

Parts of Speech as Radical Constructions in Amis

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Abstract

The category “Adjectives”, with the intermediate status between the Noun-Verb continuum, has for decades become the core of theoretical debates. One mainstream claim is the lack of universal ‘adjective’ category. Croft, on the other hand, maintains an alternative view: noun, verb, and adjective are not categories found in particular languages; they are language universals (Croft 2001: 63). The proposal might be a theoretical shock for Austronesian grammarians, since claims such as “the lack of adjective category” and “putative adjectives are subsumed under the verb category” have been attested repeatedly in most reference grammar in Austronesian family. The approach to identifying the absence of adjectives, and further categorizing putative adjectives into verbs or nouns, has been criticized as “lumping”, which involves methodological opportunism in ignoring small part-of-speech classes (Croft 2001: 65-75).

This study, thus, is a humble attempt to re-investigate the Amis parts of speech within Croft’s Radical Construction Framework. We take advantage of the framework to illustrate in semantic maps the language particulars of Amis parts of speech. Accordingly we conclude that Amis lexical roots are not precategoryal; they are, if not syntactically, at least morphologically subcategorized. Another intriguing finding with theoretical implication is that, we seem to observe some empirical evidence to partially counter the Radical Construction Framework during application of the framework itself. We demonstrate how the structural coding for Amis modification constructions challenges the theory’s own hypotheses and poses threat to the framework. As a consequence, we render support to the ‘lumping’ approach by taking typological considerations, and by providing diachronic interpretations from the synchronic Amis data.

1. Introduction

Proposal A: There is no universal ‘adjective’ category

- Putative adjectives are ‘chameleons’— in some languages they form an open class, in some other languages a closed one, in still other languages they are conflated with ‘nouns’ or ‘verbs’.
- The approach (Hengeveld 1992, Bhat 1994, Wetzer 1996, Beck 2002, among others) thus aims for identifying the absence/presence of the ‘adjective’ category and the conflation of putative adjectives.
- The notion of prototype theory and markedness theory is applied: a)

prototypically, adjectives refer to “Properties” and serve the “Modification” function; b) the presence of adjectives can be assured by observing the typologically unmarked structure for the corresponding prototype.

- Parts of speech in Formosan languages under this proposal (Ross 2003; Yeh 2003; Wu 2004; Kuo 2008):
 - i) No adjective category
 - ii) Putative adjectives are subsumed under the verb class

Proposal B: There is a universal ‘adjective’ category

- Dixon (1977): ‘some languages have no adjective class at all’;
Dixon and Aikhenvald (2004): every language ‘has an adjective class’
- Croft (1991): adjectives are less prominent as a prototype than nouns and verbs;
Croft (2001): noun, verb, and adjective are typological prototypes
- The approach based on **Proposal A** is, according to Croft, a ‘lumping’ method for “involving methodological opportunism in ignoring small parts-of-speech classes” (p.65-75).

The purpose of this study:

To re-investigate the Amis parts of speech within Croft’s (2001) Radical Construction Framework.

2. The Framework

With regards to parts of speech:

✓ The traditional view:

(1) (Croft 2001: 63)

- a. Noun, verb, and adjective are universal (cross-linguistic) categories found in particular languages
- b. But noun, verb, and adjective are not language universals — that is, not all languages possess the parts of speech noun, verb or adjective.

✓ **Radical Construction Framework:**

(2) (Croft 2001: 63)

- a. Noun, verb, and adjective are not categories of particular languages
 - b. But noun, verb, and adjective are language universals — that is, there are typological prototypes which should be called noun, verb, and adjective
- These prototypes can be described from an integration of semantics (i.e. ontological classes) and syntax/pragmatics (i.e. syntactic function/propositional

acts):

(3) Typological prototypes noun, verb, and adjectives (Croft 2001: 89)

noun = Reference to an Object

adjective = Modification by a Property

verb = Predication of an Action

Table 1. Semantic properties of prototypical parts of speech (Croft 2001: 87)

	Relationality	Stativity	Transitoriness	Gradability
Objects	nonrelational	state	permanent	nongradable
Properties	relational	state	permanent	gradable
Actions	relational	process	transitory	nongradable

Table 2. Overtly marked structural coding constructions for parts of speech (Croft 2001: 88)

