

Notes on nouns and noun phrases in Iká

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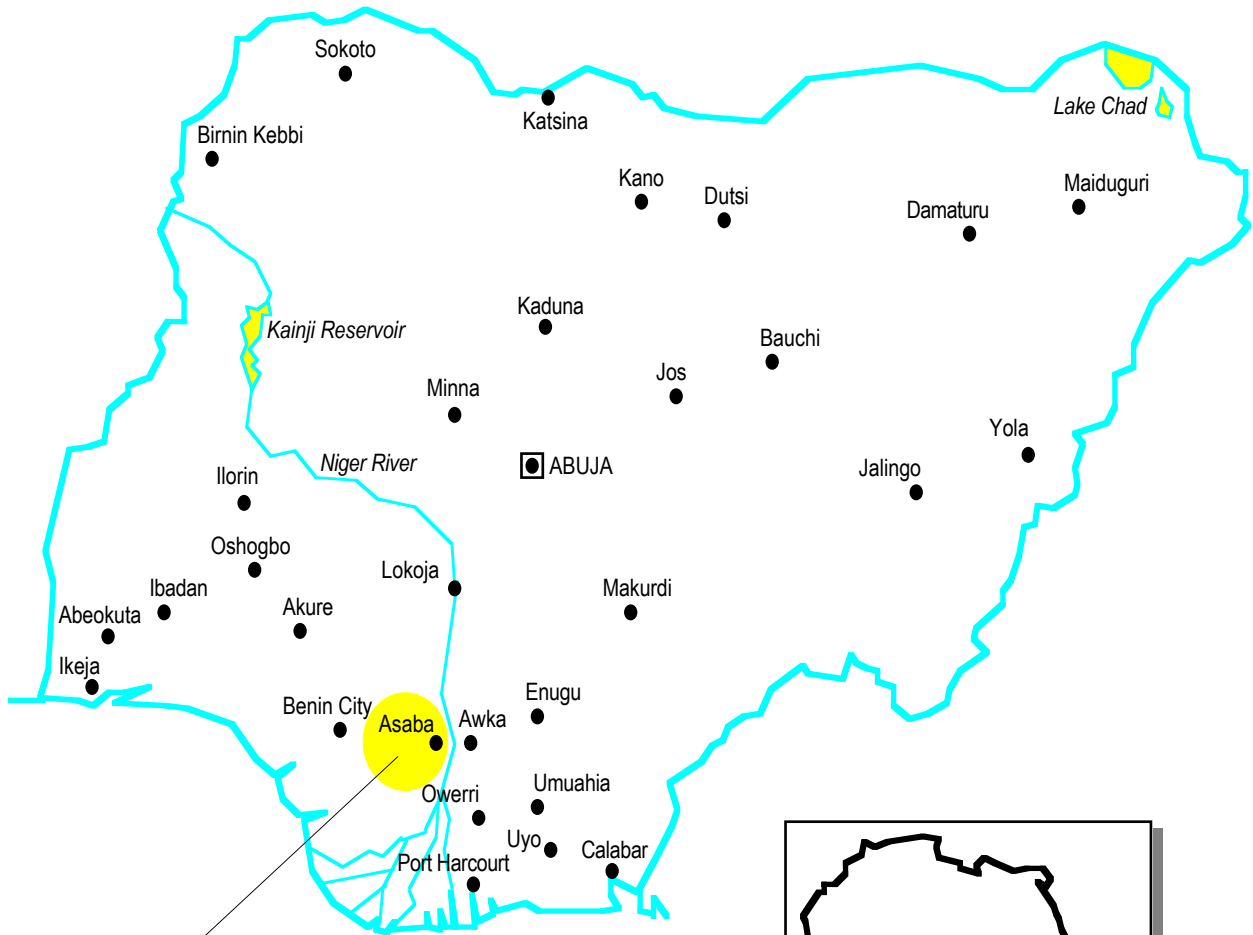
REVISED VERSION

