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 [pə̂ 55luŋ 13], 新挖龙 Xinwalong [pə̂ 55tsuŋ 13], 九平 Jiuping [pə̂ 55tsı̂n 31], 石北坡 Shibeipo [pə̂ 55ce 13], 新寨 Xinzhai [li̯ 31laŋ 13], 马龙 Malong [pə̂ 55yu 31] 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 [pə̂ 55kan 33] in their own language, the surrounding Han call them Hualo or 花族 Huazu ‘colorful people’, because the Bugan women wear colorful traditional dresses made from sewing together triangular swatches 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 [pə̂ 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 (v) and lax (v) contrast.
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*³³ ‘bird’, *bi*³¹ ‘two’, *bi*³³ ‘classifier’ ~ *sau*³³*bi*³²³ ‘two birds’, *wi*³¹ ‘we’, *bi*³¹ ‘two’, *pau*³¹ ‘classifier’ ~ *wi*³¹*bi*³²³ ‘we two’, *le*³¹ ‘auxiliary, belong to’, *σ*³¹ ‘I’ ~ *lio*³⁵ ‘mine, belong to me’.

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

### 1.1 Initials

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*Figure 1. Initials*

The Bugan language has 36 initials, */ʔ/* 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 prenasalized stops, */mb ηg ηq 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/*—*mtse*³¹ ~ *ptse*³¹ ‘three’, *mtsha*³¹ ~ *ptsha*³¹ ‘to rub with the hands, make a cord’. Before the rhyme */-i-/*, initial */ts-/* is palatalized to */τc-/*—*tsiou*³¹ ~ *tciou*³¹ ‘to sneeze’, *tsiu*³⁵ ~ *tciu*³⁵ ‘to have money on sb.’ The prenasalized initial */ŋ/* sometimes is pronounced as a pure nasal */ŋ/*—*/ŋa*³¹ ~ *ŋa*³¹ ‘yellow’. Words with */g-*, */ŋ-*, */md-*, */mdz-/* are few in number; in my record, there is only one word for each of */g-*, */ŋ-*/, i.e., *gam*³⁵ ‘to stab’, */ŋqu*³³ ‘village’.

*/p/*  pi³⁵ ‘sun’; *piau*³⁵ ‘human being’
*/ph/*  pho³⁵ ‘(maternal) grandfather’; *phe*³⁵ ‘(maternal) grandmother’
*/b/*  bio³³ ‘mountain’; *bou*³¹ ‘dust’
*/mb/*  mbøŋ⁵⁵ ‘to eat one’s fill’; *mbøŋ⁵⁵ ‘to lash’
*/m/*  me¹³ ‘mother’; *mau*³³ ‘younger brother’
*/f/*  feī³³ ‘cooked corn or other cereals’; *fi*³¹ ‘to meet sb.’
/w/ pəo wat31 ‘round’; wə 35 ‘to drink’
/t/ tau13 ‘to look for’; taŋ31 ‘to point to sb.’
/th/ thə31 ‘large, big’; thu31 ‘to fly’
/d/ di31 ‘bad’; douŋ35 ‘to pull out’
/md/ mda33 ‘be light (of a lamp)’; mdə 33 ‘be light (of the sky)’
/nd/ nda33 ‘be bold and powerful’; ndə 33 ‘be light (weight)’
/n/ na33 ‘younger sister’; nau31 ‘much, many’
/w/ na31 ‘mosquito’; nə 13 ‘to erect’
/l/ lə 33 ‘red’; ləŋ33 ‘clear (liquid)’
/θ/ θi35mə31 ‘dew’; θi35 ‘alkali water, made from plant ash’
/s/ sa33 ‘hard (material)’; səŋ35/sək55 ‘hair’
/c/ caŋ31 ‘green’; cə33 ‘stomach’
/z/ zəŋ31 ‘old’; zo33 ‘long’
/k/ kou31 ‘to finish’; ka31 ‘to beat with fist or a hammer, etc.’
/kh/ khə35 ‘to fill a bowl with rice, etc.’; kho35 ‘carry on one’s head’
/g/ gam35 ‘to stab’
/ŋ/ nga31 ‘yellow’; nəgai31 ‘askew’
/ŋ/ nə 13 ‘dark’; nə 55 ‘water buffalo’
/x/ xə31 ‘horn’; xou 55 ‘monkey’
/q/ qau31 ‘to nod’; qou 33 ‘to burn up’
/ŋq/ nəqu33 ‘village’
/y/ yoŋ31 ‘busy’; you 31 ‘to read’
/h/ ho31 ‘slow’; ha31 ‘to dry in the sun’
/ʔ/ ʔəm31 ‘warm’; ʔa33 ‘to rain’
/ts/ pə 55tə 35 ‘ear’; pə 55tə 13 ‘placenta’
/sh/ na33təŋ31 ‘uvula’; təsha 31 ‘urine’
/mts/ mtsə33 ‘fruit’; mtsa35 ‘one meal, classifier’
/mtsh/ mtsəha13 ‘to kill’; mtsəhu31 ‘to lure’
/mdz/ mdze31 ‘to plait (one’s hair)’; mdzaŋ35 ‘insipid, lack salt’
/ndz/ ndəŋ33 ‘thin (human being)’; ndza 55 ‘beautiful’
### 1.2 Rhymes

