Bugan—a new Mon-Khmer language of Yunnan Province, China

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The Bugan number nearly 3000 and are found in the mountainous areas of southern Guangnan 广南 and northern Xichou 西畴 Counties in the southeastern part of Yunnan Province. The Bugan live in the following seven villages: 老挖龙 Laowalong [pə^55]uŋ¹³], 新挖龙 Xinwalong [pə^55]tsun¹³], 九平 Jiuping [pə^55]tsian³¹], 石北坡 Shibeipo [pə^55]ce¹³], 新寨 Xinzhai [lǘ³¹]an¹³], 马龙 Malong [pə^55]yu³¹] and 那拉 Nala. The Bugan and the Han Chinese live together in Jiuping, Xinzhai, and Nala; the other four villages are exclusively inhabited by Bugan. The Bugan call themselves [pə^55]kan³³] in their own language, the surrounding Han call them Hualo or 花族 Huazhu ‘colorful people’, because the Bugan women wear colorful traditional dresses made from sewing together triangular swathes of printed cloth. The Bugan do not consider themselves to be natives of Guangnan and Xichou but came here before the Han, the Miao/Hmong, and the Yao. Some Bugan people say their ancestors originated from Jiangxi, Sichuan, and Guizhou Provinces and have lived in Guangnan and Xichou for ten or more generations. The Bugan celebrate their own New Year’s festival in April of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. During the festival days they sing native or Han songs, and dance together to music of the [pə^3¹], a kind of Bugan instrument made of bamboo and calabashes. Nowadays, only a few old people are able to sing their native songs. The Bugan male clothing is the same as the Han’s, females are accustomed to wearing long black skirts, colorful dresses, and headwraps. The Bugan used to marry only within their own ethnic group, but in recent times a few Bugan girls have married young Han men. The most common family names are nine in number and are: 李 Li, 王 Wang, 郭 Guo, 罗 Lou, 严 Yan, 卢 Lu, 普 Pu and Yi. All Bugan people speak their mother tongue and adults also can speak Chinese. There is no variation in the Bugan language. This paper is based on my 1994 investigation.

1. The Sound system

There is a double series of initials in the sound system, prenasalized and plain for stops and affricates. Most vowels possess a tense (υ) and lax (v) contrast.

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Final consonants, stops and tones are prone to change. A part of the vocabulary can be pronounced with either final nasal or stop (same place of articulation), some words (but not in context) can be pronounced in two different tones. Sandhi changes are usual, especially tone changes; there are also some blends caused by fusion of syllables. sau\textsuperscript{33} ‘bird’, bi\textsuperscript{31} ‘two’, bi\textsuperscript{33} ‘classifier’ \sim sau\textsuperscript{33}bi\textsuperscript{31} ‘two birds’, wi\textsuperscript{31} ‘we’, bi\textsuperscript{31} ‘two’, pau\textsuperscript{31} ‘classifier’ \sim wi\textsuperscript{31}bi\textsuperscript{31} ‘we two’, le\textsuperscript{31} ‘auxiliary, belong to’, s\textsuperscript{31} ‘I’ \sim lio\textsuperscript{55} ‘mine, belong to me’.

Compared with the surrounding languages (Han, Zhuang, Yi/Lolo, Miao/Hmong, or Yao), Bugan syllables are rather subject to change.

\textbf{1.1 Initials}

\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
 p & ph & b & mb & m & f & w \\
 t & th & d & md & nd & n & n & l \\
 θ & s & ç & ç & z \\
 k & kh & g & įg & į & x & q & įq & Y \\
 h & ? \\
 ts & tsh & mts & mtsh & mdz & ndz \\
\end{tabular}

\textit{Figure 1. Initials}

The Bugan language has 36 initials, /ʃ/ appears only before vocalic onset. [voice] and [aspiration] are contrastive features in some stops and in some double initials of the type ‘nasal + affricate’: /p/ b ph, k g kh, t d th, mts mtsh mdz/. There are five presnasalized stops, /mb/ įg įq md nd/. Durations of these initials are longer than those of corresponding non-nasalized stops /b/ g q d/ but their nasal resonance is not especially strong, sometimes it is only slightly perceptible. The same is true of the affricates /mts/ mtsh mdz/. With the tone 31, nasal /m/ of /mts mtsh mdz/ is pronounced as stop /p/-\textDash mt\textsuperscript{31}se\textsuperscript{31} \sim pt\textsuperscript{31}se\textsuperscript{31} ‘three’, mt\textsuperscript{31}sha\textsuperscript{31} \sim pt\textsuperscript{31}ha\textsuperscript{31} ‘to rub with the hands, make a cord’. Before the rhyme /i-/, initial /ts-/ is palatalized to [tɕ-]—t\textsuperscript{31}shiu\textsuperscript{31} \sim t\textsuperscript{31}chiou\textsuperscript{31} ‘to sneeze’, ts\textsuperscript{35}yu\textsuperscript{35} \sim tɕ\textsuperscript{35}yu\textsuperscript{35} ‘to have money on sb.’ The presnasalized initial /ŋg/ sometimes is pronounced as a pure nasal [ŋ]—ŋ\textsuperscript{31}ga\textsuperscript{31} \sim ŋ\textsuperscript{31}a\textsuperscript{31} ‘yellow’. Words with /g-, įq-, md-, mdz-/ are few in number; in my record, there is only one word for each of /g- įq-/, i.e., ga\textsuperscript{35} ‘to stab’, įqu\textsuperscript{33} ‘village’.

/p/ pi\textsuperscript{35} ‘sun’; piau\textsuperscript{35} ‘human being’

/ph/ pho\textsuperscript{35} ‘(maternal) grandfather’; phe\textsuperscript{35} ‘(maternal) grandmother’

/b/ biou\textsuperscript{33} ‘mountain’; bo\textsuperscript{31} ‘dust’

/mb/ mbyuŋ\textsuperscript{55} ‘to eat one’s fill’; mban\textsuperscript{55} ‘to lash’

/m/ me\textsuperscript{13} ‘mother’; mau\textsuperscript{33} ‘younger brother’

/f/ fei\textsuperscript{33} ‘cooked corn or other cereals’; fi\textsuperscript{31} ‘to meet sb.’
pa⁰wat³¹ ‘round’; wa³⁵ ‘to drink’
tau¹³ ‘to look for’; tan³¹ ‘to point to sb.’
tha³¹ ‘large, big’; thu³¹ ‘to fly’
di³¹ ‘bad’; dou³⁵ ‘to pull out’
mda³³ ‘be light (of a lamp)’; mdā³³ ‘be light (of the sky)’
nda³³ ‘be bold and powerful’; ndā³³ ‘be light (weight)’
na³³ ‘younger sister’; nau³¹ ‘much, many’
na³¹ ‘mosquito’; nə²¹³ ‘to erect’
ла³³ ‘red’; laŋ³³ ‘clear (liquid)’
θi³⁵mā³¹ ‘dew’; θi³⁵ ‘alkali water, made from plant ash’
sa³³ ‘hard (material)’; saŋ³⁵/sak⁵⁵ ‘hair’
caŋ³¹ ‘green’; ce³³ ‘stomach’
zuŋ³¹ ‘old’; zo³³ ‘long’
kou³¹ ‘to finish’; ka³¹ ‘to beat with fist or a hammer, etc.’
khɔ³⁵ ‘to fill a bowl with rice, etc.’; khou³⁵ ‘carry on one’s head’
gam³⁵ ‘to stab’
ŋa³¹ ‘yellow’; ŋgai³¹ ‘askew’
ŋa¹³ ‘dark’; na⁵⁵ ‘water buffalo’
xə³¹ ‘horn’; xou⁵⁵ ‘monkey’
qua³¹ ‘to nod’; quou³³ ‘to burn up’
ŋqu³³ ‘village’
ŋoŋ³¹ ‘busy’; you³¹ ‘to read’
ho³¹ ‘slow’; ha³¹ ‘to dry in the sun’
ʔam³¹ ‘warm’; ʔa³³ ‘to rain’
po⁵⁵tsɛ³⁵ ‘ear’; po⁵⁵te³¹³ ‘placenta’
tshə³³ ‘uvula’; tshə³¹ ‘urine’
mtsi³³ ‘fruit’; mtsa³⁵ ‘one meal, classifier’
mtsha¹³ ‘to kill’; mtshu³¹ ‘to lure’
mdʒe³¹ ‘to plait (one’s hair)’; mdzaŋ³⁵ ‘insipid, lack salt’
ndʒe³³ ‘thin (human being)’; ndza⁵⁵ ‘beautiful’
### 1.2 Rhymes

