

Nominal Modifiers in Ikwere

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Abstract

Ikwere is an Igboid language spoken in four (Ikwerre, Emohua, Obio/Akpor and part of Port Harcourt Local Government Areas (LGAs)) of the twenty-three LGAs of Rivers State of Nigeria. It adopts a descriptive approach in the analysis of nominal modifiers in the language. The paper identifies the adjectives, qualificative nouns, demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals, possessives and relative clauses as the seven sub-classes of nominal modifiers in the language. It notes that most of the modifiers belong to the close class of words in Ikwere. Syntactically, all nominal modifiers predominantly occur in post-head position, but few of them, in addition, occur in pre-head position. It is observed that high tone plays a significant contribution in the derivation of most of the nominal modifiers in the language. It is expected that this paper will serve as a useful reference material to the documentation of linguistic features in Ikwere and other (related) languages.

Keywords: Nominal modifiers, Adjectives, Qualificatives, Quantitatives, Numerals

1. Introduction

Ikwere is an Igboid language of the West Benue-Congo family of the Niger-Congo Phylum of languages (Williamson 1988, Williamson and Blench 2000). It is spoken in four (Ikwerre, Emohua, Obio/Akpor and part of Port Harcourt Local Government Areas (LGAs)) of the twenty-three LGAs of Rivers State of Nigeria. The language comprises 24 divergent dialects, which are mutually intelligible. According to Alerechi (2015), it is yet to develop a standard dialect, but there are published works such as Donwa-Ifode and Ekwulo's (1987) *Ikwere Orthography, T̄s̄itamenti Ikne* (a translated New Testament Bible), and some recent scholarly works in the language. Some other research works are Worukwo (1999), Weje (2003), Alerechi (2007,2009), Alerechi and Ojukwu (2010), to mention but a few. These works focus on different areas of language study in Ikwere. The present study treats the different nominal modifiers identified in Ikwere, for the purpose of documentation.

2. Nominal modifiers

Nominal modifiers is a cover term for those 'qualifying' words, which even though they only occur in the noun phrase (NP), can never be used alone in a minimal NP (Emenanjo, 1978). Emenanjo further observed that they only modify nominal, especially nouns in Igbo. This is similar to what is obtainable in Ikwere as the present paper will illustrate. Nominal modifiers are linguistic expressions used to restrict, limit or specify the reference of the nouns or pronouns in their vicinity. A number of nominal modifiers are attested in related Igboid languages to Ikwere such as Igbo and Echie. One of such nominal modifiers is the adjective. In examining the very existence, characteristics and exact number of adjectives in Igbo, Emenanjo (2015) states the following as the frame used in identifying the adjectives:

- i) Adjectives cannot function alone as a minimal NP. This implies that any word which can be immediately used after the verb *d̄i* 'have the feature of' is not an adjective but a nominal.
- ii) Adjectives never function as the head of a two-word NP or a relative clause.
- iii) Adjectives retain their inherent tones when they come immediately after another word in a two-word NP.

Following these frame and others advanced by some other scholars working in Igbo, Emenanjo (2015) recognizes only three of the words identified by Welmers and Welmers (1968) as the words that can properly be called adjectives in Igbo. They are *aj̄ō/ ajōō* 'bad', 'unacceptable', *ojī/ ojiē* 'black'/ 'dark' and *ōcha* 'white, clear, clean'

These frames used in identifying adjectives in Igbo are contrary to the traditional ones observed in English. Crystal (1997) notes that in English adjectives:

- 1) Function in the 'attributive' position as in 'the *big* man'
- 2) Can occur in a post-verbal or predicate position as in 'The man is *big*'
- 3) Can be pre-modified by an intensifier such as 'very' as in 'The very *big* man'

4) Can be used in a comparative and superlative form, either by inflection such as (big, bigger, biggest) or periphrastically as in (interesting, more interesting, most interesting).

These obviously differ from those observed in Igbo as treated by Emenanjo (1978, 2015) and others. Note that in considering adjectives in Ikwere, the author bears in mind the frame outlined in Igbo by Emenanjo (2015) as they may share certain features in common being Igboid languages.

Considering the semantic features of the adjectives, Dixon (1977:63) states that ‘an adjective describes some important but non-criterial property of an object. That is, an adjectival description will serve to distinguish between two members of the same species that are referred to by a single common noun’. Similarly, an adjective is defined as ‘a word typically used to modify a noun, and which describes some property of the thing referred to by the noun, such as its colour, age, value, size, origin, or the impression it gives’ (Hurford, 1994:8). It is expected that adjectives in Ikwere may meet some of these semantic features listed by Hurford.

