Grammar Sketch of Mashan Miao

Sarah Heal
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Abstract

This book is a grammatical sketch of the Mashan Miao language spoken in five counties in the south of Guizhou province, China. Mashan Miao is of the Chuanqianbian branch of the Miao-Yao or Hmong-Mien family of languages. The population of speakers is approximately 130,000 people. The theoretical framework used in the syntactic analysis is Role and Reference Grammar. Limited research has been conducted in this language, it has mostly concerned phonology. There has been quite extensive documentation of other languages in the Hmong-Mien family. This book examines the layered structure of the clause in Mashan Miao, the noun phrase, the nature of adpositions and the structure of complex sentences. The data provides evidence that this language shares many features of other Hmong-Mien languages, it is an SVO language and an isolating language with no inflection. Modifiers follow the noun, there are deverbal prepositions and complex verb constructions are used to express a variety of meanings and functions. The speakers of this language also have heavy influence from Mandarin Chinese, and there is evidence of borrowing of structures. This book raises several topics for further research, particularly the interaction between phonology and syntax, and between syntax and semantics.
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Preface

In this book I present a grammar description of the Mashan Miao language, spoken in Guizhou Province, People’s Republic of China. I used Role and Reference Grammar as the framework to complete the grammatical analysis. I collected the data used in the analysis in cooperation with Mashan Miao speakers.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to Karin Zeibig and Howard Jackson for their support, supervision and input in the writing of this work. I would also like to express my gratitude to my Mashan Miao friends Wang Zhi and Liang Yilian for their patience in teaching me their language and providing me with stories and texts to use for analysis.
Introduction

In this book I present an analysis of the syntactic structure of the Mashan Miao language. I first provide an explanation of Role and Reference Grammar, the theoretical framework used in the analysis of the syntactic structure of Mashan Miao. Then, I summarise research that has already been undertaken on Mashan Miao and related languages (section 1.2) and explain the research methods used in data collection (section 1.3) and the writing system used in the transcription (section 1.4). Finally I briefly explain Mashan Miao morphology (section 1.5).

In later chapters I present an analysis of Mashan Miao syntax, including the layered structure of the clause (Chapter 2), the reference phrase (Chapter 3), adpositions (Chapter 4) and complex constructions (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of my findings.

Mashan Miao is a language spoken in five southern counties of Guizhou province in China: Changshun, Huishui, Ziyun, Wangmo and Luodian counties (Lewis et al. 2013). The population of speakers is approximately 130,000 (Wang Fushi and Mao Zhongwu 1995 cited in Lewis et al. 2013). It is part of the Hmong-Mien language family, of the Western Hmongic branch (Mortensen 2013:6), also known as the Chuanqiandian branch, which makes reference to the three provinces in which these dialects are spoken (Chuan is Sichuan, Qian is Guizhou and Dian is Yunnan). Hmong is the auto-ethnonym, Miao is the Chinese name for the Hmong people (Niederer 2001:346). The Mashan Miao people are also referred to as Mang (Mortensen 2013:6). In this work the language is referred to as Mashan Miao. There are four Mashan Miao vernaculars: Central, Northern, Western and Southern (Lewis et al. 2013). They are all generally mutually intelligible but are not mutually intelligible with other Hmong dialects (Mortensen 2013:17). The main differences between Mashan vernaculars are phonetic, mostly to do with tones and vowels (Mortensen 2013:12). However, there are some lexical differences.

The relationship of Hmong-Mien to other language families is not clear. Chinese linguists include it in the Sino-Tibetan language family; however, it is considered by most scholars to be a separate language family (McLaughlin 2013:4; Goddard 2005:36; Clark 1989:175). Hmongic languages have been influenced phonologically and grammatically by Tai, Sino-Tibetan and Austroasiatic languages (Clark 1989:176).

1.1 Role and Reference Grammar

The goal of linguistic theories is to explain how languages work and identify universal structures that can be found in all languages of the world. Role and Reference Grammar (hereafter RRG) was developed by linguists who looked at four very different languages; Lakhota, Tagalog, Dyirbal and English (Van Valin 2005:1). They sought to discover the universal features of language, and which features were different but comparable to those of another language (Van Valin 2005:3; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:22). In this work I use RRG as a framework to analyse the grammar of Mashan Miao. Here I give a brief description of RRG.

Some important aspects of RRG are that the structure or syntax of a language is not considered in isolation from the meaning of words (the semantics) or the function of words in their context (pragmatics) (Van Valin 2005:1–2).

All languages distinguish between an event, that is something that happened, and the participants in those events (Van Valin 2005:4; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:25). Events are denoted by words that predicate; in English and many other languages these are verbs (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:25). Participants are denoted by words that refer to entities in the real world; in many languages nouns are used to refer (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:28). This distinction between predicating elements and referring elements is universal to all languages of the world (Van Valin 2005:4; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:28).

This universal distinction forms the basis for what in RRG is termed the layered structure of the clause. The clause has three layers: the nucleus, the core and the clause. At the nucleus is the predicate (Van Valin 2005:4; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:26). The predicate has arguments; these refer to entities involved in the event being described. The predicate and its arguments form the core of the clause (Van...
Valin 2005:4; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:26). The arguments include the Privileged Syntactic Argument (PSA) and Direct or Oblique Core Arguments (DCA and OCA) (Pavey 2010, loc 1498). Outside of the core there may be other elements that are not arguments of the predicate. They may provide information about the time, location or manner in which the event took place (Van Valin 2005:4; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:26–27). These elements form the periphery.

Figure 1 provides a visual illustration of the structure of the predicate, arguments and non-arguments.

![Figure 1](image1.png)

Figure 1. Predicate, argument and non-argument structure (Van Valin and Lapolla 1997, with permission).

The clause includes both the core and the periphery (Van Valin 2005:4; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:26). Figure 2 shows the location of these elements in the layered structure of the clause.

![Figure 2](image2.png)

Figure 2. The layered structure of the clause (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, with permission).

Figure 3 gives an example from English. The verb watch is the predicate and is in the nucleus. The pronoun I and the film are arguments of the predicate. The predicate and its arguments form the core. On Saturday provides extra information about when the event took place and forms the periphery. The core and the periphery together make the clause.

![Figure 3](image3.png)

Figure 3. An example from English.