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The Bugan language has 90 rhymes. The tense vowels and lax vowels are contrastive: *kui³³ ‘fire smoke’ ~ kui³³ ‘to dry by smoke’, lyp³³ ‘well’ ~ lyp³³ ‘abyss, deep cave’. Compared to the lax vowels, the tense vowel tongue position is lower and further back, the lax /a/ in ta³¹ ‘near’ is [a], but the tense /a/ in tą³¹ ‘to bet’ is close to [ə]. With the rising tonal syllables, the tense vowels are easy to hear; the laryngeal setting is very tense; but in the words with the falling tone (31) the laryngeal setting is weak.

There are three final stops, /-p, -t, -k/; they are not released. Words with final stops are limited; these words appear only with tones 55, 33, 31 (only two with tone 33 in my record). Some words can be pronounced either with final nasal or stop (same place of articulation) or the coda can be lost altogether: *nam⁵⁵ ~ nap⁵⁵ ‘to close one’s mouth’; *cet⁵⁵ ~ cęn⁵⁵ ‘goat’; *biak⁵⁵ ~ biar⁵⁵ ‘grape’; *pə⁵⁵bop³¹ ~ *pə⁵⁵bou³¹ ‘head’; nuk³¹ ~ nə³¹ ‘to come’; wąk³¹ ~ wə³¹ ‘iron pot’. A few words...
with nasalized vowels lose their nasalization and become oral syllables or they lose the final and preserve the nasal as a nasalized vowel—sẵ33 ~ sa33 ‘eight’, lanŋ31 ~ lă31 ‘horse’. The rhymes /iä aap uâ em ê sê/ appear only in Han and Zhuang borrowing. There is only one word with rhymes /jau jâm iä aap iak em êm âk ân ê/ for each of them. Most of those words are with final nasal or stop, and some are borrowings. Moreover, /uak/ appears only with one suffixed syllable: ho31 ‘slow’; guéak31 ‘very slow’.

/a/ ta31 ‘near’; sa33 ‘hard (material)’
/a/ là55 ‘thin (material)’; tà33 ‘shrivelled, flat’
/ai/ pə55mai35 ‘pupil (of the eye)’; pə55lai33 ‘tongue’
/ai/ ai33qou31(55) ‘cloud’; nai31 ‘flat, level’
/a/ na31 ‘much, many’; tsau33 ‘stingy, narrow-minded’
/a/ làp31 ‘empty’; nâu55 ‘soft, pliable’
/a/ ɲgau35 ‘slippery (road)’; sau31 ‘tree’
/a/ tsau35 ‘early’; sau31 ‘garlic’
/a/ mia31 ‘salt’; pià55 ‘cymbals’
/a/ lià31 ‘keep out (the wind)’; tsià55 ‘to heat up’
/a/ biau31 ‘lunch, midday meal’
/a/ kua55 ‘son’; mə0kua31 ‘folk song’
/am/ kham35 ‘(to work) hard’; tam33 ‘to sink’
/am/ am31 ‘warm’; gam35 ‘to stab’
/an/ laŋ13(31)tə0tan13 ‘stark-naked’; han33 ‘move (house)’
/an/ lan31 ‘naked’; lan33 ‘blunt’
/an/ teətha,55 ‘horizontal, across’; lanŋ31 ~ lă31 ‘horse’
/an/ làŋ33 ‘clear (liquid)’; làŋ31 ‘wooden basin’
/a/ tshā31 ‘greedy, fond of good food’; là55 / làŋ55 ‘blind’
/a/ bā55 ‘sticky’; sā55 / sāŋ55 ‘disorder’
/ap/ te55map31 ‘knot’; nap55 ‘tense, tight’
/at/ pə0wat31 ‘round’; nat55/nan55tə55 ‘to bear, to endure’
/at/ lat31 ‘slippery (road)’; və33/vaŋ13 ‘to turn’
/ak/ pə0lak55 ‘flat’; ndzak31 ‘frozen, stiff’
/ak/ wak31/wa31 ‘iron pot’; màk33/màŋ55 ‘muddy (water)’
/iam/ tsiam55 ‘soul’
/ian/ bianŋ31 ‘light (color)’; thianŋ13 ‘thousand’
/ian/ biaŋ35 ‘claw’; phianŋ35 ‘to support with the hand’
/iä/ miä31 ‘life’
/iap/ puŋ55 tsiap31 ‘Chinese chives’
/iak/ biak55/bianŋ55 ‘grape’
/iän/ tshuan31 ‘boat’; khu33 ‘solidify’
/uan/ ɲuan³¹ 'stupid'; ɲguaŋ¹³çè¹³ 'intestines'
/uà/ luà¹³ 'disorder'; tshuà³¹ 'to send'
/e/ nde³⁵ 'beat'; mtse³¹ 'sour'
/é/ xè³¹ 'taste good'; sè³¹ 'smart'
/ei/ nei³¹ 'smooth'; thei³⁵ 'false, be not true'
/ei'/ lèi³⁵/1³³ 'the sting of a bee or wasp'; khèi⁵⁵ 'to run'
/ue/ ngue³¹ 'crooked, bend'; khue³¹ 'piece, lump'
/em/ lem³⁵ 'to lose (a game, etc.)'
/ém/ lêm³¹ 'reed trumpet, a Chinese woodwind instrument'
/en/ kën³³ 'firm, secure'; thën³⁵ 'to lay out'
/èn/ tèn⁵⁵ 'short (human being)'; yèn³⁵ 'cut'
/ié/ liè³¹/me³¹ 'sickle'; zìè³³ 'rich (colors)'
/e/ te⁵⁵ta³¹ 'true'; mtse³¹ 'three'
/è/ bê³³ 'short (material)'; tê³¹ 'accurate (shooting)'
/ie/ phie³¹ 'to force, compel'; tie⁵⁵ 'hand'
/ie/ mie³³ 'small'; pie³¹ 'to change'
/en/ nen³³ 'cloth'; yen³³/55 'be like, to take after'
/èn/ tšèn³⁵ 'to rub, to scratch an itch'; nèn³³ 'broken'
/et/ zèt³¹ 'to fall down'; nèt³¹ 'to swing'
/i/ xi³³ 'far' di³¹ 'bad'
/i/ tši³⁵ 'cold'; kí³³ 'to wipe, to rub'
/in/ min³¹ 'understand'; pin³⁵ 'shoulder'
/o/ thò³¹ 'large, big'; ɲò³³ 'peppery, hot'
/ò/ tò³⁵ 'hold or carry in both hands'; lò³¹ 'little, few'
/ò/ diò³¹ 'loose, inattentive'; biò³¹ 'two'
/òn/ tsòn³⁵ 'to hoe up (weeds)'; kòn³¹ 'steep'
/ò/ luà¹³ hò³³ hò³³ 'in noisy disorder'; mò³³mù³³ 'roof'
/òk/ kòk³¹/kòn³¹ 'bend upwards'
/o/ zo³³ 'long'; yo³³ 'high'
/ò/ tò³⁵ 'to climb'; mo³¹ 'heavy'
/òw/ kòw³¹ 'deep'; nòwu³³ 'wrinkle, crease'
/òu/ thòu³⁵ 'to prop up'; tšòu³¹ 'to eat'
/io/ ta³¹/pio³³ 'to close, near'; pio³³ 'to collapse'
/io/ pio³¹ 'to set upright'; pù³³pìo³¹ 'coat'
/ön/ yon³¹ 'busy'; pon³³ 'blister'
/ön/ pôn³¹ 'concave, hollow'; khòn³³ 'protruding'
/op/ bòp³³mtse³³ 'hail'; tê³³bop³¹ 'carp'
/ôn/ pion³¹ 'to write down'; pion³¹ 'to make a sound'
/ôn/ pion³³ 'colorful'; pion³¹tie³³ 'finger ring'