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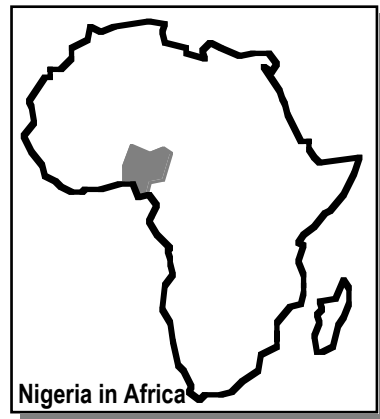
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Approximate location of the Iká language



Nigeria (with state capitals)

Introduction

The present paper is a small contribution towards the grammatical description of Iká, an Igboid language spoken in south-eastern Nigeria. The focus is on Iká nouns and noun phrases. It must be stressed that the below notes are highly tentative, and everything said herein should therefore be interpreted with some amount of caution. Thus the conclusions are only preliminary. Also, the structure of the presentation is yet to find its final form.

The data derives from a single informant, Joseph Onyeche, aged 30, who has kindly submitted himself to various cross-examination-like elicitation sessions. Earlier notes and handouts from Pontus Fredriksson on verbs, Karl Erland Gadelii on syntax, Tore Janson on phonology and tones, and Joseph Onyeche on the lexicon have been very useful.

The orthography used is basically that of the IPA alphabet, while the depth of transcription relies chiefly on Tore Janson's efforts at establishing the phonemic system of the language (see separate notes on this). The transcription of vowels in general and the indication of tones in particular is somewhat unsophisticated. As for tone-marking, since the tonal system of Iká is yet to be described, I have chosen to mark high and low tones wherever I think they seem to occur and/or where my informant says they occur. Lack of tone-marking indicates ignorance, not lack of tone.

Grammatical gender

First off, there is no noun class system (or grammatical gender) in Iká, although there is evidently trace of an older prefix-based noun class system visible on various nouns.

(1)	ENGLISH GLOSS	SINGULAR FORM	PLURAL FORM
	<i>man</i>	ókéje	ikeje
	<i>woman</i>	ókpóhó	íkpóhó
	<i>stranger</i>	otumú̀m̀je	itumú̀m̀je
	<i>child, infant</i>	ɲwádu	ɲmúndú
	<i>child</i>	ɲwàta	ɲmweka
	<i>beloved, brethren, sibling</i>	ɲwene	ɲmune

The above-exemplified nouns bear remnants of the following putative prefixes:

(2)	SINGULAR	PLURAL
	* ɔ-	* i-
	* ɲw- (?)	* ɲmu- (?)

Neither of these prefixes are productive, since there seems to be no way of applying these to new forms. Thus they are best analyzed as fixed parts of the nominal roots.

Deverbal nouns

Prefixation is used for derivation. Thus we find regular correspondences between certain types of nouns and their phonological form. So far, two productive derivational prefixes have been elicited: *i-* for infinitives and *o-* for gerunds. The latter occurs together with reduplication (of some sort; see below). Both infinitives and gerunds can be seen as types of verbal nouns in that they can occur as objects and subjects in sentences.

(3)	VERB (STEM)	INFINITIVES (<i>i</i> -VERB)	GERUNDS (<i>o</i> -VERB _{PARTIAL} -V-VERB)
	ghǒ (<i>buy</i>)	íghǒ (<i>to buy</i>)	oghǐghǒ (<i>the buying</i>)
	ré (<i>sell</i>)	íré (<i>to sell</i>)	oríré (<i>the selling</i>)
	zá (<i>answer</i>)	íza (<i>to answer</i>)	ozízá (<i>the answering</i>)
	kpé (<i>pray</i>)	íkpe (<i>to pray</i>)	okpíkpe (<i>the praying</i>)
	gbú (<i>kill</i>)	ígbu (<i>to kill</i>)	ogbúgbú (<i>the killing</i>)
	mú (<i>laugh</i>)	ímú (<i>to laugh</i>)	omúmú (<i>the laughing</i>)

The formation of infinitives is straightforward, namely, a simple prefixation of an *i*-vowel to a verbal stem. The formation of gerunds, however, looks more complicated. There is an *o*-prefix and there is clearly a reduplication of the verbal stem, but it seems to be interrupted by a vowel, which in most cases is *i*, as seen in examples like *ozízá* and *okpíkpe*. However, the vowel *u* also occurs. These seem to be the only vowels occurring. So far, a rule explaining the vowel might read something like “use *u* with verb stems containing *u*, otherwise use *i*”. Obviously more data is needed for a clearer statement.

