Property concepts in Irabu Ryukyuan

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1. Introduction

This talk discusses a situation where words designating property concepts form a coherent functional system but crosscut several word classes. The focus is on Irabu, a Southern Ryukyuan language spoken in Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. By 'functional system' I mean the following kind of situation, where the compound noun form (1) and the verbal form (2), both containing the adjective root *pisi-* 'cold', bear different functions and are used paradigmatically:

(1) *kjuu=ja*   *pisi-munu.*
     today=TOP   cold-DUM.H
     'Today (it's) cold.' [*pisimunu* is a compound noun]
(2) *kjuu=ga=du*   *pisi-kar-Ø.*
     today=NOM=FOC   cold-VLZ-NPST
     'Today (it's) cold (i.e. It is today that is cold(er))' [*pisikar* is a verb]
(3) **kjuu=ga=du*   *pisi-munu.*
       today=NOM=FOC   cold-DUM.H

2. Irabu
2.1. A brief typological summary

As in all other Japonic languages (Japanese and Ryukyuan), Irabu is a verb-final language with the modifier-head constituent order, and with the nominative-accusative case system. There is no agreement morphology either in NPs or between the verb and its argument(s). Nouns do not inflect, and case is marked by an enclitic attached to the NP. Verbs inflect for tense, mood, and dependency (main clause or dependent clause).

2.2. Word classes

Tᴀʙʟᴇ 1. Major criteria for word class assignment (definitional criteria in boldface)

	Morphological	Syntactic
Noun		**only heads an NP**
Verb	**[stem-inflection]**	only appears in VP (ʟᴇx V (+ ᴀᴜx V))
Adjective	**[RED*i*-stem] (RED: reduplicant)**	may appear either in NP or in VP

(4) *kunu*   *[pžtu]=u=baa*   *ssa-n-Ø.*
     this   man=ACC=TOP   know-NEG-NPST
     '(I) don't know this man.'

(5) *ba=ga*　　　*[jurav-ta-m]*.
　　1SG=NOM　　call-PST-RLS
　　'I called (him).'

(6) *unu*　　　*jama=a*　　　*[takaa-taka]$_{NP}$=du*　　*a-tar.*
　　that　　　mountain=TOP　RED-high=FOC　　　COP-PST
　　'That mountain was high.'

(7) *unu*　　　*jama=a*　　　*[takaa-taka]=du*　　*u-tar.*
　　that　　　mountain=TOP　RED-high=FOC　　PROG-PST
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　LEX V　　　　　　　AUX V
　　'That mountain was high.' [lit. That mountain was high-ing]

2.3. Further notes on the adjective class

An adjective is a pre-reduplicated word form consisting of the stem and its full redu-plicant, with the stem-final segment of the reduplicant being lengthened by one mora.[1]

(8) a. *takaa-taka*　b. *bar:-bar*　c. *zauu-zau*　　d. *kuuu-kuu*
　　　RED-high　　　RED-bad　　　RED-good　　　RED-hard
　　　'high'　　　　　'bad'　　　　　'good'　　　　　'hard'

　　Syntactically, an adjective mostly occurs as head of an NP (NP$_1$ below) that recur-sively fills the modifier slot of a larger NP (NP$_2$). As head of an NP, the adjective car-ries case, just like an ordinary noun.

(9) *[[takaa-taka]$_{NP1}$=nu*　*jama]$_{NP2}$*
　　RED-high=GEN　　　　　mountain
　　'a high mountain'

(10) *[[kan-ganas]$_{NP1}$=nu*　*jama]$_{NP2}$*
　　god-HON=GEN　　　　　mountain
　　'God's mountain'

TABLE 2. Adjectives in natural discourse: a text-count (32 texts, 46,900 words)

Head of an NP			VP component	Others	Total
Argument	Copula complement	NP modifier			
0 (0%)	16 (4.9%)	288 (87.8%)	8 (2.4%)	16 (4.9%)	328 (100%)

2.3 Root classes and word classes

A set of roots may directly serve as a noun stem (which in turn serves as a noun word

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[1] Full reduplication is also common in verb roots, but in this case there is no lengthening of the root-final segment of the reduplicate. Thus the reduplicated word form of the verb root *fau-* 'eat' is *fau-fau* 'eat (iteratively, habitually, etc.)' rather than *fauu-fau*.

without any further morphological make-up), and is therefore identified as *noun roots*. Another set of roots may directly carry the verbal inflectional affix, and is identified as *verb roots*. Still another set of roots may directly fill the base stem slot of the reduplication schema (see Table 1), and is identified as *adjective roots*.

