How to express ‘adjectives’ in Saho

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Abbreviations:

AGN  agent noun
AUX  auxiliar
f  feminine
f.o.b.  for one’s own benefit
GEN  genitive
m  masculine
n  noun
NOM  nominative
NP  noun phrase
pl  plural
s  singular
SC  suffix-conjugation
SGTV  singulative
var.  variant
vI  first class verb (verb with prefixes and suffixes)
vII  second class verb (verb with suffixes)
vIII  third class verb (stative verb)
vIV  fourth class verb (compound verb)

1. Introduction

The first classification of the different parts-of-speech of Saho is due to Reinisch (1878a). He distinguished the following:

1) Numerals
2) Pronouns
3) Verbs
4) Nouns
5) Adjectives
6) Postpositions
7) Conjunctions

Even though he regarded adjectives as a separate part-of-speech, he wrote that «Das Saho besitzt keine ursprünglichen Adjectiva, sondern es werden dieselben aus dem Verb (Participia, Nomina agentis) abgeleitet» (1878a, pag. 452). He also distinguished between ‘comparative’ and ‘superlative’ adjectives.

Conti Rossini (1913) didn’t regard adjectives as proper part-of-speech, but pointed out what he called different «forme aggettivali» or «formazioni aggettivali». These are basically the following ones:

a) (§ 19, pag. 170) forms with a «vero significato di aggettivo» derived from a «formazione participale», with the addition of what he regarded as «forme ausiliarie», i.e., the inflectional endings of the verbs that are called here ‘stative verbs’;

b) (§ 29, pag. 175) «vera forma aggettivale», i.e., that with the «rel. -tāyá femm. -tāyá plur. -mārō»;

c) (§ 29, pag. 175) also nominalized relative forms with -m may have a «valore aggettivale»;

d) (§ 29, pag. 175) agent nouns in -ēnā;

e) (§ 29, pag. 175) compounds with -lō “have” (also with the «suffisso relativo» -tāyā);

f) (§ 29, pag. 175) compounds with -ām;

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1 I want to give special thanks to Giorgio Banti and my main informant Ahmedsaad Mohammed Omer for their help in preparing this paper. Of course, errors and omissions are only mine.

2 In his study on Die Sprache der Irob-Saho in Abessinien (1878b), where only the Irob dialect is described, Reinisch didn’t include postpositions among the other parts-of-speech, yet he talked about them in his article, and added the category of particles.

3 According to well-known tendency to regard most Cushitic inflectional endings as grammaticalized auxiliaries.
(§ 29, pag. 175) noun forms with an adjectival value that occur immediately before nouns, and that take a «suffisso relativo» when they are used in isolation.

Also Conti Rossini discusses comparative and superlative forms (§ 30, pag. 176).

On the other hand, Welmers (1952) claimed that «Words translatable by adjectives may be morphologically and syntactically no different from nouns, but are treated separately here to illustrate attributive and predicative constructions». In this connection he lists a number of «adjectives» (actually all stative verbs), and points out that «some adjectives are followed by |kin| (from |kil|) in attributive position».

Also Lamberti (1990, pag. 140-41) mentions «adjectives» several times in discussing what actually are examples of stative verbs.

It will be shown that these authors regarded as «adjectives», i.e., as words or constructions that could be translated by means of adjectives in contemporary European languages, very diverse forms. Some of them they definitively misunderstood, while others actually should be classified as different parts-of-speech and constructions.

The question of «adjectives» in other languages of the Lowland East-Cushitic group has been debated for at least half a century⁴. For other references on the description and comparative analysis of adjectival words see the bibliography.

We proceed now to classify the different ways in which «adjectives» are expressed in Saho. The orthography used here below for this language is the official orthography that has been introduced in Eritrea. Notice in particular that c = [t], ch = [tʃ], c = [tʃ], dh = [d] and its allophone rh = [t], gn = [n], j = [dʒ], kh = [x], q = [k], gh = [x], sh = [ʃ], th = [t], ts = [s], x = [h]. A dieresis is used to distinguish some feminine nouns with a final pitch accent from their masculine counterparts that have penultimate pitch accent. E.g., dite [dite] nm “blackness”, ditè [ditè] nf “darkness”.