	Reference	Modification	Predication
Objects	UNMARKED NOUNS	genitive, adjectivalizations, PPs on nouns	predicate nominals, copulas
Properties	deadjectival nouns	UNMARKED ADJECTIVES	predicate adjectives, copulas
Actions	action nominals, complements, infinitives, gerunds	participles, relative clauses	UNMARKED VERBS

- Typological markedness applies to **a) structural coding** and **b) behavioral potential** and results in two implication universals:
 - a. the ‘structural coding criterion’ specifies that the marked member is encoded by *at least as many* morphemes as the unmarked member.
 - b. the ‘behavioral potential criterion’ specifies that the unmarked member displays *at least as wide a range* of grammatical behavior as the marked member.

- The Conceptual Space Approach:

(4) *Structural Coding Map Hypothesis*: Constructions encoding a function should code that function in at least as many morphemes in typologically marked points in conceptual space as in typologically unmarked points in conceptual space.

(5) *Behavioral Potential Map Hypothesis*: Constructions expressing the behavioral potential of a category should be found in at least the typologically unmarked points in conceptual space.

(Demonstration: English and Lango: see appendix A.)

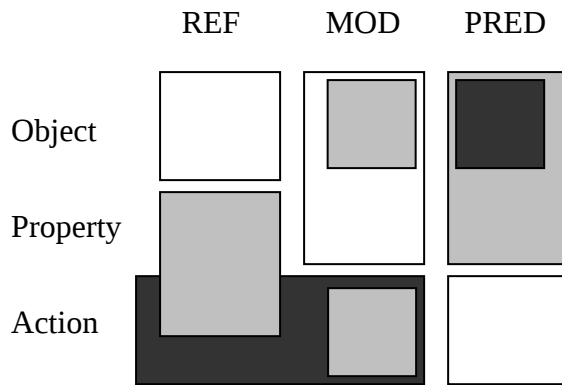


Fig 1. semantic map that conforms to Structural Coding Hypothesis

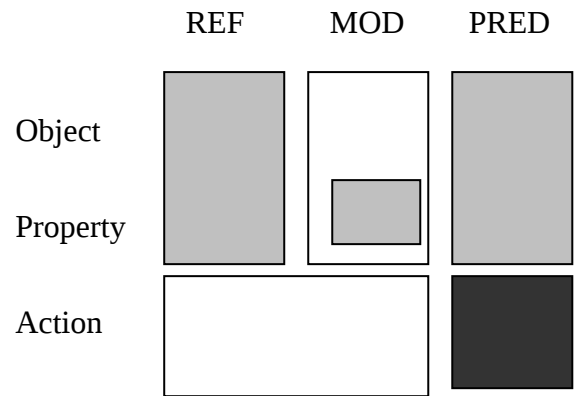


Fig 2. A semantic map that violates Structural Coding Hypothesis

(The box specifies the structural coding for certain constructions. The degree of markedness is indicated by the degree of darkness: the more the morphosyntactic means are required for the construction, the darker is its box.)

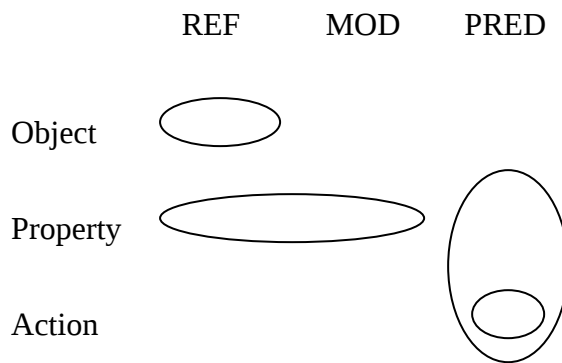


Fig 3. A semantic map that conforms to Behavioral Potential Hypothesis

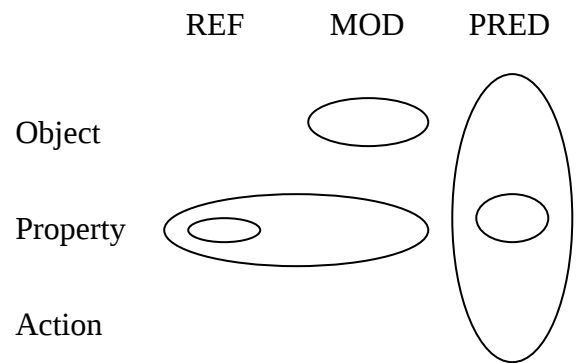


Fig 4. A semantic map that violates Behavioral Potential Hypothesis

(The constructions expressing behavioral potential for parts of speech are given as ovals.)