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tshu\textsuperscript{55} ‘dry’; khu\textsuperscript{55} ‘expensive’
lu\textsuperscript{55} ‘small, young’; zu\textsuperscript{55} ‘wrong’
\textnu\textsuperscript{55} ‘rainbow’; kui\textsuperscript{33} ‘fire smoke’
p\textsuperscript{0} kui\textsuperscript{55} ‘craftsman’; kui\textsuperscript{33} ‘to dry by smoke’
\c\i\textsuperscript{31} ‘poor, poverty-stricken’; mu\textsuperscript{33} \c\i\textsuperscript{55} ‘China fir’
\p\i\textsuperscript{31} ‘bear’; \n\u\textsuperscript{33} ‘sweet potato’
biou\textsuperscript{33} ‘mountain’; tsiou\textsuperscript{35} ‘to mend (clothes)’
si\textsuperscript{55} m\i\textsuperscript{31} ‘future’; tsjo\textsuperscript{13} ‘to mend (shoes)’
ndzu\textsuperscript{33} ‘thin (human being )’; zu\textsuperscript{31} ‘old’
ts\u\textsuperscript{33} ‘like, be fond of’; lu\textsuperscript{31} ‘to close’
t\u\textsuperscript{55} ‘mouth’; n\u\textsuperscript{55} ‘brain’
te\textsuperscript{55} k\u\textsuperscript{31} ‘frost’; p\textsuperscript{55} n\u\textsuperscript{31} ‘heart’
d\e\textsuperscript{33} ‘long(time)’; z\e\textsuperscript{31} ‘see, catch sight of’
bi\textsuperscript{13} ‘two (animals)’; bi\textsuperscript{33} ‘classifier (for animal)’
m\e\textsuperscript{33} ‘thick’
l\a\textsuperscript{55} \c\i\textsuperscript{31} ‘grain’
l\u\textsuperscript{31} ‘good’; khu\textsuperscript{35} ‘pool, pond’
ts\u\textsuperscript{55} ‘shallow (water)’; tsa\textsuperscript{33} l\u\textsuperscript{55} ‘fermented glutinous rice’
khy\textsuperscript{55} ‘narrow’; khy\textsuperscript{31} ‘the period of the day (from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.)’

1.3 Tones

There are six live tones: two level (55, 33), two rising (35, 13), one falling (31) and the slight tone (atonality) ‘∅’. The slight tone ‘∅’ appears only in some prefixes. The dead tones have pitch shapes 55, 33, 31. Dead tones occur with either lax or tense vowel syllables. Tones are instable in Bugan, a part of the lexicon can be pronounced with either of two tones, zo\textsuperscript{33/55} ‘earth’, do\textsuperscript{13/33} ‘to burn the grass on waste land, for cultivation’, ts\textsuperscript{13/33} ‘to bite’, xa\textsuperscript{55/31} ‘valley’, mt\textsuperscript{55/13} ‘to milk’, l\i\textsuperscript{13/35} ‘the sting of a bee or wasp’, ts\textsuperscript{33/35} ‘to stretch out (one’s hand)’, etc. Tonal change is common in context, and many cases show progressive assimilation, mo\textsuperscript{55} xe\textsuperscript{553(31)} ‘taste bad’, mo\textsuperscript{55} nam\textsuperscript{55(35)} ‘one year’, bi\textsuperscript{31} nam\textsuperscript{31(35)} ‘two years’, nam\textsuperscript{33(35)} ni\textsuperscript{33} ‘this year’, yo\textsuperscript{13} en\textsuperscript{33(35)} ‘very crowded’, p\\o\textsuperscript{35} lo\textsuperscript{35(33)} ‘the upper’. (Tone values in parentheses are unchanged citation values).
Live tones:

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<td>55</td>
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<td>læ̂̃55 ‘thin (material)’; tə̂̃0thañ̂̃55 ‘horizontal, across’</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>mid level</td>
<td>læ̂̃33 ‘to turn round’; när̂̃33 ‘to sleep’</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>high rising</td>
<td>læ̂̃35 ‘to return, give back’; tan̂̃35 ‘to close (a door)’</td>
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<td>low rising</td>
<td>tə̂̃13 ‘to carry on the back’; tan̂̃13 ‘to keep domestic animals’</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>low falling</td>
<td>tə̂̃31 ‘to bet’; tan̂̃31 ‘to cook, to boil (fold, stable, etc.)’</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>slight</td>
<td>pə̂̃0qə̂̃55 ‘left side’; tə̂̃0yə̂̃55 ‘the inner’</td>
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Dead tones:

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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>high level</td>
<td>biak̅55/bian̂̃55 ‘grape’; tsgt55/tsə̂̃55 ‘to hog’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>mid level</td>
<td>mak̅33/maŋ̂̃55 ‘muddy (water)’; wat̅33/wan̂̃13 ‘to turn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>low falling</td>
<td>zet̅31 ‘to fall down’; kə̂̃k31/kə̂̃ŋ̂̃31 ‘bend upwards’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Syllable types

Syllables appear in 12 types (see below). Most syllables are type 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, or 11; the rest are relatively rare. Type 12 has only one word in my record. All vowel onset syllables have glottal (hard) onset [ʔ]; I do not analyze them here. Vowels in the same syllable must all be tense or lax simultaneously, tense vowels and lax vowels do not occur together in same syllable.

1 VT  a³̃3 ‘came back’  ə̂̃33 ‘raw, uncooked’
2 VVT  ẫi³̃3 ‘excrement’  au⁵⁵ ‘husband of one’s aunt’
3 VCT  ẫm³̃1 ‘warm’  an³̃1 ‘to wash’
4 CVT  ta³̃1 ‘be close’  sa³̃3 ‘hard (material)’
5 CVVT  nẫi³̃1 ‘flat, level’  sau³̃1 ‘tree’
6 CVVVT  biou³̃55 ‘leech’  biou³̃33 ‘mountain’
7 CCVT  nde³̃5 ‘to beat’  mtse³̃1 ‘three’
8 CCVVT  ngau⁵⁵ ‘slippery (road)’  mtshaï⁵⁵ ‘mad’
9 CVCT  när̂̃33 ‘to sleep’  zet³̃1 ‘to fall down’
10 CVVCT  bian³̃55 ‘claw’  khuan³̃33 ‘solidify’
11 CCVCT  ndzuŋ³̃33 ‘thin (human)’  mdzan³̃55 ‘insipid’
12 CCVVCT  nguāŋ³̃13çɛ³̃13 ‘intestines’
2. Lexicon

2.1 Word structure

2.1.1 Simple words

There are two types: monosyllabic and disyllabic. Most Bugan words are monosyllabic: $pî^3^5$ 'sun', $tâ^5^5$ 'moon', $tç^5^5$ 'grandfather', $zu^3^3$ 'grandmother', $buñ^3^1$ 'skin', $nau^5^5$ 'shoe', $lî^3^5$ 'to change', $tsi^3^1$ 'to comb'. But there are also disyllabic forms: $bò^5^5mo^3^3$ 'star', $ngò^3^1nau^5^5(3^1)$ 'thing', $fu^5^5da^1^3$ 'money', $tsi^3^1lò^3^5$ 'rabbit', $tq^3^5ti^5^5$ 'to give', $nou^1^3tsau^3^1$ 'to frighten (sb.)', $e^5^5e^5^5$ 'sand'.

