The Nominal Phrase in Northern Zhuang: A Descriptive Study*

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This paper provides a descriptive overview of the nominal phrase in Northern Zhuang, including discussions on the following areas: (i) the properties of different nominal elements, such as classifiers, numerals, demonstratives and modifiers, (ii) the referential properties of the noun phrase with varying formal characteristics, and (iii) the ordering of nominal elements, from a comparative point of view.

Keywords: Northern Zhuang, classifiers, numerals, demonstratives, modifiers, definite reference, indefinite reference

1. Introduction

In this paper, we provide an essentially descriptive overview of the properties of the nominal phrase in Northern Zhuang, a Tai language spoken in southern China. It is primarily based on a wide variety of published sources (mostly books and articles written in Chinese), supplemented with our own fieldwork data.¹

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¹ This article is a literature study in the sense that most of the data we use here come from published sources. These data are supplemented with data we gathered ourselves (and some analytical comments here and there); also, we checked virtually all data we report on here with native speaker informants. With this paper, we want to make Zhuang data available to Tai language researchers and other linguists who do not know enough Chinese to be able to consult the literature. At the same time, this paper is far from complete, both descriptively and analytically, as it raises many questions which we leave unaddressed here. We hope that it will serve as a starting point for further inquiries, not only conducted by ourselves, but by others as well. One point that certainly needs elaboration is the issue of language variation, which we have absolutely not done justice to; also, in reporting our consultants’ judgments, we do not
Some details (to be discussed below) aside, the basic word order within a Northern Zhuang nominal phrase is the following (with both the slash and the curly brackets signaling complementary distribution) (e.g. Liáng 1986: 18; Ji 1993; Qin 1995):

(1) \{numeral >1\} — classifier — noun — modifier(s) — demonstrative /\{ndeu
‘one’\}

Here are two examples:

(2) a. song duj va hoeng gou haenx
   two CLflower flower red 1SG that
   ‘those two red flowers of mine’

   b. aen vanj diet hung ndeu (cf. Zhou and Fang 1984: 46)
   CLthing bowl iron big one
   ‘one big iron bowl’

We organize the description of the nominal phrase in Northern Zhuang around three clusters of topics. We first investigate the different types of elements we find in the nominal domain aside from the noun itself, viz., the classifiers, the numerals, the...
demonstratives and different types of modifiers (§3-6). Next, we investigate the referential properties of the noun phrase with varying formal characteristics (§7). Finally we briefly look at the ordering of the different elements, from a general, comparative point of view (§8). The paper starts with a short section providing some background information regarding the language, its speakers, its history and its neighbors (§2).

2. Background

Zhuang belongs to the Tai language family. It is spoken in a continuous area comprising, roughly, the western half of the Chinese province of Guǎngxī, Wěnshān county in the neighboring province of Yúnnán (to the west), and bordering areas in the provinces of Húnán and Guìzhōu (to the north). There is one discontinuous patch: Liānhān county and vicinity in Guǎngdōng province (east), the likely place of origin of Zhuang (possibly of all Tai languages according to some researchers; cf. Wěi and Qín 1980: 1; Zhang and Wei 1997: 78; Edmondson and Solnit 1997: 1, 12).

It is not obvious that what is called “Zhuang” is actually one language. All sources on the language agree that there are two major dialect areas, “north” and “south”; SIL’s Ethnologue (www.ethnologue.com) has separate entries for Northern Zhuang and Southern Zhuang. Northern and Southern Zhuang are divided by a line running along the Yōngjiāng and the Zuōjiāng Rivers. Each variety has several sub-varieties, seven in the north and five in the south (e.g., Zhang and Wei 1997; Wěi and Qín 1980; see also the map in Wěi and Qín 2006). Ramsey (1987: 236) notes that “[t]he speech of these two dialect areas is divergent enough to be considered two separate languages, even by the relaxed criteria of mutual intelligibility used in China.”

Northern Zhuang is more widely spoken (two-thirds of the Zhuang speakers speak a northern variety; Zhang and Wei 1997: 79) and the northern varieties are more alike. The variety spoken in Wǔmíng in the north has been picked as the basis for the official standard; in other words, “Standard Zhuang” means Northern Zhuang (Zhāng 1987: 268; Ramsey 1987: 236). Wǔmíng Zhuang is also the variety that the official spelling is based on. However, even though Wǔmíng Zhuang may officially be the standard language, there is no incentive whatsoever for people from outside Wǔmíng to learn it. This not only has the consequence that literacy in Zhuang is very low, but also that Zhuang speaking people from different dialect areas tend to communicate with each other in Chinese (either South-Western Mandarin, which they call “Guānhuà”, or Cantonese, which they refer to as “Báihuà”).

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2 For a note on differences between Standard Zhuang and Wǔmíng Zhuang, see Luó (2005: 1209).
Although the Zhuang nationality has more than 15.5 million people (census of 1990; Huang 2000: 42), the number of Zhuang speakers is hard to assess. Also, the vast majority of Zhuang people who do speak Zhuang is bilingual, some variety of Chinese being the other language. Monolingual speakers (most likely all older than 50) may still be found in rural areas in the western hills.

In Zhuang speaking areas, Chinese languages are omnipresent; the Zhuang area may be by and large continuous, but the Zhuang people often do not constitute the majority. And even when they do, Chinese is prominently present. In Wūmíng, for instance, the Zhuang make up more than 80% of the population and the Han Chinese in the town are able to speak Zhuang well enough to get by in daily conversations. However, as Huang (1997: 58) points out, “since Wūmíng is the center of political, economic, and cultural activities, Wūmíng Mandarin is the main means of communication”.

Over the many centuries of contact with the Chinese, the Chinese language has left its mark on the Zhuang language, although Li (1956: 17) has the impression that the influence is bigger with respect to the variety of Wūmíng than on Tai varieties in Yún-nán. We have only found systematic accounts of Chinese influence on the lexicon, but phonology and syntax have also been influenced (Dài 1992; also Li 1956, see below). According to most sources, until the middle of the 20th century, Chinese loanwords were almost exclusively Cantonese (but see Qin 2004:13-14). Since then, South-Western Mandarin has taken over the role of the main supplier. Wáng (1962: 257) reports that folk stories and folk songs from before the Communist take-over in 1949 contain about 30% Chinese loanwords and since then, the percentage of loans has only increased: Wáng estimates the percentage of loanwords in everyday conversation at his time of writing, 1962, “especially when the conversations involve modern life and work”, at more than 40%. In heavily political-administrative texts he counted more than 80% Chinese loanwords (Wáng 1962: 257). Qin (2004: 10) confirms this picture for contemporary Zhuang. Li (1956: 4) notices that his informant uses many more Chinese loan words when he is telling the stories for Li to record than when is engaged in daily conversations (for loans, see also Li 1940).

3 The local Chinese varieties have also been influenced by Zhuang (Huang 1997). The comments in the main text pass over the theories regarding a Tai substrate of the southern Sinitic dialects, such as Cantonese/Yue. Although this idea is quite old (see for discussion: Chappell 2001; Yue-Hashimoto 1991), there is a recent surge in publications on this connection in Chinese, for example, see Bān (2006) and Liū (2006); see also, Lán (2003) and Yóu (1982).

4 Wéi and Qin (2006: 150) set the percentages of Chinese loans at 50% and 90% for daily life and work/politics/science/education/etc. respectively. Wéi and Qin (2006:150-154) present a short but systematic treatise on loanwords in Zhuang.
Li (1956: 18-20) mentions a number of points where Mandarin has influenced the syntax of Wùmíng Zhuang. First, he shows that one can sometimes observe that modifiers to the noun, which typically follow the noun in Zhuang and other Tai languages, precede the noun and are separated from it by an element dih, order and marker clearly borrowed from Mandarin (see also Liáng 1986: 22). As a second example, he mentions that the adverb now spelled as gong ‘first, in front’, which should follow the verb, is often put in front of it, again, just like in Mandarin. Finally, Li keeps open the possibility that the order [classifier-noun] in Zhuang has also come about under the influence of Chinese; other varieties, such as Thai, have the classifier follow the noun. Li thinks that in earlier historical phases of Tai both orders were possible and that modern orders have been determined under the influence of neighboring languages. What is interesting is that Li assembled his material in the mid-thirties (mainly 1935) and that with respect to the first two points mentioned here (the position of the modifier relative to the noun and the positioning of gong ‘first, in front’ relative to the verb) the situation has not really changed. The “Chinese” orders mentioned by Li can certainly be observed, and they are mentioned in other sources as well (e.g. Liáng 1986: 22), but they have not “taken over”; they are still definitely recognized as “foreign” (see also footnote 1).

3. Classifiers

3.1 General comments: word order

Like Chinese as well as other Tai languages, Northern Zhuang (which from now on we will refer to simply as “Zhuang”) makes use of classifiers which perform several functions within the noun phrase. One such function is that of “classifying”, in the sense that different classes of animate and non-animate beings combine with different types of classifiers. Structurally, the most common function is that of a go-between between numerals and demonstratives on the one hand and the noun on the other: when counting and when a demonstrative is used, the use of a classifier is generally obligatory.

