

ASSIDUE

Arbeitspapiere des Seminars für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Erfurt

Nr. 14

Are there adjectives in Hocank (Winnebago)?

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April 2004

ISSN 1612-0612

Erfurt

**Seminar für Sprachwissenschaft
der Universität**

Impressum:

Arbeitspapiere des Seminars für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Erfurt

Seminar für Sprachwissenschaft

Philosophische Fakultät

Universität

D - 99105 Erfurt

Herausgeber:

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ISSN 1612-0612

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Typological and theoretical background	4
1.2. Methodological remarks	6
1.3. The data	8
2. EVIDENCE AGAINST ADJECTIVES AS A SEPARATE WORD CLASS IN HOCANK	9
2.1. No category establishing morphology in Hocank	9
2.2. No category changing morphology in Hocank	12
3. HOCANK AS AN ADJECTIVAL-VERB LANGUAGE	13
4. GRADATION OF PROPERTIES IN HOCANK	17
4.1. Intensification	18
4.2. Comparative	18
4.2.1. Lexical strategy	19
4.2.2. Periphrastic expressions	20
4.2.3. Context-based pragmatic inference of a comparative meaning	20
4.3. Superlative	21
5. CONCLUSIONS	22
REFERENCES	23

1. Introduction

The examination of adjectives in Hocank presented in this article is part of a larger project of the investigation of the grammar of Hocank (Winnebago). This includes, among other things, the determination of the parts-of-speech system in Hocank (cf. Helmbrecht 2002a, 2002b, 2003, and in prep.). The object language is Hocank, a Siouan language of the Mississippi Valley branch closely related to Dakota, Chiwere, and Dhegiha, still spoken in Wisconsin. As is true for most of the North American Indian languages, Hocank is a highly endangered language with no more than approximately 200 fluent speakers left. The linguistic and anthropological literature traditionally used the name Winnebago in order to refer to the Hocank tribe and their language. This name is of Algonquian origin. The self-denomination is Hocank and will hence be used throughout this study.

The goal of the present paper is to find answers to the following questions: is there a separate word class of adjectives in Hocank besides nouns and verbs? If yes, what are the morphosyntactic properties and characteristics of adjectives in Hocank? If no, what are the strategies and linguistic means in Hocank to express property concepts and the categories often associated with adjective such as comparative and superlative? In general, what are the Hocank equivalents of noun modification?

1.1. Typological and theoretical background

Recent typological research revealed that adjectives are not a universal class of words in the languages. While the distinction between nouns and verbs seems to be a universal one, although there are specific studies of this question that show that there are languages such as Salish languages, Iroquoian languages, and others in which such a distinction cannot be found or is hard to discover (cf. Kuipers 1968, Kinkade 1983, Sasse 1991, and van Eijk & Hess 1986, Jacobsen 1979 on Makah (Wakashan) for a different view), it is quite uncontroversial that adjectives are a syntactic category that is not formally distinct in all languages.

Dixon (1977) in his seminal study on adjectives distinguished three types of languages with respect to adjectives as a morphosyntactically identifiable word class. There are languages that have an open class of adjectives such as English, German and other European languages. There are languages that have a closed class of adjectives such as Swahili (Bantu),

Hua (Papua New Guinea), and many others, and there are languages that have no adjectives at all. It is one of the fascinating and surprising findings of Dixon's study that if languages have a closed class of adjectives, i.e. up to 50 lexical items, then these adjectives always designate property concepts of the following the semantic domains: Dimension ('big' versus 'small'), Age ('old' versus 'young'), Value ('good' versus 'bad') and Color ('black', 'white'; 'blue', 'green', etc.).

If languages, however, do not have adjectives as a proper word class (or have only a few of them), they have to express property concepts by words of the other major word classes, i.e. either by nouns or by verbs or by both. The question that was tackled by different authors was whether there are semantic parameters that determine which property concepts are subsumed under the class of nouns and which ones under the class of verbs in a language without adjectives. Dixon (1977) proposed that there is a tendency to express physical properties such as 'hard' by means of verbs in these languages, and human propensities such as 'happy' by nouns.

Wierzbicka (1986) proposed that the choice between nouns and verbs is dependent on the function of these word classes. Adjectival concepts are expressed by nouns, if they are used to categorize individuals (i.e. the basic functions of nouns) by means of permanent human properties. Adjectival concepts are expressed by verbs, if they are used to describe (i.e. the basic function of verbs) temporary states. The English expression *being drunk* would represent the verbal strategy according to Wierzbicka, the expression *drunkard* the nominal strategy. The latter expression categorizes an individual according to a permanent property.