There might be further categories of deverbal nouns than infinitives and gerunds that are formed with productive derivation processes, but data is scanty for a full treatment of this. There are, however, many examples of noun forms that are related

to corresponding verb forms, and for which no obvious derivational process has been possible to establish.

(4)	VERB FORMS		NOUN FORMS	DERIVATIONAL SEMANTICS
	kpé (<i>pray</i>)	-?→	ikpɛɛ (<i>prayer</i>)	result (while acting)
	mú (<i>laugh</i>)	-?→	emu (<i>laughter</i>)	result (while acting)
	bú (<i>sing</i>)	-?→	ebu (<i>song</i>)	result (while acting)
	hú (<i>be</i>)	-?→	éhu (<i>body</i>)	result (while acting)
	zá (<i>sweep</i>)	-?→	èzìza (<i>broom</i>)	instrument
	rú (<i>work_{verb}</i>)	-?→	ɔrũ (<i>work_{noun}</i>)	result (while acting)

Although the verbs and nouns above are clearly related in form, it is at present difficult to establish any regular correspondences. Some hints of rules are nevertheless detectable. However, the only one occurring fairly abundantly is the one involving a prefixed vowel (other than the infinitive í). The exact semantics involved will have to be left for future studies though. In any case, we might tentatively establish the following derivational rules for Iká:

(5)	FORMULA	FUNCTION	EXAMPLES
	i-Verb	infinitive	za (<i>answer</i>) → iza (<i>to answer</i>)
	o-Verb _{partial} -V-Verb	gerund	mú (<i>laugh</i>) → omumu (<i>the laughing</i>)
	e/ɛ/o/ɔ-Verb	result (?)	bú (<i>sing</i>) → ? ebu (<i>song</i>)

The last of these is clearly the most uncertain one. However, a derivational rule producing the ‘result (while acting)’ (or ‘objectification of verbal act’) would seem like a useful derivational process in Iká considering the (abundant?) use of so-called bound verb complement constructions.

More data is needed on deverbal derivations, and also regarding nouns derived from other parts-of-speech than verbs.

Morphological distinctions of grammatical number

Grammatical number is not morphologically marked in Iká. Thus singular and plural nouns are usually identical, as in the following examples:

(6)	ENGLISH GLOSS	SINGULAR FORM	PLURAL FORM
	<i>snake</i>	aguɔ	aguɔ

<i>fish</i>	azũ	azũ
<i>bird</i>	ɲɔɲo	ɲɔɲo
<i>dog</i>	ɲkíte	ɲkíte
<i>tree</i>	óʃíʃí	óʃíʃí
<i>hill</i>	òke	òke
<i>pit</i>	ólù	ólù

As noted in the previous section, however, there is a handful (as it seems) of nouns denoting people that exhibit obligatorily marked distinctions in singular and plural. (See previous section for examples.) This subset consists of nouns bearing traces of an older prefix-based noun class system which is no longer productive. Thus from a synchronic perspective, they seem best regarded as exceptional (or suppletive) forms.

There is, in addition, at least one non-human noun which has a suppletive plural form distinct from the just-mentioned prefix-based singular/plural distinction.

(7)	ENGLISH GLOSS	SINGULAR FORM	SUPPLETIVE PLURAL FORM
	<i>animal</i>	ánu	ánumanu

The reason for dubbing it ‘suppletive form’ is simply that it does not seem to form part of any general pluralization process. There might be more nouns with suppletive (exceptional) forms, but the above is the only one elicited so far.

Still, despite of what is stated above, Iká is not completely void of productive pluralization processes, although they all seem to be optional and not strictly morphological. It is possible to denote plurality with the marker (possibly prefix) ɲdi.

(8)	ENGLISH GLOSS	SINGULAR FORM	PLURAL ɲdi FORM
	<i>elder</i>	ìtʃě	ɲdi ìtʃě
	<i>person</i>	ihjã	ɲdi ihjã
	<i>friend</i>	òwu	ɲdi òwu

The ɲdi marker is optional since all plural nouns can apparently be used without it. It is commonly only used with human nouns, but when it is not it conveys an additional notion of humanness. Thus non-human nouns pluralized with the ɲdi marker are not straightforward plural forms of the corresponding singular nouns. Thus, for instance, ɲdi ókũ ɛbuo means not *two fires* but *two hot people*.

