

SELECTIONAL RESTRICTION IN ASPECT IN IBIBIO

Nneoma Fyne Ugorji
Clifford University, Owerrinta,
Abia State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The Ibibio language is a language spoken in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The linguistic classification of the language places it in the Benue-Congo sub-family, which in turn belongs to the Niger-Congo. Selectional restriction is a linguistic rule placed on the co-occurrence of lexical, phonological or grammatical units in a specific construction. In this paper, one is concerned with the selectional restriction in aspect in the Ibibio language. Some of the objectives of this paper are: to show that that aspect is grammaticalized in Ibibio because of the formalized affixes used in aspectual expressions, to show that there is a morphological rule conditioning the choice of the pairing of –CV negative suffix, that there is a pairing of the prefix *dí-* ‘began /started and a –CV suffix conditioned by the morphological structure of the verb to generate the negative inceptive aspect, that there is a selection of two prefixes for the construction of the positive habitual aspect. The framework adopted for the analysis of data in this paper is the theory of Componential analysis. The reason for the adoption of Componential analysis is that it will help in the decomposition of the semantic contents of the affixes used in marking aspect in Ibibio. The collection of data for this paper was done through the recording of the speech of two native speakers aged 40 -60 years. Use was equally made of library texts. Some of the findings of the paper are: that the construction of the relative completive aspect, selects the use of a matrix and a subordinate clause and that the active verbs in the positive and negative relative completive aspect are partially reduplicated.

Keywords: Selectional restriction, aspect, positive and negative constructions, Componential analysis and Ibibio.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Selectional Restriction

Brown and Miller (1985: 85-101), note that “in our normal use of language we do not expect all linguistic forms to co-occur with all other linguistic forms”. This in other words mean that linguistic units have constrains in every language. Thus linguistic items have environments of acceptability and grammaticality, as well as environments of unacceptability and ungrammaticality. Brown and Miller illustrate their assertion by giving the instance of intransitive verbs which do not co-occur with a following noun phrase (NP), while transitive verbs must co-occur with a following NP.

Lyons (1989: 419), writing on selectional restriction in relation to context declares that: “we must not lose sight of the relationship between utterances and particular contexts”. What this means is that the context of speech and the previous knowledge between speech participants play a great role in the, choice, use and interpretation of words in adjacent position in a stretch of utterance. In this case, pragmatics and not semantics alone is involved in the generation of meaning in utterances.

Selectional restriction according to Matthews (2007: 359), is “a restriction on the choice of individual lexical units in a construction with other lexical units”. Matthews explains that for instance the word *breathe* will typically select an animate subject and in the same form the word *pregnant* will typically select a subject referring to someone or some animal that is female. Matthews went on to add that in generative grammar, restrictions such as the one above are subject to rules called *selectional rules*.

Carnie (2007: 220) writing on constrains in the X-bar Theory, reports that the use or non use of object complements depends on the verb that is involved in a construction. Carnie (2007: 220), adds further that the information about the peculiar or particular properties of verbs is contained in our mental dictionary or lexicon. From Carnie's assertion above, one can see that the selectional restriction between a verb and its NP is the ability to attract or dispel a nominal complement is as a result of its inherent semantic property. Thus, when a verb obligatorily takes a nominal complement in its post verbal position for subject, verb, object languages (SVO), it is transitive, but if it does not then, it is intransitive.

Murthy (2007: 51), writing on indefinite articles in the English language asserts that "The selection between *a* and *an* is determined by sound". Murthy explained the above declaration by saying that *a* is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound". He gives the following examples: a boy, a man a table and so on. While, *an* is used before a word beginning with a vowel sound. He gives the following as examples: an hour, an honour, an heir an so forth. Looking at the selection of the indefinite articles in the English language as illustrated by Murthy, one could say that it is a phonetically controlled restriction since the choice of an indefinite article is between consonant and vowel and not based on the graphic representation of a word. Moreso, the examples report that indefinite articles can only be used with singular countables nouns in the English language.