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5 Another early, informative article on the influence of Chinese on the word order in the Zhuang noun phrase is Cào (1959).
6 Note that we say “generally”; there are exceptions both with the use of numerals (some nouns can be counted without classifiers) and with the use of demonstratives. See, for instance, Qin (1995: 3ff.). Here is one example:

(i) it bi miz cib ngeih ndwen
one year have ten two month
‘one year has 12 months’
In terms of word order, Zhuang classifiers always precede the noun. We already saw this illustrated in (2); another example is provided in (3). Measure words display the same distributional behavior, as is illustrated in (4) (for the placement of the numeral, see §4 below).

\begin{align*}
(3) & \text{duz} \quad \text{mou} \quad \text{ndeu} \\
& \text{CL}_{\text{animal}} \quad \text{pig} \quad \text{one} \\
& \quad \text{‘a/one pig’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
(4) & \text{a. cenj} \quad \text{raemx} \quad \text{ndeu} \\
& \text{CL}_{\text{cup}} \quad \text{water} \quad \text{one} \\
& \quad \text{‘a cup of water’} \\
& \text{b. song} \quad \text{gaen} \quad \text{noh} \\
& \text{two} \quad \text{CL}_{\text{pound}} \quad \text{meat} \\
& \quad \text{‘two pounds of meat’}
\end{align*}

The classifier may also follow the noun but then it no longer functions as a numeral classifier. Instead, it is interpreted as a modifier, since in Zhuang, modifiers follow the noun they modify, as we saw in (1) and (2). With count nouns, \([N_{\text{count noun}} - \text{classifier}]\) phrases mean ‘the whole N’ (Wéi 1985; Liáng 1986). This is illustrated in (5).

\begin{align*}
(5) & \text{bya} \quad \text{duz} \quad \text{(Liáng 1986: 15)} \\
& \quad \text{fish} \quad \text{CL}_{\text{animal}} \\
& \quad \text{‘the whole fish’}
\end{align*}

With mass nouns, \([N_{\text{mass noun}} - \text{measure word}]\) phrases give rise to an interpretation that N appears in a form denoted by the measure word. This is illustrated in (6):

\begin{align*}
(6) & \text{a. noh} \quad \text{gaen} \quad \text{(Wéi 1982: 279)} \\
& \quad \text{meat} \quad \text{CL}_{\text{pound}} \\
& \quad \text{‘meat by the pound’} \\
& \text{b. fun} \quad \text{raq} \quad \text{(Qín 1995: 92)} \\
& \quad \text{rain} \quad \text{CL}_{\text{shower}} \\
& \quad \text{‘rain in showers’}
\end{align*}

We take it that there is no principled difference between mass nouns and count nouns in this respect. In both cases, the classifier or measure word can be interpreted as
meaning something like ‘by the unit indicated’. Here are two more examples with the phrase embedded in a sentence:

(7) a. de lau vunz gyoengq (Qín 1995: 92)
    3SG fear people CL group
    ‘he fears people in groups’

b. raeuz bae saz yangz faek gwn (Qín 1995: 93)
    1PL go roast corn CL ear consume
    ‘let’s roast corn-on-the-cob to eat’

In both cases, the appropriate interpretation is ‘N by the unit indicated’: people in groups, and corn by the ear. In cases where the unit indicated corresponds to the natural unit in which the entity in question occurs, we automatically get an interpretation paraphrasable with ‘the whole N’. In (7b), we are dealing with whole cobs, in (5) we have ‘fish by its naturally occurring unit’, thus, ‘the whole fish’.

In short, when the element that generally functions as a numeral classifier follows the noun, it acts as a modifier to that noun and is paraphrasable as ‘by the unit indicated’.

3.2 Classifiers and number

Zhāng (1979: 191) notes that, while bare nouns are not specified for number, a noun phrase which contains an N and a classifier, but no numeral, is interpreted as singular (see also Wéi 1982; Wéi 1985: 33; Zhāng 1987: 281). In the following example, which contains no classifier, the number of the subject phrase is not specified.

(8) saw gou youq gwnz daiz (Zhāng 1979: 191)
    book 1SG be-at top table
    ‘my books are/my book is on the table’

When a classifier is added, the phrase is necessarily interpreted as singular:

(9) a. bouh saw gou youq gwnz daiz (Zhāng 1979: 191)
    CL volume book 1SG be-at top table
    ‘my book is on the table’

b. ngoenzneix gou gip-ndaej diuz hanz (Qín 2005: 53)
    today 1SG pick-up CL long object shoulder pole
    ‘I picked up a carrying pole today’
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c. duz bit haj maenz ngaenz \textsuperscript{c.} (Wéi 1985: 30)
\textsuperscript{CL}animal duck five \textsuperscript{CL}money silver
‘one duck costs five yuan/dollar’

There are several strategies that we can take if we want to vaguely express ‘more than one’. One such strategy involves the use of \textit{geij} and \textit{doengh} both meaning ‘several, some, a few’. They come in the place of the numeral and are used together with the classifier; note that \textit{doengh} is generally not used without a demonstrative (Wéi 1982: 269), \textit{geij} does not have such a restriction.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(10)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. aen mbanj haenx gig iq, mbouj miz geij
\textsuperscript{CL}thing village that very small not have several
ranz vunz \textsuperscript{(Luó 2005: 471)}
\textsuperscript{CL}household people
‘that village is very small, there are only several households’
\item b. doengh daeg vaiz haenx \textsuperscript{(Wéi 1985: 30)}
some \textsuperscript{CL}male buffalo that
‘those few male buffaloes’
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

Another strategy is the use of classifiers or measure words with meanings such as ‘group’, ‘flock’, ‘herd’ etc. The literal meaning of such expressions is all but lost: all that is left is the sense of ‘more than one’. Thus, although the phrase in (11a) can mean ‘this group of people’, with the literal interpretation of the classifier/measure word \textit{gyoengq} ‘group’, it is often used to simply express ‘these people’. The use of the demonstrative is common but not obligatory.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(11)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. gyoengq vunz neix \textsuperscript{(Qín 1995: 78)}
\textsuperscript{CL}group people this
‘this group of people’ AND ‘these people’
\item b. miz mbangj vunz dawz rauq \textsuperscript{(Luó 2005: 787)}
have \textsuperscript{CL}portion people harrow paddy
‘there are people harrowing the paddies’
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

We also come across other elements expressing plurality, which occupy the classifier position, such as \textit{gij} and \textit{di} (the latter obviously borrowed from Cantonese). These too can be used with and without a demonstrative.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(12)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. gij saw youq gwnz daiz \textsuperscript{(Luó 2005: 484)}
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
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CL plural book at top table
‘those/the books on the table’
b. sou naengh gij daengq neix …
2PL sit CL plural chair this…
‘you guys sit on these chairs…’
(13) gou cawx ndaej di saw (ndeu)
1SG buy get CL plural book (one)
‘I bought some books’

Note that di can be used with ndeu ‘one’. This does not apply to gij, which, in any case according to Wei and Qin (1980: 34-35) and Wei (1982: 277), can only co-occur with doengh ‘several’ (illustrated in (17b) below). On the other hand, Zhang (1979: 196) reports, that gij can combine with numerals higher than ‘one’, in which case it means ‘sort, type’; this is illustrated below with one of Zhang’s examples; our informants find examples like this questionable.7

(14) song gij gwn
two CL plural consume
‘two types of food’

Both di and gij can also be used with mass nouns, meaning ‘a little bit of’, and with abstract nouns:

(15) a. gij noh neix (Zhang 1979: 196)
CL plural meat this
‘this (bit of) meat’
b. gij maeg neix (Qin 1995: 45)
CL plural ink this
‘this ink’
c. gij bingh de (Lu 2005: 484)
CL plural sickness 3SG
‘his sickness’

(16) a. gou siengj gwn di raemx
1SG want consume CL plural water
‘I want to drink some water.’
b. boux vunz gou caeuq vunz miz di mboujdoengz

7 For the combination of the classifier followed by a verb, see §3.3.1.
Interestingly, *doengh* ‘some, several, a few’ can also be used in combination with classifiers like *gij* and *gyoengq*, seemingly just emphasizing the plurality aspect:

(17) a. doengh gyoengq bit haenx (Wéi 1985: 30)
    some *gij* group duck that
    ‘those several ducks’

b. doengh gij neix (Wéi 1985: 84)
    some *gyoengq* plural this
    ‘these, these few’

A final point to note in this section on classifiers and number is that when Zhuang classifiers are reduplicated, we get universal quantification, ‘every’. We understand that reduplication of the classifier is a fairly common process. Dài (1992: 136) claims that it is due to Chinese influence, it being more common in areas where more language contact has taken place. Wéi (1982: 271) states that reduplication is only possible with monosyllabic classifiers. As the following examples illustrate, the reduplicated classifier can co-occur with a topicalized noun phrase, (18a), it can occur alone, (18b), and it can occupy the regular classifier position and form one phrase with the noun, as shown in (18c,d,e).

(18) a. daxmeh nyib buh, geu-geu ndei (Wéi and Qin 1980: 34)
    mother sew shirt *clothing* good
    ‘every shirt that is sewn by mother is good.’

b. bouxboux cungj gyaerez guh hong (Zhāng and Qin 1993: 51)
    *people* all like do labor
    ‘everybody likes to do physical labor’

c. go-go faex soh (Wéi 1982: 271)
    *tree* tree straight
    ‘every tree is straight’

d. duz-duz lingz guenj linj (Zhāng 1998: 119)
    *animal* monkey all lively
    ‘every monkey is lively’

e. sik-sik daiz guenj bingzfud (Zhāng 1999: 120)
    *table* all stable
    ‘every table is stable’
In Zhuang, as a rule, nouns do not reduplicate (Wéi 1985: 16).

