Describing adjectives in Nkọrọọ (Kirika)

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Abstract

This paper provides a linguistic description of the adjective class and its functions in Nkọrọọ, an Eastern Ịjọ language. To achieve this, the Lingua Descriptive Studies Questionnaire was employed as a data elicitation tool. The findings revealed that like many African languages in the Niger-Congo phylum, Nkọrọọ operates a small closed class of adjectives that consists of three lexical items, namely áyá 'new', opu 'big/great', and pápa 'bare/empty/useless/vain'. These adjectives express the basic concepts of dimension, age, and value, and can be identified by the following features; they specify the attributes of nouns, they cannot be inflected to reflect temporal, aspectual, modal, or other grammatical meanings or categories, and they only function attributively and not predicatively. To function in the predicate position, Nkọrọọ adjectives obligatorily need the presence of an ideophone, a noun or noun phrase. The adjective 'opu' agrees in number with plural nouns by taking a low tone plural clitic =a. In addition to adjectives, stative verbs may perform the function of adjectives. When adjectives and stative verbs that function as adjectives occur alongside other nominal modifiers such as pronouns, demonstratives, numerals, and the definite article in the noun phrase, they occur closest to the head noun as prenominal modifiers. With the aid of compounds, lexical morphemes, and suffixes, adjectives and stative verbs may be used to express the attributes of nouns in terms of equality, comparative, and superlative and to measure the quality a noun possesses in super abundance, large, or small measure.

Keywords: **Adjective, Stative Verb, Nominal Modifier, Nkọrọọ, Ịjọ**

Introduction

Adjectives are a recognized word class in human language. However, their description is "problematic in almost every language" and this is because "there is no semantically definable class of concepts that universally falls into a category that we would want to call adjectives; rather, adjectives stand "between" nouns and verbs ..." (Payne, 1997, p. 63). Therefore, each language must have language specific features for identifying adjectives, in addition to their universal functions.

Crystal (1997, p. 8–9), defines adjectives as a class of words whose main function is to specify the attributes of nouns. He mentions four criteria that define this class in English, namely;

i.   they function in the 'attributive' position, e.g. the **big** man;
ii.   they can occur in a post-verbal or 'predicative' position, e.g. the man is **big**;
iii.   they can be premodified by an intensifier, such as *very*, e.g. the **very big** man;
iv.   they can be used in a comparative and superlative form, either by inflection (e.g. *big*, *bigger*, *biggest*) or periphrastically (e.g. *interesting*, *more interesting*, *most interesting*).

Adjectives occur with the noun in the noun phrase, where they function as nominal modifiers. The distribution of adjectives within the noun phrase varies from language to language. In some languages, adjectives precede the noun and function as prenominal modifiers, while in others, they follow the noun, functioning as post nominal modifiers. What constitutes the class of adjectives varies from language to language. In some languages, such as English, adjectives form an open class to which more adjectives can be added. Hence, adjectives constitute a large class in English. In a number of languages (and many African languages belong here), adjectives form a small closed class of words that are characterized by certain internal grammatical criteria. In fact, many descriptive adjectives in English and other European languages are expressed by verbs in some African languages. As a result, African languages tend to have fewer adjectives. One striking particularity of a number of African languages, especially in the Niger-Congo phylum is that "they have a very small number of non-derived adjectives (sometimes less than ten), and no possibility of deriving adjectives from other categories at all" (Creissels, 2000, p. 249). In yet other languages, it is claimed that adjectives do not exist, and the translation equivalents of English adjectives are assigned to either the noun or verb class.

Croft (1990) observes that languages with a small closed class of adjectives tend to include words referring to a specific set of concepts. The basic concepts are dimension, age, color, and value. This notion is corroborated by Payne (1997) who affirms that these basic concepts are expressed in any language that has a morphosyntactically distinct class of adjectives. Croft exemplifies with the Igbo adjective class that includes the words for 'large', 'new', 'black/dark', 'good', 'small', 'old', 'white/light', and 'bad'. Generally, other concepts that may be expressed by adjectives include shape, physical characteristics, human property, and speed.