3. The Structural Coding of Amis Parts of Speech Constructions

Amis is a Formosan language with the largest population. It has five dialects: Sakizaya, Northern, Tavalong-Vataan, Central, Southern. This study investigates the Central dialect. The data are collected from Changkuang Community at Changpin, Taitung County.

- **Reference function:**

The structural coding for the reference function in Amis is always the *u* marker plus the root form, regardless of the semantic class.

(6) object reference¹: (bare root + *u* marker²)

- a. Ø-fangcal k-u-ra wawa/singsi/wacu
AF-good NOM-CN-that child/teacher/dog
'That child/teacher/dog is good.'
- b. pa-fli kaku ci panay-an t-u paysu/siri/tayal
CAU-give 1SG.NOM NCM.SG PN-OBL OBL-CN money/goat/work
'I gave Panay money/a goat/a job.'

(7) property reference: (bare root + *u* marker)

- a. hakuwa k-u takaraw ni kulas (dimension)
how.many NOM-CN tall NCM.SG.GEN PN
'how tall is Kulas?'
(Lit. How many is the tallness of Kulas?)
- b. hakuaw=tu k-u katelang nuna luma' nira (age)
how.many=ASP NOM-CN old that.GEN house 3SG.GEN
'how old has his house become?'
- c. hakuwa k-u fangcal nura faki (value)
how.many NOM-CN good that.GEN uncle
'How good/kind is that uncle.'
- d. hakuwa k-u kahngang nu pising aku (color)
how.many NOM-CN red GEN face 1SG.GEN
'How red is my face?'
- e. hakuwa k-u fa'edet nuna nanum (physical property)
how.many NOM-CN hot that.GEN water
'How hot is that water?'
- e. hakuwa k-u keter nu mama isu (human propensity)
how.many NOM-CN angry GEN father 1SG.GEN
'How angry is your father?'
- f. hakuwa k-u usui nura tamina (speed)
how.many NOM-CN slow that.GEN boat
'How slow is that boat?'

(8) action reference³: (bare root + *u* marker)

¹ The abbreviations used in this paper are as follows: 1/2/3SG: first/second/third person singular; AF: actor focus; ASP: Aspect marker; CN: common-noun marker; FAC: Factual mood marker; GEN: genitive case; IMP: Imperative marker; InA: Instrumental Applicative; IRR: Irrealis; LNK: linker; NCM: Non-common noun marker; NOM: nominative case; OBL: oblique case; PF: patient focus; PN: proper name/place name; Prep: preposition.

² In the literature, *u* is viewed as the (common) "noun marker". It is part of the nominal case marking system which includes the 'case proper' (e.g. *k-/t-/n-* 'NOM/OBL/GEN'), the noun marker *u*, and possibly the deitic morphemes (e.g. *-ni/-ra* 'here/there') (cf. Liu 1999; Wu 2006). Here, *u* is viewed as a marking device though it is embedded in case marking. This is for the consistency of our analysis. Later, we will show that *u* is necessary for the object predication construction; it will thus be odd to disregard the *u* marker in the reference construction and count the *u* marker only in the predication construction.

³ Not all action references in Amis are encoded by the pattern as in (8). For example, *mi-nanum* 'drink' is manifested as *pi-nanum* when it serves as the reference. This kind of derivation is one of the deverbalization processes in Amis (Wu 2006: 70). Radical Construction Framework examines the "typologically prototypes" as well as the marked constructions. The focus is thus on the root form of the three semantic classes, and the possible operations (i.e. marked structural coding) required for nonprototypical syntactic functions. Along this line, our discussion centers on root-level operations only. Stem-level and word-level operations will not be discussed in order to avoid confusion.

a. na'on-en k-u **rakat**
 mind-UV NOM-CN walk
 'Good-bye.' (Lit. Mind your walk!) (Imperative, UV)

b. Ø-tata'ak k-u **palu** aku
 AF-big NOM-CN beat 1SG.GEN
 'I was beaten severely.' (Lit. My beating is big)