3.3 Referential uses

3.3.1 Nominalization

The classifier in Zhuang has a number of functions which can be seen as referential in one way or another. In one of these functions, the classifier is followed by a modifier of some sort, X, resulting in the interpretation ‘the X one’. The modifier can be an adjective, a noun, a pronoun, a verb, a locative marker, a question word, etc. (Zhāng 1979: 192; Qin 1995: 73, 77-8). Because the resulting phrases are nominal qua interpretation and distribution to a large extent (but see below), we refer to this function of the classifier as its “nominalizing” function. Here are some examples (translation as definite or indefinite is random; see section 7).

(19) a. go hung b. aen ndei (Zhāng 1979: 192)
     CL tree big CL thing good
     ‘a big one (tree)’ ‘a good one (thing)’

(20) geu sanghaij (Wéi 1982: 283)
     CL clothing Shanghai
     ‘a piece (of clothing) from Shanghai’

(21) a. geu mwngz (Ji 1993: 65)
     CL clothing 2SG
     ‘yours (clothing)’

     b. geu nuengx (Wéi 1982: 283)
     CL clothing younger sibling
     ‘the piece (of clothing) belonging to my little brother/sister’

(22) boux de (Qin 1995: 77)
     CL people that
     ‘that one (person)’

(23) duz mbin (Zhāng 1987: 281)

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8 Zhāng (1987: 280) says that monosyllabic nouns do reduplicate, but then we get the interpretation ‘every type’. Wéi (1982: 272), however, notes that there is only a very limited set of nouns which can reduplicate and only under certain circumstances; also, from Wéi’s translation it is not clear that nominal reduplication means ‘every type’. See also Zhāng and Qin (1993: 17, 20-21).
As different nouns co-occur with different classifiers, the choice of the classifier in these classifier-nominalizations reveals the type of object the phrase is referring to. These phrases are interpreted as singular. To get the plural interpretation, we use *gij*, which we saw in the previous section (Zhāng 1979: 196-197; Wěi 1982: 277-278). The fact that it can be used this way as well, confirms its status as a classifier. Note that when we use *gij* we don’t get any “classificatory” information. Thus, whereas in (21) we know from the classifier that we are talking about a piece of clothing, in (26c), we don’t know what is ‘ours’; examples are taken from Zhāng (1979: 196-197) and Wěi (1982: 277-278).

(26) a.  gij  neix  
   CLplural  this 
   ‘these’

b.  gij  raeuz  
   CLplural  1PL 
   ‘ours-PL’

c.  gij  gwn  
   CLplural  consume 
   ‘edibles, food’

d.  gij  daenj  
   CLplural  wear 
   ‘wearables, clothing’

e.  gij  nding  
   CLplural  red 
   ‘red [entities]’

f.  gij  rang  
   CLplural  fragrant 
   ‘fragrant ones’

g.  gij  ndaw  raemx  de  (Zhāng 1979: 197)  
   CLplural  inside  water  that 
   ‘those in the water’

h.  cawx  gij  bak  geij  maenz  de  (Zhāng 1979: 197)  
   buy  CLplural  hundred  some  dollar  that 
   ‘buy those of more than one hundred dollars’
With respect to the nominal properties of such phrases, a few comments can be made. According to Qin (2005 and elsewhere; and others), phrases such as (19)-(25), containing the unit-classifiers, cannot be counted by simply adding a numeral. This would strengthen the idea made earlier that the classifier in these phrases does not function as a classifier.

(27) a. duz  mbin
   CL\textsubscript{animal} fly
   ‘the flying one’

   b.*song  duz  mbin
   two  CL\textsubscript{animal} fly
   Intended reading: ‘two flying ones’

(28) a. boux  dafangz
   CL\textsubscript{people} blind
   ‘blind person’

   b. *sam boux  dafangz
   three  CL\textsubscript{people} blind
   Intended reading: ‘three blind people’

For Qin, since [classifier-modifier] phrases themselves cannot be counted, one must, if one wants to count them, replace the classifier with a noun, e.g., roeg ‘bird’ or roeg-mbin ‘flying bird’ in the case of duz-mbin and vunz-dafangz ‘blind person’ in the case of boux-dafangz:

(29) a. song  duz  roeg-mbin
   two  CL\textsubscript{animal} bird-fly
   ‘two flying birds’

   b. sam boux  vunz-dafangz
   three  CL\textsubscript{people} people-blind
   ‘three blind people’

However, Bo (2003) has different judgments, and our informants side with Bo; they have no problem with a phrase like (30) (although one of them insists that the presence of the demonstrative is obligatory):

(30) saam  duz  binh (haenx)
   three  CL\textsubscript{animal} fly that
   ‘those three flying ones’
All agree that these phrases cannot be counted by adding another classifier (Qin 2005):

(31) a. *song duz [duz mbin]  
    two CL_{animal} CL_{animal} fly  
    Intended reading: ‘two flying ones’

b. *sam boux [boux dafangz]  
    three CL_{people} CL_{people} blind  
    Intended reading: ‘three blind people’

Whichever way, these [classifier-modifier] phrases are not on a par with noun phrases or nominal compounds in all respects. Even for Qin, to whom the classifier in these phrases is not a full-fledged classifier, it is still recognizable as a classifier. The fact we mentioned earlier, namely that phrases such as those in (19)-(25) are always singular, points into the same direction, as bare nouns (compounds included) in Zhuang are compatible with both a singular and a plural reading.

3.3.2 Pronominal use of classifiers

The second instance of the classifier performing a referential function is the following. Under certain circumstances the classifier may be used as if it is a pronominal (Qin 1995; You 1982). The general condition seems to be that it must always refer to an entity from the linguistic context, generally the first conjunct in a complex sentence. Wéi (1985) gives some examples of this pronominal usage of the classifier, seemingly implying that this use is only felicitous in contrastive contexts (as in (32a)), but other examples provided in the literature counterexemplify this impression. Below, we present some examples. Among other things, they show that the antecedent can be both animate and inanimate, that it does not have to be the subject of the previous sentence and it does not have to be definite. The antecedent can contain a different classifier or does not contain a classifier at all. The interpretation of the pronominal classifier is always singular.

(32) a. gouh dawz neix, ga dinj ga raez (Wéi 1985: 43)  
    CL_{pair} chopsticks this CL short CL long  
    ‘as to this pair of chopstick, one is short, the other one is long’

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9 Not all our informants like this usage of the classifier very much.
b. duz ma laeng daxlungz caen yak, duz
  CLanimal dog family uncle really cruel CLanimal
  ngoenzlwenz haeb duz gaeq gou dai lo (Qín 1995: 81)
  ‘my uncle’s family’s dog is really cruel, it bit my chicken to death yesterday’

c. de deng fāg cax gou doek roengz bya bae,
  3SG do CL knife 1SG drop down mountain go
  gou dawz daeujbaeza yawj, fag mbanq lo
  1SG take come one look CLhandle broken SFP
  ‘he dropped my knife down the mountain, I took a look and it’s broken’
  (Qín 1995: 81)

d. mwngz bibi ndaem faex, go baenzlawz ha?
  2SG every year plant tree CLtree how PRT
  ‘you plant trees every year, how are they doing?’ (Qín 1995: 83)

In the above sentences the classifier is used pronominally in subject position. The following examples show that it can also be so used in object position.

(33) a. mwngz dawz duz ma de daeujhawj gou, gou
  2SG take CLanimal dog that come give 1SG 1SG
  buy CLanimal (Qín 1995: 85)
  ‘you bring that dog to me, I’ll buy it’

b. neix lij miz geij duz bit, gou aeu duz (Qín 1995: 84)
  here still have some CLanimal duck 1SG want CLanimal
  ‘there are still some ducks here, I want one’

Since an antecedent is required in the pronominal use of the classifier, the classifier is often interpreted as definite, but not always. In (33b), the classifier in question is interpreted as indefinite. It has a partitive reading, i.e. ‘one of those ducks’. The indefinite pronominal use of the classifier is illustrated further in (34):

(34) a. ranz gou miz haujlai lwbug, aen gaen (Qín 1995: 78)
  house 1SG have several pomelo CLthing CLpound
  ‘we have a lot of pomeloes, every one weighs one pound’

b. gou faen geij aen lwbug hawj sou, boux aen
  1SG distribute some CLthing pomelo to 2PL CLpeople CLthing
  ‘I hand out some pomeloes to you guys, one each’ (Qín 1995: 90)
when the antecedent is not in the first conjunct of a complex clause the classifier cannot be used pronominally. For instance, classifiers cannot be used alone when answering questions (Wéi and Qín 1980):

(35) Q: mwngz aeu aen lawz?
2SG take CL thing which
‘which one would you take?’
A: aen neix/ *aen CL thing this CL thing
‘this one’

3.4 Classifiers as kind-markers

The combination of a classifier and a noun can also lead to a kind reading. Consider the classifier-noun sequences in the following two examples:

(36) a. gou miz duz-mou
1SG have CL animal-pig
‘I have pigs (generic)’

b. gou miz duz mou
1SG have CL animal pig
‘I have a pig’

Though different orthographically, phonologically, (36a) and (36b) are not distinguishable. However, concurring with claims in the literature, native speakers claim that the orthography reflects a semantic difference. For (36a), classifier plus noun refers to ‘pigs’ as a type of animal, that is with a generic interpretation (Qín 1995, 2005); as such it is compatible with a situation in which a person has more than one pig, while this is not the case in (36b); (36b) must be interpreted as if ndeu ‘one’ is missing (cf. (9) above).