The present study is aimed at describing the adjective class in Nkọrọọ, an Eastern Ịjọ language that belongs to the Niger-Congo phylum and is spoken in Rivers state, Nigeria, West Africa (Williamson and Blench, 2000). The objectives are to identify the members of the adjective class, the features that characterize adjectives and examine how they function in the language. The language data presented is based on the Nkọrọọ orthography proposed by Obikudo (2022).

Methodology

Data elicitation for this study was carried out with the aid of the Lingua Descriptive Studies Questionnaire developed for writing grammars by the Department of Linguistics, Max-Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. Specifically, the study employed the qualitative research method by collecting data based on section 2.1.4 of the questionnaire that addresses adjectives and analyzing the data collected.

Adjectives in Nkọrọọ

Jenewari (1977, p. 341) defines the adjective in Kalaḅarị (a sister Eastern Ịjọ dialect) as a "pronominal modifier which does not occur with a tense marker" and "denotes quality". He lists three lexical items that fall into this category as **kálá** 'small, little', **opu** 'big, great', and **pápá** 'vain, empty'. From the list, we see that the Kalaḅarị adjectives express the basic concepts of dimension (small, big) and value (great, vain). In Nkọrọọ, adjectives belong to a small closed class that also consist of only three lexical items. They include **áyá** 'new', **opu**

'big, great', and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain'. Membership into the adjective class is based on the following criteria.

i. Adjectives specify the attributes of nouns. Note that stative verbs also do the same, so this criterion alone makes it impossible to identify the true adjectives in the language.

(1)   a. áyá ókúrú
          new cloth
          'new cloth'

          b. pápa   ḅu
           bare/empty body
          'bare/naked body'

ii. Adjectives do not take any aspectual, temporal or modal markers. Such markers only occur with verbs and not adjectives. In other words, adjectives cannot be inflected to reflect any grammatical categories or features. The examples below are all ungrammatical because they are inflected.

(2)   a. *a   áyá-sī
            3SG.N   new-INT
           'It is very new'

          b. *tọ́nyé   opu-sí
            PN   great-INT
           'Tọnye is very great'

          c. *a   pápa-suku
            3SG.N   useless/vain-PFV
           'It has become useless/vain'

          d. *a=nde   pápa-máa
            3SG.N=SCL useless/vain-PRG
           'It is becoming useless/vain'

iii. Alone, adjectives can only function attributively and not predicatively. Examples (3a – c) show the attributive function of adjectives while examples (4a & b) show the predicative function.

(3)   a. pápa   ḅeḅe ḅọ
           useless/vain mouth person
           'useless/vain person'

          b. opu ígbé   ḿ   kẹ́ḿ   ítángá tíe   ke
           big box   DEF EXIST bed   under LOC
           'The big box is under the bed'

c. áyá okuru ḿ   káan-suku
　　new cloth DEF   tear-PFV
　　'The new cloth has torn'

(4)　　a. *a   pápa
　　　　3SG.N   useless/vain
　　　　'It is useless/vain'

　　　　b. *amímī   ḿ   áyá
　　　　 that   DEF   new
　　　　 'That is new'

Examples (4a & b) above are ungrammatical because true adjectives in Nkọrọọ cannot occur alone as the predicate of a sentence. To function in the predicate position, Nkọrọọ adjectives obligatorily need the presence of an ideophone (example 5a & b) or a noun or noun phrase (example 6a & b). Note that the word order in Nkọrọọ is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV), so the object precedes the verb in the predicate.