Figure 4 shows the syntactic representation of the layered structure. There is a node for each layer in the clause. In this example the predicate is a verb. The arguments of the core are denoted by reference phrases (RP) (Pavey 2010, loc 689). The periphery modifies the core providing further information (Van Valin 2005:19), in this case a prepositional phrase (PP) indicates when the event took place. An arrow is
used to show that the periphery is modifying the core. There may also be peripheral elements at other levels of the layered structure (Van Valin 2005:21).

![Figure 4. Syntactic representation of English example.](image)

The structures described so far are universal; however, there are some positions that are language specific. The first is a position within the clause but not included in the core; it may precede or follow the core, and is correspondingly termed a pre-core (PrCS) or a post-core slot (PoCS) (Van Valin 2005:5; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36). This extra-core slot is for elements that have been brought out of the core in order to bring them into focus (Pavey 2010, loc 2647; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36). English has a pre-core slot, and this is also the place that interrogative pronouns, or WH-words take (Van Valin 2005:5; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36).

Figure 5 shows the position of the PrCS in the layered structure.

![Figure 5. Layered structure showing English pre-core slot.](image)

Languages may also place phrases outside of the clause, which are usually separated from the main clause with an intonation pause (Van Valin 2005:6; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36). If they are also an argument of the core, there is usually another reference to them in the core in the form of a coreferential pronoun (Van Valin 2005:6; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36). This position outside of the clause is referred to as a detached position; it may occur to the left or the right of the clause (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:37). Figure 6 shows examples of English sentences containing left and right-detached positions.
Languages have words which perform grammatical functions and in RRG are termed operators (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:40). Operators may function at all three layers of the clause (Van Valin 2005:8–9; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:45). There are two operators that are universal to all languages, these are illocutionary force and negation (Van Valin 2005:9; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:42). Illocutionary force indicates whether the speaker is making a statement, a command or asking a question. Some other operators are tense, aspect and modality (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:40–41).

The layered structure diagrams included in this chapter so far have all shown the ‘constituent projection’ (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:48). The ‘operator projection’ (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:48) reflects the constituent projection and shows which operators are in use and which layer of the clause they are modifying (Van Valin 2005:12–13; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:48).

Figure 7 shows all the possible operators (indicated in the boxes to the right) and which layers they may have scope over, that is which layers they modify.
Figure 8 shows both the constituent and operator projections for an English clause. There are two operators, tense functioning at the clause level and showing that the event happened in the past, and narrow focus negation functioning at the core level.

Reference phrases also have a layered structure that is similar to that of the clause, also having a nucleus, a core and a periphery (Van Valin 2005:24; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:53). Thus reference phrases also have a layered structure, and also their own set of operators that may be shown in an operator projection (Van Valin 2005:24; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:56). Some examples of reference phrase operators are definiteness, number and deixis (Van Valin 2005:25; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:58). The structure of an English reference phrase can be seen in Figure 9. The adjective pink is modifying the noun and occurs in the periphery (Van Valin 2005:26). There are three operators in this sentence: number (NUM) shows that the noun is plural, and quantification (QNT) indicates how many; these are both core operators. The noun is definite and this (DEF) is an RP level operator (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:58).

Figure 8. Constituent and operator projections of an English clause.

Figure 9. Layered structure and operator projection of the reference phrase.
Reference phrases have certain semantic roles in the sentence. Some examples are agent, instrument, recipient or goal (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:85–86). In RRG these participant roles may be subsumed under two macroroles, those of actor and undergoer (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:140–141). In an active sentence the actor often corresponds to the PSA of the sentence and the undergoer to the DCA (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:141).

Many sentences that we utter are much more complex than the simple clause. Different elements may be joined, for example nucleus with nucleus or core with core (Pavey 2010, loc 2117; Van Valin 2005:188; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:448). There are three types of linkages that can occur: coordination, subordination and cosubordination (Van Valin 2005:188; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:442). Coordination involves a symmetrical connection between independent units of the same kind that have their own operators (Pavey 2010 loc 2147; Van Valin 2005:183). Subordination involves a connection where one unit is embedded in or dependent on another unit (Pavey 2010, loc 2154; Van Valin 2005:183). The subordinated element may be a modifier in the periphery (Pavey 2010, loc 2158; Van Valin 2005:183). This is an asymmetrical construction (Pavey 2010, loc 2155; Van Valin 2005:199). Cosubordination is another symmetrical construction as two of the same unit are joined together, but share an operator (Pavey 2010, loc 2165; Van Valin 2005:187). Coordination and subordination are also possible at the sentence level (Van Valin 2005:191–193). This results in 11 possible combinations in total (Van Valin 2005:198). A language may not use all the possible combinations in forming complex sentences (Van Valin 2005:197).

Figure 10 shows an example of an English sentence that has junctures at all three layers of the clause. There is a nuclear cosubordinate juncture between the two predicates *paint* and *white*. There is a core coordinate juncture between the two cores containing the predicates ask and paint. Finally there is a clause cosubordinate juncture between the two clauses linked by the clause linkage marker and (Van Valin 2005:199).

Figure 10. Complex English sentence containing junctures at all three layers (Van Valin 2005, with permission).

In the following chapters I present my analysis of the syntactic structure of the Mashan Miao language based on the Role and Reference Grammar framework.

### 1.2 Literature review

Mashan Miao has not been widely researched and documented. The phonology of the language has been most researched by Mashan Miao scholars who want to document and preserve their language and culture. They have documented Mashan Miao poetry (Bender 2013; Li 2011). The tonal system of
Mashan Miao is one of the most complex (Mortensen 2013). There has been some research into how tone interacts with syllable onsets and syllable finals (Xian 1990). David Mortensen (2013) found a relationship between tone and vowel raising in one Mashan Miao dialect.

Other Hmongic languages have been quite widely researched and documented. There have been several comprehensive grammatical descriptions of other Hmongic languages. An early example is Jean Mottin’s (1978) description of White Hmong spoken in Thailand. More recently Xiong Yuyou and Diana Cohen (2005) have produced a handbook of Blue Hmong spoken in Yunnan province, China. This volume includes an explanation of the phonology and orthography, in addition to grammatical description.

Others have included brief grammatical descriptions in theses that focus on particular aspects of various Hmongic languages. Carey McLaughlin (2013) in her thesis proposes a salience scheme for Hmong Soud, a Hmong language spoken in Yunnan China. She also presents a relatively comprehensive grammatical analysis. Judith Fuller (1985) wrote a thesis concerning topic and comment in Hmong, and included a brief description of the main grammatical features. She focuses particularly on the noun phrase as it is more relevant to the subject of her thesis.