Here is an example from the published literature (Qín 1995: 4), with a [classifier-noun] in subject position, confirming the generic interpretation.

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10 Writing about Tai languages spoken in Yúnnán, Zhang (1992: 209) writes: “A measure word can be combined with its corresponding noun to form a compound noun of the same meaning” — emphasis added, but in the rest of the relevant paragraph Zhang repeats that we are really dealing with “the same meaning”.
Qin (1995, 2005) calls the classifier in such generic cases a prefix; it is not clear, however, how the generic reading arises. Others, such as Wei (1985) and, more recently, Bó (2003), suggest that the noun in such combinations must be seen as a modifier to the classifier, with the noun, as the modifier, restricting the range of the classifier. Here too, however, it is not made clear how the generic interpretation arises. 11

Both Qin and Bó point at the parallel with what we called the “nominalizing” use of the classifier we discussed in §3.3.1. It is quite reasonable to assume that that duz mbin /CLanimal fly/ ‘a/the flying one (animal)’ in (23) and the duz-mou /CLanimal-pig/ in (36a) must be analyzed in the same way. In our terms, the latter would then have to be paraphrased as ‘a/the pig one’, which brings us close to the generic reading: ‘an animal that is like a pig’. In fact, this comes very close to the way Wei (1985: 34) paraphrases go faex /CLtree tree/: “plants that are called ‘faex’”. Note that with masses, we never get a generic interpretation for [Cl-N] phrases, which may be seen as confirmation for the idea that we should take the parallel between the different [Cl-N/V/A] phrases seriously. After all, with masses we never have the same type of relation: if duz-mou /CLanimal-pig/ in (36a) is paraphrased as ‘an animal that is like a pig’ or ‘a pig one’, then cenj-raemx /CLcup-water/ in (38) should be paraphrased as ‘a water-one’ or ‘one/one cup/cups that is/are called water’ or ‘a cup that is like water’ or words to this effect, which does not make any sense.

(38) *gou miz cenj-raemx
1SG have CLcup -water

In any case, the kind reading falls out from this analysis automatically.

There may also be an alternative analysis of these phrases and their kind-interpretation. Taking one step back, we notice that several points we raised above make it clear, that the classifier in Zhuang is much more than a simple go-between between the numeral and the noun, which it is in Mandarin (Sybesma 2007). In the literature, there is quite some discussion on the status of the classifier in phrases that do not contain a numeral. From what we have read (Yóu 1982; Liáng 1983; Bān 1999, 2000; Yuán and Zhāng 1958; Wáng 1957), we understand that some take the position that

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11 In Chinese we find [N-CL] combinations (that is, noun and classifier in the “wrong” order) with a generic interpretation: chē-liàng ‘vehicles’, chuān-zhī ‘boats’. Note that this order is the same as that between a modifier and its modifiee in Chinese.
outside of pure counting contexts the classifier is a nominal element or a nominal classificatory prefix. This statement must be understood in the following context. In Zhuang, just like in other languages, nominal compounds are generally composed of two parts, one being a more general term, the other one narrowing down the semantic range of the first one. In Zhuang, we see X-Y, X denoting the broader category, Y being the modifying element that narrows down the range of X. Now, in many names of animals and plants, we see this pattern consistently implemented to the effect that all bird names contain the element roeg ‘bird’, all fish have a name with the element bya ‘fish’ in it, and all tree names contain faex ‘tree’; etc. Let's look at the following bird names as an example: they all consist of the initial morpheme roeg ‘bird’ followed by a more specific designation, which can be a meaningful unit by itself, as in (39a,b), an onomatopoeic element, as in (39c) or a loan, as in (39d) (Yuán and Zhāng 1958: 10):

(39) a. roeg-guj    bird-eagle   ‘eagle’
    b. roeg-ding-faex   bird-peck-tree  ‘woodpecker’
    c. roeg-vaiqguhvaisqguz  bird-(onomat.)  ‘cuckoo’
    d. roeg-yaemyieng   bird-(loan)   ‘mandarin duck’

The example in (39a) is significant because, while in the other case we could say that without roeg ‘bird’ we would not know that we are dealing with a bird, this is not the case in (39a). Guj means ‘eagle’; roeg would not be necessary for making clear the the animal in question is a bird.

The same pattern could be illustrated with the names of different types of fish, fruit, vegetables, meat, trees, etc. (see Yuán and Zhāng 1958: 10ff; Wáng 1957; Bān 1999, 2000).

What is interesting is that all animal names can subsequently be preceded by a duz, the element that we have so far called the classifier for animals; the same applies to people, plants etc., with other elements.

(40) a. duz ma
    dog
b. duz vaiz
    buffalo
c. duz mui
    bear
d. duz roeg guj
    bird eagle
e. duz bya leix
What we have noticed is that in the literature, when it is irrelevant to the discussion at hand, these elements are generally ignored. For instance, both *duz ma* and *ma* are glossed with ‘dog’ as if *duz* is simply not there. Quite often we come across sentences with, let’s say, *duz vaiz* and a few pages further down the exact same sentence with the *duz* missing, very similar to what Zhang (1992) observes, as quoted in footnote 11.

The question is what the status of these elements in such phrases is. One possibility, as is defended by some, is that we are dealing with classificatory prefixes: *duz* simply makes it clear that we are dealing with an animal. Another possibility is that these elements are really nouns, and *duz ma* is a bonafide compound, ‘dog-animal’. *Duz roeg guj* in (40d) would then be a ‘eagle-bird-animal’. In either case, we are dealing with a complex nominal, and as a result, the generic reading does not come as a surprise anymore, as bare nominals can receive a generic interpretation, as we will see in §7.12,13

Whatever they are, Yóu (1982) develops the hypothesis that classifiers actually developed from these prefix-type elements, but this claim is subject to discussion (Liáng 1983).14

### 3.5 Classifiers with a special meaning

To close off this section on the classifier, let’s look at one more point to underscore the idea that the category classifier is possibly a problematic category in Zhuang. Zhāng (1979: 195-196) and Qín (1995: 99-104) note that some elements seem to fall in different categories; let’s look at *lwg* as an example: it may be a noun meaning ‘child’ (as in (41)), a classifier meaning ‘a small one of’ or simply a classifier for small things (in (42a) and (42b) respectively), an element that precedes the classifier or the noun

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12 This may put the whole idea that in Zhuang we use words that belong to a certain category, namely classifiers, when we count into a new perspective. We may as well say that nouns in Zhuang have an optional prefix, and when we count, we can only use the noun with the prefix. All the prefix does is mark the noun in question as a count noun (although for some nouns, the prefix may be optional even in counting contexts), which must be done when counting and can be done in other contexts. We will have to work on this more.

13 There may be yet another way of looking at this, namely from the perspective developed in Borer (2005). According to Borer the classifier assigns range to the division head (<e>div) which immediately dominates the lexical N-projection, and since division involves no ‘portioning out’, it is expected that [Cl-N] phrase have a generic reading. In other words, Borer predicts [Cl-N] phrases to have a generic reading (for further discussion, Borer’s book, especially §6.4.)

14 See also Delancey (1986).
expressing denigration (in (43)), and a lexical prefix to nouns referring to small things (illustrated in (44)) (and this does not exhaust the possible uses; see also Wéi 1985: 3-4; and elsewhere). Here are some examples:

(41) de miz song boux lwg (Luó 2005: 743)
    3SG have two CLpeople child
    ‘he has two children’

(42) a. song lwg kai (Zhāng 1979: 195)
    two CLsmall chicken
    ‘two little chicklets’

   b. sam lwg mae (Zhāng 1979: 195)
    three CLsmall thread
    ‘three threads’

(43) a. lwg duz mou neix (cf. Wéi 1985: 5)
    CLsmall CLanimal pig this
    ‘that petty little pig’

   b. geij lwg boux caeg neix lau gijmaz
    some CLsmall CLpeople thief this fear what
    ‘some petty thieves, what is there to be afraid of’ (Wéi and Qin 1980: 36)

   c. lwg vai neix (Luó 2005: 744)
    CLsmall water buffalo this
    ‘this runty water buffalo’

(44) a. lwgbieng ‘cucumber’ (Wéi 1985: 4)
    lwggenz ‘lemon’
    lwggva ‘pumpkin

   b. lwgbag ‘hailstone’ (Luó 2005: 745)
    lwgda ‘eye’
    lwgdin ‘toe’ (din ‘foot’)

   c. song naed lwgraz (Zhāng 1979: 196)
    two CLgrain sesame
    ‘two grains of sesame’

Once again, as a result, in some cases, when we see a two-morpheme combination without a demonstrative or a numeral, it is not always clear whether we are dealing with a noun preceded by a classifier or a compound noun, involving a prefix. Qin (1995: 102), on the other hand, emphasizes that it is very clear when lwg is a classifier and when it is a prefix. If it is a prefix, such as in (44), we need another classifier when we
count, as a result of which it is clear that \textit{lwg} is not the classifier. Thus, (44c) would be ungrammatical without the classifier \textit{naed}.