Ndimele (2007, p. 99-100), defines selectional restriction as "a phenomenon which specifies the constraints on the possible combination of lexical items within a given grammatical context. The constraints are stated with reference to relevant inherent semantic properties which are in terms of qualities of animacy, humanness, concreteness and so forth". Here, Ndimele writes on the selectional

restriction between the subject and the verb it takes. Hence a human subject will co-occur with verbs like: *speak, admire, cook, drive*, and so on. While a non-human subject will take the stative verb *be*. From the above review of literature on selctional restriction it is obvious that various types of selectional restriction occur at different levels of a language. The linguistic import of all the various co-occurrence restrictions is to avoid the production of ungrammatical and unacceptable constructions based on the conventions of a particular language.

1.2 Aspect

According to Brown and Miller (1985, p. 105), “aspectual distinctions commonly refer to the distribution of an event over time. This means that aspectual markings are used to indicate the various phases or the time spread of an action. Brown and Miller went further to indicate that the main aspectual distinctions usually identified in the English language are: progressive, (indicating that an action is or was in progress), the perfective (indicating that an action has been completed), the habitual (indicating that an action is carried on always) and the stative (indicating the present condition of an action). Lyons (1989, p. 300), notes that “like tense-distinctions, aspect is the temporal distribution or contour of an action, event or state of affairs, rather than with its location in time”. From this assertion one can see that the moment of speech is not a reference point for the expression of an aspectual notion. This is because aspectual notions are not deictic or fixed, but are transitional from one stage of an action to another.

O’ Grady, Archibald, Aronoff, and Rees-Miller, (2001, p. 707), refer to aspect as “an inflectional category indicating the manner in which an action or event takes place, in particular its duration in time”. From the above declaration by O’Grady et al, it shows that aspect is concerned with the mode of an action over a period of time.

Carnie (2007, p. 269), with reference to tense and aspect asserts that “... for each English type of inflection, we have a distinct set of verbal forms. The suffix on the verb and the auxiliary together determine the meaning of the expression: when we have a tensed main verb (that is, a simple present or simple past present), then the verb bears the appropriate tense morphology (*-s*, *-d*, or *-∅*). When a modal (category T) such as *can* or *will* appears, then there is no morphology on the verb. When you have a perfective structure, we pair the auxiliary “have” with an *-en* participle. The progressive is a pairing of the verb *be* with an *-ing* participle”.

Aspect according to Matthews (2007, p. 29), is a term “... for verbal categories that distinguish the status of events in relation to specific periods of time, as opposed to their simple location in the present, past, or future”. Matthews gives the following examples:

1. I am reading your paper.

The sentence above according to Matthews means that the reading is in progress over a period that includes the moment of speaking. Matthews explains that: *am reading* is therefore present in tense but progressive (or continuous) in aspect.

2. I have read your book.

In (4) above, Matthews explains that at the moment of speaking, the reading has been completed. It is therefore present in tense but perfect in aspect. Commenting further, Matthews informs that aspectual categories are very varied, and since both tense and aspect are defined by reference to time, a clear distinction where it exists will usually be drawn by formal criteria as explained above. Matthews gives the following as different types of aspects: durative, habitual, imperfective, inchoative, iterative, and punctual. Thus, following Matthews, one can say that aspect is a verbal grammatical category that reports the various facets of an action.

According to Essien (2008, p. 83), “Aspect is concerned with the various phases or time components of a situation. Commonly, such phases or components of a situation are: the beginning, the middle, termination, or some other phases that may be important to the speakers of a particular language. Essien adds that like tense, aspect is grammaticalized in Ibibio in that there are formal markers that perform some of the aspectual distinctions mentioned above. From Essien’s (2008, p. 83) assertion of what the term aspect is, one can say that he perceives of aspect as being concerned with the different stages of an action with reference to time.

