

Chapter 8

Property concepts, adjectives, and other derivational processes

This chapter focuses on (1) issues to do with ‘property concepts’ (‘high’, ‘good’, ‘white’, etc.), including the description of the adjective class, and with (2) class-changing derivational processes. With regard to (1), there are four major word formation processes involving a given property concept stem (henceforth PC stem): adjective formation, nominal formation, verb formation, and adverb formation. With regard to (2), there are stem class-changing processes whereby a PC stem is derived from a verb stem, and a nominal stem is derived from a verb stem.

8.1. Property concept stems (PC stems)

A PC stem is a bound stem and requires suffixation, compounding, or reduplication to function as a grammatical word (a few exceptional free PC stems do exist; §8.1.2.2). An adjective is formed by reduplicating a PC stem (e.g. *taka-* ‘high’ > *takaa+taka*), and usually modifies the head nominal within an NP. The adjective class is fully described in §8.2. In addition to the adjective formation, there are three other ways to form a grammatical word from a PC stem: (1) a nominal compound (*taka+jama* ‘high+mountain’, *taka+munu* ‘high(+thing)’), (2) a PC verb (*taka-ka-ta-m* ‘was high-VLZ-PST-RLS’), and (3) a PC adverb (*taka-fi* ‘high-ly’). Each constitutes a subclass of its respective word class. These are described in §8.3.

8.1.1. Property concept

Property concepts are cross-linguistically likely to be expressed as ‘adjectives’. Dixon (1982) identifies the following semantic categories of property concepts: DIMENSION, AGE, VALUE, COLOUR, PHYSICAL PROPERTY, HUMAN PROPENSITY, and SPEED.

Many PC stems in Irabu are of these categories, but a number of PC stems belong to other categories such as Position, Difficulty, and Similarity (Dixon 2004: 5).

As indicated by ‘-’ in TABLES 8–1 and 8–2 below, most PC stems are

TABLE 8–1. Property concepts and Dixon’s (1982) semantic types

DIMENSION	<i>uku-</i> ‘big’	<i>naga-</i> ‘long’	<i>taka-</i> ‘tall’	<i>pžsu-</i> ‘wide’
AGE	<i>mžž-</i> ‘new’	<i>baka-</i> ‘young’	<i>gaba-</i> ‘old’	<i>jari-</i> ‘old’
VALUE	<i>zau-</i> ‘good’	<i>bar-</i> ‘bad’	<i>kagi-</i> ‘lovely’	<i>pinna-</i> ‘odd’
COLOUR	<i>ffu</i> ‘black’	<i>ssu</i> ‘white’	<i>aka</i> ‘red’	<i>au</i> ‘blue’
PHYSICAL PROPERTY	<i>kupa-</i> ‘hard’	<i>iv-</i> ‘heavy’	<i>cuu-</i> ‘strong’	<i>aci-</i> ‘hot’
HUMAN PROPENSITY	<i>kuukaci</i> ‘mean’	<i>pukarasī</i> ‘happy’	<i>umukutu</i> ‘clever’	<i>pazikasi-</i> ‘ashamed’
SPEED	<i>pjaa-</i> ‘fast’	<i>niv-</i> ‘slow’		

TABLE 8–2. Property concept roots and other semantic types

Position	<i>taka-</i> ‘high’	<i>bžda-</i> ‘low’	<i>tuu-</i> ‘far’	<i>cika-</i> ‘near’
Difficulty	<i>mucikasi-</i> ‘difficult’			
Similarity	<i>junuguu</i> ‘same’			

bound, except for a few free PC stems that may be zero-converted to nominal stems (see §8.1.2.2). For example, *junuguu* ‘same’ in TABLE 8–2 can stand alone if it is zero-converted to a nominal, and can function as head of an NP (either argument or predicate).

- (8–1) *ui=mai* *sīn-i-i,* *mmja,* *junuguu=n=du*
 3SG=too die-THM-NRT INTJ same=DAT=FOC
nar-tar:
 become-PST
 ‘He also died, and became the same (as another guy who had died).’
- (8–2) *kui=tu* *kui=tu=u* *junuguu=du* *jar-Ø.*
 this=ASC this=ASC=TOP same=FOC COP-NPST
 ‘This and this are the same.’

8.1.2. Morphosyntax of the PC stem

A PC stem exhibits a number of morphosyntactic properties that distinguish it from other stem classes (nominal stems, verb stems, and adverb stems). I list them below, labelled (A), (B), and (C). (A) and (C) are borrowed from Motonaga (1978: 395).

- (A) REDUPLICATION: a PC stem can be reduplicated. Unlike other kinds of reduplication such as verbal reduplication (§3.3.6.2; §10.5.2.6), PC

stem reduplication involves a full reduplication *plus* lengthening of the stem-final phoneme by one mora. In some cases it is possible to consider that the reduplication expresses intensity by itself, but in others it is not. Rather, intensity is more regularly expressed by intonation and/or by the phonetic realisation of one-mora lengthening: the lengthening may be extra-long [ːː] depending on the semantic intensity that speaker wishes to emphasise.¹

- (i) *taka-* ‘high’ > *takaa+taka*
- (ii) *kuu-* ‘hard’ > *kuuu+kuu*
- (ii) *kiban-* ‘poor’ > *kibann+kiban*

- (B) DIRECT QUOTATION: with stem-final lengthening: a PC stem can be directly quoted by quotative marker =*ti(i)*, where the PC stem undergoes the lengthening that is identical to that in reduplication (A). The semantic effect of this is a quoted exclamation. This lengthened PC stem behaves partially like an interjection: even though it does not constitute an utterance, it is embedded into a matrix clause with the quotative marker =*ti(i)* (see §3.3.6.4 for the definition of interjections).

takaa=ti=nu *pžtu*
 high=QT=GEN man
 ‘a man who is like, “(how) tall!”’

- (C) SPECIAL DERIVATIONAL AFFIXES: PC stems may have a distinct set of derivational affixes attached to them. These are the verbaliser *-ka(r)*, the state nominaliser *-sa*, and the adverbialiser *-fi*.

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| (i) <i>taka-ka-tar</i> | (ii) <i>taka-sa</i> | (iii) <i>taka-fi</i> |
| high-VLZ-PST | high-NLZ | high-AVLZ |
| ‘was high’ | ‘highness; height’ | ‘highly’ |

The following table shows how various PC stems satisfy each criterion. Also, the table lists nominal stems (k–m), which satisfy one or more of the criteria, showing that these are less prototypical nominal stems and more

¹ Karimata (2002: 61) pointed out this fact as a tendency that holds true for Miyako Ryukyuan varieties in general. He argues that when lengthening is sustained over two morae (he apparently considers that there is a phonemic contrast between monomoraic and bimoraic lengthening, which I do not agree with), reduplication is interpreted as intensifier.