If a verb root is to serve as a noun stem (i.e. if a verb root is to be assigned to the noun word class), certain nominalisation strategies are necessary, e.g. the affixation of agent nominaliser *-ja*.

(11) budur- 'dance' (v)
[budur-ja]N=nu=du   ur-Ø.
dance-NLZ=NOM=FOC   exist-NPST
'(There) is a dancer.'

If a verb root is to serve as an adjective stem, adjectivalisation is necessary, with derivational affixes such as *-bus* 'want to', *-jas* 'easy to', *-guri* 'difficult to', etc.

(12) mii- 'look; see'

miibus:-mii-bus	*miijas:-miijas*	*miigurii-mii-guri*
RED-see-want.to	RED-see-easy.to	RED-see-difficult.to
'want to see'	'easy to see'	'difficult to see'

A small set of roots may directly serve as a noun stem or an adjective stem. These include: *jarabi* 'child; childish', *avva* 'oil; oily', *gudun* 'dull person; dull' (see Karimata 2004 for a more extended list). That is, these roots are assigned to two word classes (N/A).

(13) *[jarabi]N=nu*   *naki-i=du*   *u-tar.*
child=NOM   cry-CVB.SEQ=FOC   PROG-PST
'A child was crying.'
(14) *[jarabii-jarabi]A=du   u-tar*
RED-child=GEN   PROG-PST
'(S/he) was childish.' [note that the LEX V slot of VP cannot be filled by a noun]

3. Adjective roots and their word-formation: formal account
A given adjective root may be realised as a noun word or as a verb word, in addition to an adjective word.

(15) The input root *taka-* 'high' and its output word forms

a. Lex-head cpd N	b. Dum-head cpd N	c. PC verb	d. Adjective
taka-pztu	*taka-munu*	*taka-kar-Ø*	*takaa-taka*
high-man	high-THING	high-VLZ-NPST	RED-high
'tall man'	'high (thing/man)'	'be high'	'high'

(16) The input stem *baka-* 'young' and its output word forms

a. Lex-head cpd N	b. Dum-head cpd N	c. PC verb	d. Adjective
baka-pztu	*baka-munu*	*baka-kar-Ø*	*bakaa-baka*
young-man	young-THING	young-VLZ-NPST	RED-young
'young man'	'young (man)'	'be young'	'young'

(17) The input stem *zau-* 'good' and its output word forms

a. Lex-head cpd N	b. Dum-head cpd N	c. PC verb	d. Adjective
zau-pztu	*zau-munu*	*zau-kar-Ø*	*zauu-zau*
good-man	good-THING	good-VLZ-NPST	RED-good
'good man'	'good (thing; man)'	'be good'	'good'

3.1. Nominal word formation (prototypical noun): Lex-head compound noun

In each example of (15) to (17), (a) is a compound noun (Lex-head compound noun) where the head root is a lexical noun root. Lex-head compound noun is a prototypical noun, showing all major features expected of noun: it may head an NP that serves as argument, copula complement, etc. The meaning is composite. Like other compounds *rendaku* (or sequential voicing, a morpho-phonemic process whereby the stem-initial voiceless consonant is replaced by a voiced counterpart, as in *taka-* 'high' + *kii* 'tree' > *taka-gii* 'tall tree') may occur between the stems, and a word cannot be inserted between the stem. Thus Lex-head compound noun is a single grammatical and phonological word.

3.2. Nominal word formation (less nominal): Dum-head compound noun

Dum-head compound noun is also a compound noun, but the compound head *munu* is a formal noun root: it was originally a lexical noun root designating 'thing' or 'person', but is often much less substantive when used in the compound structure, so that it is often unable to be translated as 'thing' or 'person'. Thus I gloss it DUM.H (dummy head noun root). Whereas in (18) below the head root can be substantively translated, in (19) it is impossible: *sabic-munu* does not mean 'lonely thing' or 'lonely person', but '(I felt) lonely'.