2.1.2 Complex words

2.1.2.1. Compound words. A compound is formed in any of several ways: in parallel, verb-object, head-modifier, subject-predicate, or verb-complement.

Parallel type:

\[
tu^3^3.zau^5^5(3^1) \quad \text{‘go out’} \quad mau^3^3.na^3^3 \quad \text{‘sibling’}
\]

out-go

younger brother-younger sister

Verb-object type:

\[
tsò^3^1.qò^3^5 \quad \text{‘go hunting’} \quad bi^3^3(3^5).man^5^5 \quad \text{‘marry (a woman)’}
\]

hunt-game

buy-wife

Head-modifier type: most modifiers follow the head, a few modifiers precede the head.

\[
bìò^3^3.gò^3^3 \quad \text{‘rock hill, karst formation’} \quad zuñ^5^5(3^1).tse^3^1 \quad \text{‘foot of mountain’}
\]

hill-rock

foot mountain

\[
da^1^3(3^5).nàï^5^5 \quad \text{‘wave’} \quad da^3^5.tàu^3^5 \quad \text{‘rice field’}
\]

water-jump

water-field

Subject-predicate type:

\[
mò^5^5(3^3) \quad lâ^3^5 \quad \text{‘the blind’} \quad po^0.qou^5^5.lûñ^3^3 \quad \text{‘thunder’}
\]

eye-blind

sky-make a sound

Verb-complement type:

\[
pù^3^3.sò^3^1 \quad \text{‘easy’} \quad kàï^3^3.sò^3^1 \quad \text{‘comfortable’}
\]

do-easy

stay-good
2.1.2.2. Derived words. There are two main types of derivation: \textit{prefix + head, head + suffix}. All prefixes are pronounced with tone, but a few of them are pronounced with the slight tone.

Prefix + head type:


\textit{tə}^{55/0} - prefix in words for body parts, localities, or animals: \textit{nou}^{55} ‘the back of the body’, \textit{quy}^{35} ‘the palm of the hand’, \textit{kay}^{35} ‘middle’, \textit{yo}^{55} ‘inner’, \textit{kə}^{33} ‘tiger’, \textit{kə}^{33} ‘squirrel’.


\textit{lə}^{0} - prefix in a few body part names: \textit{kə}^{33} ‘the lower jaw’, \textit{po}^{55} ‘shoulder’.


\textit{pu}^{55} - prefix in some animals: \textit{lan}^{31} ‘stallion’, \textit{cen}^{55} ‘nanny (goat)’.

\textit{mu}^{33} - prefix in some plants and female animals: \textit{pa}^{31} ‘peach tree’, \textit{san}^{55} ‘pine’, \textit{lou}^{33} ‘rice straw’, \textit{quy}^{33} ‘sow’, \textit{tsau}^{33} ‘bitch’. Some female animals have the prefix \textit{mu}^{33}, but the relevant males do not have the prefix \textit{pu}^{55}.

\textit{tə}^{0} - prefix in some birds and made objects: \textit{qa}^{35} ‘duck’, \textit{yan}^{35} ‘goose’, \textit{vən}^{31} ‘(ring-necked) pheasant’, \textit{lou}^{35(13)} ‘pliers’.

\textit{mə}^{33} - prefix in some made objects: \textit{tsa}^{31} ‘hand straw cutter’, \textit{dou}^{33} ‘firewood knife’, \textit{pe}^{55} ‘patch’.

\textit{o}^{55} - prefix in some nouns of locality: \textit{du}^{33} ‘upper reaches (of a river), upper place (of land)’, \textit{nda}^{33} ‘the lower’, \textit{lo}^{33} ‘sky’, \textit{lə}^{31} ‘under the sky’.

\textit{di}^{33} - prefix in January ~March, or December of the Chinese lunar calendar: \textit{tsə}^{35} ‘January’, \textit{ni}^{31} ‘February’, \textit{sə}^{13} ‘March’, \textit{lə}^{31} ‘December’.

\textit{mə}^{55} - prefix in April ~November of the Chinese lunar calendar: \textit{pə}^{33} ‘April’, \textit{mi}^{33} ‘May’, \textit{bə}^{55} ‘November’.
Head + Suffix type: In this type, the head is first, followed by the suffix (one or two syllables) to indicate certain conditions, parts of suffixes are reduplication.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ho}^{31} \text{ njuk}^{31} & \quad \text{very slow} \\
\text{ndo}^{13(35)} & \quad \text{nd}^{55} \text{ lou}^{55} \quad \text{very light (not heavy)} \\
\text{mj}^{31} & \quad \text{diamond bright} \\
\text{na}^{13} & \quad \text{na}^{55} \text{ ‘shiny black’} \\
\text{pe}^{31} & \quad \text{pe}^{33} \text{ ‘very careless’} \\
\text{pou}^{31} & \quad \text{pou}^{33} \text{ ‘very careless’} \\
\text{slow} & \quad \text{light} \\
\text{bright} & \quad \text{lan}^{13(31)} \text{ta}^{0} \text{tan}^{13} \quad \text{‘be stark-naked’} \\
\text{black} & \quad \text{lu}^{13} \text{ ho}^{55} \text{ ‘in a mess’} \\
\text{careless} & \quad \text{disorder} \\
\text{naked} & \quad \text{η}^{35} \text{ wa}^{55} \text{ wa}^{35} \quad \text{‘very dark’} \\
\text{disorder} & \quad \text{dark}
\end{align*}
\]

Infixed type: only one infix \( xi^{31} \) ‘is found, and it indicates small female animals’, \( li^{55} \) ‘cattle’, \( pu^{55} li^{55} \) ‘ox’, \( mu^{33} li^{55} \) ‘cow’, \( na^{33} li^{55} \) ‘calf’, \( na^{33} pu^{55} li^{55} \) ‘small ox’, \( mu^{33} xi^{31} li^{55} \) ‘small cow’, \( mu^{33} la^{31} \) ‘mare’, \( mu^{33} xi^{31} la^{31} \) ‘small mare’, \( mu^{33} cen^{−55} \) ‘nanny (goat)’, \( mu^{33} xi^{−3} cen^{55} \) ‘small nanny (goat)’ (\( pu^{55}, mu^{33}, na^{33} \) are prefixes).

2.1.3 Semi-inflection

In some cases, related words differ only by vowel alternation, tense and lax vowel alternation, tonal alternation or consonants (initials) alternation. These include synonyms, antonyms, or the categories change.