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The Bugan language has 90 rhymes. The tense vowels and lax vowels are contrastive: ƙui³³³³ ‘fire smoke’ ~ kui³³³³ ‘to dry by smoke’, luŋ³³³³ ‘well’ ~ luŋ³³³³ ‘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 /ã/ in ta³¹ ‘to bet’ is close to [α]. 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 ~ cen⁵⁵ ‘goat’; biak⁵⁵ ~ biap⁵⁵ ‘grape’; pɔ₃₃₃₃bop⁵⁵ ~ pɔ₃₃₃₃bou⁵⁵ ‘head’; nuk³¹ ~ nɔ³¹ ‘to come’; wako³¹ ~ wɔ³¹ ‘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—sǎ̃ ⁵³³ ~ sa ³³³ ‘eight’, laŋ̄ ³¹³ ~ lǎ̃ ³¹ ‘horse’. The rhymes lā³³ ‘la’, uā³ em ₃ ₂₃/ appear only in Han and Zhuang borrowing. There is only one word with rhymes lau uam iā iap em ⁴ ₃k ₃n ₂_/ 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: ho ³¹ ‘slow’; nəuak ³¹ ‘very slow’.

/a/
- tə̃ ³¹ ‘near’; sa ³³ ‘hard (material)’
/a/
- lə̃ ⁵ ‘thin (material)’; tə̃ ³³ ‘shriveled, flat’
/ai/
- pə̃ ⁵³ mə̃ ³⁵ ‘pupil (of the eye )’; pə̃ ⁵³ lai ³³³ ‘tongue’
/ai/
- ai ³³ gə̃ ³¹(³³) ‘cloud’; nə̃ ³¹ ‘flat, level’
/au/
- nau ³¹ ‘much, many’; tsau ³³ ‘stingy, narrow-minded’
/au/
- lə̃ ³¹ ‘empty’; nə̃ ⁵ ‘soft, pliable’
/au/
- nə̃ ³³ ‘slippery (road)’; sau ³¹ ‘tree’
/au/
- tsau ³¹ ‘early’; sau ³¹ ‘garlic’
/a/
- miə̃ ³¹ ‘salt’; pia ⁵ ‘cymbals’
/a/
- lə̃ ³¹ ‘keep out (the wind )’; tsə̃ ⁵ ‘to heat up’
/aəu/
- biəu ³¹ ‘lunch, midday meal’
/ua/
- kua ⁵ ‘son’; ma ³⁹ kua ³¹ ‘folk song’
/am/
- kham ³³ ‘(to work )hard’; tam ³³ ‘to sink’
/am/
- am ³¹ ‘warm’; gam ³³ ‘to stab’
/an/
- laŋ ³³⁽¹³⁾ tə̃ ⁵ tan ³¹ ‘stark-naked’; han ³³ ‘move (house)’
/an/
- laŋ ³¹ ‘naked’; laŋ ³³ ‘blunt’
/an/
- tə̃ ⁺ ’horizontal, across’; laŋ ³¹ ~ lə̃ ³¹ ‘horse’
/ə̃/
- laŋ ³³ ‘clear (liquid)’; laŋ ³¹ ‘wooden basin’
/ə̃/
- tʃə̃ ³¹ ‘greedy, fond of good food’; lə̃ ³³ / laŋ ³³ ‘blind’
/ə̃/
- bə̃ ⁵ ‘sticky’; sə̃ ³³ / sə̃ ³³ ‘disorder’
/ap/
- te ⁵ map ³¹ ‘knot’; nap ⁵ ‘tense, tight’
/at/
- pə̃ ⁵ wat ³¹ ‘round’; nə̃ ³³ / nə̃ ³³ tə̃ ³³ ‘to bear, to endure’
/at/
- lə̃ ³¹ ‘slippery (road)’; və̃ ³³ / və̃ ³³ ‘to turn’
/ak/
- pə̃ ⁵ lak ⁵ ‘flat’; ndzə̃ ³¹ ‘frozen, stiff’
/ak/
- wə̃ ³¹ / wə̃ ³¹ ‘iron pot’; mə̃ ³³ / maŋ ³³ ‘muddy (water)’
/əm/
- tsə̃ ³³ ‘soul’
/ən/
- biaŋ ³¹ ‘light (color)’; thian ³³ ‘thousand’
/əŋ/
- biaŋ ³³ ‘claw’; phə̃ŋ ³³ ‘to support with the hand’
/ən/
- miə̃ ³¹ ‘life’
/əp/
- pə̃ ⁵ tsiə̃ ³¹ ‘Chinese chives’
/ək/
- biə̃ ³³ / biaŋ ³³ ‘grape’
/uəu/
- tshuan ³¹ ‘boat’; khan ³³ ‘solidify’
/uan/ ɲuən31 'stupid'; ɲuən13ɕe13 'intestines'
/uə/ luə13 'disorder'; tshuə31 'to send'
/e/ ndə35 'beat'; mtsə31 'sour'
/g/ xə31 'taste good'; sə31 'smart'
/ei/ nei31 'smooth'; thei35 'false, be not true'
/ei/ lεi35/13 'the sting of a bee or wasp'; khεi55 'to run'
/ue/ ngue31 'crooked, bend'; khue31 'piece, lump'
/em/ lem35 'to lose (a game, etc.)'
/gm/ legm31 'reed trumpet, a Chinese woodwind instrument'
/en/ ken33 'firm, secure'; then35 'to lay out'
/gn/ tən55 'short (human being)'; ɣεn35 'cut'
/iɛ/ liɛ31to13 'sickle'; ziɛ33 'rich (colors)'
/e/ te55tə31 'true'; mtsə31 'three'
/e/ be55 'short (material)'; tɛ31 'accurate (shooting)'
/e/ phie31 'to force, compel'; tie55 'hand'
/iɛ/ mjε55 'small'; pie13 'to take'
/en/ nen33 'cloth'; ɣɛn33/55 'be like, to take after '
/en/ tʃɛn35 'to rub, to scratch an itch'; nɛn33 'broken'
/e/ zɛt31 'to fall down'; ɲɛt31 'to swing'
/f/ xi33 'far' di31 'bad'
/f/ tʃi35 cold'; kʃi35 'to wipe, to rub'
/in/ min31 'understand'; pin35 'shoulder'
/o/ tɔ31 'large, big'; ɲɔ33 'peppery, hot'
/o/ tɔ35 'hold or carry in both hands'; ɫɔ31 'little, few'
/o/ diɔ31 'loose, inattentive'; biɔ31 'two'
/ŋ/ tɔŋ35 'to hoe up (weeds)'; kɔŋ31 'steep'
/s/ luə13 hɔ55 hɔ55 'in noisy disorder'; mɔ55nu55 'roof'
/k/ kɔk31/kəŋ31 'bend upwards'
/o/ zo33 'long'; yo33 'high'
/o/ tɔ35 'to climb'; ɲɔ31 'heavy'
/ou/ kou31 'deep'; ɲou55 'wrinkle, crease'
/uə/ thou35 'to prop up'; tsou31 'to eat '
/io/ ta31bio33 'to close, near'; pio55 'to collapse'
/ɲ/ pio31 'to set upright'; pu55ljo31 'coat'
/ŋ/ yon31 'busy'; pon55 'blister'
/ŋ/ pon31 'concave, hollow'; khon55 'protruding'
/op/ bop55mtse33 'hail'; te55bop31 'carp'
/ŋ/ pon35 'to write down'; pon31 'to make a sound'
/ŋ/ pion33 'colorful'; pion31tie55 'finger ring'
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, tsou33/55 ‘earth’, do13/33 ‘to burn the grass on waste land, for cultivation’, tsyl13/33 ‘to bite’, xaw55/31 ‘valley’, mtshi55/13 ‘to milk’, lgi13/35 ‘the sting of a bee or wasp’, tsi33/35 ‘to stretch out (one’s hand)’, etc. Tonal change is common in context, and many cases show progressive assimilation, mɔ55xe55(31) ‘taste bad’, mɔ55nam55(35) ‘one year’, bi31nam31(35) ‘two years’, nam33(35)ni33 ‘this year’, yo13tεn33(35) ‘very crowded’, pɔ0log35(33) ‘the upper’. (Tone values in parentheses are unchanged citation values).
Live tones:

Tone: Shape: Examples:
55 high level ɲg\textsuperscript{55} ‘thin (material)’; tə\textsuperscript{0} than\textsuperscript{55} ‘horizontal, across’
33 mid level ɲg\textsuperscript{33} ‘to turn round’; n ağ\textsuperscript{33} ‘to sleep’
35 high rising ɲa\textsuperscript{35} ‘to return, give back’; tan\textsuperscript{35} ‘to close (a door)’
13 low rising tə\textsuperscript{13} ‘to carry on the back’; tan\textsuperscript{13} ‘to keep domestic animals’
31 low falling tə\textsuperscript{31} ‘to bet’; tan\textsuperscript{31} ‘to cook, to boil (fold, stable, etc.)’
0 slight pə\textsuperscript{0} či\textsuperscript{55} ‘left side’; tə\textsuperscript{0} yo\textsuperscript{55} ‘the inner’

Dead tones:

Tone Shape Examples
55 high level biak\textsuperscript{55}/bian\textsuperscript{55} ‘grape’; tsət55/tsən\textsuperscript{55} ‘to hog’
33 mid level mak\textsuperscript{33}/maŋ\textsuperscript{55} ‘muddy (water)’; wət\textsuperscript{33}/wən\textsuperscript{13} ‘to turn’
31 low falling zet\textsuperscript{31} ‘to fall down’; kək\textsuperscript{31}/kəŋ\textsuperscript{31} ‘bend upwards’

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 []; 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.
2. Lexicon

2.1 Word structure

2.1.1 Simple words


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:

\[tu33-zau55(31)\] ‘go out’ \[mau33-na33\] ‘sibling’
out-go younger brother-younger sister

Verb-object type:

\[ts231-c235\] ‘go hunting’ \[bi33(35)-man55\] ‘marry (a woman)’
hunt-game buy-wife

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

\[biou33-yo33\] ‘rock hill, karst formation’ \[zun55(31)-tse31\] ‘foot of mountain’
hill-rock foot mountain

\[da13(35)-nai55\] ‘wave’ \[da35-tau35\] ‘rice field’
water-jump water-field

Subject-predicate type:

\[mg55(33)-la55\] ‘the blind’ \[po0qou55-lun33\] ‘thunder’
eye-blind sky-make a sound

Verb-complement type:

\[nu33-so31\] ‘easy’ \[kai33-so31\] ‘comfortable’
do-easy stay-good
2.1.2.2. Derived words. There are two main types of derivation: *prefix + head*, *head + suffix*. All prefixes are pronounced with tone, but a few of them are pronounced with the slight tone.

