NOTES ON TENSE AND ASPECT IN THE IJESHA DIALECT OF YORUBA

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Ijèṣa is a dialect of Yoruba in which there are three aspect markings—progressive, habitual, and perfective—and one tense marking—future. Tense/aspect marking in the Ijèṣa dialect differs from that found in Standard Yoruba. Consider first aspectual marking. The progressive in Ijèṣa is marked by mí rather than the į of Standard Yoruba, as shown in (1).

\[(1)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ijèṣa} & \quad \text{Standard Yoruba} \\
\text{a. } & \quad \text{Mo mí luọ roko.}^1 \\
& \text{I PROG go farm} \\
& \text{‘I am going to the farm.’} \\
\text{b. } & \quad \text{Adé mí jeun.} \\
& \text{Ade PROG eat} \\
& \text{‘Ade is eating.’} \\
\text{c. } & \quad \text{Mo ti mí suse.} \\
& \text{I PF PROG do work} \\
& \text{‘I have been working.’} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In imperative constructions, such as those shown in (2), Ijèṣa allows either the bare verb (2a) or progressive marker a plus verb (2b-c). Standard Yoruba, on the other hand, requires the auxiliary máa and does not permit use of either the bare verb or the progressive form. Ijèṣa a is a reduced form of máa, which no longer occurs as a progressive marker in this form in Ijèṣa.

The habitual is marked by a vowel that assimilates to the preceding vowel in Ijèṣa, but by máa į in Standard Yoruba, as in (3).

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1 Abbreviations are as follows:
- HAB habitual
- FUT future
- PF perfect
- PROG progressive

(2) Ijësa

a. Ọ bọ ‘come’

b. A bọ. PROG come
   ‘Come.’

Ijësa

c. A jeun. PROG eat
   ‘Eat.’

Standard Yoruba

Máa bọ. cf. A bọ.

be come we come
‘Come.’ ‘We arrived.’

(3) Ijësa

a. Bọlá á tù wé.
   Bola HAB sell book
   ‘Bola is always selling books.’

b. É é á.
   he HAB come
   ‘He always comes here.’

Standard Yoruba

Máa jeun. cf. A jeun.

be eat we eat
‘Eat.’ ‘We ate.’

(4) Ijësa

a. Mà a ga.
   I FUT tall
   ‘I will become tall.’

Standard Yoruba

Olú yóó/yóó sòrò.

Olu FUT talk
‘Olu will talk.’

b. Supo á lọ.
   Supo FUT go
   ‘Supo will go.’

Olú máa sòrò.

Olu FUT talk
‘Olu will talk.’

Future tense marking also differs in the two dialects. In Ijësa, it is marked by either a or á, in contrast to the variant forms yóó, yóó, ó, or máa in Standard Yoruba.