

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ASPECTUAL MARKING IN GONJA



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ASPECTUAL MARKING IN GONJA



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**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

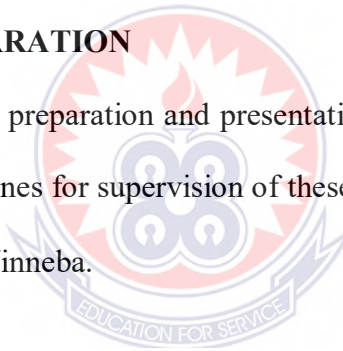
I, FUSEINI MALIK declare that this thesis, except for quotations and references contained in published works that have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of these as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



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DEDICATION

This handy work of mine is particularly dedicated to my humble and lovely father, Yussif Basiru, whose endless encouragement and sacrifices gave me the endurance to pursue this M. Phil programme successfully. I must admit that I am highly indebted to you in life. Also, I dedicate this work to Mahama Bonosa (Auntie) and Uncle Adam for equally playing crucial roles in my pursuit of this M.Phil. programme.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	First person pronoun
2	Second person pronoun
3	Third person pronoun
BLT	Basic Linguistic Theory
CONJ	Conjunction
CVN	Consonant vowel nasal
DEF	Definite article
DET	Determiner
DEM	Demonstrative
FM	Frequency modulation
FUT	Future
HAB	Habitual marker
NEG	Negative marker
NEG.PROG	Negative progressive
NEG.HAB	Negative habitual
NEG.FUT	Negative future
NP	Noun phrase
PST	Past marker
PERF	Perfective aspect
PHC	Population housing census
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive

POSTP	Postposition
PROG	Progressive aspect
PROG.PST	Progressive past
SG	Singular
SV	Subject-verb
SVO	Subject-verb-object
SVC	Subject-verb-adjunct
SVOA	Subject-verb-object-adjunct
SVOO	Subject-verb-object-object
TZ	Tuozaŋi



ABSTRACT

This thesis is on aspectual marking in Gonja, a Guan language spoken in the Savannah Region of Ghana. The study employs Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) in the data analysis. Data used in this thesis were collected from primary sources; mainly from naturally occurring spoken texts (spontaneous speech), which were recorded from Nkilgi FM. Hence, spontaneous data, which were tape recorded informally and formally, were then transcribed for analysis and description. Furthermore, the spoken texts were supplemented by elicited data as well as data based on my native speaker's introspection. It revealed that Gonja employs both covert and overt strategies in the marking of aspect. For instance, while the perfective aspect is not morphologically marked, the habitual and progressive employ independent syntactic elements to mark aspect. In terms of syntax, I show that these particles occur in the preverbal position immediately preceding the verb phrase (VP). I also investigated the interaction between aspect and negation, showing that the progressive aspectual marker **bee** and the negative progressive marker **maa** are not compatible in Gonja. It is also established that the future aspectual marker **been** and the negative future marker **maan** are not compatible in Gonja. Again, the study shows that the particle **bee** doubles as a progressive and habitual marker in Gonja. In addition, the study investigates the particle **maa** and show that it can be used to code both negative progressive and negative habitual in Gonja.



CHAPTER ONE

THE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

1.0. Introduction

This thesis provides an analysis of aspectual marking in Gonja. Natural language sentences employ a variety of devices to encode information about the temporal properties of the situations they describe. These include grammaticalized markers of location in time (tense) or temporal structure (aspect), temporal adverbial of location (e.g., last year, now) or frequency (e.g., always, rarely), lexicalized descriptions of events and their temporal structure (aktionsart or lexical aspect) and discourse principles, which relate the ordering of discourse to the temporal order of events (Deo, 2012: 155).

Over the years, there has been a terminological split among linguists regarding what should be called “aspect” (Issah, 2015:30). According to Thomson (2016), the main point of contention among linguists when it comes to defining an aspect is which of the several related anomalies should be considered under that umbrella, with the difficulties involved being that languages behave quite differently about the phenomenon being studied. One approach begins with a specific language and applies the term “aspect” to specific grammaticalized distinctions found in that language, whereas others seek a wider scope that may be adapted cross-linguistically (Thomson, 2016).

This notwithstanding, a well-known definition of aspect is that of Comrie (1976:3), where he refers to aspect as the “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation.”

According to Bhat (1999), the most fundamental aspectual difference that arises in the grammar of natural languages is the one between perfective and imperfective. It generally indicates two diverse ways of perceiving or narrating a particular event. Perfective offers the perspective of an event as a whole from the outside, while imperfective provides the view from the inside. The former is preoccupied with the internal temporal structure of the event, while the latter is significantly concerned with such a structure. The former considers the situation to be confined and to be forming a cohesive entity, whereas the latter considers it to be ongoing or habitual (see Comrie 1976, Dahl 1985, Bache 1995).

In Gonja, a potential two-way distinction is made between perfective and imperfective aspectual categories. Where the imperfective aspect comprises the habitual and progressive forms of the verb. Thus, the language employs particles that are syntactically placed immediately before the verb to code the grammatical category aspect. Aspectual marking is one of the topics, which remain mainly untouched in the study of the Gonja language, which belongs to the Guan language family. The study of aspect has been inadequate as far as research on the grammar of Gonja is concerned. As the first of its type in Gonja, this present thesis seeks to provide a descriptive investigation into aspectual marking in Gonja. This thesis notably focuses on how aspect is indicated, the particles utilized in aspectual marking, and how these aspectual particles interact with negation within the structure of Gonja sentences.

Beyond the introduction, the rest of the chapter will proceed as follows: section 1.1 provides a brief background to the study whilst section 1.2 presents the problem statement of the study. The purpose and objectives of the study are stated in sections 1.3

and 1.4 respectively. In section, 1.5, I present the research questions. The significance of the study is outlined in 1.6 while section 1.7 deals with the delimitations of the study. The organization of the entire thesis is detailed out in section 1.8 while section 1.9 presents the summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

The study examines aspectual marking in Gonja. Gonja is a language that belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo phylum (Hall, 2010) and is spoken by the Gonja people in the Savannah area of Ghana. According to Braimah (1962), the name Gonja is derived from the Hausa line *zaani gun ja goro*, which means “I am going to the land of the red cola nuts.” Gun ja (at the place of the red) was selected out of the phrase to give the people the common moniker Gonja. The indigenous name for the people is Ngbanya (plural) and Kagbanya (singular), whereas the language they speak is Kεgbanya, in other words, Nεgbanyato, which literally means “in Gonja.” The Gonja people inhabit six local government units (districts), all in the newly constituted Savannah region of Ghana. These are: Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, Bole, West Gonja, Central Gonja, East Gonja and North Gonja (Jindayu, 2013). Each of these districts has its own capital or headquarters. They are Sawla-Tuna-Kalba, Bole, Damongo, Buipe, Salaga and Daboya respectively.

Afari-Twako (2005), mentioned in Kotochi (2017), notes that Gonja has three primary dialects, which are the East Gonja dialect, the West Gonja dialect and the Ndompo dialect. Gonja is considered the second most spoken Guang language in Ghana (Dakubu, 1988). It is also considered the northernmost of the Guang language speakers in Ghana (Nelson et al., 2016). As Afari-Twako reveals, the Gonja range from Kpembe in the east

to Bole and Nyoli in the west, and from Chache near Wa in the north to Bamboi in the south.

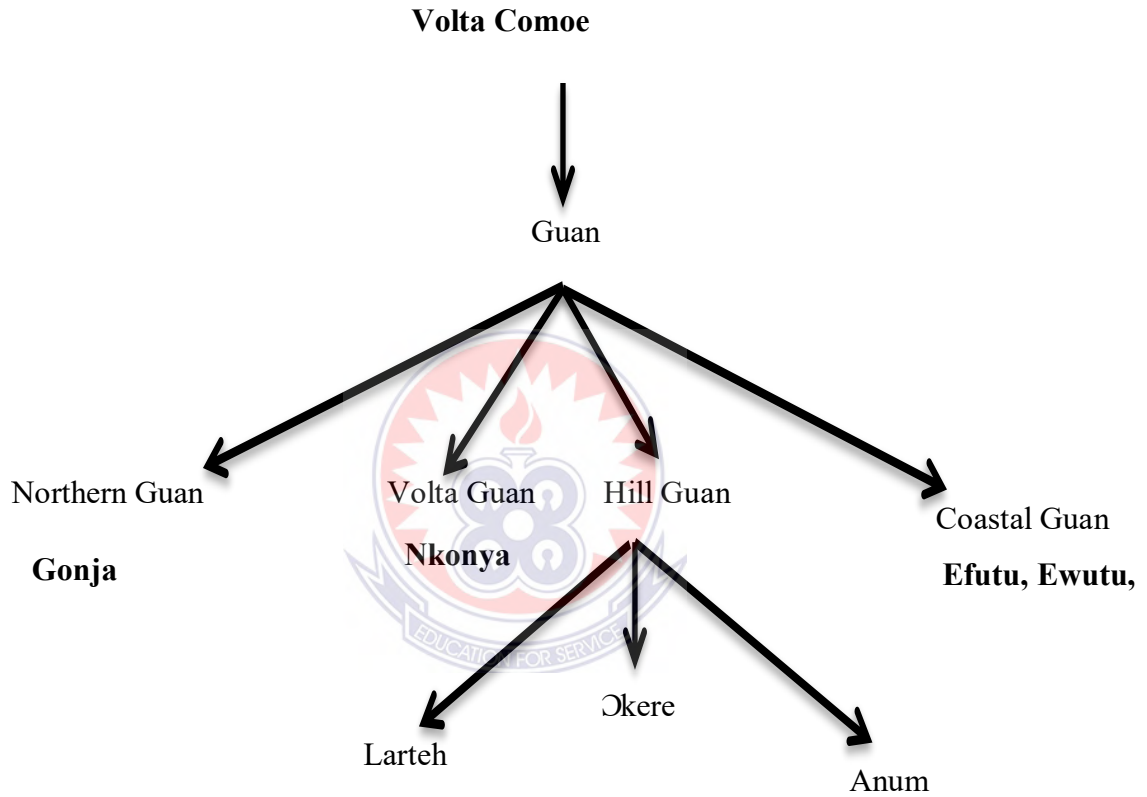
The population and housing census (PHC) 2021 list the population of Gonjas as roughly six hundred and forty-nine thousand, six hundred and twenty-seven (649,627), and is spoken throughout a broad territory reaching farther north than Tamale, the capital of Ghana's Northern region. Its east-west extent is likewise extensive, spanning from the east of Salaga in the east to Bole in the west.

The Gonja Kingdom as it exists currently comprises several Mabia languages established inside it, some of which are Farifari, Dagaaba, Chokosi, Sisala, Kokomba, Safalba, Birifor and Dagomba, among others. The locals speak Gonja as their first language and speak the numerous languages of the settlers as their second language. The major activity of the Gonja people is farming. They cultivate crops like yam, cassava, maize, millet, Guinea corn, beans, groundnuts and many more. They also create some of the northern smocks. It is because of these economic activities that adjacent communities have relocated from their original locations onto the land to work and make a living.

Considering the linguistic qualities, the language shows both voiced and voiceless consonants at each location of articulation. Gonja has been evaluated lately as having a nine-vowel system, albeit seven of which are employed in its writing. Gonja primarily shows consonant-vowel (CV), verb (V), consonant-verb-nasal (CVN), and consonant-vowel-vowel (CVV) syllable structures (Nelson et al., 2016). The language is exclusively subject-verb-object (SVO). This study is focused on analyzing how aspects are coded in the language, the particles utilized to code these aspectual forms, and how they interact

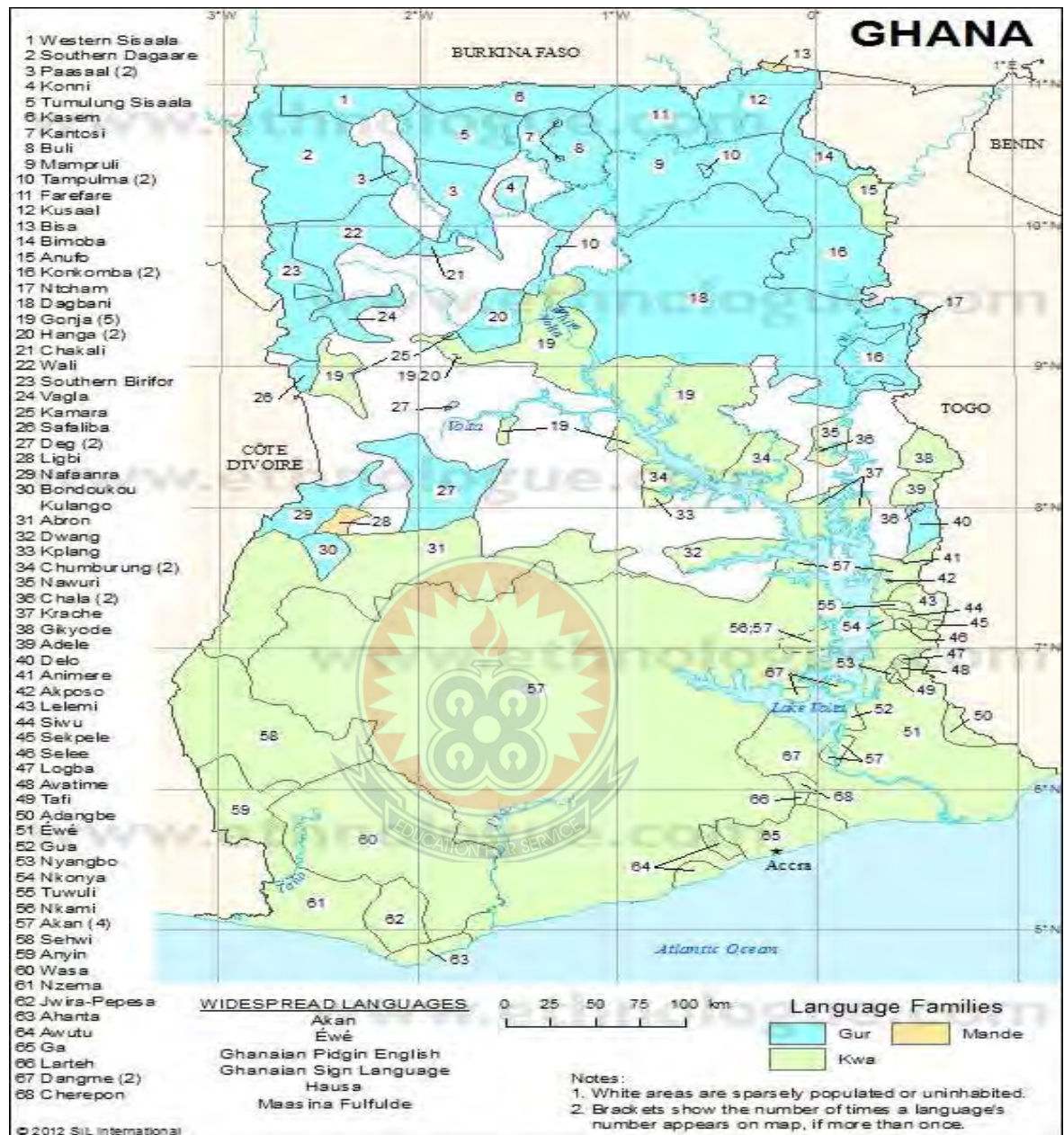
with negation paradigms in the language. Figures 1 and 2 show the classification of Gonja and a language map of Ghana, showing the language group of Gonja and where the Gonja people reside respectively.

Figure 1: Classification of Gonja



Source: Adopted from Animah (2015: 6)

Figure 2. The language map of Ghana



The number 19 is the region where Gonja is spoken.

(Source: Lewis et al., 2013)

1.2 Statement of the problem

Studying African languages has been an urgent concern to linguists across the world. Gonja is one of the Guan languages that has not gained much attention in research. Painter (1970) focused on the structure of Gonja; whereas Nelson et al. (2016) worked on the phonology of Gonja. Also, Kotochi (2017) researched on the Gonja noun phrase; Dari (2020) worked on serial verb constructions in Gonja; Furthermore, Jindayu (2017) studied morphosyntactic analysis of Gonja personal names; and Seidu (2020) studied the literary analysis of the Gonja dirge in the area of literature. Afari-Twako (2015), Amidu (2009), and Braimah (1997 and 1962) all worked on the cultural systems of Gonja. In all these works, there is no study that has paid attention to aspectual marking in Gonja; therefore, this study fills this gap of aspectual marking by looking at how similar or different it may be in other Guan languages. By focusing on aspectual marking, this thesis describes an important part of the syntax of the language. This is because aspect aids speakers of the language in codifying various contexts connected to verb activity.

