

Tense and Aspect in Izón Negation Marker

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Abstract

In the most, it is established that natural languages code Tense, Aspect, Agreement (TAM) and other grammatical categories on the inflection (INFL) node with the VP shell representing its complement. Thus, a verb in a natural language may inflect for TAM features overtly or otherwise in varied ways. This paper examines the distinctive features of the Izón INFL node with particular reference to the morpho-syntactic manifestations of tense and aspect in Negative polarity. The elements -mé -ii and -minimi are isolated for past, present and future tenses in Izón, while de and -ii instantiates perfective and imperfective aspects respectively. Three distinct negation (NEG) markers are identified namely; -ghá, -kúmo and éein. While -ghá distinguishes reference time based on the specified time in an underlying affirmative clause, -kúmo clusters round present time on the time line as such negates only in imperative clauses otherwise translates as an adverbial. éein is distinguished as an unexpanded polar response element, while náá is an auxiliary. The study is cast within the framework-free approach and posits that, the choice to make in negating an underlying proposition with the tense or aspect feature intact is not only triggered by the clause type but by the tense or aspect marking on the core-predicate.

Keywords: Izón, inflection, tense, perfective, imperfective, negation.

1.0.Preliminaries

The name Izón is synonymous with its people and culture. It is one of a cluster of four closely related languages collectively referred to as Izón or Ijo (the latter is the anglicized form of the language). Ijo includes; Eastern Ijo to which Kalabari, Okrika, Ibani and Nkoro belong; Nembe and Akassa; Buseni Okodia and Oruama and Izón (Williamson, 1983; Jenewari, 1977 and Kekai, 2016). The last, the object of this study has an estimated population of speakers numbering about two million¹ with multi-dialectal varieties numbering about twenty-eight (Agbegha, 1965) that are mutually intelligible to its speakers. Izón is spoken in six states of Nigeria namely; Delta, Bayelsa,

¹ "Ijaw People". Ijaw foundation.org. Retrieved March 7th, 2019.

Edo, Akwa-Ibom, Ondo and Rivers. The dialect chosen for this study is Kabu. It is spoken in parts of Bayelsa and Delta states and mutually intelligible to other dialect speakers.

This paper examines the distinctive features of the Izón inflection node with particular reference to the morpho-syntactic manifestations of tense and aspect in Negative polarities. Observations reveal that there is paucity of information in the literature as regards tense and aspect and negation (NEG) markers in Izón. The few that are available have not only failed to situate the Izón NEG markers as features that also mark tense, aspect and grammatical features as components of the INFL, but also failed to distinguish the NEG markers and the distinct syntactic structures and types that each can participate in.

Though Blench and Williamson, (2011) and Williamson (1965), identify certain extensions and describe the causative/directional *mo* and other affixes such as the reciprocal -*yai* and -*i/i* as verbal extensions, they fail to neither position them as constituents of the INFL nor examine the negative polarities of these extensions in constructions. Jenewari (1977) also fails to identify the NEG markers and their variants as tense and aspect markers. For Kekai (2016), though a few verbal extensions that contribute to argument selection and distribution can be identified, a clear identification, distinction and evaluation of NEG markers as extensional affixes and tense and aspect markers of the INFL node like other time and temporal specification elements is absent.

Derek and Beaudion-Lietz (2002:11), identify a binary negative contrast between a regular negative -*a* occurring in most syntactic contexts in Izón and translates the element *nàá* as *yet* but fail to situate the latter as NEG auxiliary that inherently indicates aspectual notions. NEG responses to polar questions and other sentence types are also undermined. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to identify the NEG markers in Izón and further separate the tense and aspect features borne by them in a bid to elucidate the inherent features that dictate their co-occurrence in different syntactic frames.

2.0.Theoretical Orientation

Haspelmanth (2010) asserts that frameworks represent aprioristic assumptions that would likely lead to a distorted description of a language. In the light of the foregoing and as opined by Haspelmanth, this paper embraces the framework-free approach to the characterization and description of Izón tense and aspect in NEG polarity. Choice of the framework is motivated by the need to avoid been biased or subjective by the influence of other languages on which theoretical frameworks were postulated. It is well known and argued that most of the frameworks employed in the elucidation of natural languages in the twentieth century are English biased just like pre-Modern grammars were based on the Latin grammars which are vehemently condemned (cf. Van Valin (2005) and Haspelmanth (2010). Since grammatical categories and relations are assumed to

be language specific, this study isolates the small sets of innate grammatical categories and relations from which the Izón language tense, aspectual and negation features shall be elucidated.

