Phonology of Igbo Morpho-syntactic Clitics

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Abstract

This paper examines the morphosyntactic clitics in the Igbo language. It studies the phonological features that characterise them. It describes their phonological shape, types, environments, patterning, attitude towards vowel harmony, and tonal features. Data were collected through observation and introspection. The research design is purely descriptive. The paper finds out that the majority of the clitics possess a consonant and a vowel (CV) syllable structure, which may be found in clusters, the order being dependent on the desired meaning the speaker wants to achieve. The clitics are grouped into two according to whether or not they obey the vowel harmony rule (VHR). One group obeys VHR while the other group violates it. Using the tonal criterion, the Igbo clitics are classified into three: host dependent, specific and the obligatory contour principle (OCP) compliant clitics. The host dependent clitics copy the preceding tone of a tone bearing unit (TBU). Tone specific clitics maintain their peculiar individual tone pattern wherever they are found. On the other hand, OCP compliant clitics bear different tone patterns from their preceding TBU. These phonological elements combine to make this study worthwhile.

Keywords: clitic, syllable structure, clitic cluster, vowel harmony, tone.

1. Introduction

The word clitic is derived from the Greek word *klinien* meaning *to lean*. Clitics are neither clearly independent words nor affixes (Katamba, 1995). They are morphemes that display actions that indicate that they have a locus between words and morphemes. They are dependent morphemes that are attached to words known as hosts. Following Zwicky (1977), many other works have tried to distinguish clitics from words and affixes. The distinguishing criteria were based on the properties of ordering, internal sandhi, binding, construction with affixes, rule immunity and accent (Zwicky, 1977; Kaisse and Shaw, 1985; Anderson, 1992; Zwicky and Pullum, 1983; Macaulay, 1987 etc). Zwicky (1977) classifies clitics into two broad types: simple and special clitics. He refers to simple clitics as the elements with "one (or more) of alternative phonological forms of certain lexical items (in particular, the prosodically deficient realisation(s) of the item in question" (Anderson, 2005:22). Anderson (2005:23) uses simple clitic as phonological clitic which he defines as, "a linguistic element whose phonological form is deficient in that it lacks prosodic structure at the level of the (prosodic) word". On the other hand, special clitics are said to be equally related to corresponding non-clitic forms with full-word phonology and ordinary syntax (Anderson, 2005). The special clitic is what Anderson calls morphosyntactic clitic and redefines it so as to eliminate any 'unusual' morphosyntactic property. He defines morphosyntactic property as "a linguistic element whose position with respect to the other elements of the phrase or clause follows a distinct set of principles, separate from those of the independently motivated syntax of free elements in the language" (Anderson, 2005:31).

Since the advent of classical generative phonology, the brain-child of Chomsky and Halle (1968), phonology moved away from the realm of identification of phonemes to issues relating to morpho-syntax. The *Sound Pattern of English* (SPE) came to be a proposal that phonological organisation can be related to morphosyntactic organisation through phonological rules. Classical generative phonology has been revised in many forms (e.g. Kahn, 1976, Goldsmith, 1976; Selkirk, 1980, 1981, 1984, 1985; Nespor and Vogel, 1986; Peperkam, 1997 and Vigario (2003). It became important for a division of phonological units that are larger segments into syllables, morpheme, words, and phrases to be represented in quasi-segmental elements with specific positions internal to the segments (Anderson, 2005). Kahn (1976) suggests that the boundary-element approach to higher phonological units can be alleviated with autosegmental picture (Goldsmith 1976). Kahn (1976) suggests that rather than seeing syllable as stretches of segments between two instances of an appropriate boundary element, they should be treated as structural tier linked to segmental units in a potentially many to many fashion. Kahn's proposal opened the door to significant revisions of prosodic organisation. Such relevant revisions include the inclusion of higher organisation and stress (Liberman and Prince, 1977) and additional constituent types (Selkirk 1981, 1984 and Nespor and Vogel, 1986) where syllables are hierarchically organised into feet (Ft), feet into phonological (or prosodic) words (PW), words into phonological phrases (PPh), phonological phrases into intonational phrases (IPh), and intonational phrases into whole utterances.

