

ASPECTUAL CONTRASTS IN ESAN

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In the literature on aspectual systems of many languages, it is generally believed that it is not always easy to draw a distinction between tense and aspect, especially as both deal with temporal reference. In spite of this situation, there are clear areas of distinction where aspectual contrasts are delineated from tense contrasts.

In this paper, we examine the various ways of expressing aspectual contrasts, highlighting areas where tense and aspect impinge on each other as well as other areas which are distinctly aspectual.

Dans les ouvrages traitant des systèmes aspectuels de bien des langues on propose en général qu'il n'est pas toujours facile de distinguer temps et aspect, surtout quand il s'agit de références temporelles. Malgré cela il existe clairement des domaines où les contrastes d'aspect se distinguent des contrastes temporels.

Nous examinons ici les diverses manières d'exprimer les contrastes aspectuels, et nous soulignons d'une part certains domaines où le temps et l'aspect se chevauchent, et d'autre part certains domaines où il s'agit nettement d'aspect.

0. INTRODUCTION

Tense and aspect both deal with temporal specification and in the works on aspectual systems of many languages, it is generally believed that it is not always easy to draw a distinction between them. See Lyons (1968:316), Comrie (1976:82), Lyons (1977:705), Essien (1984), and Oko (1986) among others. Ejele (2002) treated the syntax and semantics of tense markers vis-à-vis temporal specification in Esan. In this present paper, we examine the relevant data to show the various ways in which aspectual contrasts can be expressed, highlighting areas where tense and aspect impinge on each other as well as other areas seen to be clearly distinct and aspectual.

The data for this paper is taken from the Ekpoma dialect spoken mainly in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The Esan language, spoken in five Local Government Areas of the Benue-Kwa (Elugbe 1986), formerly classified as belonging to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger-Congo family (Greenberg 1963), is now classified as New Benue-Congo (Bendor-Samuel 1989).

1. ASPECTUAL CONTRASTS

While both tense and aspect make reference to temporal notions, aspect is distinct from tense in being non-deictic. In other words, aspect makes non-specific, indefinite reference to time, while tense makes specific, definite reference to time. Consequently aspect is a non-deictic temporal notion involving the way in which the situation depicted by the verb is seen or experienced. In other words, it is to do with whether the beginning, middle or end of the situation is being referred to, for example; or whether it is single or iterative, complete or incomplete. In this way, events, actions or states can be broken down into phases.

These aspectual concepts may be expressed through lexicalisation or grammaticalisation (Lyons 1977:706). When lexicalised, a word is used to express the concept and when grammaticalised, a grammatical morpheme expresses it, and the concept is

said to be formalised. In what follows, we look at the progressive, prospective aspect, completion, inception, habitual and the perfective/imperfective contrasts.

1.1 THE PROGRESSIVE

In Esan, no distinction is made between progressive, continuous or repetitive situations, as the same prefix **á-** is used (see Ejele 2002). Hence, Reichenbach's (1947) term 'extension' is a very useful cover term for these situations. The extended verb form is represented by **á-VP**, meaning 'be VP-ing'. In what follows, we examine the expressions of the progressive as it occurs with the three tenses, i.e. the simple present extended, simple past extended and simple future extended.

1.1.1 Simple Present Extended

This is the traditional present progressive, used to depict situations that are in progress at speech time, as in examples (1a–c) below. This contrasts with the simple present tense, which in Esan normally expresses habituality, as discussed in §1.5.

- (1) a. **ọ́díá táló** Odia is talking / talks.
 talk/speak
 b. **ọ́díá khọn** Odia is fighting.
 fight
 c. **ọ́díá bọ ùwá** Odia is building a house.
 build house

In examples (1a–c), the morpheme **á-VP**, 'be VP-ing', that marks extension is absent. Yet they are interpreted as present situations that are extended. Hence, the simple present extended is a conceptual category. In fact, since tense and aspect are not segmentally separable in these examples, the systems of tense and aspect can be said to be very much intertwined. Using only the tone on the verb as a criterion of distinction is not very reliable because it is inconsistent, being low in (1a) and (1c), but rising in (1b). Apart from this the tone on the verb is itself affected by other factors like transitivity, position in the sentence, modification, etc. (See Ejele 1982:69 and Ejele 1986:134–140, 170 for details.)

