

Chapter 20

Adjectives in Lubukusu

Aggrey Wasike

University of Toronto

The lexical category of adjectives is proposed to be universal, but its realization varies across languages. In languages such as English, there is a clearly distinct category of adjectives. But in other languages the category of adjectives is not entirely distinct morphologically and syntactically from nouns and verbs. In this paper I show that there is a striking resemblance between adjectives and nouns in Lubukusu. In addition, stage-level predicate meanings are expressed by use of verbs rather than adjectives. Because of these facts, it is tempting to adopt an analysis that reduces Lubukusu adjectives to either nouns or verbs. However, I argue that there is not sufficient evidence to support such an analysis. Lubukusu has true adjectives in spite of the associated nominal and verbal characteristics. A verbal characteristic such as expressing adjectival meanings by use verbs is similar to languages such Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako. But there are significant differences between these languages and Lubukusu with regards to this verbal characteristic.

1 Introduction

This paper discusses adjectives in Lubukusu, a Bantu language spoken in Western Kenya. This discussion is particularly useful considering the fact that there is disagreement among linguists on the status of adjectives as a universal category. For linguists such as Mark Baker and R. M. W. Dixon, the lexical category of adjectives is universal (Baker 2001; 2003; Dixon & Aikhenvald 2004). But for R. M. W. Dixon in his earlier work and Chafe Wallace, the category of adjectives is not universal (Dixon 1982; Chafe 2012). Description and discussion of how adjectival meanings are expressed in different languages can help linguists draw a valid conclusions regarding the category of adjectives.

The lack of agreement on the status of adjectives as a universal category among linguists is attributed to cross-linguistic variation in the expression of adjectival meanings. Some languages express adjectival meanings by use of adjectives while others express similar meanings by use of verbs and nouns. Even those languages that have a distinct class of adjectives differ from each other in terms of the properties of adjectives: in some languages, adjectives “may share at least some of their morpho-syntactic behavior with nouns, in others they may have more in common with verbs, and still in others they may



be more or less independent of those other classes” (Chafe 2012: 1). Languages that have a distinct category of adjectives can also differ in terms of adjective inventory: some, such as English, have a large number of adjectives. In fact adjectives in English constitute an open class. But other languages have a closed set of adjectives. An example of such a language is Hausa which has approximately 12 adjectives (Whaley 1997).

As has already been pointed out, some languages lack a distinct category of adjectives. Instead they express adjectival meanings by use of either verbs or nouns. Examples of languages which use verbs to express adjectival meanings include Mohawk (Baker 2001), Seneca and other northern Iroquoian languages (Chafe 2012), Manipuri (Bhat 1994) and Mayali. To illustrate how a languages use verbs to express adjectival meanings consider sentences in (1) and (2) from Manipuri and Seneca respectively.

- (1) a. Manipuri (Bhat 1994: 190)
əy mabu u-de
I him-ACC see-NEG(NFUT)
‘I did not see him.’
b. phi ədu ɲaɲ-de
cloth that red-NEG(NFUT)
‘That cloth is not red.’
- (2) a. Seneca (Chafe 2012: 10)
Tganöhsö:t, CIS-N.SG.AGT -building-upright-STA
t-ka-nöhs-o:t-ø
‘The house there,’
b. ganöhsasdë. N.SG.AGT -building-big-STA
ka-nöhs-astë:-
‘it was a big house.’

Notice that in these languages words that express adjectival meanings take inflectional morphology of verbs such as negation in (1).

An example of a language that uses nouns to express adjectival meanings is Quechua. In this language words that express adjectival meanings take nominal inflectional morphology such as case. This is illustrated in (3).

- (3) a. Peru Quechua (Weber 1983: 6)
rumi-ta rikaa
stone-ACC 1SG.see
‘I see a/the stone.’
b. hatun-ta rikaa
big-ACC 1SG-see
‘I see a/the big (one).’

Given the cross-linguistic variability illustrated above, it is understandable why linguists would fail to agree on whether the category of adjective is universal or not. Clearly,

studying how adjectival meanings are expressed in languages that have not been studied yet is important as it can improve our understanding of adjectives.