\textit{Lwg} ‘small’ has a counterpart in \textit{ndaek} ‘big’, which has all the uses of \textit{lwg} illustrated above, except that it is never a noun or a prefix (Wéi and Qín 1980: 36; Wéi 1982: 276-277). Here are two examples.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(45)] a. \textit{ndaek byaleix neix} \textit{CL\textsubscript{big} carp this} ‘this big carp’
\item b. \textit{songn daek duz mou neix bizbwne} \textit{CL\textsubscript{big} CL\textsubscript{animal} pig this fat SFP} ‘these two pigs [nice ones!] are very fat!’
\end{enumerate}

Besides \textit{ndaek} and \textit{lwg}, Zhuang has a number of other classifiers which have more meaning than just ‘one unit of’. \textit{Daeg}, for instance, means ‘one male unit of’, \textit{dah} ‘one female unit of’ (Zhāng 1979: 193):

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(46)] a. \textit{nuengx ‘younger sibling’ daeg nuengx ‘younger brother’}
\item b. \textit{lan ‘grand child’ daeg lan ‘grandson’}
\item c. \textit{lwgnyez ‘child’ daeg lwgnyez ‘son’}
\item d. \textit{læq ‘small child’ daeg læq ‘small boy’}
\end{enumerate}

These phrases are regular \textit{[classifier-noun]} phrases and can all be accompanied by a numeral or a demonstrative, without the need for another classifier.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(47)] a. \textit{song daeg læq} \textit{CL\textsubscript{male} child} \textit{two CL\textsubscript{male} child} ‘two small boys’
\item b. \textit{daeg læq neix} \textit{CL\textsubscript{male} child this} ‘this small boy’
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(48)] a. \textit{song dah nuengx} \textit{CL\textsubscript{female} child} \textit{two CL\textsubscript{female} child} ‘two small girls’
\item b. \textit{dah nuengx neix} \textit{CL\textsubscript{female} child this} ‘this small girl’
\end{enumerate}

We find similar gender classifiers for animals (Wéi and Qín 1980: 33; Méng 2001; \textit{e.g.}, \textit{me} ‘female unit of’, Wéi 1982: 270). There are also classifiers which distinguish
shape or size (see also Wéi 1982: 275ff. and Qin 1995: 72). Some may also mark degree (Zhāng 1979: 194-195). Classifiers can also be used outside their semantic domain to induce a certain semantic effect. For instance, we can use the classifier for big animals with lice, expressing how disgusting we think they are (or with people as a pejorative; Luó 2005: 884), or we use the classifier for animals to refer to our children to resort some humorous effect (Qín 1995: 75-76; also Zhāng and Qín 1993: 58-59).^{15}

4. Numerals

4.1 Cardinals

Zhuang uses a base-ten system for numerals (Wéi and Qin 1980: 43; Bodomo and Pan 2007; Qin 1995); from the look of it, several numerals are borrowed from Chinese (particularly Cantonese).^{16}

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
0: & \text{lingz} & 1: & \text{ndeu/it} \\
2: & \text{song/ngeih} & 3: & \text{sam} \\
4: & \text{seiq} & 5: & \text{haj/ngux} \\
6: & \text{roek/loeg} & 7: & \text{caet} \\
8: & \text{bet} & 9: & \text{giuj} \\
10: & \text{cib} & & \\
\end{array}
\]

We see that there are different terms for several cardinals; we will only discuss the difference between ndeu and it ‘one’; for details regarding the others, see Qin (1995: 53-64) and Wéi (1985: 71ff.).^{17}

Like most other numerals, it precedes the classifier.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{it/sam} & \text{duj} & \text{va} & \text{va} \\
\text{one/three} & \text{CL} & \text{flowe} & \text{flower} \\
\text{‘one/three flower/s’} & & & \\
\end{array}
\]

---

^{15} In light of this section we may also reconsider the analysis suggested above for cases like (28a). Instead of saying that they must be paraphrased as ‘a blind one’, we could also say that it means something like ‘a human instance of blindness’, very much in line with ‘one female unit of child’.

^{16} Cantonese numbers (1-10) in Jyutping (The Linguistic Society of Hong Kong Cantonese Romanization Scheme): 0 ling; 1 jat; 2 ji; 3 saam; 4 sei; 5 ng; 6 luk; 7 cat; 8 baat; 9 gau; 10 sap.

^{17} For more information on ndeu, see Yuán and Zhāng (1958: 4); Wei and Qin (1980: 44, 45); Liáng (1986: 16). Two more words for ‘one’ have been mentioned in the literature: he and niengh. For the former, see Zhāng (1979: 192); Wei and Qin (1980: 44, 45), for the latter, see Wei and Qin (1980: 44). On numerals in general, see Zhāng and Qin (1993: 38ff).
The only difference between *it* and other numerals is that *it* is incompatible with the demonstrative (Wéi and Qín 1980: 45):

(51) a. sam duj va haenx
    three CLflower flower that
    ‘those three flowers’

b. *it duj va neix/haenx
    one CLflower flower this/that
    Intended reading: ‘that flower’

*ndeu*, on the other hand, is very different from the other numerals. Position-wise, it always appears after the noun; in fact, it appears at the very end of the noun phrase as a whole: modifiers intervene between the noun and *ndeu*. This is illustrated below:

(52) duj va (hoeng) ndeu
    CLflower flower (red) one
    ‘one (red) flower’

Like *it*, *ndeu* is incompatible with the demonstrative (Wéi and Qín 1980: 45):

(53) *duj va ndeu neix/haenx
    CLflower flower one this/that
    Intended reading: ‘that flower’

Even though *ndeu* and *it* appear in a different position, they cannot co-occur, and *ndeu* is also in complementary distribution with other numerals:

(54) a. *it duj va ndeu
    one CLflower flower one
    Intended reading: ‘one flower’

b. *gou bae cawx sam bonj saw ndeu
    1SG go buy three CLvolume book one
    Intended reading: ‘I am going to buy three books’

Another difference between *ndeu* and *it* is that *ndeu*, not *it*, is used with words like *ningq* ‘a bit’.

(55) a. gou siengj gwn ningq raemx ndeu
We think that this difference is related to a more general difference, namely that it always means ‘one’, whereas ndeu, besides ‘one’, can also function as an indefinite article.

With respect to the deviating distributional properties of ndeu, we need to note that it is a general property of the numeral for ‘one’ in Tai languages to have a distribution which is different from that of the other numerals; Thai, Lao and Nung, to just name a few, are also like this. Ndeu is said to go back to an adjective meaning ‘single’, which may explain its exceptional behavior (Liáng 1986: 21; Ji 1993: 64; Qin 1995: 56); this may be the case, but it does not explain the other properties of this element, nor the fact that the distribution of ‘one’ is exceptional in all varieties of Tai.

4.2 Ordinals

In Zhuang, there are several ways to form ordinals. First and foremost, ordinal numerals are formed by putting the numeral behind the classifier (Wéi and Qin 1980: 44):

(56) boux cib haj
    CL people ten five
    ‘the fifteenth person’

Secondly, as we saw above, numerals generally cannot be combined with a noun without the presence of a classifier. In cases where there is no classifier, the numeral can directly follow the noun to express ordinality, but this is only possible with a limited number of noun classes (Qin 1995: 46ff; Wéi and Qin 1980). These include time expressions such as ndwen ‘month’ and family relational terms.

(57) a. ndwen sam
    month three
    ‘the third lunar month’ or ‘March’

b. ngoenz cib-it
    day eleven
‘the eleventh day’
(58) a. dah-sam  (Qín 1995: 52)
girl-three
‘the third girl, i.e. daughter’
b. cej   seiq  (Qín 1995: 51)
elder sister four
‘fourth elder sister’

Finally, the classifier and the numeral can be separated by the (originally Chinese) ordinalizer daih (Wéi and Qín 1980: 44; Liáng 1986: 15; Ji 1993: 64).

(59) a. boux daih cib pet  (Wéi and Qín 1980)
    CL people ORD ten eight
    ‘the eighteenth person’
b. bi  daih sam  (Ji 1993)
    year ORD three
    ‘the third year’
c. ngoenz daih it  (Qín 1995: 51)
    day ORD one
    ‘the first day’

With the ordinalizer, as Wéi and Qín (1980: 44) note, the numeral can also precede the classifier (as it does in Chinese); Liáng (1986: 15) claims that this order is less general than the classifier-first-order, but Qín (1995: 48) presents the alternation as optional.

(60) daih loeg duz
    ORD six CL animals
    ‘the sixth one (animal)’

The ‘height’ of the number might also affect how ordinals are formed. For instance, Qín (1995: 51) further reports that ‘the nth day’ is expressed in different ways depending on the height of the number: from 1 – 10 we get the pattern “day – daih – Num”, as we saw in (59c), for the 11th day and up, we get “day – Num”, as was illustrated in (57b).
5. Demonstratives

As we saw in (1), the demonstrative in Zhuang follows the noun plus its modifiers if there are any. There are three demonstrative elements in Zhuang; the forms are not marked for number.

(61) a. neix ‘this/these’: proximal
    b. haenx ‘that/those’: distal
    c. de ‘that/those’: distal (and also a 3SG pronoun; see (63))

Here are some examples:

(62) a. goengq bya neix/haenx
    CL karst mountain this/that
    ‘this/that mountain’
    b. song duz mou neix/haenx
    two CL animal pig this/that
    ‘these/those two pigs’
    c. song duz mou de
    two CL animal pig that
    ‘those two pigs’

(63) de dwg bouxlawz
    3SG BE who
    ‘who is he/she?’

De is not mentioned in all inventories; we have not been able to make out what are the differences and similarities between haenx and de other than that the latter can also be used as a pronoun.