The aim is to determine the substantive universal on which Izón can be described. Needless to say, that a framework-free grammatical description/analysis is superior to framework-bound analysis because all languages have different categories and languages should be described in their own terms. Based on this, this study adopts the framework-free approach to the analysis of tense and aspect in negative polarity in Izón.

3.0. Instantiating Predication in Izón

A verb in Izón is any word category that can be inflected for tense or aspect. A verbal complex can also be derived by affixation, reduplication or compounding. An inflection may be pre- or –post verbal and affect the sub-categorization frames of verbs. Kekai (2012) for instance, accounts for extensions and inflections such as *mé*, *mómo*, *zouzou*, *bári* etc. that extend the meaning of verbs and dictate the argument selection properties of the verbs they are attached to. Furthermore, she posits that, extensions such as the aforementioned dictate the argument distribution and alters the semantic roles of the arguments they select. To this end, *mómo* for example obligatorily requires comitative arguments and *zouzou* requires dual subjects with equal capabilities to reciprocate the situations expressed by the core-predicates of their clauses (see Kekai 2012 for a detailed discussion).

Based on available literature at their disposal, Derek and Beaudoin-Lietz, (2002) assert that a verb is a word category to which a suffix can be attached. The duo provides the provisional template in 1 for the Izón verb based on the structure in 2, with hyphens representing morpheme boundaries.

- 1a. OP – root –EXT – Suffix₁ – suffix₂
2b. ɔ -te -mí -eé
3p (OP) -beg -FAC -EMPH
'...begged them'

To them, an Izón verb is a root to which an extension which may be as much as two suffixes may be affixed. Thus, a verbal affix may be post verbal but not pre-verbal as such all tense and aspect markers are extensions or suffixes but extensions such as the reciprocal, augmentative, maleficiary, comitative etc. markers (kekai, 2012) are not extensions as they occur pre-verbally. It is informative to note that what they regard as factitive (FAC) in the data reproduced in 2 above is actually a past tense marker and variant of *mé* in the kolokuma dialect speakers.

While this study agrees with the view put forward by the duo that a verbal base may be succeeded by an extension and suffixes which could number as much as two as the template in 1 indicates, available literature at the disposal of this researcher and interaction with competent Izón speakers reveal that an extension may also be pre-verbal in Izón. To this end, certain NEG markers which occur pre-verbally isolated herein as auxiliaries and grammatical aspect markers are regarded as verbal extensions. Consider the structures below, the extensions are bold-faced.

3. *Tare a mómo mu -mè*
PN 3SG COMM go -PST
'Tare accompanied her to go'
4. *Á koro warı weni -mò - dò*
ARG INC ARG root - DIR - PFV
'They have begun to move towards the house'
5. *Tare a mómo mu -gha*
PN 3SG COMM root -PST
'Tare didn't accompany her to go'
6. *Á naa koro warı weni -mò - gha*
ARG NEG INC ARG root - DIR - PFV
'They wouldn't have begun to move towards the house'

In 3- 6, all bold-faced items to the right of the verbal stems are pre-verbal extensions and satellites of their core-predicates, while the tense and aspect markers namely; the past tense marker *-mè*, the perfective marker *-dò*, the NEG marker *-ghá*, etc. to the left of the predicates are post-verbal. Like the past tense and perfective markers, all extensions true to type extend the semantic imports of the core predicates of their clauses as such; they are extensions and being extensions are components of the INFL. For the purpose of this study therefore, these affixes together with the NEG markers espoused are regarded as verbal extensions. The modified provisional template posited below based on the data in 3-6 above account for the lexico-semantic oppositions found in Izón NEG structures.

7. A provisional template for Izón verbs

ARG — ARG -EXT - root — EXT - EXT

3.1. Tense in Izón

Tense relates changes in verb forms to discourse time (Comrie, 1985). Izón tenses can be divided into; present, past and future tenses conforming to the timeline proposed in Comrie, with aspect clearly delineated as perfective and imperfective. While *-mè* marks past time and indicates a location in time that is prior to the moment of speech, *-ii* codes the point in time coinciding with the moment of speech. The future tense which locates a situation in time subsequent to the time of

utterance is marked with the suffix *-minimi* and distinguished from the *factative* marker *-nimi*. These distinct tense markers in Izón are exemplified below:

8.	Base	Past	Present	Future
a.	wéni	'walk' -mé	'walked'	-ii 'walking'
b.	bajn	'run' -mé	'ran'	-ii 'running'
c.	tje	'beg' -mé	'begged'	-ii 'begging'
d.	fón	'fan' -mé	'fanned'	-ii 'fanning'
e.	kéri	'build' -mé	'built'	-ii 'building'

9.	Factative
a.	wéni 'walk' -ními 'walked'
b.	bajn 'run' -ními 'ran'
c.	téi 'play' -ními 'played'
d.	fón 'fan' -ními 'fanned'
e.	kéri 'build' -ními 'built'

Clearly, Izón morphologises the time of events around the deictic center. Hence, a distinction can be made between the present, as against the past and the future events. A factative marker *-nimi* indicating the state of affairs as realis or present indicative mood at speech time is also overtly interpreted. The morphemes *-mé*, *-ii*, and *-minimi* are thus isolated as denoting the past, present and future tenses in Izón, while *-ními* is isolated and interpreted as a factative marker that realis marker.

3.2. Aspect in Izón

The term *aspect* refers to ongoing, completed or yet to be completed situations. It relates to the different ways in viewing the internal temporal constituents of an event (Comrie, 1976). Languages generally conceptualize and have clear morphological distinctions for aspect markings. While in some languages for instance, verb paradigms and aspectual markings are extremely complex and extraneous to isolate, in some others such as English inflectional endings are quite easy to isolate. Binnik (2004) and Frawley and Elbaum (1992) show that aspect is conceptually and morphologically more varied with different ways of viewing events, states, processes and action across different languages. Izón conceptualizes and codes grammatical oppositions in temporal distinctions following the two basic oppositions in addition to the use of time adverbials. They are:

- a. the perfective aspect which views situations in their entirety without consideration to the inner layouts or phases that make them up.
- b. the imperfective aspect that considers the internal progression of situations, from the onset, through the middle to the end of the situation.

While perfective aspects refer to completed or bounded situations, imperfective aspects refer to ongoing, unfolding and unbounded situations. Imperfective aspects are often coded with morphological endings and time adverbials such as *-ii* for the progressive, *bai* ‘tomorrow’, *be mgbai* ‘today’, *bebise* ‘just now’ etc Izón.

For want of space and for the purpose of this study only the NEG markers for the perfective (bounded) and progressive aspects are examined as such, only perfective and progressive aspect markers are elucidated.

Izón codes the perfective aspect by affixing the morpheme *dó* to a situation verb and employs the morpheme *-ii* for imperfective (ongoing) or what is also interpreted as present progressive tense. Other flow of events and internal distinctions are expressed with distinct morpho-syntactic elements such as the use of time adverbials, grammatical and *letter aspects*². Below are verbs with the perfective and imperfective (progressive) aspect markers attached to them:

	10. Perfective		imperfective
a.	<i>wéni-dó</i>	‘walked’	<i>wéni-ii</i> ‘walking’
b.	<i>bain-dó</i>	‘ran’	<i>bain-ii</i> ‘running’
c.	<i>tié-dó</i>	‘begged’	<i>tié-ii</i> ‘begging’
d.	<i>fón-dó</i>	‘fanned’	<i>fón-ii</i> ‘fanning’
f.	<i>pína-dó</i>	‘got ripe’	<i>pína-ii</i> ‘getting ripe’

The data below comprise clauses with the perfective and progressive aspect markers attached to them. The progressive also doubles as present tense in Izón. Consider the perfective and progressive aspects in syntactic frames below:

- 11a. *a bain -dó*
 3SG run -PFV
 ‘She has run’
- b. *Tare bíra -dó*
 PN forget -PFV
 ‘Tare has forgotten’
- 12a. *a bain -ii*
 3SG run -PROG
 ‘She is running’
- 12b *Tare bíra -ii*

² Lexical aspect is an inherent property of a verb that is not formally marked.

PN forget -PROG
'Tare is forgetting'

Just as tense and aspect can be delineated in affirmative forms by the use of distinct markers, so also can their negative forms be isolated in clauses. Thus, an affirmative clause with a specific tense distinction selects the appropriate NEG marker that corresponds with the tense feature for its negative polarity. We proceed to isolate the parameters for linguistic well-formedness for negative polarity in native speakers' intuitive judgment of correct usage.