Clitics were studied using prosodic hierarchy. Nespor and Vogel (1986) propose an additional unit hierarchy called clitic group comprising a host and a sequence of clitics. The position where this unit is assumed is between PW and PPh. The Clitic group proposal received negative attacks (see Booij, 1988, Zec and Inkelas, 1990, Peperkamp, 1997). It was therefore abandoned as part of prosodic hierarchy. Anderson (2005:45-46) proposes that a combination of lexical phonology and prosodic phonology may be an alternative framework for analysing phonology of cliticisation. Thus, he identifies non-clitic words in the following manner: Non-clitic lexical words are assigned prosodic structure up to the level of the PW within the lexical phonology. (Phonological) clitics, in contrast, are "prosodically deficient" in the sense that they do not have PW structure at the point they are introduced into S-structure. To satisfy full interpretation, they must be incorporated into PW or some other constituent in the prosodic structure, together with the associated lexical material, in the post-lexical phonology. Following Kiparsky (2000), Anderson (2005) adopts a modified version of optimality theory (OT) where constraints operate to instantiate the phonology of a given level of the lexical phonology, as well as that of the post-lexical phonology, in such a way that there is more than one constraint-satisfaction operation in the phonology as a whole in the analysis of clitics. Clitics bear some suprasegmental features.

In the Igbo language, few works have been done on clitics. Emenanjo (1978) concentrates on enclitics where he identifies a good number of them as may be found in various varieties of Igbo. Anagbogu (2001) in addition identifies proclitics and concentrates on the semantic analysis of the clitics. Nweze (2010-11) studies, in particular, clitics in the Nsukka variety of Igbo and observes the existence of mesoclitics in the dialect. Anyanwu (2006) uses syntactic evidence (strict adjacency to the main or auxiliary verb, modification, topicalisation, coordination etc) to prove the fact that there exists pronominal simple clitics in Igbo. He finds out that the pro analysis for the pronominal simple clitics in Igbo is superior to the argument analysis. This work identifies itself with Emenanjo (1978),

Anagbogu (2010) and Nweze (2010-11) by outlining the clitics observable in the Igbo language. It however deviates from them by describing the phonological features of the identified clitics.

2. Igbo Clitics

The examples in 1 are some of the clitics used in the Igbo language.

1a. nụ /nʊ/   shows politeness or mild request, may be used for 'please'

 b. nụ   /nʊ/   optional polite plural marker

 c. nwa /ŋʷa/   emphatic pronominal or nominal phrase marker 'very self'

 d. ra /ɹa/   also

 e. rịị /ɹɪɪ/   since, already

 f. sị /sɪ/   optional plural marker, all (all times with overtones of
      distributiveness)

 g. tụ /tʊ/   shows polite request for a little thing

 h. zi/zị   /zi/zɪ/   also, too again

 i. zi/zị   /zi/zɪ/   eventually, after, afterwards, now after something else

 j. se /se/   interrogative marker requesting confirmation

 k. dị(rị)   dɪ (ɹɪ)   indicates scorn

 l. dụ (dọ, dị) /dʊ (dɔ, dɪ) optional interrogative marker

 m. fụ /fʊ/   just now

 n. ga /ga/   optional plural marker

 o. kọ   (dị; ra; tụ) /kɔ(dɪ,ɹa,tʊ/   also

 p. kwa(kwọ) /kwa(kwɔ/   also, in addition to, for repetition or emphasis

 q. kwu /kwu/   also, in addition to something else

 r. ri/rị   /ri/rɪ/   really

 s. nii/nii   /nii/nɪɪ/   really

 t. nọọ/nnọọ /nɔɔ/nnɔɔ/   really, quite

 u. te   /te/   also, too, even

 v. ọzọ   /ɔzɔ/   in addition

 w. he   /he/   as usual

 x. kpa   /kpa/   frequently

 y. kpa   /kpa/   shows finality, not to be argued

 z. cha   /ʧa/   totally

2.1 Shape of Igbo Clitics

Almost all the clitics in Igbo have identical segmental shape. Their phonological shape generally has a consonant and a vowel (CV) syllable structure. The consonant is the onset and the vowel, the nucleus. There are only a few clitics like **rịị** and **nọọ/nnọọ** that have two or three syllables.

