

How to express ‘adjectives’ in Saho¹

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Abbreviations:

AGN	agent noun	pl	plural
AUX	auxiliar	s	singular
f	feminine	SC	suffix-conjugation
f.o.b.	for one’s own benefit	SGTV	singulative
GEN	genitive	var.	variant
m	masculine	vI	first class verb (verb with prefixes and suffixes)
n	noun	vII	second class verb (verb with suffixes)
NOM	nominative	vIII	third class verb (stative verb)
NP	noun phrase	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) Postpositions²
- 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 participiale», with the addition of what he regarded as «forme ausiliarie», i.e., the inflectional endings of the verbs that are called here ‘stative verbs’³;
- b) (§ 29, pag. 175) «vera forma aggettivale», i.e., that with the «rel. *-tiyā* femm. *-tiyá* plur. *-mārā*»;
- 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 *-lé* “have” (also with the «suffisso relativo» *-tiyā*);
- f) (§ 29, pag. 175) compounds with *-ām*;

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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.

g) (§ 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 |ki|) 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* = [ʕ], *ch* = [tʃʰ], *č* = [tʃ], *dh* = [d] and its allophone *rh* = [ɾ], *gn* = [ɲ], *j* = [dʒ], *kh* = [x], *q* = [kʰ], *qh* = [xʰ], *sh* = [ʃ], *th* = [tʰ], *ts* = [sʰ], *x* = [ħ]. 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** [dité] *nm* ‘blackness’, **ditë** [dité] *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’

	Present tense	Subject markers	Past tense
1s	cadiyo	-iyo	cadiyuk ine
2s	cadito	-ito	cadituk tine
3sm	cado	-	cadii yine
3sf	cado	-	cadii tine
1p	cadino	-ino	cadinuk nine
2p	caditin	-itin	caditin tinin
3p	cadon	-on	cadii yinin

⁴ For instance, their Somali equivalents have been discussed by Andrzejewski (1956, pags. 118ff.) and (1969), yet cf. also Bell (1953, pags. 76ff. and 104-105), but a general consensus has not been reached yet. For instance Saeed (1988 and 1999, pags. 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, pags. 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’.

	Negative present tense	Negative past tense
1s	micadiyo	cadii miine~miiniyo
2s	micadito	cadii mitine~mitinito
3sm		cadii miyine
3sf	micado	cadii mitine
1p	micadino	cadii minine~mininino
2p	micaditiini	cadii mitiniini~mitinitiini
3p	micadooni	cadii miyiniini

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-^cAfar phonological rule described by Bliese (1981) and Hayward (1983). **Kinni** ‘be’ has **makin** as its present 3s negative form.

(1) **anu datiyō, atu laakin cadito** ‘I am black, but you are white’
 I am-black you but 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 <i>vIII</i> ‘be black’ (attributive: dat). dattowe <i>vII</i> ‘become black’, dattoyshe <i>vII</i> ‘make black, calumniate, slander’, dattoyshite <i>vII</i> ‘make black f.o.b.’, dite <i>nm</i> ‘blackness’, ditē <i>nf</i> ‘darkness’.
Blue	kuxullayna <i>vIII</i> ‘be blue’ (attributive: kuxullayin). kuxullayte <i>vII</i> ‘become blue’, kuxullayshe <i>vII</i> ‘make blue’, kuxullayshite <i>vII</i> ‘make blue f.o.b.’, kuxullayno <i>nm</i> ‘blueness’. kuxulla <i>nm</i> ‘blue’, also as a complement of kinni ‘be’. (From kukul <i>nm</i> ‘antimony, kohl (used as a cosmetic’; kukulute <i>vII</i> ‘colour one’s eyes with kohl’, kukuluse <i>vII</i> ‘colour the eyes of somebody with kohl’).
Brown	buuhina <i>vIII</i> ‘be brown’ (attributive: buuhin). buuhute <i>vII</i> ‘become brown’, buuhuse <i>vII</i> ‘make brown’, buuhino <i>nm</i> ‘brownness’. buhto <i>nm</i> ‘brown’ (fem. buhtō), also as a complement of kinni ‘be’. (From buuha <i>nm</i> ‘the colour of a dirty <i>sibbarh</i> (a kind of leather container) after using it for churning butter’).
Green	andharha <i>vIII</i> ‘be green’ (attributive: andharh). andharhina <i>vIII</i> ‘be green’ (attributive: andharhin). andhadhhowe <i>vII</i> ‘become green, become lush’, andhadhdhoyshe <i>vII</i> ‘make green, make lush’, andhadhdhoyshte <i>vII</i> ‘make green, make lush f.o.b.’ indhirhe <i>nm</i> ‘greenness’, andhaarha <i>nf</i> ‘greenness’ (sgtv. andhaarhatto). andharho <i>nm</i> ‘green’ (fem. andharhō), also as a complement of kinni ‘be’. (From dharhaa <i>nm</i> ‘leaf/leaves’).
Red	casa <i>vIII</i> ‘be red’ (attributive: =). cassowe <i>vII</i> ‘become red’, cassoyshe <i>vII</i> ‘make red’, cassoyshite <i>vII</i> ‘make red f.o.b.’, cise <i>nm</i> ‘redness’.
White	cado <i>vIII</i> ‘be white’ (attributive: =). caddowe <i>vII</i> ‘become white, become clear’, caddoyshe <i>vII</i> ‘make white, specify, make clear’, caddoyshite <i>vII</i> ‘make black f.o.b.’, cide <i>nm</i> ‘whiteness’.

