How Do We Describe Demonstratives in Yuwan Ryukyuan?

NIINAGA Yuto

The University of Tokyo

Abstract: Demonstratives in Yuwan spread over several word classes: nouns, adnominals, and adverbs. When we describe word classes as a subsection of morphology in grammar sketches, do we have to divide such demonstratives into each word class or put them together making a new section or both?

1. Introduction

Yuwan is spoken in a small village in the west region of Amami Ōshima. Amami Ōshima is located northeast of the Okinawa. Typologically, it belongs to the Ryukyuan languages, which are sister languages of Japanese. Phonologically, it has thirty phonemes [1], and (C)V(V)(C) syllable structure. Morphologically, it is a highly agglutinative language, and a word in Yuwan necessarily begins wi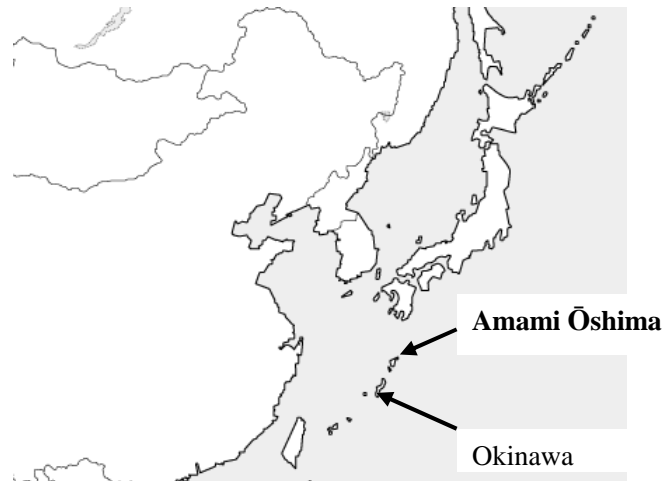th a root, so possible bound morphemes attached to it are suffixes and enclitics (except for the bound roots in the case of making compounds). Syntactically, the word order of Yuwan is SOV, and it has a nominative-accusative case marking system.

Figure 1   Map of East Asia

Figure 2
Map of Amami Ōshima

2. About my research

I have studied Yuwan since I was in the first grade of master course, which was three years ago. Yuwan belongs to Ryukyuan languages, which have been regarded as 'dialects of Japanese' by some researcher, but there are many differences between them, and the differences stimulated my curiosity. Along with other dialects in Japan, Yuwan is an indigenous language, so quick and sufficient research is required, which is

---

[1] Yuwan has seven vowels /i, ɨ, e, ə, a[ʌ], o, u/, twenty one consonants /p, ʔp, b, m, ʔm, ʔw, t, ʔt, d, s, c[ts], ʔc, z[dz], n, ʔn, r[ɾ], ʔj, k, ʔk, g, h[ɕ~x~χ~h~ɸ]/, and two semi-vowels /w, j/. /c/ and /z/ are palatalized before /i/ or /j/ and realized as [tɕ] and [dʑ] respectively.

another reason I have been studying it.

I have been to the field seven times and the total research time is about five months. I have been studying the grammar of Yuwan mainly from elicitation so far, and a part of the result is written in my MA thesis focusing on the relationship between animacy hierarchy and case markers in Yuwan. Now I have an immediate task to write a grammar sketch of Yuwan, which is a part of Linguistic Dynamics Science Project (LingDy) of ILCAA, and I belong to the subproject which aims to make a book that consists of grammar sketches of several Ryukyuan languages. The final purpose in the doctor course is to write a reference grammar of Yuwan as my Ph.D. thesis.

3. The point of argument: how do we describe demonstratives in Yuwan Ryukyuan?

Demonstratives in Yuwan spread over several word classes: nouns, adnominals, and adverbs. In this case, what describing style is better: to include such demonstratives in each word class, to separate them from each word class and put them together, or describe them twice (in each section of word classes and demonstratives)?

In the following sections, we will see the distinction of word classes in Yuwan (§3.1), then we will see the demonstratives spreading over the word classes (§3.2).

3.1. Word classes in Yuwan

Yuwan has three major word classes (nouns, verbs[2], and adnominals[3]), and two minor word classes (adverbs and interjections). The word classes relative to this discussion are nouns, adnominals, and adverbs. Adverbs are difficult to define by themselves, but roughly speaking, they directly modify verbs, i.e. they should not precede any case clitics when they modify verbs: *mazɨn ikj-oo* (together go-INT) 'Let's go together!'; however, the other word classes cannot directly modify verbs. The differences between nouns and adnominals are clearly seen when we look at the morphosyntactic construction of a noun phrase (NP). First, in the case of modifying a noun, nouns need a genitive case clitic (1a), but adnominals does not; more precisely, adnominals should not precede a genitive case clitic (1b).

(1) Modifying nouns

        a. *warabɨ=nu*   *tɨɨ*

          child=GEN   hand

          'child's hand'   (noun attached to a genitive case clitic)

---

[2] So-called 'adjectives' in Yuwan belong to a subcategory of verbs (Niinaga 2009).
[3] The semantic feature of adnominals is deictic (in the case of demonstrative adnominals, e.g. *kun* 'this', *un* 'that (medial)', *an* 'that (distal)') or possessive (in the case of pronominal adnominals, e.g. *waa* 'my', *naa* 'your', or interrogative adnominals, e.g. *taa* 'whose').

      b. *kun*   *tɨɨ*

        this   hand

        'this hand'   (adnominal)

Second, nouns can head an NP (2a), which is shown by the fact that nouns can take case clitics and be an argument of verbal predicate; on the other hand, adnominals cannot do that (2b).