2.2   Environment of Clitics

Clitics in Igbo can be found at host initial, word medial and host final positions. These environments have been technically referred to as proclitics (for host initial position), mesoclitics (for word medial position) and enclitics (host final position). Thus, proclitics are the clitics found at the left side of a word particularly, the host. When a clitic is added at the right side of a word, it is referred to as enclitic, and when a clitic is found within a word, it is called a mesoclitic. In Igbo, enclitics are similar to mesoclitics in the sense that they are found after the hosts. However, they differ in the sense that in mesoclitics, one or more morphemes follow the mesoclitic. The host (i.e. clitic) and other morphemes constitute one word. Thus, mesoclitics are found between a host and an affix. Proclitics and enclitics may be separated from their hosts whereas mesoclitics are written together with their hosts. Examples 2, 3, and 4 illustrate them.

Proclitics

2a. Tẹ̀ gị́ sòrò   rí   /tè gí sòrò rí/.

     Cl 2sg followPst eat

     Even you followed to eat

b. Tẹ̀ Ùjú tẹ̀ Ógè chùrù   ḿmírī̄. /tɛ̀ ùdʒú tɛ̀ ógè ʧùrù ḿmírī̄/

     cl   Uju cl Oge fetchPst water

    Even Uju, even Oge too fetched water

c. Kpà, ọ́ nwụ̀ọ̄lā.   /kpà, ɔ́ ŋʷɔ́ɔ̄lā/

     Cl, 3sg   dieovsperf.

     Definitely, it is dead

Mesoclitics

3a. Òbí bìtẹ̀-kwùrù égō. / òbí bìtɛ̀kʷùrù égō/

       Obi borrow-clPst money.

       Obi borrowed money in addition.

b. Ọ́ gwà-zị̀rị̀   m̀ ókwú. /ɔ́ gʷàzìrì   m̀ ókwú/

3sg tell-clPst 1sg speech

He eventually talked to me.

c. Há bị̀á-chàrà n'ógè. / há bìátʃàrà nógè/

3pl come-clPst in time

They all came early.

Enclitics

4a. Nyè-tú ḿ ńchà. /ɲ̀ètú ḿ ŋchà/.

Give-cl 1sg soap

(please,) give me a little soap.

b. Ònyé-zí kà ị́ kpọ̀rọ̀? /�òɲé zí kà í kpɔ̀rɔ̀

who-cl that 2sg callPst

who then did you call?

c. nyè-kwá ḿ égō m̄. /ɲ̀èkʷá ḿ égō m̄/

give-cl 1sg   money 1sg.

Give me also my money.

2.3 Clitic Clusters

Two or more clitics may be found in a sequence or alternating in a word. The order in which they appear is determined by the semantic aim of the speaker. Thus, in a word, two or more clitics may be used for emphasis.

2.3.1 Two Clitic Cluster

5a. Kèdú-zí-ǹnọ́ọ̄ úrù ọ́ bààrà   hà? /kèdú zí ǹnɔ́ɔ̄ úrù ɔ́ bààrà hà/.

What-cl-cl   gain 3sg enterAplPst 3pl?

Of what benefit is s/he/it then to them afterwards?

b. Gwà-kwú-zíé yā. / gàkʷúzíé jā/

Tell-cl-clOvs 3sg.

Tell him in addition then.

c. Ńdị́ à gà-sị̀   bụ̀ ǹké Ògè / ńdí à gàsì bò ǹ̀ké ògè/

   these-cl-cl be poss Oge

   these ones are Oge's own.

2.3.2 Three Clitic Cluster

6a. Yá bụ̀ nà ńdị́ à fụ́-chá-kwú sò àgá /já bò nà ńdí à fótʃákʷú sò àgá/

   3sg be that these cl-cl-cl follow Prefgo

    So all these ones too are going.

b. nyè-tụ́-zíé-nú há   égō. /ǹ̀ètʊ́zíénú há égō/.

   Give-cl-cl-ovs-cl 3pl money

   (please,) give to them a little more money.

c. gósì-zì-rà-kwúé   ḿ   ákwà gị́. /gósìzìràkʷúé ḿ ákʷà gí/

   show-cl-cl-cl-ovs 1sg bed   2sg

   show me then just your bed in addition.

2.3.3 Four Clitic Cluster

7a. Ńdị́ à gà-chà-kwù-zì gà-ésò gbá égwū. / ńdí à gàtʃàkʷùzì gà ésò gbá égʷū/.