Vowel alternation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pho}^{35} & \quad \text{phoe}^{35} \quad \text{(maternal) grandfather’} \\
\text{mu}^{31} & \quad \text{mi}^{31} \quad \text{‘you (singular)’} \\
\text{ci}^{55} & \quad \text{ca}^{55} \text{ ‘yesterday evening’} \\
\text{ηo}^{33} & \quad \text{ηa}^{33} \quad \text{‘peppery’} \\
\text{tsa}^{13} & \quad \text{tsou}^{31} \quad \text{‘to eat’} \\
\text{la}^{35} & \quad \text{li}^{35} \quad \text{‘to change’}
\end{align*}
\]

Tense vowel and lax vowel alternation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kui}^{33} & \quad \text{kui}^{33} \quad \text{‘fire smoke’} \\
\text{nda}^{33} & \quad \text{mda}^{33} \quad \text{‘be light (of a lamp)’} \\
\text{lun}^{33} & \quad \text{lun}^{33} \quad \text{‘well’}
\end{align*}
\]

Tonal alternation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tso}^{55} & \quad \text{tso}^{35} \quad \text{‘rake’} \\
\text{-tshu}^{31} & \quad \text{tshun}^{33} \quad \text{‘throat’} \\
\text{tsan}^{35} & \quad \text{tsan}^{33} \quad \text{‘to smell’}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{tso}^{55} \quad \text{‘to harrow’} \\
\text{tshun}^{33} \quad \text{‘thirsty’} \\
\text{tsan}^{35} \quad \text{‘smelly’}
Consonants (initials) alternation:

- laŋ\(^{33}\) ‘clear (water)’
- man\(^{55}\) ‘muddy (water)’
- ni\(^{33}\) ‘this’
- ki\(^{33}\) ‘that’
- pe\(^{31}\) ‘we’
- hê\(^{31}\) ‘they’
- mtsha\(^{13}\) ‘to kill’
- mtsa\(^{31}\) ‘to die’
- nap\(^{55}\) ‘be closed’
- nap\(^{55}\) ‘to close one’s eyes, to shut up’
- dunŋ\(^{33}\) ‘hole’
- luŋ\(^{33}\) ‘well’

2.2 Loan words

As the result of communication with the Han and the Zhuang, the Bugan language has borrowed some words from Han and Zhuang languages; all the borrowings are modern words. Some Bugan words are similar to Yi/Lolo or other Tibeto-Burman languages, but it is uncertain whether they are cognates or borrowings.

Chinese loan words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bugan</th>
<th>Chinese (Pinyin)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>miou(^{31})</td>
<td>miao</td>
<td>‘temple’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pei(^{35})</td>
<td>bei</td>
<td>‘tablet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tshanŋ(^{31})</td>
<td>chang</td>
<td>‘to taste’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mo(^{31})</td>
<td>mai</td>
<td>‘pulse’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-kan(^{13})</td>
<td>jin</td>
<td>‘axe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pin(^{35})</td>
<td>bing</td>
<td>‘soldier’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min(^{31})</td>
<td>ming</td>
<td>‘understand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lō(^{55})gi(^{31})</td>
<td>liangshi</td>
<td>‘grain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hu(^{31})tsiu(^{13})</td>
<td>huijiao</td>
<td>‘pepper’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsau(^{33})</td>
<td>jiu</td>
<td>‘wine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsau(^{35})</td>
<td>zhao</td>
<td>‘kitchen range’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zhuang loan words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bugan</th>
<th>Wuming (Zhuang)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-man(^{13})</td>
<td>-man(^{55})</td>
<td>‘plum’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-tsiap(^{31})</td>
<td>kep(^{55})</td>
<td>‘chives’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-kù(^{55})</td>
<td>kù(^{31})</td>
<td>‘eggplant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ke(^{13})</td>
<td>kve(^{24})</td>
<td>‘towel gourd’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tg(^{55})</td>
<td>tai(^{33})</td>
<td>‘bag’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mə55. mau42 ‘roof’
laŋ33 li:ŋ55 ‘umbrella’
bə35 buŋ35 ‘greasy, be bored with’

3. Grammar

3.1 Word categories

Although Bugan has some cases of derivational morphology, we can divide Bugan word categories most surely on the basis of structure, distribution, and meaning. Categories are: nouns, pronouns, numerals, classifiers, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, auxiliaries, conjunctions, or mood words.

3.1.1 Nouns

Nouns can stand by themselves, or they can be modified by adjectives, pronouns, or numeral classifier phrases. Generally, the position of the modifier is after the head (noun).

laŋ31 pou35 ‘a white horse’
horse white
mg55 kə33 ‘that child’
child that
wə33 mə55 ‘the younger brother of the child’
yng. brother child
ɔ31 bi33(35) məŋ33 mə55 tshə13(35) ‘I bought one knife.’
I buy knife one classi.

When the cardinality of the noun is one, it can be directly modified by the classifier bə55 ‘one, classifier’.

wə33 bə55 ‘one piece of stone’
stone class.
bə55kou13 bə55 ‘one corn’
corn class.
puŋ55 bə55 ‘one flower’
flower class.
puŋ55liŋ31 bə55 ‘one coat’
coat class.

Most nouns cannot be reduplicated, but many nouns that are concurrently classifiers, can be: he55 he55 ‘every day’.

3.1.2 Pronouns

Personal pronouns distinguish singular, dual, and plural, and the first plural pronouns distinguish inclusive and exclusive. bi31 is a blend of ‘bi31 (two) pau31 (classifier of people).’
\( \text{o}^{31} \text{ 'I'} \quad \text{wi}^{31} \text{bi}\text{\textdegree}^{31} \text{ 'we two'} \quad \text{wi}^{31} \text{ 'we (inclusive)'} \quad \text{pe}^{31} \text{ 'we (exclusive)'} \)

\( \text{m\textdegree}^{31} \text{ 'you (singular)'} \quad \text{mi}^{31} \text{bi}\text{\textdegree}^{31} \text{ 'you two'} \quad \text{mi}^{31} \text{ 'you (plural)'} \)

\( \text{i}^{31} \text{ 'he, she, it'} \quad \text{he}^{31} \text{bi}\text{\textdegree}^{31} \text{ 'they two'} \quad \text{he}^{31} \text{ 'they'} \)

Some interrogative pronouns are formed with \(-\text{pau}^{35}\) (indicating interrogation) and other morphemes, \(\text{a}^{55}\text{pau}^{35}\) 'where', \(\text{t}^{55}\text{pau}^{35}\) 'when', \(\text{t}^{55}\text{pau}^{35}\) 'how many, how much', \(\text{m}^{13}\text{pau}^{35}\) 'how many (people)', \(\text{yen}^{55}\text{pau}^{35}\) 'why'.

Demonstrative pronouns have two basic forms—\(\text{m}^{33}\) 'this' and \(\text{k}^{33}\) 'that'. There are some others, \(\text{t}^{55}\text{ni}^{33}\) 'here', \(\text{t}^{55}\text{ki}^{33}\) 'there', \(\text{m}^{55}\text{ni}^{33}\) 'this side', \(\text{m}^{55}\text{ki}^{33}\) 'that side', \(\text{n}^{13}\text{ni}^{33}\) 'like this', \(\text{n}^{13}\text{ki}^{33}\) 'like that'. There are three deictic degrees to indicate location—\(\text{k}^{33}/\text{d}^{13}\) 'that far', \(\text{k}^{33}\) 'that farther', \(\text{o}^{55}\text{k}^{33}\) 'that farthest'. \(\text{d}^{13}\) is not often used.

\( \text{m}^{55} \text{ ki}^{33} \text{ xu}^{55(13)} \text{ la}^{31} \) 'That boy rides a horse.'

\( \text{m}^{55} \text{ k}^{33} \text{ tsou}^{31} \text{ fei}^{33} \) 'That boy (farther) has a meal.'

\( \text{m}^{55} \text{ o}^{55} \text{k}^{33} \text{ mtshau}^{31} \text{ li}^{55} \) 'That boy (farthest) herds oxen.'

Normally, pronouns cannot be either modified nor reduplicated.