Another but compatible semantic parameter is Givón's (1984) hypothesis of time-stability as a word class distinguishing semantic parameter. Nouns designate prototypically time-stable, not changing THING concepts. Verbs designate prototypically changing and dynamic EVENT concepts. Adjectives are somewhat in between (cf. Givón 1984:51ff). More permanent, time-stable properties are hypothesized to be classified as nouns in languages without adjectives. Less time-stable, changing and temporary properties are rather classified as verbs. A solid empirical prove for all three hypotheses (Dixon, Wierzbicka, and Givón) just mentioned is lacking though.

The observation that languages without adjectives may express property concepts systematically or dominantly with nouns or with verbs led Schachter (1985:15ff) to the typological distinction between adjectival-noun languages and adjectival-verb languages. Adjectival-noun languages use abstract nouns designating properties in possessive constructions such as in English *a person of kindness*, or in appositive constructions such as *a*

person, a madman in order to express the modification of a noun. Adjectival-verb languages use relative clauses such as English *a man who is mad* in order to express a modification of a noun without attributive adjective. The close relationship and similarity between predication and modification is the basis for this strategy. Unfortunately, these two types of languages that lack adjectives are described only very briefly in Schachter's article. It might be expected that it is not always clear how to categorize a specific language according to the two types. It will be shown later in §3 that Hocank could be considered a good candidate for being an adjectival-verb language. It is one of the goals of the present paper to provide more detailed information on the properties of an adjectival-verb language with Hocank serving as an example.

The theoretical perspectives on the nature of adjectives just summarized do not deviate significantly from the view of traditional grammar. Adjectives are defined as a class of words that designate property concepts and that are used to modify nouns as attributes in the noun phrase. This view also was integrated in the prototype approach of word classes by Croft (1984, 1991:Chap.3/4). Croft defines prototypical adjectives as a class of words in a specific language that grammaticalized the combination of semantic and pragmatic functions. The semantic function is to designate property concepts that are gradable, persistent/ time-stable to some degree, and static. Prototypical adjectives are also semantically monovalent, i.e. they have one inherent argument slot (cf. Croft 1991:65). The prototypical pragmatic function of adjectives is to modify nouns, i.e. their usage as attributes that add further information of the new discourse referent that may be needed by the hearer for its correct identification. Evidence for this theory comes from markedness relations found with regard to property words used in constructions with less prototypical functions for adjectives. If adjectives are used in constructions designed for predication and reference, respectively, they usually need some morphological indication (e.g. derivation) that they are used in a different function than the one they are specified for.

1.2. Methodological remarks

All typological studies mentioned so far do not explicitly spell out how to recognize adjectives as a separate word class in a specific language. This is a serious draw back that also holds in part for the prototype approach presented in Croft (1984, 1991). This, however, does not make these studies useless for the present investigation. The theoretical definition of adjectives as manifested in the studies cited will provide the methodological basis for the

search for adjectives in Hocank. The notion of an adjective prototype allows finding the words that are hypothetical adjectives. However, only the examination of their morphosyntactic properties in the specific language can be the basis for their analysis of a separate word class vis-à-vis the other word classes. Part of this principle direction of research is to check whether the object language shows any morphological operations that are indicative for adjectives in languages that have adjectives as a proper class of words. Such morphological operations include category establishing morphology and category changing morphology (cf. Sasse 1995). Category establishing morphology with regard to adjectives are all kinds of agreement relations between the adjective and the noun it modifies. Since gradability is a unique semantic specification of adjectives, it does not come as surprise that comparison (comparative, superlative, elative) is central as category-establishing morphology. The most important category establishing morphology for adjectives is summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Category establishing morphology of adjectives

- Grammatical agreement with the modified noun in number, gender/ class, case (e.g. the Russian adjective, or in Latin)
- Comparison: positive, comparative, and superlative, or elative (e.g. in German, French, English and Modern Arabic)

Languages with a separate class of adjectives usually have category changing (derivational) morphology that involves adjectives either on the source side or on the target side of the derivation. Such category changing morphology is therefore indicative for the existence of a syntactic category. Some of these category-changing derivations are summarized in Figure 2 for English.

Figure 2. Category changing morphology involving adjectives

- Derivation of adjectives from abstract nouns (e.g. Engl. *beauty* → *beautiful*)
- Derivation of adjectives from verbs (e.g. Engl. *to agree* → *agreeable*)
- Derivation of nouns designating individuals from adjectives (e.g. German *der Schwarze* 'the black one')
- Derivation of manner adverbs from adjectives (e.g. Engl. *furious* → *furiously*)
- Derivation of factitive verbs from adjectives (e.g. Engl. *short* → *to shorten*)
- Derivation of inceptive verbs from adjectives (e.g. Engl. *it darkens* i.e. 'it becomes dark')
- Derivation of abstract nouns from adjectives (e.g. Engl. *ugly* → *ugliness*)

Adjectives, used as attributes of nouns are not the only means to express the modification of nouns. Other means include nominal compounds, genitive constructions, participle constructions and relative clauses (cf. Figure 3). These means do occur in languages with adjectives (as the examples in Figure 3 suggest), but they may be the only means in languages that do not have adjectives as a proper word class.