(18) *imi-<u>munu</u>*   *ara-da,*   *uku-<u>munu</u>=u*   *turi-Ø.*
     small-THING   COP-NEG.CVB   big-THING=ACC   take-IMP
     'Take a big <u>one</u>, not a small <u>one</u>.'

(19) *ba=a*   *<u>sabic-munu</u>=du*   *a-tar.*
     1SG=TOP   lonely-THING=FOC   COP-PST
     'I was <u>lonely</u>' [not 'I was a lonely person']

3.3. Verbal word formation: PC verb

A verb stem can be derived from an adjective room, derived by the verbaliser suffix *-ka(r)*. The derived stem inflects just like ordinary verbs (the /r/ is deleted by rule when carrying certain affixes), and I call this PC verb.

TABLE 3. The inflectional paradigm of PC verb (the list is not exhaustive)

	tur- 'take'	*a(r)-* 'be'	*taka-ka(r)-* 'be high'
Finite verb: past realis	*tur-<u>tam</u>*	*a-<u>tam</u>*	*taka-ka-<u>tam</u>*
Finite verb: past unmarked	*tur-<u>tar</u>*	*a-<u>tar</u>*	*taka-ka-<u>tar</u>*
Finite verb: non-past realis	*tur-<u>m</u>*	*a(r)-<u>m</u>*	*taka-ka(r)-<u>m</u>*
Finite verb: non-past unmarked	*tur-<u>Ø</u>*	*ar-<u>Ø</u>*	*taka-kar-<u>Ø</u>*
Finite verb: non-past irrealis intentional	*tur-a-<u>di</u>*	*ar-a-<u>di</u>*	*taka-kar-a-<u>di</u>*
Finite verb: non-past irrealis optative	*tur-a-<u>baa</u>*	*ar-a-<u>baa</u>*	*taka-kar-a-<u>baa</u>*
Finite verb: non-past irrealis imperative	*tur-i-<u>Ø</u>*	*ar-i-<u>Ø</u>*	*taka-kar-i-<u>Ø</u>*
Converb: causal 'because'	*tu(r)-i-<u>ba</u>*	*a(r)-i-<u>ba</u>*	*taka-ka(r)-i-<u>ba</u>*
Converb: conditional 'if/when'	*tur-<u>tigaa</u>*	*a-<u>tigaa</u>*	*taka-ka-<u>tigaa</u>*
Converb: negative conditional	*tur-a-<u>dakaa</u>*	*ar-a-<u>dakaa</u>*	*taka-kar-a-<u>dakaa</u>*
Converb: simultaneous 'while'	*tur-<u>ccjaaki</u>*	N/A	N/A
Converb: purposive 'in order to'	*tur-<u>ga</u>*	N/A	N/A
Converb: immediate anterior 'as soon as'	*tur-<u>tuu</u>*	N/A	N/A

4. Property concept words: functional account[2]

4.1. Frequency in texts

Even though the morphological criterion in Section 2.2 tells us that adjective roots are default choices for adjectives and are thus identified as such, these roots do not necessarily occur as an adjective in natural discourse. In other words, whereas we can maintain 'if adjective then adjective root (or stem)', we cannot say 'if adjective root then adjective'. This situation is very different from noun roots and verb roots, which are very likely to occur as nouns and verbs respectively, making the claim that 'if noun/verb root then noun/verb' true.

In my text databse, property concept words made from adjective roots (or derived stems) did not show conspicuous bias for adjective words: 328 tokens of adjective words, 520 tokens of Lex- and Dum- head compound noun words (1 and 2), and 288 tokens of PC verbs. In fact, I referred to the adjective root as 'property concept root' in my earlier descriptions (Shimoji 2008, 2009), to avoid the impression that this root is always realised as an adjective. I am still confused about this…

4.2. Functional system of property concept words

Adjective roots and the four property concept words have different functions, and the functional system is sketched out by two major syntactic functions: attribution vs predication. When two forms bear the same syntactic function, the two have differentt discourse-pragmatic functions: referentiality vs non-referentiality of the modified noun,

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[2] In my grammar of Irabu (Shimoji 2008), I created this section to bundle together all the forms scattered in different sections (i.e. nominal morphology, verb morphology, and adjective morphology) and give a picture of the functional system they compose. But this was done only after introducing all the relevant forms in different sections, of course. Now I think this is a bit hard to read for readers.

and focussed vs presupposed status of the predicate.