Apart from the adjectives, scholars have identified other nominal modifiers in the literature. Emenanjo (1978), records the adjectives, the demonstratives, quantifiers and pronominal modifiers as sub-classes of nominal modifiers in Igbo. Ndimele (2003), in addition to these sub-classes, recognizes the numerals, relative clauses and the totalizer in his treatment of nominal modifiers in Echie, an Igboid language spoken in Rivers State of Nigeria. Similarly, this paper identifies seven sub-classes of the nominal modifiers as the adjectives, qualificative nouns, demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals, possessive pronouns and relative clause in Ikwere, a related Igboid language to Echie and Igbo.

3. Methodology

This paper is a description of nominal modifiers in Ikwere. The language comprises twenty-four mutually intelligible dialects. However, the data used in analyzing the nominal modifiers in the language is drawn from the Omuanwa dialect, the variety of the author. As a competent native speaker, the data collection is based on personal introspection of the author. Interaction with other competent native speakers also served as a useful means of authenticating the data for the analysis. The data is represented orthographically and vowel nasalization in the language is symbolized by inserting the letter ‘n’ between the consonant and vowel of the affected syllable. Data was discussed using a descriptive method of analysis. This is because it accounts for the primary linguistic data in a way that agrees with the native speaker’s intuition of the language.

4. Ikwere nominal modifiers

This paper identifies the adjectives, qualificative nouns, demonstratives, quantifiers, numerals, possessive pronouns and relative clause as the nominal modifiers in the Omuanwa dialect of Ikwere. They are treated in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Adjectives in Ikwere

This paper observes five adjectives, and two of them may be arranged in antonymous pairs *ochnichna* ‘white’ and *ujiji* ‘black’/ ‘dark’, *kwu* ‘big’ and *ogbede / ntii* ‘small’, and *ojo↓o* ‘bad’. Similar to Green and Igwe’s (1963) observation in Igbo, adjectives in Ikwere follow the noun they modify. Consider examples (1) - (5):

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1) <i>ojo↓o</i> | | ‘bad’ |
| ewu + <i>ojo↓o</i> | = | ewu <i>ojo↓o</i> |
| goat bad | | ‘bad goat’ |
| 2) <i>ochnichna</i> | | ‘white’ |
| ewu + <i>ochnichna</i> | = | ewu <i>ochnichna</i> |
| goat white | | ‘white goat’ |
| 3) <i>ujiji</i> | | ‘black’/ ‘dark’ |
| ewu + <i>ujiji</i> | = | ewu <i>ujiji</i> |
| goat black | | ‘black goat’ |
| 4) <i>kwu</i> | | ‘big’ |
| mma + <i>kwu</i> | = | m↓ma <i>kwu</i> |
| knife big | | ‘big knife(matchet)’ |
| 5) <i>ogbede / ntii</i> | | ‘small’ |
| mma + <i>ogbede / ntii</i> | = | m↓ma <i>ogbede / ntii</i> |
| knife small | | ‘knife(kitchen)’ |

Semantically, each of the adjectives in examples (1), (2) - (3), and (4) - (5) expresses the notion of value, colour, and dimension, respectively, of the nouns they modify. It is interesting to note that the adjectives in examples (1) - (3) are derived from the verb root *-jɔ* 'be bad/ugly', *-chna* 'be white/clean' and *-ji* 'be black/dark', respectively. However, they can never co-occur with the verb root from which they are derived in any construction. If they do, they lose their class membership as adjectives. In other words, they change to become their nominal cognate counterparts, the origins of which are also derived from the same verb root. It is further observed that the adjective *ochnichna* 'white', unlike the others, is formed by a partial reduplication of the derived verb root in addition to the *o-* prefix recorded in (1). In contrast, *kwu* 'big' and *ogbede / ntii* 'small' are not derived from any verb root and *kwu* does not occur with any affix.