Figure 3. Other constructions that are used to express modification

- Nominal compounds; e.g. Engl. *beauty queen*, *beauty shop/salon* etc.
- Genitive constructions; e.g. Engl. *the brightness of the sun* etc.
- Participle constructions; e.g. Engl. *the broken bottle*, etc.
- Relative clauses such as *the man who is tall*, etc.

It will turn out in the next chapter (cf. §2) that Hocank lacks adjectives as a separate word class: It will be shown that at least some of these constructions play a role in the expression of modification in Hocank (cf. §3).

1.3. The data

Data for the present study are taken from different published and unpublished sources. Textual sources are the Hocank mythological stories (*waiika*) recorded and published by Radin (1949), Danker (1985), and autobiographical notes by Josephine White Eagle (1988). Data were also taken from lexical studies such as White Eagle (1988), and Zeps (1996), and from my own notes collected during various fieldtrips to Wisconsin.

2. Evidence against adjectives as a separate word class in Hocank

2.1. No category establishing morphology in Hocank

Hypothetical adjectives in Hocank do not show any agreement with the head noun of a noun phrase. There is no classification of nouns with respect to gender or noun class. There is no plural marking of nouns, and there is no case inflection of nouns. Gender, Number, and case are potential agreement categories between nouns and their modifying adjectives.

Plural of the subject and object noun phrase is marked on the verbal predicate, if the NP is definite. The semantic role of the subject and object has to be inferred from word order unless one or more of the core participants are speech act participants. Then we have grammatical marking of the semantic function of the verbal complement(s) on the verb by means of different applicatives and different series of pronominal affixes. Hocank is a verb-final (SOV) language. The complement NPs usually precede the verbal predicate.

E 1 *ciisgára waacána¹*
 /cii- sgaa-ra wa- haacá- nal
 [house-white-DEF]_{NP} 3PL.U-1A.saw-DECL
 ‘I saw the white houses.’

E 1 illustrates a simple Hocank clause with a noun phrase containing an adjective. There is no agreement between adjective and noun. The position of the potential adjective *sgaa* ‘white’ is always between noun and definite or indefinite article. The plurality of the undergoer is marked on the verb by means of a 3PL.U prefix *wa-* ‘them’. The clause literally translates as ‘I saw them, the white house(s)’. The following example E 2 demonstrates that potential adjectives such as *sgaa* ‘white’ or *zii* ‘brown’ can be used as clausal predicates without any morphological modification.

¹ The following abbreviations are used for the grammatical glosses: PN = proper name, DECL = declarative, DEF = definite article, INDEF = indefinite article, 1./2./3. = first, second, and third person, U = undergoer, A = actor, PROG = progressive aspect, CAUSE = causative, HS = hearsay, DIM = diminutive, VAGUE = vagueness, INTS = Intensifier, EXCL = exclamation, COND = conditional, SG = singular, PL = plural, REL.PRO = relative pronoun, INCH = inchoative, COLL = collective, REFL.POSS = reflexive possessive.

- E 2 *waamihakjahè zinal*
/waamihak-jahè Æ- zii- nal
 chair this 3SG.U-brown-DECL
 ‘This chair is brown.’

No auxiliary is necessary to use the adjective *zii* ‘brown’ as a clausal predicate. This holds for all potential adjectives. In this function, they are not distinct from inactive/ stative/ neutral verbs in Hocank. Hocank has a basic split between active intransitive verbs and inactive/ intransitive verbs. The former class includes verbs designating an activity (usually performed by an animate or human being). The latter class includes all verbs designating uncontrolled processes and states. The verbs are formally distinct because they are personally inflected by different series of personal prefixes. The actor and the undergoer series of personal prefixes are distinct except for the third person. The 3SG.A/U is always zero, the 3PL.A/U is the suffix *ire*. An intransitive verb of the inactive/ neutral class is *kooré* ‘to be surprised’. It is used in a strict parallel fashion as the potential adjective in E 2. Compare the example in E 3.

- E 3 *Johnga kooréenal*
/John-ga Æ- kooré- nal
 John-PN 3SG.U-be.surprised-DECL
 ‘John is surprised.’