In the literature it is said explicitly that the demonstrative cannot be added to the noun without a classifier being present (e.g., Qin 1995: 73). However, examples given to illustrate other phenomena (such as (43c) above) often contain noun phrases containing just a noun and the demonstrative neix and two of our informants have no problem with such phrases. Here are some examples they came up with:

(64) a. ma neix gvai
    dog this obedient
    ‘this dog is obedient’
    b. bit neix cungj gwn haeux gou
duck this all consume rice 1SG
‘all these ducks eat my rice.’
c. cazneix ndei lai
   tea this good much
‘this tea is very good’

Three comments are in order here: (i) [noun-neix] phrases, when alone, are generally interpreted as singular. However, they can also be interpreted as plural, for instance, when they are used with the quantifier cungj ‘all’, as in (64b); (ii) only the proximal demonstrative neix is used in the [noun-demonstrative] construction; the distal demonstrative haenx is not used here, as shown in (65), in contrast with (64a); (iii) [noun-neix] phrases are always deictic: they always refer to objects in the vicinity.

(65) ??" ma haenx gvai
     dog that obedient
Intended reading: ‘that dog is obedient/those dogs’

6. Modifiers

6.1 General comments

With ‘modifiers’, we mean anything that modifies a noun: adjectives, relative clauses, prepositional phrases, other nouns, proper names, pronouns, etc. In Zhuang, all modifiers follow the noun.\(^\text{18}\) We provide some examples below (for more examples, see Qin 1995: 185-191):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(66) a. bonj saw henj ndeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL volume book yellow one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘a yellow book’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIVE CLAUSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(66) b. boux lwgdoegsaw daenj yenjging haenx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL person student wear glasses that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘that student who wears glasses’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{18}\) In the verbal domain, modifiers generally precede the V, although some may follow (Qin 1995: 104).
Zhuang speakers dislike multiple modifiers. The examples in (2) are exceptional in containing two modifiers and still being acceptable. They exemplify the only two situations in which multiple modification of one noun is possible. The first is if one of the modifiers involved is a possessor, as is the case in (2a). The other is if the noun and the modifier closest to it can be seen as a compound, such as vanj diet ‘iron bowl’ in (2b). In all other cases, we see that speakers, when asked to use multiple modifiers, prefer to use a conjunction or to express them in separate phrases:

(67) ??duz loengz heu laux biz haenx
    CLanimal dragon green big fat that
    Intended reading: ‘that green, big, fat dragon’

(68) duz loengz heu yux laux yux biz haenx
    CLanimal dragon green and big and fat that
    ‘that green, big, fat dragon’

Note that the marginality of (67) is not due to some kind of ordering restriction on the adjectives. Changing the ordering of the adjectives does not improve the phrase. Simpson (2005) claims that in Thai (or, more generally, Tai), the relation between the noun and its modifier is one of predication, the modifier acting as the predicate, the noun it modifies as the subject. This is fundamentally different from what we see in many other languages, in which modifiers to a noun are adjuncts. The idea that in Tai languages, including Zhuang, the modifier is really a predicate, predicating over the noun ([N Mod] is really like [Subj Pred]), may explain the strong aversion we just mentioned Zhuang (and other Tai) speakers have against multiple modifiers; after all, subjects pair up with predicates in strict one-to-one relationships. We think Simpson is right.

In Zhuang, modifiers are not marked in any way, nor are they separated from the noun they modify by a marker of any sort (such as subordination), with one exception: in some contexts the possessor is separated from the noun by a marker (see §6.2). The fact that modifiers follow the noun directly and are unmarked may be seen as confirma-
tion of the idea that the noun and its modifier have a predication relation. The fact that modifiers in the nominal phrase are joined to the head noun without any markers of subordination, leads to potential ambiguity, as Yuán and Zhāng (1958: 14) and others note:

(69) miz song duz roeg ding faex
    have two CLanimal bird peck tree
    1st reading: ‘there are two woodpeckers’
    2nd reading: ‘there are two birds pecking wood’

The ambiguity arises from the fact that ding faex ‘peck tree’ can be seen as a modifier of the noun roeg ‘bird’ or as a predicate.

Qín (1995: 172-183) deals with the ambiguity phenomenon quite extensively. He shows that the phrase following the noun can be of any type as long as it is predicative. He provides the following examples of ambiguous cases:

(70) a. vaiz doek dat
    cow fall slope
    1st reading: ‘the cow falls off the slope.’
    2nd reading: ‘the cow that fell off the slope’

b. bit ga raek
    duck leg break
    1st reading: ‘the duck broke its leg(s).’
    2nd reading: ‘the duck with the broken leg(s).’

c. de lau vunz gaj mou
    3SG fear people kill pig
    1st reading: ‘he is afraid of people slaughtering pigs’
    2nd reading: ‘he is afraid of people who slaughter pigs’

d. vunz doek dah dai lo
    people fall river die SFP
    1st reading: ‘the person fell into the water and died’
    2nd reading: ‘the person that fell into the water died’

Qín also mentions that, since the demonstrative is always last in the nominal phrase, the demonstrative is used to disambiguate. Thus, the following sentence is not ambiguous:

(71) boux vunz doek dah neix/haenx dai lo
    CLpeople people fall river this/that die SFP
‘this/that person that fell in the water died’

6.2 The special status of possessors

Even though modifiers are normally not separated from the noun by any marker, there is one exception. In some cases, the possessor can be separated from the noun by a marker, *duh*. Interestingly, the possessor with *duh* is the only modifier to the noun that can be separated from it by the demonstrative.

(72) a. duz ma (?duh) gou haenx
   CL_animal dog MRKR 1SG that
   ‘that dog of mine’

b. duz ma haenx duh gou
   CL_animal dog that MRKR 1SG
   ‘that dog of mine’

Note that whereas *duh* in (72a), in which the possessor occurs before the demonstrative, is optional (if it is acceptable at all; possibly only older people may allow it), it is obligatory in (72b), with the possessor following the demonstrative. There also seems to be a tendency to use the pattern illustrated in (72b) more often than the pattern exemplified by (72a); this must be looked into more.

The question arises as to what the status of *duh* is. Liáng (1989) regards it as a subordination marker, comparable to *de* in Mandarin, with the important difference that, whereas the latter can be used between all modifiers and modifiees, Zhuang *duh* is only used between the possessor and the possessee. As is also stressed in Wěi (1985: 21 and other places), the N preceding *duh* is [-human], the element following it [+human] (where organizations also count); in other words, *duh* gou /DUH 1SG/ ‘mine’ can never be used to refer to my brother, my uncle, my grandmother, etc. (see also Qin 1995: 169-172). This can be understood if Liáng (1989: 28) is right in claiming that *duh* is historically derived from the classifier for animals, *duz* (the two elements only differ in tone: *z* vs. *h*; see footnote 1).

Wěi (1985) has a different idea on the status of *duh*. He calls it a “[–human] referential element”, as it can be used to replace [–human] nouns in contexts of possession: in saw ræuz /book 1PL/ ‘our book’ saw ‘book’ can be replaced by *duh*: *duh* ræuz /DUH 1PL/ ‘ours’. Here is an example from Liáng (1989: 23), showing that [duh Poss] can operate alone; Qin (1995: 169-172) has many such examples.

---

19 In the southern varieties of Zhuang, we find hong for *duh* (see Liáng 1989, among others).
Wěi (1985: 235) proposes an interesting analysis for phrases like the one in (74):

(74) saw duh gou
Book MRKR 1SG
‘my book’

In these cases, he proposes, we are dealing with an appositive structure: ‘the book, mine’.

We would like to point out that in phrases with duh such as in (73), duh functions much the same as the classifier in what we dubbed its nominalizing function: fag gou /CLtool 1SG/ ‘mine’, bonj gou /CLvolume 1SG/ ‘mine’ and duz gou /CLanimal 1SG/ ‘mine’ mean the same as duh gou /DUH 1SG/ ‘mine’ except for the fact that fag gou, bonj gou and duz gou give more information as to what we are talking about. This parallel between duh and this particular use of the classifier is mentioned here and there in the literature, but never emphasized as particularly significant.