In what follows, we treat tone as a sentential category since the tone on other elements, apart from the verb, also plays an important role. It is the overall sentential tonal pattern and syntactic structure that capture the nature and means of representation of tense and aspect. See Ejele (2001a) for tense.

1.1.2 Simple Past Extended (traditionally Past Progressive)

Three structures are used to express the simple past extended, as in examples (3a–c), respectively, compared with (2), the simple past tense.

- (2) **ọ́díá táló / odia dâ táló** Odia talked.
 (3) a. **ọ́díá dâ á-táló** Odia was talking.
 PAST EXT¹-talk

¹ 'Extended'.

- b. **òdíá dá tàlọ** Odia was talking.
 PAST talk
- c. **òdíá ọ a-tàlọ** Odia was talking.
 he EXT-talk

In these examples, the simple past extended is conveyed by the presence of:

1. **dâ á-VP**, as in (3a). For **dâ** as [+past], see Ejele (1986) and (2001a). Here the prefix occurs with the VP. Note the falling tone on **dâ**, compared with the high tone on **dá** in (3b);
 2. **dá VP**, as in (3b). Note the absence of the prefix on the VP, and the high tone on **dá**;
 3. **a VP**, as in (3c), where **a** with a mid tone is a free morpheme occurring before the VP, distinct from **á** as a prefix. Note also the presence of the concordial pronominal element which occurs immediately after the NP subject in some tenses and aspects. This pronoun refers to the noun subject and agrees with it in person and number, as in the difference between (4a) and (4b), where **ọ** occurs after **òdíá** and **ẹ** after **ìkpiá**, the noun subject.
- (4) a. **òdíá ọ tàlọ** Odia talks.
 Odia he talk
- b. **ìkpiá ẹ tàlọ** Men talk.
 men they talk

Semantically, the three structures are synonymous, but they differ pragmatically. Both **dâ** and **dá** are similar in that they are generally used for reporting or describing situations seen as still in progress in the past. However, **dá** is the common form, characteristically iterative, used for emphasis or as a stylistic device, associated with narrative contexts to refer to situations further back in the past (anterior in the past). In contrast **dâ** is used for more recent situations, and is not capable of iterative use. Furthermore **dâ** also occurs in the simple past (as **dâ VP**: see Ejele 2001a, compared to **dâ á-VP**, the past progressive) whereas **dá** does not.

The use of **a** in **a VP** to express simple past extended is also pragmatically different from the aforementioned two structures as it is mainly used for emphasis. When used, the speaker asserts that it is the action depicted by the VP, rather than some other action, that is being done by the subject of the sentence. Thus (3c) specifies that the subject Odia was *talking*, not eating or playing or doing something else.

The three structures co-vary with the two verbal forms. Thus **dâ á-VP** occurs as a grammaticalised verb form, while the zero verb form (the verb form with no affix attached) occurs with the other two structures as **dá VP** and **a VP** (see Ejele 1986:176).

Tense and aspect are intertwined in these structures, because although we can separate the parts into tense (**dâ**) and aspect (**á-VP**) in **dâ á-VP** in the first structure, the other two structures are not separable; though there is no doubt that what is semantically expressed in (3b) and (3c) is 'past extended'. One way to establish their status as 'past extended' is to exclude them in (3a–c), as shown in (5a–c), respectively.

- (5) a. **òdíá á-tàlọ** Odia was talking.
 EXT-talk

- b. **ódiá tào** Odia talks (is talking).
 talk
- c. **ódiá ô tào** Odia talks (habitual/ability).
 he talk

When **dâ** is excluded from (3a) as in (5a), the resulting sentence is interpretable as simple past extended, presumably because the grammaticalised verb form **á-tào** (**á-VP**) still performs this function. However (5a) is not the usual form, as it lacks the pragmatic descriptive effect of (3a) (with **dâ**). When **dá** and **a** are excluded, the resulting sentences are interpretable as simple present—a purely conceptual category, as in (5b) and (5c) compared with (3b) and (3c) respectively; though in some contexts, it can mean present progressive, as in (5b).