In this paper, I show how adjectival meanings are expressed in Lubukusu. Questions that I seek to answer include, though not limited to the following: How are adjectival meanings expressed in Lubukusu? Is Lubukusu English-like, Mohawk-like or Quechua-like? How similar or different is Lubukusu from other languages? What nominal and verbal features do words that express adjectival meanings have? Why shouldn't Lubukusu adjectives be considered nouns?

I show that Lubukusu has pure adjectives like English, but it not exactly like English in all respects. This is because there are certain adjectival meanings that are expressed by use of verbs just like in Mohawk, Seneca, Mayali and Manipuri. Thus Lubukusu has a mixed adjectival system. I also show that although adjectives are structurally similar to nouns, they constitute a lexical category that is distinct. Similarly, although certain adjectival meanings are expressed by use of verbs, it cannot be true to argue that Lubukusu lacks adjectives.

This paper is organized as follows. §2 is a general description of adjectives in Lubukusu that recognizes two major subtypes of adjectives: basic adjectives and derived adjectives. §3 describes and discusses nominal features of adjectives focusing on morphological and syntactic features. §4 is a discussion of verbal features of adjectives. I show that only stage-level readings of predicates are expressed by use of verbs in Lubukusu. §5 is the conclusion.

2 Overview of adjectives in Lubukusu

Adjectives are nominal modifiers, and as illustrated in (4) they can occur in a Noun Phrase (NP) with other modifiers such as numerals, possessive pronouns, demonstratives, associative Prepositional Phrases (PP) and relative clauses.

(4) Lubukusu

ba¹-ba-ana ba-taru ba-nge baa-bofu be lii-ria baa-kon-a ba-no
 2-2²-person 2-three 2-mine 2.2-big of 5.5-respect 2.REL-sleep-FV 2-DEM
 'these three big respectful children of mine who are sleeping'

Because of the constraints of space numerals, possessive pronouns, associative PPs and relative clauses are not discussed in this paper. I have also not discussed word in the NP. Instead I have focused on adjectives only, without reference to the other noun modifiers.

Adjectives in Lubukusu can be divided into two broad categories: basic adjectives and derived adjectives.

²Orthographic B or b is [β] when it is not preceded by a nasal sound

²In the sequence of these numerals here and in the rest of the paper, the first numeral is the pre-prefix (augment); the second numeral is class prefix

2.1 Basic adjectives

These are adjectives that are base generated and are not derived from other lexical categories. Basic adjectives describe size, color, quantity etc. and include *-bofu* 'big', *-titi* 'small', *-leyi* 'tall', *-imbi* 'short', *-balayi* 'wide', *-mali* 'black', *-wanga* 'white', *-besemu* 'red', *-kali* 'many', *-lendafu* 'stupid', *-kesi* 'clever', *-silu* 'stupid', *-kara* 'lazy', *-miliu* 'clean', *-nyalu* 'dirty', *-siro* 'heavy', *-angu* 'light', *-chou* 'big/fully grown', *-khulu* 'old', *-bisi* 'raw/unripe', *-robe* 'ripe' etc.

2.2 Derived adjectives

Lubukusu has a very productive process of deriving adjectives from verbs. The process involves suffixing the root of the verb with the vowel *-e*³. In other words the final vowel of the verb root is replaced with the vowel *-e*. This suggests that *-e* is an 'adjectivizing' suffix. Derived adjectives ending in *-e* include *-funge* 'closed' (from *funga* 'close'), *-funule* 'open' (from *funula*⁴ 'open'), *-funikhe* 'covered' (from *funikha* 'cover'), *-singe* 'washed' (from *singa* 'wash'), *-tekhe* 'cooked' (from *tekha* 'cook'), *-lekhule* 'free' (from *lekhula* 'free/let go'), *-khalange* 'fried' (from *khalanga* 'fry'), *-robe* 'ripe' (from *roba* 'become ripe'), *-simbe* 'busy' (from *simba* 'become busy'), *-lume* 'hard' (from *luma* 'become hard'), *-sye* 'ground' (from *sya* 'grind'), *-ake* 'weeded' (from *yaka* 'weed'), *-male* 'smeared' (from *mala* 'smear'), *-chichunge* 'sifted' (from *chichunga* 'sift'), *-osye* 'roasted' (from *yosya* 'roast') etc.