3.1.3 Numerals

\( \text{b}^{55} \) 'one', \( \text{bi}^{31} \) 'two', \( \text{mi}^{31} \) 'three', \( \text{pau}^{33} \) 'four', \( \text{mi}^{33} \) 'five', \( \text{pi}^{33} \) 'six', \( \text{po}^{31} \) 'seven', \( \text{s}^{23} \) 'eight', \( \text{ci}^{33} \) 'nine', \( \text{ma}^{31} \) 'ten', \( \text{zu}^{31} \) 'hundred', \( \text{thia}^{13} \) 'thousand'.

Different forms of 'one' and 'two' have different uses; \(\text{m}^{55}\) 'one' and \(\text{bi}^{31}\) 'two' are used with classifiers to form a numeral classifier phrase.

\( \text{piau}^{13(35)} \) (people) \(\text{m}^{55}\) (one) \(\text{pau}^{31}\) (classifier of people) 'one person',

\( \text{piau}^{13(35)} \) (people) \(\text{bi}^{31}\) (two) \(\text{pau}^{31}\) (classifier of people) 'two persons'.
mā³¹ bo⁵⁵ ʻelevenʼ  \( \text{mə}^{55} \text{ζu}^{31} \text{li}^{33} \text{bo}^{55} \) ʻone hundred and oneʼ
mā³¹ bi³¹ ʻ12ʼ  \( \text{bi}^{31} \text{ζu}^{31} \) ʻtwo hundredʼ
bi³³(31) mā³¹ ʻ20ʼ  \( \text{mə}^{55} \text{thiaŋ}^{13} \) ʻone thousandʼ
mə⁵⁵ ζu³¹ ʻ100ʼ  \( \text{mə}^{55} \text{vā}^{13} \) ʻten thousandʼ

Normally, numerals cannot be modified or reduplicated.

### 3.1.4 Classifiers

Classifiers can be divided into three types—the classifiers for nouns (indicating measures of things, objects, etc.), for verbs (indicating measures of actions), or blends.

**Classifiers for nouns:**

- pau³¹ for people  \( \text{piau}^{13(35)} \text{bi}^{31} \text{pau}^{31} \) ʻtwo personsʼ
- bia³³ for animals  \( \text{li}^{55} \text{mtse}^{31} \text{bia}^{33} \) ʻthree oxenʼ
- li³³ for long-shaped objects  \( \text{xa}^{33} \text{mə}^{55} \text{li}^{33} \) ʻone stickʼ
- tshe¹³ for objects, river  \( \text{you}^{55} \text{mə}^{55} \text{tshe}^{13} \) ʻone riverʼ
- tsuŋ⁵⁵ for plants  \( \text{sau}^{31} \text{pau}^{33} \text{tsuŋ}^{55} \) ʻfour treesʼ
- liu³³ for sheet-shaped objects  \( \text{yai}^{35} \text{mə}^{55} \text{liu}^{33} \) ʻone sheet of paperʼ
- tsam³³ for pair  \( \text{sau}^{33} \text{mə}^{55} \text{tsam}^{33} \) ʻa pair of birdsʼ
- pam³⁵ for portion  \( \text{fei}^{33} \text{mə}^{55} \text{pam}^{35} \) ʻa portion of foodʼ

**Classifiers for verbs:**

- tsi³⁵ time  \( \text{zau}^{31} \text{mə}^{55} \text{tsi}^{35} \) ʻhave been there onceʼ
- mtsa³⁵ for eating  \( \text{tsə}^{31} \text{mə}^{55} \text{mts}^{35} \) ʻhave a mealʼ
- tuŋ⁵⁵ for biting  \( \text{tsə}^{13} \text{mə}^{55} \text{tuŋ}^{55} \) ʻbe bitten onceʼ
- nga³¹ for sleep  \( \text{nəŋ}^{33} \text{mə}^{55} \text{nga}^{31} \) ʻhave slept onceʼ
- tan³³ for fist  \( \text{nde}^{35} \text{mə}^{55} \text{tan}^{33} \) ʻgive sb. a boxʼ

**Blends:**

- mtse³³ for animals, consists of mə⁵⁵ ʻoneʼ and bia³³ (classifier), ta⁵⁵kə³³ mtse³³ ʻa tigerʼ.
- biə¹³ for animals, consists of bi³¹ ʻtwoʼ and biə³³ (classifier), ta⁵⁵kə³³ biə¹³ ʻtwo tigersʼ.
- mbəŋ⁵⁵ for people, consist of mə⁵⁵ ʻoneʼ and pau³¹ (classifier), piau¹³(35) mbəŋ⁵⁵ ʻone personʼ.

Classifiers can be modified by numerals and demonstratives.

- ma⁰kua³¹ mi³³ tsiu³³ ʻfive folk songsʼ
- song five classifier
fei³³ pau³³ pam³⁵
food four classifier

'four portions of food'

ziu⁵⁵ bɔ⁵⁵ ni³³
spoon classifier this

'this spoon'

au³¹ tha³³ ki³³
firewood bundle that

'that bundle of firewood'

A few classifiers can be reduplicated to indicate 'every, all'.

he⁵⁵ he⁵⁵ 'every day'
day day

mai⁵⁵ mai⁵⁵ 'every month'
month month

3.1.5 Verbs

Some verbs have causative forms, indicated by 'ŋgɔ³⁵ + verb', the original meaning of ŋgɔ³⁵ is 'to drive out'.

xɔu³⁵ 'to ride (a horse)'
pgu³¹ 'to get up'
tu³³ 'out'

ŋgɔ³⁵xɔu³⁵ 'to order sb. to ride (a horse)'
ŋgɔ³⁵pgu³¹ 'to order sb. to get up'
ŋgɔ³⁵tu³³ 'to order sb. or sth. to get out'

Some verbs have durative aspect (continuous aspect), indicated by 'sai³³ + verb + naŋ³¹' or 'verb + naŋ¹³'.

ɔ³¹ sai³³ pioŋ¹³
I dur. write

mu³¹ nu³³ naŋ¹³(31) mɔ⁰dze⁵⁵
you do dur. what

'What are you doing?'

li⁵⁵ sai³³ tsɔu³¹ tsiu⁵⁵ naŋ³¹
ox dur. eat grass dur.

The ox is eating grass.'

Verbs can be modified by adverbs and auxiliary verbs.

pe¹³(35) mɔ⁵⁵ yen⁵⁵ me¹³
eld. sister not like mother

'The elder sister doesn’t take after her mother.'

ɔ³¹ faŋ⁵⁵ zau³³(31) naŋ⁵⁵/ŋe³¹
I want go market

'I like to go to the market.'

Verbs cannot be reduplicated.
3.1.6 Adjectives

Adjectives can be modified by different adverbs to indicate degrees.

1st degree  ‘adjective + te\(^{31}\),
comparative  ‘adjective + te\(^{31}le^{31}\),
superlative  ‘kan\(^{55}\) + adjective + le\(^{31}\).

\(\text{nu}^{35}\  s^{31}\  lu^{31}\  te^{31}\)  ‘My house is good.’
\(\text{nu}^{35}\  mu^{31}\  lu^{31}\  te^{31}le^{31}\)  ‘Your house is better.’
\(\text{nu}^{35}\  i^{31}\  kan^{55}\  lu^{31}\  le^{31}\)  ‘His house is the best.’

Adjectives can be modified by all adverbs.

\(mo^{31}\  te^{31}\)  ‘be a bit too heavy’
\(\text{ka}n^{55}\)  ‘very heavy’
\(mo^{31}\)  ‘very heavy’
\(ma^{55}\  lou^{33}\)  ‘be not cold’
\(\text{to}^{0}ka^{33}\)  ‘do (it) immediately’
\(\text{nu}^{13}\)  ‘do’

Adjectives can be followed by 1~2 suffix syllables to indicate certain conditions (see § 2.1.2.2.), and most adjectives can be reduplicated.