4.0. Negation in Izón

That natural languages generally encode negative and positive polarity in their utterances is not new. Just as a truth conditions or assertions may be expressed using affirmative forms, negative forms may also be employed to falsify such assertions. Natural languages select one of several parameters to negate unmarked polarities and thus, provide licensing contexts for such markers. Izón exhibits roughly three negative markings with syntactic frames distinguishing the type and context of the NEG marker to be selected. The following morphemes have been identified and isolated as NEG markers:

- 13a. -*ghá*,
b. -*kúmo* and
c. *qeín*.

qeín in 13c is isolated herein as a marker in response to polar question as shall be examined subsequently in this study. Below are the two NEG markers in 13a and b namely; *kúmo* and *ghá* attached to verbal stems. Their attachment negates the propositions expressed by the verbs to which they are affixed. Thus, each verbal base is interpreted as a negative polarity for the affirmative forms simply because the NEG markers are attached.

- 14a. *wéni* 'walk' -*ghá/kúmo* 'walk not'
b. *bain* 'run' - *ghá/kúmo* 'run not'
c. *téi* 'play' - *ghá/kúmo* 'play not'
d. *fón* 'fan' - *ghá/kúmo* 'fan not'
e. *kori* 'build' - *ghá/kúmo* 'build not'

In addition to the three NEG markers listed in 13, an additional NEG element namely; *náà* is identified as an auxiliary with additional adverbial feature. *náà* is isolated as an auxiliary because of the grammatical contrasts it displays in syntactic frames and because it surfaces only in negative phrases but not affirmative forms. It co-occurs with -*ghá* and -*kúmo* but does not cancel nor derive affirmative forms by their co-occurrence.

Studies in the literature assert that in languages such as; Portuguese, Japanese and some dialects of English double negatives or what is technically regarded as *negative concord* affirm each other. In which case, where two negative elements co-occur in a syntactic frame such as what is observed in Izón, the proposition expressed in that clause is affirmed. The case of Izón is worth examining. In the data below, the element *náà* co-occurs with the two NEG markers, but does not cancel the NEG meanings of the constructions to derive affirmative forms. Consider the structures;

	náà __ +kúmo		náà __ +ghá
15a.	<i>náà</i> <i>bó</i> - <i>kumo</i>		<i>náà</i> <i>bó</i> - <i>gha</i>
	NEG (1AUX, ADV) come -NEG		NEG (1AUX, ADV) come -NEG
	'Do not come yet'		'has not come'
b.	<i>náà</i> <i>fí</i> - <i>kumo</i>		<i>náà</i> <i>fí</i> - <i>gha</i>
	NEG (1AUX, ADV) eat -NEG		NEG (1AUX, ADV) eat -NEG
	'Do not eat yet'		'has not eaten'
c.	<i>náà</i> <i>biri</i> - <i>kumo</i>		<i>náà</i> <i>biri</i> - <i>ghá</i>
	NEG (1AUX, ADV) bathe -NEG		NEG (1AUX, ADV) come -NEG
	'Do not bathe yet'		'has not taken a bathe'

As the data above shows, the NEG auxiliary *náà* is inherently adverbial thus glosses as the morpheme *yet*. It occurs pre-verbally, with the NEG markers attached to the verb stem post-verbally. The clauses in ***náà __ +kúmo*** are interpreted as imperatives or instructions not to perform the verbal situations of their clauses, while those in ***náà __ +ghá*** are declaratives sentences that are negated. *-ghá* and *-kúmo* therefore converge by both being NEG markers but diverge by the types of syntactic frames in which they occur. In addition, the NEG markers seem to vary in tense distinction, hence the verbal situations in ***náà __ +ghá*** and ***náà __ +kúmo*** vary in terms of tense and aspectual distinction. While those in ***náà __ +ghá*** indicate non-completion of their verbal events, those in ***náà __ +kúmo*** instantiate the actual situations that are not required at the moment of speech. The NEG markers in the syntactic frames thus exhibit specific peculiarities to which they can be associated namely that, *-kúmo* only surfaces in imperative constructions while *-ghá* occurs in declaratives. An attempt at alternating or selecting the NEG markers without due consideration to the type of syntactic frame will thus lead to ill-formedness or anomalous condition. It is important note that *-ghá* always translates as a NEG marker unlike *-kúmo* which also glosses as an adverbial. It is informative to examine the distinctive features of the two NEG markers *-ghá* and *-kúmo* in finite clauses to further reveal their inherent features. Consider the extension *-ghá* attached to the verb stems below;

	Positive (V-gha)		Negative (V-ghá +TNS)
16a.	<i>Ebí</i> <i>fíyai</i> <i>fí</i> - <i>me</i>		<i>Ebí</i> <i>fíyai</i> <i>fí</i> - <i>gha</i>