(5)　　a. a   áyá   jéínjéín
　　　　3SG.N   new   ID
　　　　'It is very new'

　　　　b. tọ́nyé   opu   ígídí   bọ́ọ̄
　　　　 PN   great   ID   person
　　　　'Tọnye is a very great person'

(6)　　a. tọ́nyé   opu   bọ́
　　　　 PN   great   person
　　　　 'Tọnye is (a) great (person)'

　　　　b. amímī   ḿ   pápa   **y**e
　　　　 that   DEF   useless/vain   thing
　　　　 'That (one) is (a) useless/vain (thing)'

Based on the three criteria discussed above, **opu** 'big, great', **áyá** 'new', and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain' are the only true adjectives in Nkọrọọ. They express the basic concepts of dimension (**opu** 'big'), age (**áyá** 'new'), and value (**opu** 'great' and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain'). Apart from adjectives, however, stative verbs may also specify nominal attributes and thus perform the function of adjectives.

Stative verbs functioning as adjectives

The stative verbs in Nkọrọọ do function as adjectives by specifying the attributes of nouns. Unlike true adjectives, they can function both attributively and predicatively. Stative verbs do not obligatorily need a noun or an ideophone to function as predicates of sentences.

Stative verbs functioning as attributive adjectives

(7) a. duḅa   ígbé   ḿ   kę́ḿ   ítángá   tíe   ke
        be.big/fat   box   DEF   EXIST   bed   under   LOC
        'The big box is under the bed'

    b. ólóḿ   ókúrú   ḿ   kaan
        be.old   cloth   DEF   tear.IMP.SG
        'Tear the old cloth!'

Stative verbs functioning as predicative adjectives

(8) a. ígbé ḿ   duḅa
        box DEF be.big
        'The box is big'

    b. ókúrú ḿ   ólóḿ
        cloth   DEF be.old
        'The cloth is old'

    c. tǫ́rú   ḿ   kókóró
        river DEF   be.deep
        'The river is deep'

Stative verbs can also be inflected to reflect such grammatical meanings as degree (9a & b), tense
(10a & b), aspect (11a & b), and negation (12a & b).

(9)   a. mindi ḿ   ḅókū-sí
        water DEF   be.cold-INT
        'The water is very cold'

    b. otiǫ́   ḿ   kǫ́rǫ́kǫ́rǫ́-sī
        road/path   DEF   be.narrow-INT
        'The road/path is very narrow'

(10)   a. awǫ   má duḅa-ḿ
        children   PL be.big/fat-FUT
        'The children will be fat'

    b. kíngí ḿ=ńdē   ikpuru-ḿ
        knife DEF=SCL   be.blunt-FUT
        'The knife will be blunt'

(11)   a. o=nde   ólóḿ-máa
        3SG.M=SCL   be.old-PROG
        'He is getting old'

b. tọ́rú ḿ   pẹkẹlẹ-suku
    river DEF be.wide-PFV
    'The river has become wide'

(12)   a. a   ibị=ka
      3SG.N   be.good=NCL
      'It is not good'

      b. á   gboli=ka
      3SG.F   be.short=NCL
      'She is not short'

Adjectives and agreement with nouns

       This section discusses how adjectives and stative verbs agree in number and definiteness with the nouns they modify.

Agreement in number
The adjectives in Nkọrọọ exhibit different behaviours when modifying plural nouns. The adjective **opu** takes the low tone plural clitic =**a** when modifying plural nouns (that may or may not take the plural marker). This clitic is also attached to modifying numerals. On the other hand, the plural marker, **má**, follows the noun when it is being modified by either **áyá**, **pápa** or a stative verb. For those specific human nouns in which plurality is marked in the noun itself such as **awọ** 'children', the choice of the plural marker is optional.

