Tense and aspect in Esan: Preliminary findings from fieldwork

This talk: Presents results from initial phase of an ongoing investigation of the tense/aspect system of Esan, an Edoid language of Nigeria

Goal of project:
1. Develop an accurate description of the expression of tense and aspect in the Ogwa dialect of Esan
2. Situate this dialect’s T/A system appropriately within what is known of other Edoid varieties

Contents
1. Part One – Esan Tense and Aspect ......................................................................................................................... 1
   1.1. Background on Esan ........................................................................................................................................... 1
   1.2. Mini-project on Esan tense/aspect .................................................................................................................... 3
   1.3. Tense and Aspect Overview .............................................................................................................................. 3
      1.3.1. Factativity .................................................................................................................................................. 7
      1.3.2. Complicating Data ..................................................................................................................................... 9
2. Part Two – Comparison to previous studies on Esan and Edo ................................................................................. 9
3. Part Three – Situating Esan within West Africa .................................................................................................... 13
References .................................................................................................................................................................  15
Contact ...................................................................................................................................................................... 16

1. Part One – Esan Tense and Aspect

1.1. Background on Esan

Esan (ISO-code [ish]; Lewis 2009): Edoid language, in the south-south geopolitical zone of Edo State, Nigeria
- North-Central branch of Edoid (Elugbe 1989b:22)
- Forms a sub-group with Edo (the language of the famous Benin Kingdom) and the Ora-Emai-Iuleha language cluster.
Esanland:
- Within longitudes 6.05E (6°3'E) and 6.66E (6°40'E), latitudes 6.40N (6°24'N) and 6.87N (6°52'N)
- Roughly 2,900 square kilometers (approximately 1,100 square miles) (Bradbury 1957:62; Okojie 1994:2)
- Current population estimated to be between 500,000 and 700,000 people

Map of the Ishan Area
Map from Lorenz (1995:418). Ogwa dialect within solid line, the dialect of this study. Other dialects/languages used for comparison within dashed line.

Structure:
- SVO language
- Little segmental morphology (typical of the region)
1. **Clause structure:**

subject – subject marker – P.V.M. - adverbial - continuousness marker - V - O - V - O – adjunct

**Pre-Verbal Markers (Tense/Aspect/Polarity/Realis/Among Others):**

irrealis marker | negation markers | future markers | etc.

---

**Tone:**

- Basic High/Low tonal contrast at the phonological level
  - Realized as H, L, !H, R, F
- Nouns have inherent lexical tonal pattern
- Verbs in Edoid languages are inherently toneless
  - (Possible exception of Epie-Atisa; Elugbe 1989a:299)
- Tone on verb is grammatical tone

**Underdocumentation:**

- Esan severely underdocumented, as is the entire Edoid branch (Schaefer & Egbokhare 2007)

1.2. **Mini-project on Esan tense/aspect**

**Procedure:**

1. Going through the our corpus of data we have collected
   a. One speaker of Ogwa Esan living abroad in Canada, and 5 speakers living in Nigeria
2. Extracted tokens of temporal/aspectual marking
3. Formulated into a number of working tables which demarcate the data into specific temporal/aspectual categories
4. Compared this initial system to the tense/aspect systems in 3 dialects of Esan, 5 descriptions of Edo

**Later phases:**

- Target specific areas of the system for further clarification/refinement
- Greater text collection and stories which are designed to elicit a variety of tense/aspect types
- Conduct fieldwork with speakers in the SF Bay area and Nigeria
- Identify relevant theoretically- and typologically-oriented literature

1.3. **Tense and Aspect Overview**

**Tense:** Relating the time of the situation (event or state) being referred to with some other time, typically the moment of speaking (Comrie 1976)

- Past/Present/Future
Aspect: “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” (Comrie 1976: 3)
- Completed, ongoing, etc.

Surface realization of tense/aspect in Esan depend on verb type

Eventive verbs: denote an event, such as a process or action (e.g. gbe “to dance”)
Stative verbs: denote an internal or external state of an entity (i.e. what something is, e.g. tan “to be tall”)

Aspectual distinction:
- Perfective: “the view of a situation as a whole” (Comrie 1976:16), often denoting complete events
- Cf. Imperfective: “pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation”
  o Progressive (I was playing) and habitual (I used to play)
- Typical aspectual distinction in West Africa (e.g. Yoruba, argued to be “tenseless” - Comrie 1976:82-83; Ajayi 2001).