Tonally, all the adjectives, except *ogbede* 'small', behave alike irrespective of whether they are derived from their verb root or not. When the adjectives combine with the nouns they modify, the tone of the V1 (i.e., the last vowel of the noun) and the tone of the V2 (i.e., the first vowel of the adjective) become a high (H) + high (H) irrespective of their inherent tone pattern. This implies that adjectives are marked with a high tone in Ikwere. With a high low (HL) tone pattern noun, however, the low tone moves leftward as a floating tone causing the high tone adjectival marker to lower to a downstep high, while the adjective retains its tone pattern. At the boundary between the noun and the adjective, the tone of the V1 (i.e., the last vowel of the noun) and the tone of the V2 (i.e., the first vowel of the adjective) become high (H) + high (H) irrespective of their inherent tone pattern. Thus while it is true that adjectives in Ikwere do not occur alone in a minimal NP as observed in Igbo, the Ikwere data demonstrate contrary to Emenanjo's (1978, 2015) observation that adjectives do not generate tonal changes in Igbo, that tonal alterations exist when adjectives combine with the nouns they modify as in (2) and (3).

Nominal cognate

Similar to Ndimele's (2003) observation in Echie concerning adjectives with verbal origin, Ikwere also records adjectives with verbal origin as the adjectives in (1), (2) and (3) derived from the verb roots *-jɔ* 'be bad/ugly', *-chna* 'be white/clean' and *-ji* 'be black/dark', respectively, show. The adjectives also have nominal cognates, which are also derived from the same verb roots as the adjectives themselves. Unlike the adjectives, the nominal cognates co-occur with their verb roots. See examples (6) - (9):

- 6) m↓ma 'beauty'
 o marna m↓ma
 3SG be beautiful beautiful 'She is beautiful'
- 7) njo 'badness' / 'ugliness'
 Oge jo-ro njo
 PN be ugly-ASRT ugly 'Oge is ugly'
- 8) ochna 'cleanliness' / 'whiteness'
 ize a chna ochna
 teeth 3SG be clean clean 'His/Her teeth are clean'
- 9) nji 'blackness' / 'darkness'
 o ji nji
 3SG be dark dark 'S(He) is dark'

Examples (6) – (9) show that the nominal cognates are derived from their verb root and unlike their adjectival counterparts that cannot occur alone in a minimal NP, they can occur alone.

4.2 Qualificative nouns

The qualificative nouns behave like the adjectives in Ikwere as they occur in the vicinity of the nouns they specify. However, they may occur before or after the noun they modify. Contrary to the adjectives, they can occur independently in predicate position, particularly with a copula or stative verb. Some of the qualificative nouns may be ideophonic or reduplicative in nature. Consider examples (10) – (17):

- 10) Oknani/ oknei 'old'
 a) Jí+óknàni = jí óknàni 'old yam'
 Yam old
 b) Nyé + óknèi = Nyé óknèi 'old person'
 Person old

c) Óknèí mádnù old person			‘old person’
11) Ùkné			‘new’
a) Jí + ùkné Yam new	=	jí ú↓kné	‘new yam’
b) Órò + ùkné House new	=	ó↓ró ùkné	‘new house’
12) Nknù			‘hot’
Mi↓ni + nknù Water hot	=	miní n↓knù	‘hot water’
13) Ndíndí / nkpùmkpù Ndíndí mádnù Short person			‘short’ ‘A short person’
14) Ógólógó / óbnórónó Ógólógó mádnù Tall person			‘tall’ ‘A tall person’
15) Óbnórónó mádnù Huge person			‘A huge person’
16) Mgbíríngbí/nngníníngnì Mgbíríngbí mádnù Slim person			‘slim’ ‘A slim person’
17) Njájá Njájá mádnù smallish person			‘smallish’ ‘A smallish (smart) person’

The foregoing examples of qualificative nouns in Ikwere demonstrate that they occur before and after the nouns they modify. Whenever they precede the noun they modify, an emphatic meaning is implied on the modifier rather than the noun. The examples further show that the qualificative nouns are derived with high tone in the boundary between the noun-head and the modifier. The qualificative nouns can also occur alone in post verbal position in the language. This is unlike the real adjectives that cannot occur in isolation in predicative position. See examples (18) - (20):

18) Ó mè-rnè óknàni 3SG be-ASERT old	‘It is old’
19) Ò dì ùkné 3SG be new	‘It is new’
20) Ò dì nknù 3SG be hot	‘It is hot’

From the foregoing discussions, the difference among the adjectives, nominal cognates and qualificative nouns needs to be mentioned. While adjectives cannot occur independently in a predicate position and cannot co-occur with the verb root from which they are derived, nominal cognates can co-occur with the verb root from which they are derived. On the other hand, the qualificative nouns can also occur independently in predicate position, particularly with a copular or stative verb in Ikwere.