      Adjective + [- HUMAN] noun
(13)   a. opu=a   ígbé   (má)
      big=PCL   box   PL
      'big boxes'

      b. dubạ   ígbé má
      be.big   box PL
      'big boxes'

      Adjective + [+ HUMAN] noun
(14)   a. pápa   tọkú
      useless/vain child
      'useless/vain child'

      b. pápa   awọ   (má)
      useless/vain children   PL
      'useless/vain children'

      c. nángúọ̄   íríára
      be.tall   woman
      'tall woman'

    d. nángúǭ   íríápu (má)
      be.tall   women PL
      'tall women'

Agreement in definiteness/indefiniteness
Indefinite reference is not overtly marked in Nkǫrǫǫ. Definiteness is marked only on singular nouns with the definite article **mú**/**ḿ**. There is no definite marker in plural nouns rather, the plural marker **má** is used with plural nouns whether the reference is definite or indefinite. In other words, **má** has a generic reference. This applies to both non-human and human nouns.

       Adjective + [- HUMAN] nouns
(15)   a. áyá kura ḿ
         new year DEF
        'the new year'

       b. opu ígbé ḿ
         big box DEF
        'the big box'

       c. dubạ   ígbé ḿ
         be.big   box DEF
        'the big box'

       Adjectives + [+ HUMAN] nouns
(16)   a. opu   kiní ḿ
         great   person DEF
        'the great person'

       b. dubạ   amaowei   ḿ
         be.big/fat male.man   DEF
        'the big/fat man'

Agreement with coordinated nouns which belong to different classes
       Nkǫrǫǫ is a non-noun class language. However, it reflects a human versus non-human gender distinction (in addition to sex-based gender) in its nominal morphology (Obikudo, forthcoming). In this section, we shall look at agreement between adjectives and singular human and non-human nouns and between adjectives and plural human and non-human nouns.

Adjectives and singular nouns
       The adjective is phrase-initial when conjoining both human and non-human nouns. The conjunction **na … na** 'and' that is used in linking both nouns being modified by the adjective surrounds the second noun whether human or non-human.

Adjective + singular human noun and singular non-human noun

(17) a. ólómíríára   na   wó   wári   na
        be.old   woman CONJ   NOM   house   CONJ
        'old woman and house'

     b. pápa   amaowei   na   wó   námá   ná
        useless   male.man   CONJ   NOM   animal CONJ
        'useless man and animal'

     Adjective + singular non-human noun and singular human noun

(18) a. ólómẃári   na   wó   íríára   na
        be.old   house CONJ   NOM   woman CONJ
        'old house and woman'

     b. pápa   námá   ná   wó   amaowei   na
        useless   animal   CONJ   NOM   male.man   CONJ
        'useless animal and man'

Adjectives and plural nouns

The only adjective that takes a plural marker when modifying plural nouns is **opu** 'big'/'great'. It takes the plural clitic =**a** in addition to the plural marking on the nouns. Both human and non-human nouns take their own plural markers irrespective of which comes first. The plural marker **má** is used to mark number in both non-human and human nouns, while **apu** 'people' or -**ani** (for kinship nouns and personal names) is used to mark number in human nouns only. Where **apu** is used to mark a plural human noun, the use of the general plural marker **má** is optional. As mentioned earlier, the conjunction 'and' surrounds the second noun but occurs after the plural marker **má** (whenever it is used) that immediately follows the second noun. When this happens, a floating low tone appears between the plural marker **má** and ...**na**, so that we have: [- HUMAN] noun + **má** + **nā** instead of ...**ná** as is the case with the singular non-human nouns ending with a high toned syllable (see examples 17b and 19a & b).

     Adjective + plural human noun and plural non-human noun

(19) a. ólómíríápu   na   wó   wári   má   nā
        be.old   women CONJ   NOM   house   PL   CONJ
        'old women and houses'

     b. opu=a   amaapu   na   wó   námá   má   nā
        big/great=PCL   men   CONJ   NOM   animal PL   CONJ
        'big/great men and animals'

     Adjective + plural non-human noun and plural human noun

(20) a. ólómẃári   má   na   wó   íríápu   na
        be.old   house PL   CONJ   NOM   women CONJ
        'old houses and women'

b. opu=a   namá na   wó   amaapu   na
   big=PCL   animal CONJ NOM   male.people   CONJ
   'big/great animals and men'

Means of expressing various kinds of comparison

There are various ways in which the attributes of nouns may be compared. In this section, we shall describe how the attributes of nouns may be expressed in terms of equality, comparative, and superlative. Adjectives may be used to express the comparative but not equality or the superlative. This is because they may occur in the attributive position (for comparative) but not in the predicative position (for equality and superlative), hence, the need to use stative verbs.