\(\text{nga}^{31}\)  ‘deep yellow’
\(\text{nga}^{31}\)  ‘deep yellow’
\(\text{ndzu}^{33}\)  ‘very thin (person)’
\(\text{ndzu}^{33}\)  ‘very thin’

3.1.7 Adverbs

Adverbs cannot be modified, their main grammatical function is to modify verbs and adjectives. Most of them occur before their heads, only few adverbs follow their heads (see 3.1.5, 3.1.6).

3.1.8 Prepositions

Prepositions form prepositional phrases with nouns and pronouns and play a sentence part.

\(pa^{0}\  \text{na}^{m55}\  \text{te}^{31}\  ts^{55}ni^{33}\)  ‘(from ) last year until today.’
\(\text{last year to now}\)
pi¹³ thɔ⁵⁵(31) tsai³¹/pi³³ ta⁵⁵ ‘The sun is bigger than the moon.’
sun big than moon

i³³(31) lai⁵⁵ ban⁵⁵ pa⁵⁵ sau¹³ a³³ ‘He has fallen from the top of a tree.’
he fall from top tree come

3.1.9 Auxiliaries

mɔ⁵⁵ precedes adjectives, indicates quality or condition of sth. or sb.
mɔ⁵⁵ la¹³(33) ‘(It) is red’, mɔ⁵⁵ŋga⁵⁵(31) ‘(It) is yellow’

la³³ precedes nouns, pronouns, forming a genitive.
na³³ mɔ⁵⁵mi³³ la³³ mu⁵⁵(31) ‘This house is yours.’
house here belong-to you

le³¹ follows nouns, pronouns, forms a genitive.
moŋ³³ a³¹ le³¹ ‘The knife is mine.’
knife I belong-to

tsy³¹ follows verbs, indicates continuous action.
mɔ⁵⁵ be³⁵ tsu³¹ on³⁵(13) bi³¹ tshe¹³
child hold sugar cane two classifier
‘This boy is holding two sugar canes.’

3.1.10 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are often used to link up content words or phrases.

we³³ le³¹ du³³
eld. brother and ygr. brother
‘elder brother and younger brother’

mtse³³ tsɔ³³ kai³³ ma³³ mtse⁵⁵(31)
banana have or haven’t
‘(Do you) have any bananas?’

3.1.11 Mood words

They usually occur at the end of a sentence to indicate its mood. By itself a mood word has no meaning.

ma¹³, a³³ occur in assertives.

i³¹ mɔ⁵⁵ nɔ³¹ ma¹³ ‘He doesn’t come here.’
he not come assert
zau⁵⁵ yau⁵⁵ sau⁵⁵ tsu⁵⁵ mə⁵⁵ nam⁵⁵ a³³
go read auxiliary one year assert.

‘He has gone to school for one year.’

ni⁵⁵ occurs in interrogatives.

i³¹ nɨ³¹ mə⁵⁵ nɨ³¹ ni⁵⁵
he come not come ques.

‘Does he come here?’

la⁰ occurs in imperatives.

wi³¹ nə⁵⁵ la⁰
we go imp.

‘Let us go!’

3.2. Phrases

There are subject-predicate phrases, verb-object phrases, parallel phrases, head-modifier phrases, verb-complement phrases, and numerical-classifier phrases.

3.2.1 Subject-predicate phrases

Subjects are usually formed by nouns, pronouns, nominal head-modifier phrases or parallel phrases. Predicates are usually formed by verbs, adjectives, verbal and adjective parallel (or head-modifier) phrases, or verb-complement phrases.

tsion³³ nə⁵⁵
deer step on

‘the deer steps on’

hɔn³³ zon⁵⁵(31) tsion³³ tsaŋ³³
footprint foot deer smelly

‘Footprints of deer are smelly.’

i³¹ nɨ³¹ mə⁵⁵ tsi³⁵
he come one time

‘He has once come here.’

we³³ le³³ pə³⁵ nə³¹bi⁵⁵ di³¹
eld. bro. and sis.-in-law quarrel terribly
‘Elder brother quarrels with sister-in-law terribly.’

mə⁵⁵ ə³³(31) zəu³¹ thə³¹ zəu³¹ yo³³
child I also big also tall
‘My child is big and tall.’
3.2.2 Verb-object phrases

The elements which act as an object are the same as those that act as a subject:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{te}^{31} & \quad \text{thuŋ}^{31} \text{go}^{31} \\
\text{worship} & \quad \text{buckwheat} \\
& \quad \text{‘to offer buckwheat as a sacrifice to (ancestors )’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tan}^{35} & \quad \text{sau}^{31} \quad \text{le}^{33} \quad \text{lau}^{35(13)} \\
\text{put-in} & \quad \text{garlic and} \quad \text{prickly-ash} \\
& \quad \text{‘to put some garlic and Chinese prickly ashes (in the bag )’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta}^{35i}^{55} & \quad \text{muu}^{31} \\
\text{give} & \quad \text{you} \\
& \quad \text{‘to give you’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pa}^{55} & \quad \text{kæn}^{33} \quad \text{ca}^{33} \quad \text{nuŋ}^{31} & \quad \text{tsi}^{13} & \quad \text{kæ}^{35} \quad \text{thi}^{13} & \quad \text{tsi}^{55} \\
\text{Bugan} & \quad \text{afraid} \quad \text{Nong Zhigao} \quad \text{Emperor} \\
& \quad \text{‘The Bugan were afraid of Emperor Nong Zhigao.’}
\end{align*}
\]

3.2.3 Parallel phrases

Parallel phrases can be formed by two or more nouns, pronouns, verbs, or adjectives, some use conjunctions but others don’t.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{cu}^{33} & \quad \text{tau}^{33} \quad \text{cu}^{33} \quad \text{tsæ}^{35} \\
\text{meat} & \quad \text{pig} \quad \text{meat} \quad \text{chicken} \quad \text{‘pork and chicken’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ca}^{31} & \quad \text{le}^{31(33)} \quad \text{i}^{31} \\
\text{he} & \quad \text{and} \quad \text{I} \quad \text{‘he and I’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mu}^{31} & \quad \text{le}^{33} \quad \text{na}^{33} & \quad \text{mu}^{33} \quad \text{zæ}^{55} \quad \text{pa}^{31} \\
\text{you and girl} & \quad \text{dance} \quad \text{a reedpipe wind instrument} \\
& \quad \text{‘You and the girls dance following the music (played by a reedpipe wind instrument).’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tsæŋ}^{31} & \quad \text{a}^{33} \quad \text{tsæu}^{31} \\
\text{take} & \quad \text{assert. come eat} \quad \text{‘take (it) back and eat’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kan}^{55} & \quad \text{tho}^{55(31)} \quad \text{kan}^{55} \quad \text{yo}^{33} \\
\text{very big} & \quad \text{very high} \quad \text{‘big and high’}
\end{align*}
\]

3.2.4 Head-modifier phrases

There are two types. When nouns act as the head they may be modified by adjectives, pronouns, nouns, or numerical classifier phrases (see § 3.1.1.). When
verbs or adjectives act as the heads, they may be modified by adverbs and time
nouns (see § 3.1.5. and § 3.1.6.).