For predication, the object semantic class differs from the property/action semantic classes in structural coding:

a. **u** **singsi** Ø-ci sawmah
CN teacher AF-NOM-NCM.SG PN
'Sawmah is a teacher.'

b. **u** **sasti'** ku sa-pi-palu ni mayaw ci dongi-an
CN stick NOM InA-PI-beat NCM.SG,GEN PN NCM.SG PN-OBL
'The stick is what Mayaw beat Dongi with.'

a. zero affixation:

Ø-takaraw/Ø-kereteng/Ø-fangcal	kaku
AF-tall/AF-heavy/AF-good	1SG.NOM
'I am tall/heavy/good.'	

b. *ma-* affixation:

ma-su'su'/ma-laluk/ma-keter	Ø-ci	lising
AF-fat/AF-diligent/AF-angry	NOM-NCM.SG	PN
'Lising is fat/diligent/angry.'		

a. <um> affixation :
r<um>akat/r<um>adiw kaku i lalan

⁵ In the literature, four types of affixation of Amis predicates have been discussed: a) Ø ; b) <um>; c) *mi-*; (d) *ma-* (Liu 2003; Wu 2006; Tsukida 2008, among others). While action predicates are found to possess all four types of affixation, in this study we neglect the zero type for a significant reason. The “zero” action predicates (i.e. Ø-A verbs in Tsukida (2008)), upon close scrutiny, are actually composed of the root plus specific prefixes. For example:

In note 2 we explain that “root-level operations” are the target of this study. However, not all root-level operations should be incorporated into the analysis. For example, we identify the significance of *mi*-affixation, for the predicate *mi-palu* ‘hit’ and the reference *palu* ‘hit’ are exactly the same in terms of semantics. However, the predicate *tala-lutuk* ‘go to mountain’ and the reference *lutuk* ‘mountain’ are involved with certain level of “semantic shift”. This kind of derivation should thus be disregarded.

walk<AF>/sing<AF> 1SG.NOM Prep road
 'I am walking/singing on the road.'

b. *mi-* affixation :

mi-palu/mi-nengneng cingra tura wawa
 AF-beat/AF-see 3SG.NOM that.OBL child
 'He is beating/He sees the child.'

c. *ma-* affixation:

ma-tayal ku faki aku i uma'
 AF-work NOM uncle 1SG.GEN PreP field
 'My uncle works in the field.'

- **Modification function:**

For modification, the object semantic class differs from the property/action semantic classes:

In Amis, an **object modifier** may have two structural coding patterns:

- a. postnominal genitive case;
- b. prenominal linker

(12) postnominal object modifier: genitive *n-* + *u* marker

- a. fafuy **n-u** **lutuk**
 pig GEN-CN mountain
 'mountain pig.'
- b. suta' **n-u** **kiwkay**
 land GEN-CN church
 'the land of church.'
- c. singsi **n-u** **amis** (Wu 2006 : 94 ; gloss mine)
 teacher GEN-CN Amis
 'Amis teacher. (the teacher is not necessarily Amis)''

(13) prenominal object modifier: linker *a*

- a. fadisu'su' **a** epah
 grape LNK wine
 'grape wine'
- b. kilang **a** kayakay
 wood LNK bridge
 'wood bridge.'
- c. amis **a** singsi (Wu 2006: 94)
 Amis LNK teacher
 'Amis teacher (the teacher is Amis)'

(14) property modifier: (affixation + *-ay* marker + *a* linker)

- a. Ø-takaraw-ay **a** tamdaw (dimension)
 AF-tall-AY LNK person
 '(a) tall person'
- b. Ø-katelang-ay **a** luma' (age)
 AF-old-AY LNK house
 '(an) old house'
- c. Ø-fangcal-ay **a** faki (value)
 AF-good-AY LNK uncle

- ‘(a) **good** uncle’
d. Ø-**kahngang-ay** **a** pising (color)
AF-red-AY LNK red
‘(a) **red** face’
e. Ø-**fa’edet-ay** **a** nanum (physical property)
AF-hot-AY LNK water
‘**hot** water’
e. **ma-keter-ay** **a** wawa (human propensity)
AF-angry-AY LNK child
‘(an) **angry** child’
f. **ma-usui-ay** **a** tamina (speed)
AF-slow-AY LNK boat
‘(a) **slow** boat’