**2. Simple stative verbs (vIII)**

A considerable number of «adjectives» are actually stative verbs⁵ – or viii following the terminology used by Vergari-Vergari (2003) and, for ‘Afar, Parker-Hayward (1985) – because they have definitely verbal inflections for person as shown below and in example (1). They share such inflections with verbs like ‘be’, ‘have’, ‘love’, ‘dislike’. Yet, differently from the other inflectional classes of verbs, they don’t distinguish gender in 3s forms, and have only a compound tense for the past. Imperatives, and several depended tenses are supplied by their corresponding inchoative verbs. The final vowel of the 3s stem can be any of -a, -e, i and -o. This has been the reason for choosing it as citation form.

Ex. cado ‘be white’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present tense</th>
<th>Subject markers</th>
<th>Past tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1s cadiyoyo</td>
<td>-iyo</td>
<td>cadiyuk ine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s cadiito</td>
<td>-ito</td>
<td>cadituk tine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sm cado</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>cadii yine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sf cadiyo</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>cadii yine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p cadino</td>
<td>-ino</td>
<td>cadinuk nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2p cadinin</td>
<td>-itin</td>
<td>cadinin tinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p cadon</td>
<td>-on</td>
<td>cadiin yinin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ For instance, their Somali equivalents have been discussed by Andrzejewski (1956, paggs. 118ff.) and (1969), yet cf. also Bell (1953, paggs. 76ff. and 104-105), but a general consensus has not been reached yet. For instance Saeed (1988 and 1999, paggs. 104ff.) still uses the term ‘adjective’ for stative verbs, and regards them as a separate part-of-speech. For ‘Afar see, e.g., Hayward (1978), but Colizza (1887, pag. 81) already remarked that there are no true adjectives in ‘Afar. For Oromo see Owens (1985) and Banti (1988. paggs. 224ff.). Banti (1988 and 1994) deals extensively with this issue in the whole East-Cushitic group.

⁵ Banti (2004) has called the inflectional type SC2, i.e., second type of suffix conjugation. Andrzejewski (1969) called them ‘hybrid verbs’.
The negative tenses are obtained by adding the negative prefix mi-, in some dialects ma-. The 2pl and 3pl forms also add a final -i that causes the penultimate vowels to occur in open syllable. They can thus retain their length according to the well-know Saho-Åfari phonological rule described by Bliese (1981) and Hayward (1983). Kinni ‘be’ has makin as its present 3s negative form.

(1) **aru dativo, atu laakin cadito** ‘I am black, but you are white’

(2) **yowa makin, kaa kinni faake tii** ‘it is not me, it is him who opened it’

Among these verbs several indicate colours, shapes or sizes, weights, and other qualities. Typically most of these verbs have shortened relative forms. It can be seen in the – non exhaustive – list below of stative verbs, that most of them have derived verbal forms. Those derived from stative verbs of colour all belong to the suffix conjugation (or vII). The other ones inflect either according to the prefix conjugation (or vI) or to the vII. Stative verbs also have derived nouns, and even nouns used as attributes or as predicates in the construction with kinni.

COLORS (examples):

**Black**

- **data** vIII ‘be black’ (attributive: **dat**).
  - **dattowe** vII ‘become black’, **dattoyshe** vII ‘make black, calumniate, slander’, **dattoyshite** vII ‘make black f.o.b.’, **dite** nm ‘blackness’, **ditē** nf ‘darkness’.

**Blue**

- **kuxullayna** vIII ‘be blue’ (attributive: **kuxullayin**).
  - **kuxullayte** vII ‘become blue’, **kuxullayshe** vII ‘make blue’, **kuxullayshite** vII ‘make blue f.o.b.’, **kuxullayno** nm ‘blueness’.
  - **kuxulla** nm ‘blue’, also as a complement of kinni ‘be’.
  - (From **kuxu** nm ‘antimony, kohl (used as a cosmetic); **kuxulte** vII ‘colour one’s eyes with kohl’, **kuxulate** vII ‘colour the eyes of somebody with kohl’).