Prefix + head type:

$p\rho^{55}$ - prefix in words for body parts, kinship, nations, people, made objects, or nouns of locality: ~*bop*₃¹/*bou*₃¹ 'head', ~*san*₃³ 'navel', ~*du*₃³ 'brother', ~*de*₃¹ 'relatives by marriage', ~*mio*₃¹ 'the Miao/Hmong', ~*khui*₅⁵ 'the Han', ~*kha*₁³ 'guest', ~*sup*₅⁵(₃¹) 'old people', ~*si*₅⁵ 'broom', ~*por*₅⁵ 'hammer', ~*j*₅⁵ 'left side', ~*ca*₅⁵ 'right side'.

*tz*₅⁵/₀ - prefix in words for body parts, localities, or animals: ~*nou*₅⁵ 'the back of the body', ~*qou*₃⁵ 'the palm of the hand', ~*kay*₃⁵ 'middle', ~*yo*₅⁵ 'inner', ~*kɔ*₃³ 'tiger', ~*kɛ*₃³ 'squirrel'.

*te*₅⁵ - prefix in words for plants, birds, rivers, fauna, made objects, or weather: ~*tan*₃⁵ 'moss', ~*tan*₃³ 'pumpkin', ~*tsa*₃¹ 'sparrow', ~*kɔŋ*₅⁵ 'shrimp', ~*map*₃¹ 'knot', ~*re*₃³ 'waistband', ~*tsi*₃³ 'snow', ~*kuk*₃¹ 'frost'.

*la*₀ - prefix in a few body part names: ~*kɔ*₃³ 'the lower jaw', ~*po*₅⁵ 'shoulder'.

*na*₃³ - prefix in small persons and things: ~*la*₃³ 'baby', ~*mu*₃³ 'little girl', ~*tay*₃³ 'baby pig', ~*tsay*₅⁵ 'mouse', ~*tie*₃¹ 'index finger', ~*hau*₃³ 'taro'.

*pu*₅⁵ - prefix in some animals: ~*lap*₃¹ 'stallion', ~*cen*₅⁵ 'nanny (goat)'.

*mu*₃³ - prefix in some plants and female animals: ~*pay*₃¹ 'peach tree', ~*san*₅⁵ 'pine', ~*lou*₃³ 'rice straw', ~*tan*₃³ 'sow', ~*tsau*₃³ 'bitch'. Some female animals have the prefix *mu*₃³-, but the relevant males do not have the prefix *pu*₅⁵-, *la*p₃¹*say*₃³ 'boar', *tsau*₃³*lo*₃¹ 'dog'.

*tse*₀ - prefix in some birds and made objects: ~*qa*₃⁵ 'duck', ~*gai*₃⁵ 'goose', ~*vən*₃¹ 'ring-necked pheasant', ~*lou*₃⁵(₁³) 'pliers'.

*mə*₃³ - prefix in some made objects: ~*tsa*₃¹ 'hand straw cutter', ~*dou*₃³ 'firewood knife', ~*pɛ*₅⁵ 'patch'.

*o*₅⁵ - prefix in some nouns of locality: ~*du*₃³ 'upper reaches (of a river), upper place (of land)', ~*nda*₃³ 'the lower', ~*loŋ*₃³ 'sky', ~*lə*₅¹ 'under the sky'.

*di*₃³ - prefix in January ~March, or December of the Chinese lunar calendar: ~*tsai*₅⁵ 'January', ~*ni*₃¹ 'February', ~*sä*₁³ 'March', ~*l弊*₃¹ 'December'.

*mə*₅⁵ - prefix in April ~November of the Chinese lunar calendar: ~*pau*₃³ 'April', ~*mi*₃³ 'May', ~*bə*₅⁵ 'November'.

Bugaan—a new Mon-Khmer language
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.

ho₃¹ ɲuak₃¹ ‘very slow’
slow
ndzou₃¹ mj₃¹ ‘diamond bright’
bright
na¹³(55) ndo₅⁵ ‘shiny black’
black
pou₃¹ pe ³³ ‘very careless’
careless

ndg₃¹ pə₅⁵ lou₅⁵ ‘very light (not heavy)’
light
lan₁³(3¹) tə₀ tan₁³ ‘be stark-naked’
naked
lu₁³ hɔ⁵⁵ hɔ⁵⁵ ‘in a mess’
disorder
ŋa³₅ wa³₅ wa³₅ ‘very dark’
dark

Infixed type: only one infixed xi³¹ ‘is found, and it indicates small female animals’, li₅⁵ ‘cattle’, pu₅⁵li₅⁵ ‘ox’, mu₃³li₅⁵ ‘cow’, wa₃³li₅⁵ ‘calf’, wa₃³pu₅⁵li₅⁵ ‘small ox’, mu₃³xi₃¹ li₅⁵ ‘small cow’, mu₃³lan₃¹ ‘mare’, mu₃³xi₃¹lan₃¹ ‘small mare’, mu₃³cen₅⁵ ‘nanny (goat)’, mu₃³xi₃ cen₅⁵ ‘small nanny (goat)’ (pu₅⁵, mu₃³, wa₃₅ 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:

pho₃⁵ ‘(maternal) grandfather’
mu₃¹ ‘you (singular)’
či₅⁵po₃¹(55) ‘yesterday evening’
ŋo₃³ ‘peppery’
tsa₁³ ‘to bite’
lə₃⁵ ‘to return’

pʰe₃⁵ ‘(maternal) grandmother’
mⁱ₃¹ ‘you (plural)’
ca₅⁵po₃¹(55) ‘tomorrow evening’
ŋa₃³ ‘salted’
tsq¹³ ‘to eat’
lɪ₃⁵ ‘to change’