      These cl-cl-cl-cl   aux-Preffollow dance dance.

   All these (ones) too will then follow to dance.

b.   kèdú-zí-ǹnọ́ō̄-kwá-zị́ íhé ḿ mèrè gị̀. /kèdú zí ńnɔ́ɔ̄ kwází íhé ḿ mèrè gì/

   What-cl-cl-cl-cl thing 1sg doPst 2sg.

      What then really have I done to you again.

c.   Ógè nwá-kwá-dị́-kwú jèrè èbéē? /ógè ŋʷá kʷá díkʷú dʒèrè èbéē/

   Oge cl-cl-cl-cl goPst where?

   Where did even Oge too go?

d.   Kèdú-kwá-chá-zí-si-ǹnọ́ō̄ ihe ha mere gị ? /kèdú kʷá tʃá zí sí ńnɔ́ɔ̄ íhé há ḿ mèrè gì/

What-cl-cl-cl-cl-cl thing 3pl doPst 2sg

What other things then really have done to you

In these examples, we observe that **nu** occupies the clitic final position. The open vowel suffix is attached after certain clitics like /kʷa/, /kʷu/, etc. Apart from /**nu**/ and the clitics that accept open vowel suffixes, any clitic can occupy any position in a sequence of clitics. The ordering is dependent on the meaning or emphasis the speaker intends to achieve. Consider for instance, the various positions of /zi/ or /zị/ in the above examples. It appears as the first clitic in 5a, 6c, and 7b; second in 5b and 6b; and fourth in 7a and 7b. The closer a clitic is to the host, the higher the degree of its emphasis. In 5a, **kèdú zí ǹnọ̄ọ̄,** it appears to mean that after a high expectation placed on someone to behave well, he disappointed them. Thus, the expectation **zị** 'afterwards' is placed first before the degree of disappointment **ǹnọ̄ọ̄** 'really'. Observe also that in example 7b (**kèdú zí ǹnọ̄ọ̄ kwá zị́**), zi/ị appears twice; occupying first and last positions in a series of clitics. The first one is used to indicate 'again' or 'afterwards' while the last one is used to mean 'now after something else', meaning 'what again have I really done to you again after all my efforts to please you?'

2.4 Vowel Harmony and Copying in Clitics

Vowel harmony is operational in the Igbo language. The vowel harmony rule (VHR) requires that all the vowels in a word bear the same value of some vocalic feature (Backovic, 2000). There are few (if any) languages where the above definition is absolutely true. There are some conflicting conditions that get in the way and usually prevent a total realisation of the rule. In the standard Igbo language, the eight vowels are classified into two groups based on the pharyngeal cavity size. Thus, the Igbo vowels can be produced with expanded or with unexpanded pharynx. Expanded or unexpanded distinction also amounts to the 'Advanced or Retracted Tongue Root' (+/-ATR) because when the tongue root is fronted; it leads to the expansion of the pharynx (Ikekeonwu, 1991). Thus, a vowel can either be Expanded/+ATR (advanced tongue root) or Unexpanded/-ATR (retracted tongue root). Using the above terms, the Igbo vowels are divided into two sets as: Expanded /[+ATR]: /i, u, e, o/ and Unexpanded/[-ART]: /ɪ, ʊ, ɔ, a /. Vowels from the two sets do not usually co-occur in simple words in the language. That is, during word formation, a selection of vowels is made from only one set. The Igbo clitics can be grouped into two based on how obedient they are to the rule of vowel harmony. The two groups are VHR obedient clitics and VHR disobedient clitics. The later include **nwa, ra, ri/rị, sị, tụ, se, dị, dụ, fụ, ga,** and **kwa** while the former are **nu, zi,** and **ri**. The VHR disobedient clitics maintain their vowels irrespective of its neighbouring vowel. On the contrary, the VHR obedient vowels may change their vowels depending on the vowel of its neighbour. The direction of the vowel copying is leftwards, see e.g. 5a, b, c, and 6c.

8(a)   Kèdú zí ǹnọ̄ọ̄ úrù ọ́   bàràà   hà? /kèdú zí ǹnɔ́ɔ̄ úrù ɔ́ bàràà hà/.