The putative adjectives as predicates are personally inflected like neutral/ stative intransitive verbs in Hocank. This is demonstrated in the examples E 4a-b and E 5a-b. Restrictions do occur only with property words that designate a property that cannot pragmatically be attributed to a human being

- E 4 a. *hiketéenà* ‘I am a big person’
 /hił xeté- nal
 1SG.U- big- DECL
 b. *niketéenà* ‘You are a big person’
 /nił xeté- nal
 2SG.U-big- DECL
 E 5 a. *hisagréenal* ‘I am fast’
 /hił sagré- nal
 1SG.U- fast- DECL
 b. *nisagréenal* ‘You are fast’
 /hił sagré- nal
 2SG.U-fast- DECL

Hypothetical adjectives can function as clausal predicates without any morphological derivation or indication. There is a strong parallelism between intransitive inactive/ stative

verbs and adjectives in Hocank. However, although hypothetical adjectives can be used as predicates without auxiliaries or category changing morphology, there is a tendency in texts to use adjectives as predicates with auxiliaries, even if there is no need to specify a certain aspectual distinction. This is, however, only a tendency and never obligatory. One finds both ways without obvious reason in texts. Cf. E 6.

E 6 *zèegúlcooníłkorohó-gí zèegúlaabrá sùuj (h)eré hootá zíinal*
/zèegúlcooníłkorohó- gí zèegúl aab- rá sùuj (h)eré hootá zíi- nal
 NARR fall prepare-when NARR leaves-DEF red be some yellow-DECL
 ‘In early fall, the leaves are red and some are yellow.’

The predication of the colors of the leaves in fall, red and yellow, is done first in E 6 by means of an auxiliary *heré*, then without auxiliary support simply by adding the declarative suffix.

Nouns, on the other hand, need auxiliary support, if they are used as clausal predicates. This is demonstrated in E 7 and E 8.

E 7 *eegí waamíhakizàlnaksàhal*
/eegí waamíhak-izàl nak- sàhal
 this.here chair- INDEF is(sitting)-DECL
 ‘This here is a chair.’

E 8 *sùłkxétera wanojge xeteízàlhereéna*
/sùłkxéte-ra wanojge xete-ízàl here- nal
 horse- DEF animal big-INDEF is- DECL
 ‘The horse is a big animal.’

Hocank has various different auxiliaries - the three positional auxiliaries *nak* ‘to be (in a sitting position)’, *jee* ‘to be (in a standing position)’, and *ak* ‘to be (in a lying position)’, and *wa’ul heré, nihé* - that can be used for predicate nominals.

The other type of category-establishing morphology is comparison. Grammatical categories such as positive, comparative and superlative reflect the fact that properties are gradable. They are therefore closely connected to the syntactic category adjective. With regard to Hocank, there is no morphological category of positive, comparative and/ or superlative.

It can be concluded that with regard to inflection, the hypothetical adjectives in Hocank do not show any adjective category-establishing morphology. The grammatical behavior in predicate function is parallel to the intransitive inactive verbs in Hocank.

2.2. No category changing morphology in Hocank

If a language has derivational morphology that changes the word class of a word, this is direct evidence that the target as well as the source category is a distinct syntactic category in this language. In Hocank, no derivational morphology can be found that involves the adjective category no matter which side of the derivation. For instance, there is no derivation of adjectives from abstract nouns of the type *beauty* → *beautiful*. Similarly, there is no derivation of adjectives from verbs (which is not surprising, if adjectives are verbs in Hocank) of the type *to agree* → *agreeable*. Factitive verbs of the type *short* → *to shorten* are formed in Hocank with the help of the causative auxiliary *hii* 'to make, to cause'. Cf. the examples in E 9a-c.

E 9	a.	<i>sará</i>	'to be oily'	<i>saráhí</i>	'to oil'
	b.	<i>sgáhré</i>	'to be molten'	<i>sgáhré hii</i>	'to melt'
	c.	<i>sgeé</i>	'to be clean'	<i>sgeé hii</i>	'to clean'

Inceptive/ inchoative verbs are formed in Hocank with the auxiliary *rahé* 'to be on the way going'. Cf. the examples in E 10a-c.

E 10	a.	<i>hokawás</i>	'to be dark'	<i>hokawás rahé</i>	'becoming dark'
	b.	<i>sùuc</i>	'to be red'	<i>sùúc rahé</i>	'becoming red'
	c.	<i>xeté</i>	'to be big'	<i>xeté rahé</i>	'becoming big'

The analytic verb complexes in E 9a-c and E 10a-c are not derivations of verbs from adjectives, but rather combinations of verbs. There is no derivational morphology that derives abstract nouns from adjectives of the type *ugly* → *ugliness*. These results lead to the conclusion that from a morphological point of view, there is no evidence for a category adjective in Hocank. Putative adjectives are indistinguishable from neutral/ stative verbs in Hocank.

