

Chapter 5: Adjectives

5.1 Morphology of adjectives

In Rigwe, adjectives divide between those that precede the noun and those that follow it, which correspond to a distinction between agreement with the had noun or lack of it. Rigwe adjectives are typically CV or CV(N)CV but those that follow the noun have a wider range of canonical forms. Reduplication is common, with a CV syllable copied exactly. Table 1 shows examples of all the structures so far recorded for Rigwe;

Table 1. Canonical forms of Rigwe adjectives

Rigwe	Gloss	Canonic form
cé	white	CV
rò	bitter	CV
ṅmgbá	big	NCV
rùtò	sweet	CVCV
sèrè	sour	CVCV
kúnjú	short	CVNVCV
ʒʷóʒʷó	all	CʷVCʷV
brùmbù	blue	CʷVCʷV
ìjǐ	small	VVCV
uúku	short	VVCV

Rigwe shows exact vowel-copying in all syllables of the adjective; *rùtò* ‘sweet’ constitutes a single exception.

5.2 Agreement and the position of adjectives

In Rigwe, adjectives divide between those that precede the noun and those that follow it.

5.2.1 Adjectives following the noun

Adjectives that follow the noun include colours, numbers, and a small miscellaneous set. They are invariant, showing no concord or agreement.

Colours

tágo cé	white shirt
támrí ɥí	black shoe
wòndò ʃʷó	red trousers
lènté brùmbù	blue bag

brùmbù is a loanword from English but it behaves exactly as the other colours.

Numerals

The adjectival forms of numerals differ from the ordinary count forms for the first five numbers. Thus;

	Count
tágo ^[2] zùnzrù	one shirt
rè tágo ^[2] wêṃiè	two shirts
rè tágo ^[2] wêtsiè	three shirts
rè tágo ^[2] wêni	four shirts
rè tágo ^[2] wêteʷòò	five shirts
but;	
rè tágo rítsiè	six shirts
rè tágo ʃʷá ne ^[2] zùnzrù	eleven shirts

à	bí	rè	tágo	cé	wêṃiè
he	has	PL	shirt	white	two

He has two white shirts.

à bí r̀è tágo ʃʷó r̀ítsié
 he has PL shirt red six
 He has six red shirts.

à bí r̀è tágo r̀ítsié ne m̀bé ní ʃʷóʃʷóŋ
 he has PL shirt six that they are red
 He has six shirts that are red.

Why?

Others

Table 2 give examples of the main adjectives that follow the noun, with plurals to illustrate the invariance of the adjective;

Table 2. Rigwe adjectives that follow the noun

Rigwe	Gloss	Example	Gloss	Example pl.	Gloss
klò	hard	ritʃi klò	hard head	ntʃi klò	hard heads
kúŋgú	short	ñne kúŋgú	short person	ñne kúŋgú	short people
rò	bitter	ricê rò	bitter medicine	rè-ricê rò	bitter medicine
réré	pointed	onú réré	pointed mouth	ronú réré	pointed mouths
rùtò	sweet	riʃi rùtò	sweet water	rè-riʃi rùtò	sweet waters ¹
sèrè	sour	riʃi sèrè	sour water [idiom for beer]	rè-riʃi sèrè	sour waters
mí	new	tágo mí	a new shirt	rè tágo mí	new shirts
ʒʷóʒʷó	all	ñne ʒʷóʒʷó	all people		

The adjective ʒʷóʒʷó ‘all’ is generally used in sentence contexts with a *gà* preceding the noun. Thus;

gà ñne ʒʷóʒʷó ne ñdziè
 all people all go sleep
 Everyone’s gone to sleep

Reduplicated adjectives such as *réré* can also precede the noun, with no apparent change in sense.

5.2.2 Adjectives preceding the noun

Adjectives preceding the noun show agreement in number. The strategies for agreement patterns in adjectives strongly resemble those for nouns (Chapter 3). These are shown in Table 3;

Table 3. Plural marking strategies for adjectives in Rigwe

No.	Strategy	Allomorph
1.	<i>rè-/r-</i> pluraliser precedes noun	
2.	stem-tone raising	prefix-vowel tone-raising
3.	initial low tone nasal raising	

Table 4 gives examples of the operation of number marking in Rigwe adjectives;

¹ A descriptive term for ‘wine’ or any soft drink

Table 4. Rigwe adjectives that precede the noun

Gloss	No.	Rigwe	sg.	pl.	Strategy
short	sg.	uúku	uúku ñne	short man	
	pl.	rè úúku	rè úúku ñne	short people	1
new	sg.	ṹṹṹ	ṹṹṹ 'tágo	new shirt	
	pl.	rè ṹṹṹ	rè ṹṹṹ rè tágo	new shirts	1
great	sg.	brà	brà ek ^{wé}	tall tree	
	pl.	brá	brá rek ^{wé}	tall trees	2
some	sg.	jà	jà ñne	a person	
	pl.	já	já ñne	some people	2
another	sg.	jáká	jáká ñne	another person	
	pl.	jáká	jáká ñne	other people	2
small	sg.	ìíí	ìíí ewé	younger child	
	pl.	ìíí	ìíí rewé	younger children	2
small	sg.	ewé	ewé'wè	small child	3
	pl.	èwèé	èwèé rèwè	small children	3
big	sg.	ṹṹṹṹ	ṹṹṹṹàátsié	big stone	
	pl.	ṹṹṹṹ	ṹṹṹṹáátsié	big stones	3