Thus the three structures for expressing simple past extended can be said to be morpho-syntactically represented, even though there is only one grammaticalised verb form, since the morphemes **dá** and **a** which occur with the verb stem with zero marker are [+past extended].

1.1.3 Simple Future Extended (Future Progressive)

This deals with a situation yet to take place, just like the simple future, but the situation in the former is seen at speech time as being in progress. In Reichenbach's terms, reference time and event time are extended and are posterior to speech time.

There are three ways of expressing the simple future extended:

1. by the use of the future morpheme **a** in conjunction with the grammaticalised extended verb form (**á-VP**) as in (6c); semantically, this has an anticipatory interpretation;
2. by the use of the future morpheme **kì** in conjunction with the grammaticalised extended verb form (**á-VP**) as in (6d); semantically, this has a consequential interpretation;
3. by the use of an appropriate future adverbial in conjunction with the simple present extended verb stem with zero marker as in (6e).

These three ways of expressing the simple future extended (6c,d,e) contrast with the two ways of expressing the simple future, shown in (6a and b) below.

- (6) a. **ódiá ô â tào** Odia will talk.
 he FUT talk
- b. **ódiá kì tào** Odia will talk.
 FUT talk
- c. **ódiá ô á á-tào** Odia will be talking.
 he FUT EXT-talk
- (≡ **ódiá á á-tào** Odia will be talking.)
 FUT EXT-talk
- d. **ódiá kì á-tào** Odia will be talking.
 FUT EXT-talk

- e. **íséná éwìè ọ́díá tàlọ** This time tomorrow, Odia is talking.
 this time tomorrow Odia talk ≡ This time tomorrow, Odia will be talking.

Of interest is the tonal change in the future morpheme from **â** (in simple future in (6a)) to **á** in simple future extended in (6c). Although semantically equivalent, the three modes of expression differ pragmatically in terms of the certainty of the speaker for the proposition he is asserting. The most certain is (6e), involving simple present extended and the temporal adverbial, where the speaker is certain that the situation referred to will definitely take place (other things being equal). This is expressed in the action being in progress even though it is yet to take place. Similarly when the **kì** structure is used, the speaker is quite certain of the proposition expressed, as seen in the associated consequential interpretation in (6d). The least certain is (6c), which expresses anticipatory expectation. These notions of certainty, anticipation and expectation are all essentially modal in nature, in addition to the non-deictic-temporal concepts expressed. This is not surprising, because the simple future tense in the Esan language also has modal overtones of prediction, apart from its normal deictic temporal reference (Ejele 2001a).

1.2 PROSPECTIVE ASPECT

The prospective aspect, according to Comrie (1976:64), relates a state to some subsequent situation. This aspect is grammaticalised in Esan, as in the examples below.

- (7) a. **ọ́díá (ò) rẹ̀ â tàlọ** Odia was about to / wanted to talk /
 he PERF FUT talk nearly/almost talked.
 b. **ọ́díá; (ò) rẹ̀ â khọ̀n** Odia was about to / wanted to fight /
 he PERF FUT fight nearly/almost fought.
 c. **ọ́díá; (ò) rẹ̀ â bọ́ úwá** Odia was about to / wanted to build a
 he PERF FUT build house house / nearly/almost built a house.

Note that the concordial pronominal **ò** is optional in these examples.

The prospective aspect is non-deictic and is represented by the structure **rẹ̀ â** which occurs directly before the VP. It is composed of the perfective morpheme **rẹ̀** and the anticipatory future morpheme **â**, occurring in that order. The prospective aspect is anticipatory in a sense, reflecting the influence of the anticipatory future morpheme. The meaning of the prospective aspect includes ‘was about to / wanted to / nearly/almost’. There is also an imperfective correlate, as seen in (8a–c).