1.3 Theoretical framework

Componential analysis is the framework adopted in this paper for the decomposition of the semantic content of the affixes inflected for tense and aspect in Ibibio. Componential analysis (CA), has been observed by Hyde (1990, p. 6), that “it is a useful technique for exploring the interrelationship of meaning which exist among lexical sets”. This implies that CA is a model used to specify the contrastive features among related words. Ndimele (2007, p. 26), refers to componential analysis “as a process whereby the meaning of a word is expressed in terms of the combination of all its sense components”. From the above assertion by Ndimele, it can be seen that the sense components a linguistic unit can be its physical features or abstract features which are inputs to the semantic content of a morpheme (bound or free morpheme). Ndimele goes on to say that in CA, sense components or semantic features are considered in binary opposition using the mathematical sign of plus (+), or minus (-). Further, Ndimele also notes that in CA upper case letters are used to represent the features because they are considered as concepts rather than mere words. The features in CA are written after the plus (+) or minus (-) sign in an enclosed square brackets. Ejele (2003, p. 41) notes that CA is “an approach to the description of the meaning of words that is

based on the theses that the sense of every lexeme can be analysed in terms of a set of more general sense components or semantic features”. Thus, from Ejele one can say that CA employs the use of features that are characteristic of the linguistic units to be described. Omega (2011, p. 78), observes too that “Componential analysis is an approach to the study of meaning evolved from the views that lexical items are composed of semantic features”. Hence, this means that CA aims at projecting the semantic features of an item in order to demonstrate areas of shared and non-shared features with other units in the same class. Ifeagwazi (2016, p. 155), notes that “ Componential analysis, also called Feature analysis or Contrast analysis is the analysis of words through structured sets of semantic features which are given as “present”, “absent” or “indifferent” with reference to a feature”. Thus, one can simply say that CA is feature specifying approach in the study of the meaning of linguistic units. Componential analysis can be done using: terminologies, binary features, redundancy rule where predictable features are excluded, and Natural semantic metalanguage which helps to describe the basic components of human conceptual structure. In this paper, one will use the redundancy features to characterise the morphemes used in marking tense and aspect in Ibibio. In redundancy rules, square brackets are used to indicate the linguistic markers or distinguishers used. In spite of the fact that there are different presentation formats in CA, all the formats aim at the decomposition of linguistic units into smaller components of meaning. In the subsections below, selectional restriction in the choice of the prefixes inflected for tense and aspect in Ibibio will be presented.

1.4 Methodology

The collection of data for this paper was done through the recording of the speech of two native speakers aged 40 -60 years. Use was equally made of library texts.

1.5 The Ibibio Language

The Ibibio language is a language spoken in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The speakers constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria. The linguistic classification of the language places it in the Benue-Congo sub-family, which in turn belongs to the Niger-Congo. Ibibio belongs to the lower cross group of languages where it forms a cluster with Anaang, and Efik. These three related dialects constitute what is commonly known as the Ibiboid group of languages.

1.6 Aspect in Ibibio

According to Essien (2008, p. 83), “Aspect is concerned with the various phases or time components of a situation. Commonly, such phases or time components of a situation are: the beginning, the middle, termination or some other phases that may be important to the speakers of a particular language”. This means that aspect projects the status of an action or situation. According to Essien (2008, p. 84), the Ibibio language has the following different aspects in its grammar namely: the inceptive, habitual and completive. The completive is divided into: the perfect and the relative perfect. These are all discussed below.

1.6.1 The Inceptive Aspect

The inceptive aspect is the aspectual status that reports of the beginning of an action or situation. In Ibibio, the inceptive aspect is divided into the positive and negative inceptive aspects. These are illustrated below:

1.6.1.1 The Positive Inceptive Aspect

This is the aspectual phase of an action or a situation that informs one of the beginning of an action in a positive assertive sense. For examples:

3a. *Ámĩ ní-dí-wèt.* ‘I have started to write’.

b. *Essièn é-dí díá íkpò.* ‘Essien has begun to eat something’.

c. Nnyìn í-dí-í-yāiyá. ‘We have started to be pretty’.

d. Ömmô é-di-é-kpón. ‘They have started to be pretty’.

In (3a-d), the prefix is *dí-* ‘has’ with a high tone. The prefix is used with both active and stative verbs. The active verbs are: *wèt*, ‘write’, *día*, ‘eat’, while the stative verbs are: *yāiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat’. The componential features characterising the positive inceptive aspect are:

- e.