In parentheses below: (φ) stands for a subject marker
- Analyzed as a resumptive pronoun in Rolle (2010) – left aside for now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic T/A Distinctions</th>
<th>Stative verbs</th>
<th>Eventive verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marking</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective (Progressive, Habitual)</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>(ka) gha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>(φ) [H…]Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future</td>
<td>(φ) khian (g)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Eventive – Past perfective – High tone on verb
Ébaì mè le’. Food 1SG eat “It was food I ate.”

3. Eventive – Present imperfective – Pre-verbal marker gha
Agbòn á time’. Agbon gha tie ime
Agbon IPFV call 1SG.FULL “Agbon is calling me.”
4. **Eventive – Present imperfective – Low tone on verb**

   \(\text{Ebai m\text{é} le.}\)
   \(\text{ebai m\text{é} le}\)
   \(\text{food 1SG eat}\)
   “It is food I am eating.”

5. **Stative – Present imperfective – High tone on verb**

   \(\text{Èbh\text{o\text{̀}b\text{ûn}.}\)
   \(\text{èbho bun}\)
   \(\text{people be many}\)
   “There are many people (here).” (More lit.: people are many)

6. **Eventive – Past imperfective – Pre-verbal marker gha**

   \(\text{M\text{ô\text{̀}á lèb\text{ài}.}\)
   \(\text{m\text{é} o gha le ebai}\)
   \(\text{1SG 3SG IPFV eat food}\)
   ‘I was eating.’

7. **Stative - Past imperfective – Pre-verbal marker gha**

   \(\text{Enafiam\text{è}na e gha gh\text{ôngh\text{ôn}.}\)
   \(\text{eni afiam\text{è}na e gha gh\text{ôngh\text{ôn}}\)
   \(\text{DEF bird these 3PL IPFV be happy}\)
   ‘These birds were happy.’

8. **Stative - Past imperfective –Pre-verbal markers ka...gha**

   \(\text{M\text{è\text{ò} k\text{à\text{̀}è r\text{è\text{̀} à l\text{òn\text{èb\text{ài.}}}}\)
   \(\text{m\text{è} o ka r\text{è} gha le oni ebai}\)
   \(\text{1SG 3SG formerly although IPFV eat DEF food}\)
   “I used to eat the food.”

9. **Eventive – Future perfective(?) – Pre-verbal marker khian**

   \(\text{M\text{è\text{ò} kh\text{ì\text{à}}n s\text{i\text{\text{èn\text{èm\text{à}}.}}}}\)
   \(\text{M\text{è\text{ò} kh\text{ì\text{à}}n si eni emila.}\)
   \(\text{1SG 3SG FUT pull DEF cattle}\)
   ‘I will pull the cattle.’

10. **Eventive – Future imperfective - Pre-verbal markers khian gha**

    \(\text{M\text{è\text{ò} kh\text{ì\text{à}}n gha le\text{\text{è\text{b\text{ài.}}}}\)
    \(\text{m\text{è\text{ò} kh\text{ì\text{à}}n gha le ebai}\)
    \(\text{1SG 3SG FUT IPFV eat food}\)
    “I will be eating.”
11. Stative – Future imperfective – Pre-verbal markers *khian gha*

*O*niwa o *khian gha* kpolọ.

DEF dog 3SG FUT IPFV be big

‘The dog will be big.’

*Khian* also used:

1. **Intention**: *Mẹ̀ o‘khian kpà* “I plan to leave”
2. **Inception**: *Ọ khian sèné mílá* “He is about to pull the cattle”
3. **Agent-oriented modality** - obligation from some outside force: *Mọ khian kpoluwa*. “I must sweep the house today”
4. **Epistemic modality** - certainty from evidence and/or reasoning: *Omon o khian gha ri bhekọwà*. “Omon has to be in the room” (he is expected to be there, because he usually is there)