- (8) a. **ọ́díá (ò) rẹ̀ á a-tàlọ** Odia was about to be talking.
 he PERF FUT EXT-talk
 b. **ọ́díá (ò) rẹ̀ á a-khọ̀n** Odia was about to be fighting.
 PERF FUT EXT-fight
 c. **ọ́díá (ò) rẹ̀ á a-bọ́ uwá** Odia was about to be building a house.
 PERF FUT EXT-build house

In both the perfective and imperfective, the implication is that ‘NP did not actually VP’.

Another structure for expressing the prospective aspect involves a time adverbial, as in (9a) and (9b)—which are the perfective and imperfective correlates respectively.

- (9) a. **o ke khéré ni ódiá rẹ tálo** Odia was about to be talking.
 it remain small for PERF talk
- b. **o ke khéré ni ódiá rẹ á-tàlo** Odia was about to be talking
 it remain small for PERF EXT-talk (= about to start talking).

The phrase **o ke khéré**, literally meaning ‘it remain small’, functions as a time adverbial which in acceptable English means ‘was about to / nearly / almost’.

Note that the prospective aspect which is assertive, as in (8a–c), can be used descriptively by the addition of **da** (with non-high tone) directly before the perfective marker **rẹ**. When so used, the pronominal must be excluded, as in (10a,b).

- (10) a. **ódiá dà rẹ á tàlo** Odia almost talked.
 PAST PERF FUT talk
- b. **ódiá dà rẹ á a-tàlo** Odia was almost talking.
 PAST PERF FUT EXT-talk

1.3 COMPLETION

The concept of completion is expressed by the presence of the word **fo** ‘finish’ and/or **ne** ‘already’ occurring sentence-finally, as in examples (11a–c).

- (11) a. **ódiá tálo fo(ne)** Odia has finished talking
 talk finish.(already) ≡ Odia has already talked.
- b. **ódiá khọn fo(ne)** Odia has finished fighting
 fight finish.(already) ≡ Odia has already fought.
- c. **ódiá bó úwá fo(ne)** Odia has finished building a house
 build house finish.(already) ≡ Odia has already built a house.

Note that **ne**, ‘already’, is not obligatory. However, when both words **fo** and **ne** occur in a sentence as above, **fo** must precede **ne**. An adverb, if present, occurs after **ne** as in (11d) below or sentence-initially as in (11e).

- d. **ódiá tálo fo ne òdẹ** Odia had finished talking yesterday
 talk finish already yesterday ≡ Odia has already talked yesterday.
- e. **òdẹ ódiá tálo fo** It was yesterday Odia finished talking.
 yesterday talk finish

Example (11e) is a case of topicalisation.

In this combination, it is the choice of adverbial that determines the meaning of the sentence. Thus

- f. **íséná éwiè ódiá tálo fo** This time tomorrow, Odia has finished
 this.time tomorrow talk finish talking, ≡ will have finished talking.
- g. **íséná òdẹ ódiá tálo fo** This time yesterday, Odia has finished
 this.time yesterday talk finish talking, ≡ had finished talking.

As we see in (11f), a future-referring adverbial **íséná éwiè**, ‘this time tomorrow’, forces a future-referring interpretation, just as in (11g) a past-referring adverbial **íséná òdẹ**, ‘this time yesterday’, determines a past-referring interpretation. When there are

no adverbials as in (11a–c), the notion of completion which is lexically conveyed, expresses what one may call ‘perfective present’ which, in Esan, lacks an imperfective correlate. (See the Paradigms in §2.2, which show other perfective/imperfective correlates.)

1.4 THE INCEPTIVE

The inceptive aspect is expressed by the verb **muhen** (‘start, begin, commence’), directly by the extended verb form as in (12).

- (12) a. **ọdiá múhèn á-tàlo** Odiá has started talking.
 start EXT-talk
- b. **ọdiá múhèn á-khọn** Odiá has started fighting.
 start EXT-fight
- c. **ọdiá múhèn á-bọ úwâ** Odiá has started building a house.
 start EXT-build house

It is used in any situation that involves phases, but focuses on the beginning or inceptive phase. As such, it reflects a change in the state of affairs.