**Brown**

- **buuhina** vIII ‘be brown’ (attributive: **buuhin**).
  - **buuhute** vII ‘become brown’, **buuhuse** vII ‘make brown’, **buuhino** nm ‘browness’.
  - **buhto** nm ‘brown’ (fem. **buhtö**), also as a complement of kinni ‘be’.
  - (From **buuha** nm ‘the colour of a dirty sibbarh (a kind of leather container) after using it for churning butter’).

**Green**

- **andharha** vIII ‘be green’ (attributive: **andharh**).
  - **andharhina** vIII ‘be green’ (attributive: **andharhin**).
  - **andhadhdhowe** vII ‘become green, become lush’, **andhadhdhoyshe** vII ‘make green, make lush’, **andhadhdhoyshte** vII ‘make green, make lush f.o.b.’ **indhirhe** nm ‘greenness’, **andhaarha** nf ‘greenness’ (sgtv. andhaarhatto).
  - **andharho** nm ‘green’ (fem. **andharhö**), also as a complement of kinni ‘be’.
  - (From **dharhaa** nm ‘leaf/leaves’).

**Red**

- **casa** vIII ‘be red’ (attributive: =).
  - **cassowe** vII ‘become red’, **cassoyshite** vII ‘make red’, **cassoyshite** vII ‘make red f.o.b.’, **cise** nm ‘redness’.

**White**

- **cado** vIII ‘be white’ (attributive: =).
  - **caddowe** vII ‘become white, become clear’, **caddoyshe** vII ‘make white, specify, make clear’, **caddoyshte** vII ‘make black f.o.b.’, **cide** nm ‘whiteness’.
Yellow
caguyna vIII ‘be yellow’ (attributive: caguyn).
caguynite vII ‘become yellow’, caguynish vII ‘make yellow’, caguynite vII ‘become yellow’, caguyshe vII ‘make yellow’, caguyshtite vII ‘make yellow f.o.b.’, caguyno nm ‘yellowness’.
cagu nm ‘yellow’ (fem. cauwa), also as a complement of kinni ‘be’.
egerina vIII ‘be yellow’ (attributive: egerin).
egerowe vII ‘become yellow’, egerno nm ‘yellowness’.
egero nm ‘yellow’ (fem. egero), also as a complement of kinni ‘be’.

SHAPES AND DIMENSIONS (examples):
Big
naba vIII ‘be big, be great’ (attributive: =).
enbe vI ‘become big, grow up’, eynebe vI ‘cause to grow, adopt (a child), respect’, essenebe vI ‘rear f.o.b.’, nabinta nf ‘greatness, bigness, growth’, nabne nf ‘greatness, bigness, growth’, manabotta nm ‘leader of the chiefs, president, governor’.

Large
fidina vIII ‘be wide, be large’ (attributive: fidin).
ifiddine vI ‘become large, become wide’, iyfiddine vI ‘widen, spread out’, imfiddine vI ‘be widen, be enlarged’, fiadine nf ‘wideness, width’.

Long
dheerha vIII ‘be long, be tall’ (attributive: dheerha).
erheerhe vI ‘become long, become tall’, eyrheerhe vI ‘lengthen’, edhdheerhe vI ‘be far from’, dzdheerhe nm ‘longness, length; height’.

Roundle
kuruwina vIII ‘be round’ (attributive: kuruwina).
ukuruw vI ‘become round’, usukuruw vI ‘make round’, kurur nm ‘small round object’; ‘puppy (of dog)’.

Short
urhurha vIII ‘be short’ (attributive: urhur).
uddhurhe vI ‘become short’, uyshuddhurhe vI ‘shorten’, urhaarhe nf ‘shortness’.

Small
cindha vIII ‘be small, be young’ (attributive: =).