In an article that is mainly on Thai, Den Dikken en Singhapreecha (2004) implement and develop the idea that the presence of a marker in modification structures is a sign of predicate inversion having taken place. Using material from a number of different types of languages, they argue that the derivation of a nominal phrase containing a modifier and a marker involves the following steps. First, the relation between a noun and its modifier is one of predication (see our discussion on this point in the previous section). Taking this predication relation as the base relation between a noun and its modifier, they argue that in many languages, Thai being one of them, Chinese another, in the course of the derivation predicate inversion takes place, a process which always goes hand in hand with the insertion of a marker. This is schematically represented in (75) and illustrated in (76a) and (76b) for Mandarin and Thai respectively:

(75) \[ XP \text{ NP Mod} \rightarrow [YP \text{ Mod} [Y \text{ MRKR} [XP \text{ NP Mod}]]] \]

(76) a. \[ XP \text{ huā hǎokàn} \rightarrow [YP haokan [Y de [XP hua haokan]]] \]

\[ \text{flower beautiful} \]

b. \[ XP \text{ nāngsuu nāa} \rightarrow [YP nāa [Y thii [XP nāngsuu nāa]]] \]

\[ \text{book thick} \]
For Mandarin, the derivation stops here, but for Thai, the process repeats itself; see (77) (taking the output of (75) as its input) and (78) (with the output of (76b) as its input):

\[
(77) \left[ \text{YP Mod} \left[ \text{Y MRKR} \left[ \text{XP NP Mod} \right] \right] \right] \rightarrow \left[ \text{ZP NP} \left[ \text{Z MRKR} \left[ \text{YP Mod} \left[ \text{Y MRKR} \left[ \text{XP NP Mod} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]
\]

\[
(78) \left[ \text{YP nāa} \left[ \text{Y thīi} \left[ \text{XP nāngsuu-nāa} \right] \right] \right] \rightarrow \left[ \text{ZP nāngsuu} \left[ \text{Z thīi} \left[ \text{YP nāa} \left[ \text{Y thīi} \left[ \text{XP nāngsuu nāa} \right] \right] \right] \right] \right]
\]

The derivation of the Zhuang phrase *ma duh gou* /dog MRKR 1SG/ ‘my dog’ along these lines would be as follows:

\[
(79) \left[ \text{XP ma ‘dog’ gou ‘1SG’} \right] \hspace{1cm} \text{predicate inversion:}
\]

\[
\rightarrow \left[ \text{YP gou} \left[ \text{Y duh} \left[ \text{XP ma gou} \right] \right] \right] \hspace{1cm} \text{repeated:}
\]

\[
\rightarrow \left[ \text{ZP ma [z duh} \left[ \text{YP gou [Y duh [XP ma gou]} \right] \right] \right]
\]

Referring for the technical details and the theoretical consequences to the paper itself, and for possible problems to Paul (2005), we would like to point out that Den Dikken and Singhapreecha’s approach is interesting for our work on Zhuang for several reasons. First, as pointed out above, in Zhuang, multiple modifiers are generally avoided, and if there are more modifiers than just one, the second one is most likely a possessor, which in such cases tends to be marked with *duh*. The way we can make sense of this in light of the above is that, once the inversion processes have taken place, the possessor is no longer a predicative element, which opens up the possibility of having an additional modifier.

The second reason has to do with the similarity between the marker *duh* and the classifier in what we called the nominalization function, as discussed in relation to (73) above. What is interesting about Thai is that the marker *thīi* can be replaced by the appropriate classifier in which case the phrase may contain two instances of the same classifier. Although the precise consequences of this are as yet unclear to us, it shows that the marker and the classifier have certain things in common.

The final reason why Den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004) is interesting to us is that the consequences of it for the possessor in Zhuang can help us choose between different approaches to explain the word order within the nominal domain, as we will see in §8.
7. Referential properties

Like Chinese and many other classifier languages, Zhuang is an article-less language. Whether a noun has a definite or indefinite interpretation is only overtly indicated if a demonstrative or a numeral is present: a noun phrase containing a demonstrative is generally interpreted as definite and a noun phrase containing a numeral (in the absence of a demonstrative) is definitely indefinite. Bare nouns can be both definite and indefinite, though there appears to be some dialectal variation. In what follows, we discuss the interpretation of four types of noun phrases in Zhuang, namely, (i) bare NPs; (ii) [Cl-N] phrases; (iii) [Nume-Cl-N] phrases / [Cl-N-‘one’] phrases; and (iv) [(Nume)-Cl-N-Dem] phrases.

Bare NPs. Bare NPs in Zhuang can be interpreted as generic, definite and indefinite. This is illustrated in the sentences below.

To show the interpretation of the different noun phrases in this section, we make use of the fact that not all interpretations are possible in all syntactic positions. For instance, just like Chinese (and many other languages), Zhuang does not allow indefinite subjects in sentence initial position. Preverbal subjects of episodic predicates must be definite and those of non-episodic predicates tend to (but do not have to) be generic. In contrast, subjects of existential sentences, with the subject following the verb, must be indefinite. By putting the different types of noun phrases in these different positions, we can verify their referential properties.

Thus, putting a bare noun in the subject position of an episodic predicate, in (80), we see that the bare noun takes on a definite interpretation. In the subject position of non-episodic predicates, we see that it can be generic (in (81)) and in the subject position of an existential sentence, it is indefinite (see (82)). In object position of certain verbs, we may find definite, indefinite and generic noun phrases and as such we expect that a bare noun can, depending on the context, be interpreted in all three ways, which is confirmed, in (83).

Note that bare nouns, regardless of their referential properties, can be interpreted as singular and plural.

**DEFINITE:**

(80) a. dou  hai  dwk
    door  open  PROG
    ‘the door(s) is/are open’

b. ma  cingq  byaij  gvaq  majlu
    dog  right-now  run  pass  road
‘the dog(s) is/are crossing the road’

**GENERIC:**

(81) a. ma ngaeq gwn noh
dog like consume meat
‘dogs like to eat meat’

b. vunz miz song fwngz, rox guh hong (Qín 1993: 4)
people have two hand can do work
‘people have two hands, they can work.’

**INDEFINITE:**

(82) gwnz daiz miz yenjging, mwngz bang gou dawz
above table have spectacle, 2SG help 1SG bring
gvaq daeuj
pass come
‘there are (a pair of/pairs of) spectacles on the table, you bring them to me’

**GENERIC/DEFINITE/INDEFINITE:**

(83) gou ciengj cawx saw
1SG want buy book
‘I want to buy books/the books(s)/a book/some books’

**[Cl-N] phrases.** The interpretation of [Cl-N] seems to vary across dialects. Our informants do not agree on their referential properties. In Wűming Zhuang, however, according to published sources, confirmed by our field work, [Cl-N] phrases can be used alone. They can have different readings. Taking into account what we said in §3.4, we know that (whatever the internal structure is) [Cl-N] phrases can be generic.

The following example shows that it can also be indefinite:

(84) a. daegnuengx haet gwn aen lwymaenx
younger brother morning consume CLgeneral sweet potato
‘younger brother eats a sweet potato every morning.’

b. gou miz duz mou (=(36b))
1SG have CLanimal pig
‘I have a pig’
As far as we understand, [Cl-N] phrases can also be definite. Qin (1995: 263 (49)) uses the *ba*-construction in his Mandarin translation of the following sentence, which can be taken as a strong indication that [Cl-N] phrases can be interpreted as definite in Zhuang:

(85) mwngz suj aen ci hwnj-daeuj
   2SG lock CL thing bike up-come
   ‘you lock up the bike, …’

You (1982: 36) states that the classifiers in Zhuang (and related languages) are like those in some southern varieties of Chinese in that they have a “demonstrative function”. Here is an example he gives; in his translation he uses a demonstrative (both examples, cf. You 1982: 36):

(86) a. boux hak heuh de bae haemh neix
     CL people official call 3SG go evening this
     ‘that/the official tells him to go tonight’

b. yiengheix aen gang hix vaih
   consequently CL thing vessel also break
   ‘consequently, the vessel also broke’

Zhang and Qin (1993: 213), in presenting examples of the Zhuang counterparts of the Chinese *ba*-construction, state explicitly that the [Cl-N] phrases of these sentences are *zhidingde* ‘definite’.

In short, just like bare nouns in Zhuang, [Cl-N] phrases can be interpreted as definite, indefinite and generic; in view of our discussion in §3.4, this is not a surprise; if we are right there, [Cl-N] phrases could actually well be bare nouns.

[Nume-Cl-N] phrases / [Cl-N-‘one’] phrases. As mentioned earlier on, in Zhuang, the numeral ‘one’, *ndeu*, behaves differently from the other numerals. *Ndeu* always follows the noun, as illustrated once more in (87a) and other numerals always precede the classifier, as illustrated in (87b).

(87) a. gou bae cawx bonj saw ndeu
    1SG go buy CL volume book one
    ‘I am going to buy a book’

b. gou bae cawx sam bonj saw
    1SG go buy three CL volume book
    ‘I am going to buy three books’
Phrases that involve numerals (be it ‘one’ or otherwise) in Zhuang are always indefinite, unless a demonstrative is present. This can be shown by the fact that they can appear in the existential construction, as in (88).

\[(88) \text{a. } \text{gwnz daiz miz sam bonj saw, mwngz bang } \]
\[\text{above table have three CL volume book, 2SG help} \]
\[\text{gou dawz gyaq daeuj} \]
\[1SG \text{ bring pass come} \]
\[‘there are three books on the table, bring them to me’ \]
\[\text{b. } \text{gwnz daiz miz bonj saw ndeu, mwngz bang gou} \]
\[\text{above table have CL volume book one, 2SG help 1SG} \]
\[\text{dawz gvaq daeuj} \]
\[\text{bring pass come} \]
\[‘there is a book on the table, bring it to me’ \]

As shown earlier, in Zhuang, only definite noun phrases can appear in subject position. As expected, phrases that involve numerals but no demonstrative cannot appear in the subject position, as illustrated in (89).

\[(89) \text{a. *sam duz ma gwn noh} \]
\[\text{three CL animal dog consume meat} \]
\[\text{Intended reading: ‘there are three dogs eating meat’} \]
\[\text{b. *duz ma ndeu gwn noh} \]
\[\text{CL animal dog one consume meat} \]
\[\text{Intended reading: ‘a dog is eating meat’} \]

[Cl-N-Dem] phrases. When a demonstrative is present, the expression is definite.

\[(90) \text{a. duz ma haenx/neix cingq byaij vajj majlu} \]
\[\text{CL animal dog that/this right-now run pass road} \]
\[‘that/this dogs are crossing the road’ \]
\[\text{b. *gwnz daiz miz bonj saw haenx,} \]
\[\text{above table have CL vol book that} \]
\[\text{Intended reading: ‘there is that book on the table…’} \]

Summary. In (Wûming) Zhuang, bare nouns and [Cl-N] phrases can be definite, indefinite and generic. In light of the discussion in §3.4, this comes as no surprise. If [Cl-N]
phrases are really just complex nouns, we expect their distribution to be the same as that of bare nouns.