What-cl-cl   gain 3sg enterAplPst 3pl?

Of what benefit is s/he/it then to them afterwards?

b. Gwà-kwú-zíé yā. /gʷàkwúzíé jā/

Tell-cl-clOvs 3sg.

Go to him in addition now.

c. Ńdị́ à gà-sị̀ bụ̀ ǹké Ògè /ńdí à gàsì bò ǹké ògè/

these cl-cl be poss Oge

these ones are Oge's own.

d. Gósì-zì-rà-kwúé ḿ ákwà gị́. /gósìzìràkʷúé ḿ ákwà gí/

show-cl-cl-clOvs 1sg bed 2sg

Show me also your bed in addition.

However, in a situation whereby an open vowel suffix follows a clitic, the clitic becomes +ATR. Thus, open vowel suffixes induce a rightward copying of vowels, e.g.

9   a.   Gòtụ́zíérị̀,

b.   Gòtụ́zíé ǹnọ́ọ̄,

c.   Í nyékwázíéfù yà, ọ̀ sị́ gị́nị̄ ?,

d.   Gbùgásị́zíénu únù ọ́kà áhụ̀.

2.5 Tonal Behaviour of Igbo Clitics

Some clitics depend on their hosts for their tonal manifestations. There are however few ones that appear to have peculiar tone patterns, peculiar in the sense that they do not depend on the tone of their host. There are other clitics that take the tone pattern different from the tone of its host. This makes it possible for one clitic to have different tone patterns. Based on their tonal behaviour, we propose three types of clitic. They are tone-specific, host-dependent, and OCP-compliant clitics.

2.5.1 Host Dependent Clitics

10.   a. Ógè chà-kwù sò /ógè ʧàkʷù sò/.

Oge cl-cl follow.

Oge too is even included.

b. Ùjú chá-kwú sò /ùjú ʧákʷú sò /

Uju cl-cl follow

c. Ábụ̀ kwù bụ̀ ákụ̀kụ̀ áhụ́ ḿmádụ̀. / ábò kʷù bò ákòkò áhò ḿmádò/.

armpit cl be part body person

Armpit too is (a) part of human body

d. Ányá kwú bù ákụ̀kụ̀ áhụ́ ḿmádụ̀ / áɲá kʷú bɒ̀ ákɒ̀kɒ̀ áhɒ̀ ḿmádɒ̀/

Eye cl be part body person

Eye too is (a) part of human body

11 a. Ńdị́ à gà-kwù gàrà ụ́lọ̀   / ńdị́ à gàkʷù gàrà ʊ́lɔ̀/

These all too goPst house

These people also went home

b. Há gá-kwú gàrà ụ́lọ̀ /há gákʷú gàrà ʊlɔ́/

3pl cl-cl goPst house

They all too went home

12 a. Úchè kwà-nù? / útʃè kʷànɒ̀/.

Uche cl-cl?

How about Uche?

b. Ùjú kwá-nụ́? / ùʤú kʷánɒ́/

Uju cl-cl?

How about Uju?

13   a. ọ̀kà à gàsị̀ bụ̀ ǹkè ḿ. / ɔ́kà à gàsì bɒ̀ ŋ̀kè ḿ/

Maize these all be poss 1sg

All these maize are mine

Other host dependent clitics are **tụ** as in wèrétú 'take a little'**, gà(á) tụ́** 'go a little'**, rì(é) tụ́** 'eat a little'**, ràchàtụ̀rụ̀** 'leaked a little';   **zi** as in **ònyé zí** 'who eventually?', **àlà zì** 'land eventually', **Ógè zì** 'Oge eventually', **Ùjú zí** 'Uju eventually' etc; **si** as in **ókà à sị̀** 'these corns', **há sí** 'them'; **kwu, kwa, ga** as in **úgụ̄ kwū/kwā/gā** 'pumpkin too/again/in addition', **ńtị̀ kwù/kwà/gà** 'ear too/again/in addition', **óché kwú/kwá/gá** 'chair too/ again/ in addition' etc; **dụ/ dị**   used scornfully as in **ònyé dị́** 'who', **ị̀ mà dị̀ 'do** you know?, **Úché dị̀ '**Uche', **Ùjú dị́** 'Uju'etc; **cha** used in cases of scornful exaggeration as in **Úchè chà**, **Ùjú chá**, **ọ̀hà chà**, **ḿmā chā** etc. Many Igbo speakers produce imperative words with a dimunitive clitic **tụ** as **gàtụ́** 'go a little'**, rìtụ́** 'eat a little', **bùtụ́** 'carry a little' etc. In