Tense vowel and lax vowel alternation:

kui₃³ ‘fire smoke’
mda₃³ ‘be light (of a lamp)’
lun₃³ ‘well’

kui₃³ ‘to dry with smoke’
mda₃³ ‘be light (of the sky)’
lun₃³ ‘abyss, deep cave’

Tonal alternation:

tsq₅⁵ ‘rake’
-tshun₃¹ ‘throat’
tsan₃⁵ ‘to smell’

tsq₅⁵ ‘to harrow’
tshun₃³ ‘thirsty’
tsan₃³ ‘smelly’
Consonants (initials) alternation:

- láŋ\(^{33}\) ‘clear (water)’
- ni\(^{33}\) ‘this’
- pe\(^{31}\) ‘we’
- mtsha\(^{13}\) ‘to kill’
- nap\(^{55}\) ‘be closed’
- duŋ\(^{33}\) ‘hole’
- maŋ\(^{55}\) ‘muddy (water)’
- ki\(^{33}\) ‘that’
- hē\(^{31}\) ‘they’
- mtsa\(^{31}\) ‘to die’
- nap\(^{55}\) ‘to close one’s eyes, to shut up’
- 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>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mëou(^{31})</td>
<td>miao</td>
<td>‘temple’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pe(^{35})</td>
<td>bei</td>
<td>‘tablet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tshan(^{31})</td>
<td>chang</td>
<td>‘to taste’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma(^{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>lā(^{55})ci(^{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>Meaning</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>-ku(^{55})</td>
<td>ku(^{31})</td>
<td>‘eggplant’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ke(^{13})</td>
<td>kve(^{24})</td>
<td>‘towel gourd’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tê(^{55})</td>
<td>tai(^{33})</td>
<td>‘bag’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mō55. mau42 'roof'
lō33 li:ŋ55 'umbrella'
bō35 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).

lō31 pou35 'a white horse' mō55 ŋ33(31) 'my children'
   horse white                  children I

mō55 kō33 'that child'       we33 mō55 'the younger brother of the child'
   child that                  yng. brother child

ō31 bi33(35) mōu33 mō55 tsōe13(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 bō55 'one, classifier'.

wō33 bō55 'one piece of stone' bō55kōu13 bō55 'one corn'
   stone   class.               corn class.

puŋ55 bō55 'one flower'      puŋ55lō31 bō55 'one coat'
   flower class.               coat class.

Most nouns cannot be reduplicated, but many nouns that are concurrently classifiers, can be: hōe55 hōe55 'every day'.

3.1.2 Pronouns

Personal pronouns distinguish singular, dual, and plural, and the first plural pronouns distinguish inclusive and exclusive. biō31 is a blend of 'bi31 (two) pau31 (classifier of people).'
Some interrogative pronouns are formed with -pau\textsuperscript{35} (indicating interrogation) and other morphemes, o\textsuperscript{55}pau\textsuperscript{35} 'where', ts\textsuperscript{55}pau\textsuperscript{35} 'when', t\textsuperscript{55}pau\textsuperscript{35} 'how many, how much', n\textsuperscript{55}pau\textsuperscript{35} 'how many (people)', y\textsuperscript{55}pau\textsuperscript{35} 'why'.

Demonstrative pronouns have two basic forms—ni\textsuperscript{33} 'this' and k\textsuperscript{i33} 'that'. There are some others, ta\textsuperscript{55}ni\textsuperscript{33} 'here', ta\textsuperscript{55}k\textsuperscript{i33} 'there', m\textsuperscript{o55}ni\textsuperscript{33} 'this side', m\textsuperscript{o55}k\textsuperscript{33} 'that side', n\textsuperscript{aty13}n\textsuperscript{33} 'like this', n\textsuperscript{aty13}k\textsuperscript{i33} 'like that'. There are three deictic degrees to indicate location—k\textsuperscript{i33}d\textsuperscript{55}3 'that far', k\textsuperscript{33} 'that farther', o\textsuperscript{55}k\textsuperscript{33} 'that farthest'. d\textsuperscript{52}3 is not often used.

\begin{align*}
\text{me}^{55} & \text{ k\textsuperscript{i33} xu}^{55(13)} \text{ la\textsuperscript{31}} & \text{'That boy rides a horse.'} \\
\text{child} & \text{ that} & \text{ ride} & \text{ horse} \\
\text{me}^{55} & \text{ k\textsuperscript{33} ts\textsuperscript{31} fe\textsuperscript{33}} & \text{'That boy (farther) has a meal.'} \\
\text{child} & \text{ that} & \text{ eat} & \text{ meal} \\
\text{me}^{55} & \text{ o\textsuperscript{55}k\textsuperscript{33} mt\textsuperscript{31} li}^{55} & \text{'That boy (farthest) herds oxen.'} \\
\text{child} & \text{ that} & \text{ herd} & \text{ oxen}
\end{align*}

Normally, pronouns cannot be either modified nor reduplicated.