According to Adger (2004), cited in Issah (2015) understanding aspectual marking is very key for users of a particular language because it enables them to codify different situations that are associated with the action of the verb. In most natural languages, grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, mood, and polarity are marked on the verb via affixation. Thus, affixes are attached to the verb to denote some functional categories, which sum up the grammatical category it refers to. However, Gonja aspectual marking is not morphologically bound. Thus, the language employs independent particles that are

not affixed to the verbs but are immediately placed before the verb to derive the aspectual forms. This linguistic phenomenon is reflected in the data below:

(1). a. **Kebia na bee ji ajibi.**
 Child DEF HAB eat food
 „The child eats food.“

b. **Kebia na bee ji ajibi.**
 Child DEF PROG eat food
 „The child is eating food.“

c. **Kebia na beej ji ajibi na.**
 Child DEF FUT eat food DEF
 „The child will eat the food.“

d. **Kebia na maanj ji ajibi na.**
 Child DEF NEG.FUT eat food DEF
 „The child will not eat the food.“

From the illustration above, the verb **ji** “eat” co-exists with verbal particles to mark aspect in the language. The particle “**bee**” doubles as a habitual and progressive marker in Gonja with context differentiating between the two paradigms. In (1a), the particle “**bee**” is marked on the verb **ji** “eat” to express a habitual reading; this indicates that the action of the subject occurs for an extended period (i.e., food is something the child eats

regularly). As (1b) shows, the **bee** is a progressive marker used to indicate an ongoing event. Also, as shown in (1c) and (1d), the particles **been** and **maan** denote future readings; while **been** indicates that the action denoted by the verb will take place after the speech time, **maan** is a future negation marker that indicates that an action will not take place after the speech time. This thesis is therefore aimed at filling the gap by concentrating on aspectual marking in Gonja.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to conduct a comprehensive descriptive analysis of aspectual marking in Gonja. The study is my attempt to contribute to the general knowledge of aspectual marking using data from Gonja.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore aspectual marking in Gonja;
2. To argue that Gonja employs particles for marking aspect;
3. To investigate the interaction between negation and aspectual marking in Gonja.

1.5 Research Questions

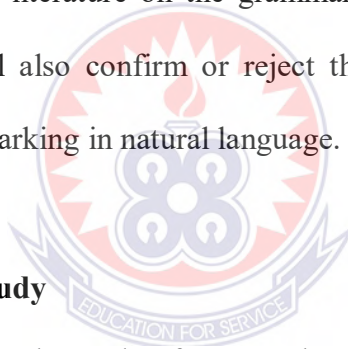
The questions that will guide the research are:

1. How is aspect marked in Gonja?
2. What are the particles employed in aspectual marking in Gonja?
3. What is the interaction between negation and aspectual marking in Gonja?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be significant in various ways. In the first place, this study will help provide insight into the aspectual marking in Gonja. Linguists will also gain new insights into the types of aspects identified, their interpretations, syntax, and their interactions with negation paradigms.

As a descriptive study of its kind, a detailed account of aspectual marking will be offered and this, I hope, will provide numerous empirical facts about aspectual marking in Gonja. It will also serve as a working material for future studies on the syntax of Gonja and hence, add to the existing literature on the grammar of the language. The results and findings of this study will also confirm or reject the generalizations made by earlier linguists about aspectual marking in natural language.



1.7 Delimitation of the study

The study will be limited to the study of aspectual marking in Gonja. Also, this study is limited to the western corridor of Gonjaland communities comprising the West, Central, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba and Bole Districts. The data collected relates to the West Gonja dialect.

1.8 Organization of the study

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one (1) presents the general overview of the thesis, which includes an introduction, background to the study, statement of the

problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, the organization of the study and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter two (2) captures two components of this study: the literature review and the theoretical framework. The scope of the literature review covers the general notion of aspectual marking, previous studies on aspectual marking in Mabia languages, works on aspectual marking in Kwa languages and some non-African languages. The theoretical framework is also discussed in this chapter.

In chapter three (3), the methodology used in the data collection for both primary and secondary data for this study is discussed. The emphasis is placed on research design, site and sample size, data collection techniques, data analysis and limitations.

Chapter four (4) is where the analysis of the study begins; it discusses aspectual marking in Gonja, where various aspectual particles are identified. The particles used for aspectual marking are discussed using Gonja examples and concludes the chapter with the interaction between negation and aspectual marking in Gonja.

Chapter five (5) concludes the thesis by summarizing the main findings and recommending areas for future research on aspectual marking and other areas of Gonja syntax and linguistics discussed in this research work.

1.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter discussed the general introduction and background of the study. It also discussed the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, as well as the structural organisation of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on aspectual marking in some languages around the world. The chapter reviews the literature on aspectual marking in both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian languages. It discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the discussions of aspectual marking in Gonja. Beyond this section, the chapter is organised as follows: Section 2.1 provides a brief background on the general notion of aspectual marking, whereas Section 2.2 reviews previous studies on aspectual marking on Kwa languages. Also, section 2.3 reviews previous studies on aspectual marking on Mbia languages. In 2.4, I focus on previously studies on aspectual marking in African languages. In section 2.5, I examine the literature on related topics in other languages around the world. The theoretical framework is outlined in Section 2.6, and Section 2.7 summarises the chapter.

2.1 General notion of aspectual marking

According to Thomson (2016), the distinction between perfective and imperfective verbs in Slavonic languages, such as Russian, which has been dubbed "the aspect language par excellence," serves as the starting point for the more restricted approach to aspect. As a calque or loan translation of the Russian term (*vid*), "aspect" was in fact first used as a grammatical phrase in the eighteenth century. The latter, which may be used to refer to both "form" and "view," was initially chosen by grammarians as a translation of the Greek word *eidōs*, which denotes a morphological form or type. Smotrickij used the

phrase in the early seventeenth century to distinguish "primary nouns and verbs from "derived" ones, while Gre (1827) used the term in his grammar to distinguish several semantic classes of verbs.

Despite the different views amongst linguists regarding the concept "aspect," the understanding of the concept "aspect" within general linguistics is that it is used to refer to an expression or "view" of the internal temporal structure of a situation, where the word "situation" serves as a catchall for actions, events, activities, and states (Thomson 2016).

Comrie (1976:3), possibly the most well-known and frequently cited example of the concept "aspect," says that aspects are "different ways of viewing the internal temporal consistency of a situation." He refers to the "internal temporal constituency" as how a situation unfolds through different temporal situations, but not by relating the time of the situation to any other time-point.

The substantive aspectual types have been classified so that the distinction between the perfective aspect and the imperfective aspect is primary (Comrie 1976:25). Broadly construed, the perfective aspect shows "the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation" (Comrie 1976:21), and the imperfective makes explicit reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation, viewing a situation from within (Comrie 1976:24). These claims by Comrie have led him to include within the "imperfective aspect" a variety of more specific

aspects, such as habitual and progressive aspects. In assertion, Klein (1994), cited in Thomson (2016:10), says that aspect, according to the conventional view, “concerns the different perspectives which a speaker can take and express about the temporal course of some event, action, process, etc.: the speaker may view it as completed, as on-going, as imminent, and possibly in other ways.”

Furthermore, Comrie (1976:60) points out that in certain cases, the present significance of a perfect situation may be attributed primarily to its temporal closeness, meaning that the past situation is relatively recent. As Comrie underscores, the concept of recency is subjective, and if the listener is encountering the information for the first time, the speaker, using the perfect tense, presents it as recent news. Therefore, the perfect tense denoting a recent past event is occasionally referred to as the "hot news perfect." Furthermore, in a perfect construction, the current relevance can stem from both its temporal closeness to the present and other factors, which may be elaborated upon in subsequent discourse.

Going forward, Allen's (1966) theory of aspect, the primary aspectual contrast in the English language revolves around the perfective aspect and the imperfective aspect. The perfective aspect is conveyed by the simple form of the verb, while the imperfective aspect is represented by one of the forms of the auxiliary "be" plus the "ing" form of the verb. Essentially, Allen posits that English has only two aspects: the inclusive aspect (also known as the perfective aspect) and the intrusive aspect (also known as the imperfective aspect). He contends that aspect functions as a formal expression of the

speaker's subjective perspective towards a specific action in the real world, essentially defining how the speaker "looks at" a given event or situation.

However, he understands this doesn't imply that the speaker always has complete discretion to label a given situation as inclusive (perfective) or intrusive (imperfective). Instead, in certain contexts, the choice of aspect is significantly influenced by objective factors such as meaning, syntax, and emphasis in expression. Along these lines of reasoning, he defines the perfective aspect's meaning or function as signalling inclusive reference, where "inclusive reference" denotes a reference to the entire event rather than just a part of it. Although Allen (1966) is confident about the significance of the perfective aspect indicated by non-progressive forms in English, he appears less certain about the primary meaning or function of the imperfective aspect.

Allen changes his earlier assessment of the English progressive aspect, arguing that it carries a distinct meaning while the intrusive aspect lacks a core meaning. This contrasts with the inclusive intrusive aspect, which includes both perfective and imperfective. In addition, he contends that the progressive feature does not necessarily convey concepts of incompleteness, duration, or any other conceptions. Instead, it frequently maintains a neutral stance towards the pronounced inclusive reference meaning seen in non-progressive verb forms. The English progressive aspect, denoted by the marker "be... + -ing," is Allen's (1966) unmarked category in the progressive vs non-progressive opposition. He claims that in English, the present participle is employed to show that an event takes place over a specified time span.

Additionally, Allen's second interpretation of the English imperfective aspect transcends many other viewpoints already present in the literature by highlighting the fact that the progressive component's core meaning does not center upon "incompleteness" or "limited duration." Allen makes additional significant contributions to aspectual studies in his 1966 book by making perceptive remarks about the division of lexical verbs and verb predications into various groups. Allen exhibits a keen awareness that semantic analysis of the morphological or syntactic markers of aspectual oppositions, such as perfective versus imperfective, progressive, and others, should be conducted independently from the examination of lexical verbs based on the types of actions they represent.

Comrie's Aspect (1976), which explores aspect as a part of broader linguistic theory, aims to define aspect and develop aspectual theories with enough generality to account for the aspectual structure of any given language. Comrie uses a definition of aspect that is similar to Allen's: it is the speaker or writer's perspective on a particular real-world scenario. Perfective aspect is the portrayal of an event as a whole, according to Comrie. But there is a clear distinction between the two scholars' points of view. While Comrie's analysis is based on the idea of a one-to-many relationship between form and meaning, Allen's account of aspect primarily depends on the theory of a one-to-one correlation between form and meaning. This indicates that Comrie is aware that there could be many interpretations of a single form, which sets his views apart from Allen's approach.

According to Lyons (1977), static and dynamic circumstances are fundamentally different from one another. A static situation, also known as a state-of-affairs or state, is

something that exists as opposed to taking place, according to him. It has constant characteristics during its existence, including homogeneity and continuity. A dynamic scenario, on the other hand, is anything that happens, occurs, or takes place and is different. It can be fleeting or lasting, and it doesn't always show homogeneity or continuity; alternatively, it could have different temporal contours. Because they may or may not be controlled by an agent, dynamic situations must be distinguished from static ones.

Based on their length and the ability of an actor to regulate them, dynamic circumstances can be further divided into subgroups. The word "activities" is first used by Lyons (1977) to refer to dynamic durational circumstances that last throughout time and are managed by an agent. On the other hand, he uses the word "acts" to describe dynamic circumstances that are under the control of agents but have varying lengths. In addition, Lyons recognizes both short- and long-term dynamic conditions, including a variety of events and processes that are out of the agents' control. Having provided some background on aspectual marking, the next sub-section provides an overview of some related literature on aspectual marking within the Kwa languages.

2.2 Previous works on aspectual marking on Kwa languages

In this sub-section, I review literature on aspectual marking, drawing data from the Kwa languages. Some works I review include Campbell (2017) on Ga, Dorvlo (2008) on Logba, Osam (2003) on Akan and Ameka (2008) on Ewe.

According to Campbell (2017), Ga does not use a special marker to mark perfectives. She indicates that perfective readings in the language are very basic in verbs that denote an action viewed as completed. Campbell (2017) therefore says that the perfectivity in Ga is not so relevant. However, it is worth noting that the Gonja perfective is the same as the Ga perfective in the sense that the perfective in Gonja is not marked morphologically with any affix.

According to her, the progressive aspectual marker is the prefix “- ” The particle “**ŋ-**” is morphologically prefixed to the verb to indicate that the action or event is ongoing at the time of speech. She claims that the progressive aspect in Ga is not concerned with the starting and ending points, nor is it concerned with the time of the event; it only cares that the event is unfolding at a particular point in time. The prefix is homorganic nasal but she addresses it orthographically as **ŋ-**. She maintains that when the prefix is morphologically prefixed to the second singular (**o=**) and third singular (**e=**) pronominal clitics, the pronoun is lengthened, whereas the nasal segment is deleted, and its low tone remains and is borne by the second vowel of the lengthened pronoun. E.g., **òò=bà** ,you are coming“; **èè=bà** ,s/he is coming“. Also, Campbell (2017) says that when the first singular pronoun is in the progressive, it is realised orthographically as **mĩ=**. The sentences below are from Campbell (2017:237-238) and demonstrate the progressive aspect of Ga.

(2) **n** **èè=tá!ó** **n** **m** **k ŋ ŋ**
 and 3SG.PROG=want NMLZ 3SG.SBJV-build house again
 “And he wants to build another house.”

- (3) **f n** **èè=bà** **fi!óó**
 please 3SG.PROG=come little
 “Excuse him, please.” i.e., “Make way” (Lit: “Please, he’s coming a little.”)

- (4) **ŋ -** **h m**
 1PL=PROG-eat Homowo
 “We are celebrating Homowo (festival).”

The assertion from Campbell (2017) on the Ga progressive aspect marker and how it is used to mark progressive aspect is similar, if not true, in Gonja. Thus, the progressive aspectual marker in both Gonja and Ga occurs in the pre-verbal slot. Also, the Gonja progressive marking for the first and third person pronouns is fused with the progressive marker **bee** in the language to denote progressive aspectual readings. A similar scenario is seen in the data postulated by Campbell (2017). However, the difference between the two languages' progressive aspectual markers is that the Ga marker is morphologically realised with a prefix **ŋ-** whereas the Gonja progressive marker is an independent element **bee** that is syntactically placed before the verb. This will be seen later in the thesis in chapter four (4).

Furthermore, Campbell (2017) contends that the presence of the progressive prefix **ŋ-** in Ga sentences can code future action marked as ongoing. Consider the following illustrations in Ga:

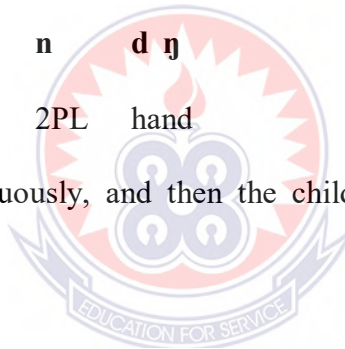
- (5) **bé ni ò=bàá-!bá=!á j l n**
 tomorrow time NMLZ 2SG=FUT-come=DEF 1PL=lie top
n ñhòó n
 NMLZ 1PL=PROG-cook thing

“By the time you come tomorrow, we’ll be busily cooking.”

- (6) **b - n à h b gb k - b**
 3SG=FUT-toil 2PL continuously then child-PL=DEF

am ñ-jè n d ñ
 3PL=PROG-exit 2PL hand

“You’ll toil continuously, and then the children will be getting out of control.”



(Campbell, 2017:239)

Furthermore, Campbell (2017) identifies - /-a as the habitual markers in Ga. She claims that the suffixes are employed to code actions that occur frequently, and she explains that a typical construction in Ga shows an action that has been repeated at least more than “once anterior to the moment of speaking and is reasonably expected to continue posterior to the moment of speaking.” She further stresses that the habitual suffix is seen as “-a” when the immediately habitual suffix is realized as -a when the immediately preceding phoneme is /a/. It is realised as “- ” in all other phonetic environments. Consider the following instances of habitual constructions from Campbell (2017:241) below:

As regards to Logba, Dorvlo (2008) discusses aspect markers and identify four morphological preverbal markers for aspect. These include present progressive, habitual, past progressive, and future markers. He posits that the present progressive morpheme in Logba is **lu** and explains further that “the underlying vowel is /u/ because this is the vowel quality that surfaces after a consonant subject prefix such as /n/ for 1SG and after an open vowel subject prefix such as /a/ for 2SG. For example, **nlu** and **alu** the /l/ of the progressive morpheme completely assimilates to become /n/ after the nasal of 1SG in the Alakpeti dialect. The /l/ becomes a stop /d/ in the Tota dialect.