The derivation of adjectives from verbs with roots that end in liquids (/l/ & /r/) and the voiceless fricative (/x/) involve phonological processes that are different from *-e* final derived adjectives illustrated in the previous paragraph. To form adjectives from these verbs, the root final liquids and /x/ are changed into fricatives – either [f] or [s] and the final vowel is changed to [u] or [i]. Adjectives formed in this manner include: *-mesi* 'drunk' (from *mela* 'become drunk'), *-changalafu* 'insipid' (from *changalala* 'be dull, insipid, tasteless'), *-randafu* 'brown' (from *randara* 'become brown', *-lendafu* 'stupid, slow' (from *lendala* 'be stupid, be slow thinking'), *-angafu* 'mature' (from *angala* 'mature'), *-nyindafu* 'brave' (from *nyindala* 'brave'), *-labufu* 'dirty' (from *labukha*⁵ 'become dirty'), *-rundubafu* 'big' (from *rundubara* 'become big'), *-khalafu* 'sad' (from *khalala* 'be sad'), *-nefu* 'fat' (from *nera* 'become fat'), *-balakafu* 'dry' (from *balakala* 'dry'), *-kafu* 'stupid' (from *kala* 'be stupid/slow thinking'), *-khandyafu* 'proud' (from *khandyaba* 'walk proudly') etc.

In addition to the two types of derived adjectives exemplified above, there are derived adjectives that end in the suffix *-a*. These adjectives are fewer compared to the first two sub-types as they are restricted to occurring with only few nouns. Derived adjectives that end in *-a* include *-fumba* 'folding' (from *fumba* 'fold', in *endebe efumba* 'fold-

³Verbs that end in *-e* should not be confused with adjectives that are derived from verbs which also end in *-e*.

The two are distinguishable even without reference to tonal patterns: derived adjectives have an augment and class prefix but verbs have subject agreement and verbal inflections such as tense.

⁴Verbs in Lubukusu in the imperative mood occur without any prefixes

⁵Orthographic kh- is [x]

ing chair'), *-chwisya* 'knotted' (from *chwisya* 'knot', in *kumukoye kumuchwisya* 'knotted rope'), *-chunula* 'unknotting' (from *chunula* 'unknot', in *kumukoye kumuchunula* 'unknotting rope'), *-khalisya* 'crossing/shortcut' (from *khalisya* 'cross/shortcut', in *engila ekhalisya* 'short cut'), *-kisa* 'hide' (from *kisa* 'hide', in *kumwinyawe kumwikisa* 'hide and seek game'), *-kara* 'dribble' (from *kara* 'dribble', in *kumupira kumukara* 'dribbling ball game (=soccer)'), *-chururusya* 'uninterrupted' (from *chururusya* 'let go uninterrupted' in *kumupira kumuchururusya* 'game where two people hit the soccer ball back and forth'). As already pointed out, adjectives in this subcategory are few. This may be due semantic reasons. For example only few objects can be described as folding⁶, only few things can be described as knotting, only a handful on things can be described as dribbling etc. But it is also possible that these are noun-verb compounds rather than adjectives.

Up to this point we have seen that adjectives in Lubukusu can be formed from verbs. But the reverse is also possible: verbs can be formed from adjectives through a fairly productive process of suffixing *-a* to the root of the adjective. To briefly illustrate, adjective roots such, *-imbi* 'short', *-bofu* 'big', *-leyi* 'tall', and *-besemu* 'red' can be converted into the following verbs respectively: *imbia* 'become short', *bofua* 'become big', *lea* 'become tall' and *besema* 'become red'. The suffixation of *-a* to *-imbi* 'short' and *-bofu* 'big' to form a verb is clear and cannot be contested. These two examples show that the direction of conversion is from adjective to verb. I assume that this is also true in both *lea* 'become tall' and *besema* even though these two examples involve additional phonological processes beyond suffixation of *-a*. In any case the roots *-imbi*, *-bofu*, *-leyi*, and *-besemu* are unequivocally adjectival, and conversion must be from adjective to verb.

To summarize this section, we have seen that Lubukusu has many adjectives, some of which can be classified as basic and others as derived. It is particularly instructive that the morphological process which forms adjectives from verbs is quite productive. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the class of adjectives in Lubukusu is an open class. This differs from Bantu languages such as Chichewa which has "...very few 'pure' adjective stems..." (Mchombo 2004: 24). It also differs from Kiswahili which lacks a productive process of forming adjectives from verbs. For example Kiswahili lacks the noun + verb-derived-adjective equivalent of the Lubukusu *enyama endekhe* 'cooked meat'. In Kiswahili to say cooked meat, one must use a relative clause *-nyama iliyopikwa* 'meat that is cooked'.