4.3 Demonstratives

The demonstrative is used to refer to the spatial location or position of an entity or entities with respect to whether such an entity is near or far away from the speaker. Alerechi (2008) identifies three demonstratives in Ikwere. They are:

ai. kà	‘this’	a.ii. élé kà	‘these’
bi. kàm	‘that (far)’	b.ii. élé kàm	‘those (far)’
ci. kà ànì	‘that (farther away)’	c.ii. élé kà ání	‘those (farther away)’

Alerechi (2008) further says that while *kà* is used for a proximal reference, *kàm* and *kà ànì* perform distal or non-proximal function. *kà* points to an entity close to the speaker, *kàm* refers to an entity that is far from the speaker and *kà ànì* earmarks an entity farther away from the speaker. The three forms are invariant to number in the language. Plurality is, however, signaled by the morpheme *é/é*, which precedes the demonstrative pronouns.

While the foregoing discussion based on Alerechi (2008) is true as far as the referents of the demonstratives are concerned, the present study takes cognizance of the constituent parts of the demonstratives, which Alerechi

(2008) is silent on. The position of this work is that the various demonstratives as treated by Alerechi have undergone the process of assimilation. Their original forms are as given in:

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------|--------------|---------------|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| d. | Kè | à | = | kà | 'this' | |
| | PRT | one (near) | | | | |
| e. | Kè | àm | = | kàm | 'that(far)' | |
| | PRT | one(far) | | | | |
| f. | Kè | àni | = | kà àni | 'that (farther away)' | |
| | PRT | one(farther) | | | | |
| g. | élé | kè | à | = | élé kà | 'these' |
| | PL.M | PRT | one (near) | | | |
| h. | élé | kè | àm | = | élé kám | 'those (farther away)' |
| | PL.M | PRT | one (far) | | | |
| i. | élé | ↓ké | ání | = | élé ká ání | 'those (farther away)' |
| | PL.M | PRT | one (farther) | | | |

Observe that the vowel of the particularizer *kè* completely assimilates to the vowel of the referents. Thus while the vowel of the particularizer *kè* has completely merged with the referents *à* 'one (near)' and *àm* 'one (far)', it has copied the vowel of *àni* 'one (farther)'. The merging of the two vowels, therefore, has reduced two monosyllabic words to a monosyllabic word. It should be noted that what the native speaker uses in normal utterance is the assimilated form. Consider examples (21) – (26) taken from Alerechi (2008):

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 21) | Jí | kà | | 'this yam' |
| | yam | PR..DEM | | |
| 22) | Jí | kàm | | 'that yam(far)' |
| | yam | IN.DT.DEM | | |
| 23) | Jí | ká | ání | 'that yam(farther away)' |
| | yam | DT.DEM | | |
| 24) | Jí | élé | kà | 'these yams' |
| | yam | PL.M | PR.DEM | |
| 25) | Jí | élé | kàm | 'those yams(far)' |
| | yam | PL.M. | IN.DT.DEM | |
| 26) | Jí | élé | ↓ká ání | 'those yams(farther away)' |
| | yam | PL.M | DT.DEM | |

Examples (21) – (26) show that the demonstrative pronouns in Ikwere serve as nominal modifiers of the head noun. While the demonstratives immediately follow the nouns they modify in the singular forms as in (21) – (23), *élé* in (24) – (26) is inserted between the nominal and the demonstrative pronoun in the plural counterparts. Note that *élé* is used to mark plurality in nouns as well. Prosodically, the demonstrative pronouns retain their low (-low) tone pattern wherever they occur except with *kà àni*, which changes its tonal behaviour whenever it follows a contrary tone pattern.

4.4 Quantifiers

A quantifier is a nominal modifier used to express the idea of quantity. Like other nominal modifiers, they occur in the vicinity of the noun they modify. Quantifiers recorded in Ikwere are few just like adjectives and demonstratives. See examples in (27) – (30):

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|--------------------|
| 27) | kpakarara / gburugburu | 'all' |
| a) | kpakarara ede | 'all the cocoyams' |
| b) | gburugburu ede | 'all the cocoyams' |
| 28) | dai/ kpóí | 'only' |
| a) | ede dai | 'only cocoyam' |
| | cocoyam only | |
| b) | ó↓tú ede kpóí | 'only one cocoyam' |
| | one cocoyam only | |
| 29) | agwna | 'some' |
| | agwna ede | 'some cocoyams' |
| | some cocoyam | |