(15) action modifier: (affixation + -ay marker + *a* linker)

- a. **r<um>adiw-ay** **a** tamdaw
sing<AF>-AY LNK person
‘(a) boy **who sings/is singing**’
b. **mi-palu-ay** tu wawa **a** singsi
AF-beat-AY OBL child LNK teacher
‘(the) teacher **who beats/is beating** the child’
c. **ma-tayal-ay** **a** fahinayan
AF-work-AY LNK man
‘(a) man **who works/is working**’

	REF	MOD	PRED
Object	(6)	(13) (12)	(9)
Property	(7)	(14)	(10)
Action	(8)	(15)	(11)

Fig 5. The semantic map of the structural coding of Amis parts of speech constructions

The degree of markedness (i.e. no. of marking):  = 1  = 2  = 3 ;
(6)~(9): *u* marker; (10)~(11): voice/focus affixation; (12): genitive + *u* marker; (13) linker *a*;
(14)~(15): voice/focus affixation + -ay + linker *a*

Observation: The Structural Coding Hypothesis is violated particularly in Amis modification constructions.

4. The Behavioral Potential of Amis Parts of Speech Constructions

- No behavioral potential for Amis object reference prototype.
- The Tense, Aspect, and Modality (TAM) in Amis predication:

Table 3. TAM inflections for Amis predicates

	I	II	III	IV
Core properties (i.e. Ø type)	✓	✓	*	*
“less-core” properties (ma- type ; valency=1) e.g. <i>ma-su’su</i> ‘fat’	✓	✓	✓	*
nonprototypical properties (ma- type ; valency = 1) e.g. <i>ma-keter</i> ‘angry/scold’	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actions	✓	✓	✓	✓
I: <i>ka-</i> (Imperative mood)	II: <i>-ay</i> (Factual mood)			
III: <i>Ca</i> reduplication (Irrealis mood)	IV: Habitual <i>kara-</i> construction:			

(16) Imperative mood in Amis:

- ka**-harakat!
IMP-fast
‘Hurry!’
- ka**-su’su’=tu
IMP-fat=ASP
‘(It’s about time that you) get fat !’
- ka**-fana’
IMP-know
‘(You should) know/learn!’
- ka**-tayal
IMP-work
‘(Go to) work!’

(17) Factual mood in Amis:

- Ø-harakat-**ay** kuni tamina
AF-fast-FAC this.NOM boat
‘This boat is fast for real.’
- ma-su’su’-**ay** ku mama aku
AF-fat-FAC NOM father 1SG.GEN
‘My father is really fat.’
- ma-fana’-**ay** kaku a r<um>adiw
AF-know-FAC 1SG.NOM LNK sing<AF>
‘I really can sing/know how to sing.’
- ma-tayal-**ay** kaku i umah
AF-work-FAC 1SG.NOM Prep farm
‘I really work in the farm.’

(18) Irrealis mood in Amis: (Ca reduplication)

- ***ha**-harakat kuni tamina

- b. **ma-ma-su'su'** kaku
IRR-AF-fat 1SG.NOM
'I am/was about to get fat.'
- c. **ma-ma-fana'** kaku a r<um>adiw
IRR-AF-know 1SG.NOM LNK sing<AF>
'I am/was about to know how to sing.'
- d. **ma-ma-tayal** kaku i umah
IRR-AF-work 1SG.NOM Prep farm
'I am/was about to work in the farm.'

(19) Habitual construction in Amis

- a. ***kara**-harakat
b. ***kara-su'su'**
c. ?**kara-fana'** / **kara-keter**
KARA-angry/scold
'scold very often; get angry very often'
d. **kara-tayal** / **kara-futi'**
KARA-work / KARA-sleep
'work very often/ sleep very often'

- Degree inflections for Amis properties:

Kuo (2008) identified four types of comparative constructions in Amis. Among them, two types possess an explicit degree morpheme, and thus may be employed for the examination of behavior potential:

- a. *-ki-* comparatives: the *-ki-* affix is incorporated with the property (of comparison), indicating an 'exceed' sense. The comparative interpretation is manifested by means of (semantic) transitive event. That is, *A is taller than B*, in *-ki-* comparatives, should be literally interpreted as 'A exceeds B with respect to the tallness property.'