The functions of verbs and serial verb constructions have been widely researched in both Hmongic and other languages of Southeast Asia (Enfield 2008; Chang 2005; Lin 2004; Indrambarya 1995; Warotamasikkhadit 1988). Nerida Jarkey has written about these constructions in White Hmong, analysing their structure (Jarkey 2010) and semantic relations (Jarkey 2004). Elisabeth Meister (2010) conducted an analysis of types of serial verb construction in Hmong Ntsuab spoken in Thailand. Her work is based on Nicholas Enfield’s (2008) analysis of serial verb constructions in Lao. Meister (2010) also includes a brief grammatical description, focussing mostly on verbs and their functions.

Marybeth Clark (1989) has written a paper about the major grammatical features of Hmong, in comparison with other Southeast Asian languages. Other writers have focussed on particular syntactic structures in Hmong, such as passives (Creswell and Snyder 2000), questions (Clark 1985), noun classifiers (Jaisser 1987), demonstratives (Ratliff 1997) and relative markers (Riddle 1993).

In this work I give an initial description of the syntactic structure of Mashan Miao. To my knowledge such a work has not been undertaken for this particular dialect. Therefore this work contributes to knowledge regarding Hmongic languages and a language that has previously been little documented.

1.3 Writing system

The data used in this book was provided by two mother-tongue speakers of Mashan Miao, Wang Zhi (WZ) and Liang Yilian (LY). The two language assistants were both female and in their early twenties. They speak two slightly different vernaculars of Mashan Miao. LY claimed to speak Central Mashan Miao. I made an educated guess that WZ speaks the Southern Mashan Miao vernacular. According to the Ethnologue (Lewis et al. 2013), the Western vernacular is spoken in Ziyun and Wangmo counties, and the Southern vernacular is spoken only in Wangmo county. I collected some data with some speakers from Ziyun county which is not used in this work; but as the speakers in Ziyun spoke differently to both WZ and LY, I assumed that they were speaking the Western vernacular (spoken in Ziyun and Wangmo) and that WZ is speaking the Southern vernacular (spoken only in Wangmo).

The examples used in this work have been labelled with the ISO 639-3 codes assigned to these two vernaculars, HMA for the Southern vernacular and HMM for the Central vernacular (Lewis et al. 2013), to enable easy identification of which dialect the example is taken from. Each text has also been given a number, so that the origin of each example can be identified. Two example texts from each vernacular have also been included in Appendix B with gloss and English free translation. Abbreviations used in the glossing of the texts are listed in the front matter.

The Central vernacular uses a pinyin-based orthography developed by some Mashan Miao scholars, based on the Standard Miao orthography devised by Chinese linguists (Li 2011). The data for the Southern vernacular was also transcribed using a pinyin-based script that was adapted for use with the Mashan Miao dialect by Andrew Castro (2013).
### 1.4 Morphology

Mashan Miao is an isolating language; words do not inflect for tense or person etc. Many words are monosyllabic as in example (1).

(1)  
\[ \text{haet} \]

‘egg’ (HMA19)

There are also some words with more than one syllable, such as the word meaning ‘friend’ in (2). Although it is one word, the two syllables are written with a space in between.

(2)  
\[ \text{nzangh dol} \]

‘friend’ (HMA13)

Sometimes words are combined to form compound words. For example in (3) the two words angt meaning ‘do’ and ndaud meaning ‘book’ are combined to mean ‘study’.

(3)  
\[ \text{angt ndaud} \]

‘study’ (HMA13)
2 The Layered Structure of the Clause

In this chapter I discuss the layered structure of the clause in Mashan Miao, including basic clause structure (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6) and grammatical operators (2.7). In Mashan Miao the basic word order is Privileged Syntactic Argument (PSA) – Predicate – Direct Core Argument (DCA), as in (4). The noun phrase god mat ‘my mother’ is the PSA, jaud ‘boil’ is the predicate and haet ‘egg’ is the DCA.

(4) god mat jaud haet
    1SG mother boil egg
    ‘My mum boiled (some) eggs.’ (HMA19)

2.1 The nucleus

The nucleus contains the predicate. In Mashan Miao the predicate may be a verb, for example the verb saok ‘laugh’ in sentence (5).

(5) god lax saok lex
    1SG also laugh INCHO
    ‘I also smiled.’ (HMA02)

The predicate may also be a nominal as in (6). A nominal predicate occurs with the copula verb nyongs ‘to be’.

(6) gongd nyongs gwf bim box goh
    1SG be 2SG POSS Grandmother PRT
    ‘I’m your grandmother.’ (HMM16)

Attributive clauses are expressed using adjectival predicates (see section 3.1.2.1 for further discussion of adjectives) as in sentence (7). Here the adjective is hob ranx ‘happy’. Adjectival predicates in Mashan Miao do not require a copula; however, they may occur with an intensifier, such as huak ‘very’ as in this example.

(7) god hob ranx huak
    1SG happy very
    ‘I was very happy.’ (HMA06)

Locative predicates are realised using the verb nyab ‘to be located at’ as in (8).

(8) lenx dongb liaox nyab xax hrax
    CLF child big be.located up tree
    ‘The older child was in the tree.’ (HMA24)

The verb nyab also means ‘have’ and is used in existential clauses as in (9). In this context it is better translated ‘there is’.

(9) xix eid nyab ib lenx box lol renh
    before have one CLF witch
    ‘Once upon a time there was a witch.’ (HMA24)
2.2 Core templates

The core contains the predicate and its arguments. In Mashan Miao predicates can take one or two arguments. In Mashan Miao intransitive sentences the single argument precedes the predicate as in (10).

\[(10) \quad \text{god} \quad \text{xef} \quad \text{lex} \]
\[1SG \quad \text{wake.up} \quad \text{ASP} \]
\[\text{‘I got up.’ (HMA07)} \]

Figure 11 shows the syntactic structure of this clause. The predicate is in the nucleus and the single argument is included in the core.

In some cases the single argument of an intransitive verb may follow the predicate as in (11). The predicate is the verb \text{loul} and the single argument is \text{nengs} ‘rain’.

\[(11) \quad \text{nongx} \quad \text{naed} \quad \text{loul} \quad \text{nengs} \]
\[\text{today} \quad \text{come} \quad \text{rain} \]
\[\text{‘It’s raining today.’ (HMA22)} \]

The structure of the core of the clause in sentence (11) is shown in Figure 12. The verb \text{loul} is in the nucleus, and the argument \text{nengs} is inside the core, to the right of the predicate.