Expressing Equality

Equality is expressed by a compound word consisting of **ḅára** 'way/manner' and a particle **wá**. Together, they may be interpreted to mean 'equal' and function as an equality marker. The conjunction **sọ́** 'also' may be introduced after the subject to express emphasis (examples 21b & d). The formal structure of the sentence that expresses equality is: subject (noun) + object (noun) + **ḅárawá** + Adjective/V (stative). The stative verb performing the adjectival function occurs sentence-finally (that is, in the predicate position).

(21)   a. tọ́nyé   bomá ḅárawá iḅi
          PN   PN   EQL   be.good
          'Tọnye is as good as Boma'

       b. tọ́nyé   sọ́   bomá ḅárawá iḅi
          PN   also   PN   EQL   be.good
          'Tọnye is also as good as Boma'

       c. namá nji   ḅárawá ótóḿ
          meat fish   EQL   be.sweet
          'Meat is as tasty as fish'

       d. namá   sọ́   nji   ḅárawá ótóḿ
          meat   also   fish EQL   be.sweet
          'Meat is also as tasty as fish'

Expressing the Comparative

A comparative construction is one "in which two items are compared according to some quality" (Payne, 1997, p.88) and this quality is expressed by either an adjective or a stative verb. The comparative in Nkọrọọ is marked by including the stative verb **nẹ́ngī** 'exceed/surpass' after the second noun that is being compared, that is in sentence-final position. The adjective or stative verb that expresses the nominal attribute occurs between the two nouns being compared. The intensifier -**sí** may be attached to the stative verb. The use of -**sí** with the stative verb is optional while **nẹ́ngī** is obligatory.

(22)   a. tọ́nyé   opu   bomá nẹ́ngī
             PN   big/great   PN   exceed
             'Tọnye is greater than Boma'

        b. tọ́nyé   iḅi   bomá nẹ́ngī
            PN   be.good   PN   exceed
             'Tọnye is better than Boma'

        c. námá   ótóḿ-sī   nji   nẹngí
           meat   be. sweet-INT fish   exceed
            'Meat is tastier than fish'

Expressing the Superlative

To express the superlative, a nominal compound consisting of a noun **ḅú** 'self/body' and the stative verb **nẹ́ngī** 'exceed/surpass' is used. Together, **ḅú nẹ́ngī** may be interpreted as 'exceed or surpass self'. This compound occurs after the stative verb and may be used to compare an entity to other entities. The focus marker **wo** is usually introduced after the subject in this type of construction.

       Superlative when compared to other entities
(23)   a. tọ́nyé   wo   nángúọ̄ ḅú   nẹ́ngī
           PN   FOC   be. tall self   exceed
           'Tọnye is the tallest'

        b. ami tọru ḿ   wo   kókóró   ḅú   nẹ́ngī
          that river DEF FOC be.deep   self   exceed
          'That river is the deepest'

Superlative when compared to itself at other points or times
The compound **ḅú nẹ́ngī** may also be used to compare an entity to itself at other points or times. The intensifier -**sí** may be attached to the verb **nẹ́ngī** (example 24b) to indicate emphasis, but this is optional. The focus marker is also optional.

(24)   a. mí tọru   wo   kókóró   ḅú   nẹ́ngī míọn ke
          this river FOC be.deep   self   exceed here   LOC
          'This river is deepest here'

        b. órúá ófiri ḅú   nẹ́ngī-sí   íkiringa   oku   ke
          sun be.hot self   exceed-INT   harmattan   season LOC
          'The sun is hottest during harmattan season'

Degrees of quality

This section discusses how adjectives and stative verbs (functioning as adjectives) measure the quality a noun possesses. This could be in super abundance, large, or small measure.