In an inceptive interpretation, only the grammaticalised extended verb form (**á-VP**) can be used, as in (12a–c) above; otherwise it results in unacceptable sentences which are difficult to interpret as in (13a–c), where the VP lacks the prefix that marks the extension.

- (13) a. ***ọdiá múhèn tàlo** ?Odiá start talk.
 start talk
- b. ***ọdiá múhèn khọn** ?Odiá start fight.
 start fight
- c. ***ọdiá múhèn bọ úwâ** ?Odiá start build house.
 start build house

1.5 THE HABITUAL

This expresses a situation that recurs regularly and implicitly involves iteration or repetition. Habituality is expressed in the simple present tense by a specific structure and its associated tonal pattern **NP pro VP**, meaning ‘NP does VP’, as in the examples below.

- (14) a. **ọdiá ọ tàlo** Odiá talks.
 he talk
- b. **ọdiá ọ khọn** Odiá fights.
 he fight
- c. **ọdiá ọ bọ úwâ** Odiá builds house(s).
 he build house

Habituality can also be expressed by using frequency adverbials like **éghèrebhe** ‘every time, all the time’ and **úkpuúkpe** ‘every year’ in the periodic structure **éghèrebhe NP ré VP**, meaning ‘It is every time NP VPs’, as in (15a,b).

- (15) a. **éghèrèbhé ọ́diá rẹ́** **viẹ** Odia cries all the time.
 every.time use/spend cry
- b. **úkpùúkpè ẹ́fẹ́ rẹ́** **biẹ** It is every year Efe gives birth.
 every.year use/spend born

Note that **rẹ́** is a verbal morpheme that marks duration in terms of a period or interval (distinct from **rẹ̀** as perfective), and contrasts with **dá** for punctual or momentary interpretation (see Ejele 1986:91 and Ejele 2001b for details).

Thus there are two ways to express habitual present in Esan:

1. through the structure associated with present tense (as in 13a-c);
2. through the periodic structure involving the use of frequency adverbials, as in (15a,b).

Habitual past can be expressed via the imperfective, as discussed in 1.6 below.

1.6 THE PERFECTIVE AND IMPERFECTIVE

The perfective is represented by the grammatical morpheme **rẹ̀** which occurs only in the past and future, being never used in the present. According to Comrie (1976:16), perfectivity includes punctual or instantaneous situations of short, as opposed to long, duration; or to the termination or beginning of a situation. It denotes a complete situation. Thus, perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a simple whole without distinguishing the various separate phases that make it up.

In contrast, imperfectivity focuses on the internal structure of the situation. Thus the concept of imperfectivity may be characterised as expressing a progressive, continuous or durative situation as well as a habitual or customary situation occurring over an extended period of time.

Esan has correlates expressing the perfective and imperfective. The perfective past is grammatically represented by the morpheme **rẹ̀** while the imperfective correlate is represented by a sequence of the perfective morpheme **rẹ̀** and the grammaticalised extended verb form **á-VP**. Thus there is a contrast between **rẹ̀ VP** (perfective) and **rẹ̀ á-VP** (imperfective). In what follows, we examine the correlates.

1.6.1 Perfective and Imperfective Present

As already mentioned in 1.3, the concept of completion expresses the notion of the perfective present, which has no imperfective correlate.

1.6.2 Perfective and Imperfective Past

There are three ways of expressing the perfective past (and its imperfective correlate as we shall see later). These are exemplified in (16a–c).