Dorvlo (2008) goes on to say that in other cases (non-nasal, non-low prefix), the /u/ vowel of the present progressive assimilates in closeness and frontness to the vowel of the subject prefix and in [ATR] to the vowel of the stem. In the 3SG, the progressive morpheme assimilates to the vowel of the pronoun [ɔ] or [o] to become **lɔ**, **lo**. Similarly, the present progressive morphemes underlying vowel assimilates to the 3PLU morpheme's vowel, resulting in /e/. In the 1PLU and the 2PLU, the pronouns are two-syllable words that have /a/ and /i/ in the first and second syllables, respectively. The /i/ in the second syllable influences the underlying vowel /u/ to become /i/. This changes the vowel of the progressive morpheme in the 1PLU and 2PLU from nge to /i/. (See Dorvlo, 2009:36).

According to Dorvlo (2008), the verb needs to choose one of the ATR pairs of the vowel precedents to correlate with its aspectual marker to ascertain the harmony spread. He demonstrates that **kpomi**, as the main verb, manifests [+ATR] vowels, which results in the choice of **o-lo**. Dorvlo (2008), on the other hand, maintains that where the main verb

z “sing” manifests a [-ATR] vowel stem **-l** is chosen. Consider the following examples from Dorvlo (2008:37).

- (9) **l okpomi kla ko**
- | | | |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|
| ó-lo-kpomi | kla | ko |
| 3SG-PRSPROG-collect | hide | only |
- „He is collecting it and only hide it only.“

- (10) **Adzi l z ik**
- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| adzi | -l -z | i-k |
| bird=DET | SM.SG-PRSPROG-sing | CM-song |
- „The bird is singing.“

Dorvlo (2008:37) further observes that Logba marks its habitual and past progressive with the morpheme **tu**. Thus, the morpheme **tu** is realised with a low tone for habitual and the past progressive aspect similarly employs the same segmental form, but only the vowel conveys a high tone . Dorvlo (2008) again stresses that the verb stem and the pronoun may take different forms based on the harmony established for **lu** following the same rules, where the rules include: **ti, te, to** and

The above instances studied by Dorvlo (2009) in Logba with regards to aspectual marking operates differently in Gonja in the sense that Gonja expresses aspect using independent particles rather than affixes that are prefixed or appended to verbs depending on the data at hand. However, there are parallels since Logba and Gonja mark aspect in

the pre-verbal slots. Hence, the importance of this research is to acquire firsthand knowledge regarding aspectual marking conveyed by various Guan languages.

Nonetheless, Dorvlo (2008) identifies the marker **bá** with a high tone for future coding in Logba. He believes that the assimilation rules observed for the habitual and past progressive markers **lu** will apply to the future marker **bá**. He further observes that the assimilation is complete for the non-open vowel and emphasized that the 1SG's form is **ma** with a low tone. This is shown in the following sentences below:

SINGULAR

(11).

mab z

ma-b -z

1SG-FUT-go

„I will go.“



(12).

ab z

a-b -z

2SG-FUT-go

„You will go.“

- (13). **b z**
 -b -z
 2SG-FUT-go
 „She/He will go.“

PLURAL

- (14). **a ib z**
 a i-b -z
 3PL-FUT-go
 „We will go“

- (15). **anib z**
 ani-b -z
 2PL-FUT-go
 „You will go“



- (16). **b z**
 -b -z
 3PL-FUT-go
 „They will go“

The data provided in Logba by Dorvlo (2008) is similar to Gonja in the sense that Gonja equally has the future marker **been** which denotes that the action of the verb will happen

at a later time than the speech time. Also, both languages future readings are realised pre-verbally. However, the difference between Logba and Gonja future markers is that the former's future is morphologically marked with a prefix, whereas the latter's is syntactically realised by immediately placing it before the verb.

Going forward, Osam (2003) in his study of the verbal and multi-verbal systems of Akan, argues that Akan should be considered and treated as a predominant aspectual language. He makes this claim by identifying the perfect (PERF), progressive (PROG) and habitual (HAB) aspects of the language. According to Osam (2003), Continuative (CONT) and Consecutive (CONS) are additional aspectual forms in Akan. Osam (2003) further argues that Akan's completive aspect functions as a suffix, which he attributes to two affirmative realizations. Thus, he explains that those realisations can only be noticed when the verb is preceded by an adverbial or a direct element. He continues that if the direct object or adverbial precedes the verb, the completive aspect is seen as the final vowel lengthening of the verb root if the verb ends with a vowel and the final vowel is seen as having a low tone. Consider the following examples from Osam (2003:6):

- (17) a. **Takiwa** **b -** **abofra** **no** **(Ak/Fa)**
 Takiwa hit-COMPL child DEF
 „Takiwa hit the child.“

b. **Abam yí-ì sekan no (Ak/Fa)**
 Abam take-COMPL knife DEF
 „Abam took the knife.“

(18) a. **Takyiwa b - abofra no (As)**
 Takyiwa hit-COMPL child DEF
 „Takyiwa hit the child.“

b. **Abam yì -ì sekan no (As)**
 Abam take-COMPL knife DEF
 „Abam took the knife.“

According to Osam (2003:6), if the verb ends with a consonant or is preceded by a direct or adverbial, the completive aspect can be seen as a low tone occurring on the verb's final consonant.

(19) a. **Maame no p m ' -m' atar no**
 woman DEF sew-COMPL dress DEF
 „The woman sewed the dress.“

Moving on, according to Osam (2003), if the verb is realised in the clause-final position, the completive aspect is viewed as a low-tone vowel (/i/ or /æ.) suffix. He argues that the form of the verb must conform to the vowels of the verb root about advanced tongue root

(ATR) harmony, and that if the verb stem incorporates the ATR vowel, its completive should be perceived as /-h/, but if the vowel is unadvanced, then the completive should be understood as /-œ/. Consider the following examples from Osam (2003: 6–7):

(20) a. **Ama ká-è** (Ak/Fa)

Ama remember-COMPL

„Ama remembered.“

b. **Araba bú- ì** (Ak/Fa)

Araba break-COMPL

„Araba broke (it).“

In the sense that they both code the verb as “completed,” what is identified as “completive” in Gonja is the same as “perfective” However, the difference between the Akan completive and the Gonja perfective lies in the fact that the Akan employs suffixes with a low tone that are attached to the verb to derive the completive aspect in the language. But the Gonja perfective is not morphological in nature. Thus, the language finds its perfective aspectual readings in independent particles that are syntactically placed immediately before the verb to denote the perfective aspect in Gonja.

Osam (2003) further examines the fact that what most people term the “completive aspect” has generally been attributed to the past tense. Nevertheless, Osam (2003) argues that although the morpheme has past time as part of its meaning, its main aim is not to

code past time but rather perfective events. Thus, he explains that the morpheme is always realised on verbs that code completed events. In addition, he did mention that if an event has been imperfect in the past, it does not take the form discussed below. He buttresses this with the example that if one is to report a past progressive incident, one cannot use the suffix in (21c).

(21) a. **Akosua** -
 Akosua PROG-cry
 „Akosua is crying.“

b. **Akosua sú-ì**
 Akosua cry-COMPL
 „Akosua cried.“

c. ***Akosua ré- sú- ì**
 Akosua PROG-cry-COMPL
 „Akosua cried.“



(Osam, 2003:7)

This claim in Akan is true in Gonja. Thus, since Gonja employs particles to code aspect, the marking of the past progressive takes an independent particle, **daa**, which does appear before the verb to mark it. To derive the past progressive aspect, the past progressive and perfective aspects cannot both be marked on the verb.

According to Osam (2003), Akan perfect is coded by the prefix a-, which he states agrees with the verb stem in relation to advanced tongue root (ATR) harmony. He does point out, however, that the Akan perfect is temporal. Thus, its form is invariant regardless of its time of action. Osam's (2003:8) illustrations in (22a-b) depict the perfect aspect in Fante.

(22) a. **Adwoa** **á-pàm`** **atar**
 Adwoa PERF-sew dress
 „Adwoa has sewn a dress.“

b. **Abena** **é-sì** **dan**
 Abena PERF-build house
 „Abena has built a house.“

In addition, Osam (2003) explains that the Akan progressive and habitual are marked by the prefixes “re-” and “tone,” respectively. He states that the progressive prefix “re-” denotes different phonetic interpretations in the various dialects of Akan. He mentions that in the Akuapem dialect, its pronunciation is different. He says that in the Akuapem dialect, the vowel is usually seen as the high front unadvanced vowel /æ/, orthographically represented as “e” while in Fante, the progressive prefix (re-) comprises four allomorphs as determined by the ATR and rounding nature of the verb stem. Osam (2003) also observes that the progressive is seen as a vowel for the Asante. This, he explains, is the vowel seen as similar to the vowel of the preceding syllable. Osam (2003)

concludes that although the progressive is not obligatory at specific times, it is fair to claim that it is seen as conveying the present time.

In conclusion, Osam is of the view that several temporal adverbs and discourse contexts can be used to indicate a past or future time. The following illustrations (23) and (24) depict progressive and habitual markings in Akan, respectively.

Observe Osam (2003: 8–9) illustrations below:

- (23) a. **Efua ré- tsiw b d m no**
 Efua PROG-chase dog DEF

„Efua is chasing the dog.“

- (24) a. **Ama n bankye**
 Ama sell/HAB cassava

„Ama sells cassava.“

- b. **Ama gyíná ha**
 Ama stand/HAB here

„Ama stands here.“

The progressive issues in Akan and Gonja take different forms. As a result, the Gonja progressive and the Akan both mark progressive aspects in the pre-verbal position in the same way. The difference is that while the Akan use a pre-verbal marker **re-** that is attached to the verb to denote the progressive aspect, Gonja uses an independent marker

or particle **bee** that is not morphologically attached to the verb to derive the progressive aspectual reading. In addition, the Akan and Gonja habitual are not compatible in the sense that the Akan habitual is expressed by tone, whereas the Gonja habitual is expressed by the default progressive marker **bee** but with regards to context and other adverbs. This will be examined further in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Ameka (2008) argues that Ewe, just like most other Kwa languages of West Africa, does not use overt marking of grammatical category tense in the clause but rather encodes it. He observes that other linguistic sources are used to deduce a specific situation perceived to be occurring at a specific point in time.

He further opines that the concept referring to grammatical properties mostly show various structures in Ewe. He adds that to express the verb cluster, certain preverbal markers are used via suffixes. Although Gonja employs pre-verbal markers to express the verbal category aspect, it does so without any affixes. Consider the following examples (25a-b) below:

- (25) a. **atsú-f** **mé-nyé-á** **dzidz** **ef** **ɔ** **o**
 husband-place NEG-COP-HAB happiness space always NEG
 „Wifehood is not always full of happiness.“

b. **n a e f** **lá** **mé-** **-ná** **o** **hee**
 truth DEF NEG-perish-HAB NEG UFP

„The truth never perishes, I advise you.“

(Ameka, 2008:137)

Ameka indicates further that the **mé= part** could be seen as a proclitic on the verb cluster and marking, where available, the beginning of the verb cluster, while the [o] is an independent particle.

2.3 Previous works on aspectual marking on Mabia languages

I review the literature on aspectual marking from the Mabia languages in this sub-section. Some works I reviewed include Bodomo (1997) & Saanchi (2003) on Dagaare, Issah (2015) on Dagbani, Atintono, (2004) on Gurene, Musah (2018) on Kusaal.

According to Bodomo (1997) on Dagaare, a Mabia language spoken in Ghana makes two aspectual distinctions between the perfective and imperfective aspects. He identifies two perfective aspectual forms in the language and refers to the two as perfective aspectual form and the perfective intransitive aspectual form. He argues that the perfective aspectual form does not code any morphological markings but only takes the dictionary form, while the perfective intransitive aspectual form employs suffixes that co-exist with the pre-verbal particles to mark aspect and other features. Although he did not make any division of the imperfective aspects, he explains that the imperfective aspectual form of the verb may also behave just like the perfective aspectual form. Consider the following examples from Bodomo (1997: 81)

- (26) a. **e ne** - dictionary form
 b. **e ne** - perfective aspectual form
 c. **e n-** - perfective intransitive aspectual form
 d. **e n-n** - imperfective aspectual form

The above illustrations indicate, that the perfective aspectual form *teene* in Dagaare is somehow like the dictionary form which encodes no suffix, but the perfective intransitive aspectual and the imperfective aspectual form encodes suffixes {- } and {-n } respectively. While {- } indicates that the action denoted by the verb is viewed as completed, {-n } postulates that the action is seen as ongoing (progressive). Gonja verbs do not encode suffixes; the perfective is marked with a zero morpheme on the verb and the progressive is marked by the particle {bee}.

Also, Saanchi (2003) examines the morphology of the Dagaare verb and identifies the perfective and imperfective as the two aspectual markings in the language. He observes that the two forms of aspect have two different syntactic demands. He uses terminologies such as „perfective A“ and „perfective B“, and „imperfective A“ and „imperfective B“ to depict the divergent morphological awareness. Saanchi (2003: 102) posits that the „perfective A“ is the same as the dictionary citation form of the verb, whereas the „perfective B“ suffix „is a front-mid vowel /e/ or /ɛ/ depending on the ATR value of the root vowels. He claims that the „perfective A“ mandatory comes after the post-verbal particle *la* and a required NP object or adjunct. He further points out that when the NP object is a pronoun the „pronoun comes between the verb and the postverbal particle“.

He further holds the view that the „perfective B“ can also be preceded by a NP object or an adjunct and that the post-verbal particle *la* might also precede the „perfective B“.

The imperfective aspect also takes two morphological forms with different grammatical readings. According to Saanchi (2003), the post verb particle (**la**) in example (27a) and an optional object in (27b) must come after the "imperfective A." He also shows how the “imperfective A” can have the clitic (- **ŋ**) added to it when the verb is employed intransitively, as in (27c). Examples from Saanchi (2003:104).

- (27) a. **A bie di-re la**
 DEF child eat-IMPERF AFF
 „The child is eating.“
- b. **A bie di-re la a ŋma**
 DEF child eat-IMPERF AFF DEF meal
 „The child is eating the meal.“
- c. **A bie di-re-ŋ**
 DEF child eat-IMPERF-AFF
 „The child is eating.“

- d. *A **bie** **di-re-ŋ** **a** **ɪma**
 DEF child eat-IMPERF-AFF DEF meal

Also, Saanchi (2003:105) observes that the "imperfective B" calls for a necessary object (28a) or adjunct (28b). However, the object of the pronoun does not cause it to happen (28c). As demonstrated by the ungrammaticality, "The 'imperfective B' does not also occur with post verb *la* or the clitic *-*," (28d).

- (28) a. **A** **bie** **kuɔ- ɛɛ** **a** **zie**
 DEF child weed-IMPERF DEF place

„The child is weeding the place“.

- b. **A** **bie** **di-ree** **uŋ**
 DEF child eat.IMPERF well

„The child is eating well“

- c. * **A** **bie** **ŋmiɛ- ɛɛ** **ma** **la**
 DEF child beat.IMPERF 1SG AFF.

„The child is beating me.“

- d. ***A** **bie** **kuɔ- ɛɛ-ŋ**
 DEF child weed-IMPERF-AFF

„The child is weeding.“

Atintono (2004) in his work tried to organize the verbal modifiers sequentially to conform to their syntactic distribution of the verb in Gurunɛ. He opines those particles that co-exist with the verb be seen as verbal modifiers and views time adverbs just like other types of adverbs, which are voluntary particles capable of moving within the sentence. Comrie's (1976) assertion that some West African languages are tenseless supports the claim that Niger-Congo languages are predominantly aspectual. Noting claims that some West African languages are tenseless opines that the Imperfective aspect closely corresponds with the present tense, and the perfective aspect works closely with the past tense. For this reason, Olawsky (1999) identifies two forms of the Dagbani verb (the perfective and the imperfective).

He explains that the knowledge of the two forms of aspect is necessary to understand Dagbani verbs. Olawsky (1999) further indicates that where there are no adverbials or other markers to indicate time, the imperfective form of the Dagbani verb is perceived as the present and the perfective is also taken as the past, noting that a time marker may be added to the imperfective form to give it a past reading. The perfective, according to Olawsky, is the unmarked form of the verb and it denotes completed action. Consider the following examples from Olawsky (1999:32):

- (29) a. **O** **nyu** **kom.**
 He/She drink water
 „He/She drank water.“

b. **N di nyuli.**

I eat yam

„I ate yam.“

c. **pi yu ŋ nyuri kom pam.**

sheep DEM drink-IPF water much

„This sheep drinks a lot of water.“

d. **jaŋa diri k du**

monkey eat-IPF banana

„The monkey eats bananas.“

Examples (29a &b) from the above illustrations show that the perfective (unmarked form) does not make use of particles; the two verbs thus (nyu „drink“ and di „eat“) are in their dictionary forms. It can also be deduced that the English glosses imply past reading. The imperfective forms of the verbs are realized in sentences (29c) and (29d) where each of them encodes the suffix {-ri}; thus, nyu „drink“ becomes nyuri, and di „eat“ becomes diri to denote imperfective. Olawsky (1999) says that the habitual manifests a progressive reading when the particle la is infused between the verb and the object. Consider the following examples from Olawsky (1999:32).