Having provided a general description of adjectives in Lubukusu, we are now ready to tackle remaining issues that can challenge our conclusion that adjectives are indeed a separate and independent lexical category in Lubukusu. An examination of Lubukusu adjectives indicates that they do have what can be considered nominal features on the one hand and verbal features on the other. It is necessary to discuss these features and in the process explain how and why adjectives are neither nouns nor verbs.

⁶This contrasts with the adjective *-fumbe* 'folded' (from *fumba* 'fold') which is not as restricted semantically. Many things can be described as folded: *engubo efumbe* 'folded cloth', *ekaratasi efumbe* 'folded paper' etc.

3 Nominal features of adjectives in Lubukusu

By nominal features, I mean those features that are generally thought of as belonging to nouns. But instead of nouns being the bearers or associates of these features, it is adjectives that are. When adjectives carry many nominal features, it can be difficult to clearly and uniquely distinguish between nouns and adjectives, and it can be challenging to argue for the existence of a separate category of adjectives. In this section I examine and illustrate morphological and syntactic nominal features borne by or associated with the Lubukusu adjectives, beginning with morphological features.

3.1 Morphology of the adjective

Lubukusu adjectives must agree with the nouns that they modify. For this reason they have a morphological structure that similar to that of nouns. Like nouns, adjectives have the structure pre-prefix (augment)-class prefix-root. But it is the noun that determines the form of the pre-prefix and prefix borne by the adjective. The following data illustrates the structure of nouns, adjectives and agreement patterns in noun classes 1 to 11.

- (5) a. o-mu-ndu o-mu-bofu
1-1-person 1-1-big
'big person'
b. ba-ba-ndu baa-bofu
2-2-person 2.2-big
'big people'
- (6) a. ku-mu-sala ku-mu-bofu
3-3-tree 3-3-big
'big tree'
b. ki-mi-sala ki-mi-bofu
4-4-tree 4-4-big
'big trees'
- (7) a. li-li-ino lii-bofu
5-5-tooth 5.5-big
'big tooth'
b. ka-me-eno ka-ma-bofu
6-6-tooth 6-6-big
'big teeth'
- (8) a. si-sy-uma sii-bofu
7-7-bead 7.7-big
'big bead'

- b. bi-by-uma bii-bofu
8.8-bead 8.8-big
'big beads'
- (9) a. e-n-dika e-m-bofu
9-9-bicycle 9-9-big
'big bicycle'
- b. chi-n-dika chi-m-bofu
10-10-bicycle 10-10-big
'big bicycles'
- (10) a. lu-lu-ichi luu-bofu
11-11-river 11.11-big
'big river'
- b. chi-nj-ichi chi-m-bofu
10-10-river 10-10-big
'big rivers'

As shown in (5–10), the structure of adjective is similar to that of noun in each case both in terms of the number of morphemes and form of the morphemes. This is due to agreement requirements: the adjective must agree with the noun they modify. The adjective meets this requirement by copying or reduplicating the prefix form and structure of the noun it modifies. When a noun's prefixes are *o-mu* as in (5a), the adjective must also have *o-mu*; when a noun's prefixes are *ku-mu* as in (6a), the adjective must also have *ku-mu*. The only slight variations in the noun and adjective prefix structure can be found in (5b), (7a & b), (8a & b), and (9a & b), repeated here as (11), (12), (13) and (14) respectively.