Figure 12. Single core argument following predicate.
In a Mashan Miao existential clause the core has a similar structure. In (12) the verb nyab introduces a new participant, in this case ib lex box lol renh ‘a witch’.

(12) xix eit nyab ib lenx box lol renh
    before have one CLF witch
    ‘Once upon a time there was a witch.’ (HMA24)

Many predicates are transitive and have two arguments, as in (13). The default order for transitive sentences is for the PSA argument to precede the predicate, and the DCA argument to follow.

(13) god nyab ib lenx nzangh dol
    1sg have one CLF friend
    ‘I have a friend.’ (HMA13)

Figure 13 shows the layered structure of a core containing two arguments.

![Figure 13. Core containing two arguments.]

These three possible structures in Mashan Miao can be illustrated using the core templates shown in figure 14.

![Figure 14. Core templates.]

2.3 Argument adjuncts

The core may also contain arguments marked by prepositional phrases (see Chapter 4). They are called argument adjuncts (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:161). These prepositional phrases are said to be predicative as they add meaning to the clause; in this way they are adjuncts (Pavey 2010, loc 2026). The prepositions also introduce participants to the core; therefore the reference phrases that they introduce are also core arguments (Pavey 2010, loc 2026). Argument adjuncts usually occur between the PSA and the predicate in Mashan Miao. In sentence (14) the argument adjunct is nil ‘him’; it is a core argument as
both of them took part in the eating. It is marked with the deverbal preposition *ndeus* which marks argument adjuncts with the semantic role of accompaniment.

(14) god *ndeus* nil nyax lex.

1SG with 3SG eat PERF
‘I ate (it) with him.’ (HMA20)

The layered structure of sentence (14) is shown in Figure 15.

![Figure 15. Argument adjunct.](image)

2.4 Periphery

The clause layer contains the core and any non-arguments; these non-arguments occur in the periphery. Peripheral elements in Mashan Miao often occur before the predicate, sometimes clause initial and sometimes following the PSA. Adverbs are an example of a peripheral element. Sentence (15) contains a temporal adverb, *dand nbwl* ‘morning’, which provides information about when the event took place. Temporal adverbs modify the core of the clause and generally occur clause initial in Mashan Miao.

(15) *dand nbwl* heb hax
morning chicken call
‘In the morning a cockerel crows.’ (HMM11)

Figure 16 shows the structure of (15). The temporal adverb occurs in the core periphery.
Manner adverbs also appear in the core periphery. They express how an action was carried out. Sentence (16) contains an example of a manner adverb. The adverb *bux yangb* ‘secretly’ is reduplicated and followed by the particle *deib*. It occurs between the PSA and the predicate.

(16) *boux ves bux yangb bux yangb deib ndus hob ves ab lenx*
  
  paternal.grand 3PL secretly secretly PRT follow after 3PL two CLF
  
  ‘My grandmother and her friends secretly followed the two women.’ (HMA09)

Figure 17 shows the syntactic representation of sentence (16).

In Mashan Miao peripheral elements expressing location usually occur between constituents in the core. For example the deverbal preposition *nyab* is used to introduce adjuncts with the semantic role of location, as in (17). This peripheral element occurs between the PSA and the predicate.

(17) *god mat nyab biaed angt hangb*
  
  1SG mother at house work
  
  ‘My mother works at home.’ (HMA18)
2.5 Left-detached position

There is evidence for a left-detached position in the Mashan Miao clause, containing phrases that are separated from the main clause by a pause (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36). If this phrase is also a core argument, then it will be cross referenced in the core (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36). Topics may occur in this position. The topic is what the sentence is about; it is followed by a comment which says something about that topic (Levinsohn 2012:39). In Mashan Miao topics take the first position in the sentence. In (18) the DCA biux hangd ‘speech’ is the topic, and the rest of the sentence is the comment.

(18) biux hangd nil dub mux dangh nal
    speak speech 3SG all NEG clear hear
    ‘Speech, she cannot hear clearly.’ (HMA01)

The diagram in Figure 18 shows the structure of this sentence, the left-detached position is outside of the clause.

[Diagram showing the structure of a sentence with left-detached position]

The particle jek seems to sometimes function as a topic marker. In sentence (19) the particle jek sets the topic beid ‘fruit/pear’ apart from the rest of the clause.

(19) beid jek zit qengl njab qengl.
    fruit PRT spill.fall.out all.completely spill.fall.out all.completely
    ‘As for the pears, (they) spilled out everywhere.’ (HMM11)

Cross linguistically if the referent in the left-detached position is also an argument in the core, it is repeated with a pronoun in the core (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:36), as in (20). The pronoun nil in the main clause refers back to the referent gongk ndaed deib eid ‘that long part’ in the left-detached position, it is called a resumptive pronoun (Pavey 2010, loc 2681).

(20) gongk ndaed deib eid mub nil dib dens dens deib
    section.length.part long REL DEM.DEIC use 3SG tie.up tight tight REL
    ‘That long part, take it and tie (it) up tight.’ (HMA17)
2.6 Passive constructions

Mashan Miao has a passive-like construction. The actor argument is no longer the PSA of the sentence, and in Mashan Miao is marked by the deverbal preposition zaol (see section 4.1) and occurs in the same position as argument adjuncts, before the predicate. The undergoer becomes the PSA of the sentence and takes the initial position in the core. Sentence (21) is an example of a passive sentence in Mashan Miao. The actor argument *hax lws* ‘hailstones’ is marked by zaol. The undergoer *veul* ‘tile’ becomes the PSA of the sentence and the first element in the clause.

(21) *veul zaol hax lws ndok deus lex.*
    tile PASS hailstones make break PERF
    ‘The tiles had been broken by the hailstones.’ (HMA08)

The actor argument may be omitted as in (22). The deverbal preposition zaol must still be present in a passive sentence even if the PSA is omitted. The omission of the PSA may be a discourse feature; reference phrases are often elided in Mashan Miao when they are evident from the context.

(22) *beid rax zaol nis lex*
    pear PASS steal PERF
    ‘(His) pears had been stolen.’ (HMA14)

Mashan Miao passives most often have an adversative meaning; that is, the event had a negative impact on the undergoer (Pavey 2010 loc 1682; Li and Thompson 1981:493). Figure 19 shows the layered structure of the Mashan Miao passive.