these forms, they appear as OCP compliant clitics in their surface representation. Underlyingly, they have open vowel suffixes which have been elided for easy flow of speech. The vowel deletion notwithstanding, the tone is not deleted but remains a floating high tone which the following vowel copies. This confirms the fact established in Clements (2000) and Oyebade and Mbah (2008) that when a tone bearing unit is deleted in speech, its tone does not delete. This also means that these clitics are not the actual imperative marker (cf Iloene, 2010). **Tụ**, **si** and some other host dependent clitics also follow the tone pattern of Igbo syntactic structures. For example, the verb nye 'give' and the clitic tu 'a little' will yield the following structures: infinitive- ínyētụ̄, imperative- nyètụ́, past- nyètụ̀rụ̀ etc. Thus, in such syntactic structures, they obey the tone of such structures as is the case with nyètụ́ since imperatives always end on high tones in the language.   In this kind of situation, its tone is not dependent on the preceding TBU of the host, but rather on the syntactic form of the host.

2.5.2 OCP Compliant Clitics

14 ai.   Òbí rị̀ kà ḿ sììrì ńrí. / òbí rị̀ kà ḿ sììrì ńrí/

          Obi cl that 1sg cookAplPst food

     Òbí really is the one I cooked for.

     ii.   Àkwá rị̀ kà ó nyèrè Ùjú. /àkwá rị̀ kà ó ɲèrè ùʤú/

egg-cl that 3sg givePst Uju

Egg is actually what he gave Uju

     iii.   Ákwá rị̀ kà ọ́ nà-èbé. /ákwá rì kà ɔ́ nàèbé/

cry-cl that 3sg aux-cry

Crying even is what s/he is crying

     iv.   Égō rị̀ kà ó nyèrè Ùjú / égō rì kà ó ɲèrè ùjú/

money-cl that 3sg givePst Uju

Money is even what s/he gave Uju

     v.   Bị̀á rị̀ kà ị́ hụ́ / bìá rì kà í hʊ́/

come-cl that 2sg see

Come (please) and see

     vi.   Bùrú rị̀ àkpá àgwà̀ à.

Carry-cl bag beans dem.

(Please) carry this bag of beans.

     vii.   Ònyé fụ̀ nwè ákwà̀ à? / òɲé fò ŋʷè ákʷà̀ à/

  Who cl have dress dem?

  Who (even) has this dress?

     viii.   Gị́nị̄ fụ̀ kà ḿ gà-èkwú?   / gínī fò kà ḿ gàèkʷú/

What cl that 1sg aux-say

What even will I say?

ix. Kèdú fṳ̀ ǹké ká ḿmā? / kèdú fʊ̀ ǹké ká ḿmā/

Which cl that pass beauty?

Which one is even better?

x. Ùjú à fʊ́ è sòkwà? / ùʤú à fʊ́ è sòkʷà/

Uju dem. cl Pron follow-cl?

Does this Uju actually follow too?

bi. Ákwà rị́ kà ó nyèrè Ùjú. / ákʷà rí kà ó ɲèrè ùʤú/

Cloth-cl that 3sg givePst Uju

Cloth is actually what s/he gave Uju

ii. Úchè   rị́ kà ḿ sììrì ńrí. / úchè rì kà ḿ sììrì ńrí/

Uche cl that 1sg cookAplPst food

Uche actually is the one I cooked for.

iii. Àkwà rị́ kà ó nyèrè Ùjú. / àkʷà rí kà ó ɲèrè ùʤú/

Bed-cl that 3sg givePst Uju

Bed is actually what s/he gave Uju

iv. ọ́ dàrà rị̣́ úlé. / ɔ́ dàrà rí úlé/

3sg failPst cl exam.

He even failed an exam.

v. Éjì m̀ fʊ́ ákā ná ọ̀ gà-àbị́á? / éjì m̀ fʊ́ ákā ná ɔ gà-àbíá/

Prefhold 1sg cl hand that 3sg aux Prefcome?