(30) a. **pi yu ŋ nyurila kom pam.**
 sheep DEM drink-IPF-FOC water much

„This sheep is drinking a lot of water.“

b. **jaŋa dirila k du.**
 monkey eat-IPF-FOC banana

„The monkey is eating bananas.“

Issah (2015) investigates the verb morphology of the Dagbani language and concludes that most natural languages distinguish between perfective and imperfective aspects in two different ways. He said categorically that the habitual and progressive forms of the verb are included in the imperfectives. According to Issah (2015), the contrasts between the two types of features are crucial because they help language users comprehend the many problems connected to the verb action. He further indicates that Dagbani marks aspects via morphological process and that almost all Mabia (Gur) languages use class suffixes to denote verbal nouns.

Musah (2018) identified imperfective and perfective as the two main aspects of Kusaal. He explains that the imperfective has two sub-groups, the habitual -Vd/-t and the progressive -Vd/t-nE. Whiles, the perfect (ive) is marked on the verb by -Vya. As (32) shows, the progressive emerges as a “focused version of the habitual” (p. 175).

He shows that verbs that are inflected with the „habitual“ suffix alone might also have a progressive explanation, as shown in (33a-b). Also, -Vd/t-nE marking on the verb is not

always realized as progressive but sometimes a habitual meaning is obtained, as (33c) shows. He categorically stated that Kusaal seems to have clear contrast in terms of marking between imperfective events (habitual and progressive).

(31) **Awam di'e-d d**
 Awam collect-HAB salary
 „Awam collects salary.“

(32) **Da aŋ la ko-o-n n**
 Young man DET kill-HAB-Foc chickens
 „The young man is killing chickens.“

(33) a. **Ba s - d zimi n**
 3PL roast-HAB fishes Foc
 „They are roasting fishes (not meat).“

b. **O di-t a'ab n**
 3SG eat-HAB TZ Foc
 „He is eating TZ.“

c. **S 'm kama zig-id-n o m ŋ la**
 Everyone HAB-Foc 3SG REFL matter
 „Everyone strives for their own cause.“

- (34) Ba ~ " -iya.
3PL remember-PRF
„They have remembered

(Musah, 2018: 177-225)

A description of aspectual marking in Mabia languages has been given in this section. Data were taken from Bodomo (1997) and Saanchi (2003) on Dagaare, Atintono (2004) on Gurunε, Olawsky (1999) and Issah (2015) on Dagbani and finally Musah (2018) on Kusaa. The morphological paradigm shows that the identified languages examined have comparable aspectual marking.

Aspect among the Mabia family group is marked for by affixes within the verbal paradigm which is differently marked in Gonja via independent particles. It is also to be seen from the Mabia language group that aspects are realised in two different ways: the perfectives and imperfective which is a similar assertion in Gonja. Furthermore, it can again be deduced from the Mabia language family that the progressive and habitual falls under the imperfective aspects as types.

2.4 Review of some related literature on aspectual marking on African Languages

Many African languages have received considerable work in relation to aspectual marking. I have reviewed some African languages aspectual markings because I want to see how other languages outside the geographical location of Gonja behave when compared.

Barasa (2015) discusses aspectual marking in Ateso, a language belonging to the Teso-Turkana sub-group of the Eastern Nilotic family of Nilotic languages. He argues that in Ateso, clear distinctions are made between the following aspects of the language: imperfective, perfective, consecutive, perfect, habitual, and iterative. He further posits that aspectual markers in Ateso carry the tone of the tense. He indicates that the imperfective aspect is marked by a suffix “-i,” the perfective by a suffix “-it” and the consecutive aspect by a prefix morpheme **kó-** attached to the verb, the perfect aspect by a prefix “à-” and the habitual aspect by a morpheme “-néné,” together with a high tone on the whole verb stretch. Consider the following illustrations for imperfective, perfective, consecutive and habitual aspects in Ateso.

Imperfective

- (35) **é-m `ɲ- I**
 3SG-cry: PAST-IPFV
 „He/she was crying.“



Perfective

- (36) **á-m `ɲ-it I I**
 3SG-cry-PFV today
 „He/she cried today.“

Consecutive

- (37) **á-lo`i`ò ɔ ní, kò-g e`li k i ia, kò- mási ájónó, kò- ikári òré**
 3SG-walk town, CONS-buy flour, CONS-drink beer, CONS-go home
 „He went to town, bought some flour, drank some beer, and went home.“

Habitual

- (38) **é-sísìà-néné Letisia èmúsúgútú**
 3SG-teach-HAB Letisia English
 „Letisia teaches English.“ (Barasa, 2015:94)

Salffner (2012) investigates the verb morphology of Ikaan, a language of the Benue-Congo family of the Niger-Congo Phylum that is spoken in Nigeria. He identifies four (4) aspectual categories in the language. These include the continuous aspect, habitual aspect, sequential aspect, and perfective aspect. According to Salffner (2012), the continuous aspect is used for ongoing activities and changing conditions that occur in the present or the past while future occurrences are not considered continuous. Salffner (2012:150) indicates that within the continuous aspect, “the verbal prefix has a long vowel, and the form for 1SG is dʒe:-/dʒɛ:-.” He further explains that the verbal prefix for habitual aspect is a long vowel, which takes the form dʒo:/dʒɔ: for 1S. He further stresses that the ATR value of the prefix is chosen based on the ATR value of the root of the verb.

Again, Salffner (2012) observes that the perfective (completive) aspect is expressed for situations derived from their innate state or situations completed. He further states that

c. **f unn -gba-ju-ch - -l e mmiri**
 O PRE-fetch-full-all-PST-PERF pot water

„Ofunna has filled all the water pots.“

d. **Ch di -je- -l ah**
 Chidi PRE-go-PST-PERF market

„Ch d have gone to the market.“ (Nweya, 2018:129)

Obiamalu (2015) cited in Nweya (2018), is of the view that the vowel suffix (VS) in perfective constructions is nothing but a meaningless morpheme. Obiamalu (2015:81–82) backs his claims with three attestations. He first observes that when the verb root encodes the consonant-vowel-vowel (CVV) syllable structure the vowel suffix should not appear within perfective constructions. Consider the example below:

(44) **b a-la**
 3SG come-**PERF**

„He has come.“

According to Obiamalu (2015), the vowel suffix (VS) cannot occur in isolation when the verb root is a complex one. Thus, a verb should not employ more than one root. He illustrates his claim with the data in (45) below:

(45) a. **Ike e-gb -d -la nk ah**
 Ike PRE-cut-fall-PERF palm tree DEM
 „Ike has cut down the palm tree.“

b. **z -ta-la gb l h u**
 3Sg buy-Ext.Suff-PERF vehicle land new
 „S/he has bought a new car.“

Lastly, he indicates that dialects such as *ni chà*, which marks perfective via the suffix –
 go and other phonologically related variants: **-gwo**, **-wo**, **-gwe**, do not employ a vowel
 suffix to mark the verbal category. (Obiamalu, 2015, p. 82):

(46) a. **O gb -gō ek**
 3S kill-PERF python
 „S/he has killed a python.“

b. **O gō-gō no n i d**
 3S buy-PERF house Onicha
 „S/he has bought a house at Onicha“

Nweya (2018) thus posits that although Obiamalu’s final point is justifiable, there are still
 concerns about his first two points. According to Nweya (2018), it is natural for the
 vowel suffix (VS) in Igbo not to encode verbs in consonant-vowel-vowel (CVV)
 structure because Igbo verbs lack consonant-vowel-vowel-vowel (CVVV) form. Nweya

(2018:130) further indicates that embedding the vowel suffix to a verb root, which has CVV structure, “violates the syllable structure principle of the language.” Therefore, Nweya (2018) argues that one may contend that “bia” possesses CJV rather than CVV since V1 is frequently palatalized, especially when it is an infinitive, as in *ibia* “to come.” Nweya opines that, regarding the second issue, there are contradictory examples that demonstrate that complicated verbs may accept VS. Consider the following examples from Nweya (2018:130).

- (47) a. **Ike e-gb -d -la nk ah**
 Ike PRE-cut-fall-PERF palm tree the
 „Ike has cut down the palm tree.“
- b. **Ike e-gb -d -a-la nk ah**
 Ike PRE-cut-fall-PST-PERF palm tree the
 „Ike has cut down the palm tree.“
- c. **Òfunna -gba-ju-ch -e-l e mmiri**
 O PRE-fetch-full-all-PST-PERF pot water
 „Ofunna has filled all the water pots.“

Notwithstanding, Nweya (2018) observes that when the data (49a) and (49b) were given to speakers of the language for grammatical assessment, they opted for (49b) over (49a). In addition, he claims that although (49c) also encodes a complex verb root, it co-relates with the vowel suffix. Nweya (2018) concludes that the reasons are not enough to suggest

c. **Og n -g ak k .**

O. IMPERF PART-read book

„Oge is reading a book.“ (PROG)

„Oge reads/Oge is a student.“ (HAB)

d. **n -je ah**

3SG IMPERF PART-go market

„S/he is going to the market.“ (PROG)

„S/he goes to market.“ (HAB)

The above data is from Nweya (2018) on the issue that both the progressive and habitual are similarly marked with the particle **nà** in Igbo, but with context proving the difference is true in Gonja. Thus, Gonja also employs the same particle **bee** to show that an event is ongoing at the time of the speech (progressive) and that an event happens repeatedly (habitual). The difference, though, is that adverbs play a major role in separating the aspectual forms in Gonja. This will be seen later in this thesis.

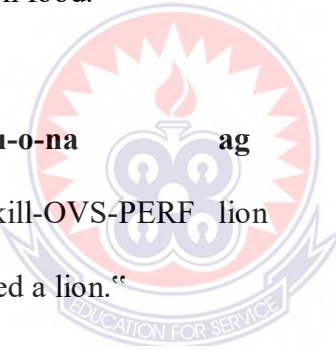
Maduagwu and Obiamalu (2016) investigate the grammatical categories in Ògbahù, a Nigerian dialect of Igbo. They demonstrate that Ògbahù employs two aspectual forms for the marking of aspect: perfective and progressive. Maduagwu and Obiamalu (2016:160) have it that verbs showing a perfective aspect in the language take “(E)-VR-OVS-na structure (where E= e/a harmonizing prefix, VR = Verb Root, OVS = Open Vowel suffix,

na= Perfective suffix)”. The following are sample sentences illustrating the perfective aspect.

(49) a. **Nwa à – zà –a – nà n**
 3pl Agr –sweep–OVS-PERF house
 „They have swept the house.“

b. **O li – e – na nn**
 She eat-OVS-PERF food
 „She has eaten food.“

c. **Òbi e-gbu-o-na ag**
 Òbi Agr-kill-OVS-PERF lion
 „ bi has killed a lion.“



Moreover, Obiamalu (2015) sees a progressive aspect in the situation going on at the time of speech. Maduagwu and Obiamalu (2016) argue that *gbah* does not distinguish between progressive and habitual aspect categories. According to them, the progressive aspect is marked by the auxiliary **na** in the language. The progressive aspectual marking in Gonja is almost identical, if not the same, as *gbah* because Gonja equally employs the independent particle **bee** to denote what is seen as ongoing at the time of speech. See examples of progressive aspects from Maduagwu and Obiamalu (2016: 161):

- (50) a. **Ibè nà è-li nn**
 Ibe PROG e-eat food
 „Ibe is eating food.“
- b. **nà à-g ak k**
 3SG PROG e-read book
 „He/she is reading a book.“
- c. **Èmeka nà a-z l**
 Emeka **PROG** e-sweep house
 Emeka is sweeping the house.“

Adetugbo (1967) is of the view that the southeast Yoruba make use of pronouns to mark aspect. Adetugbo (1967) examines how the southeast Yoruba signal this aspectual category by changing the pronoun's vowel. This assertion in Yoruba is similarly done in Gonja. Thus, in coding progressive and future aspectual forms for the first person singular (1SG) in the Gonja, the pronouns **mee** and **meen** are realized. Thus, the progressive and future particles **bee** and **been** are fused with the first-person pronoun **ma** „me“ to be realised as **mee** and **meen** for the progressive and future, respectively. Also, the second person singular (2SG) and third person plural (3PL) take similar positions in the language. This will be examined later in Chapter 4 of this thesis. See examples from Adetugbo (1967: 119) below:

(51)

	A		B		C
	Definite		Indefinite		Hab. Definite Singular.
a.	Mo tà		Ma tà		Me tà
	I sell		I sell		I sell
	“I sold”		“I will sell”		“I do sell”
b.	Wo tà		Wa tà		We tà
	you (SG) sell		you (SG) sell		you(sg) sell
	“You(sg) sold”		“You (SG) will sell”		“You(sg) do sell
c.		tà		tà	
	H/She sell		he/she sell		he/she sell
	“He/she sold”		“He/she will sell”		“He/she does sell”

Adéoyè (2019) establishes that *g i* can introduce two independent particles within a single sentence for aspectual marking. He explains that the perfect aspect in *g i* employs progressive and habitual markers within the same sentence structure for its reading. The *g i* aspectual system is similarly attested for in Gonja in that Gonja also marks the progressive, habitual, and future aspects with particles placed before the verb, as will be shown later in his study. However, the difference between the two languages is that Gonja employs the particle **bee** to mark both the progressive and the habitual, where context indicates the difference between the two aspectual forms. Also, two or more

aspectual particles cannot co-occur in the language to mark aspect but must employ one at a time. Consider the following examples (52-55) below from Adéoyè (2019:8):

(52) a. **Ad ka ko**
Adé PERF PROG sing song
„Ad has been singing song (s).“

(53) b. **OI ka**
OI PERF PROG sleep
„OI has been sleeping.“

(54) a. **Ad ka r si d nd**
Ad PERF HAB run surpass
„Ad used to run often.“

b. **Ad ka j d nd**
Ad PERF HAB fight surpass
„Ad used to fight often.“

(55) a. **Ad ka ko**
Ad PROG PERF sing song

b. ***Ad ka**
Ad HAB PERF go

- c. **OI**
 OI PROG HAB go
- d. ***OI**
 OI HAB PROG go

2.5 Review of some related literature on other languages of the world

In this sub-section, I review the literature on aspectual marking, drawing data from languages of the world. Some works I reviewed include Iatridou et.al (2001) on Bulgarian and Tsang (2012) on Mandarin Chinese. The purpose of other languages of the world is to get an understanding of how languages outside the geographical location of Ghana behave when it comes to aspectual marking.

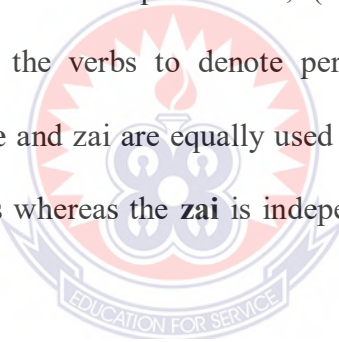
Iatridou et.al (2001), in their discussion of the Bulgarian aspectual system, argued for three ways aspects should be seen in the language. These include neutral, imperfective, and perfective. They gave the following examples in Bulgarian:

- (56) a. **Az stroix** **pja âčna** **kula.**
 I build-NEUT.PAST.1SG sand castle
 „I was engaged in building a sand castle.“

c. **Zhangsan shui-zhe**
Zhangsan sleep-PROG
„Zhangsan is sleeping.“

d. **Zhangsan zai shui**
Zhangsan PROG sleep
„Zhangsan is sleeping.“

The examples (57a-d) above indicates that Mandarin Chinese makes use of the suffixes and independent marker to mark aspect. Thus, (-**le** and -**guo**) are affixes that are morphological attached to the verbs to denote perfective and non-perfective aspect respectively while the -**zhe** and **zai** are equally used to code progressive readings, the -**zhe** is attached to the verbs whereas the **zai** is independently placed before the verb. In example



Preliminary data available in Gonja with regards to aspectual markers, Mandarin Chinese aspectual markers use an independent particle and affixes that are not mentioned in Gonja. It is observed that all the aspectual markers in Gonja are marked with independent particles via the pre-verbal position. However, the marker **zhai** in Mandarin Chinese and the marker **bee** in Gonja behave similarly in the two languages because both are independent particles that are employed pre-verbally to mark the progressive aspect.

More so, Zsang (2012) further stresses that the two perfective markers may vary in terms of emphasis on the perfective meaning. **Le** denotes the meaning of completion, while **-guo** depicts the meaning of “having the experience of action.” Also, Li and Thompson (1981:217) observe that **Guo** is termed an experiential marker and claim that **Zai** contrasts with the other three markers in that it is placed before the verb as in (59d) and is a “word” that can function as other word classes such as a verb (e.g., **ta zai nali** “He is there”). They further argue that the other three markers, which follow the verb as in examples (57a), (57b) and (57c), are “suffixes” that must be attached to verbs (Li and Thompson 1981: 217). These perhaps depict that the marker **zai** holds some specific structural properties and was therefore not included in the present analysis. This evidence is applicable to aspectual marking in Gonja since it also employs grammatical particles to denote its aspect.