### 3.1.3 Numerals

\begin{align*}
b\textsuperscript{o55} & \text{ 'one', b\textsuperscript{i31} 'two', m\textsuperscript{53}e\textsuperscript{31} 'three', p\textsuperscript{au33} 'four', m\textsuperscript{i33} 'five', p\textsuperscript{i33} 'six', p\textsuperscript{ou31} 'seven', s\textsuperscript{33}a\textsuperscript{33} 'eight', c\textsuperscript{i33} 'nine', m\textsuperscript{33}a\textsuperscript{31} 'ten', z\textsuperscript{31}u\textsuperscript{31} 'hundred', t\textsuperscript{13}ha\textsuperscript{13} 'thousand'.
\end{align*}

Different forms of 'one' and 'two' have different uses; m\textsuperscript{o55} 'one' and b\textsuperscript{i31} 'two' are used with classifiers to form a numeral classifier phrase.

\begin{align*}
\text{piau}^{13(35)} & \text{ (people) m\textsuperscript{o55} (one) p\textsuperscript{au31} (classifier of people) 'one person',} \\
\text{piau}^{13(35)} & \text{ (people) b\textsuperscript{i31} (two) p\textsuperscript{au31} (classifier of people) 'two persons'}. \\
\end{align*}
mā31 bo55 ‘eleven’  
mā31 bi31 ‘12’  
bi33(31) mā31 ‘20’  
mā55 zu31 ‘100’

mə55 zu31 ‘one hundred and one’  
bi31 zu31 ‘two hundred’  
ma55 thian13 ‘one thousand’  
mə55 vā13 ‘ten thousand’

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
- bi33 for animals
- li33 for long-shaped objects
- tshe13 for objects, river
- tsun55 for plants
- liu33 for sheet-shaped objects
- tsam33 pair
- pam55 portion

- piau13(35) bi31 pau31 ‘two persons’
- li55 mtse31 biə33 ‘three oxen’
- xa33 ma55 li33 ‘one stick’
- you55 ma55 tshe13 ‘one river’
- sau31 pau33 tsun55 ‘four trees’
- yai55 ma55 liu33 ‘one sheet of paper’
- sau33 ma55 tsam33 ‘a pair of birds’
- fei33 ma55 pam55 ‘a portion of food’

Classifiers for verbs:

- tsi35 time
- mtsa35 for eating
- tuŋ55 for biting
- nga31 for sleep
- tan33 for fist

- zau31 ma55 tsi35 ‘have been there once’
- tsuŋ31 ma55 mtsa35 ‘have a meal’
- tsə13 ma55 tuŋ55 ‘be bitten once’
- nəŋ33 ma55 nga31 ‘have slept once’
- ndə35 ma55 tan33 ‘give sb. a box’

Blends:

- mtse33 for animals, consists of ma55 ‘one’ and biə33 (classifier), tə55kə33 ‘a tiger’.
- biə13 for animals, consists of bi31 ‘two’ and biə33 (classifier), tə55kə33 biə13 ‘two tigers’.
- mbau55 for people, consist of ma55 ‘one’ and pau31 (classifier), piau13(35) mbau55 ‘one person’.

Classifiers can be modified by numerals and demonstratives.

- ma0kua31 mi33 tsiu33 song five classifier
- ‘five folk songs’
fæi33 pau33 pam35 'four portions of food'  
food four classifier

ziu55 bɔ̃55 ni33 'this spoon'  
spoon classifier this

াু31 tha33 ki33 'that bundle of firewood'  
firewood bundle that

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 'ŋgɔ25 + verb', the original meaning of ŋgɔ25 is 'to drive out'.

xɔu35 'to ride (a horse)'  
pau31 'to get up'  
tu33 'out'

ŋgɔ25xɔu35 'to order sb. to ride (a horse)'  
ŋgɔ25pau31 'to order sb. to get up'  
ŋgɔ25tu33 'to order sb. or sth. to get out'

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

s31 sai33 pion13 'I'm writing.'  
I dur. write

muu31 nu33 naŋ13(31) ma9dze55 'What are you doing?'  
you do dur. what

li55 sai33 tsou31 tsiu55 naŋ31 'The ox is eating grass.'  
ox dur. eat grass dur.

Verbs can be modified by adverbs and auxiliary verbs.

pe13(35) ma55 yen55 me13 'The elder sister doesn’t take  
eld.sister not like mother after her mother.'

s31 faŋ55 zau55(31) nai55/ŋe31 'I like to go to the market.'  
I want go market

Verbs cannot be reduplicated.
3.1.6 Adjectives

Adjectives can be modified by different adverbs to indicate degrees.

1st degree ‘adjective + te³¹’,
comparative ‘adjective + te³¹le³¹’
superlative ‘kan⁵⁵+ adjective + le³¹’.

nu³⁵ s³¹ lu³¹ te³¹ ‘My house is good.’
house I good indeed

nu³⁵ mu³¹ lu³¹ te³¹le³¹ ‘Your house is better.’
house you good more

nu³⁵ i³¹ kan⁵⁵ lu³¹ le³¹ ‘His house is the best.’
house he most good most

Adjectives can be modified by all adverbs.

mo³¹ te³¹ ‘be a bit too heavy’
heavy a bit

kan⁵⁵
very heavy

mo³¹ ‘very heavy’

mə⁵⁵ lou³³ ‘be not cold’
not cold

tə⁰ka³³ immediately

nu¹³ ‘do (it) immediately’
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.