Am I really sure he will come?

vi. Ógè bị̀àrà-fʊ́ m̀gbè Ùjú nà-àlá. / ógè bìàrà-fʊ́ m̀gbè ùjú nààlá/

Oge comePst-cl time Uju aux-Prefreturn

Oge came when Uju was going.

vii. Ógè à fʊ́ è sòkwà? /ógè à fʊ́ è sòkʷà/

Oge dem. cl follow-cl?

Does this Oge actually follow too?

viii. Àlà rị̣́ị̀ kà ọ́ zụ̀rụ̀. / àlà ríì kà ɔ́ zòrò/

Land cl that 3sg buyPst.

It is even land that he bought.

ix.   Àkwà rı̇̄̈ kà ó dínà nà yà. / àkʷà rɨ̂ɨ kà ó dínà nà jà/

Bed cl that 3sg lay in it.

  It is even in the bed that s/he is laying.

x.   Ógè rı̇̄̈ kà ḿmádù ǹchá nà-èché. / ógè rɨ̂ɨ kà ḿmádò ǹʧá nàèʧé/

Oge cl that person all aux-Prefwait

It is even Oge that everybody is waiting for.

xi. Ányáà rı̇̄̈ kà ọ́ tùkpòrọ̀ Ógè /ányáà   rɨ̂ɨ kà ɔ́ tòkpɔ̀rɔ̀ Ógè/.

  Eye-cl that 3sg throwblindPst Oge.

xii.   Ákwáà rı̇̄̈ kà ọ́ nà-èbé. /ákwáà rɨ̂ɨ kà ɔ́ nàèbé/

Cry cl that 3sg aux-Prefcry.

S/He is even crying.

xiii. Ùjúù rı̇̄̈ kà ḿmádù ǹchá nà-èché / ùjúù rɨ̂ɨ kà ḿmádò ǹʧá nàèʧé/

Oge cl that person all aux-Prefwait

It is even Uju that everybody is waiting for.

The data in examples 12 above have the tones of the host and its clitic alternating between low and high respectively, hence obeying the obligatory contour principle. Observe an interesting process with which **rı̂ı** forces its preceding vowel to be OCP compliant. Since it (**rı̂ı**) is always on high and low tones, if a preceding vowel ends in a low tone, the OCP principle is obeyed (12bviii-x), but if on the other hand, the preceding vowel bears a high tone, it induces an epenthetic low tone vowel, thereby enforcing the clitic and its host to obey the rule of OCP (12bxi-xiii).

2.5.3 Tone Specific Clitics

The clitics **nọ́ọ̄/ǹnọ́ọ̄**, **nụ́**, **nù**, **tè**, and **nwá** are considered specific tone clitics because they maintain their tone patterns irrespective of the environment they find themselves.

13a. Ógè ǹnọ́ọ̄ kà ḿ chọ̀rọ̀ ị́lū̄. / ógè ǹnɔ́ɔ̄ kà ḿ ʧɔ̀rɔ̀ ílō/

  Oge cl that 1sg wantStv marry.

  Oge actually is who I want to marry.

b.   Ùjú ǹnọ́ọ̄ kà ḿ chọ̀rọ̀ ị́lū̄ / ùjú ǹnɔ́ɔ̄ kà ḿ ʧɔ̀rɔ̀ ílō/.

  Uju cl that 1sg wantStv marry.

  Uju actually is who I want to marry.

c.   Égō ǹnọ́ọ̀ kà ḿ gà-éjì méchíé ókwú áhù̀ /égō ǹnɔ́ɔ̄ kà ḿ gàéʤì méʧíé ókʷú áhɔ̀/.

Money cl that 1sg aux-Prefhold close speech dem.

It is actually money that I will use to end the case.

d. Gwà nṵ́ ḿ ézíókwū   / gʷà nɔ́ ḿ ézíókʷū/.

Tell cl 1sg true word.

Please tell me the truth.

e. Gbàbá nṵ̀ égwú /gbàbá nɔ́ égʷú /

Dance cl music

You people should dance.

f. Gbàbá nṵ́ égwū /gbàbá nɔ́ égʷū/.