2.6 Theoretical framework

Every research work has a theoretical basis upon which it is constructed. These ideas aid researchers in the study of their data and its interpretation. This study employs Dixon's framework for "Basic Linguistic Theory," which is mostly descriptive (2012). With this method, each language is defined in its terms along with unbiased, unrestricted justifications for how it is. He argues that because it contains both descriptive and explanatory theories, this technique is suitable for characterizing and explaining languages that have received little or no documentation. This is comparable to Chomsky's (1973) generative grammar, where a single theory may act as both descriptive and explanatory theories. This notion is derived from Chomsky's perspective on innateness:

where it is thought that our innate linguistic knowledge is the reason why languages are what they are, a theory about that knowledge will concurrently serve as a theory about what languages are like and as a theory about why they are that way.

According to Dixon, descriptions are informative in and of themselves on a distinct level. The grammar itself may be seen as an element of the explanation for linguistic behaviour and serves as an explanation for certain facts of the language, for instance, if it is a representation of what the speaker understands in mind and that which underpins linguistic behaviour.

Dryer (2006), supports (BLT) and posits that failing to acknowledge basic linguistic theory as a theory and failing to distinguish between descriptive theory and explanatory theory has harmful effects. Work in fundamental linguistic theory is sometimes rejected as "merely" descriptive due to the erroneous distinction that many linguists make between description and theory and the higher prestige associated with what is referred to as a theory. Even though most of the work in fundamental linguistic theory is descriptive, he contends that these descriptions serve as the main source of data for theoretical work in typology. Theoretical importance is always present in descriptive work in fundamental language theory.

When describing a language using BLT, the organization of the language and the reasons behind this organization should be the main points of discussion. Dixon (2012a) argues that the grammar of every language is a network of cooperating kinds and structures and

urges a comparison of related occurrences across languages before making predictions. This indicates that each language is studied before being compared to what is common to all languages around the globe. According to Dixon (ibid), who regards linguistics as natural science, the linguistic study of a language must follow the scientific procedures of describing, explaining, predicting, and assessing.

However, other theories also experience this; it is not unique to BLT. The theory also provides guidelines for grammar writers, stating that before beginning work, linguists must record, transcribe, and analyze texts to discover the regular and irregular features of the language. These should be written clearly, "avoiding obscure prose," and the terminology must be unambiguous. Linguists are cautioned by Dixon to never rely on secondary sources and to always return to the sources for confirmation. To avoid mistakes and avoid misquoting academics, this is done. The standard orthography of the language must be adhered to, and attention given to stress and intonation since these can bring about meaning differences.

It is important to follow the language's standard orthography and pay close attention to intonation and stress since these two factors can change the meaning of words. Each language is unique (Dixon 2012a: 92) thus, BLT does not generalize but rather offers fundamental linguistic "properties and parameters" that are common to be drawn on as right when constructing a language's grammar, unlike other formal theories that provide a framework that is utilized to fit the theory's parts to a language.

2.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter considered two areas of the study. Thus, it reviewed related literature and the theoretical framework that underpins the study on Aspectual marking. Firstly, I considered the general review of the notion of aspectual marking, previous works on aspectual marking in Kwa languages and previous works on aspectual marking in Mabia languages. Besides that, related literature in some African languages and some languages of the world are also reviewed. The theory that guides the study is also talked about and finally the summary of the chapter.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological strategies that were employed by the researcher to collect rational data for aspectual marking in Gonja. The chapter proceeds as follows: Section 3.1 presents the research design/approach, the research site comes in 3.2, and the population used for the study is discussed in section 3.3. Section 3.4 looks at the sampling and sampling technique used, as well as the language consultants and their roles. In section 3.5, I present the sources of data for the study. The data collection strategies and the data collection instruments are presented in Section 3.6; while the ethical considerations come in Section 3.7; Section 3.8 outlines the method of data analysis; and finally, Section 3.9 sums up the chapter.

3.1 Research design/approach

The research approach adopted for this study is a qualitative one. It was chosen for its descriptive quality, which improves knowledge of the concepts and symbols that underpin all human behavior. Qualitative research design entails using case studies, personal experiences, interviews, observations, and visual texts. These are just a few of the methods available to collect empirical data regarding a specific phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they ascribe to their experiences (Tisdell and Meriam 2016: 6).

I considered the qualitative research method more appropriate for this study because the analysis is set within the framework of basic linguistic theory, a term coined by Dixon (1997) to cover “language description and the postulation of general properties of human language” (Dixon 2010:128). Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) originates from conventional grammar; that idea emerged and has been fashioned through years of grammar writing. BLT is ideal for grammar writers, particularly new researchers embarking on fieldwork. There are so many motives behind the researcher’s choice to apply this approach: the researcher believes that using this approach, the form of linguistic information yielded from the study could assist different researchers in different African languages and not only Gonja. I also adopted a qualitative research design because the data was collected in words rather than numbers. This method is preferred because of its high degree of interpretation through observation, questioning, and analysis. This allows us to draw comprehensive conclusions that reflect common practices, beliefs and attitudes, ongoing processes, and evolving issues.

In addition, qualitative research seeks to comprehend people's interpretations of the dynamic phenomenon, as reality changes as people's perceptions change. I chose the qualitative approach to provide “deeper” and more comprehensive information. Also, qualitative research uses subjective information and participant observation to describe the context or natural environment of the variable under consideration and the interaction of the various variables in context. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe and document naturally occurring phenomena.

Newman (2012) maintains that descriptive research gives relevant data about a group or a phenomenon, providing new information about issues and documenting information that either opposes or affirms prior knowledge about a particular issue. In addition, the descriptive research design has the primacy of providing the opportunity to describe semantic systems, relations, or social events, background information about the issue in question, and explanations. Another reason for selecting qualitative for this study is that it is suitable for the study. A qualitative research design will again be employed for the study because the research has to do with non-statistical methods of probing and analysing a social phenomenon.

3.2 Research site

The research was carried out in both Bole town, a district of the Savannah Region, and at the College of Languages Education, Ajumako, Central Region, Ajumako-Enyan-Esiam District. The Bole district shares boundaries with the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district to the north, the West Gonja district to the east, the Wenchi district to the south, and Cote d'Ivoire to the west. The choice of Bole town is appropriate because it helped me to communicate easily with the participants selected for the study since I am a native speaker. I am also a resident of the town, so gathering data was much easier. The choice of the College of Languages Education, Ajumako is appropriate because almost all Ghanaian languages are studied there, including Gonja. In addition, the participants I gathered data from are native speakers of the language, resulting in easy communication.

3.3 Population

A population is a collection of individuals who share one or more traits in common and are of interest to the researcher. According to Sidhu (2012), a population is any group of people who share one or more characteristics of interest to the researcher. He also opines that population concerns the aggregate or totality of items or persons regarding which conclusions are to be formed in a sampling investigation. This indicates that the population includes all persons and documents, among others, that are suggested to be included in the design of the research.

Best & Kahn (2006) argue that to accomplish one's goals in research, the population is essential. A population is a collection of individuals, occasions, or things that the researcher is interested in and that share one or more characteristics. The target audience for every study is the population, or the group to which the study's conclusions should be applied (Gay, 1987).

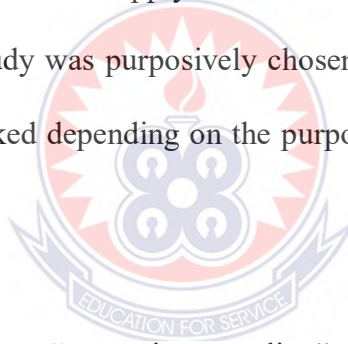
The participants for this study were all native speakers of Gonja and were sampled from Bole in the Savanna Region of Ghana and the College of Languages Education, Ajumako Campus. The researcher selected these participants because of their knowledge in writing and use of the language as far as the teaching and learning of the Gonja are concerned.

3.4 Sampling and sampling technique

Research of this sort implies that the researcher selects participants from a population to support him in the study. The participants in this research were native speakers of Gonja who were sampled from Bole, in the Savannah Region of Ghana, and the College of

Languages Education, Ajumako Campus. To attain the given aim, the researcher is required to employ sampling to collect data from the accessible population. Sampling involves studying one or more components to generalise the character of the overall population. By doing so, the researcher resorted to a purposive sampling strategy to acquire the ideal subjects for the study. A qualitative study enables the researcher to examine phenomena, such as sensations or thinking processes that are difficult to extract or learn about using standard research techniques (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Gay and Airsian (2000) says that most qualitative research designs depend on a planned selection of participants who will supply the relevant information on the study subject. The population for this study was purposively chosen. Purposive sampling is a strategy where components are picked depending on the purpose of the investigation (Owu-Ewie 2012:29).



More so, Creswell (2009) sees “purposive sampling” as a strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristics or traits; the procedures require identifying the characteristics and then finding sites or individuals that display different dimensions of the characteristics. Sampling is an act or procedure used in choosing an appropriate population to ascertain the parameters or features of the total population (Tuckman, 1999). For this reason, individuals were chosen to reflect the total population for this research. The components for the study were chosen depending on the goal of the research; the sample was picked since it contained the expertise and information the researcher required. This does not provide a sample that is typical of a

wider population, but it gives the correct source of information for researchers. In purposive sampling, individuals are picked for a specific reason. The towns and language consultants from which the data for this study originated were chosen based on geographical location, population size, and dialectical variations. It is anticipated that informants from these regions will offer an enough representation of the Gonja people. This has been employed for this study since not every member of the research community holds the information the researcher required. The sampled population for this study was made up of six (6) language consultants who are native speakers of the language. These language consultants are people who aided the researcher in acquiring data and conducting most of the work. They were purposively selected based on their knowledge and grasp of the syntax and rules of the language.

Dryer (2006:52) says that language consultants are most important, and working with them allows the researcher to tap knowledge from each consultant's strengths, especially when dwelling on the fact that the consultants may belong to different sociolinguistic backgrounds, i.e., sex, age, place of origin, etc. The researcher felt it was vital to make use of these language consultants since this helped eliminate any potential for certain biases. Besides that, this helped check for the grammaticality of the sentences, as it has been argued by Himmelmann (2006:4) that native speakers have the tacit knowledge to provide interpretations and systematization for linguistic units and events in their language, hence the need to involve them in the data collection process. These consultants provided the researcher with valuable insight into the phenomena and assisted him in conducting his analysis.

3.4.1 Language consultants

In getting data for the study, a total of six (6) language consultants with ages ranging from 35 to 72 years were employed during the elicitation session. These language consultants were made up of four males and two females. This choice was made because there was no other female researcher available at the time who was willing to spend her time assisting the researcher, and it was not made because the researcher is biased against women. The language consultants for the study were made up of two (2) lecturers from the Gur-Gonja Department of the University of Education, Winneba, two (2) teachers from Bole Senior High School, and two (2) teachers from Bole St. Kizitos “A” Junior High School. These language consultants were those who helped the researcher gather data for this study.

In addition, the consultants were all native speakers of Gonja, and each of the consultants had a separate elicitation session with the researcher. Upon meeting with the language consultants, the researcher took note of certain valid suggestions that were put forward by the consultants. They were met at appropriate places that were agreed upon. During the conversations, diligent attention was given to the identification of aspectual marking, the aspectual particles employed in marking aspect, and their interaction with the negation paradigm in Gonja. The consultants also allowed the researcher to record certain portions of their explanations as and when they became necessary. After the individual sessions, the researcher met with some of the consultants in a group to discuss the elicited data and to plan for future elicitation. The language consultants were not just selected but were purposively selected due to their knowledge of writing and the use of the language as far

as the teaching and learning of the Gonja are concerned. The list of the consultants (their ages, sexes, and affiliations) is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: List of language consultants

CONSULTANTS	GENDER	AGE	AFFILIATION
1	MALE	72	UEW, AJUMAKO CAMPUS
2	MALE	46	UEW, AJUMAKO CAMPUS
3	MALE	42	BOLE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
4	FEMALE	36	BOLE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
5	FEMALE	40	ST. KIZITO „A“ JUNIOR HIGH
6	MALE	45	ST. KIZITO „A“ JUNIOR HIGH

There are six language consultants named “Consultant 1” “Consultant 2” and so on up to “Consultant 6” in that order. All these individuals helped the researcher in various ways over the course of this project, often working long hours despite their other commitments as teachers. Despite their hectic schedules, they took time out of their busy days to help me succeed. My selection of both females and males is to eliminate any gender prejudice, and the age range is due to my view that the elderly maintains and preserve the language and speak it properly. This helped me check for grammar and discover certain modifications in the language. The approval of the consultants was obtained after I explained to them what the goal of the research was. This was to take care of any ethical difficulties.

3.5 Sources of data

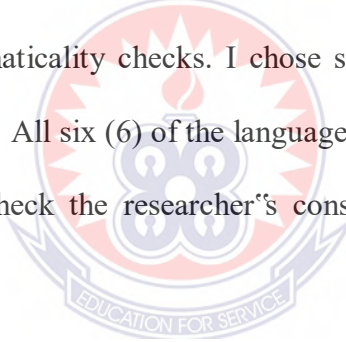
The primary source of data collection is used for the data gathering for this study. Chelliah & Reuse (2011) hold that the gathering of information to document and describe a language via interaction with speakers in contexts where speakers would normally use the language is described as “descriptive linguistic fieldwork.” These researchers equally underline that data collection is not limited to introspection or inspection of written documents or corpora, nor is it limited to controlled lab trials. Because of this, data for this research were gathered from these two (2) different sources: natural data and data constructed based on the researcher’s native intuition. The sources of data are discussed below.

3.5.1 Natural data

Recordings of radio panel discussions in the language, spontaneous recordings of everyday interactions between speakers of the language and the researcher’s interactions with other native speakers of Gonja were the natural data gathered for this work. These recordings were transcribed and cross-checked to pick out aspectual markings. This sort of data is gathered from first-hand sources, primary: interviews, recordings, and observations. Natural data are the direct result of experiences of things observed by the researcher and can be obtained by recordings, interviews, and observation, among other methods.

3.5.2 Data constructed based on native speaker introspection

By virtue of the fact that I am a native speaker of Gonja, I was able to construct some sentences for reasons of my analysis based on native speaker introspection. In fact, this strategy provided me with more than half of the data employed for this study. As previously indicated, I am a native speaker, not just speaking but having trained in this language straight from elementary school up to the university level. Börjars (2006) argues that this strategy is useful to the researcher in the sense that the linguistically educated person is more likely to give valid data than the linguistically untrained native speaker is. However, taking cognizance of the potential bias that might come in when researchers construct data on their own, I made all these constructions available to other native speakers for grammaticality checks. I chose some language consultants because these checks were required. All six (6) of the language consultants, both male and female, were contacted to cross-check the researcher's constructed sentences for purposes of authenticity and validity.



3.6 Data collection strategy.

Research instruments refer to the tools chosen by a researcher to facilitate data collection. Without instruments, there cannot be research since every research is based on empirical evidence, known as “data” (no data, no research). According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989), using a variety of data collection methods equally helps to provide research findings through triangulation. For this investigation, different data-gathering approaches were employed. The researcher primarily used recordings as a primary procedure to collect data and gathered data from native speaker introspection.

Field data was collected by listening to programmes in the language on Nkilgi FM in Bole and recording some data. The programme “**Yala m bia**” from Nkilgi FM, which means “It is a problem or issue” was listened to and recorded for the data. The programme was selected because it is purely local Gonja programme that is devoid of code-switching from one language to another. The programme comes every day. The programme was recorded thrice. Each recording was fifteen (15) minutes long. In all, I had three different recordings from the FM station, giving a total of 45 minutes of conversation on the radio programme. The recordings were done inside the studio with the help of the programme host to help do away with impediments or noise that interfered with the sound of the radio. This contributed to high-quality sound that was free of noise disruptions. The recorded data was played again in order to detect the participant’s aspectual marking for transcription. The recorded data were subsequently transcribed and translated using interlinear glossing for analysis, which helped answer the research objectives for this study. The findings were afterward evaluated by the six language consultants, who are all academics and are themselves native speakers.

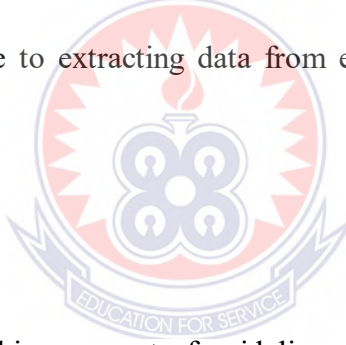
In addition, attention was paid to both the daily discussions of native speakers and the researcher's engagement with native speakers, and field notes were kept in a notebook. These notes were afterward re-examined in terms of aspectual marking and added to my data for analysis.