	PN food eat -PFV	PN food eat -NEG(1PST)
	‘Ebi ate food’	‘Ebi did not eat food’
b.	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -ii</i>	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -ghá</i>
	PN food eat -PROG	PN food eat -NEG(1PRS)
	‘Ebi is eating’	‘Ebi is not eating’
c.	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -minimi</i>	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -ghá -minimi</i>
	PN food eat -FUT	PN food eat -NEG -FUT
	‘Ebi will eat food’	‘Ebi will not eat food’

In 16a, the past tense marker *-mé* is attached to the verb *fi* ‘eat’ indicating that the situation expressed occurred at some time prior to the moment of speech. This past feature of the core predicate in the underlying affirmative clause does not surface in the negative form haven been deleted and replaced with the NEG marker *-ghá*. This is also the situation with sentence 16b where the NEG marker replaces the present markers *-ii*. The implication of these is that, *-ghá* is inherently parsed for both past and present tenses since it translates in both ways. This means that that grammar preselects by default, the appropriate tense feature specified by the contextual exigencies dictated by underlying affirmative clauses.

In the negative structure in 16c, the future marker is not lost. The licensing context for the NEG marker *-ghá* is still post verbal and this is followed by the future marker. The NEG marker *-ghá* is not inherently assessable for future tense as such the suffix *-minimí* resurfaces to express it. An attempt at selecting *-kúmo* for the clauses in 16 derives anomalous negative polarity as the clauses below indicate.

	Positive	Negative (*V-kúmo +TNS)
17a.	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -me</i>	* <i>Ebí fiyai fi - kúmo</i>
	PN food eat -PFV	PN food eat -NEG
	‘Ebi ate food’	*‘Ebi, do not eat food’
b.	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -ii</i>	* <i>Ebí, fiyai fi - kúmo</i>
	PN food eat -PROG	PN food eat -NEG
	‘Ebi is eating’	*‘Ebi, do not eat food’
c.	<i>Ebí fiyai fi -minimi</i>	* <i>Ebí fiyai fi - kúmo -minimi</i>
	PN food eat -FUT	PN food eat -NEG -FUT
	‘Ebi will eat food’	*‘Ebi, do will not eat food’

The structures in 17a-c are all adjudged to be ill-formed and anomalous because the NEG marker *-kúmo* participates only in negating imperative clauses. The semantic imports of the situations expressed in the finite clauses in 17 can only be negated with *-ghá*. These structures can be well-formed and meaningful if pauses, as required by imperatives are inserted into the frames.

This implies that they will not be negations derived from finite clauses but negative imperatives derived from positive polarity. Consider the NEG structure with *-kúmo* below.

Positive imperative clause (V INF)

- 18a. *Ebí, fiyai fi*
PN food eat
'Ebi, eat food'

Negative imperative clause (V INF + kúmo)

- b. *Ebí, fiyai fi - kúmo*
PN food eat -NEG
'Ebi, do not eat food'

In 18b above, the NEG marker *-kúmo* is inserted into a positive imperative clause to negate the underlying imperative proposition in 18a. The data shows that *-kúmo* negates only specific types of constructions of which imperatives are identified.

4.1. Negating propositions with perfective aspectual markers

The structures in 16b, c and those in 17a-c might lead one to conclude that negation in Izón is simply by attaching the morphemes *-ghá* to propositions and *-kúmo* to imperatives and non-past events. However, close look at propositions with the perfective aspectual notions reveal that other morpho-syntactic elements participate as grammatical elements to express and negate distinct semantic notions. The morpheme *-dó* in the structures in 19 below show that the verbal events expressed in their clauses are completed and bounded. Examine their negative polarities in the control structures in 20.

- 19a. *Ebí bo -dó*
PN come -PFV
'Ebi has come'

- 20a. *Ebí naà bo -ghá*
PN AUX(2NEG, PFV) come -NEG
'Ebi has not come home (yet)'

- b. *Ebí ware' o bo -dó*
PN home LOC MK come -PFV
'Ebi has come home'

- b. *Ebí naà wáre' o bo -gha*
PN AUX(2NEG, PFV) home LOC MK come -NEG
'Ebi has not come home (yet)'
(2NEG= negation, AUX = auxiliary, PFV=perfective)

As is obvious from the negative constructions in 20, the perfective markers of their underlying affirmative clauses in 19 have been deleted and replaced with the NEG marker *-ghá*. To indicate that the events expressed in the affirmative forms have not been completed as their underlying propositions assert, the morpho-syntactic element *naà* is inserted. The semantic import of *naà* thus gravitates towards not perfective, completed and bounded situations.