<i>dí-</i>
+PREFIX
+HIGH TONE
+STATIVE VERBS

1.6.1.2 The Negative Inceptive Aspect

The negative inceptive marker is the aspectual phase of an action or a situation that reports the beginning of it in a negative assertive mood. For examples:

4a. Ámì ñ-dí-ñ-wèt-té. ‘I have not started to write’.

b. Essièn é-dí-e- día-há ñkpò. ‘Essien has not began to eat something’.

c. Nnyìn í-dí-í-yāiya-ké. ‘We have not started to be pretty’.

d. Ömmô é-di-é-kpón-nó. ‘They have not started to be big’.

In (4a-d), the prefix is *dí-* ‘has’, a CV- morpheme structure with high tone. It is used with both active verbs: *wèt*, ‘write’, *día*, ‘eat’, and

stative verbs: *yâiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat’. The suffix is conditioned by the morphological structure of the verb stem. For a CVC structure, the suffix takes the word final consonant and vowel of the stem as in: -*té*, ‘not’ -*nó*-, ‘not’, for CVV verb structure, the suffix is -*há* ‘not’ and for -CVVCV or CVCV structure of the suffix is -*ké* ‘not’. The componential features characterising the negative inceptive aspect are in (4e and f) below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>e. {</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>dí</i>-</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+PREFIX
+HIGH TONE
+STATIVE VERBS</p> <p>}</p> | <p>f. -CV</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+SUFFIX
+HIGH TONE
+VERB STEM
STRUCTURE</p> <p>}</p> |
|---|--|

1.6.2 The Habitual Aspect

The habitual aspect talks of actions or situations that take place as usual, regular or normal occurrences. The habitual aspect in Ibibio is divided into the positive and negative habitual aspect. These are illustrated below:

1.6.2.1 The Positive Habitual Aspect

The positive habitual aspect is the grammatical aspect in language that marks the usual occurrence of actions or situations in a positive assertive sense. For examples:

- 5a. *Àmĩ m̃- má-sí-n-wèt*. ‘I always write/ I used to write’.
- b. *Essièn á-máá-sí-é-díá ñkpò*. ‘Essien always eats something/ Essien used to eat something’.
- c. *Nnyĩn í-má-í-sí-í-yâiyá*. ‘We used to be pretty’.
- d. *Òmmô é-má-é-sí-é-kpón*. ‘They used to be big/fat’.

In (5a-d), the prefixes are: *má-* have/has and *sí-* ‘always’. They are used with both active and stative verbs. In (5b-d), there is a lengthening and harmonization of the vowel of *má-* ‘have’ with the pronominal clitic so that it becomes *máá-* ‘has’, *máí-* ‘have’ and *máé-* ‘have’ respectively. The componential features characterising the prefixes used in marking the positive habitual aspect are in (5e-f) below:

e. *máá-*
 +PREFIX
 +HIGH TONE
 +VOWEL HARMONY IN PLURAL SUBJECTS
 +STATIVE VERBS

f. *sí-*
 +PREFIX
 +HIGH TONE
 +STATIVE VERBS

1.6.2.2 The Negative Habitual Aspect

The negative habitual aspect is the grammatical aspect in language that marks the usual occurrence of actions or situations in a negative assertive mood. For examples:

6a. *Ámǐ m- má-sí-n-wèt-té.* ‘I used not to write’.

b. *Essièn á-màá-sí-é-díá-há ñkpò.* ‘Essien used not to eat something’.

c. *Nnyñ ì-má-í-sí-í-yâiya-ké.* ‘We used not to be pretty’.

d. *Ommô é-ma-é-sí-é-kpón-nó.* ‘They used not to be big/fat’.