Another possibility to discover a distinct formal property for property words in Hocank could be the syntactic position in the noun phrase. Cf. the basic structure of the NP in Hocank in Figure 4. The NP with a noun as head contains optionally an adjective and a numeral and obligatorily a determiner. A determiner can be a definite/ indefinite article, or a

demonstrative pronoun. The order of these elements is rigidly fixed with the exception of the numeral or quantifier. This element can also appear on the right side of the DET element.

Figure 4. The structure of the NP in Hocank

[Noun – “**Adjective**” – (Numeral) – DET]_{NP}

The structural position of the putative adjective, however, cannot be taken as a syntactic diagnostics for a syntactic category adjective. The same position can be filled with intransitive and transitive verbs. The whole expression then is interpreted (translated) as a relative clause.

E 11 *waníltuujáa naágre*
 /waníltuuc háa=naágre/
 meat be.cooked 1SG.A.cause=DEM.PROX.PL
 -the meat(s) I am cooking»

The expression in E 11 is a canonical relative clause in Hocank. The head noun *waníl* ‘meat’ is followed by the intransitive inactive verb *tuuc* ‘to be cooked’, the causative auxiliary *hii* ‘to cause, make’ inflected for the first person actor (causer) and the demonstrative pronoun *naágre* ‘these’ functioning as determiner. The verb complex of the relative clause is in the same structural position as putative modifying adjectives, and indeed, it can be replaced by such adjectives without any modification. The structure of E 11 is parallel to the structure of the (undergoer) noun phrase in E 1. There is a strong structural parallelism between noun phrase and relative clause in Hocank which will be dealt with further in §3.

3. Hocank as an adjectival-verb language

The prototypical function of adjectives is to designate properties and to attribute them to nouns. Adjectives are hence prototypically concept modifying expressions. Languages that do not have a grammaticalized class of adjectives have to use alternative means to fulfill the same function. This implies that words of the other major word classes (nouns or verbs) have to be utilized for this function in the syntagmatic constructions associated with these word classes. This holds for Hocank as well. Such alternative constructions were summarized already in Figure 3 above. All of them except participle constructions (there are no participles

in Hocank) play a role in Hocank grammar. There are four different constructions that express a relation of modification in Hocank:

1. nominal compounds (cf. Figure 5 and E 12),
2. “genitive” constructions (cf. Figure 6 and E 13),
3. noun-verb compounds (cf. Figure 7 and E 14),
4. and relative clauses (cf. Figure 8 and E 16).

Nominal compounds in Hocank consist of a modifying noun followed by a noun modified. There is no linking element between the two nouns. Structurally, it is a juxtaposition of two nouns on the word level that can be distinguished from “genitive” constructions (see below) in Hocank only with regard to phonological and morpho-phonological properties. Both nouns constitute a unit with regard to stress patterns and frequently exhibit morphonological processes. The structure of noun-noun compounds in Hocank is given in Figure 5. The general pattern is illustrated in E 12.

Figure 5. Noun-noun compounds in Hocank

	[Noun ₁	-	Noun ₂]
	modifying	-	modified
E 12	<i>nabl - há</i>		'birch'
	tree ₁ -skin ₂		

One of the peculiarities of the Noun₁ position in the construction in Figure 5 is that it is the most reliable diagnostics for nouns in Hocank (besides the prototypical semantics and negative morphological evidence and negative syntactic distribution; cf. Helmbrecht 2002a). Only "real nouns" are allowed in the Noun₁ position in Figure 5. Putative adjectives and stative verbs must not occur there. If there were abstract nouns in Hocank such as ‘bigness’, ‘happiness’, or the like, they should be licensed to occur in this structural position. There are, however, no abstract nouns and hence there are no expressions like ‘the bigness of the house’ in the sense of ‘the big house’. If such abstract nouns would exist, they should be able to occur in this slot. This fact is evidence for the classification of Hocank as an adjectival-verb language. Property concepts are expressed by means of verbs, i.e. inactive intransitive verbs to be precise, and not by nouns.

A structurally similar construction in Hocank is the “genitive” construction. The term “genitive” is, however, misleading. Hocank has no morphological case marking in general

and no genitive case marker in particular. What is at issue here is simply juxtaposition (again without any linking element) on the phrase level that is comparable to genitive constructions in more familiar European languages with regard to its functions. For instance, as genitive constructions in European languages, this Hocank “genitive” construction is used to express possessive relations, part-whole relations, and so on. It is structurally similar to the noun-noun compounds in that the modifying constituent precedes the modified constituent. Often, both constructions are difficult to distinguish. The main difference between noun-noun compounds and “genitive” constructions in Hocank is that the constituents of the latter may be determined separately. The structure of the “genitive” construction in Hocank is given in Figure 6 with an illustrating example in E 13.