The final NEG marker espoused in this study is that which is isolated for either polar questions or what is simply referred to as Yes-No questions in English, conducive, tag questions.

In all the scope of the NEG response *qéin* stretches over the semantic imports of the content combination of question responded to. The next section is dedicated to examining *qéin*.

4.2. The Polar Response *qéin* Negation in Izón

The element *qéin* is here isolated as a negation marker because it orientates towards a distinct response with scope of the response covering the total semantic content of an underlying interrogative proposition. Like the English Yes-No responses, *qéin* - *iin* happen to function as negative and positive responses respectively. Thus, while *qéin* is a NEG response to responses to polar questions, tag questions and other types of questions or propositions requiring single straight answers, *iin* is its positive counterpart.

Two types of responses to polar questions can be distinguished; that which consist of an interjection Yes!/No! alone and thus referred to as unexpanded response and that which requires additional components after the interjection word as such provide elaboration on the subject matter (Lee, 2014). For the purpose of this study, *qéin* is isolated as an unexpanded negative response³ to polar questions in Izón. To this end, the polar questions below, signaled by the question particle *máà* and the morphological interrogating clitic *a o!*, added to the end of declarative sentences require the negative response, *qéin*.

Questions	Response
21a. <i>Taré be mgbai kó bo máà?</i>	<i>qéin</i>
PN DET day FOC MK come Q	NEG
‘Was it today that Tare came?’	‘No!’
b. <i>é yin weni pua -d' á ò?</i>	<i>qéin</i>
2SG mother walk out;go out PFV Q	NEG
‘Has your mother walked/gone out?’	‘No!’
c. <i>Ebí kí e píri máà?</i>	<i>qéin</i>
PN FOC MK 2SG give Q	NEG
‘Was it Ebi that gave you?’	‘No!’
d. <i>é bó -ii?</i>	<i>qéin</i>
2SG come -PRS	NEG
‘Are you coming?’	‘No!’
e. <i>eyó bó sèrií!</i>	<i>qéin</i>
place LOC MK leave	NEG
‘Leave there!’	‘No!’

³ An unexpanded negative response is a negative response to a question seeking (re-)confirmation about the content of the matter that has been conveyed in an interrogative clause.

As can be seen from the structures in 21a-d above, being polar questions, the responses merely require either an affirmation word or a negation word to re-affirm or negate them. Hence, the NEG element *qeín* 'No' is the response for all the structures. sentence *e* is a command to which the unexpanded negative response is also given. *qeínis* thus, isolated as the unexpanded NEG element for polar questions with the affirmative form being *iin* 'Yes'.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine the distinctive features of the Izón INFL node with particular reference to the morpho-syntactic manifestations of tense and aspect in Negative polarity. It isolated the morphemes *-mé -ii* and *-minimi* as past, present and future tenses markers in Izón, while *dó* and *-ii* were marked as perfective and progressive aspects respectively. In a bid to identify the negative markers and distinguish their tense and aspect features, the three negative elements; *-ghá*, *-kúmo* and *qeín* were inserted into positive propositions to derive negative polarities. This helped in identifying the tense and aspect features possessed by each NEG element. *-ghá* was identified to be inherently past and present. Its interpretation depended on the tense import proposed by its affirmative clause. On the other hand, *kúmo* gravitates towards a present marker as it instantiates imperative meaning in the events of its clauses.

On its part *qeín* was isolated as an unexpanded negative response element to polar questions and other questions requiring single responses. This led to the proposition made in this study that, negation in Izón is marked by three elements namely; *-ghá*, *-kúmo* and *qeín*. While *qeín* is isolated as an unexpanded negative response to polar questions, the choice to make between *-ghá* and *-kúmo* is prompted by the clause type. Thus, if the sentence to be negated is a command or an imperative so to speak, the NEG marker to select is *-kúmo*. On the other hand, if the sentence is a declarative, *-ghá* is selected. *-ghá* is thus isolated as a generic NEG marker not only because it co-occurs with all word categories in syntactic frames but because it translates only as a NEG marker, unlike *-kúmo* which may co-occur with the NEG auxiliary *-naa* but translates as the adverbial *yet* in such instances. It is believed that this study will prompt this and other researchers to examine other extensional affixes in relation with verbs.

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