Grammar: Test this style of script

Hello, last week we looked at word orders and simple noun phrases, in this lesson we’ll be expanding our expressions a bit by looking at the adjectives, how to ask questions including the 5W’s and tense.

Adjectives, or descriptive words, are used to help ‘add colour’ to our sentences, such as:

The cow is big

The cow is black and white

Which is more helpful in telling others what you’ve seen than saying:

A cow

And in Japanese adjectives are categorised into two groups, i- adjectives as shown here:

家は大きい（です）。

The house is big

大きい家

Big house

And na-adjectives as seen here:

家は安全[だ/です]。

The house is safe

安全な家

(A) safe house

Where the na-adjective gets its name from the fact that it needs an accompanying na- when modifying a noun

We’ll be going into further detail about these two groups today.

The reason we have this divide is largely historical, so we won’t really go into it but suffice it say that in old Japanese there were only i-adjectives and this list was final, no other adjectives could be added to this list. But as the language grew however, new foreign words were introduced, these words were originally added as nouns, these were then, over time, adjectised, creating the na-adjectives. Which can explain somewhat for the construction of the two groups.

For example i-adjectives are more constrained, made up of a stem and a suffix.

大き　＋い

And the suffix always end in i-, a-, o- or u- but never e- such as me, te and re

This is why kirei is not a considered a i-adjective despite ending in i

Na-adjectives, so basically the rest of the adjectives which do not fit into the above rules, are basically free-range, the only rules being that when modifying a noun they use na-. And so you’ll see na-adjectives, since they’re largely foreign in origin, when written to be either in kanji or katakaka.

しつれいな人

Rude person

キュートなヘアスタイル

Cute hairstyle

So yes many English adjectives are used in Japanese, however, some English adjectives, such as colours, are treated as nouns in Japanese such as:

グレーの傘

Grey umbrella

ソロのえんそう

Solo performance

Which can lead to some odd situations like:

けんこうな人

Healthy person

病気の人

Sick person

To make learning this oddity group of adjective-like nouns easier, we’ll make a third group of adjectives which we’ll call no-adjectives

Get into the idea of words representing concrete and abstract

On the concrete end we got proper nouns…

No-adjectives more concrete in concept than na-adjectives, such as physical features or small group

It should also be noted that many na-adjectives, especially colours, have a i-adjective equivalent such as black(na) and black(i). The use of either is up to the speaker though one is often used in certain situations against another, the na-adjective version of a word is often used in advertising for example

[See this in kono and konna

This bird

Birds like this ]

Adding teki to a noun makes it into a na-adjective : history = historical