- (9) ńdi ókũ ɛbuo
 PLURAL fire, hot two
 Two hot people **Two fires*

And similarly:

- (10) ńdi úgbókó ɛbuo
 PLURAL forest two
 Two forest people **Two forests*

In order to say *two forests*, a ńdi-less construction would be necessary.

- (11) úgbókó ɛbuo
 forest two
 Two forests

We may conclude this section by saying that there are little morphological marking of grammatical number (besides the handful of nouns which have exceptional singular and plural forms). Whatever morphological marking there is, it is optional and concerns only human nouns.

Adjectives (and numerals)

Adjectives, as well as numerals, follow whatever noun they qualify.

- (12) ɔkeɛ oba
 man big
 a big man
- (13) élé ńma
 antelope beautiful
 a beautiful antelope
- (14) moto égédí ɛbuo
 car old two
 two old cars

Adjectives (and other adnominals) are usually used together with nouns, but constructions involving adjectives without a noun are also fairly common; at least not uncommon. In English, we can easily derive such noun-less constructions by a simple deletion process, as in *the blue lies over there* which could be derived from, say, *the blue book lies over there*. In Iká, however, we cannot easily employ such a simple process. Compare the following examples:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (15) | ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTION | NOUN-LESS CONSTRUCTION |
| | óǰíǰí uku | hú hi óǰbè |
| | <i>a big tree</i> | <i>a big one (lit. that be big)</i> |

Note firstly that there are different adjectives used in the attributive and the predicative construction respectively. This will be discussed further below. Presently we can focus on how to derive a noun-less noun phrase. There are at least two ways to do this. One point of reference is the copula construction.

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------|-----|------|
| (16) | óǰíǰí | hi | óǰbè |
| | tree | COP | big |
| | <i>(the) tree is big</i> | | |

Relating the noun-less construction to a copula construction, we might see the hú in hú hi óǰbè as some kind of place-holder (or noun surrogate) occupying the place of the missing noun, as in the following putative analysis:

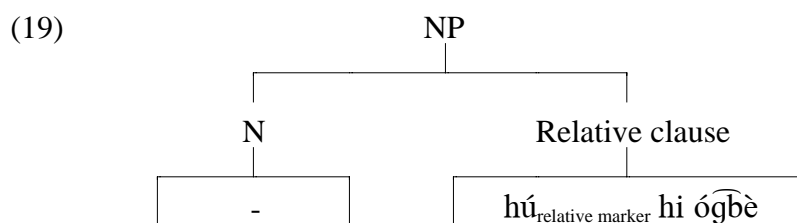
- | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-----|------|
| (17) | S | | |
| | NP | COP | ADJ |
| | hú _{relative marker} | hi | óǰbè |

The other point of reference would be a relative clause construction (which will be dealt with more in detail in sections further below), as the following:

- | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| (18) | óǰíǰí | hú | hi | óǰbè |
| | tree | REL | COP | big |
| | <i>a tree which is big</i> | | | |

This might give us reason to analyze the noun-less construction as a kind of noun-

less (or “reduced”) relative construction, and thus say that there is an empty slot where the missing noun used to be, as in the following putative analysis:



Thus according to this solution, what in English would be a nominalized (or “headless”) adnominal construction (NOUN+ADJ) is in Iká a nominalized (or “headless”) relative clause construction (NOUN+REL). I do not know which one to prefer, the “surrogate” construction or the “reduced” construction. However, the latter seems to me as the most economical one. Be that as it may, more data is needed on this subject, especially such that involve other copulas than *he*.

As already noted above, there is a difference between adjectives used in attributive constructions and such that are used in predicative constructions. Some adjectives can only occur in attributive constructions, while others can only occur in predicative constructions. (There are also adjectives occurring in both.)

	ATTRIBUTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS	PREDICATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS
(20)	ɔkɛɲɛ uku man big <i>a big man</i>	ɔkɛɲɛ hi ógbè man COP big <i>(the) man is big</i>
(21)	ŋkite nta dog small <i>a small dog</i>	ŋkite me ntĩ dog COP small <i>(the) dog is small</i>

The adjective *uku* *big(er than usual)* can not be used in a predicative construction, and the reverse is true for *ógbè* which cannot be used attributively; at least not without losing its original meaning. Compare the following pair of sentences:

(22)

ŋwá	hi	ógbè
child	COP	big
<i>a small child</i>		

- (23) ηwá ógbè
 child big
a street child

However, there are many examples of adjectives which are used in both attributive and predicative constructions, though apparently not without semantic differences

- (24) ηwá ri íjma
 child COP good
a good child

- (25) ηwá íjma
 child fine, beautiful
a fine child or a beautiful child

Note that the copula used in the examples above (as well as some of the earlier ones) display differing forms. The one used in the next-to-last example (ri) is a kind of default copula occurring in most copula constructions. Other copulas, which I will refer to here as ‘restricted copulas’, are used with certain adjectives only, for instance, the copula me goes with adjectives indicating smallness in size (as well as behaviour).

- (26) ηwá me ntĩ
 child COP_{small} small
(the) child is small

- (27) əkeje me ngbara
 man COP_{small} slim
(the) man is slim

- (28) ηkite ηmè me dzù
 dog my COP_{small} cool, quiet
my dog is quiet/cool

The restricted copula hi is used with adjectives indicating the reverse, as it would seem, that is, bigness in size, and perhaps also intensive (≈ bigness) behaviour.

- (29) ɔkɛɲɛ hi ak̄pa
 man COP_{big} fat
 (the) man is fat
- (30) ɲkite ɛbuɔ ɲkɛ ɔkɛɲɛ ahũ hi ógbè
 dog two POSS man DEF/DEM COP_{big} big
 the man's two dogs are big

Other copulas are restricted to other semantic domains.

- (31) ɲkite ka égédí
 dog COP_{age} old
 (the) dog is old
- (32) ɲnunu gì ɲgì
 bird COP_{black} black
 (the) bird is black
- (33) aguɔ tǣ̃ ɔtǣ̃
 snake COP_{white} white
 (the) snake is white
- (34) joni dʒɔ ńdʒó
 John COP_{ugly} ugly
 John is ugly
- (35) élé ma ńma
 antelope COP_{beauty} beautiful
 (the) antelope is beautiful

Thus the adjectives, or some of them at least, might appropriately be analyzed as something else than adjectives, since they clearly form a heterogenous category not only semantically but also syntactically.

- (36) ENGLISH GLOSS ATTRIBUTIVE USE PREDICATIVE USE
 big uku hi ógbè
 big(er than usual) uku hi ógbè

big, grown-up	oba	hi	ógbè
fat, big	akpa	hi	akpa
small (in size)	nta	me	ntĩ
slim	ngbara	me	ngbara
cool, quiet	dzù	me	dzù
beautiful, good	ńma	ma	ńma
ugly	ńdzó	dzó	ńdzó
hot	ókũ	kpõ	ókũ
glad, happy	oyó	ri	áyòyò
old	égédí	ka	égédí
black	ogi	gì	ngì
white	otfã	tã	otfã

The default copula *ri* is used with some predicatively restricted adjectives, like *oyó* *happy*. Possibly it can be used with all adjectives.

(37) o ma ńma
 he/she/it COP_{beauty} beautiful
he/she/it is beautiful

(38) o ri ńma
 he/she/it COP good
he/she/it is good

However, there is obviously a semantic difference between the two examples above. Together with a restricted copula, the adjective tends to focus on appearance rather than (inherent) qualities; the reverse is true with the default copula. Perhaps this is true for other adjectives as well? More data is needed on this.