WEIGHTS AND DEGREES OF HEAT (examples):
Heavy
cilisha vIII ‘be heavy (also for situation); be difficult, be hard’ (attributive: cilish).
icilishe vI ‘become heavy’, iscilishe vI ‘weigh down, make difficult’, cilsha nf ‘weigh, being’. heavy’.

Light
sissika vIII ‘be light, be soft; be fast, be quick’ (attributive: sissik).
isissike vI ‘become light, etc.’, iyissiske vI ‘make light, etc.’, sissake nf ‘lightness, softness; quickness’.

Cold
dhaxmina vIII ‘be cold’ (attributive: dhaxmix).
dhaxme vI ‘become cold’, dhaxnish vII ‘cool’, dhaxna nf ‘coldness, coolness’.

Hot
lacina vIII ‘be hot’ (attributive: lacin).
lace vI ‘become hot, feel hot’, lacishe vI ‘heat’, lacile vII ‘bask (before the fire), lacina nf ‘hotness; fever’, lalo nf ‘basking (by the fire)’, lice nm ‘temperature’.

OTHER QUALITIES (examples):
Bad
uma vIII ‘be bad’ (attributive: =).
Dry  

kafina v\textsuperscript{III} ‘be dry, be solid’ (attributive: \textit{kafin}).

\textit{kafe} v\textsuperscript{II} ‘become dry, become solid’, \textit{kafishe} v\textsuperscript{II} ‘dry’, \textit{kaffishite} v\textsuperscript{II} ‘dry something f.o.b. (?), kafina nf ‘dryness, drought’.

Good  

mece v\textsuperscript{III} ‘be good, be fine, be nice’ (attributive: =).

\textit{emce} v\textsuperscript{I} ‘become good, improve’, \textit{eymeece} v\textsuperscript{I} ‘repair, mend, adjust, organize’, \textit{micne} nf ‘goodness, kindness, righteousness’, \textit{macaani} nf ‘goodness, kindness, righteousness’, \textit{macaani-le} v\textsuperscript{III} ‘be good, be kind, be right’, \textit{aymociya} nf ‘repairing, reparation, adjustment’.

New  

\textit{cusuba} v\textsuperscript{III} ‘be new’ (attributive: \textit{cusub}).

\textit{ucussube} v\textsuperscript{I} ‘become new, be refreshed’, \textit{uscussube} v\textsuperscript{I} ‘repair, refresh’, \textit{cusaabe} nf ‘newness, novelty’.

etc.

In predicative position the v\textsuperscript{III} usually follows its subject as in (1) above, and inflects for person (but see also §§ 3 and 8 below).

(3) nanu datino, atin caditin ‘we are black, you PL are white’

\begin{verbatim}
we   are-black you   are-white
\end{verbatim}

In attributive position the v\textsuperscript{III} usually precedes its head noun.

(4) cado care ‘(a) white house’, lit. ‘a house that is white’.

(5) amaa cado care ‘that (or ‘the’) white house’

\begin{verbatim}
that is-white house
\end{verbatim}

(6) cado cari yiggidile ‘(the) white house was broken’

\begin{verbatim}
is-white house-NOM was broken
\end{verbatim}

(7) Axmad cado lax leya ‘Ahmed has a white goat’

Ahmed is-white goat has

The attributive 3p forms of v\textsuperscript{III} verbs are like their corresponding attributive 3s forms.

(8) cusub roomi ‘(a) new knife’

\begin{verbatim}
is-new knife
\end{verbatim}

(9) cado carwa ‘(a) white houses’, lit. ‘houses that are white’

\begin{verbatim}
are-white houses
\end{verbatim}

(10) fidin citror ‘large pots’

\begin{verbatim}
are-large pots
\end{verbatim}

(11) cado carwa tiggidile ‘(the) white houses were broken’

\begin{verbatim}
were-broken
\end{verbatim}

(12) fidin citror yiggidile ‘(the) large pots were broken’

\begin{verbatim}
were-broken
\end{verbatim}

Postpositions always follow the last word of the phrase. Consequently they go with the head noun, not with the attributive form of the v\textsuperscript{III} verb.