### Additional words/constructions with temporal/aspectual meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>T/A meaning</th>
<th>Esan Form</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative past</td>
<td>o ke [ ]</td>
<td>Subordinate Clause</td>
<td>Expletive + Verb</td>
<td>“had already, will have already”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ọ̀ kọ̀lé yù fó, wè kọ̀ vái.</em> ‘He had already died before you arrived.’ (Lit. It is quick [that he die finish]…)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote past</td>
<td>o bue [ ]</td>
<td>Subordinate Clause</td>
<td>Expletive + Verb</td>
<td>“has a long time ago”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ọ̀ bué námé kē rō</em> ‘It has been raining.’ (Lit. It is long [that water after falling])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive/habitual past</td>
<td>ka [ ]</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Pre-verbal marker</td>
<td>“before, used to”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ọ̀ ka khorion.</em> ‘He used to be ugly.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive/habitual past</td>
<td>mọ [ ]</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Pre-verbal marker</td>
<td>“formerly, used to”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Uwanea owé mọ̀ khin? Uwa onea owé mọ̀ khin</em> ‘Which house used to be yours?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent past</td>
<td>dan [ ]</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Pre-verbal marker</td>
<td>“just, recently”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Me o dan bho lebai.</em> ‘I just ate.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aspectual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>[ ] VerbPhrase fo</td>
<td>V2 in SVC</td>
<td>“has finished V”</td>
<td><em>Ọ̀ bonuwa fo.</em> ‘He has finished building the house already.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inception</td>
<td>mu hẹn gha [ ]</td>
<td>V + gha</td>
<td>“begin to, start to”</td>
<td><em>Ibhokhan na mu hẹn gha tiebe.</em> ‘The children started to read a book.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuousness</td>
<td>sẹ yẹ̀</td>
<td>Pre-verbal markers</td>
<td>“still”</td>
<td><em>Ọ̀ tité, o sẹ̀ yẹ̀ tita nia.</em> ‘She sat down and is still sitting now.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3.1. Factativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic T/A Distinctions</th>
<th>Stative verbs</th>
<th>Eventive verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marking</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>(ka) gha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>(φ) [^H⋯]Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factative marking**: Interpretation depends on the verb type

"Factativity": Welmers (1973) African language structures (preceded by Welmers & Welmers 1968:75-76)
- "Expresses the most obvious fact about the verb in question, which in the case of active verbs is that the action was observed or took place, but for the stative verbs is that the situation obtains at present." (1973:346-347)

12. Factative (default) tense/aspect/modality (Faraclas 1996:188 for Nigerian Pidgin)
[-stative] → [+past], [+completive], [+realis]
[+stative] → [-past], [-completive], [+realis]

13. Eventive – Past perfective - Factative marked – High tone on Verb
   a. Ọ̀ wọn bhónàmẹ́
      ‘He has drunk some of the water.’ (cf. Ọ̀ wọn bhónàmẹ́. ‘He is drinking some of the water.’)
   b. ọ́ tuá
      “It burnt”
   c. Énókhúọ wẹ́ ọ̀lé kpá
      “The woman said she left”
   d. Ọmọn gbíkhien.
      “The child has killed a fly.”
   e. Ọnálímọ́ bhiè nösèn násòn.
      “The baby slept well all night.”

14. Stative – Present Imperfective - Factative marked – High tone on Verb
   a. Ọ́ bí. “It is black”
   b. Ẹ̀nèbài riènpùn gbé. “The food is delicious.”
   c. Ọ́nálímọ́ këkë̀ á. “The orange is rotten.”
   d. Ọkèhèrè ó !fé. “Akhere is rich.”
### Factivity with [Low-Low] noun - ikhetween ‘dance, play’

a. **Factive - [High-Low] surface pattern**
   
   Önôn gbikhiên.
   
   Önôn gbé ikhetween
   
   Önôn dance\FACT dance
   
   ‘ Önôn danced.’, ‘ Önôn has danced.’

b. **Non-factive - [Low-High] surface pattern**
   
   Önôn gbikhiên.
   