Possibly there is some kind of (historical?) significance attached to the fact that many of the restricted copulas are similar in form with the adjectives with which they are used. That there is an obvious form-correspondence between the restricted copulas and their adjectives might indicate that the restricted copulas are something else than “pure” copulas. Compare the following:

(39) ihiẽ ori ri ókũ
 food COP fire
(the) food is on the fire

- (40) ihiẽ ori kpõ ðkũ
 food be hot fire, hot
 (*the*) food is hot (referring to taste/temperature)

The first example contains an ordinary (locational) copula construction. The second example contains a so-called bound verb complement construction, that is, a verb followed by an obligatory object. In the majority of cases, these obligatory objects bear a clear form-correspondence with the verb with which they are used; compare the verb *kpõ* and the object *ðkũ*. Possibly we should analyze the restricted copula constructions in light of this fact, namely, that they are related to the bound verb complement constructions. Thus according to this, it would be tempting to analyse the adjectives following restricted copulas as nominalized adjectives functioning not as complements for copulas, but bound complements for verbs.

While in the bound verb complement construction we might say that the verb determines the form of the grammatical object, in the copula construction we would want to claim the reverse, that is, that it is the copula complement (what would equal a grammatical object) that determines the form of the copula (\approx verb). If there is a relationship between these two types of constructions, it would be convenient to reanalyze the bound verb complement construction in lines with the restricted copula construction, that is, that the form of the verb is determined by the object. This might, furthermore, force us to possibly reanalyze verbal constructions altogether as constituting a continuum of some sort, possibly determined by the syntactic status (or something else) of the verb complement. For instance:

- (41) “NORMAL” VERB BVC CONSTR. RESTR. COPULA “NORMAL” COP.
 Subj+Verb+Obj \rightarrow Subj+Verb+BVC \rightarrow Subj+Cop_{restricted}+Adj \rightarrow Subj+Cop_{re}+Adj

The two middle categories above might possibly be lumped together. Be that as it may, this particular subject lies outside the area of noun phrase studies, but it does bear some relevance to adnominal studies.

There are no special comparative or superlative inflected or derived forms of adjectives. These notions are instead constructed with special words/particles. In both the comparative and the superlative construction, we find the word/particle *ka*, which is probably identical with the restricted copula used together with *égédí old* (see above). In fact, it would probably not be too far off to compare the function of *ka* in the comparative and superlative constructions with that of a semantically weakened verb of some sort (copulas, auxiliary verbs, so-called deficient verbs, and others).

(42) moto nṣĩ
 car small
a small car

(43) moto ka nṣĩ
 car COMP small
(the) smaller car

The same marker also occurs in superlative constructions.

(44) moto ka-tʃa-ri nṣĩ
 car SUPER small
(the) smallest car

The tʃa-element seems related to verbal aspect markers indicating ‘completeness’ or ‘perfect’ (or the like). Thus a possible segmentational semantics of ka-tʃa-ri might read something like COMPARATIVE+COMPLETE+COPULA, that is, be completely in possession of the quality in question in comparison to something else.

Note also the following examples:

(45) moto uku
 car big
a big car

(46) moto ka-ni
 car COMP ‘BIG’
(the) bigger car

(47) moto ka-tʃa-ri-ni
 car SUPER ‘BIG’
(the) biggest car

The last example may also be rendered as:

(48) moto ka-tʃa-ri ógbè
 car COMP big
(the) biggest car

Note that in the comparative and the superlative constructions, the adjective *ógbè* *big* has been swapped for a suffix/clitic *ni*. Apparently no other adjective may be swapped for *ni*. The *ni* does not mean *big* in itself, something that is conveyed by the comparative marker *ka*.

Genitive constructions

Genitive constructions involve a genitive marker *ηκε*, which is optional; indicated with the use of parentheses below.

- (49) *óló* (*ηκε*) *ηmè*
 house (GEN) my
 my house
- (50) *éhúhuó* (*ηκε*) *jù*
 paper (GEN) your_{singular}
 your_{singular} paper
- (51) *ùkpali* (*ηκε*) *εjì*
 basket (GEN) our
 our basket

Similarly with nominal possessors:

- (52) *ηkite* (*ηκε*) *ókpóhó* *ahũ*
 dog (GEN) woman DEF/DEM
 the woman's dog or the woman's dogs
- (53) *ηkite* (*ηκε*) *ìkpóhó* *ahũ*
 dog (GEN) women DEF/DEM
 the women's dog or the women's dogs

There seems to be a slight semantic difference in operation here, namely, that the *ηκε*-construction is more emphatic. However, there is a further, more intensive, emphatic genitive construction, one that employs the word *εka* *hand*.

significant and therefore not subject to deletion. Thus it “floats” back to the preceding (tone-bearing) segment when the original one is deleted.