ŋa³¹ ŋa³¹ ‘deep yellow’
yellow yellow

ndzun³³  ndzun³³ ‘very thin (person)’
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.

pə⁰ nam⁵⁵ tə³¹ tsə⁵⁵ ni³³ ‘(from ) last year until today.’
last year to now
pi¹³ thɔ⁵⁵(31) tsai³¹/pi³³ ta⁵⁵ 'The sun is bigger than the moon.'
sun big than moon

j³³(31) la⁵⁵ ban⁵⁵ pa⁵⁵ sau³¹ 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', mɔ⁵⁵ nga⁵⁵(31) 'It is yellow'

la³³ precedes nouns, pronouns, forming a genitive.
mu³³ mɔ⁵⁵ni³³ la³³ mu⁵⁵(31) 'This house is yours.'
house here belong-to you

le³¹ follows nouns, pronouns, forms a genitive.
mɔ³³ ɔ³¹ le³¹ 'The knife is mine.'
knife I belong-to

tsu³¹ follows verbs, indicates continuous action.
mɛ⁵⁵ be³⁵ tsu³¹ ɔŋ³⁵(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 tsq³³ 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.

j³¹ mɔ⁵⁵ nɔ³¹ ma¹³ 'He doesn’t come here.'
he not come assert
zau₃¹ yau₃¹ sau₅⁵ tsu₃¹ mə₅⁵ nam₅⁵ a³³
go read auxiliary one year assert.
'He has gone to school for one year.'

ni₅⁵ occurs in interrogatives.
i₃¹ nə₃¹ mə₅⁵ nə₃¹ ni₅⁵
he come not come ques.

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.

tsion⁵³ ngə³⁵
deer step on

hoŋ³³ zuŋ⁵⁵(31) tsion³³ tsəŋ³³
footprint foot deer smelly

'the deer steps on'

Footprints of deer are smelly.'

i³¹ nə³¹ mə₅⁵ tsı³⁵
he come one time

'He has once come here.'

we³³ le³³ pə³⁵ pe³¹ biə³³ di³¹
eld. bro. and sis.-in-law quarrel terribly
'Eldest brother quarrels with sister-in-law terribly.'

mg⁵⁵ c₃³(31) zou¹³ tho³¹ zou¹³ yə³³
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:

\[ \text{tc}^{31} \quad \text{tu}^{31} \quad \text{go}^{31} \]
worship buckwheat
‘to offer buckwheat as a sacrifice to (ancestors )’

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

\[ \text{ta}^{35} \text{tu}^{55} \quad \text{mu}^{31} \]
give you
‘to give you’

\[ \text{pa}^{55} \text{kan}^{33} \quad \text{co}^{33} \quad \text{nu}^{31} \text{tsi}^{13} \text{ko}^{35} \quad \text{thie}^{13} \text{tsu}^{55} \]
Bugar afraid Nong Zhigao Emperor
‘The Bugan were afraid of Emperor Nong Zhigao.’

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.

\[ \text{cu}^{33} \quad \text{ta}^{33} \quad \text{cu}^{33} \quad \text{tsa}^{35} \]
meat pig meat chicken
‘pork and chicken’

\[ \text{ca}^{31} \quad \text{le}^{31(33)} \quad \text{j}^{31} \]
he and I
‘he and I’

\[ \text{mu}^{31} \quad \text{le}^{33} \quad \text{pa}^{33} \text{mu}^{33} \quad \text{za}^{55} \quad \text{po}^{31} \]
you and girl dance a reedpipe wind instrument
‘You and the girls dance following the music (played by a reedpipe wind instrument ).’

\[ \text{tsan}^{31} \quad \text{a}^{33} \quad \text{tsou}^{31} \]
take assert. come eat
‘take (it) back and eat’

\[ \text{kan}^{55} \quad \text{tso}^{55(31)} \quad \text{ka}^{55} \quad \text{yo}^{33} \]
very big very high
‘big and high’

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.

\[\text{ne}^{31} \text{ bio}^{33} \text{ di}^{31} \text{ 'to quarrel terribly'}\]
\[\text{kan}^{35} \text{ thu}^{33} \text{ 'to cut down'}\]
\[\text{cut} \text{ fall}\]
\[\text{bi}^{35} \text{ tsu}^{31} \text{ bi}^{31} \text{ tshe}^{13} \text{ 'to hold two'}\]
\[\text{hold auxiliary two classifier}\]
\[\text{zau}^{31} \text{ yau}^{31} \text{ sau}^{55} \text{ tsu}^{31} \text{ mo}^{55} \text{ nam}^{55} \text{ a}^{0}\]
\[\text{go read auxiliary one year}\]
\[\text{have gone to the school for one year}\]
\[\text{i}^{31} \text{ yo}^{33} \text{ mtse}^{31} \text{ tshu}^{33}\]
\[\text{he high three chi}\]
\[\text{'He is three chi (a unit of length) high.'}\]

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

Bugan 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.

\[\text{S} \text{ V O}\]
\[\text{nun}^{31} \text{ tsi}^{13} \text{ ko}^{35} \text{ thie}^{13} \text{ tsu}^{55}\]
\[\text{te}^{31} \text{ tou}^{33(13)} \text{ po}^{55} \text{ kan}^{33}\]
\[\text{Emperor Nong Zhigao pursue Bugan}\]
\[\text{'Nong Zhigao Emperor pursued the Bugan.'}\]
\[\text{S} \text{ V O Complement}\]
\[\text{po}^{55} \text{ kan}^{33} \text{ nu}^{33} \text{ mtsa}^{35}\]
\[\text{kg}^{33} \text{j}^{55} \text{ biou}^{33}\]
\[\text{Bugan spend festival on the mountain top.}\]
\[\text{'The Bugan spend festivals on top of the mountain.'}\]
S V O or S Predicate
mi31 a33 ta33(35) pu55 li31 ni33 z33 ma55 z33
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
ɔ31 ndɔ31 se31 tɔ̄33 ma55 ni33
I like sell pig this
‘I’d like to sell this pig.’