![Figure 19. Passive construction.](image)

2.7 Operators

In Mashan Miao negation operators function at all levels of the clause, aspect operates at the nuclear level, directionals and deontic modality function at the core level and status and illocutionary force function at the clause level.
2.7.1 Negation

There are two negative markers in Mashan Miao, these are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Negative markers in Mashan Miao

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Marker</th>
<th>Southern Vernacular</th>
<th>Central Vernacular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>mux</td>
<td>muh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-completion</td>
<td>mux neis</td>
<td>muh nans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two negative markers seem to correspond to the negative markers *bu* and *meiyou* of Mandarin Chinese. According to Li and Thompson (1981:421) *bu* is a general negative marker and *meiyou* shows that an event was not completed. The same distinction seems to hold between the two negative markers of Mashan Miao. The marker *mux* seems to be a general marker for the negative as in (23). The negative marker *mux neis* seems to mark non-completion as in (24).

(23) nil mux gongh god angt.  
3SG NEG give 1SG do  
‘She would not let me play with (it).’ (HMA20)

(24) biok ndongx lex, baeb at lik mux neis kax dak nggux.  
dark day INCHO 1PL still NEG find obtain cow  
‘In the evening, we had still not found the cows.’ (HMA12)

In Mashan Miao the negative operator precedes the verb that it is negating. The negative operator *mux* may operate at all three levels of the clause; only the context indicates the scope of the operator. Sentence (25) contains an example of nuclear negation. There are two predicates in this sentence, *njaet* ‘climb’ and *loul* ‘come’. This is a resultative construction. The second verb shows the state resulting from the first verb. In this sentence, however, the second verb is negated as the negative marker *mux* precedes it. This shows that the resulting state was not reached.

(25) gwx njaet mux loul.  
2SG climb NEG come  
‘You can’t climb up.’ (HMA24)

Sentence (26) is an example of core negation involving the negation of one of the core arguments. In sentence (26) the argument *ngex heb* ‘chicken’ is being negated by *muh nans*, the negative operator showing non-completion in the Central vernacular.

(26) gongd muh nans nongh ngex heb, gongd noax ngex nngongx  
1SG NEG eat meat chicken 1SG eat meat cow  
‘I didn’t eat chicken, I ate beef.’ (HMM13)

Sentence (27) contains an example of clause negation. The negative marker *mux* again precedes the verb that it is negating.

(27) god mux ngil loul  
1SG NEG down.off DIR  
‘I’m not coming down!’ (HMA24)
In the negative, the tone on certain verbs with certain tones changes. In the Southern vernacular on verbs that carry an [s] tone, the tone changes to an [h] in the negative, so \textit{njais} in (28) becomes \textit{njaih} in the negative, as seen in example (29).\textsuperscript{1}

(28) \begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{baeb} \textit{nja} \textit{is} \textit{nyab} \textit{hliob} \\
1PL  afraid  have  ghost spirit
\end{tabular}

'\textit{We were afraid there would be ghosts.'} (HMA12)

(29) \begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{meant} \textit{ndeus} \textit{god} \textit{ib} \textit{jangk} \textit{deib} \textit{ves} \textit{dub} \textit{mux} \textit{njaih} \textit{sax} \textit{hwx}. \\
look  and  1SG  one  year  REL  3PL  all  NEG  fear  lightning.
\end{tabular}

'\textit{(I) could see that my friends the same age as me were not afraid of lightning.'} (HMA05)

In the Southern vernacular another tone change that has been observed is the [t] tone becoming a [k] tone in the negative. The same happens to some tones on verbs that are negated in the Central vernacular. There are many more tone changes in this vernacular. The tone changes observed so far in the Central vernacular are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. List of tone changes in the negative in Central Mashan Miao

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Tone</th>
<th>Tone in the Negative</th>
<th>Positive Example</th>
<th>Negative Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[t]</td>
<td>[k]</td>
<td>\textit{dat}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{dak}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kill</td>
<td>NEG kill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[m]</td>
<td>[s]</td>
<td>\textit{sanm}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{sans}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>think</td>
<td>NEG think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[d]</td>
<td>[t]</td>
<td>\textit{jind}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{jint}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>remember</td>
<td>NEG remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>[m]</td>
<td>\textit{xwb}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{xwm}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stand</td>
<td>NEG stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[x]</td>
<td>[h]</td>
<td>\textit{nzeix}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{nzeih}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>turn</td>
<td>NEG turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[s]</td>
<td>[h]</td>
<td>\textit{nyongs}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{nyongh}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be</td>
<td>NEG be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[l]</td>
<td>[s]</td>
<td>\textit{tengl}</td>
<td>\textit{muh} \textit{tengs}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>dye</td>
<td>NEG dye</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The examples in table 2 were all taken from the wordlists and not from the more natural speech in the recorded texts. Also, the transcription of the negative in the texts was not always consistent. It is not clear whether these tone changes are related to negation, or if it is simply tone sandhi that is causing the tone changes. More research would need to be done to determine whether this is a phonological or a grammatical process.

In the Central vernacular the form of some verbs changes completely in the negative, for example the verb meaning 'let'. In the positive it is \textit{kongs} as in (30).

(30) \begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{wes} \textit{kongs} \textit{gongd} \textit{lwf} \textit{kuoh}. \\
3PL  let  1SG  go  find
\end{tabular}

'\textit{They would make me go and find (the cows).'} (HMM05)

\textsuperscript{1} Tones in Mashan Miao are marked orthographically by the final letter of each word. Table C.4 in Appendix C indicates the orthographic representation and the phonological realisation of the tones in the Southern vernacular. For example the tone indicated word finally by the letter [s] is a rising tone, tone 2 rising to tone 4.
In the negative it is pronounced ngongh as in (31).

(31) *dand lul bjed noax xongt jek wes muh ngongh lul.*

arrive.at return home eat lunch PRT 3PL NEG let return

‘When it was time to go home and eat lunch, they would not let (me) go home.’ (HMM05)

Some other such examples are listed in Table.

Table 3. Verb form changes in the negative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb in the Positive</th>
<th>Verb in the Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noax eat</td>
<td>muh nongh eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zox Walk</td>
<td>muh coh walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jinx finish</td>
<td>muh qinh finish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jongx bring</td>
<td>muh qongh bring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blux speak</td>
<td>muh pluh speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tias die</td>
<td>muh dah die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qongs plant</td>
<td>muh jongh plant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.2 Nuclear level operator: Aspect

Aspect gives information about the ‘internal temporal structure’ of an event (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:40). Mashan Miao has a rich aspectual system. Aspect is marked using particles and verbs that may also function as aspect markers. Table 4 lists some of the aspect markers identified in the data collected; however, in the examples they are all glossed as ‘ASP’. Much of the analysis in this section is based on McLaughlin’s (2013:44–48) analysis of aspect in Hmong Soud. Aspect in Mashan Miao seems to be marked in a similar way.