Figure 6. “Genitive” constructions in Hocank

[NP	-	NP]
modifying	-	modified
possessor	-	possessum
part		whole
etc.		

E 13	<i>wazàtírecoora hogisrá</i>	'the wheel(s) of the blue car'
	<i>/wazàtíre-coo- ra hogis- rá/</i>	
	car- blue-DEF wheel-DEF	

There is no possibility for putative adjectives (i.e. inactive intransitive verbs) to occur in the first slot of this construction. Again, this demonstrates that putative adjectives are not nominal expressions translatable as *thick-ness*, *dark-ness*, etc. Again, this is evidence for the categorization of Hocank as an adjectival-verb language

The next construction type for the expression of the modification of nominal concepts, again on the word level are, are noun-verb compounds. The structure of these constructions is given in Figure 7 together with an illustrating example in E 14.

Figure 7. Noun-verb compounds in Hocank

[Noun	-	Verb _{INTR.INACT}]
modified	-	modifying

- E 14 a. *sùlukxéte* 'horse'
 /sùluk-xéte/
 dog- big
 b. *caasép* 'moose'
 /caa- séep/
 deer- black

The examples in E 14a-b are more or less lexicalized noun-verb compounds. The creation of expressions according to this structural pattern is very productive in Hocank. It is used for the creation of complex terms to designate entities for which no simple words are available in the lexicon.

The modifying second position in this construction is open to putative adjectives as well as to intransitive and transitive verbs. An illustrating example with a transitive verb is given in E 15. The verb *rutí* is a transitive verb meaning 'to pull something' which appears without any morphological modification in this second modifying slot. As the literal translation suggests this construction could be better understood as a kind of short relative clause (see below). Structurally, there is no difference to hypothetical adjectives in this position modifying a noun. This is further evidence that adjectives are basically verbs in Hocank.

- E 15 *caawáruti*
 /caa-wá- Æ- rutí/
 deer-3PL.U-3SG.A-pull
 'reindeer' (literally: '(the) deer that pulls them/sth.')

The last but not less important construction for the modification of nouns is the relative clause (cf. Figure 8) showing some remarkable similarities with noun-verb compound (cf. Figure 7) and the regular noun phrase (cf. Figure 4) in Hocank.

Figure 8. The structure of the relative clause in Hocank

Noun _{HEAD}	-	[Ø _{RelPro} + Predicate + DET] _{DEPENDENT}
modified	-	modifying

- E 16 *nabl'eja nabžjera paacgíssàhal*
 /nabl Ø 'eja nabží- je- ra paacgís- sàhà/
 tree [REL.PRO there stand- be(standing)-DEF]_{REL} 1SG.A.cut- DECL
 'I cut the tree that was standing over there.'

The canonical relative clause in Hocank consists of a head noun plus the dependent relative clause itself. The head noun is not part of the relative clause. Relative clauses are hence externally headed. There is no relative pronoun anaphorically referring to the head noun. The relative clause consists of the predicate (a verb or verbal complex) and a determiner delimiting the right edge of the constituent. The determiner can be a definite article or a demonstrative pronoun. In example E 16, the predicate of the relative clause is a verbal complex *nabzije-* 'being standing' consisting of an intransitive active verb *nabzi* 'to stand' and the auxiliary *jee* 'to be (standing position)' indicating progressive aspect. The definite article *-ra* delimits the right end of the constituent. The predicate in E 16 can be replaced by any semantically appropriate stative or active intransitive and transitive verb. Even properties designating words - the hypothetical adjectives - may occur in the position of *nabzi* 'to stand' without any grammatical modification. However, permanent properties of the relativized entities do not go together with the progressive aspect. This is additional evidence that the hypothetical adjectives are categorized as verbs in Hocank.

4. Gradation of properties in Hocank

The discussion of adjectives as a separate class of words in Hocank brought the following results. Words that designate prototypical adjectival concepts are categorized in Hocank as intransitive inactive verbs. From a morphological point of view, there is no category establishing or category changing morphology that indicates a separate class of adjectives. Property designating words may appear in noun-verb compounds, in ordinary noun phrases, and in relative clauses in the same position as other verbs may do. The syntactic distribution is not indicative either. The structural parallelism between noun phrase and relative clause makes it impossible to take the position after the head noun of a NP as a formal diagnostics of adjectives in Hocank.