(2) Heading an NP

      a. *warabɨ=ba*   *mi-cja*

        child=ACC   see-PST

        '(I) saw a child.'   (noun)

      b.**kun=ba*   *mi-cja*

        this=ACC   see-PST

        '(I) saw this.'   (adnominal)

As you have seen above, we can clearly distinguish these word classes, i.e. nouns, adnominals, and adverbs, which is summarized below.

Table 1   Word classes: distinctive criteria

	nouns	adnominals	adverbs
Can head an NP	+	-	-
Directly modify nouns	-	+	-
Directly modify verbs	-	-	+

But, if you try to describe demonstratives in Yuwan, you must face a big problem relative to this distinction of word classes.

3.2. Demonstratives in Yuwan

Demonstratives in Yuwan make a single category, which is shown by the following fact: (1) formally, they make a well-organized paradigm of their own, i.e. they have regular combinations of original roots and suffixes as in Table 2; (2) semantically, they have deictic or anaphoric function; more concretely, they have a system of three degrees of distance, i.e. proximate (P), medial (M), and distal (D), represented by the two sets of roots: *ku*-(P)/*u*-(M)/*a*-(D), and *ka*-(P)/*ga*-(M)/*aga*-(D). Demonstrative roots are bound morphemes, and some derivational suffixes are attached to them: nominalizer (*-ri, -ttaa, -ma*), adnominalizer (*-n, -raa*), and adverbializer (*-n*). See the following table and examples.

Table 2 Demonstrative roots and derived forms

Word classes	Meaning	Suffixes	Proximate	Medial	Distal	Roots
Nouns	pronominal[4]	: *-ri* (singular)	*ku-ri*	*u-ri*	*a-ri*	*ku/u/a*
		: *-ttaa* (plural)	*ku-ttaa*	*u-ttaa*	*a-ttaa*	
	Locative	: *-ma*	*ku-ma*	*u-ma*	*a-ma*	
Adnominals	Plain	: *-n*	*ku-n*	*u-n*	*a-n*	
	Insulting	: *-raa*	*ka-raa*	*ga-raa*	*aga-raa*	*ka/ga/aga*
Adverbs	Direction	: *-n*	*ka-n*	*ga-n*	*aga-n*	

Let us see the examples one at a time. First examples are the demonstratives regarded as nouns by reason that they head NPs, i.e. they can take case clitics and be arguments of verbal predicates. See the following examples.

(3) Demonstrative nouns

      a. <u>*kuri=ba*</u>   *mi-cja*

        this=ACC   see-PST

        '(I) saw this.'   (pronominal singular)

      b. <u>*kuma=kara*</u>   *ikj-oo*

        here=ABL   go-INT

        'Let's go from here!'   (locative)

Second examples are the demonstratives regarded as adnominals by reason that they directly modify nouns; in other words, they should not precede a genitive case clitic when they modify nouns. See below.

(4) Demonstrative adnominals

      a. <u>*kun*</u>   *tii*

        this   hand

        'this hand'   (plain)

      b. <u>*karaa*</u>[5]   *mun*

        this.bad   person

        'this bad person'   (insulting)

Final examples are the demonstratives regarded as adverbs by reason that they directly modify verbs; in other words, they should not precede any case clitics when they modify verbs.

---

[4] Demonstrative pronouns in Yuwan can indicate both humans and non-humans, but if you use proximate or medial demonstratives to indicate humans, they often imply some insulting meaning.
[5] I have never heard *karaa* not preceding *mun*, so this expression may be a compound (i.e. *karaa+mun*) and lexicalized.

(5) Demonstrative adverbs

      <u>*kan*</u>   *k-oo*

      here   come-IMP

      'Come here!'   (direction)

3.3. Problems and possible solutions

As you can see from the sections above, demonstratives in Yuwan spread over several word classes: nouns, adnominals, and adverbs. So when we describe the demonstratives in a grammar sketch (or a reference grammar), how should we deal with them. I think there are three kinds of possibilities: (1) we divide such demonstratives into each word class; (2) we separate them from each word class and put them together making a new section titled 'demonstratives'; (3) we describe them twice, firstly in each word class from the formal perspective, and secondly in another section titled 'demonstratives' from the functional perspective.

At present I think the possibility (2) is the best because the possibility (1) loses the commonality of the words called 'demonstratives' in §3.2, and the possibility (3) seems to be redundant; however, there can be another possibility, so I would like to ask advice about this problem here.

Abbreviations

ABL=ablative	IMP=imperative
ACC=accusative	INT=intentional
GEN= genitive	PST=past

'-, =, +' in examples mean the following;

   '-' means the following morpheme is an affix;

   '=' means the following morpheme is a clitic;

   '+' means the preceding morpheme and the following morpheme make a compound.

References

Niinaga, Yuto. 2009. Adjectives as a subclass of verbs in Yuwan Ryukyuan. Paper read at Workshop on Ryukyuan Languages and Linguistic Research, Los Angeles, UCLA.