(13) kaafa cado care-dde sugo kiyō ‘today I will stay in the white house’

\begin{verbatim}
today is-white house in stay AUX
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{6} Here the verb is in the 3sf because the plural \textit{carwa} is feminine. Instead the plural \textit{citror} in the subsequent example is masculine.
3. Stative (vIII) verbs with indefinites and -m

Relative forms of vIII verbs can only occur in attributive position, and require the indefinite -tiya m ‘one, one that’, -tiyâ–tya f or -mara pl ‘ones, ones that’ [+human] to act as dummy heads when they occur in the syntactic position of an NP. This occurs, for instance, when they function predicatively as complements of kinni ‘be’.

(14) anu dat-tiya kiyio, atu laakin cada-tiya kito ‘I am black, but you are white’, lit. ‘I am one that is black, but you are one that is white’

(15) ta cari cusub-tiya kinni ‘this is a new house’, lit. ‘this house is one that is new’

(16) Axmad lax cada-tiya kinni ‘Ahmed’s goat is white’

(17) ta xiyaw cada-mara kinon ‘these men are white’

Differently from ‘Afar, the above is the most frequent way for using vIII verbs as predicates.

The construction with the indefinite and kinni ‘be’ can also be used for an attribute, but less frequently than the plain relative form of the vIII verb. For instance instead of (18) below, it is possible to use (19) with the relative form of kinni.

(18) amaa cusub care uble lit. ‘I saw that house that is new’

(19) amaa cusub-tiya kin care uble lit. ‘I saw that house that is a new one’

Alternatively the relative vIII form can be nominalized by means of the suffix -m. Clauses with -m suffixed to their verbs may function either as sentential complements or as free relatives. Such forms are frequently used for predicates that refer to [+human] subjects.

(20) ta carwa cadu-m kinni ‘these are white houses’

4. Comparative and superlative constructions

The standard of comparison is marked by the postposition -ko ‘from’ both in comparative and in superlative expressions. In such cases the predicate is often represented by the plain vIII verb, even though kinni may also occur.

(21) ta cari aki caree-ko cada ‘this house is whiter than the other house’

(22) ta cari aki caree-ko cada-tiya kinni lit. ‘this house is one that is whiter than this house- NOM other house from is-white one is the other house’

(23) too caree-ko ta cari cada ‘this house is whiter than that house’

\[7\] Notice that instead of cadum one also finds cadom without raising of o to u. Also here the verb is in the 3sf because the plural carwa is feminine.
5. Derived vIII verbs

A small group of vIII verbs are derived from nouns and verbs by means of the suffix -ina. The final vowel of the noun’s stem may be dropped as in andharhina, or be retained as in kuxullayna.

Examples:

caaguyna vIII ‘be yellow’ from caagu nm ‘yellow’
andharhina vIII ‘be green’ from andharho nm ‘green’, derived from dharhaa nm ‘leaf/leaves’
kuxullayna vIII ‘be blue’ from kuxulla nm ‘blue’, derived from kuxul nm ‘antimony, kohl (used as cosmetic)’
kafina vIII ‘be dry’ from kafe vII ‘become dry’
lacina vIII ‘be hot’ from lace vII ‘become hot, feel hot’

6. Multi-word expressions involving vIII verbs

It should be pointed out that in many instances there is no clear-cut distinction between compound verbs and multi-word verbs in Saho. This is to say that there are no phonological or grammatical features that distinguish the two. Orthography in this case shows a high degree of variation: the words involved are sometimes spelt as separate words, as a single word, and with hyphens. The latter option has been generally chosen in Vergari-Vergari (2003) and Vergari (2005).

6.1. Noun + le constructions

Several nouns are followed by the vIII verb le ‘have’. In attributive position only le occurs, while in predicative position both le and leya are found as 3s forms. Also the construction with kinni ‘be’ is allowed with these constructions.

