very hard to draw any conclusions about their exact meaning and function. They are dzɔ́nɛ́ 'maybe, probably'; tsɛ̀tsɛ̀ 'first'; tī́ 'even, but'.

⁴It may be quite possible to set up a series of semantic 'distinctive features' for the particles. A particle would then be said to be incompatible with a particle with the opposite +/- value for that feature. Thus kó 'subjunctive' would be marked [+projection, -text world] and can therefore not co-occur with sī́ 'intensifier' tī́ 'contraexpectation' and tɔ́ 'repetitive', which are all [+text world]. The prohibitive m̄aa on the other hand, can only co-occur with the subjunctive, because they are the only two particles carrying the features [+projection, -text world]. Some particles would be seen as carrying an alpha value for a certain feature, which would take the value of any particle that it co-occurred with. Further study in this area may prove illuminating.

⁵The particle ní precedes every noun phrase which is not directly preceded by a transitive verb. It also precedes clauses and parts of clauses functioning as a subordinate complement to another clause, and quotations. It is best described as a dummy verb, although it can often be glossed by the preposition 'in', the conjunction 'that' and the verb 'to say'. For ease of understanding it will be glossed 'in' or 'that' as appropriate in this article. The same particle ní, or possibly a homophonous particle, is also found after frontshifted or emphasised phrases or clauses. It has been glossed 'it is' in this paper, like the similar particle ni (mid tone).

⁶It is interesting to note in this context the study by Ivan Kalmár of Inuktitut (Greenlandic) moods or modes (1982) where he shows how their main function is 'to place each predication within the context of a text as a whole'. He claims that the Inuktitut modes 'make it possible to single out essential as opposed to background information, to distinguish events that develop rather than elaborate the speaker's message, and to differentiate

between predications with focus on the predicate from those where the focus is on the arguments or participants.'

⁷Welmers (1973, p. 356) suggests the term 'hortatory' for the corresponding forms in other Niger-Congo languages, based on the fact that the form is often used to 'urge' or 'suggest'. He dislikes the term subjunctive, on the grounds that the Niger-Congo forms are not 'primarily 'subjoined' or used in subordinate clauses'. However, in grammars of modern European languages, the term subjunctive is used for 'the wish form' of the verb, i.e. for the unreal, mental world. This corresponds to the use of the subjunctive in Ifè. Armstrong (1963) also chose the term subjunctive for a similar form in Idoma, on the basis of its similarity to the subjunctive in European languages. It is interesting to note that many sentences in Ifè in the subjunctive are best translated with a French subjunctive and vice versa. It is also interesting to note that a secondary use of the subjunctive in Ifè is precisely that of subjoining a clause to other clauses in a text.

⁸Reported speech in Ifè is semi-direct rather than completely direct. In (22) the reported speech is literally what was said. In (21) the speech is reported in 3rd person. What was actually said (in 2nd person imperative) was:

òò, 13 kãã tse ewé yèé wá gé!
no go exgr. pick leaf that come just
'No, just go and pick that leaf!'

There is often vacillation between 2nd and 3rd person in reported speech when referring to the addressee, and between 1st and 3rd person when the speech refers back to the speaker.

⁹An alternative form *bã* has been reported, but it is not found in our data. It is probably a dialectal variant.

¹⁰Dahl (1985) attempts to find some universal tense and aspect categories in a study of a large number of languages. However, he works from a questionnaire that has been translated into languages in question. It is my opinion that in describing a tense-aspect-mood category, one needs to start with a large corpus of unelicited text, and study all possible situations where the category occurs. TMA systems seem often to consist of sets of categories where each set covers a certain parameter such as time in relation to the speech act, internal structure of the event, or possible worlds. To understand the function of each of the members in such a set, we need to see how the system as a whole divides up the parameter of reality that it is concerned with. This can only be done by studying how the categories are used in unelicited text.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, R.C. 1962. Dictionary of modern Yoruba. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Akinkugbe, Femi. 1976. An internal classification of the Yoruboid group. *Journal of West African Languages* XI:20.
- Armstrong, R. 1963. The subjunctive in Idoma. *Journal of West African Languages* II:155-159.
- _____. 1965. Comparative word list of two dialects of Yoruba and Igala. *Journal of West African Languages* II:51-78.

- Bamgbose, Ayo. 1966. A grammar of Yoruba. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chung, Sandra & Alan Timberlake. 1985. Tense, aspect and mood. Language typology and syntactic description, Vol.III.ed. by T.Shopen, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. Aspect: An introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahl, Oesten. 1985. Tense and aspect Systems. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Grimes, Joseph. 1975. The thread of discourse. The Hague: Mouton.
- Kalmár, Ivan. 1982. The function of Inuktitut verb modes in narrative texts. Tense-Aspect. Between Semantics and Pragmatics. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Omamor, A. 1982. Tense and Aspect in Isekiri. Journal of West African Languages XII.2:95-129.
- Ogunbowale, P.O. 1970. The essentials of the Yoruba language. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Welmers, William E. 1973. African language structures. Berkeley: University of California Press.

ON NEGATING THE CONSECUTIVE VERB IN AKAN

Florence A. Dolphyne

Department of Linguistics
University of Ghana, Legon

Ten tense/aspect verbal forms are recognised in Akan, each with an affirmative and a corresponding negative form.

With the exception of the Consecutive verb, all the verbs in the tense/aspect verbal system can occur independently. The Consecutive verb, however, normally occurs as a non-initial verb in a serial verb construction, and the initial verb in such a construction is limited to certain tense/aspect forms only.

It has always been taken for granted that when an affirmative sentence is negated, the negative verb belongs to the same tense or aspect as the affirmative verb. It will be shown that this is not true of the affirmative Consecutive verb in serial verb constructions.

Contrary to the claim (Boadi, 1968) that in Akan serial verb constructions 'what joins them [the constituent verb phrases in the serial construction] is agreement between certain pre-verbal affixes across the sentence', this paper¹ shows that there are serial verb constructions in Akan in which the verbs belong to different tenses or aspects of the verb. When such sentences are negated, non-initial verbs are unmarked for tense or aspect, and are dominated by the tense or aspect of the first verb.