Table 4. Mashan Miao aspect markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td><em>lex</em></td>
<td><em>lwf</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inchoative</td>
<td><em>lex</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completive</td>
<td><em>jinx, jengl, los, huanh</em></td>
<td><em>jinx, qengl, los</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durative</td>
<td>Reduplication of the verb.</td>
<td>Reduplication of the verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td><em>ndaex</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td><em>hliah</em></td>
<td><em>guoh</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resultative</td>
<td>Resultative Construction</td>
<td>Resultative Construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The particle *lex* marks perfective aspect. Perfective aspect shows that an event has been completed and refers to the event in its entirety (Comrie 1976:18). In sentence (32) the perfective particle *lex* follows the predicate *ndieuh* ‘go’ and indicates that the whole event of the speaker’s friend going to school with somebody else is a completed event.
Completive aspect indicates that an event has been completed, but focuses on the end point of the event (Pavey 2010, loc 936; Comrie 1976:18). In Mashan Miao it can be marked in two ways, with the verbs *jinx* or *jengl*. These two verbs both mean ‘finish’ or ‘complete’. As well as being predicates, they also have the grammatical function of marking completive aspect. In sentence (33) *jinx* functions as a marker of completive aspect, highlighting that when the exam was finished, then the speaker should go and look for her brother.

(33) *nil* blux tangl hangl kaod jinx jek, jaeb lwf kuoh nil  
3SG say say take.exam COMPL then self go find 3SG  
‘He said that when (I) finished the exam, (I) should go and find him by myself.’ (HMM07)

There is a subtle difference between *jinx* and *jengl*. Sentences (34) and (35) demonstrate the difference. In (34) *jinx* indicates that the speaker has finished eating but there may be food left in the bowl.

(34) *god* nyax jinx lex  
1SG eat COMPL PERF  
‘I’ve finished eating.’ (HMA25)

In (35) *jengl* indicates that the speaker has eaten everything in the bowl and there is nothing left.

(35) *god* nyax jengl lex  
1sg eat COMPL PERF  
‘I’ve eaten everything.’ (HMA25)

Inchoative aspect shows that a change has taken place or is currently happening (Pavey 2010, loc 913; Comrie 1976:19–20). In Mashan Miao the particle *lex* may also be used, besides its use to mark perfective aspect, to mark inchoative aspect as in (36). This example may be literally translated ‘the sky has become yellow’, this illustrates the change that has occurred from night to day.

(36) *fux* ndongx lex  
yellow day ASP  
‘at sunrise’ (HMA07)

Durative aspect shows that an action lasts a long time (Comrie 1976:41). In Mashan Miao it is marked by repeating the verb as in (37). The sentence is describing a game; the predicate *ndok* is reduplicated to show that the playing of the game went on for some time.

(37) *ndok* ndok hual jengl yuh ndieuh vanb  
play play tired COMPL again go play  
‘(We) played until (we) were too tired, then (we) went out to visit (friends).’ (HMA19)

Progressive aspect shows that an event is currently in process (Pavey 2010, loc 916; Comrie 1976:33). In Mashan Miao it is marked by the particle *ndeax*. In sentence (38) the progressive aspect
marker *ndaex* follows the predicate *jex*, showing that the boy was in the process of riding when he passed underneath the tree.

(38)  *pouh*  *dongb*  *sek*  *ib*  *lenx*  *dongb*  *juh*  *jex*  *ndaex*  *danb*  *cex*
      a.little.while  pass.time  PRT  one  CLF  boy  ride  PROG  bike

  *hliah*  *jix*  *hrax*  *ndieuh*
  pass  under  tree  go

  ‘After a little while, a boy riding a bike passed underneath the tree.’ (HMA14)

Experiential aspect shows that at some point the speaker has experienced an event (Comrie 1976:58). In Mashan Miao it is marked by the verb *hliah*. As a lexical verb *hliah* means ‘to cross’ or ‘to pass’. In sentence (39) it follows the predicate *angt xid*; in this case it shows that this event was not experienced again.

(39)  *at*  *hob*,  *baeb*  *mux*  *neis*  *angt*  *xid*  *hliah*
      after  1PL  NEG  be.angry  EXP

  ‘After, we didn’t fall out again.’ (HMA02)

Resultative aspect shows that an action was successfully performed (Comrie 1976:20). In Mashan Miao resultative aspect is expressed using a complex verb construction rather than a specific aspect marker. The resultative construction consists of a verb showing a cause, followed by another verb that shows the result of the first verb. An example is given in (40). The first verb *dat* means ‘kill’; the second verb *dws* ‘die’ shows that the action of the first verb was successful, the pig was successfully slaughtered.

(40)  *dongl*  *nbat*  *dat*  *dws*  *lex*
      CLF  peg  kill  die  INCHO

  ‘When the pig is dead…. ’ (HMA11)

In Mashan Miao most aspect marking involves complex constructions (see chapter five).

### 2.7.3 Core level operators

#### 2.7.3.1 Core directionals

Core level directionals provide information about the direction of motion of a core argument with reference to another argument (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:42). The two most common directionals in Mashan Miao are the verbs *ndieuh* ‘go’ and *loul* ‘come’. When these verbs follow the main verb they are usually functioning as core directionals. In (41) the verb *ndieuh* is modifying the preceding verb *ot* ‘exit’. It shows that ‘she’ is moving away from the point of reference, in this case the inside of the house.

(41)  *sek*  *nil*  *ot*  *ndieuh*  *maent*
      so  3SG  exit  DIR  look

  ‘So she went out to take a look.’ (HMA24)

In sentence (42) the witch is speaking to the child, asking him to come down from the tree towards herself; she is the point of reference and the verb *loul* indicates that she wants the child to move towards her.

(42)  *sek*  *nil*  *aut*  *ndaex*,  *dongb*,  *gwx*  *ngil*  *loul*
      so  3SG  call  say  child  2SG  down.off  DIR

  ‘Then she said, “child, come down.”’ (HMA24)
The point of reference is usually the speaker; however, this is not always the case as seen in (43). In the first sentence the witch is speaking and she herself is the point of reference; in his response the little boy continues to use her as the point of reference.