Expressing super abundance

As with the superlative, the compound **ḅú nḗngī** may be used to express super abundance with stative verbs only. The intensifier -**sí** may be optionally attached to this compound. With adjectives however, an ideophone is obligatory (example 25b). Again, this is due to the fact that adjectives do not occur in the predicate position.

(25) a. a   bíbíé   ḅú   nḗngī
     3SG.N   be.small   self   exceed
   'It is extremely/too small'

    b. ami tíín   ḿ   opu   ígídí
    that tree   DEF   big   ID
    'That tree is extremely/too big'

Expressing large measure

The intensifier -**sí** is obligatorily used alongside a stative verb to express large measure. In order to express large measure with adjectives, an ideophone is neccessary (example 26c).

(26) a. a   iḅi-sí
     3SG.N be.good-INT
    'It is very good'

    b. a   gogori-sí
    3SG.N be.red-INT
    'It is very red'

    c. tọ́nyé   opu   ígídí
     PN   big/great   ID
    'Tọnye is very great'

Expressing small measure

There are three ways to express small measure with stative verbs functioning as adjectives.

a) By the use of **ḅú** 'self/body' + **nḗngī** 'exceed/surpass' + **=ka** 'negative clitic'.

(27) tíín   ḿ   duḅa ḅú   nḗngī=ka
    tree   DEF   be.big self   exceed=NCL
    'The tree is not too/so big'

b) By the use of a lexical negative morpheme **opuma** after the noun in addition to V + =**ka** 'negative clitic'. The use of the lexical negative morpheme **opuma** in addition to the negative clitic =**ka,** which is attached to the stative verb, is mandatory in expressing small measure. If the negative clitic is deleted, the sentence becomes ungrammatical (example 28b). This shows that double negatives are allowed in Nkọrọọ.

(28)   a. tíín ḿ   opuma duḅa=ka
       tree DEF   NEG be.big=NCL
       'The tree is not too/so big'

      b. *tíín   ḿ   opuma
        tree   DEF NEG
        'The tree is not too/so big'

c) by the use of **ḅú nḛ́ngī** and the intensifier -**sí** alongside a stative verb that has a dimunitive meaning:

(29)   a. fíye ḿ   bíbíé   ḅú   nḛ́ngī-sí
       food DEF be. small   self   exceed-INT
       'The food is too small'

      b. amaowei ḿ   gboli/gbolu   ḅú   nḛ́ngī-sí
       male.man DEF be. short   self   exceed-INT
       'The man is too short'

Adjectives as nominal modifiers

      Both adjectives and stative verbs functioning as adjectives precede the noun they modify within the noun phrase. In other words, they function as prenominal modifiers as seen in examples (1), (3), and (7) that express the attributive function of adjectives and stative verbs. It is possible to have more than one adjective/stative verb in this position and there is no strict order of occurrence for the adjectives/stative verbs within the noun phrase (example 30a & b).

(30)   a. opu   iḅi   olom iriara
       big/great be.good   be.old woman
       'great good old woman'

      b. iḅi   olom opu   iriara
       be.good   be.old big/great   woman
       'good old great woman'

Other nominal modifiers such as pronouns, demonstratives, numerals, and the definite article may occur alongside adjectives and stative verbs functioning as adjectives in the noun phrase. In the order of modifiers, adjectives/stative verbs always come last, immediately preceding the noun being modified. They occur closest to the head noun as seen in the examples below.