Dance cl music

Please be dancing.

g.   Gbábà nṵ̀ n'ṵ́lɔ̀ / gbábà nɔ̀ nɔ́lɔ̀/

Run enter cl in house.

You people should run into the house.

2.6 Tone Patterns in Cluster

This subsection aims at combining the different types of tonal behaviour of clitics to know whether or not they maintain their tone when they appear in sequence.

2.6.1 Specific + Host Dependent

14ai. Ị́gākwā ọ̀zɔ́? / ígākʷā ɔ̀zɔ́/

To go again

ii   Ị́gākwánṵ́ ọ̀zɔ́? / ígākʷánɔ́ ɔ̀zɔ́/

For polite request

iii   Ị́gākwānṵ́ ọ̀zɔ́? / ígākʷānɔ́ ɔ̀zɔ́/

For polite plural

bi. ị̀ màkwà yá? / ì màkʷà já/

Do you know him?

ii Ùnù màkwànṵ̀ yà? / ònò màkʷànò jà/

Do you people even know him?

iii Únù màrákwá yā? /ónò màrákʷá jā/

You people should know him

iv ị̀ mākwānú yá dị̀ ḿkpà. / í mākʷānɔ́ já dì ŋ́kpà/

To know him is important

v   i̱ mākwānù yá dì̱ ḿkpà. /í mākʷānò já dì ŋ́kpà/

   To know him is important (polite request)

ci.   Sìríkwá ńrí ǹkè gí̱   / sìríkʷá ńrí ŋ̀kè gí/

   cook yours too.

  ii   Sìríkwánú̱ ńrí ǹkè gí̱ /sìríkʷánó ńrí ŋ̀kè gí/

   please, cook yours too.

  iii   Sìríkwánù̱ ńrí ǹkè únù̱   / sìríkʷánò ńrí ŋ̀kè ónò/

   you people should cook yours.

Observe that the host dependent clitics in the examples 14 take the tone of the preceding TBU of its host.

2.6.2 Specific + Specific

15a   Nyè-tú̱-nù̱ m̀ ákí̱ únù̱.

   Give-cl-cl 1sg kernel 2pl

   You(pl) give me a little of your kernel.

   b.   Nyètú̱nú̱ m̄ ákí̱ únù̱.

   Give-cl-cl 1sg kernel 2pl

   please give me a little of your kernel.

2.6.3 Specific +Host-Dependent+OCP

16ai. Bùrúkwánù̱rí̱ / bùrúkʷánòrí/

   you(pl) carry also again.

ii   Bùrúkwánú̱rì̱ /bùrúkʷánórì/

   please, carry also again.

iii   Sòrókwúzíkwáánú̱ ḿ bì̱á. / sòrókʷúzíkʷáánó ḿ bìá/

   Follow me also in addition to go.

Notice that in the above examples, each clitic obeys the tone rule that characterises its class, irrespective of the position it finds itself.

3. Conclusion

This study has given the morphosyntactic clitics of the Igbo language a phonological description. It has outlined some of the clitics found in Igbo. The findings of the study reveal that proclitics, mesoclitics and enclitics are in the language. Most of them have a CV syllable structure. Clitics may be found in four to five clusters. There are two sets of clitic according to how obedient or otherwise they are to the VHR. Igbo clitics are further grouped into three according to their tone behaviour. The host dependent clitics rely heavily on the immediately preceding TBU of its host. The specific tone clitics maintain their respective consistent tone pattern irrespective of the environment they find themselves. The OCP compliant clitics have an opposing tone at the immediately preceding TBU of the host and

the first TBU of the clitic. In some cases, there will be an introduction of epenthetic TBU in order to achieve OCP. These phonological features combine to make the Igbo morphosyntactic clitics unique. Since the descriptive foundation has been laid, we suggest that further studies be carried out using phonological theories especially Optimality Theory to account for the generality of clitics using universal constraints.

List of Abbreviations

1sg   First person singular pronoun

2pl   Second person plural pronoun

2sg   Second person singular pronoun

3pl   Third Person plural pronoun

3sg   Third person singular pronoun

Apl   Applicative suffix

aux   auxiliary

cl   clitic

dem   Demonstrative

Ovs   Open Vowel Suffix

Perf   Perfective marker

Pref   Prefix

Pron   Pronoun

Pst   Past tense Suffix

Stv   Stative marker

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