In fact, differing tones seem to be the main differences between subjective and genitive pronouns. While the subjective forms are high-toned all through, the genitive pronouns are low-toned.

(59)	ENGLISH GLOSSES	SUBJECT PRONOUNS	GENITIVE PRONOUNS
	<i>me ~ my(mine)</i>	ήμέ	ημέ ~ ì
	<i>you ~ your(s)</i>	jú ~ i	jù ~ ì
	<i>he/she ~ his/her(s)</i>	ο	è
	<i>we ~ our(s)</i>	επi	επì ~ ì
	<i>you ~ your(s)</i>	όνú	όνù
	<i>they ~ their(s)</i>	ύwe	ύwè ~ wè

There seems to be a slight difference in preferred construction form when dealing with alienable and inalienable possession respectively. While all elicited alienable genitives (see examples above) were most often given with the (optional) genitive marker ηκε, all inalienable genitives were spontaneously given without it.

	SPONTANEOUS ELICITATION		OPTIONAL FORM
(60)	επά ημέ <i>my eyes</i>	→	επά ηκε ημέ
(61)	επά jù <i>your_{singular} eyes</i>	→	επά ηκε jù

However, given that the genitive marker is optional in all genitive constructions, the difference between alienable and inalienable genitives seems hardly an important feature of the grammatical structure of Iká.

Pronominal genitive constructions involving several possessors are involve the conjunction *lè and*.

(62)	όί	(ηκε)	ημέ	lè	jù
	house	(GEN)	my	CONJ	your _{singular}
	<i>my and your_{singular} house (when referring to the same house)</i>				

In the example above, the house referred to is the same for both possessors. Had it

not been, the word *óló house* would have to be mentioned twice.

- (63) *óló* (*ηκε*) *ημè* *lè* *óló* (*ηκε*) *jù*
 house (GEN) my CONJ house (GEN) your_{singular}
 my house and your_{singular} house (when referring to separate houses)

Thus one cannot delete the second occurrence of the possessed noun *óló house*, something that is possible in English (*my house and yours*).

Demonstratives (and the marking of definiteness)

There are two demonstratives in Iká, *ni this* and *áhũ that*.

- | | THIS-DEMONSTRATIVE | THAT-DEMONSTRATIVE |
|------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (64) | <i>óǰǰí ni</i>
<i>this tree</i> | <i>óǰǰí áhũ</i>
<i>that tree</i> |
| (65) | <i>èzìza ni</i>
<i>this broom</i> | <i>èzìza áhũ</i>
<i>that broom</i> |

There are no distinct forms based on grammatical number, which thus has to be inferred from the context. However, it would seem that a demonstrative is seldom used with nouns that carry plural meaning. In fact, a singular meaning seems to be inferred by default. Thus a phrase like *íkṙṙṙṙ áhũ* is not (cannot be?) interpreted as *those women* but *that group of women*.

The that-demonstrative *áhũ* is also used for definiteness. Thus a phrase like *óǰǰí áhũ* can be translated as either *that tree* or *the tree* depending on context.

Relative markers and relative clauses

Relative clauses seem to be fairly straightforward in Iká. There is a relative marker *hú* which introduces the relative clause. Moreover, the *hú* is optional.

- (66) *ókéne* *ahũ* (*hú*) *áṗá* *moto* *ηṗṗṗ* *ηkite*
 man DEF/DEM (REL) drives car has/owns dog
 the man who drives a car has a dog

- (67) ñkíte ahũ (hú) ri ímè moto aḡbó íkě
 dog DEF/DEM (REL) COP inside car barks loud/intensive
the dog which is in the car barks loud
- (68) ñkíte ahũ (hú) ðinè ebe-àhũ wũ ñke ñmè
 dog DEF/DEM (REL) lies there COP GEN my/mine
the dog that lies there is mine
- (69) áṅũ ahũ (hú) ñĩĩ wú ñke ñmè
 axe DEF/DEM (REL) heavy COP GEN my/mine
the axe which is heavy is mine

Due to the phonetic similarity between the last syllable in the definite/demonstrative marker ahũ and the relative marker hú, either one of them seems likely to be omitted, at least in less formal speech. In fact, most elicited example sentences were spontaneously given without the relative marker. Moreover, since the relative marker hó is optional, all sentences exemplified below are perfectly okay.

