

NOTES ON TENSE AND ASPECT IN THE IJEṢA DIALECT OF YORUBA

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Ijeṣa 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 Ijeṣa dialect differs from that found in Standard Yoruba. Consider first aspectual marking. The progressive in Ijeṣa is marked by *mí* rather than the *ń* of Standard Yoruba, as shown in (1).

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| (1) | Ijeṣa | Standard Yoruba |
| a. | <i>Mọ mí lọṣ roko.</i> ¹
I PROG go farm
'I am going to the farm.' | <i>Mo ń lọ sí roko.</i>
to |
| b. | <i>Adé mí jẹun.</i>
Ade PROG eat
'Ade is eating.' | <i>Adé ń jẹun.</i> |
| c. | <i>Mọ ti mí ṣusé.</i>
I PF PROG do_work
'I have been working.' | <i>Mo ti ń ṣisẹ.</i> |

In imperative constructions, such as those shown in (2), Ijeṣa 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. Ijeṣa *a* is a reduced form of *máa*, which no longer occurs as a progressive marker in this form in Ijeṣa.

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

¹ Abbreviations are as follows:

HAB habitual

FUT future

PF perfect

PROG progressive

- (2) Ijeṣa Standard Yoruba
- a. *Bọ* ‘come’ **bò*
- b. A *bò*. *Máa bò.* cf. A *bò*.
 PROG come be come we come
 ‘Come.’ ‘Come.’ ‘We arrived.’
 Ijeṣa Standard Yoruba
- c. A *jẹun.* *Máa jẹun.* cf. A *jẹun.*
 PROG eat be eat we eat
 ‘Eat.’ ‘Eat.’ ‘We ate.’
- (3) Ijeṣa Standard Yoruba
- a. *Bólá á tù wé.* *Bólá máa n ta ìwé.*
 Bola HAB sell book HAB sell
 ‘Bola is always selling books.’
- b. *É é á.* *Á máa n wá.*
 he HAB come he HAB come
 ‘He always comes here.’
- c. *Ọ́tọ̀ nùkà̀n lẹ́ é sọ.* *Ọ́tọ̀ nìkà̀n nì ó máa n sọ.*
 truth only is_he HAB speak is he HAB
 ‘He speaks only the truth.’

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

- (4) Ijeṣa Standard Yoruba
- a. *Mà a ga.* *Olu yòḍò/yó/ó sòrò.*
 I FUT tall Olu FUT talk
 ‘I will become tall.’ ‘Olu will talk.’
- b. *Supọ́ á lọ.* *Olu máa sòrò.*
 Supọ́ FUT go Olu FUT talk
 ‘Supo will go.’ ‘Olu will talk.’