3.2.5 Verb-complement phrases

Verbs can be followed by adjectives, verbs, or numerical classifier phrases
to complete their meaning, thus forming a verb-complement phrase.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{quarrel} & \quad \text{truly} \quad \text{to quarrel terribly} \\
\text{cut} & \quad \text{fall} \quad \text{to cut down} \\
\text{hold} & \quad \text{auxiliary} \quad \text{two} \quad \text{classifier} \quad \text{to hold two} \\
\text{read} & \quad \text{auxiliary} \quad \text{one year} \quad \text{have gone to the school for one year} \\
\text{high} & \quad \text{three} \quad \text{chis} \quad \text{He is three chis (a unit of length) high.}
\end{align*}
\]

3.2.6 Numerical classifier phrases

These consist of ‘numeral + classifier’; some become blends (see §3.1.3,
§3.1.4).

3.3 Sentence parts and word order

Buga is a SVO language; only the existential sentence is OSV (see §3.4). Attributes follow heads; some adverbials follow heads, but the others precede
heads. Complements always follow heads.

The elements which act as subject or object in a sentence are the same as
those in a phrase; some examples are found in §3.1, §3.2; below are some more
sentences.

S
nuñ31tsi13ko35thie13tsu55
Emperor Nong Zhigao
‘Emperor Nong Zhigao pursued the Bugan.’

S
pə55kən33nu33mtsən35
Buga
‘The Bugan spend festivals on top of the mountain.’
S V O or S Predicate
mì31 a33 ta33(35) pu55 liq31 ni33 zà33 ma55za33
you come look coat this good not good
‘Please come here to look my coat, and tell me if it is good or not.’

S V O
s31 ndò31 se31 taù33 ma55ni33
I like sell pig this
‘I’d like to sell this pig.’

S Predicate
kòu13 tai31(55) ma55ni33 kàŋ55 mq31 ni55a0
corn basket this very heavy mood word
‘This basket of corn is very heavy.’

The elements which act as attributes and complements in a sentence are the same as those in a phrase (attribute equals the modifier of nouns). Adverbials are formed by adverbs, adjectives, time nouns, or pronouns. Some examples were given in §3.1 and §3.2, and there are some more examples below.

Adverbial Attribute
he33 ni33 s31 mtsha13 tse0qa35 mi33biò33
today I kill duck five classifier
‘I have killed five ducks today.’

Adverbial
pa55kàŋ33 kài33 qha35 tsù33nu33 mtæn35
Bugar on way spend festival
‘The Bugar spent the festival on the road (when they moved).’

Attribute Adverbial Complement
yà31 thu55 ni33 khon35 sou55 ò55 pe13tou13
take vegetable this all put inner basket
‘Please put all vegetables in the basket.’

Adverbial Attribute Complement
jì31 bæn55 ò55 tì55 s33 be35 thàm55(33) tsà13 bi21 nò31
he from inner pocket pull take egg hen two come
‘He takes two eggs out from his pocket.’

In subjects or objects, heads are often modified by several attributes (modifiers). In these cases, adjectives are general, closest to the head, then personal pronouns; demonstrative pronouns are always the farthest from the head.

lan31 pou35 ma55ni31 ‘this white horse’
horse white this
man⁵⁵  œ³¹  ki³³  mi³³  pau³⁵(31)  le¹³  lu¹³
daughter-in-law  I  those  five  classifier  all  good
‘All of my five daughters-in-law are excellent.’

The older Bugan people (60 years old and up) are accustomed to inserting
kai³³  ‘have’  between  the  head  and  the  modifier  when  the  modifier  is  a  numeral-
classifier phrase.

li⁵⁵  kai³³  mi³³  biœ³³
ox  have  five  classifier
‘There are five oxen.’

xa³³  kai³³  ma⁵⁵  li³³
stick  have  one  classifier
‘There is one stick.’

3.4  Sentence  patterns

3.4.1  Existential  sentences

Existential  sentences  indicate  that  someone  has  something  or  there  is
something  in  some  place,  and  all  objects  in  this  pattern  are  placed  before  the  subject
and  verbs;  the  sentence  order  is  OSV.

pœ⁰qou⁵⁵  pi³⁵  kai³³  mtse³¹  bœ³¹(55)
sky  sun  have  three  classifier
‘There are three suns in the sky.’

ton¹³  sau³¹  œ³¹  kai³³  biœ³¹
bucket  wood  I  have  pair
‘I have a pair of water buckets.’

mtse³³tsœ³³  muœ³¹  kai³³  ma³³  mtse⁵⁵
banana  you  have  or  not
‘Do you have any bananas?’

3.4.2  Assertives  and  negatives

Some  assertives  have  no  linking  verb.

ki³³  man⁵⁵  œ³¹
that  daughter-in-law  I
‘That is my daughter-in-law.’

i³¹  khœ³³  pœ⁵⁵khui⁵⁵
He  may  Han
‘He may be a Han.’

bi³¹  we³³  du³³  kœ³¹
two  brother  be  blood
‘(They) two are blood brothers.’
Linking verbs have two forms—\(ni^{33}/nu^{33}\). They are used in assertives. The original meaning of \(nu^{33}\) is ‘do’; it is not often used as a linking verb. \(ni^{33}\) may be related to \(ni^{35}\) ‘this’. \(s\a^n55\) is used in negatives.

\[
\begin{align*}
c^31 & ni^{33}/nu^{33} & p\a^n55k\a^n33 \\
& I & be \\
& Bugan \\
'I am a Bugan.' \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
c^31 & m\a^n55 & s\a^n55 & piau^{13} & p\a^n55se^{33} \\
& I & not & be \\
& man & Guangnan \\
'I am not a person who lives in Guangnan Town.' \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
m\o^n33 & m\a^n55ni^{33} & lio^{55} & m\a^n55 & s\a^n55 \\
& knife & here & my & not & be \\
'This knife is not mine.' \\
\end{align*}
\]

### 3.4.3 Comparative sentences

Comparative sentences are used to compare the conditions and characters of people or things. Basically, their nuclear form is ‘adjective - tsai\(^{31}/pi^{13}\) - noun (pronoun or nominal phrase)’; \(tsai^{31}/pi^{13}\) are prepositions, they govern nouns (or nominal phrases) and form a prepositional phrase (or a prepositional clause).

\[
\begin{align*}
l^{55} & \ t\a^31 & tsai^{31}/pi^{13} & t\a^u^{33} \\
& ox & big & than & pig \\
'An ox is bigger than a pig.' \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
m\o^55 & i^{31} & s\c^{31} & tsai^{31}/pi^{13} & m\c^55 & mu^{31} \\
& children & he & smart & than & children & you \\
'His children are smarter than your children.' \\
\end{align*}
\]

Although Bugan is a tonal language, most of its words are monosyllabic, and only a few words show morphological changes, still, the Bugan language is very close to Mon-Khmer. From its basic vocabulary, we can clearly observe the close relation between Bugan and other Mon-Khmer languages. From the following wordlist, we note that Bugan shares many cognates in basic vocabulary with Mon-Khmer languages especially with Lai/Bolyu of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous region, China.\(^1\) In coming papers, I will discuss the origin of Bugan tones, Bugan’s relation to Lai/Bolyu and its position in the Mon-Khmer stock.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Bugan and Lai/Bolyu words come from my investigations, Old Mon (spoken in the Dvaravati Kingdom of Central Thailand in the VI to IXth Centuries A.D.) words from Diffloth: *The Dvaravati Old Mon Language and Nyah Kur*, and the words from the other Mon-Khmer languages come from F. E. Huffman, “An Examination of lexical correspondences between Vietnamese and some other Austroasiatic languages,” *Lingua* 43:171-98 (1977). Vietnamese phonetic values are taken from Laurence C. Thompson. 1987. *A Vietnamese Reference*

2 I would like to thank Professor Jerold A. Edmondson. This paper has benefited substantially in form and content from his help. Responsibility for any errors or misconceptions remains mine alone.