- (70) ójĩĩ ahũ hú i ri éliha àkalle égedi
 tree DEF/DEM REL you COP seeing grown old
the tree that you see is old
- (71) ójĩĩ - hú i ri éliha àkalle égedi
 tree - REL you COP seeing grown old
the tree that you see is old
- (72) ójĩĩ ahũ - i ri éliha àkalle égedi
 tree DEF/DEM - you COP seeing grown old
the tree that you see is old
- (73) ójĩĩ - - i ri éliha àkalle égedi
 tree - - you COP seeing grown old
the tree that you see is old

Whether or not there are any semantic differences remains to be investigated. Note that both components of the main clause predicate àkalle égedi contain a semantic

element of *old* and/or *matured*. Moreover, they seem to go together in that the former (*àkallè*) cannot be used with any other adjective than *égèdi*. The latter can be omitted without any apparent change in meaning, in which case its presence is implied.

Relative markers referring to plural nouns are different from those denoting singular nouns. Thus the plural relative marker is *ndé*. Also this is optional. Compare the following sentences:

(74) ðkéɲe (hú) ri ábu ébu ri áɣðɣð
 man (REL) COP sing song COP glad
 the man who is singing is glad

(75) ikɛɲe (hú) ri ábu ébu ri áɣðɣð
 men (REL) COP sing song COP glad
 the men who are singing are glad

The plural relative marker is possibly related to the pluralizing (human) *ídi*-prefix described earlier. However, the distribution of the relative marker *ndé* is not restricted to co-occur with the notion of humanness (as is the *ídi*-prefix).

More data is needed on relative clause constructions.

The order of multiple qualifiers

Multiple qualifier constructions are best described with the aid of a few examples:

(76) oʃíʃi uku ebuɔ
 tree big two
 two big trees

(77) ɲkite ebuɔ (hú) hi uku
 dog two (REL) COP big
 two big dogs or two dogs are big

(78) ðkéɲe ahũ (hú) ri ímè moto ɲwð ɲkītē
 man DEF/DEM (REL) is inside car has dog
 the man who is in the car has a dog

- (79) efo dʒo ŋkite uku ogi ebuo ahũ ri ibeka ahũ
 wicked dog big black two DEF/DEM COP over/side there
 Those two big black dogs which are over there are wicked

The English sentence is partly inaccurate as a translation of the last example. The initial efo dʒo *wicked* is topicalized, and a more literal translation should read *wicked, those two big black dogs over there*.

Note also the order of the two adjectives uku *big* and oge *black* in the last-used example above, that is, a size-adjective precedes a colour-adjective, as in the following noun phrase extracted from above:

- (80) ŋkite uku ogi
 dog big black
 A big black dog

Thus the following example is ungrammatical:

- (81) * ŋkite ogi uku
 dog black big
 A big black dog

The above-used examples indicate the following preferred order:

- (82) NOUN + ADJ_{size} + ADJ_{colour} + NUM + DEM/DEF + REL

Concluding comments

One thing that immediately strikes a nominal analyzer is the fact that while most nouns seem to begin with vowels, there appears to be no (or at least very few) verbs that do so. Presumably this is a remnant of an old prefix-system, although it could have other implications as well, for instance, as an indication of productive derivational processes. Noteworthy nonetheless.

As a general typological characteristic one could conclude that Iká seems to be a typical VO language, at least from the viewpoint of nouns and noun phrases. Thus qualifiers (operators) follow nouns which they qualify (operands). This is true for adjectives, demonstratives, relative clauses and genitive constructions (nominal as

well as pronominal). The few compounds that have been elicited also exhibit a operand—operator order.

As the (tentative) notes above have shown, there is definite need to elicit more types of nominal constructions, such as various forms of demonstrative constructions, more relative clauses constructions, more adjectival constructions involving comparatives and superlatives (and excessives?), material regarding nominal derivation, as well as other stuff.