- (11) ba-ba-ndu baa-bofu
1-1-person 1-1-big
'big people'
- (12) a. li-li-ino lii-bofu
5-5-tooth 5.5-big
'big tooth'
- b. ka-me-eno ka-ma-bofu
6-6-tooth 6-6-big
'big teeth'
- (13) a. si-sy-uma sii-bofu
7-7-bead 7.7-big
'big bead'

- b. bi-by-uma bii-bofu
8.8-bead 8.8-big
'big beads'
- (14) a. e-n-dika e-m-bofu
9-9-bicycle 9-9-big
'big bicycle'
- b. chi-n-dika chi-m-bofu
10-10-bicycle 10-10-big
'big bicycles'

These are not counterexamples to the noun-adjective prefix similarity generalization since they can be explained phonologically. In (12b) the augment-noun prefix turns up as *ka-me* because the phonological process of vowel coalescence has taken place. In (14 & b), the nasal takes on different forms because it assimilates to the place of articulation of following stop. And finally in (11), (12a), and (13a & b), prefix haplology has taken place. Prefix haplology takes when identical prefixes such as *ba-ba* (class 2), *li-li* (class 5), *si-si* (class 7) and *bi-bi* (class 8) are followed by nominal root or adjectival root that begins with a consonant. In (11), *ba-ba* becomes *baa* because the root of the adjective begins with a consonant. This holds for (12) as well where *li-li* becomes *lii* because the adjective root is consonant initial. Prefix haplology is not limited to adjectives alone; it takes place in nouns as well. This is illustrated in the following data.

- (15) a. baa-soreri (from ba-ba-soreri)
2.2-boy
'boys'
- b. lii-fumbi (from li-li-fumbi)
5.5-cloud
'cloud'
- (16) a. sii-rekere (from si-si-rekere)
7.7-village
'village'
- b. bii-rekere (from bi-bi-rekere)
8.8-village
'villages'

For a detailed discussion of prefix haplology and how it is accounted for in phonological theory, see Mutonyi (2000).

I end this section by reiterating the nominal features borne by Lubukusu adjectives. Lubukusu adjectives bear class prefixes that agree with the noun they modify. In addition, they undergo prefix haplology just like nouns. But is this enough to conclude that Lubukusu adjectives are a sub-set of nouns rather than an independent lexical category?

Before answering this question, let us first examine the ‘noun-ness’ of adjectives at the level of syntax.

3.2 Syntactic function and position of Lubukusu adjectives

Lubukusu adjectives seem to occupy typical noun positions in the sentence without a modified noun. The typical noun positions which Lubukusu adjectives can occupy are subject position, object position and object of preposition position. To illustrate, consider the following sentences.

- (17) a. O-m-bofu o-yu a-siim-a o-mw-ana wewe.
 1-1-blind DEM-1 1-PRS-love-FV 1-1-child his/hers
 ‘That blind person loves his/her child.’
 b. Baa-tambi ba-a-sab-ang-a byaa-khulya.
 2.2-poor 2-PRS-beg-HAB-FV 8.8-food
 ‘The poor usually beg for food.’
- (18) a. Ku-mu-leeyi kw-a-funiikh-e.
 3-3-tall 3-PST-break-FV
 ‘The tall (one) broke.’
 b. Li-li-imbi lya-a-kw-a.
 5-5-short 5-PST-fall-FV
 ‘The short (one) fell.’
- (19) a. Wafula a-a-yet-ang-a baa-tambi.
 1.Wafula 1-PRS-help-HAB-FV 2.2-poor
 ‘Wafula usually helps the poor.’
 b. Mayi a-a-kul-il-e lii.bofu.
 Mother 1-PST-buy-ASP-FV 5.5-big
 ‘Mother bought the big (one).’
- (20) a. Wafula a-a-r-a sii-bofu khu-mesa.
 Wafula 1-PST-put-FV 7.7-big on.PRF-table
 ‘Wafula put the big (one) on the table.’
 b. Wafula a-a-r-a sii-tabu khu-mu-bofu.
 Wafula 1-PST-put-FV 7.7-book 17-17-big
 ‘Wafula put the book on the big one.’

Thus Lubukusu adjectives can function as subject (17& 18), object (19) and object of preposition (20). These positions – subject position, object position and object of preposition – are noun positions and there is no doubt nor controversy about it. We are thus confronted yet again with data and facts that underscore the striking similarity between nouns and adjectives in Lubukusu. Does this mean that adjectives in Lubukusu are nouns? This is the question we turn to in the next section.

3.3 Are Lubukusu adjectives nouns?

In section 3.1, we saw that adjectives in Lubukusu have a structure that is similar to that of nouns. Like nouns they have a pre-prefix and a class prefix. In addition adjectives undergo prefix haplology just like nouns. And in section 3.2, we saw that Lubukusu adjectives take typical noun functions of subject, object and object of preposition. These striking similarities raise the possibility that adjectives are just a sub-type of nouns. If this is indeed the case, then it will not be justifiable to retain adjective as a separate lexical category in Lubukusu grammar.