(43) \textit{sek nil aut daex, “dongb, gwx ngil loul, god mux nyax gwx”}
\textit{so 3SG call say child 2SG down.off DIR 1SG NEG eat 2SG}
‘Then she said, child, “come down, I’m not going to eat you!”’

\textit{lenx dongb liaox daeb daex, “god mux ngil loul”}
\textit{CLF child big say say 1SG NEG down.off DIR}
‘The grandchild replied “I’m not coming down!”’ (HMA24)

\subsection{Deontic modality}

Deontic modality refers to the expression of obligation, permission or ability (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:41). In Mashan Miao the verb \textit{daf} ‘must’ can be used to express an obligation; in (44) \textit{daf} is negated. In the following example the speaker is addressing her grandmother saying that she should not feel obligated to go out and climb the slopes chopping firewood. There are two predicates in this sentence, \textit{njaet} ‘climb’ and \textit{hauk} ‘chop’, the verb \textit{daf} has scope over both predicates.

(44) \textit{gwx mux daf nongx nongx ndieuh njaet bias ndieuh hauk deul}
\textit{2SG NEG must day day go climb slope go chop firewood}
‘You don’t need to go out every day to climb the hills and chop firewood.’ (HMA01)

In Mashan Miao the verb \textit{boab} meaning ‘know’ is used to express an ability to do something, as in (45).

(45) \textit{ruf nzouk huob bianb dwt joak boab huh deib}
\textit{sit behind write.compose give those be.able sing PRT}
‘(They) would sit at the back writing songs to give to those who can sing.’ (HMM04)

An inability to do something is expressed by adding the negative operator \textit{muh} in front of \textit{boab} as in (46).

(46) \textit{gongd muh boab plah hanx}
\textit{1SG NEG be able blow lusheng}
‘I don’t know how to play the lusheng.’ (HMM13)

A resultative construction (see section 2.7.2.1) also expresses an inability to perform an action when the result predicate is negated, as in (47). This structure indicates that the first action was attempted, but the result was not achieved, thus implying that one was unable to do it (Jarkey 2010:115; Li and Thompson 1981:57). In (47) the addressee can look, but cannot see, therefore they are not able to see.

(47) \textit{gwx nongb muh lax meant mux baof}
\textit{2SG CLF eye also look NEG see}
‘Your eyes can’t see.’ (HMA01)

\subsection{Clause level operators}

\subsubsection{Status}

Status refers to the extent to which a proposition is real (Pavey 2010, loc 813). Epistemic modality is a subcategory of status (Pavey 2010 loc 816; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:41). It is a clause level operator
as it concerns the probability of a statement, how likely it is to happen (Pavey 2010, loc 816). In Mashan Miao this is expressed using the lexical verb njais meaning ‘be afraid’ as in (48).

(48)  nongx ndiak njais jit xol ndongx maed
day.after.tomorrow possible sunny day PRT
‘The day after tomorrow will probably be sunny.’ (HMA22)

2.7.4.2  Illocutionary force

Sentence final particles are a common feature of Southeast Asian languages and they may function as illocutionary force operators (Goddard 2005:144). They often convey very slight nuances of meaning (Goddard 2005:144). In Mashan Miao there are several different sentence final particles; some examples of these are in (49). They all seem to turn a declarative statement into a polar question that requires either a yes or no answer.

(49)  gwf nyongs nil deib dongb ndwt yangs?
2SG be 3SG POSS classmate PRT
‘Are you his classmate?’

bek ndws bek gwx nyongs gwf deib eit?
book CLF DET be 2SG POSS PRT
‘Are those books yours?’

nenb kwh nyongs gwf deib dongb ndwt at?
CLF DET be 2SG POSS classmate PRT
‘Is that person your classmate?’ (HMM12)

More research would have to be done into the different sentence particles used in Mashan Miao and the differences in meaning that they convey in order to determine whether they are illocutionary force operators.

Polar questions may be formed in other ways, for example using a construction in which the main verb is repeated in the negative, as in (50).

(50)  lwk qil eid nyoab muh nyoab danb mus ang?
CLF market there have NEG have dress.skirt sell PRT
‘Were there any skirts for sale at the market?’ (HMM12)

The negated form of the verb may also be put at the end of the sentence, this is shown in (51).

(51)  gwf saam lwf gongd bjed muh lwf?
2SG think go 1SG home NEG go
‘Do you want to go to my house?’ (HMM12)

In Mashan Miao content questions contain no explicit illocutionary force marking, rather question words appear in situ, replacing the constituent that is being questioned. Although there are no illocutionary operators in content questions, discussion concerning their structure is dealt with in this section, as interrogatives are a kind of illocutionary act. Sentence (52) shows a question and answer; the interrogative pronoun dut in the question appears in the same position that the answer takes in the following sentence.
Then, (they) asked them, “Where are you going?”

‘The two women replied, “We are going to the cave in your village, Guanyin Cave.”’ (HMA24)

Another example of this is in (53). The question word nenb sis ‘who’ follows the verb nyongs in the question. In the answer, gwf bim box ‘your grandmother’ occurs in the same position.

(53) nenb dongb nbiah daeb daex, nyongs nenb sis angs?
    CLF child ask say be who PRT
    ‘The child asked: “Who is it?”’

    gongd nyongs gwf bim box goh
    1SG be 2SG POSS Grandmother PRT
    ‘I’m your grandmother.’ (HMM16)

Table 5 lists some question words of Mashan Miao.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Word</th>
<th>Southern Vernacular</th>
<th>Central Vernacular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>lenx dut/yus duk</td>
<td>nenb sis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>dof zeit</td>
<td>twl sis/dwf sis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>xix duh</td>
<td>xih douh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>nongb dut</td>
<td>had tus/hangd tus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>angt sis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>at dut</td>
<td>angt jix tus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.8 Summary

In this chapter I described the layered structure of the clause in Mashan Miao. The nucleus usually contains a verb, but may also contain nominal and adjectival predicates. Argument adjuncts usually occur between the PSA and the predicate, and are marked by a deverbal preposition. In Mashan Miao passives, the undergoer moves to the first position in the core, and the actor argument is marked by the deverbal preposition zaol. In Mashan Miao peripheral elements may occur clause initial or between the PSA and the predicate; there is also a left-detached position. In section 2.7 I described the operators that function at each layer of the clause. Negation functions at all three levels of the clause. Aspect functions at the nuclear level; directionals and deontic modality function at the core level. The operators of status and illocutionary force function at the clause level. Verbs in Mashan Miao often have grammatical functions such as marking operators.
3 The Reference Phrase

In this chapter I describe the layered structure of the reference phrase in Mashan Miao, the operators that function at each level of the reference phrase and the structure of complex reference phrases.