(20) The distribution of *-ki-* comparative morpheme

- a. property predicates
mi-ki-takaraw kaku tura tamdaw
AF-exceed-tall 1SG.NOM that.OBL person
'I am taller than that person.'
- b. property modifiers
ma-ulah cingra tu **mi-ki-takaraw-ay**
AF-like 3SG.NOM OBL AF-exceed-tall-AY
tura tamdaw a fafariyan
that.OBL person LNK man
'He likes the man (who is) taller than that person.'

- b) *ikaka* comparatives: *ikaka* is a grammaticalized comparative morpheme indicating 'more'; it serves as the predicate of the construction (Kuo 2008: 60-64). The property (of comparison) in this construction, particularly, has to occur in root form. Therefore, *A is taller than B*, in *ikaka* comparatives, should be literally interpreted

as ‘A’s tallness comparing to B’s tallness is more.’

(21) The distribution of *ikaka* comparatives

a. property references

Ø-ikaka ku takaraw aku tura tamdaw
 AF-more NOM tall 1SG.GEN that.OBL person
 ‘I am taller than that person.’

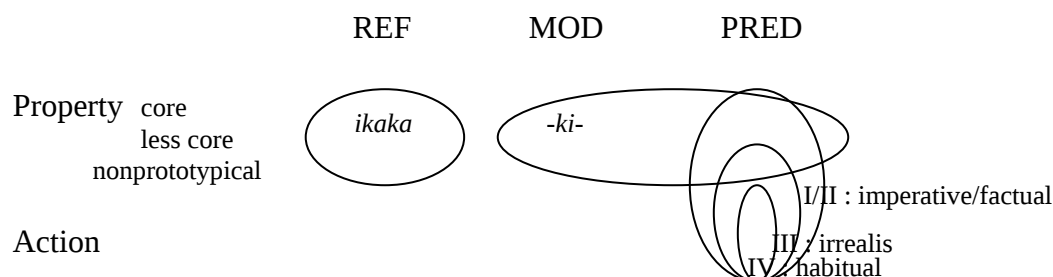


Fig 6. The semantic map of the behavioral potential of Amis parts of speech constructions

Observation:

- The distribution of TAM inflections conforms to the Behavioral Potential Map Hypothesis
- The distribution of comparative constructions, however, violates the hypothesis

- **Accounting for the inconsistency:**

Amis conforms to the hypotheses (4) and (5) for object reference and action predication, but not for property modification:

- These hypotheses are in the right track, **except for suffering from the idea ‘adjective as a prototype (i.e. language universal)’**.
- Our investigation in Amis parts of speech constructions renders support to a ‘lumping’ perspective of parts of speech:
 - a) adjectives might not be an independent category
 - b) the property modifiers may possess structural markedness

5. In Defense of the “Lumping” Approach

- **From a typological perspective:**

The Parts of Speech system and its typological implications:

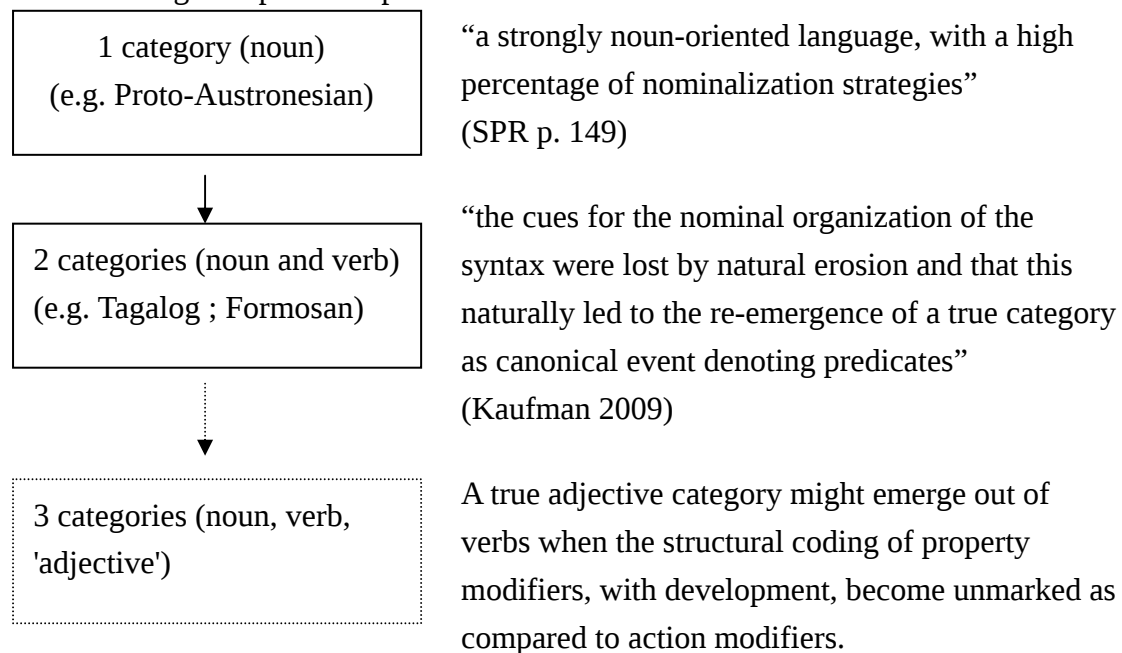
- head-marking or dependent marking (Dixon and Aikhenvald 2004: 33)