(31)   Pronoun + adjective + noun
      a. á   gbǫ́ǫ́n   dímḛ
       3SG.F   be.straight   hair
       'her straight hair'

b. wá opu   wari
   1PL big/great   house
  'our big/great house'

(32)   Demonstrative + adjective + noun
    a. mí pina   ọ́bori
       this be.white goat
      'this white goat'

    b. ami opu   bọ
       that big/great   person
      'that great person'

Both cardinal and ordinal numerals can occur with adjectives in the noun phrase. For cardinals, numerals 1 – 19 precede the adjective while numerals 20 and above follow the noun, thus occurring after the adjective. On the other hand, ordinals always precede adjectives.

(33)   Cardinal numeral + adjective + noun
    a. gbọ́rí   síe   jọwọ́ín
       one   be.bad paddle
      'one bad paddle'

    b. gbọ́rí   ópu   jọwọ́ín
       one   big   paddle
      'one big paddle'

(34)   Adjective + noun + cardinal numeral
    a. sie   jọwọ́ín si
       be.bad   paddle twenty
      'twenty bad paddles'

    b. opu=a   jọwọ́ín si
       big=PCL   paddle twenty
      'twenty big paddles'

(35)   Ordinal numeral + adjective + noun
    a. pípẹ́rí/púpẹ́rí   ólom   iriara
       first   be.old woman
      'first old woman'

    b. kúnọma   pápa   iriara
       last   useless/vain woman
      'last useless woman'

The definite article always functions post-nominally and so occurs after the adjective and the noun in the noun phrase.

(35)   Adjective + noun + definite article
        a. olomiriara   ḿ
           be.old   woman DEF
          'the old woman'

        b. áyá kura ḿ
           new year DEF
          'the new year'

Conclusion

Nkọrọọ, like many African languages in the Niger-Congo phylum, operates a small closed class of adjectives that includes words referring to the basic concepts of dimension (**opu** 'big'), age (**áyá** 'new'), and value (**opu** 'great' and **pápa** 'bare/empty', 'useless/vain'). This classification is based on their ability to specify the attributes of nouns and function attributively without being inflected for temporal, aspectual or modal distinctions. On their own, adjectives do not occur in the predicate position. While stative verbs may function as adjectives in the predicate position, true adjectives need a noun or an ideophone to function predicatively. On the other hand, both stative verbs and adjectives can function attributively. Both adjectives and stative verbs function as prenominal modifiers within the noun phrase. They occur closest to the head noun when they occur with other nominal modifiers. Also, there is no particular order of occurrence when more than one adjective and/or stative verb occurs modifies the noun.

In terms of number, it is only the adjective **opu** that marks plurality morphologically by taking the plural clitic =**a**. In other words, it agrees in number with the noun. With other adjectives, as well as stative verbs, number is generally marked by the use of the plural marker **má** with the noun. Definiteness is also marked on the noun and not on the adjective, however, the reference of definiteness includes the adjective.

The attributes of nouns may be expressed in terms of equality, comparative, and superlative with the aid of the compounds **ḅárawá** and **ḅú nḗngī**. The latter is used for both the comparative and the superlative. To measure the quality a noun possesses in super abundance and large measure, adjectives require an ideophone while stative verbs employ the compound **ḅú nḗngī** and the intensifier -**sí** respectively. Small measure may be expressed via stative verbs alongside the compound **ḅú nḗngī** and the negative clitic =**ka** or the intensifier -**sí** (that is either **ḅú nḗngīka** or **ḅú nḗngīsí**), or by negating the stative verb in addition to using the lexical negative morpheme, **opuma**.

Despite the fact that the description of adjectives has been termed problematic in most languages, this study has delimited the features and functions that characterize the class of adjectives in Nkọrọọ as the findings have revealed.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
CONJ	conjunction
DEF	definite article
EQL	equality
F	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future
ID	ideophone
IMP	imperative
INT	intensifier
LOC	locative
M	masculine
N	neuter
NCL	negative clitic
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
O	object
PCL	plural clitic
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PN	personal name
PROG	progressive
S	subject
SCL	subject clitic
SG	singular
V	vowel, verb

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