TABLE 4. Functional system of adjective roots and their resultant word-forms

	Predication	Attribution	
		Syntactic	Morphological
Dummy head compound noun	*		
PC verb	*		
Adnominal clause including PC verb		*	
Adjective		*	
Lex-head compound noun			*

4.2.1. Dummy head compound vs PC verb: predicative function

There is a clear tendency for a dummy head compound noun to occur as predicate in the pragmatically unmarked topic-comment structure. In this structure, there is a topic-marked NP, often subject, and the predicate is in the focus domain. Conversely, there is a clear tendency for a PC verb to occur as predicate when the predicate is pre-supposed (Koloskova and Ohori 2008 for a more detailed account of the similar contrast found in Hirara).

(**20**) *kari=a*   *cuu+munu.*
    3SG=TOP   strong(+thing)
    'He is strong.' [unmarked topic-comment structure]

(**21**) A. *nzi=nu=ga*   *cuu-kar-Ø?*
        which=NOM=FOC   strong-VLZ-NPST
        'Which is strong(er)?'

    B. *kui=ga=du*   *cuu-kar-Ø.*
        this=NOM=FOC   strong-VLZ-NPST
        'This (guy) is strong(er).'

4.2.2. Adjective vs Lex-head compound: attributive function

An adjective modifies a nominal in NP structure (syntactic attribution), whereas an adjective root within a Lex-head compound modifies a head noun within the word (morphological attribution).

An adjective in attributive function almost always modifies a nominal that is newly introduced into discourse. This nominal tends to be referential.

(**22**) *nkjaan=du=i,*   *ujakii+ujaki=nu*   *pžtu=tu*
    old.times=FOC=CNF   RED+rich=GEN   man=ASC

    kibann+kiban=nu   *pžtu=tu*   *dus*   *a-tar=ca.*
    RED+poor=GEN   man=ASC   friend   COP-PST=HS

'Once upon a time, (there were) a rich man and a poor man, (and they) were friends.'

(23) *mii-tigaa,   ssuu+ssu=nu   mii-gama=nu   a-ta=iba,*
look-CVB.CND   RED+white=GEN   fruit-DIM=NOM   exist-PST=so
'When (I) looked, (there) was a white fruit, so...'

An adjective root within a Lex-head compound is also an attributive modifier of the head nominal stem. Unlike the adjectival attribution noted above, the head nominal stem is typically non-referential and the compound nominal is typically used as a predicate head of the proper inclusion expression.

(24) *kari=a   maada=du   gaazuu+pžtu=dara=i.*
3SG=TOP   very=FOC   selfish+man=CRTN=CNF
'He's a very selfish man, eh?'

(25) *kuma=a   punic+dukuma ja-i-ba,   niv-vai-n-Ø.*
this.place=TOP   rocky+place   COP-THM-CVB.CSL sleep-POT-NEG-
-NPST

'This place is a rocky place, so (I) cannot sleep.'

4.2.3. Adnominal clause vs adjective: syntactic attributive function

(26) *ssu-kar-Ø   jaa=nu=du   mas.*
white-VLZ-NPST   house=NOM=FOC   better
'The house that is white (as opposed to black) is better.'

(27) *uu-kar-Ø   pžtu=mai imi-kar-Ø   pžtu=mai*
big-VLZ-NPST man=too small-VLZ-NPST   man=too

uma=n   dav-vas-i-i=du   u-tar.
that.place=DAT crowd-VLZ-THM-MED=FOC   exist-PST
'Bigger men and smaller men were both crowded there.'

(28) *ssuu+ssu=nu   jaa=nu=du   ar-Ø.*
RED+white=GEN   house=NOM=FOC   exist-NPST
'(There) is a (very) white house.'

(29) *ukuu+uku=nu   pžtu=tu   imii+imi=nu   pžtu=tu*
RED+big=GEN   man=ASC   RED+small=GEN   man=ASC

baftaa=sii=du   u-tar.
two=INST=FOC   exist-PST
'(There) were a (very) big man and a (very) small men together.'

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