Phrases involving a numeral, but no demonstrative, are exclusively interpreted as indefinite while phrases containing a demonstrative are mostly interpreted as definite.

8. Deriving the word order

In the previous sections, we discussed some properties of different elements we may come across in the nominal phrase in Zhuang. To recapitulate, Zhuang has the following ordering of elements in the nominal phrase (with slash and curly brackets indicating complementary distribution).

(91) {numeral >1, it} — classifier — noun — modifier(s) — demonstrative/\{nde\}

With respect to the modifier, we saw that for possessors there are two possibilities. Besides occupying the regular modifier position (between the noun and the demonstrative), it can also appear after the demonstrative, but then it must be accompanied by the marker *duh*.

(92) numeral > 1 — classifier — noun — demonstrative — *duh* possessor

The sentence in (93a) is a representation of the order in (91), the modifier being a possessor, and (93b) pairs up with (92).

(93) a. duz ma gou haenx [Cl NP Poss Dem]
   \text{CL animal dog 1SG that}
   ‘that dog of mine’

b. duz ma haenx duh gou [Cl NP Dem *duh* Poss]
   \text{CL animal dog that MRKR 1SG}
   ‘that dog of mine’

Note that, as we remarked above, with respect to (93a) in which the possessor precedes the demonstrative, the insertion of *duh* in front of the possessor is possibly optional for older speakers, though younger ones don’t like it. In (93b) where the demonstrative precedes the possessor, the marker is obligatory.
In this section we briefly discuss the ordering of the different elements, especially in comparison to other languages, with special attention to the different positions the possessor may occupy.

Setting the issue of the possessor aside for the moment, we observe that, comparing Zhuang to languages such as Chinese, a number of properties of the Zhuang ordering of elements in (91) is quite interesting. As a reference, the typical unmarked Chinese order is given in (94):

(94) Dem — Nume (all of them) — Classifier — modifier(s) (MRKR) — Noun

From a Chinese perspective, the interesting properties of Zhuang are the phrase-finality of the demonstrative, the complementary distribution between the demonstrative and ndeu 'one' (both of which will be briefly discussed in the present section) and the fact that the modifiers follow the noun (the difference in the order of the noun and its modifier between Chinese and Thai was discussed in §6.2; we will not come back to it here).

With respect to the placement of the demonstrative, the theoretically inclined comparative literature in which a central issue is the question whether there should be one base order from which all languages (or a defined subset) derive their specific surface orders, and if so, which one that should be, seems to converge on the conclusion that, at least with respect to (Asian) classifier languages, the “Chinese” order in (94) represents the base order, that is, with the demonstrative in phrase initial position. For languages such as Zhuang, this means that to derive the correct surface order, the rest of the phrase (the numeral, the classifier and the NP) has to move around the demonstrative into a position in front of it; this is indicated in (95). The same derivation would apply to languages such as Hmong, Indonesian, Nung, Thai and Vietnamese; see, among others, Simpson (2005), Singhapreecha (2000) and Nguyen (2004). To derive the Chinese surface order, nothing needs to be done.

(95) Underlying structure: [Dem (Nume) Cl NP]
Movement past Dem: [[((Nume) Cl NP), Dem ti]]

There are several (theoretical) arguments for the derivation in (95), the most convincing one being that, as Simpson (2005) points out, the languages in question tend to be head-initial (that is, VO) languages and, assuming that the demonstrative occupies a position that heads the phrase as a whole, creates a certain degree of consistency, if the projection headed by the demonstrative were head-initial as well.

In this discussion, Sybesma and Sio (to app.) take a different approach. First of all, they point out that, while there is in principle nothing against movement of the entire
part of the phrase that follows the demonstrative into a position that precedes it, the strategy in (95) makes wrong empirical predictions for Zhuang: when we move the entire part of the phrase that follows the demonstrative into phrase initial position, it will be impossible to ever get the possessor in a position following the demonstrative. The second point it cannot explain is the obligatory presence of $duh$ when the possessor follows the demonstrative, while it is not obligatory otherwise.

To illustrate the first point, if we take the structure of (96a) as our input, and we apply the procedure in (95), that is, moving the entire constituent following the demonstrative to a position preceding it, we get (96b).

(96) a. [Dem-(Nume)-Cl-NP-(duh) Poss]
b. $[(\text{Nume})\text{-Cl-NP-}(duh) \text{Poss}], \text{Dem } t,

In other words, the possessor will move along with the rest of the phrase it is embedded in. Whatever structure one would want to assign to (96a), it will be very hard to move a chunk containing several heads such as the numeral and the classifier as well as the NP away and leave $[duh \text{Poss}]$ behind. The only type of input to (95) that can result in an order in which $[duh \text{Poss}]$ follows the demonstrative, is (97).

(97) [Dem-$duh$ Poss-(Nume)-Cl-NP]

That is, in the base structure, the possessor, including the marker, precedes the classifier and the noun. Note that the movement operation no longer applies to “the entire constituent following the demonstrative” but must be reformulated to “(Nume)-Cl-NP”; but this is not the most problematic aspect of this proposal. What is a problem here, though, is that there is absolutely no motivation for generating the possessor so high in the nominal structure, even above the numeral and the classifier, especially in view of the fact that modifiers in Zhuang as a rule follow the noun.

In short, taking a Chinese-type demonstrative-first base approach to the derivation of the Zhuang surface order runs into empirical problems.

Instead of taking the “Chinese” order as the base order, Sybesma and Sio (to app.) propose to take the following order as the base order for all languages involved in this discussion (though we will restrict our attention to Mandarin and Zhuang here). The most eye-catching feature here is the low generation position of the demonstrative, namely right above the lexical NP.

(98) (Nume) — Cl — Dem — NP
To derive the correct surface word order, we see that in Zhuang, the NP would have to move into a position in between the classifier and the demonstrative, while Chinese would have to move the demonstrative into phrase-initial position; we will not go into the technical details here (for which see Sybesma and Sio (to app.)), but we do want to explain the motivation behind the proposal of taking (98) as the base order.

The postulation of the demonstrative in a position relatively low in the structure is not entirely new. In a number of papers (Giusti 1993; Szabolcsi 1994; Campbell 1996; Hoekstra and Hyams 1996; Brugè 2002), the point has been made that there are good reasons for assuming that there is a projection, right above NP, which is related to the expression of the referential properties of the phrase as a whole. These researchers come to this conclusion for different reasons, some conceptual, some theoretical, some empirical (once again, for details, see Sybesma and Sio (to app.)). Interestingly, Campbell, entirely on the basis of evidence from English, proposes that this projection right above NP is not only the place of origin of the demonstrative, but also the projection where the indefinite article is generated. The reasoning that leads him to the low generation of the indefinite article in English is partly based on the different positions the definite and indefinite articles occupy relative to many: the many books vs. many a book. In any case, his idea that there is one projection, right above the NP, which is the place of generation of both the indefinite article and the demonstrative is of course interesting in view of the fact that in Zhuang the demonstrative and ndeu ‘one’ are in complementary distribution. This constitutes the first reason for postulating (98) as the base order: cross-linguistic evidence, fitting in very naturally with the nature of Zhuang.

The second reason has to do with the possessor. We just mentioned the fact that taking (94) as the base order makes it impossible to derive the Zhuang order with the possessor plus marker [duh Poss] following the demonstrative. The question is how we, with (98) as the base order, can get the NP in between the classifier and the demonstrative and leave [duh Poss] behind. Recall that in §6.2 we derived the order [N duh Poss] in the following way:

\[(99) \ [XP \ ma \ ‘dog’ \ gou \ ‘1SG’ ] \ predicate inversion:\n\rightarrow [YP gou [Y duh [XP ma \ gou]]] \ repeated:\n\rightarrow [ZP ma [Z duh [YP gou [Y duh [XP ma \ gou]]]]]
\]

In the last line of (99) the noun ma ‘dog’ occupies a specifier position in the structure, from which it can easily move away by itself. If we assume that as a next step of the derivation of the phrase the demonstrative is added to the structure, ma ‘dog’ can move past it, without having to take duh gou ‘MRKR 1SG’ with it, thus deriving the ordering in (93b).
In conclusion, (98) is to be preferred over (94) as the base order for Zhuang, not only for general, cross-linguistic reasons, but also because in further deriving the surface order, we do not run into empirical problems.

9. Conclusion

In this paper, we have provided an overview of the properties of the different elements and their interaction within a Zhuang noun phrase, as well as of the referential properties of the different Zhuang nominal phrases. We also have, relying on the interaction between the demonstrative and the possessor in Zhuang, argued that in Tai and Sinitic languages, the demonstrative is generated quite low in the structure of the noun phrase, namely right above the lexical NP.
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北部壯語中的名詞短語：
一項描寫性研究

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本文對北部壯語中的名詞短語作了全面的描寫，內容包括：(i) 各種名詞性成分的性質，包括量詞、數詞、指示詞和修飾語；(ii) 各種不同形式的名詞短語的指稱性質；(iii) 從比較的角度討論名詞性成分的語序排列。

關鍵詞：北部壯語, 量詞, 數詞, 指示詞, 修飾語, 有定指稱性質, 無定指
稱性質