Ex. fayda-le ‘be useful’ from fayda nf ‘income, profit, gain, advantage’

(27) fayda-le nuwatta ‘(a) useful tool’, lit. ‘(a) tool that has usefulness’
usefulness has tool

(28) ta nuwatti fayda-le ‘this tool is useful’
this tool-NOM usefulness has

(29) ta nuwatti aki nuwattaa-ko fayda-le-tiya kinni ‘this tool is more useful than the
this tool-NOM other tool from usefulness has one is other tool’

(30) ta nuwatti umman-im-ko fayda-le ‘this tool is the most useful one’
this tool-NOM all what from usefulness has

Instead of (30) above it is possible to use the kinni construction: ta nuwatti ummanimko fayda-le-tiya kinni ‘this tool is the most useful one’.

Umman ‘all’ is an indefinite modifier. In order to occur as an NP it has to be nominalized by means of -m.
6.2 Noun + hin and noun + male constructions

Nouns may co-occur with the vIII verb hin ‘be without, lack’ in relative clauses. A predicative hina doesn’t appear to exist in Saho. In its stead the negative vIII verb male ‘have not, lack’ is used. Notice that male is also a verbal noun meaning ‘one that lacks’ and may be used to form compound nouns like faydamale m ‘useless thing’ in (32) below, that has faydamale as its feminine counterpart.

Ex. fayda-hin and fayda-male ‘be useless’ from fayda nf ‘income, profit, gain, advantage’

(31) fayda-hin nuwatta ‘a useless tool’
   usefulness lacks tool

(32) fayda-male kin nuwatta ‘a useless tool’
   usefulness lacking-one is tool

(33) ta nuwatti fayda-male ‘this tool is useless’
   this tool-NOM usefulness lacks

(34) ta nuwatti aki nuwattaa-ko fayda-hin-tiya kinni ‘this tool is more useless than the other tool’
   this tool-NOM other tool from usefulness lacks one is other tool

(35) ta nuwatti umman-im-ko fayda-hin-tiya kinni ‘this tool is the most useless one’
   this tool-NOM all what from usefulness lacks one is

6.3 Noun + kinni constructions

A considerable number of phrases are formed by a noun, or an expression that is syntactically a noun, that occurs as a complement of the copular verb kinni ‘be’. The relative form of this verb is kin.

Ex. bakhil nm ‘stingy person’

(36) bakhil kin xiyawto ‘(a) stingy man’
   stingy is man

(37) ta xiyawti bakhil kinni ‘this man is stingy’
   this man-NOM stingy is

The construction with kinni is used also with agent nouns in -eena. For instance, with the agent noun of the vII verb laxuute ‘be sick’ one can have (38) instead of (39).

(38) laxuuteena kin xiyawto ‘(a) sick man’
   be-sick-AGN is man

(39) laxuuta xiyawto ‘(a) sick man’
   is-sick man

(40) laxuuteena kin-tii rabe ‘the sick one died’
   be-sick-AGN is one-NOM died

Also compounds with the verbal noun male ‘one that lacks’ can occur in the kinni construction.

Ex. intimale nm ‘blind person’ from inti nf ‘eye’

(41) intimale kin xiyawto ‘(a) blind man’
   blind-person is man

(42) usuk intimale kinni ‘he is blind’
   he blind-person is
intimalil yemeetin ‘(the) blind people arrived’
blind-persons arrived

6.4. Noun + mece and noun + uma constructions

The vIII verbs mece ‘be good, be nice’ and uma ‘be bad’ can be used with nouns indicating what is fine or bad in the subject of the clause, as in carha-mece ‘be pretty, be handsome’ and carh-uma ‘be ugly’ both from carha nm ‘appearance’.

(43) ta barhā carha-mece-tiya kinni ‘this girl is beautiful’
this girl appearance is-good one is

7. Lab ‘male’ and say ‘female’

The two above words occur only in attributive position; in order to occur as predicates they require tiya or some other kind of nominalizing device. They can thus be regarded either as defective vIII verbs like hin ‘be without, lack’ (see § 6.2), or as definitives like the Saho demonstratives, possessives and several indefinites (aki ‘other’, umman ‘all, every’, etc.). Parker-Hayward (1985, pag. 236), indeed, treat their identical ‘Afar counterparts as general definitives.