- 30) òbùlà ‘every’
 nyé òbùlà ‘every person’
 person every

Examples (27) and (28) demonstrate that Ikwere uses two different lexical items to express the words meaning ‘all’, and ‘only’, respectively. While *kpakarara* ‘all’ and *gburugburu* ‘all’ can be used interchangeably in the language, *dai* ‘only’ and *kpóí* ‘only’ have slight meaning difference. Whereas *dai* ‘only’ refers to the particular item referred to among other items in question, *kpóí* ‘only’ refers to the limitedness of the quantity of the particular item referred to. Thus most often a number is attached to the nominal being modified when the quantifier *kpóí* ‘only’ is used. The examples further demonstrate that while *dai/ kpóí* ‘only’ and *òbùlà* ‘every’ obligatorily occur after the noun like the adjectives, some qualificative nouns and the demonstratives, all others precede the noun. It is interesting to note that there is a slight change in meaning whenever the quantifier precedes the noun, i.e., when a particular modifier can be used either before or after the noun. It is further observed that whereas most of the quantifiers begin with a consonant, *agwna* ‘some’ and *òbùlà* ‘every’ begin with a vowel. Thus implying that apart from the verbs, most of the quantifiers are among the few words that begin with consonants in the language. Notice also that the quantifiers retain their inherent tone pattern with the exception of *gburugburu* ‘all’ which records tonal alteration in the last syllable when combined with the noun.

4.5 Numerals

Numerals are used to express numbers in languages of the world. Following Alerechi and Weje’s (2013) account on numerals, the Ikwere language traditionally records vigesimal counting system, which is 20 based. Apart from the numerals from 11 to 19, which are 10 based, the numerals ranging from twenty-one (21) through three hundred and ninety –nine (399) before four hundred (400), have the numeral ‘20’ functioning as the base, to which lesser numerals are added. The Ikwere language recognizes both cardinal and ordinal numerals and they are used to modify nominal.

4.5.1 Cardinal numerals

Cardinal numerals are regarded as the basic form of counting. Examples of the cardinal numerals in Ikwere are recorded in Ekwulo (2001) and Alerechi and Weje (2013). See some of the numerals in Tables 1, 2 and 3:

Table 1: The Ikwere traditional counting

Numeral	Gloss
ótù (ń↓ńím) one (one)	‘one’
wáàbḡ (èbó /àbḡ) two (two)	‘two’
hírí (ĩrí) ten (ten)	‘ten’
hírí nĩ ótù (ń↓ńím) ten CONJ one	‘eleven’
hírí nĩ àbḡ ten CONJ two	‘twelve’
ḡ↓gnú (ḡ↓gwnú) twenty	‘twenty’
ínù four hundred	‘four hundred’

In Ikwere, the numerals *otu* ‘one’, *hírí* ‘ten’, *ḡ↓gnú* ‘twenty’ and *ínù* ‘four hundred’ function as prenominal modifiers when used attributively. Conversely, those beginning with the numerals ranging from ‘two’ to ‘nine’ act as post nominal modifiers syntactically. Consider examples (31) – (36):

- 31) otu ‘one’
 o↓tu madnu
 one person ‘one person’
 32) wáàbḡ (èbó /àbḡ) ‘two’
 madnu àbḡ

- person two 'two persons'
 33) wá↓átó (ètó/ àtó) 'three'
 madnu àtó
 person three 'three persons'
 34) òrí (ìrí) 'ten'
 òrí madnu
 ten person 'ten persons'
 35) ó↓gnú 'twenty'
 ó↓gnú madnu
 twenty person 'twenty persons'
 36) ònù 'four hundred'
 ònù madnu
 four hundred person 'four hundred persons'

Examples (31) - (34-36) demonstrate that when any of these numerals - *otu* 'one', *òrí* 'ten', *ó↓gnú* 'twenty' and *ònù* 'four hundred' - combine with a noun to form a noun phrase, they always precede the noun. Examples (31) and (36) show that high low tone numerals functioning as prenominal modifier change to high downstep high tone pattern, while others retain their inherent tone pattern. Note that all the numerals functioning as prenominal modifier are disyllabic and those retaining their inherent tone patterns end in a high tone and are preceded by a low tone as in (35) and a floating low tone as in (36). This implies that high tone plays a significant role in the derivation of numeral modifiers. Observe also from (32) and (33) that the reprefix form *wV-* is deleted when the cardinal numeral functions as a nominal modifier.