- (16) a. **ọ́ kẹ́** **ọ́diá rẹ̀** **tálo** Odia had already talked.
 it quick PERF talk
 ADVERBIAL
- b. **ọ́diá ọ̀ rẹ̀** **tálo** Odia had talked.
 he PERF talk
- c. **ọ́diá rẹ̀** **tálo** Odia did talk.
 PERF talk

The perfective which occurs in a grammaticalised deictic structure **ọ kẹ NP rẹ VP** ‘NP had already VP-ed’, as in (16a), is conveyed by the adverbial expression **ọ kẹ**. The verb **kẹ** means ‘quick, fast’ and may be glossed as ‘already’. The other two very similar structures in (16b,c) do not involve the use of the grammaticalised deictic structure. The presence of the concordial pronominal **ọ** in (16b), as opposed to its absence in (16c), is crucial to the distinction between the two similar structures.

Semantically, there is little difference between them, except that (16c), **NP rẹ VP**, is more emphatic. Apart from the difference in emphasis, the overriding pragmatic impact of using **NP rẹ VP** structure in (16c) is much greater than that involved in using the **NP ọ rẹ VP** structure in (16b). Thus, using the structure in (16b) has a causal/consequential relation with the following/preceding clause; while in contrast using the **NP rẹ VP** structure as in (16c) definitely leads the hearer to expect more information by drawing any relevant pragmatic implications. It has the effect of ‘but’ in English.

Esan has imperfective correlates, as shown in (17a–c), which contrast with (16a–c).

- (17) a. **ọ kẹ ọdiá rẹ á-tálo** Odia was already talking.
 it quick PERF EXT-talk
 ADVERBIAL
- b. **ọdiá ọ rẹ á-tálo** Odia was talking / had been talking /
 he PERF EXT-talk used to talk.
- c. **ọdiá rẹ á-tálo** Odia was talking / had been talking /
 PERF EXT-talk used to talk.

All the examples in the perfective have essentially one meaning, ‘NP had VP-ed’; while the imperfective has three possible interpretations: ‘NP was VP-ing’; ‘NP had been VP-ing’; or ‘NP used to VP’, the last being habitual past.

The difference between examples (17a–c) is similar to that in (16a–c). Thus the non-habitual interpretation in (17b) usually implies that something happened during the situation depicted by the imperfective. That is, ‘NP was VP-ing / had been VP-ing when something happened’. The unexpressed phrase ‘when something happened’ represents any event or situation relevant to the situation depicted by the imperfective. This is essentially a causal/consequential relation, just like the perfective correlate in (16b). In contrast, the imperfective in the **NP rẹ á-VP** structure in (17c) implies something like ‘nevertheless’, ‘...but’, just like the pragmatic effect of its perfective correlate.

1.6.3 Perfective and Imperfective Future

The perfective future, just like its imperfective future, can be formed by a combination of a future-referring morpheme (**á** or **kì**) with the perfective morpheme **rẹ**, as in (18a,b) and (19a,b) respectively.

- (18) a. **ọ á kẹ ọdiá rẹ tálo** Odia will have already talked.
 FUT already PERF
- b. **ọ kì kẹ ọdiá rẹ tálo** Odia will have already talked.
 FUT already PERF

- (19) a. **ó â kẹ ọdiá rẹ a-tálo** Odia will already have been talking.
 FUT already PERF PROG-talk
- b. **ó kì kẹ ọdiá rẹ a-tálo** Odia will already have been talking.
 FUT already PERF PROG-talk

Structurally, the difference between (18), perfective, and (19), imperfective, is that between (20) and (21):

- (20) **ó { â } kẹ NP rẹ VP** NP will have already VP-ed
 { kì }
- (21) **ó { â } kẹ NP rẹ á-VP** NP will have already been VP-ing
 { kì }

As with perfective and imperfective past, the difference between the future correlates is that between the situation seen as a whole or in terms of its internal structure. This is captured morpho-syntactically by the **rẹ VP** and **rẹ á-VP** structures, which for the future, must have the future-referring morphemes **â** or **ki**. As already observed, **â** is anticipatory, while **ki** is consequential. The deictic grammatical structure **ó [â/ki] kẹ** fixes the reference time of the first event as preceding another time or event. Another way of expressing the future perfective is by the explicit use of an appropriate future time adverbial combined with the perfective present, as in (11f) and (11g) in §1.3.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 ASPECTUAL CONTRASTS