Yellow **caagunya** *vIII* 'be yellow' (attributive: **caaguyin**).
caagunite *vII* 'become yellow', **caaguyinise** *vII* 'make yellow', **caaguyte** *vII* 'become yellow', **caaguyshie** *vII* 'make yellow', **caaguyshite** *vII* 'make yellow f.o.b.', **caaguyno** *nm* 'yellowness'.
caagu *nm* 'yellow' (fem. **caaguwa**), also as a complement of **kinni** 'be'.
egerina *vIII* 'be yellow' (attributive: **egerin**).
eggerowe *vII* 'become yellow', **egerino** *nm* 'yellowness'.
egerto *nm* 'yellow' (fem. **egertö**), also as a complement of **kinni** 'be'.

etc.

SHAPES AND DIMENSIONS (examples):

Big **naba** *vIII* 'be big, be great' (attributive: =).
enebe *vI* 'become big, grow up', **eynebe** *vI* 'cause to grow, adopt (a child), respect', **essenebbe** *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', **fidaane** *nf* 'wideness, width'.
Long **dheerha** *vIII* 'be long, be tall' (attributive: **dherh**).
erheerhe *vI* 'become long, become tall', **eyrheerhe** *vI* 'lengthen', **edhdheerhe** *vI* 'be far from', **dhedhdhan** *nm* 'longness, length; height'.
Roundle **kurkuurina** *vIII* 'be round' (attributive: **kurkuurin**).
ukurkure *vI* 'become round', **uskurkure** *vI* 'make round', **kurkur** *nm* 'small round object'; 'puppy (of dog)'.
Short **urhurha** *vIII* 'be short' (attributive: **urhurh**).
udhdhurhe *vI* 'become short', **uyshudhdhurhe** *vI* 'shorten', **urhaarhe** *nf* 'shortness'.
Small **cindha** *vIII* 'be small, be young' (attributive: =).
ucundhuwe *vI* 'become small', **uscundhuwe** *vI* 'make small', **cindhaane** *nm* 'smallness'; 'youth, childhood', **ascandhaa** *nm* 'making small'.

etc.

WEIGHTS AND DEGREES OF HEAT (examples):

Heavy **cilisha** *vIII* 'be heavy (also for situation); be difficult, be hard' (attributive: **cilish**).
icilishie *vI* 'become heavy', **iscilishie** *vI* 'weigh down, make difficult', **cilsha** *nf* 'weight, being'. heavy'.
Light **sissika** *vIII* 'be light, be soft; be fast, be quick' (attributive: **sissik**).
isissike *vI* 'become light, etc.', **iysissike** *vI* 'make light, etc.', **sisaaake** *nf* 'lightness, softness; quickness'.
Cold **dhamxina** *vIII* 'be cold' (attributive: **dhamxin**).
dhamaxe *vII* 'become cold', **dhamxishe** *vII* 'cool', **dhamxa** *nf* 'coldness, coolness'.
Hot **lacina** *vIII* 'be hot' (attributive: **lacin**).
lace *vII* 'become hot, feel hot', **lacinshie** *vII* 'heat', **lalace** *vII* 'bask (before the fire)', **lacna** *nf* 'hotness; fever', **lalco** *nf* 'basking (by the fire)', **lice** *nm* 'temperature'.

etc.