The Ikwere language also, has evolved a modern counting system, which is 10 based. The modern system recognizes the number *ètèkné/èwhúèwhù* 'zero' and records landmarks extending to trillion, which were absent in the traditional counting. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate examples of modern counting and their various landmarks, respectively:

Table 2: Modern counting in Ikwere

Numeral	Gloss
ètèkné (èwhúèwhù) empty (empty)	'zero'
ótù (ò↓nìím) one (one)	'one'
òrí àbò ten two	'twenty'

Table 3: The Ikwere modern counting landmarks

Numeral	Gloss
ètèkné (èwhúèwhù) empty (empty)	'zero'
ótù (ò↓nìím) one	'one'
òrí (ìrí) ten	'ten'
ó↓tù ríwhù (ríwhù ò↓nìím) one hundred (hundred one)	'one hundred'
ó↓tù pókúwú (pókúwú ò↓nìím) one thousand (thousand one)	'one thousand'
ó↓tù òdásì (òdásì ò↓nìím) one million (million one)	'one million'
ó↓tù òdè (òdè ò↓nìím) one billion (billion one)	'one billion'
ó↓tù pókúwú òdè (pókúwú òdè ò↓nìím) one thousand billion (thousand billion one)	'one trillion'

It is noted, however, that numerals in modern counting behave the same way as those in the traditional counting when they are used to modify nominals in an NP construction.

4.5.2 Ordinal numerals

Ordinal numerals are used to put things in a numerical order. Just as Ndimele (2003) observed in Echie, ordinals in Ikwere are realized by inserting the particularizer morpheme *kè* between the noun and the cardinal number, thereby, functioning as post nominal modifier. The ordinal *mbom* ‘first’ and *ikpetemaznû* ‘last’, however, have different forms as they cannot be traced to any of the cardinal number. It is interesting to note that it is only with the first and last ordinals that the occurrence of the particularizer morpheme is optional when they are preceded by the noun. Consider examples (37) - (40):

- 37a) *kè mbom* ‘first’
 b. *nnwo (↓ke) mbom*
 child PRT first ‘first child’
- 38a) *kè wáàbõ* ‘second’
 b. *nnwo ↓ke wáàbõ*
 child PRT two ‘second child’
- 39a) *kè wí↓ító↓lú* ‘ninth’
 b. *nnwo ↓ke wí↓ító↓lú*
 child PRT nine ‘ninth child’
- 40a) *kè ikpetema↓znu* ‘last’
 b. *nnwo (↓ke) ikpetema↓znu*
 child PRT last ‘last child’

The foregoing examples demonstrate that the low tone of the particularizer morpheme *kè* in (37a) - (40a) changes to a downstep high tone in (37b) - (40b) when it occurs between the noun and the numeral. Examples (38) - (39) further show that the *wV-* reprefix form, which is deleted in the cardinal used as nominal modifier is retained when the ordinal functions as nominal modifier.

4.6 The possessive pronouns

The possessive pronouns are used to express the notion of ownership. In Ikwere, ownership may be expressed in two different ways such as the emphatic and the non-emphatic forms. While the emphatic form is expressed with insertion of the particularizer morpheme *kè* between the noun and the appropriate pronoun, the non-emphatic form is expressed with the exclusion of *kè*. See the following examples in (41) - (43) taken from Alerechi (2008:38-39):

- 41a) *oro m*
 house 1SG ‘my house’
 b) *ó↓ro kè m* (Emphatic)
 house PRT 1SG ‘my own house’
- 42a) *oro a*
 house 2SG ‘his/her house’
 b) *ó↓ro ke a* (Emphatic)
 house PRT 2SG ‘his/her own house’
- 43a) *oro we*
 house 3PL ‘their house’
 b) *órò kè wé* (Emphatic)
 house PRT 3PL ‘their own house’

The foregoing noun phrases demonstrate that possessive pronouns in Ikwere act as post-nominal modifiers. While examples (41a) – (43a) represent the non-emphatic forms of the possessive pronouns, (41b) – (43b) show their emphatic counterparts.

4.7 Relative clause

A relative clause is a clause that modifies a noun. It is a sentence-like construction that comprises a noun or pronoun as the head and its clausal complement (Ndimele 2003:125, Amfani 2003:835). In Ikwere, tonal alteration of the noun being modified rather than a segmental morpheme (or a relative pronoun) is used to signal a relative clause.

Abbreviations

ASERT = assertive, 1SG = first person singular, 3PL = third person plural, 3SG = third person singular, DT.DEM = distal demonstrative, H= high, IN.DT.DEM = intermediate distal demonstrative, L= low tone, NP= noun phrase, O.NUM= ordinal numeral, PL.M = plural marker, PREP = preposition, PR.DEM = proximal demonstrative, PN = proper noun, PRT= particularizer, RC= relative clause

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