I argue that the nominal features of adjectives that we have seen in previous sections are not sufficient to make the lexical category of adjective in Lubukusu irrelevant. One piece of evidence which shows that adjectives and nouns in Lubukusu are indeed separate lexical categories comes from NPs that contain both a noun and adjective. These NPs show unambiguously that nouns and adjectives are generated in different positions, suggesting that nouns are not adjectives and vice versa.

Nouns in Lubukusu precede adjectives in the NP and as we have already seen in previous sections, adjectives duplicate the prefix system of the nouns that they modify. Consider word order in the following simple Adjective-Noun structure.

- (21) a. o-mu-soreri o-mu-leyi
 1-1-boy 1-1-tall
 'the/a tall boy'
- b. *o-mu-leyi o-mu-soreri
 1-1-tall 1-1-boy
 (Intended: 'the/a tall boy')
- c. ku-mu-sala ku-mu-leeyi
 3-3-tree 3-3-tall
 'the/a tall tree'
- d. *ku-mu-leyi ku-mu-sala
 3-3-tall 3-3-tree
 (Intended: 'the/a tall tree')

Clearly, the noun must precede the adjective in the NP. This is significant because it confirms that Lubukusu adjectives and nouns are base generated in different syntactic positions.

Notice once again that in (21) as in previous examples that the adjective duplicates the prefix structure of the noun: in (21a) the adjective duplicates the noun's *o-mu* prefix, while in (21c), the adjective copies the noun's *ku-mu* prefix. This type of agreement is referred to as concordial agreement in the Bantu literature. It is this concordial agreement that explains the rather surprising distribution facts of Lubukusu adjectives illustrated in (17–20) where adjectives seemed to function as subject, object and object of preposition. Adjectives in such cases contain enough nominal features of nouns (through the

prefixes) and can allow for the dropping or omission of the associated nouns without affecting grammaticality.

Thus NPs such as those in (17–20) that occur without nouns do indeed have a noun underlyingly. This observation is supported by the fact that interpretation and comprehension of sentences (17–20) is only possible if one knows or has an idea about the nouns that the adjectives refer to. In other words, these sentences require an appropriate context: they cannot be uttered out of the blue.

The nouns in the underlying structure in (17–20) pass their nominal information to the adjectival pre-prefix and prefix through agreement before they are dropped.

To summarize, I have argued that there is no compelling reason, and there is no convincing evidence to support an analysis of Lubukusu adjectives as nouns. It is true that Lubukusu adjectives do indeed have nominal features but this is not entirely surprising. Lubukusu just happens to be a language (among many others perhaps) where adjectives share some features with nouns. This tendency by adjectives to share some of their morphosyntactic features with nouns has long been recognized in some world languages (Chafe 2012).

The conclusion of this section, then, is that nouns and adjectives exist in Lubukusu as separate lexical categories.

4 Verbal features of Lubukusu adjectives

A sub-set of adjectives or more broadly adjectival meanings show a relationship with verbs in Lubukusu. In particular some adjectival meanings are expressed by use of verbs rather than true adjectives. In (22) for example, the Lubukusu equivalents for ‘happy’, ‘sad’ and ‘tall’ which are unambiguously adjectives in English, are verbs as evidenced by the fact they bear subject agreement and tense.

- (22) a. Wafula a-a-sangal-il-e.
 Wafula 1-PRS-happy-ASP-FV
 ‘Wafula is happy.’
 b. Wafula a-a-suluny-e.
 Wafula 1-PRS-sad-FV
 ‘Wafula is sad.’
 c. Wafula a-a-le-il-e.
 Wafula 1-PRS-tall-ASP-FV
 ‘Wafula has become tall.’

Other examples of English adjectives whose equivalents in Lubukusu are verbs include the following: *lua* ‘be tired’, *chelewa* ‘be late’, *khalala* ‘be sad’, *meniukha* ‘be shiny’, *imbia* ‘become short’, *bia* ‘become bad’ etc.