In (6a-d) the prefixes are: *má-* have/has and *sí-* ‘always’. They are used with both active and stative verbs. In (6b-d), there is a lengthening and harmonization of the vowel of *má-* ‘have’ with the pronominal clitic so that it becomes *máá-* ‘has’, *máí-* ‘have’ and *máé-*

‘have’ respectively. The negative suffix is conditioned by the morphological structure of the verb stem. For a *CVC* structure, the suffix takes the word final consonant and vowel of the stem as in: *-té*, ‘not’ *-nó-*, ‘not’, for *CVV* verb structure, the suffix is *-há* ‘not’ and for *CVVCV* or *CVCV* structure of the suffix is *-ké* ‘not’. The componential features characterising the negative habitual aspect are given below in (5e-g):

- e. *máá-*
- +PREFIX
 - +HIGH TONE
 - +VOWEL HARMONY IN PLURAL SUBJECTS
 - +STATIVE VERBS
- f. *sí-*
- +PREFIX
 - +HIGH TONE
 - +STATIVE VERBS
- g. *-CV*
- +SUFFIX
 - +HIGH TONE
 - +VERB STEM STRUCTURE

1.6.3 The Completive Aspect

The completive aspect reports of actions or occurrences that have been completely executed. In *Ibibio* the completive aspect is divided into the positive and negative completive aspect. These are illustrated below:

1.6.3.1 The Positive Completive Aspect

The positive completive aspect is the grammatical aspect in language which is reported in the positive mood as being totally executed. For examples:

- 7a. *Ámǐ mí- mé-wèt*. ‘I have written’.
- b. *Èssièn á-mé-díá ñkpò*. ‘Essien has eaten something’.
- c. *Nnyìn í-mí-í-yǎiyá*. ‘We have become pretty’.
- d. *Òmmô é-mé-é-kpón*. ‘They have become big/fat’.

In (7a-d), the prefix is *mé-* ‘have’ is used with both active verbs: *wèt*, ‘write’, *díá*, ‘eat’, and stative verbs: *yǎiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat’. There is a harmonization of the vowel of the prefix in (7c). Thus, *mé-* ‘have’ is realized as *mí-* ‘have’. The sense features characterising the prefix used in marking the positive completive aspect are given below in(7e):

- e. *mé-*
(+PREFIX
+HIGH TONE
+HARMONY IN PLURAL
SUBJECTS)

1.6.3.2 The Negative Completive Aspect

The negative completive aspect is the grammatical aspect in language which is reported in the refuted mood as not being executed at all. For example:

- 8a. *Ámǐ mí- mé-wèt-té*. ‘I have not written’.
- b. *Èssièn á-mé-díá-há ñkpò*. ‘Essien has not eaten something’.
- c. *Nnyìn í-mí-í-yǎiyá-ké*. ‘We have not become pretty’.

d. *Ōmmô é-mé-é-kpón-nó* . ‘They have not become big/fat’.

In (8a-d), the prefix is *mé-* ‘have’ is used with both active verbs: *wèt*, ‘write’, *día*, ‘eat’, and stative verbs: *yãiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat’. There is a harmonization of the vowel of the prefix in (8c). Thus, *mé-* ‘have’ is realized as *mí-* ‘have’. The negative suffix is conditioned by the morphological structure of the verb stem. For a *CVC* structure, the suffix takes the word final consonant and vowel of the stem as in: *-té*, ‘not’ *-nó-*, ‘not’, for *CVV* verb structure, the suffix is *-há* ‘not’ and for *CVVCV* or *CVCV* structure of the suffix is *-ké* ‘not’. The componential features characterising the negative completive aspect are given below:

<p>e. <i>mé-</i> +PREFIX +HIGH TONE +VOWEL HARMONY IN PLURAL SUBJECTS</p>	<p>f. <i>-CV</i> +SUFFIX +HIGH TONE +VERB STEM STRUCTURE</p>
---	---

1.6.4 The Relative Completive Aspect

The relative completive aspect talks of an action that was carried out before the completion of another in association with it. In *Ibibio*, this grammatical notion is divided into the positive and negative relative completive aspects. These are discussed below in (9 and 10):

1.6.4.1 The Positive Relative Completive Aspect

The positive relative completive aspect reports an action in the positive before the completion of another action in association with it. For examples:

9a. *Ámì mí- mé- wè-wét òbèmìsò Ekà é-ké-dí.*
 ‘I had finished writing before Eka came’.