The choice of number marking in individual cases is not easily predictable, nor is the application of multiple strategies. For example, *ṹṹṹ*, 'new' is bracketed by a repeated *rè*- and also undergoes stem-tone raising, in contrast to *uúku*, 'short'. In the case of *ṹṹṹṹ*, 'big', a final vowel followed by another central vowel is assimilated. No other adjectives show this behaviour.

kpí, 'part of', precedes the noun but does not show number agreement and may be a special type of nominal;

sg.	kpí	kpí ṹṹṹṹáátsié	part of a stone
pl.	kpí	kpí ñne	some of the people

5.3 Adjectives from verbs; gerundives

A common procedure in Rigwe for forming adjectives is to reduplicate a simple CV verb. Reduplication be an exact copy or it can be divergent. Examples of exact reduplication are;

ṹṹṹṹ burning < *ṹṹ* to burn

As in;

wé	ṹṹ	ṹṹà	rè	ṹṹṹṹ
leave	food	the	to	burning
allow the food to burn				

ṹṹ^wṹṹ^wṹṹ^w persuasion < *ṹṹ^wṹṹ^w* to persuade, incite

ṹṹ dè ṹṹ^wṹṹ^w kí ṹṹ^wṹṹ^wṹṹ^w wé, kí we rè bé ne ritṹṹ ṹṹ
 Emph. not you him persuasion not him allow to come with head his
 Don't try and persuade him to come, allow him to make his own decision

However, some verbs do not reduplicate exactly;

vìvì rotting < *ví* 'to rot'

à	bí	ṹṹ ^w ṹṹ ^w	vìvì
it	has	smell	rotting

More examples

ʃĩ dè ŋʷɛ né wɛ,
Emph. not you go not
You must not go!

5.4 Comparative adjectives

Adjectives can form nominals by adding a final velar nasal, which can be used to form comparative constructions. Thus;

brà great bràŋ great one

In an equative sentence it becomes a comparative;

ŋké ní bràŋ
This is greater one
This one is greater

More examples

The adjectival stem can be reduplicated to form an intensified comparative;

ŋké ní bràbràŋ
This is still greater one

More examples

Superlatives are formed by adding the intensifier *káká* to the reduplicated adjective;

ŋké ní bràbràŋ káká
This is greatest one intensifier

More examples

The operation of these procedures is not easily predicted from one adjective to another. The adjective *ʃi/ĩ*, 'small', has a paradigm as follows;

ʃi/ĩ small ìʃi/ĩ small one

In the case of an initial reduplicated adjective, the first syllable is deleted. The comparative and superlative are then;

ŋké ní ìʃi/ĩ This is the smaller one
ŋké ní [**] *not possible*
ŋké ní ìʃi/ĩ káká This is the smallest one

ìʃi/ĩ can also be preceded by two other intensifiers, *ɛwé* and *ɲrù*, that form comparatives and superlatives;

ɛwé ìʃi/ĩ the very small one
ɲrù ìʃi/ĩ the very smallest one

níŋ 'bé ne ɛwé ìʃi ñts'è ànà he
me come with very small horse that here
bring me that very small horse

nr̀̀ ìfĩ ewé ñdzé è fĩ r̀̀é nr̀̀á
 smallest small child my Foc will tie marriage
 my youngest child will get married

These two intensifiers are specific to ìì/íí.

A comparative can also be intensified by reduplication;

á ní ífífífífí
 they are very small

à ní bràbràṅ
 it is very big

The tonal changes attendant on forming a gerundive can vary. The usual tone on the final velar nasal is mid, as in nouns. But where the nominalising nasal prefix is low, the final velar nasal takes a rising tone [ʔ] in the comparative forms. For example;

ḡmgbà big ḡmgbàḡ big one

The tone in comparative constructions is then;

check

ḡké ní ḡmgbàḡ This is the bigger one
 ḡké ní ḡmgbàḡmgbàḡ This is the bigger one still
 ḡké ní ḡmgbàḡmgbàḡ káká This is the biggest one

Where adjectives have an extra-low stem tone, the stem-tone is raised to ordinary low throughout;

bààrà wide bààràḡ wide one

ḡké ní bààràḡ This is the wider one
 ḡké ní [**] *not possible*
 ḡké ní bààràḡ káká This is the widest one

5.5 Adjectives following the copula fĩ

All the equative sentences given so far use the copula ní. However, adjectives can also follow the copula fĩ. This lexeme is very widespread in Plateau languages, even those not closely related to Rigwe and appears to be easily loaned between different speech-forms. Where an adjective follows fĩ, it can be reduplicated to agree with the number of the subject. For example;

ká different

à fĩ ká á fĩ ká, kàḡká
 it is different they are different

??????

bààrà raises its stem tone when reduplicated;