In general, the adjectival meanings that are expressed by use of verbs in Lubukusu are stage-level. These are either ‘non-permanent’, temporary states or continuing processes

or states that are yet to reach their final state. For example *sangala* ‘be happy’ describes a temporary, transient state (in contrast to having a happy personality which is expressed by an adjective as will be illustrated below). Thus to say *Wafula aasangalile* ‘Wafula is happy’ means Wafula is happy now, but it doesn’t mean that he will necessarily be happy later today or tomorrow. Similarly, *lea* ‘be tall’ does not designate a final state. It describes a process in progress. Thus to say *Wafula aaleile* ‘Wafula has grown tall’ means Wafula has grown taller from last time you saw him, and it doesn’t suggest that he is done growing. In contrast, expressing the fact that Wafula is a tall person (as his final tall state) is an individual-level predicate. This in Lubukusu is expressed by an adjective as will be shown below.

Adjectival verbs such as *sangala* ‘be happy’ and *lea* ‘become tall’ occur only in predicative structures, and therefore they are translated in English as predicative adjectives. Notice that the equivalent English predicative adjectives are obligatorily preceded by BE in declarative sentences as well as in imperatives.

As already pointed out temporary states and on-going processes adjectival meanings in Lubukusu are expressed by use of verbs, but permanent final-state attributive adjectival meanings are expressed by use of adjectives. Adjectival meanings of this later type describe qualities of nouns that are enduring; qualities that are non-temporary. Where temporary states and on-going adjectival meanings have corresponding permanent attributive meanings, these are expressed by use of adjectives. To illustrate consider (23) where temporary states and their corresponding permanent states are provided.

- (23) a. Wafula o-mu-sangafu
 Wafula 1-1-happy
 ‘happy Wafula’ (Individual-level)
- b. Wafula a-a-sangal-il-e.
 Wafula 1-PRS-happy-ASP-FV
 ‘Wafula is happy.’ (Stage-level)
- c. Ku-mu-sala ku-mu-leyi
 3-3-tree 3-3-tall
 ‘tall tree’ (Individual level)
- d. Ku-mu-sala kw-a-le-il-e.
 3-3-tree SA-PRS-tall-ASP-FV
 ‘The tree has become tall.’ (Stage-level)

In (23a), there is some permanence to Wafula’s happiness state. Here Wafula has a happy predisposition; he is naturally a happy person. In (23c) *kumuleyi* ‘tall’ is an attribute of *kumusala* ‘tree’: the tree has the attribute tall; it is an attribute that is not expected to change any time soon. Dixon is therefore correct when he observes that “...if a language has verbs derived from adjectives, then the adjective is preferred for describing a fairly permanent property and the verb for referring to a more transient state” (Dixon 2004: 32).

Notice that adjectives that express the attributive adjectival meanings (i.e. the true adjectives) in Lubukusu can be used predicatively. As illustrated in (24), when used predicatively, they retain their adjective forms and do not become verbs.

- (24) a. Wafula a-li o-mu-sangafu.
 Wafula 1-be 1-1-happy
 ‘Wafula is a happy person.’
 b. Ku-mu-sala ku-li ku-mu-leyi.
 3-3-tree 3-be 3-3-tall
 ‘The tree is tall.’

Thus attributive adjectives can be used as predicatively just like English. The most significant difference between English and Lubukusu (from the point of view of adjectives) is that Lubukusu (but not English) makes a distinction between the way it expresses temporary adjectival states or meanings on the one hand and permanent attributive qualities. The temporary states and on-going process adjectival meanings are expressed by verbs in Lubukusu, but they are expressed by adjectives in English.

A question that arises is whether verbs that express temporary and on-going processes are adjectives at some level or not. A straight forward way of determining this is showing that adjectival verbs differ in some significant way from regular verbs. This has been shown to be true in Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako. In these languages, verbs that are used to express adjectival meanings are different from regular verbs. For example Mohawk verbal adjectives contrast with regular verbs in not taking certain aspectual markers and future tense⁷ (Baker 2001). In Austronesian languages such as Vaeakau-Taumako, verbal adjectives differ from regular verbs in their ability to occur without tense-aspect-mood marking (Naess & Hovdaugen 2011).

It is therefore reasonable to argue that adjectival verbs are adjectives in Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako at some level because they differ significantly from regular non-adjectival verbs.

