This morpheme is shared by all branches of the Zhuang-Tai languages;¹ it is not found in the Kam-Sui languages.² Pittayaporn reconstructs two PT forms for this etymon, a strong form *kawA (717) and a weak form *kuːA (716).

A number of other morphemes are used as first singular personal pronouns in the Zhuang area. One of these is ngoh (ŋo6), a Han loan from 我 wǒ ‘I, me’; this is found most commonly in the SW border counties Jingxi, Debao, Daxin, Longzhou, Ningming and Chongzuo (ŋo2), where it has by and large replaced the original Tai word gou. Another word commonly used is hoiq (hoːi5) ‘slave’, used as a self-deprecatory form when speaking with social superiors (cf. the use of 奴 nú ‘slave’ in pre-modern Chinese as a 1st person singular female pronoun).³ Neither ngoh nor hoiq has been included in the present survey, although data for hoiq were collected for a supplementary lexical list.

Gou does not appear in quite a few of the texts included in the survey, owing to the above substitutions or by stylistic convention, e.g. omission of pronoun S and A arguments.

For gou, dialect variation is primarily found in the vowel:

-au is found in Wuming and Yongning North, and in SZh areas Daxin, Longzhou, Ningming, and Shangsi, and in Cao Bằng and Wenshan Nùng;
-ou is found in both NZh and SZh areas, In the NZh areas, it is found in east-central GX (Shanglin, Laibin, Guigang, Hengxian) and in west central Du’an and Pingguo (forming a ring around Wuming), with an outlier in Longsheng in the NE. In the SZh areas it is found in Yongning South and Qinzhou;
-ǝu found in west-central GZh (Zhenning, Ziyun, Panxian, Qinglong, etc.) and Qiubei in EY;

¹ Gàilùn p. 157. Liáng and Zhāng suggest that tsi¹ in Lakkia and tsia¹ in Pubiaq may possibly be cognate, but give no justification.
² Cf. CTSB 0494, p. 122.
³ More precisely hoiq is a 3rd-person reference form whose pragmatic referent is normally 1st person singular.
Sources: Traditional texts from survey locations.