   Önôn gbé ikhetween
   
   Önôn dance dance
   
   ‘ Önôn is dancing.’ (I see it happening)

### Factivity with [Low-Low] noun - ãsên ‘spittle’

a. **Factive - [High-Low] surface pattern**
   
   Më tuåsên.
   
   më tuå ãsên
   
   1SG spit\FACT spittle
   
   ‘I spat spittle.’

b. **Non-factive - [Low-High] surface pattern**
   
   Q tu åsên
   
   Q tu åsên
   
   3SG spit spittle
   
   ‘ He is spitting spittle.’
1.3.2. Complicating Data

15. Eventive – Present imperfective - Unexpected high tone with “non-factative” meaning
   a. Mẹ khían. “I am going away”.
   b. Mẹ kpâ. “I am leaving.”

Interpreted as “performative”? /  

16. Verbs of possession and factivity
   a. In situ object - Expected high tone expressing present imperfective
      Àkhérè ó bhọngọ.
      “Akhere has a bottle.”
   b. Ex situ object - Unexpected low tone expressing present imperfective
      Ògó Àkhéré bhọ̀n.
      “It is a bottle that Akhere has.”

2. Part Two – Comparison to previous studies on Esan and Edo

Previous proposals of factative in Edoid: Emai and Degema
   - Emai: a verbal suffix –ì occurs which indicates a “present state or completion of a process or activity [only in absence of auxiliaries or pre-verbal adverbs]” (Schaefer & Egbokhare 2007:178)

17. Emai - Present state (imperfective)
   Òlí ómohè ò dái …tall\FACT
   “The man is tall”

18. Emai - Past activity (perfective)
   Òlí órán nà lí ólì ómohè hiànì. …cut\FACT
   “It was this tree that the man cut”

- Degema: a suffix –ìn exists which is glossed as factative and marks past in dynamic verbs but past/non-past in stative verbs (from Nurse et al. n.d:15, citing Kari 2002:179):

19. Degema - Eventive – Past perfective
    mi-dì-ìn
    1s-eat-FAC
    “I ate.”

20. Degema – Stative – Imperfective
    o-mi-ìn
    3s-be wet-FAC
    “It became wet”/ “It is wet.”

Additional T/A studies:
   - 3 in Esan, 5 in Edo
   - No author adopted notion of factativity in their description
### Basic T/A Distinction in Ekpoma Esan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Eventive verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Perfective** | ? | ? | 1. H  
| | | | 2. H  
| | | | 3. dâ  
| | | | 4. rè  
| **Imperfective** | 1. rè  
| | | 2. rè  
| | 1. M | L | : non-momentary (??) 
| | 2. H | | |

### Basic T/A Distinction in Uromi Esan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Eventive verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Perfective** | ? | ? | H/F  
| **Imperfective** | kã / kà | ? | 1. (L)H : intransitive  
| | | | 2. L : transitive |

### Basic T/A Distinction in Ubiaja Esan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Eventive verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Perfective** | ? | ? | mì...  
| | | | F : intransitive  
| | | | HL / HH : transitive |
| **Imperfective** | ? | ? | 1. á : continuous  
| | | | mì... L : habitual |
Edo may be best candidate for factivity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic T/A Distinction in Edo</th>
<th>Stative verbs</th>
<th>Eventive verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1. (LH)-lè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>2. (LH)-lè</td>
<td>(LH)-lè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>1. (LH)-lè</td>
<td>2. ghárá-gháà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>(LH)-lè</td>
<td>1. (LH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. gháà</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wescott (1963:136-155):
- Verbal suffix -rle\(^1\): calls this suffix the “perfective suffix” (-rle is a spelling variant)
  - Dynamic verbs: past perfective
  - Stative verbs: (1) present imperfective (i.e. “is X”) or (2) incipient (i.e. “becoming X”)


22. Edo – Stative – Present imperfective – LH -lè
   Ọ̀bhòórlò. “It is ripe.” (Wescott 1963: 145)

Complications:

23. Edo – Stative – Past imperfective - LH -re
   rię́nrię́n-řè (-re is a spelling variant)
   ‘was sweet/became sweet’ (Agheyisi 1990: 73)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Variables looked at relevant for T/A surface realization</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb type (E.g. Eventive vs. stative)</td>
<td>Transitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogwa</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uromi</td>
<td>(X)(^2)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubiaja</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo(_1)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo(_2)</td>
<td>(X)(^2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo(_3)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo(_4)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo(_5)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Osiruemu (2005:71) actually calls this marker a “verbal factorial” for Ubiaja Esan, whose form is -IV (with a harmonizing vowel), deleted in fast speech. Little other information is presented about this morpheme, and it is not known if her use of label “factorial” is the same as the notion of factative. I will correspond with her this summer (hopefully); I have been unsuccessful at contacting her from North America.
2 This is not as systematically discussed as other variables.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb type</th>
<th>Eventive</th>
<th>Other types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Transitivity | Transitive | Intransitive | Ditransitive | ...
| Syllables in verb | 1 (ghe ‘look at’) | 2 (hibhin ‘save’) | 1 (gua ‘swim’) | 2 (tita ‘sit’) | ...
| Tones of DP | LL (ämè ‘water’) | LH (ògô ‘bottle’) | HL (îzè ‘rice’) | 3… (ákîlé ‘frog’) |
| Imperfective | Past | Present | Future | |
| Perfective | Past | Present | Future | |
| Other types… | |

This same type of chart to be used for:
- Additional verb types
- Additional aspectual/temporal distinctions
- Will be modified as data requires

Only then one can move to more complex constructions
- Negation
- Counterfactuals
- Grammatical tone assigned by adverbials
- Etc.
3. Part Three – Situating Esan within West Africa

If this is indeed factative marking, two issues:
- How common is factivity across West Africa?
- Can this be understood as
  a. Areal spread
  b. Genetic inheritance
  c. An emergent property of impoverished tense/aspect structures or systems (a “factativity effect” as argued for in Déchaine 1993 and Fitzpatrick 2006),
  d. Some combination of the above
  e. Something else

Similar things asked by Nurse et al. (2012:7):
- “Factative stretches across Niger-Congo from west to east”
  o “Is Factative an original Niger-Congo category, or did it spread across West and Central Africa, replacing [pure] Perfective? If so, was it an internal Niger-Congo development or was it transferred from another African phylum? If so, which one, and what is the distribution of Factative in Africa outside Niger-Congo?” (Nurse et al. 2012:7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kari (2008: xlii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igboid, Benue-Congo</td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>Welmers (1973: 346-347)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Déchaine (1993: 562)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manfredi (1991: 175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defoid, Benue-Congo</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Ajani (2001: 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantoid, Benue-Congo</td>
<td>Ejagham</td>
<td>Nurse et al. (n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijoid</td>
<td>Kalabari</td>
<td>Nurse et al. (n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa</td>
<td>Tuwulí</td>
<td>Harley (2008: 307)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbe</td>
<td>Fon [Fɔn-gbe]</td>
<td>Déchaine (1993: 562)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbe</td>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Ameeka (2008: 140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creole/Pidgin</td>
<td>Nigerian Pidgin English</td>
<td>Faracles (1996: 188)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map to show extent of factativity

Area which Factative marking occurs: **Macro Sudan Belt** (Güldemann 2008, 2010) – III on map below:

A number of areal features have already been noted (Güldemann 2010):

1. Implosive consonants
2. Labial-velar consonants
3. Three and more level tones
4. ATR vowel harmony
5. Nasalized vowels
6. “Lax” question prosody
7. SBJ-(AUX)-OBJ-V-X order
8. ‘(Sur)pass’ comparative
9. Logophoricity system

---

3 Map by Steve Huffman, Data from World Language Mapping System v.3.2 (Ethnologue 15th ed.) www.gmi.org/wlms
Concluding remarks:
- If languages such as Edo and Esan ultimately exhibit factative marking which they were not described as exhibiting before, this may represent a trend in West African description more broadly.
- Understanding the exact nature of Esan and Edoid tense, aspect, and factativity has the potential to
  - Allow further understanding of differences between factative systems and traditional perfective/imperfective systems
  - Contribute to the understanding of the areal diffusion of linguistic structure and categories in this area of the world.

References


**Contact**

Contact me to discuss any details further. I have a draft of a description of tense and aspect in Ogwa Esan, too, if one is interested. And I also have a significant body of resources on Esan and Edoid languages, and have compiled a linguistic bibliography of Edoid linguistics (going beyond what one would find on WorldCat, LLBA), which I’d love to share if anyone is interested.

Email: n.rolle@berkeley.edu