In Lubukusu, there is no compelling reason to make a similar argument. This is because adjectival verbs that describe temporary non-final states and continuing processes are not different from regular verbs in terms of tense-aspect-mood marking. To illustrate consider the tense-aspect marking on *sangala* ‘be happy’ in the following data.

- (25) a. Wafula a-la-saangal-a
 Wafula 1-FUT-happy-FV
 Wafula will be happy today.
 b. Wafula a-kha-saangal-e
 Wafula 1-FUT-happy-FV
 ‘Wafula will be happy tomorrow/next week.’

⁷But see Chafe (2012) who found nothing significant that distinguishes ‘adjectival verbs’ from regular verbs in Seneca, a language that is related to Mohawk

- c. Wafula a-li-saangal-a
Wafula 1-FUT-happy-FV
'Wafula will be happy sometime in the remote future.'
- d. Wafula a-a-saangal-a
Wafula 1-PST-happy-FV
'Wafula was happy a long time ago.'

Clearly, *sangala* can occur with any tense and aspectual marker just like any regular verb. I take this to be evidence that Lubukusu adjectival verbs that describe temporary states and continuing processes are verbs and nothing more. They express adjectival meanings, but they are verbs in the true sense of the word.

What this means is that the Lubukusu adjective system is different from that of Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako in spite of the apparent similarities. Both languages and Lubukusu express some adjectival meanings by use of verbs. But while all verbal adjectives in Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako can be argued to be adjectives, the Lubukusu ones are not: they are true verbs.

5 Conclusion

In spite of the fact that words which express adjectival meanings in Lubukusu have nominal features on the one hand and verbal features on the other, there is enough strong evidence that support the existence of adjective as a distinct lexical category. Lubukusu adjectives have a prefix system that is identical to that of nouns, and the adjectives seem to function as subject and object, but this doesn't make them nouns. They remain adjectives and they acquire these features and functions by virtue of being modifiers of nouns. With regards to the adjectival meanings that are expressed by use of verbs, I showed that only stage-level predicate readings are expressed by use of verbs in Lubukusu. Individual-level predicate readings are expressed by use of adjectives. I also argued that 'adjectival verbs' in Lubukusu are real verbs. For this reason, Lubukusu is different from Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako where adjectival verbs have been argued to be adjectives at some level in the grammar. With regards to the existence of the lexical category of adjective, Lubukusu is like English (but unlike Mohawk and Vaeakau-Taumako): it has a distinct lexical category of adjective in its grammar. But this is not to suggest that Lubukusu and English have identical adjective systems. There are significant differences, one of which is that stage-level predicate readings in Lubukusu are expressed by use verbs, but in English it is adjectives that are used.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank two anonymous reviewers for their useful detailed comments and suggestions. All errors and shortcomings are my own.

Abbreviations

Unless indicating person, numbers in glosses indicate noun class prefixes and pre-prefixes. Abbreviations follow Leipzig glossing conventions, with the following exceptions:

ASP	aspect	SA	subject agreement
FV	final vowel	STA	stative
HAB	habitual		

References

- Baker, Mark C. 2001. *The atoms of language*. New York: Basic Books.
- Baker, Mark C. 2003. *Lexical categories: Verbs, nouns, and adjectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bhat, D. N. S. 1994. The adjectival category. *Studies in Language Companion Series* 24.
- Chafe, Wallace L. 2012. Are adjectives universal? The case of Northern iroquoian. *Linguistic Typology* 16(1). 1–39.
- Dixon, R. M. W. 1982. *Where have all the adjectives gone and other essays in semantics*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Dixon, R. M. W. 2004. Adjective classes in typological perspective. In R. M. W. Dixon & Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (eds.), *Adjective classes: A cross linguistic typology*, 1–49. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dixon, R. M. W. & Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (eds.). 2004. *Adjective classes: A cross-linguistic typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mchombo, Sam. 2004. *The syntax of Chichewa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mutonyi, Nasiombe. 2000. *Aspects of Bukusu morphology and phonology*. Columbus: Ohio State University Doctoral dissertation.
- Naess, Åshild & Even Hovdaugen. 2011. *A grammar of Vaeakau-Taumako*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Weber, David J. 1983. *Relativization and nominalized clauses in Huallaga Quechua*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Whaley, Lindsay J. 1997. *Introduction to typology: The unity and diversity of language*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