The question arises: how does a language that has no adjectives and therefore no morphologically marked category of comparative and superlative express these categories, or more general, how is gradation of properties expressed in an adjectival-verb language such as Hocank. This question is not answered and not even posed in Schachter's article on parts-of-speech systems. The present chapter therefore deals with the gradation of property concepts in Hocank.

4.1. Intensification

There is a suffix *xji* 'very' in Hocank that is generally used as an intensifier. This form occurs very frequently in texts. The intensifier is used to grade words that express adjectival concepts in adverbial function such as 'good' in E 17, and 'strong, powerful' in E 18. It also intensifies property words that are used as modifiers for nouns as in E 19.

E 17 *zègul'uhak'ulpikjilxetekaragizè.*
 /zègul'utnak-'ul **pit** **xjil** xete-kara- gi- zè
 thus she.do-PROG-while good- INTS big- REFL.POSS-cause-HS
 While she was doing it so, she raised her own(herself) **very well**.
 (Text source: Radin 1949:77).

E 18 *kora! masjakjilwakgipihiksèuhil*
 /kora! **masjat** **xjil** wak gipitnik- sèuhil
 EXCL strong-INTS man like- DIM-VAGUE(= idiomatically for 'to fall in love')
 She fell in love (with the young man) **very strong**.
 (Text source: Radin 1949:77).

E 19 *zèegúl nabltaawúz xjil wa'ut jee zèegúlsàará xjil zèegul*
 /zèegúl nabltaawúz-**xjil** wa'ut jee- gi zèegúlsàará-**xjil** zèegul
 thus tree dry- INTS to.be-is(standing)-COND thus bare- INTS thus
 Yet, it was a **very dry tree**, and **very bare**
 (Text source: Danker 1985:113).

An important feature of this general intensifier is that it appears frequently with verbs and nouns as well. Neither *-xji* nor any other particle or suffix with the same or similar function is restricted to property words. If this were the case, i.e. if *xji* would occur only with property words, one could make an argument for a special adjective construction out of this fact.

4.2. Comparative

The comparative is a grammatical category that expresses that some entity X has more of a property than entity Y. This is shown in Figure 9 with an expression in English as illustrating example.

Figure 9. Structure of comparative expressions in English

[X is Adjective-er than Y]
 [X is fast-er than Y]

Hocank has no grammatical category of comparative, which is unusual only from a European perspective. Therefore, Hocank speakers have to use alternative means to express something like ‘X is bigger than Y’. There are at least three alternative ways to express comparative meanings in Hocank. They are briefly discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1. Lexical strategy

Hocank has a number of relational nouns – in particular kinship terms – that have an inherent comparative meaning. Cf. the examples in E 20a-d. Similar word pairs and lexical oppositions exist for ‘sister’ and ‘aunt’.

- E 20
- | | | |
|----|----------------|------------------------------------|
| a. | <i>hicitó</i> | 'female's older brother' |
| b. | <i>hihíl</i> | 'boy's older brother' |
| c. | <i>hisúk</i> | 'older brother' |
| d. | <i>hinuǵás</i> | 'father's older brother (= uncle)' |

- E 21
- | | | |
|----|----------------|-------------------|
| a. | <i>hinúl</i> | 'first daughter' |
| b. | <i>wihál</i> | 'second daughter' |
| c. | <i>haksigá</i> | 'third daughter' |
| d. | <i>hinaké</i> | 'fourth daughter' |

The terms for the first, second etc. daughters and sons are used in texts and conversations as equivalents for the expression ‘older daughter’, ‘younger daughter’, or ‘older son’ and ‘younger son’, although it is not a comparison. In addition, these terms are used like proper names in Hocank.

There is at least one verb (a transitive verb) *haiwít* ‘to be taller than’ with an inherent comparative meaning. Cf. E 22.

- E 22
- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <i>Peterga Billga haiwítsàhal</i> | 'Peter is taller than Bill' |
| <i> Peter-ga Bill-ga haiwít- sàhal</i> | |
| Peter-PN Bill-PN taller.than-DECL | |

Another verb of this type would be *waakihλ* 'to become worse'. The lexical strategy to express comparative meaning is, however, marginal in Hocank. The instances of lexical opposition in Hocank mentioned in this section are almost exhaustive.

4.2.2. Periphrastic expressions

More important than lexical strategies to express comparative meanings in Hocank are periphrastic expressions. There are several periphrastic strategies. The most frequent one is the usage of the verb *hijaíra* 'more (in comparison), increase (as verb)'. Cf. the example in E 23.