3.6.1 Data collection instruments

The researcher used an audio recorder to capture naturally spoken texts from various contexts, including conversations between speakers of the language and radio

programme. The researcher used an audio recorder to acquire the data from the programmes of the radio station. About clarity and accuracy, the station is fully equipped with current devices, which made it possible for the recordings to be done devoid of noise and other impediments.

In addition, the researcher took notes during sessions with language consultants using a notepad and pen. Sometimes the researcher also recorded texts using his smartphone. This mostly happened when the researcher placed a call to any of the consultants and a piece of important information comes across. Radio programmes were often listened to in order to collect information; the researcher used a radio or listened through their smartphone. When it came to extracting data from existing documents, using pen and paper became important.



3.7 Ethical consideration

Tavakoli (2012) defines ethics as a set of guidelines or standards for good professional conduct that assist to guide and advise researchers as they carry out their job. When accessing the data, the ethics of the study were considered. Before contacting individuals to gather data, the researcher introduced himself and verbally sought their consent. He stated the research goals and that the materials he was gathering were only for scholarly purposes. The researcher further assured participants that their identities would be protected and that their information would not be exposed to the public without their agreement. Furthermore, the researcher made certain that participants understood that

they might stop the procedure at any point. After getting these guarantees, the participants agreed and enthusiastically engaged in the process.

3.8 Data analysis

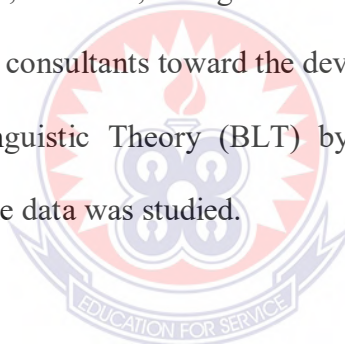
The analysis process started with the coding and categorization of the data. The data was analysed and guided by the Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) of Dixon (2012). This theory is descriptive and is appropriate because it describes and explains languages that have received little or no documentation of which Gonja is not an exception. It is also appropriate because it describes languages based on their terms, with explanations in neutral, free terms as to why they are that way. The analysis was done based on how aspectual markers are realised in sentences denoting meaning in Gonja. The data collected was analysed based on the aspectual markers that occur in each construction that I got from the informants. This was done to verify whether such constructions constitute aspectual marking in Gonja and the role each of the markers plays in the sentence. Based on the data that I had at the time, also I discussed the relationship between aspectual marking and negation in Gonja.

3.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter addressed the methodology that was employed for this research. It is qualitative and non-statistical in form. The chapter also highlighted the different procedures and tactics utilised by the researcher to obtain data for the study. Natural data, which was one of the methodologies utilised by the researcher, saw the recording of numerous communicative occurrences, from small chats and events to listening to radio

programmes and major events and communications. The utilisation of native speaker intuition was another source of data for the task. Sentences generated using native speaker intuition were checked by language consultants in order to confirm their grammaticality and also remove any potential biases by the researcher in obtaining data for the study. Natural data, which was one of the methodologies utilised by the researcher, saw the recording of numerous communicative occurrences, from small chats and events to listening to radio programmes and major events and communications.

Additionally, the researcher acquired data from previously existing textual resources for the study. These facts were, however, changed to correspond to the standards of Gonja. The efforts of the language consultants toward the development of this research were also addressed. The Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) by Dixon (2010) is the theoretical framework within which the data was studied.

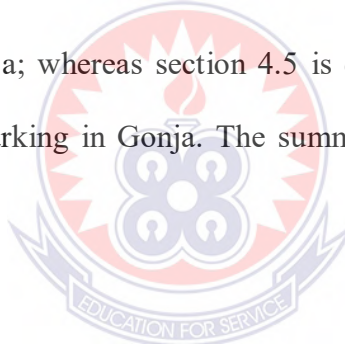


CHAPTER FOUR

ASPECTUAL MARKING IN GONJA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the aspectual markers of Gonja. The analysis presented is descriptive and does not consider theoretical issues in the data. Almost all natural language utterances make use of certain devices to encode information about the temporal grammatical properties of the situations they describe (Deo, 2012: 155). The rest of the chapter is organised as follows: 4.1 presents the sentence structure of Gonja. Section 4.2 presents an overview of Gonja verb morphology. Section 4.3 provides how aspect is marked in Gonja. Section 4.4 discusses the aspectual particles employed in aspectual marking in Gonja; whereas section 4.5 is devoted to the interaction between negation and aspectual marking in Gonja. The summary and conclusion of the chapter come in Section 4.6.



4.1 Sentence structure of Gonja

The Gonja sentence employs the subject-verb-object (SVO) word order. Thus, Gonja frequently shows a SVO word order where the subject comes before the verb and the direct or indirect object as well as adjuncts follow the verb in canonical sentence form. However, even though Gonja has a rigid SVO word order, other word orders are also permissible in the language. The following commands, subject-verb-complement (SVC), subject-verb-object adjunct (SVOA) and subject-verb-indirect object-direct object (SVOO) may occur in the language.

4.1.1 The Subject-Verb-Object (SVO)

This form has the subject occurring before the verb, which in turn appears before the object. Consider instances (58a) and (59a).

(58) a. **Abu** **buku.**
 Abu buy.PERF book
 „Abu bought a book.“

b. ***Buku** **Abu.**
 book buy.PERF Abu
 „Book bought Abu.“

(59) a. **Adam m kaboe.**
 Adam kill.PERF goat
 „Adam killed a goat.“

b. ***kaboe Adam m .**
 goat Adam kill.PERF
 „A goat Adam killed.“

The data in (60a) and (61a) above illustrate the Gonja subject-verb-object (SVO) word structure. Thus, Abu and Adam are the subjects in the constructions (58a) and (59a) respectively, followed by the verbs “buy” and **m** “kill,” with **buku** “book” and

kaboe “goat” serving as sentence objects. However, the constructions (58b) and (59b) are ungrammatical in Gonja in the sense that they form object-verb-subject (OVS) and object-subject-verb (OSV) word orders, respectively, which are not possible in Gonja.

4.1.2 The Subject-Verb (SV)

This form can occur in the language with just the subject and the verb in the sentence structure.

(60) a. **Abu**

Abu buy.PERF

„Abu bought.“

b. **Adam**

m .

Adam kill.PERF

„Adam killed.“



4.1.3 The Subject-Verb-Adjunct (SVA)

This variant has the subject appearing before the verb, which in turn appears before the adjunct. Consider examples (61a-b) where the subjects (NP) **Abu** and **Adam** occur first followed by the verbs “buy” and **m** “kill” which in turn precede the direct adjuncts **manan** “quickly” and **b iŋ** “slowly” which also come after the subjects (NP) **Abu** and **Adam** in the sentences.

(61) a. **Abu** **mananmanan.**

Abu buy.PERF quickly

„Abu bought quickly.“

b. **Adam m b igb in**

Adam kill.PERF slowly

„Adam killed slowly.“

4.1.4 The Subject-Verb-Complement (SVC)

This form has the subject occurring before the verb, which in turn appears before the complement. Consider instances (62a) and (62b).

(62) a. **Adam huŋ eleŋ o.**

Adam work.PERF hard

„Adam worked hard.“

b. **Abu lelaa jiblan na.**

Abu stroke.PERF cat DEF

„Abu stroked the cat.“

This variant has the subject appearing before the verb, which in turn appears before the complement. Consider examples (62a-b) where the subjects (NP) **Adam** and **Abu** occur first followed by the verbs **huŋ** “work” and **lelaa** “stroke” which in turn precede the

complement **eleŋ o** „hard“ and **jiblaŋ** “cat” which also come after the subjects (NP) **Abu** and **Adam** in the sentences.

4.1.5 The Subject-Verb-Object-Adjunct (SVOA)

This variant has the subject appearing before the verb, which in turn appears before the object and the adjunct. Consider examples (63a-b) where the subjects (NP) **Abu** and **Adam** occur first followed by the verbs “buy” and **m** “kill” which in turn precede the objects **buku** „book“ and **kaboe** “goat” and the adverbs **manaŋmanaŋ** “quickly” and **b iŋb iŋ** “slowly” which also come after the subjects (NP) **Abu** and **Adam** in the sentences.

(63) a. **Abu buku manaŋmanaŋ**
 Abu buy.PERF book quickly
 „Abu bought a book quickly.“

b. **Adam m kaboe b iŋb iŋ**
 Adam kill.PERF goat slowly
 „Adam killed a goat slowly.“

4.1.6 The Subject-Verb-Object-Object (SVOO)

This variant has the subject appearing before the verb, which in turn appears before the object and the adjunct. Consider examples (64a-b) where the subjects (NP) **Adam** and **Abu** occur first, followed by the verbs **ŋini** “show” and **sa** “give” which in turn precede the indirect objects **Abu** „name“ and **Adam** “name” and the direct objects **kasha** “love”

and **I la** “beautiful” which also come after the subjects (NP) **Adam** and **Abu** in the sentences.

(64). a. **Adam ηini Abu mobe kasha.**

Adam show.PERF Abu 3SG.POSS love

„Adam showed Abu his love.“

b. **Abu sa Adam kale I la.**

Abu give.PERF Adam shirt beautiful

„Abu gave Adam a beautiful shirt.“

4.2 Verb Morphology of Gonja

This section provides an overview of the verbal morphology of Gonja. Generally, morphological markings on Gonja verbs to express grammatical properties such as tense, aspect, and negation are minimal. However, the language codes these grammatical properties via the use of independent particles. The particles are usually syntactically placed immediately before the verb to code these grammatical categories.

The Gonja verb word is made up of the verb root and some independent particles that code for certain grammatical categories. The only obligatory element in the verb word is the verb head, while the independent particles that code the grammatical categories are optional. The particles occur pre-verbally. A study of the Gonja verb reveals that the perfective aspect is not marked morphologically, while imperfective aspect is realised in

the progressive form with the independent marker **bee** and the habitual aspect with the independent marker **bee** with an adverb.

4.3 Aspectual marking in Gonja

Gonja has a basic aspectual distinction between perfective and imperfective. The former is the unmarked form, which is not morphologically marked with an affix, while the imperfective in the language is realised in the progressive and habitual aspects. This section discusses the perfective aspectual form and the imperfective aspect and shows how they are coded in Gonja.

4.3.1 The perfective aspect of Gonja

In Gonja, as in many West African languages, the perfective aspect is the unmarked or bare form of the basic verb form. The perfective simply denotes “a situation viewed in its entirety, without regard to internal temporal consistency” (Comrie 1976:12).

According to Lindfors (2003), perfectivity relates to temporal boundedness and duration. A situation can be regarded as being sharply or diffusely bounded in time and as being of short or long duration. Although the essence of the perfective is an event seen as a whole, most languages that have a perfective use it for various similar semantic roles, such as momentary events and the onsets or completions of events, all of which are single points in time and thus have no internal structure. In the perfective aspect, the focus is on termination and boundedness, and there is a strong association with the past tense (Lindfors, 2003).

More so, the term “perfective,” according to Osam (2008) in Akan, can be treated as “completive.” His argument follows Comrie (1976:3), where he refers to the term as „perfective.” Osam (2008) asserts that the completive “presents the totality of the situation... without reference to its internal temporal constituency: the whole of the situation is presented as a single, unanalyzable whole, with beginning, middle, and end rolled into one; no attempt is made to divide this situation up into various individual phases that make up the action.”

Furthermore, Bhat (1999: 46), cited in Osam (2008), holds the view that the “perfective” provides the view of an event and is “unconcerned with the internal temporal structure of the event.” Furthermore, the perfective “views the situation as bounded and as forming a unified entity.” Consider the following Gonja perfective aspect illustrations (65a-d) below:



(65) a. **N ji.**

1SG eat.PERF

„I have eaten.“

b. **Jiblaŋ na m bulombuti.**

Cat DEF kill.PERF mouse

„The cat has killed the mouse.“

glossed as “continuous-habitual” or “durative-habitual” (Comrie, 1976:26). The structure of any unbounded situation that lasts for a while is represented by the imperfective (Nurse, 2007). It is a grammatical construction used to describe an event as seen from the inside. The emphasis is no longer on cancellation and boundness in the imperfective aspect (Lindfors, 2003). The subsections below will illustrate more about the progressive and habitual aspectual forms.

4.4 Particles employed in aspectual marking in Gonja

This section discusses the particles employed in marking aspectual forms in Gonja. The language is one of the few with a system of aspectual markers used to capture the happenings of the aspectual paradigm, which results in the progressive, habitual, and future aspects. Consider the following sub-sections for the discussions:

4.4.1 The progressive particle „bee“

The Gonja progressive is indicated by the pre-verbal particle **bee**. This particle occurs pre-verbally to code an event seen as going on simultaneously with the speech reference time. Thus, it expresses the idea that an action is ongoing at the time of speech. The data (66 a-c) below demonstrate Gonja progressive marking with the marker **bee**.

- (66) a. **Kebia na bee buku.**
 Child DEF PROG buy book
 „The child is buying a book.“

b. **E bee m kuwa na.**
3SG PROG go snake DEF

„He/she is killing the snake.“

c. **J n na bee dii kadibi.**
dog DEF PROG climb tree

„The dog is climbing a tree.“

d. ***Kebia na bee buku.**
Child DEF buy PROG book

„The child is buying a book.“

e. ***E m bee kuwa na.**
3SG kill PROG snake DEF

„He/she is killing snake.“

f. ***J n na dii bee kadibi**
dog DEF climb PROG tree

„The dog is climbing a tree“

It can be observed from examples (66a) through (66c) that the action has started or encodes an ongoing situation. Examples (66a) and (66b) represent the buying of a book and the killing of the snake are currently happening; whilst examples (66c) depict the

climbing of the tree is still on-going. Again, the progressive marker **bee** is employed pre-verbally to code ongoing aspectual readings. For instance, in all the constructions (66a) through (66d), the progressive marker **bee** is marked on the following verbs in each sentence „buy“, **m** „kill“, and **dii** „climb“ to code the progressive aspect.

However, it should be noted that the progressive marker **bee** is syntactically placed immediately before the verb and any attempt to introduce the progressive marker **bee** elsewhere in Gonja constructions other than the pre-verbal spot will render the construction as ungrammatical as expressed in examples (66d -f) above.

Meanwhile, in languages such as Akan (Osam, 2003), Mandarin Chinese (Tsang, 2003) and Ògbahù (Maduagwu and Obiamalu, 2016), the progressive aspectual markers are pre-verbally marked on the verb to denote that an action is ongoing at the time of speech. Observe the following Akan data from Osam (2003: 8).

- (67) **Efua ré- tsiw b d m no.**
 Efua PROG-chase dog DEF
 „Efua is chasing the dog.“

Again, let us observe the following data from the Mandarin Chinese (Tsang, 2003: 54):

- (68) **Zhangsan zai shui.**
 Zhangsan PROG sleep
 „Zhangsan is sleeping.“

Furthermore, observe the following Ògbahù (Maduagwu and Obiamalu, 2016: 161),

- (69) **Ibè nà è-li nn .**
 Ibe PROG e-eat food
 „Ibe is eating food.“

The case for Mandarin Chinese and Ògbahù is similar to Gonja but not that of Akan. Thus, Mandarin Chinese and Ògbahù employ the particles **zai** and **nà** that are placed immediately before the verbs **shui** “sleep” and **li** “eat” respectively to code progressive aspectual reading. However, the case of Akan is dissimilar to that of Gonja. Although it is coded pre-verbally, the language employs a prefix rather than an independent particle that is morphologically marked on the verb **tsiw** “chase” to code the progressive aspect in Akan.

Nonetheless, Gonja progressive can be coded in the past as well as the present. The language uses the marker **daa** in this respect, other than **bee**, to denote events that took place in the past, where it indicates that the event was in progress at that time. Dahl (1985:95) has it that the progressive is found to be used with a past-time reference (PROG-PAST) in some languages, of which Gonja is not an exception. The examples (70 a-c) below illustrate the marker **daa** in Gonja.

- (70) a. **Mbia na daa fige mfe.**
 Children DEF PROG.PST sweep here
 „The children were sweeping here.“

b. **Amati daa sukuru.**

Amati PROG.PST go school

„Amati was going to farm.“

c. **E daa ji mabe a heŋ.**

3SG PROG.PST eat 1SG.POSS about

„He/she was gossiping about me.“

d. **Mbia na bee fige mfe.**

Children DEF PROG sweep here

„The children are sweeping here.“

e. **Amati bee sukuru.**

Amati PROG go school

„Amati is going to school.“

f. **E bee ji mabe a heŋ**

3SG PROG eat 1SG.POSS about

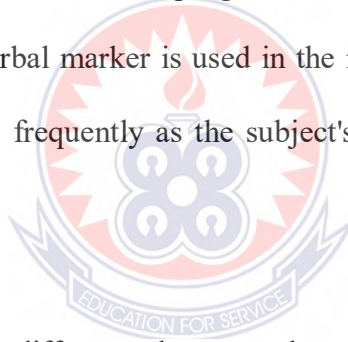
„He/she is gossiping about me.“

It can be observed from examples (70a) through (70c) that the progressive past marker **daa** is marked pre-verbally on the verbs **fige** “sweep”, “go” and **ji** “gossip” to indicate that the actions of the verbs have already occurred and not ongoing at the time of speech.