Overall a number of aspectual contrasts have been observed in the data:

1. The simple present extended is a conceptual category, as the tense and aspect morphemes are not separable; hence tense and aspect impinge on each other.
2. The simple past extended **dâ á-VP** structure contrasts with the simple past tense **dâ VP** structure. Hence, generally, tense and aspect can be said to be separable in this case.
3. The simple future extended [**á á-VP** and **ki á-VP**] overtly contrast with the simple future tense [**â VP** and **ki VP**], so tense and aspect can be separated.
4. The perfective and imperfective contrast, structurally expressed in **rẹ VP** and **rẹ á-VP** respectively. Here we are dealing mainly with aspect.
5. The combination of some expression of time adverbial (**kẹ**) with some representation of tense or aspect (**rẹ VP** and **rẹ á-VP**), as in the deictic grammatical structures **ó kẹ NP rẹ VP** vs. **ó kẹ NP rẹ á-VP** in (16a) and (17a).
6. The explicit use of appropriate time adverbials with some aspectual expression, as in (11f,g); or using completion to express the perfective present as in (11a-c).

The facts observed in 1–3 above, in essence, reflect the contrast between tense and aspect. In contrast, the facts observed in 4–6 reflect perfective versus imperfective aspectual distinctions.

We also observe that the concepts of inception and completion are lexicalised, while the progressive and prospective aspect are grammaticalised.

It is seen that while tense and aspect indeed do impinge on each other in very few areas, there are more areas where they are clearly distinct. In conclusion, we present a summary of the paradigms showing the perfective/imperfective correlates.

2.2 PARADIGMS SHOWING THE PERFECTIVE/IMPERFECTIVE CONTRASTS

The example numbers correspond to those in the text.

1. Perfective Prospective Aspect

- (7) a. **ódiá (ò) rẹ á táló**
Odia was about to talk.
- (9) a. **ò kẹ khéré ni ódiá rẹ táló**
TIME ADVERBIAL
Odia almost/nearly talked.

2. Perfective Present

(expressed via the notion of completion)

- (11) a. **ódiá táló fo(nẹ)**
Odia has finished talking.
(Odia has already talked.)

3. Perfective Past

- (16) a. **ò kẹ ódiá rẹ táló**
Odia had already talked.
- b. **ódiá ò rẹ táló**
Odia had talked... (causing something to happen, hence a causal/consequential relation with the preceding/following clause).
- c. **ódiá rẹ táló**
Odia talked / had talked (but...).

1. Imperfective Prospective Aspect

- (8) a. **ódiá (ò) rẹ á a-táló**
Odia was about to be talking.
(Odia was about to start talking.)
- (9) b. **ò kẹ khéré ni ódiá rẹ á-táló**
← fixes reference →
time
Odia was almost talking.

2. Imperfective Present

No correlate.

3. Imperfective Past

- (17) a. **ò kẹ ódiá rẹ á-táló**
Odia had already started talking.
(Odia was already talking.)
- b. **ódiá ò rẹ á-táló**
i) Odia was talking / had been talking (when something happened).
ii) Odia used to talk (Habitual Past).
- c. **ódiá rẹ á-táló**
i) Odia was talking / had been talking (but...).
ii) Odia used to talk (but...) (Habitual Past).

4. Perfective Future

(18) a. **ọ ấ kẹ ọdiá rẹ tálo**
 Odiá will have already talked
 (anticipatory).

b. **ọ kì kẹ ọdiá rẹ tálo**
 Odiá will have already talked
 (consequential).

4. Imperfective Future

(19) a. **ọ ấ kẹ ọdiá rẹ ấ-tàlo**
 Odiá will have been talking
 (anticipatory).

b. **ọ kì kẹ ọdiá rẹ ấ-tàlo**
 Odiá will have been talking
 (consequential).

In summary, the correlates are illustrated in the examples as follows:

Perfective: (7a), (9a), (11a), (16a,b,c), and (18a,b).

Imperfective: (8a), (9b), NIL, (17a,b,c), and (19a,b).

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