- b. Essièn á-mé-dí-díà m̀b̀è̀m̀ìs̀ó Ekà é-ké-kpé ókúk.
 ‘Essien has finished eating before Eka paid the money’.
- c. Nnyìn í-mí-í-yáiyá m̀b̀è̀m̀ìs̀ó í-yíé ídém.
 ‘We were already pretty before we had our bath’.
- d. Ommô é-mé-é-kpón m̀b̀è̀m̀ìs̀ó é-dí-é-kâ úfòk ñwèt.
 ‘They had already grown before they began school’.

In (9a-d), the prefix is *mé-* ‘have’ is used with both active verbs: *wèt*, ‘write’, *díà*, ‘eat’, and stative verbs: *yáiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat’.

There is a harmonization of the vowel of the prefix in (9c). Thus, *mé-* ‘have’ is realized as *mí-* ‘have’. There is a partial duplication of the verbs in (9a-b). Thus, one can see: *wè-wèt*, ‘written’ *dí-díà* ‘eaten’, in the matrix clauses which have active verbs, but none in the matrix clauses in (9c-d), which are stative verbs: *yáiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat/grown’. In the subordinate clauses in (9a-b), there is a prefix *ké-* ‘actually’, but in (20c-d), it does not occur before the verbs in the subordinate clause. The componential features characterising the relative completive aspect are given below in (e-f):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>e. <i>mé-</i></p> <p>+PREFIX
 +HIGH TONE
 +VOWEL HARMONY
 IN PLURAL SUBJECTS
 +MATRIX CLAUSE
 +STATIVE VERBS</p> | <p>f. <i>ké-</i></p> <p>+PREFIX
 +HIGH TONE
 +SUBORDINATE CLAUSE
 -STATIVE VERBS</p> |
|--|---|

1.6.4.2 The Negative Relative Completive Aspect

The negative relative completive aspect reports of actions that are not completed before the execution of another action in association with it. For examples:

10a. Amĩ m- mé- wè-wêt-té m̀b̀è̀m̀s̀ó Ekà é-ké-dí.

‘I had not finished writing before Eka came’.

b. Essièn á-mé-dí-díá-há m̀b̀è̀m̀s̀ó Ekà é-ké-kpe ókúk.

‘Essien has not finished eating before Eka paid the money’.

c. Nnyĩn í-mí-í-yãiya-ké m̀b̀è̀m̀s̀ó í-yíé ídém.

‘We were not pretty before we had our bath’.

d. Ömmô é-mé-é-kpón-nó m̀b̀è̀m̀s̀ó é-dí-é-kà úfôk íwèt.

‘They had not grown before they began school’.

In (10a-d), the prefix *mé*-‘have’, is used with both active verbs: *wèt*, ‘write’, *díá*, ‘eat’, and stative verbs: *yãiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat’. There is a harmonization of the vowel of the prefix in (10c). Thus, *mé*-‘have’ is realized as *mí*- ‘have’. There is a partial duplication of the verbs in (10a-b). Thus, one can see: *wè-wêt*, ‘written’ *dí-díá* ‘eaten’, in the matrix clauses which have active verbs, but none in the matrix clauses in (10c-d), which are stative verbs: *yãiyá*, ‘pretty’ and *kpón*, ‘fat/grown’. In the subordinate clauses in (10a-b), there is a prefix *ké*-‘actually’, but in (10c-d), it does not occur before the verbs in the subordinate clauses. The negative suffix is conditioned by the morphological structure of the verb stem. For a *CVC* structure, the suffix takes the word final consonant and vowel of the stem as in: *-té*, ‘not’ *-nó-*, ‘not’, for *CVV* verb structure, the suffix is *-há* ‘not’ and for *CVVCV* or *CVCV* structure of the suffix is *-ké* ‘not’. The componential features of the affixes characterising the negative relative completive aspect are given below in (10e g):

e.

mé-

+PREFIX
+HIGH TONE
+VOWEL HARMONY
IN PLURAL SUBJECTS
+MATRIX CLAUSE
+STATIVE VERBS

f.