Thus, examples (70a–c) present the situations of sweeping, going, and gossiping as something that has already occurred. In examples (70d–f), the sentences presented are grammatically correct for the progressive aspect but not for the past progressive aspect. Thus, the pre-verbal marker **daa** cannot be substituted with the default progressive marker **bee** to denote that the action of the verbs **fige** „sweep“, **go** „go“ and **ji** „gossip“ was ongoing later.

4.4.2 The habitual particle „bee“

In Gonja, the habitual aspect is also marked by the pre-verbal particle **bee**. The particle takes the same form and position as the progressive marker when it comes to coding the habitual aspect. This preverbal marker is used in the indicative to express or present the idea that the action occurs frequently as the subject's habit, as well as to show that an action lasts a long time.



However, to illustrate the difference between the progressive and habitual aspects of Gonja, one must rely on semantics and context to deduce which form is being referred to. Dahl (1985) identifies three closely related categories, namely, habitual (HAB), habitual-generic or simply generic (HABG), and habitual-past (HABPAST). The three are related in that they each “express actions that take place habitually or repeatedly” (Dahl 1985: 95). However, they also differ in that each possesses other unique properties that are not found in the others. For instance, the generic category is found to involve a “normic” or „law-like“ character “they describe the typical or characteristic properties of a species, a kind, or an individual” (Dahl 1985: 99). The habitual past, on the other hand, is a

“combination of HAB and past time reference” (Dahl 1985: 101). The regular habitual (HAB), which lacks the above-mentioned unique properties identified in the other two, is shown to be commonly used, for example, in English, in cases where the adverb “usually” is possible, involving “quantification over a set of occasions which is given explicitly or by context” (Dahl 1985: 97). Habitual aspect is marked by an independent syntactic element which precedes the verb. Thus, the preverbal position hosts the marker of the habitual aspect in Gonja. The following examples (71 a-d) demonstrate the habitual in Gonja:

(71) a. **Keboribi na bee m baasa.**

Road DEF HAB kill people

„The road kills people.“

b. **E bee sukuru.**

3SG HAB go school

„He/she goes to school.“

c. **Kan n na bee shile.**

Man DEF HAB run

„The man runs.“

d. **Kebia ere bee yuri.**

Child DEF HAB steal

„This child steals.“

The presence of the habitual particle **bee** in (71a-d) indicates that the action denoted by the verb occurs regularly. Thus, the construction (71a) implies that the road usually kills people; the example (71b) denotes that he/she goes to school all the time; the example (71c) depicts that running is something the man always does; and the example (71d) implies that the child steals on a regular basis. All the actions in examples (71a–d) imply that that act has become a habit and cannot be said to be happening at the present time.

An easy way of showing that the habitual marker indicates that an action occurs as a habit is to introduce a time adverb, as exemplified in (72 a–c) below:

(72) a. **Amati bee nd aŋ kama**

Amati HAB go farm always

„Amati goes to farm always.“

b. **N tuto bee ji kudoe kach kama**

1SG father PROG eat T. Z everyday

„My father eats T.Z every day.“

c. **E bee nite jiman kik .**

3SG HAB walk always

„He/she walks always.“

The introduction of the adverbs **aŋ kama** „every time“, **kach kama** „every day“ and **jiman kik** „always“ respectively gives them a reading in Gonja; thus, example (72a) implies that the subject Amati is used to going to the farm, an act which has become a habit; whereas example (72b) indicates that the subject my father eats T.Z. “all the time,” and (72c) indicates that he walks on a regular basis. All these are instances that have become habits. Therefore, the constructions in examples (72a) and (72b) express that the actions denoted by the verbs „go“ and **ji** 'eat' occur regularly. Furthermore, the introduction of adverbs no longer encodes two meanings that rely on context to denote their meaning, but instead perfectly gives them one of a habitual rather than a progressive meaning.

4.4.3 The future aspectual particle „beɛŋ“

In Gonja, the future aspect is expressed by the particle **beɛŋ**. The future is a situation that will occur after the time of speaking. Dahl (1985: 105) discusses cross-linguistic future (FUT) categories, the most common of which are those that “involve actions planned by the sentence's agent.” Normally, when we talk about the future, we are either talking about someone’s plans, intentions, or obligations, or we are making a prediction or extrapolation from the present state of the world (Dahl 1985: 103).

Dahl (1985: 106–108) suggests that the semantics of FUT can be best described in terms of a prototype involving at least the three features “intention,” “prediction,” and “future time reference,” with “future time reference” being a relatively more constant and dominant element than the modal features (intention and prediction), which in most cases may or may not be present. Other cross-linguistic and language-specific discussions of future semantics that mention “future time reference” and modal elements such as “prediction” state that the future “asserts that the event described by the verb will occur later than the utterance time” (Boadi 2008: 22), that is, “the speaker predicts that a situation will occur after the speech event” (Descles and Guentcheva 2012: 128).

Expression of probability or likelihood, which seems to be linked to or falls under “prediction” (Bybee et al. 1994), Bybee et al. (1994) talk about non-randomly distributed, multiple uses of grams across languages, including the future gram, which confirms the other authors' mention of “intention,” “prediction,” and “future time reference.” The form that has been analysed as future in Gonja is interpreted as meaning that the state of affairs expressed by the verb will happen at a time after the speech event. The constructions in (73a-c) show a future aspect.

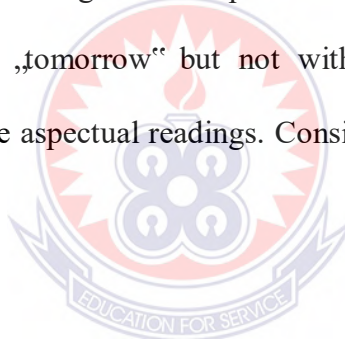
- (73) a. **Ma n Mantenso beej ji.**
 1SG CONJ Mantenso FUT eat
 „I and Mantenso will eat.“

- b. Kebia na been ib kawol.**
 Child DEF FUT write book
 „The child will write a book.“
- c. Achanƙanto na been p eyu na.**
 Police DEF FUT catch thief DEF
 „The police will catch the thief.“
- d. *Ma n Mantenso ji been**
 1SG CONJ Mantenso eat FUT
 „I and Mantenso will eat.“
- e. *Kebia na ib been kawol.**
 Child DEF write FUT book
 „The child will write a book.“
- f. *Achanƙanto na p been eyu na.**
 Police DEF catch FUT thief DEF
 „The police will catch the thief.“

The constructions (73a-c) above illustrate and involve future time reference in Gonja via the use of the marker **been**. The marker **been** syntactically is encoded in the pre-verbal position to denote future aspectual readings in Gonja. Thus, example (73a) for instance

can be interpreted to mean that, the speaker and Mantenso will eat at a time later than the time of the utterance, in (73b), it can be interpreted to mean that the child will write a book later and (73c) can be understood as the police performing an action of catching the thief for them at a later time. All these constructions encode a later action rather than an immediate one. However, the illustrations (73d-f) are ungrammatical because the marker **been** syntactically occurs in the pre-verbal position and any attempt to introduce it elsewhere in the constructions than the pre-verbal position to encode future aspect will render it ungrammatical in Gonja.

In addition, Gonja future marking is also capable of occurring with an appropriate time adverbial such as **echefo** „tomorrow“ but not with an inappropriate one like **ndre** „yesterday“ to denote future aspectual readings. Consider the following example in (74a-b) in Gonja below.



- (74) a. **E** **been** **kib** **echefo.**
 3SG FUT go market tomorrow
 „He/she will go to market tomorrow.“
- b. **Mantenso** **been** **echefo.**
 Mantenso FUT go tomorrow
 „Mantenso will go tomorrow.“

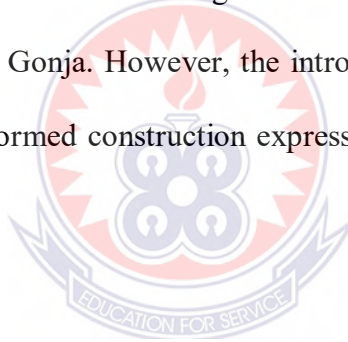
- c. * **E been kib ndre.**
 3SG FUT go market yesterday

„He/she will go to market yesterday.“

- d. * **Mantenso been ndre.**
 Mantenso FUT go yesterday

„Mantenso will go yesterday.“

It can be observed from examples (74a) and (74b) that an appropriate time adverbial such as **echefo** „tomorrow“ can be introduced together with the future marker **been** to denote future aspectual reading in Gonja. However, the introduction of an adverb such as **ndre** „yesterday“ creates an ill formed construction expressed in examples (74c) and (74d) in Gonja.



Additionally, the Gonja future marking takes a different form when it comes to coding for the first and second persons singular and plural. The future marker has various surface forms with different subject pronouns. When it occurs with the first- and second-person singular subjects, the future is marked with the form **meen** and **feen** respectively. Thus, the future marker **been** together with the first-person subject **ma** „me“ and the second-person subject **fo** „you“ are fused into a single form. In the process of the fusion, the vowels of the first-person subject **ma** „me“ and the second-person subject **fo** „you“ are put together with the initial consonant of the future marker **been** deleted presumably to

prevent an ill-formed marker in the Gonja. The illustrations in (75a-c) below demonstrate this phenomenon in Gonja:

(75) a. **Meeŋ kib echefo.**
 1SG.FUT go market tomorrow
 „I will go to market tomorrow.“

b. **Feeŋ kib echefo.**
 2SG.FUT go market tomorrow
 „You will go to market tomorrow.“

c. * **Ma beeŋ kib echefo**
 1SG FUT go market tomorrow
 „I will go to market tomorrow.“

d. * **Fo beeŋ nkpal fobe beche so.**
 2SG FUT go CONJ 2SG.POSS wives POSTP
 „You will go because of your wives.“

From examples (75a) and (75b) above, you will realize that the future marking for the first- and second-person subjects are fused with the future marker particle (**beeŋ**) to denote future marking for the first- and second-person pronouns. Thus, the examples (75a) and (75b) are predictions that can be understood to be that action later (immediate

future) will take place after the speech time. However, an attempt at separating the future marker **beeŋ** from the pronouns will render the constructions ungrammatical as illustrated above in (75c) and (75d).

In addition, coding future for the first-person plural **anye** „we“ and the second-person plural **benye** ‘you’, takes a similar process as what is seen earlier for the first- and second person. Thus, it also involves the fusion of the future marker **beeŋ** with the first- and second-persons plural respectively. This is where the final vowels of the first- and second-person plural together with the initial consonant of the future maker **beeŋ** are deleted and fused to form **an e eŋ** „we will’ and **ben e eŋ** „you will“ for the first- and second-person plural respectively. It should be noted that, unlike future marking for the first- and second-person pronouns, where they cannot occur independently without fusion, the first- and second-person plural can occur separately without any ungrammaticality in the language. But in rapid speech, the first- and second-person plural are fused into the future marker **beeŋ**. However, it mostly brings about the fusion of the first person plural **anye** „we“ and the person plural **benye** „you“ particles with the future marker **beeŋ** to encode futurity for the first and second-person plurals. Again, let us observe the following illustrations in (76a-d) below:

- (76) a. **An ee ŋ nuu nchu.**
 1PL.FUT drink water
 „We will drink water.“

- b. **Ben e eŋ nkpal mobe beche so.**
2PL. FUT go CONJ 3SG.POSS wives POSTP

„You will go because of his wives.“

- c. **Anye been nuu nchu.**
1PL FUT drink water

„We will drink water.“

- d. **Benye been nkpal mobe beche so.**
2PL FUT go CONJ 3SG.POSS wives POSTP

„You will go because of his wives.“

- e. ***Anye nuu been nchu.**
1PL drink FUT water

„We will drink water.“

- d. ***Benye been nkpal mobe beche so.**
2PL go FUT CONJ 3SG.POSS wives POSTP

„You will go because of his wives.“

The above examples (76a-d) demonstrate future occurrences about the time of speech. Thus, all the examples above give predictions of what will happen later and not immediately. From the data again, you will realize especially in the examples in (76a)

and (76b) that, the future marker **been** is fused with the first- and second-person plurals to denote future readings of the verbs **nuu** “drink” and “go”. While in the examples (76d) and (76e), the first- and second-persons plural are not fused with the future marker **been** but are separated. It should be indicated that the differences are attributed to rapid speech. Thus, in a rapid speech, it is realized differently as can be seen from examples (76a) and (76b) and the other is true for the examples in (76c) and (76d). It should however be noted that the future aspectual marker is syntactically placed immediately before the verb. Hence, any attempt to change its position to appear elsewhere other than the pre-verbal slot renders the sentence ungrammatical. This is shown in the examples (76e) and (76f) above.

Furthermore, the future marker for the third person plural somehow also uses a different marker to what has been discussed already. The future marker for the third person plural in Gonja is indicated by the marker **baaŋ** “they will”. This is solely used for marking the third person plural in Gonja. It encodes both the third-person plural and the future marker. See the examples (77a) and (77b) below:

- (77) a. **Baaŋ** **nuu** **nchu.**
 3PL.FUT drink water
 „They will drink water.“

- b. **Baaŋ** **shile** **echefo.**
 3PL. FUT run tomorrow
 „They will run tomorrow.“
- c. ***Nuu** **baaŋ** **nchu.**
 Drink 3PL.FUT water
 „They will drink water.“
- d. ***Shile** **baaŋ** **echefo.**
 Run 3PL.FUT water
 „They will run tomorrow.“

The illustrations (77a) and (77b) above encode future readings for the third person plural with the marker **baaŋ**. The expression in example (77a) can be interpreted to mean that the people will take water after the speech time and not during the speech time. Although the drinking of the water occurs in the immediate future, the expression is still affixed to the future. A similar thing can be said about (77b) as it can about (77a). This expression even embodies an adverb (tomorrow), which signifies that the action **shile** “run” will be performed later after the speech. It can be seen from the constructions that, in marking the future for the third person plural, the particle is fused with the pronoun. Also, it should be indicated that the markers can only occur pre-verbally and that any attempt to change their position in the sentence may result in the construction of ungrammatical sentences, as expressed in (77c) and (77d).

4.5 The interaction between aspect and negation

In the sections above, I have identified some aspectual paradigms in their affirmative forms in Gonja. This section goes over the aspectual paradigms mentioned above in relation to interaction with negation. Osam (2003:12) argues that languages in their affirmative forms may entail a lot more than in their negative forms. Just as it is postulated by Osam (2003), the affirmative aspectual forms identified above entail fewer negation paradigms, as will be shown below. The habitual, and in some cases progressive, may be regarded as having a common negative form. In other words, the habitual negative and the progressive negative may overlap, such that without appropriate context or other distinctive elements, such as an adverb, it is not clear which aspectual sense is meant when the negative form is used.

In Gonja, negation is marked by the following pre-verbal particles: – **maŋ**, **maa**, **maaŋ**. These markers combine with different aspects of the verb to signal various semantic relations or negate the truth value of either specific elements within the sentence or the entire sentence. Whereas **maŋ** is typically a perfective negative marker, **maa** doubles as a negative progressive and negative habitual marker, while **maaŋ** encodes future negation. The various interactions between the negative paradigms and the aspectual forms are discussed and illustrated below.

4.5.1. Negative perfective particle „maŋ“

The negative perfective particle in Gonja is **maŋ**. This marker is syntactically placed before the verb in the language to either negate the truth value of a specific element within the sentence or the entire sentence. Consider the examples (78a-d) below:

(78) a. **Kachenimu na daŋ .**

Old woman DEF cook.PERF

„The old woman has cooked.“

b. **Kachenimu na maŋ daŋ .**

Old woman DEF NEG cook.PERF

„The old woman has not cooked.“

c. **Awal biri mbia na.**

Awal beat. PERF children DEF

„Awal has beaten the children.“

d. **Awal maŋ biri mbia na.**

Awal NEG beat.PERF children DEF

„Awal has not beaten the children.“

e. **E ib kawol.**

3SG write.PERF letter.

„He/she has written a letter.“

f. **E maŋ ib kawol.**

3SG NEG write letter.