- E 23 *peexnaáka, (peex-) coóra hijaíra xeteénal*
lpeex-naáka, (peex-) coó ra hijaíra xeteé-nál
 bottle-those (bottle-) blue-DEF more big-DECL
 'Of those bottles, the blue one is bigger.'

Another strategy is to express explicitly the comparison with a verb *hirakísanik* «to compare» and then to predicate the property to the element that has more of it. Cf. the example in E 24.

- E 24 *hubrá sùukjákra hirakísanik hubrá 'e wamašcááhal*
lhut-rá sùukják-ra hirakísanik hut-rá 'ee wamašcáánal
 bear-DEF wolf- DEF compared bear-DEF that.one strong- DECL
 'The bear compared to the wolf, the bear is the strong one.'

4.2.3. Context-based pragmatic inference of a comparative meaning

In most cases, however, the comparative meaning has to be inferred pragmatically from the context. This holds for the type of narrations and mythological texts examined here. Cf. E 25 for an example.

E 25 *éegi áasgàra híigisgè zìgé zèegulsjúuj(x)ci(h)aarezè*
léegi áasgà-ra híi- gi- sè zìgé zèegul sjúuc-xji- (h)aare- zèl
 and close- DEF arrive.going-COND-also again thus warm-INTS-INCH-HS
zìgé taakác wa'uhaksè
l zìgé taakác wa'utnak- sèl
 again hot be- PROG-HS
 ‘And the **closer** he got the **warmer** he started to get, because it was so hot ‘
 (Danker 1985:228).

The gradation of *áasgà* ‘close’ in E 25 can be inferred from the context of arriving at a certain point, this movement is a gradual process. The comparative meaning of *sjúuc xji* ‘warmer’ to be translated literally as ‘very warm’ can be inferred from the context of getting closer to the sun that is hot. The context is the following. The trickster (a person of semi-divine origin, often the main character in Hocank narrations) has captured the sun with a rope and has now the task to untie and liberate the sun, so that it can proceed its way in the sky. The inference is supported by the intensifier *xji* that is added to *sjúuc* ‘warm’. However, real comparative meanings are generally rare in Hocank texts. Often they can be found only in the corresponding English translations - the translation then reflects the inferences of the hearer explicitly.

4.3. Superlative

What holds for the comparative also holds for the superlative. The superlative as a grammatical category is not as widespread as one may expect from a European perspective either. It is definitely not a grammatical category in Hocank. In addition, it is very difficult to find superlative meanings as the one presented in Figure 10 in Hocank texts.

Figure 10. The structure of the superlative expressions in English

[X is the Adjective-est of all Y]
 [X is the tall-est of all Y]

It seems to be the case that the superlative is not a necessary category to be expressed. In Hocank texts, the property word is usually marked with the intensifier *xjil* 'very' or with *tek* 'strong'. Superlative meanings almost always have to be inferred from the context. I found only one example in the available text sources in which the superlative meaning is more or less explicitly expressed by periphrastic means; cf. E 26.

E 26 *wak hakihúbra waihakra 'ee hereéna*
/wak ha- kihúp- ra wa- Æ- hihak- ra 'ee hereé- nal
 male COLL-sibling-DEF 3PL.U-3SG.A-on.top-DEF that.one he.is- DECL
 'Of the male siblings, he (my younger brother) was on top of them,

Adam Little Bear Jr., raasrà 'Aahú Ru'agá higaíreenal
/Adam Little Bear Jr., raas-rá 'Aahú Ru'at gá higa-íree-nal
 Adam Little Bear Jr., name-DEF Wing Raising-PN call-they-DECL
 Adam Little Bear Jr. was called Raising Wings.'

My younger brother, Adam Little Bear Jr., whose name was Raising Wings, is the youngest in the family (cf. White Eagle 1988:v)

The term for 'younger brother' *hisuk* is only mentioned in the subsequent context of the text. The superlative meaning is expressed by the phrase 'on top of sth.' which means on top of the age hierarchy of the male siblings.

5. Conclusions

Hocank is an adjectival-verb language. Adjectives are categorized as inactive/ neutral intransitive verbs in Hocank. Evidence for this result can be found in the morphology and syntax of the property words. There is no adjective category establishing morphology (such as adjective – noun agreement, and positive, comparative, and superlative as grammatical categories), nor is there any derivational morphology that involves the change of the syntactic category of words either from adjectives as source or to adjectives as target. Modification – the prototypical function of adjectives – is expressed by alternative constructions in Hocank involving nouns and verbs and the constructions associated with these major word classes (“genitive” constructions, predications, compounds).

Gradation of properties is expressed in many European languages by the grammatical categories comparative and superlative. Since these categories are not available in Hocank,

speakers have to use alternative means, usually periphrastic constructions and pragmatic inferences.

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