OTHER QUALITIES (examples):

Bad **uma** *vIII* 'be bad' (attributive: =).
oome *vI* 'become bad, worsen', **oshshoome** *vI* 'do bad things', **umaani** *nf* 'badness, wickedness, evil, sin' (var. **umne**).

- Dry **kafina** *vIII* ‘be dry, be solid’ (attributive: **kafin**).
kafe *vII* ‘become dry, become solid’, **kafishe** *vII* ‘dry’, **kaffishite** *vII* ‘dry something f.o.b.
(?)’, **kafna** *nf* ‘dryness, drought’.
- Good **mece** *vIII* ‘be good, be fine, be nice’ (attributive: =).
emce *vI* ‘become good, improve’, **eymeece** *vI* ‘repair, mend, adjust, organize’, **micne** *nf*
‘goodness, kindness, righteousness’, **macaani** *nf* ‘goodness, kindness, righteousness’,
macaani-le *vIII* ‘be good, be kind, be right’, **aymociya** *nf* ‘repairing, reparation,
adjustment’.
- New **cusuba** *vIII* ‘be new’ (attributive: **cusub**).
ucussube *vI* ‘become new, be refreshed’, **uscussube** *vI* ‘repair, refresh’, **cusaabe** *nf*
‘newness, novelty’.
- etc.

In predicative position the *vIII* 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’
we are-black you are-white

In attributive position the *vIII* usually precedes its head noun.

- (4) **cado care** ‘(a) white house’, lit. ‘a house that is white’.
is-white house
- (5) **amaa cado care** ‘that (or ‘the’) white house’
that is-white house
- (6) **cado cari yiggidile** ‘(the) white house was broken’
is-white house-NOM was broken
- (7) **Axmad cado lax leya** ‘Ahmed has a white goat’
Ahmed is-white goat has

The attributive 3p forms of *vIII* verbs are like their corresponding attributive 3s forms.

- (8) **cusub roomi** ‘(a) new knife’
is-new knife
- (9) **cado carwa** ‘(a) white houses’, lit. ‘houses that are white’
are-white houses
- (10) **fidin citror** ‘large pots’
are-large pots
- (11) **cado carwa tiggidile** ‘(the) white houses were broken⁶’
are-white houses were-broken
- (12) **fidin citror yiggidile** ‘(the) large pots were broken’
are-large pots were-broken

Postpositions always follow the last word of the phrase. Consequently they go with the head noun, not with the attributive form of the *vIII* verb.

- (13) **kaafa cado care-dde sugo kiyo** ‘today I will stay in the white house’
today is-white house in stay AUX

⁶ Here the verb is in the 3sf because the plural **carwa** is feminine. Instead the plural **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’, **-tiyã--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 kiyo, atu laakin cado-tiya kito** ‘I am black, but you are white’, lit. ‘I am one that is black, but you are one that is white’
I is-black one am you but is-white one are

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

(16) **Axmad lax cado-tiya kinni** ‘Ahmed’s goat is white’
Ahmed-GEN goat is-white one is

(17) **ta xiyaw cado-mara kinon** ‘these men are white’
this men are-white ones are

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’
that is-new house I-saw

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

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’⁷, lit. ‘these houses are what are white’
this houses are-white what is white’

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 cado** ‘this house is whiter than the other house’
this house-NOM other house from is-white

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

(23) **too caree-ko ta cari cado** ‘this house is whiter than that house’
that house from this house-NOM is-white

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.

(24) **too caree-ko ta cari mi-cado** ‘this house isn't whiter than that house’
that house from this house-NOM not is-white

(25) **ta cari umman-im-ko cado** ‘this house is the whitest one’⁸
this house-NOM all what from is-white

(26) **ta cari umman-im-ko cado-tiya kinni** ‘this house is the whitest one’
this house-NOM all what from is-white one is

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-letiya kinni** ‘this tool is the most useful one’.

⁸ **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 **faydamalē** 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
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

- (43) **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’.

- (44) **ta barhä 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.

- (45) **lab gooriyatto** ‘(a) male ostrich’
male ostrich-SGTV

- (46) **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.

- (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’, **niciba** ‘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**, **tiyä**, 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 vIV⁹ 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.

⁹ 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

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

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.

- (51) **boronle yigdile** ‘he broke the bottle’
bottle he-broke

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

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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.

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