à fĩ bààrà
 it is wide
 á fĩ bààràbààrà
 they are all wide

Further examples of adjectives that follow fĩ are;

dʒɛ̀dʒɛ̀ tall
 kúnǵú short
 jéjé́í correct

à jǐ kúnǵú á jǐ kúnǵú
 he is short they are short

and;

á jǐ kúnǵúkúnǵú
 they are all short

Apart from the

cǐrǐ describes s.t. thick (like cloth, wood etc.)

wòndɔ̀ n̄nà jǐ cǐrǐ
 trousers the are thick

crécré	describes a ceremony that does not come up to expectation	rě n̄nà jǐ crécré	The ceremony did not come up to expectation
dèdè...	describes s.t. very high	ek ^{wé} n̄nà jǐ dèdè	The tree is very high.
ǰéǰé	describes s.o. who is unintelligent	ŋ ^{wé} é jǐ ǰéǰé	You are unintelligent
ǰ ^{wǐ} ŋ	describes being nice, delicious	ʔjá n̄nà jǐ ǰ ^{wǐ} ŋ	The food is delicious.

5.6 Determiners

The determiner *n̄nà* always follows the noun, and is invariant in the singular except for mid-tone stems. When agreeing with a plural noun the tone on the syllabic nasal shows agreement with the final syllable of the noun stem. Table 5 shows the pattern of singular stem tones and determiner prefix tones;

Table 5. Tone concord in Rigwe determiners

<u>Stem tone sg. noun</u>	<u>Prefix tone pl. determiner</u>
Mid	High-Mid
Extra-Low	High
Low	Mid
High	Mid

Table 6 shows examples of these patterns in operation for a variety of nouns;

Table 6. Tones on determiners in Rigwe

M	HM		M	HM	
̀̀ne	̀̀nà	the person	̀̀ne	̀̀nà	the people
̀̀teɛ	̀̀nà	the money	̀̀teɛ	̀̀nà	the monies
̀̀geri	̀̀nà	the cricket	̀̀geri	̀̀nà	the crickets
EL	M		M	H	
̀̀g ^w è	̀̀nà	the chief	̀̀g ^w é	̀̀nà	the chiefs
zrì	̀̀nà	the catfish	zrì	̀̀nà	the catfish(es)
grè	̀̀nà	the basket	gré	̀̀nà	the baskets
L	M		H	M	
glè	̀̀nà	the baboon	glé	̀̀nà	the baboons
m̀brù	̀̀nà	the woman	m̀brù	̀̀nà	the women
̀̀fè	̀̀nà	the snake	̀̀fé	̀̀nà	the snakes
̀̀tò	̀̀nà	the man	̀̀tó	̀̀nà	the men
H	M		L	M	
ek ^w é	̀̀nà	the tree	rèk ^w è	̀̀nà	the trees
etfíé	̀̀nà	the hoe	rètíé	̀̀nà	the hoes
ebé	̀̀nà	the land	rèbè	̀̀nà	the lands
aaká	̀̀nà	the shoot	ràkà	̀̀nà	the shoots

5.7 Demonstratives

The proximal demonstratives ‘this, these’ are the invariant forms **nê, nē**;

̀̀ne	nê	this person	̀̀ne	nē	these people
̀̀teɛ	nê	this money	̀̀teɛ	nē	these monies
̀̀geri	nê	this cricket	̀̀geri	nē	these crickets

more examples with different tones

For focus or emphasis, **̀̀ké** pl. **rè-̀̀ke** (animates) and **̀̀gè** pl. **rè-̀̀gè** (inanimates) can precede the demonstrative. Thus;

̀̀ké nê jí ̀̀g^wè
 FOC this is chief
This one is the chief

In the plural, the subject pronoun is inserted;

rè-̀̀ke nê á jí ̀̀g^wè
 FOC this they are chiefs
These ones are the chiefs

For inanimates;

̀̀gè nê jí ̀̀mgbàátsié
 FOC this is stone
This one is a stone

rè-̀̀ke nê á jí ̀̀mgbátsié
 FOC this they are stones
These ones are stones

For the distal demonstratives, 'that, those' the invariant **̀n̄teĩ** is used. Number is unmarked, in contrast to 'this';

̀n̄gʷɛ̀	̀n̄teĩ	that chief	̀n̄gʷɛ̀	̀n̄teĩ	those chiefs
zr̄ĩ	̀n̄teĩ	that catfish	zr̄ĩ	̀n̄teĩ	those catfish(es)
gr̄ɛ̀	̀n̄teĩ	that basket	gr̄ɛ̀	̀n̄teĩ	those baskets

examples with different tones

For demonstratives in participant reference (i.e. previously referred to) the invariable **̀an̄a** is used;

̀n̄gʷɛ̀	̀an̄a	that chief	̀n̄gʷɛ̀	̀an̄a	those chiefs
zr̄ĩ	̀an̄a	that catfish	zr̄ĩ	̀an̄a	those catfish(es)
gr̄ɛ̀	̀an̄a	that basket	gr̄ɛ̀	̀an̄a	those baskets

sentence examples

5.8 Adjective strings

sentence examples