„He/she has written a letter.“

The illustrations (78b), (78d), and (78f) above demonstrate negative perfective in the Gonja. Whereas (78b) is the negative form of (78a), (78d) and (78f) are the negative forms of (78c) and (78e). The pre-verbal marker **maŋ** is used in (78b), (78d), and (78e) to negate the constructions. Thus, the negation marker **ma** appears pre-verbally with the perfective **daŋ** „cook“, **biri** „beat“ and **ib** „write“ in (78b), (78d), and (78e) to indicate that the subjects, **Kachenimu** has not cooked, **Awal** has not beaten the children, and He/she has not written a letter, respectively.

4.5.2 Future negative particle „**maaŋ**“

The particle employed to negate the Gonja future negative is **maaŋ**. It is employed to denote that an event or situation will not occur at the time of utterance. Unlike the future aspect discussed above, where two particles **been** and **baaŋ** are employed to mark the future aspects, this paradigm only encodes a single particle **maaŋ** to mark future negation in the language. Consider the use of **maaŋ** in the following examples (79b) and (80b) below:

(79) a. **E been shile echefo.**

3SG FUT run tomorrow

„He/she will run tomorrow.“

b. **E maan shile echefo.**
 3SG NEG.FUT run tomorrow
 „He/she will not run tomorrow.“

c. ***E been maan shile echefo.**
 3SG FUT NEG.FUT run tomorrow
 „He/she will not run tomorrow.“

(80) a. **Koji been m ko hi na echefo.**
 Koji FUT kill fowl DEF tomorrow
 „Koji will kill the fowl tomorrow.“

b. **Koji maan m ko hi na echefo.**
 Koji NEG.FUT kill fowl DEF tomorrow
 „Koji will not kill the fowl tomorrow.“

c. ***Koji been maan m ko hi na echefo.**
 Koji FUT NEG.FUT kill fowl DEF tomorrow
 „Koji will not kill the fowl tomorrow.“

It can be seen from the above data that whereas (79b) is the negative form of (79a), (80b) is the negative form of (80a). The marker **maa** appears as the negative form of the future marker **bee**, occupying the same syntactic position in the constructions. We may put this in simple terms by saying that in negative future sentences, the negative future marker

maɔŋ in examples (79b) and (80b) replaces the affirmative future markers **beɛŋ** in examples (79a) and (80a) to denote future negative readings. The marker **maɔŋ** is used in (79b) to indicate that an event will not occur after the speech time. Thus, both the verbs **shile** “run” and **m** “kill” in examples (79b) and (80b) referred to by the speaker will not occur after speaking. In (79c) and (80c), the constructions are ungrammatical because both the future aspectual marker **beɛŋ** and the future negative marker **maɔŋ** cannot co-occur in a single construction in Gonja to encode any meaningful meaning. Thus, depending on the specific paradigm under consideration, one must constantly be substituted for the other.

4.5.3 Negative progressive particle „maa”

In Gonja, the progressive is negated with the particle **maa**. It coexists with verb forms to express the idea that an action was not in progress at the time the speech was delivered. Consider the use of **maa** in the following illustrations (81b) and (82b) below:

(81) a. **Biawurbi bee ji.**

Biawurbi PROG eat

„Biawurbi is eating”.

b. **Biawurbi maa ji.**

Biawurbi NEG.PROG eat

„Biawurbi is not eating” OR „Biawurbi does not eat”.

- c. ***Biawurbi bee maa ji**
 Biawurbi PROG NEG.PROG eat
 „Biawurbi is not eating“ OR „Biawurbi does not eat“.

- (82) a. **Baasa na bee ul ndibi.**
 People DEF PROG carry sticks
 „The people are carrying sticks.“

- b. **Baasa na maa ul ndibi.**
 People DEF NEG.PROG carry sticks
 „The people are not carrying sticks.“

- c. ***Baasa na bee maa ul ndibi**
 People DEF PROG NEG.PROG carry sticks
 „The people are not carrying the sticks“

Examples (81b) and (82b) above confirm my observation that the marker **maa** occurs as the negative form of the future marker **bee**, whose syntactic position it occupies in the constructions. We may put this in simple terms by saying that in negative progressive illustrations, the negative progressive marker **maa** in examples (81b) and (82b) replaces the affirmative progressive aspectual marker **bee** in examples (81a) and (82a) to denote negative progressive readings. The marker **maa** is encoded in (81b) and (82b) to indicate that an action is not ongoing at the time of the speech and is replaced by the future marker **bee**, whose syntactic position it occupies in the constructions. Thus, both the

verbs **ji** “eat” and **ul** “carry” in examples (81b) and (82b) referred to by the speaker are not ongoing during speech time. In (81c) and (82c), the constructions are ungrammatical because both the progressive aspectual marker **bee** and the negative progressive marker **maa** cannot co-occur in a single construction in Gonja to encode any meaningful meaning. Thus, depending on the specific paradigm under consideration, one must constantly be substituted for the other.

It is worth noting, however, that the Gonja negative progressive marker **maa** can co-occur with the past progressive marker **daa** to code for a negative past progressive aspect. The negative past progressive denotes events that took place in the past; it indicates that the event was not in progress at that time. In this sense, the past progressive marker **daa** must be syntactically followed by the negative progressive marker **maa** and both must occur pre-verbally. The following illustrations (83a-c) in Gonja confirm this:

(83) a. **Eninipo na daa maa ib kawol.**
 Teacher DEF PROG NEG.PROG write letter
 „The teacher was not writing a letter.“

b. **E daa maa ŋin ekuloŋ na.**
 3SG PROG NEG.PROG push car DEF
 „He/she was not pushing the car.“

c. **Bu daa maa k aŋ buku na.**
 3PL PROG NEG.PROG read book DEF

„They were not reading the book.“

d. ***Eŋinipo na ib daa maa kawol.**
 Teacher DEF write PROG NEG. PROG letter

„The teacher was not writing a letter.“

e. ***E ŋin daa maa ekuloŋ na.**
 3SG push PROG NEG.PROG car DEF

„He/she was not pushing the car.“

f. ***Bu k aŋ daa maa buku na.**
 3PL read PROG NEG.PROG book DEF

„They were not reading the book.“

Examples (83a), (83b), and (83c) show that the past progressive marker **daa** and the negative progressive marker **maa** respectively, are syntactically placed immediately before the verbs **ib** “write”, **ŋin** “push” and **k aŋ** “read” to denote the negative past progressive aspect in Gonja. However, any attempt to introduce the past progressive marker **daa** and the negative progressive marker **maa** after the verbs, as seen in examples (83d), (83e), and (83f), will render the constructions ungrammatical in Gonja.

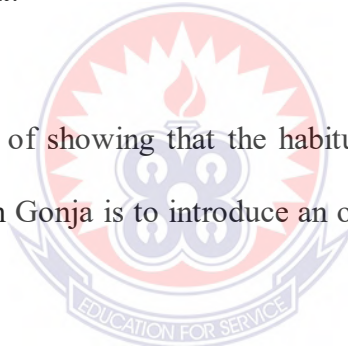
4.5.4 Negative habitual particle „maa“

The habitual negative is identical to the negative progressive. Both constructions have similar forms and employ the same particle **maa** to negate either a negative progressive or a habitual negative. The habitual negative could be misunderstood as a negative progressive without appropriate context. To avoid such ambiguity, users of the language rely on context to avoid conflict between the two paradigms. Consider the examples (84a-d) below:

- (84) a. **Kache na bee nuu nsa.**
 Woman DEF HAB drink alcohol.
 „The woman drinks alcohol.“
- b. **Kache na maa nuu nsa.**
 Woman DEF NEG.HAB drink alcohol.
 „The woman doesn’t drink alcohol.“
- c. **Ketirbu ere bee bra kumulubi.**
 Well DEM HAB cause accident
 „This well causes accident.“
- d. **Ketirbu ere maa bra kumulubi.**
 Well DEM NEG.HAB cause accident
 „This well doesn’t cause accident.“

The above examples (84b) and (84d) demonstrate the marking of negative habitual via the particle **maa** but not a progressive habitual. Whereas example (84b) negates example (84a), example (84d) equally negates example (84c). Although the particle **maa** doubles as a negative progressive particle, in the case of example (84b), it does not denote a negative progressive interpretation but negates the construction to mean that drinking alcohol is not a habit of the woman; in (84d), the particle negates the construction to denote that it is not the habit of the well to cause accidents as deemed in the affirmative construction in (84c). It is also crucial to indicate that the particle **maa** replaces the affirmative habitual marker **bee** in the constructions to denote that an action does not happen frequently as a habit.

Additionally, an easy way of showing that the habitual marker indicates that an action does not occur as a habit in Gonja is to introduce an optional time adverb as exemplified in (85a-c) below:



(85) a. **Kache na bee fige kach kama.**

Woman DEF HAB sweep everyday

„The woman sweeps every day.“

b. **Kache na maa fige kach kama**

Woman DEF NEG.HAB sweep everyday

„The woman doesn't drink alcohol every day.“

c. **Kadibi ere bee ch o nch nn ere.**
 Tree DEM HAB help these days DEM
 „This tree helps these days.“

d. **Kadibi ere maa ch o nch nn ere.**
 Tree DEM NEG.HAB help these days DEM
 „This tree doesn't help these days.“

The above examples (85b) and (85d) demonstrate the marking of negative habitual via the particle **maa**. Whereas example (85b) negates example (85a), example (85d) equally negates example (85c). The particle **maa** in (85b) negates the construction to mean that sweeping is not a habit of the woman, and in (85d) the particle negates the construction to denote that it is not the habit of the tree to help these days as deemed in the affirmative construction in (85c). It is also crucial to indicate that the particle **maa** replaces the affirmative habitual marker **bee** in the constructions to denote that an action does not happen frequently as a habit.

However, in Gonja, the affirmative habitual marker **bee** and the negative habitual marker **maa** are not compatible in the same sentence because they are in complementary distribution. Thus, both occupy the same syntactic slot. So therefore, the following constructions (86a), (86b), and (86c) in the language are ungrammatical.

- (86) a. ***Kache na bee maa nuu nsa**
 Woman DEF HAB NEG.HAB drink alcohol.
 „The woman drinks alcohol“
- b. ***Ketirbu ere bee maa bra kumulubi**
 Well DEM HAB NEG.HAB cause accident
 „This well causes accident“
- c. ***Kache na bee maa fige kach kama**
 Woman DEF HAB NEG.HAB sweep every day
 „The woman sweeps everyday“

4.6 Summary of chapter

In this chapter, I have discussed aspectual marking in Gonja. The chapter proceeded to discuss two ways aspect is coded in the language: the perfective aspect and the imperfective aspect. The perfective aspect is the bare form of the Gonja verb, whereas the imperfective aspect is subdivided into two forms: the progressive and habitual aspects.

Additionally, I provided the sentence structure of Gonja and provided a brief overview of the Gonja verb morphology, which is key to understanding the phenomenon of the thesis. Moreover, I discussed the various pre-verbal particles or markers, their interpretations, and their syntax in coding aspectual paradigms in Gonja.

Finally, I showed how the aspectual paradigms interact with negation paradigms and examined the incompatibility of the progressive and future aspectual markers with negative progressive and negative future in Gonja.



CHAPTER FIVE

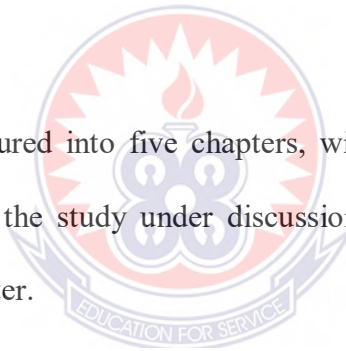
SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the general conclusion of the study. It deals with the summary and findings of the study and makes some recommendations for future studies. The rest of the chapters are organised under the following divisions: Section 5.1 presents the summary of the chapters, while Section 5.2 discusses the findings of the study. Section 5.3 concludes the study, whereas Section 5.4 provides some recommendations for future studies.

5.1 Summary of chapters

The whole thesis is structured into five chapters, with each chapter providing a vivid analysis that is related to the study under discussion. The following are some of the summaries from each chapter.



This study comprised five chapters. The first chapter served as an introduction to the study. Also, the chapter discussed the background to the study and statement of the problem. It also presented the objectives of the study as guided by the research questions. The significance of the study and delimitation were also discussed. Eventually the chapter discussed the organization of the study and summary of the chapter.

Chapter two reviewed some related literature proposed by previous researchers on aspectual marking and the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The topics

covered in this chapter are divided into four sections: the general concept of aspectual marking, a review of some related literature in African languages, and a review of some related literature in other languages around the world. I reviewed the following themes: the general notion of aspectual marking, previous works on aspectual marking in Kwa languages, reviews of some related literature on aspectual marking in African languages, and reviews of some related literature in other languages of the world. The Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) is equally looked at in this chapter.

The third chapter focused on the methodology employed in the study. The chapter discussed the research design, population, participants, and sampling techniques. Furthermore, the sources of data and the techniques used in data collection were also discussed. The last section of the chapter presented the ethical issues that guided the study.

Chapter four was a discussion on aspectual marking in Gonja. The chapter discussed the sentence structure of Gonja and provided the verb morphology of Gonja. Furthermore, the chapter explored two ways aspect is marked in Gonja. Thus, perfective aspect and imperfective aspect. Under the perfective, the chapter revealed that the Gonja aspect is not marked morphologically but is realized in the bare form of the verbs. Under the imperfective aspect, the progressive and habitual forms are realised under it and are equally marked with an independent particle **bee** for both forms but with context making the difference. In addition, the chapter also discussed the particles employed for marking aspect in Gonja. These include; the progressive particle and habitual particle **bee**, the

future aspectual particle **beeŋ**. Eventually, the chapter saw the interaction between negation and aspectual marking in Gonja. Such as the negative perfective **maŋ**, the future negative **maanŋ**, negative progressive and habitual **maa**.

Chapter five, the final chapter of the study, presents the findings, a summary of the study, an outline the general contribution of this study, and the conclusion of the study. It also presents recommendations for future researchers.

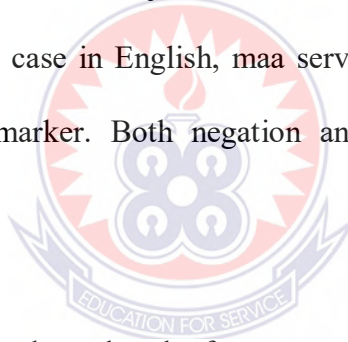
5.2 Findings of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate aspectual marking in Gonja. The findings revealed that Gonja employs both covert and overt strategies in the marking of aspect. Thus, while the perfective is not morphologically marked, the habitual and progressive employ independent syntactic elements to mark aspect. In terms of syntax, it shows that these particles occur in the preverbal position immediately preceding the verb phrase (VP).

It is also established that the verbal particle **bee** can play two distinct functions in aspectual marking in Gonja. Thus, it can either be employed to mark progressive or habitual aspects. However, it should be indicated that with the habitual aspect, the pre-verbal marker **bee** co-occurs with adverbs in the language to denote the habitual readings. But with the progressive aspect, only the pre-verbal marker **bee** is syntactically placed before the verb to code progressive readings in the language.

More so, it is noticed that the pre-verbal particle **maa** can be used to code two negation forms in Gonja. Thus, it can either be used to mark the progressive negative or the habitual negative. However, there is a distinction made between the two forms: the former encodes only the negative verbal particle **maa** to mark progressive negative, whereas the latter employs the negative verbal particle **maa** together with a compulsory time adverb to mark habitual negative.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the progressive aspectual marker **bee** and the negative progressive marker **maa** are not compatible in Gonja. Thus, the particles **bee** and **maa** are not compatible in Gonja because the two markers cannot coexist in a structure if, as is often the case in English, **maa** serves as a negative sign and **bee** also serves as a progressive marker. Both negation and progressive are simultaneously licensed by **maa**.



Moreover, the findings also show that the future aspectual marker **beenj** and the negative future marker **maanj** are not compatible in Gonja because the two aspectual markers are in complementary distribution.

5.3 Conclusion

The study showed that Gonja employs both covert and overt strategies in the marking of aspect. Thus, while the perfective is not morphologically marked, the habitual and progressive employ independent syntactic elements to mark aspect. In terms of syntax, it showed that these particles occur in the preverbal position immediately preceding the

verb phrase (VP). The thesis also investigated the interaction between aspect and negation, showing the compatibility of the aspectual and negation markers in Gonja.

5.4 Recommendations for further studies

The current study is on aspectual marking in Gonja using the Basic Linguistic Theory (BLT) as a framework. This study serves as a starting point for further investigations into the aspectual marking in Gonja.

In the intervening time, I hope that this study will serve as a starting point for further studies and expand our understanding of aspectual marking in Gonja. Though the study has provided some insights into this area, the data analysis was modelled on basic linguistic theory (BLT) which is descriptive in nature. Therefore, I recommend that other researchers use other formal theoretical approaches (frameworks) to analyse the same aspectual marking in Gonja.

I also recommend that other researchers investigate other verbal categories such as tense and mood and attest for their interaction with aspect and negation in Gonja.

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