(44) lab gooriyatto ‘(a) male ostrich’
   male ostrich-SGTV

(45) say jinse ‘feminine gender’
   female gender

Interestingly, in Somali lab ‘male’ and dheddig ‘female’ are two masculine nouns that may occur as genitive modifiers of nouns, see (47). They behave in the same way as the two feminine nouns bidix ‘left’ and midig ‘right’ whose Saho counterparts gura and mizga are two masculine nouns that occur as genitive modifiers of other nouns.

(46) say jinse ‘feminine gender’
   female gender

(47) goroyo lab ‘a male ostrich’ (Somali)
   ostrich male-GEN

(48) gacan-ta midig ‘the right hand’ (Somali)
   hand the right-GEN

(49) mizgi ishi gaba uqhuc ‘raise your right hand!’
   right-GEN your hand raise

8. Conclusions

As stated above many of the different forms that Conti Rossini regarded as ‘adjectives’ in Saho are actually verbs that belong to the vIII inflectional class. In particular, what he regarded as participles and nouns with an adjectival value – a) and g) in § 1. above – are well-known vIII verbs: kixina ‘love’, nicība ‘hate’, uma ‘be bad’, and mece ‘be good, be nice’. In sections 3., 6.1., and 6.3. it has been shown how the constructions with the indefinites tiya, tiyā, and mara, the nominalizing suffix -m, agent nouns in -eena, and le ‘have’ are to be analyzed.

The forms in -ām mentioned by Conti Rossini (1913, pag. 175) are, in modern Saho orthography, cilisham and basak-tam. The former is the 3s of vIII verb cilisha ‘be heavy’ with the nominalizing suffix -m, i.e., ‘what is heavy’. The second one also has -m, that nominalized the imperfect 3sf of the vIV verb basak-e ‘be sweet’, i.e., basak-ta + -m. Indeed, vIV verbs indicating qualities may occur in relative clauses that can be translated in European languages as adjectives.

VIV verbs are a class of verbal constructions commonly treated as a separate conjugational class in Saho and ‘Afar. They are composed of an invariable ideophone indicating a movement, a sound, etc., or by noun followed by a form of the verbs
To conclude, ‘adjectival’ words are expressed in Saho in ways that are not very different from ‘Afar. They are represented mainly by viii verbs or by phrases that have viii verbs as their heads. As stated above viii verbs are not very frequent in predicative positions in Saho. Mainly they occur in such positions in comparative constructions. Otherwise the copula kinni is used and the viii verb has to be given the status of an NP by means of -m or tiya.

The class of viii verbs in Saho and ‘Afar includes mainly simple verbs and a large number of multi-word verbs with le ‘have’, kinni ‘be’, hin, and male ‘be without, lack’, mece ‘be good, be nice’, and uma ‘be bad’. The number of denominal and deverbal derivatives with -ina is rather small. In Somali instead the class of deverbal stative verbs in -an – corresponding to Saho-‘Afar -ina – is highly productive. It derives from transitive verbs mostly intransitive stative verbs that indicate states or qualities that arise as consequences of the event referred to by the original verb, cf. Andrzejewski (1969, pags. 68 ff.). In Saho this is usually indicated by means of relative clauses with a passive verb.

(50) **Saalix basak-ya cadar yuktube** ‘Saleh wrote a fine (lit. sweet) poem’

  Saleh  fine says poem wrote

(51) **boronle yigdil** ‘he broke the bottle’

  bottle  he-broke

(52) **tiggidile boronle** ‘(a) broken bottle’, lit. ‘(a) bottle that was broken’

  was-broken bottle

REFERENCES


**erhxe** ‘say’, **e** ‘say’ or **ishe** ‘do’ used as auxiliaries. Similar constructions occur very frequently in several Afro-Asiatic languages of the Horn of Africa.