- word order (Hengeveld et al. 2004)
- dependent clauses (Van Lier 2006).
- syntactic pattern of comparatives (Kuo 2008)

- **From a historical perspective:**

The lumping approach identifies different stage of "category formation" in the development of the Austronesian family (cf. Starosta, Pawley & Reid (1982) (henceforth SPR) , Himmelmann (1991) and Kaufman (2009), among others):

Different stages of parts-of-speech formation:



6. Conclusion

✓ On Radical Construction Framework:

Merits:

- a) It separates language-particulars from language-universals with the conceptual space analysis;
- b) It distinguishes structural coding criterion and behavioral potential criterion and proposes implicational universals respectively, based on typological markedness.

Limitation: Inconsistency arises from treating adjectives as prototypical as nouns and verbs.

✓ On The ‘Lumping’ Approach, which maintains the markedness of adjectives (sometimes even verbs, as argued in PAn):

- a) It helps establish significant typological correlations
- b) It reflects the fact about parts of speech across languages and across time.

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Appendix A: The Semantic map of English and Lango parts of speech constructions (cited from Croft 2001: 98-102).

English:

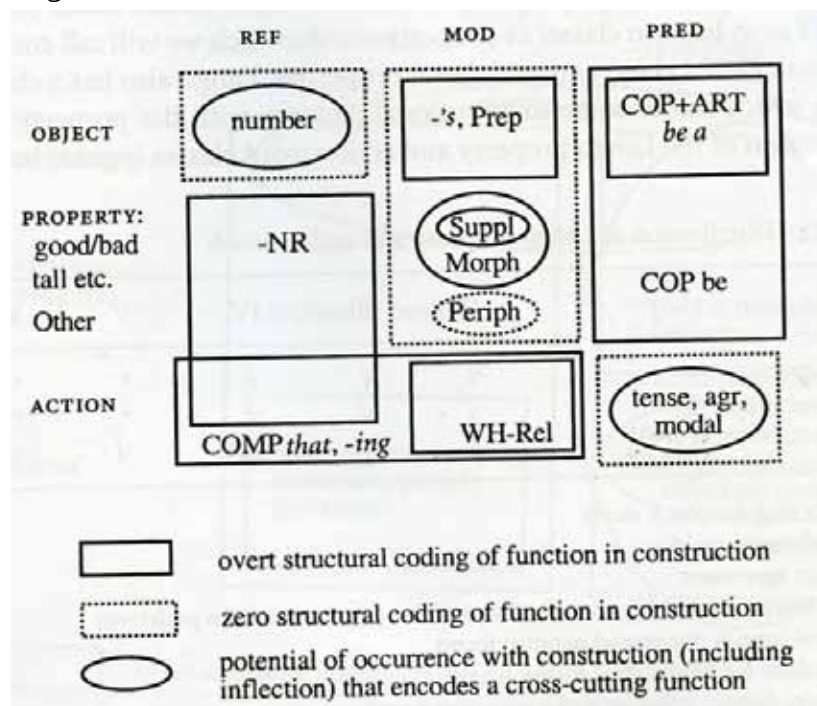


Figure A. Semantic map of English parts of speech constructions (Croft 2001: 99)
 -NR: Overt Nominalization (e.g. (1a-b)); genitive -'s or Prepositions (e.g. (2a-b)); complementizer *that* and -ing (e.g. (3)-(4)); WH-Rel: Relative Pronoun (e.g. (5)); Copula *be* (e.g. (6))