S Predicate
kɔ13 tɔ̄31(55) ma55 ni33 kα55 mɔ31 ni55 a0
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 ɔ31 mtsha13 tse0 qa35 mi33 bia33
today I kill duck five classifier
‘I have killed five ducks today.’

Adverbial
pɔ55 kα33 kɔ33 qa35 tsu33 mα33 mtsᾱ35
Bugsan on way spend festival
‘The Bugsan spent the festival on the road (when they moved).’

Attribute Adverbial Complement
ya31 thu55 ni33 khɔŋ35 sqa55 o55 pe13 tou13
take vegetable this all put inner basket
‘Please put all vegetables in the basket.’

Adverbial Attribute Complement
i31 ban55 o55 tɔ55 ɔ33 be35 tham55(33) tɔ̄13 bia31 nɔ31
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.

lanɔ31 pou35 ma55 ni31
horse white this
‘this white horse’
man⁵⁵ ɕi³¹ ɕi³³ mi³³ pau³⁵(31) le¹³ lu³¹
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 bia³³ ‘There are five oxen.’
ox  have five classifier

xa³³  kai³³ mo³⁵ li³³ ‘There is one stick.’
stick have one classifier

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.

pa⁰ou⁵⁵  pɨ³⁵  kai³³  mtse³¹  bɨ³¹⁵⁵
sky  sun  have three classifier
‘There are three suns in the sky.’

toŋ¹³  sau³¹  ɕi³¹  kai³³  bɨj²³¹
bucket  wood  I have  pair
‘I have a pair of water buckets.’

mtse³³ tsg³³  mu³¹  kai³³  ma³³  mt̥e⁵⁵
banana you have or not
‘Do you have any bananas?’

3.4.2 Assertives and negatives

Some assertives have no linking verb.

ki³³  man⁵⁵  ɕi³¹ ‘That is my daughter-in-law.’
that daughter-in-law I

i³¹  kho³³  pa⁵⁵khuï⁵⁵ ‘He may be a Han.’
He  may  Han

bi³¹  we³³  du³³  kai³¹ ‘(They) two are blood brothers.’
two  brother  be  blood
Linking verbs have two forms—ni33/nu33. They are used in assertives. The original meaning of μu33 is ‘do’; it is not often used as a linking verb. ni33 may be related to ni33 ‘this’. saŋ55 is used in negatives.

ɔ31 ni33/nu33 paŋ55kăn33
I be Bugan
‘I am a Bugan.’

ɔ31 mɔ55 saŋ55 piau13 paŋ55se33
I not be man Guangnan
‘I am not a person who lives in Guangnan Town.’

mɔŋ33 mɔ55ni33 lio55 mɔ55 saŋ55
knife here my not be
‘This knife is not mine.’

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 - tsai31/pi13 - noun (pronoun or nominal phrase)’; tsai31/pi13 are prepositions, they govern nouns (or nominal phrases) and form a prepositional phrase (or a prepositional clause).

li55 thɔ31 tsai31/pi13 tay33
ox big than pig
‘An ox is bigger than a pig.’

mɛ55 i31 sɛ31 tsai31/pi13 mɛ55 muŋ31
children he smart than children you
‘His children are smarter than your children.’

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. 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.

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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*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>one</th>
<th>bo₅₅/ma₅₅</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>mət</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>LW</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>OM</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>bi₃₁/bi₃₁</td>
<td>məŋ₃₃/maei₃₁</td>
<td>hai</td>
<td>muay</td>
<td>mooy</td>
<td>*mway</td>
<td>*baa₇</td>
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<tr>
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<td>mbi₅₅</td>
<td>ba</td>
<td>bøy</td>
<td>buan</td>
<td>paon</td>
<td>*pi₇</td>
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<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>pae₃₃</td>
<td>pun₅₃</td>
<td>bōn</td>
<td>*pan</td>
<td>*paon</td>
<td>*pan</td>
<td>*paan</td>
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<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>mi₃₃</td>
<td>me₃₃</td>
<td>nâm [nìm]</td>
<td>*m-(m-suun</td>
<td>*m-(m-suun</td>
<td>*m-(m-suun</td>
<td>*m-(m-suun</td>
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<tr>
<td>six</td>
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<td>piu₅₃</td>
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<td>*tp(m)</td>
<td>*t(p)m</td>
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<td>pai₅₅</td>
<td>bāy [bèi]</td>
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<td>*t(p)₉</td>
<td>*t(p)₉</td>
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<tr>
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<td>sam₃₃</td>
<td>tām</td>
<td>*t(p)₉</td>
<td>*t(p)₉</td>
<td>*t(p)₉</td>
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<td>cān₅₃</td>
<td>chīn</td>
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<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
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<td>man₃₃</td>
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<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
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<td>ti₅₅</td>
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<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>zï₃₁</td>
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<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>man₃₁</td>
<td>râng [raŋ]</td>
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<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
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<td>sak₅₅</td>
<td>suk₅₃</td>
<td>tōg [teukp]</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>pə₅₅/me₃₃</td>
<td>tâi₅₃/mə₃₃</td>
<td>mat</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neck</td>
<td>kon₃₃</td>
<td>lōŋ₃₁</td>
<td>cō</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nose</td>
<td>pə₅₅/mə₃₃</td>
<td>lōŋ₃₃/mi₃₁</td>
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<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
<td>*tsk(p)</td>
</tr>
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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.