-CV

+SUFFIX
+HIGH TONE
+ MATRIX CLAUSE
+STATIVE VERBS
+VERB STEM STRUCTURE

g.

ké-

+PREFIX
+HIGH TONE
-STATIVE VERBS
+SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

1.7 Conclusion

This paper started off by clarifying selectional restriction as the check placed on the co-occurrence of linguistic units. This check it was observed, could occur at any level of language depending on the rules operational in that language. This was followed by a brief review of works on aspect. From the review, one was able to establish the fact that aspect is a verbal grammatical category that is situated or based on the various facets or status of an action.

The various data that were considered in this paper showed that there is a selectional rule in Ibibio which determines the type of prefix to be used with a particular type of aspect used in a construction. The data in this paper showed that aspect is

grammaticalized in Ibibio because of the formalized affixes used for aspectual expressions in Ibibio. The data in the paper also showed that there is a pairing of the prefix *dí-* ‘have’ and a *CV-* suffix ‘not’ which is conditioned by the morphological structure of the verb stem to generate the meaning of the negative inceptive habitual aspect. It was also discovered that in the positive and negative relative completive constructions involve the use of a matrix and a subordinate clause. The data also showed that there is a partial reduplication of the active verbs in the matrix clause in the positive and negative relative completive aspect. It was also discovered that there is a pairing of two prefixes: *máá-* ‘have’ and *sí-* ‘always’ for the realization of the positive habitual aspect. Finally, this paper has shown that in the negative relative completive aspect, there is a combination of two prefixes: *mé-* ‘have’ in the matrix clause, *ké-* ‘actually’ in the subordinate clause and a *-CV* negative suffix, which is conditioned by the verb stem for its grammaticalization in Ibibio. This paper recommends a further study of the selectional restrictions involved in the choice of affixes for the marking of aspectual notions in Ibibio. This paper aims at the improvement of the teaching of the Ibibio language, since a good understanding of the choice of the different affixes used for aspectual markings will improve the quality of language in speech and writing.

References

- Amaka, G.M.K. (1983). Selectional restriction: Verbs to buy. In: *Readings on Igbo verbs*. (ed.) by P.A Nwachukwu. Ibadan: Africana-Fep publisher.
- Brown, E. K. and Miller J.E. (1985). *Syntax: A linguistic introduction to sentence structure*. London: Hutchinson.
- Carnie, A. (2007). *Syntax. A generative introduction. Second edition*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

- Chomsky, N. (1985). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Ejele, P.E. (2003). *Semantics, lexical structure and lexical relations*. Aba: National Institute for Nigerian Languages.
- Emenanjo, E.N. (2010). *Editing and writing*. Aba: E-Fronters Publishers.
- Essien, O.E. (2008). *A grammar of the Ibibio language*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Ejele, P.E. (2003). *Semantics, lexical structure and lexical relations*. Aba: National Institute for Nigerian Languages.
- Hyde, Faustina. (1990). Learning vocabulary in second language situation: Part 2 approaches. A paper presented at the 19th West African Languages Congress. Legion: University of Ghana Language Centre.
- Ifeagwazi, P.A. (2016). Componential analysis. In: *Theories of linguistics*. (Ed.) B.M.Mbah, 154-166. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press.
- Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics. (Volume 1)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, J. (1989). *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. Britain: Cambridge University press.
- Matthews, P.H. (2007). *Oxford concise dictionary of linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Murthy, J.D. (2007). *Contemporary English grammar*. Lagos: Book Master.
- Ndimele, O-M. (2007). *Semantics and the frontiers of communication*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Ndimele, O-M. (2008). *Morphology and syntax*. Port Harcourt: M&J. Grand Orbit Communication.
- Nwachukwu, P.A. (1983). Transitivity. In: *Readings on Igbo verbs*. (ed) by P.A. Nwachukwu. Ibadan: Africana-Fep Publishers.

- Omego, C. (2011). *Linguistic semantics*. Port Harcourt: Harey Publisher Company.
- O’Grady, W., J. Archibald. M. Aronoff, and J. Rees-Miller. (2001). *Contemporary linguistics:An introduction*. Fourth edition. Bedford: St. Martins