- (1) a. good**ness**, happi**ness**
 b. destru**ction**, produ**ction**
- (2) a. Bill'**s** book
 b. the book **on** the dresser
- (3) a. She realized **that** he was not going to leave her.
 b. the man **that** left the party early
- (4) a. Run**ning** is bad for your knees.
 b. the woman run**ning** down the road
- (5) the tree **which** fell on my house
- (6) a. That **is** a cypress.
 b. That cypress **is** big!

On Behavioral Potential:

“The behavioral potential constructions in English are restricted to the relevant prototype regions in conceptual space, which conforms to the Behavioral Potential Map Hypothesis. Further, the differences in the formal expression of degree in English allows us to identify more and less prototypical property words as adjectives. The degree of prototypicality conforms with Dixon’s (1977) generalizations: the most prototypical adjectives—the English property words with morphological or suppletive degree forms—include the concepts of value (*good/better/best, bad/worse/worst*), age (*older/oldest, younger/youngest, riper/ripest*), and dimension (*taller/tallest, wider/widest*).” (Croft 2001: 99)

Lango:

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Core properties	√	√	√	√	*	*	*
Peripheral properties	*	√	√	√	*	*	*
Actions	*	*	√	(√)	√	√	√

I: distinct singular/plural stems
 II: nonhabitual copula
 III: subject agreement
 IV: attributive particle ((√) = attributive particle + relative pronoun preferred)
 V: habitual tone in nongerund habitual forms
 VI: inflections for nonhabitual forms
 VII: possess distinct infinitive and subjunctive forms

Distribution of Lango property and action words (Croft 2001: 100)

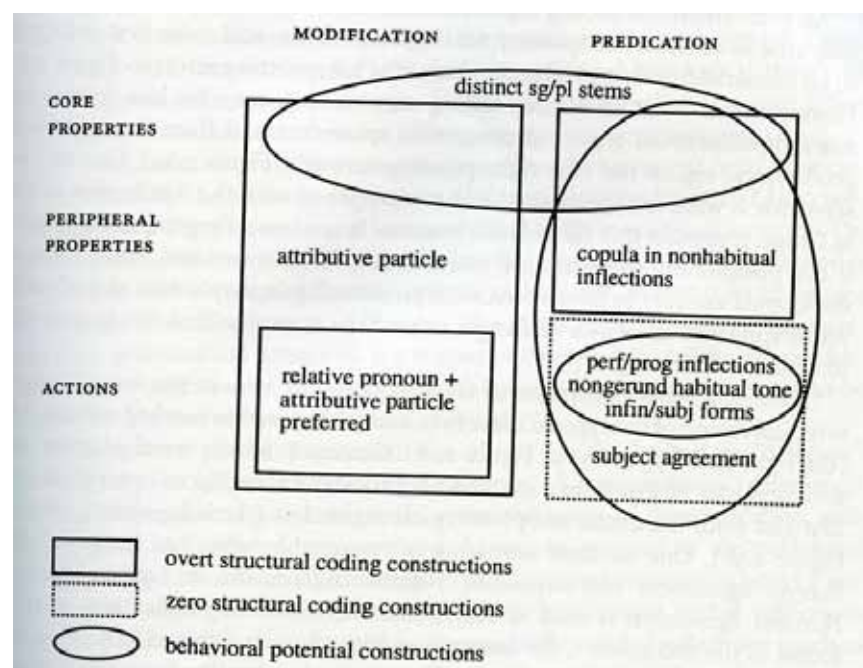


Figure B. Distribution of Lango predication/modification constructions (Croft 2001: 101)

“The overt structural coding constructions include the nonprototypical regions of the conceptual space, in conformity to the Structural Coding Map Hypothesis...The behavioral potential constructions in Lango include the prototypical regions of the conceptual space. The employment of distinct Singular and Plural stems is also found in the nonprototypical region of core property predication, and the employment of subject agreement is also found in the nonprototypical region of property predication. These facts are still in conformity to the Behavioral Potential Map Hypothesis.”
(Croft 2001: 100-101)