3.1 The layered structure of the reference phrase

Reference phrases refer to entities and have a layered structure that mirrors the layered structure of the clause (see section 1.1) (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997).

3.1.1 Nucleus

The nucleus contains the head of the phrase. In Mashan Miao the nucleus of the reference phrase usually contains a noun. Sentence (54) is an example of a noun heading a reference phrase: the noun nax ‘bag’.

(54) ib nongb nax
     one CLF bag
     ‘a bag’ (HMA20)

A reference phrase may be formed of a noun alone. In (55) the noun nggux ‘cow’ is the only constituent in the second reference phrase.

(55) sek god lins nggux ndieu hack
     then 1SG herd cow go watch.guard
     ‘Then I herded the cows out to graze.’ (HMA07)

Other categories of words may also head the reference phrase in Mashan Miao. Sentence (55) shows a reference phrase that consists of a single pronoun; the first reference phrase is headed by the first person singular pronoun god. Mashan Miao has demonstrative pronouns, which may stand alone as a referring argument as in (56). The demonstrative pronoun is nub ongb ‘that’.

(56) nub ongb yongs dof zeit hreh
     that be what PRT
     ‘What is that?’ (HMA16)

Figure 20 shows the layered structure of the reference phrase in example (54).

Figure 20. Mashan Miao reference phrase.

In Mashan Miao reference phrases are frequently omitted completely in the clause if they are evident from the context. This is a common phenomenon in Hmong languages and other East Asian
languages (Goddard 2005:36; Clark 1989:220). In some cases the noun may be omitted but other constituents in the reference phrase may still be used. In sentence (57) both reference phrases consist of only a numeral and a classifier. The noun mengx ‘person’ has been omitted in this sentence, if it were present it would follow the classifier lenx. This is a discourse feature related to whether the referent is accessible to the hearer.

\[(57) \text{ib lenx bongb ndieuk ib lenx nyax ndieuk nzeid} \]
\[\text{one CLF divide a.little one CLF eat a.little sticky.rice} \]
\[\text{‘Everyone shares some sticky rice.’ (HMA19)} \]

Sentence (58) contains a further example of this: the quantifier ib pins is used without a head noun; in this case the noun omitted is again mengx ‘people’.

\[(58) \text{ib pins renl piaih lax, ib pins renl hras} \]
\[\text{some press.hold.down leg some press.hold.down head} \]
\[\text{‘Some hold the pig’s limbs, some hold the head.’ (HMA11)} \]

3.1.2 Periphery

Peripheral elements are found at each layer of the reference phrase.

3.1.2.1 Adjectives

In Mashan Miao adjectives generally follow the noun that they modify; this is shown in (59). The adjective xiaol ‘hot’ is modifying the head noun angb ‘water’. They appear in the nuclear periphery as they are modifying the noun itself (Pavey 2010, loc 1826).

\[(59) \text{mub angb xiaol lox} \]
\[\text{use water hot scald} \]
\[\text{‘(They) use hot water to scald (the pig).’ (HMA11)} \]

Figure 21 shows the layered structure of a reference phrase containing a peripheral modifier.

![Diagram of reference phrase]

Figure 21. Mashan Miao reference phrase nuclear periphery.

It is not clear whether these modifiers in Mashan Miao should be classified as adjectives or stative verbs. In other Hmongic languages some have classified these as stative verbs (Xiong and Cohen 2005:57; Clark 1989:179), others as adjectives (McLaughlin 2013:68). Adjectival predicates in Mashan Miao do not require a copula and they are negated similarly to verbs (McLaughlin 2013:68–69), also
undergoing similar tone changes in the negative (see section 2.7.1). Further research is required to determine the class of these words.

3.1.2.2 Modifying nouns

Nouns may also be modified by other nouns, as in (60). The modifying noun \textit{nbat} ‘pig’ follows the head noun \textit{rab} ‘food’. In the syntactic representation it occurs in the nuclear periphery.

\begin{center}
\begin{verbatim}
rab  nbat
grass  pig
‘pig food’ (HMA07)
\end{verbatim}
\end{center}

Modifying elements sometimes precede the noun. In this case the particle \textit{deib} usually occurs between the modifier and the noun. (61) is an example of a reference phrase containing a modifier preceding a noun.

\begin{center}
\begin{verbatim}
ab  lenx  rangt  box  deib  dongb  nbiaih
two  CLF  beautiful  REL  woman
‘two beautiful women’ (HMA09)
\end{verbatim}
\end{center}

Figure 22 shows the syntactic representation of (61).

![Syntactic representation of (61)](image)

Structures where the modifier precedes the noun in Hmong are borrowed from Chinese (Ratliff 1997:325). Example (62) is a Mandarin sentence showing the adjective \textit{piàoliàng} ‘beautiful’ preceding the noun \textit{niúhái} ‘woman’ and the use of the particle \textit{de}. The Mashan Miao particle \textit{deib} has been borrowed from this Chinese particle \textit{de}.

\begin{center}
\begin{verbatim}
liǎng  gè  hěn  piàoliàng  de  niúhái
two  CLF  very  beautiful  PRT  woman
‘two beautiful women’ (CMN)
\end{verbatim}
\end{center}

3.1.2.3 Possessive construction

In Mashan Miao as in other Hmongic languages the possessor precedes the noun that is possessed (Clark 1989:185). The possessor is followed by the particle \textit{deib} as in (63). The possessor is the third person singular pronoun \textit{nil} and the possessed DCA is \textit{ab liof beid rax} ‘two baskets of pears’.
This structure has been borrowed from Chinese; (64) shows an example of the Chinese particle. The particle *de* marks possession and is placed between the possessor, *wǒ* the first person singular pronoun in Chinese, and the possessed, the computer.

(64) *wǒ de diànnǎo zài zhuōzi shàng*

1SG POSS computer be.located table on

‘My computer is on the table.’ (CMN)

The syntactic structure of possessives is unclear. They function similarly to modifiers of the noun, as they are also followed by the particle *deib*; therefore they could occur in the periphery of the reference phrase. However, the head noun in a possessive does not have to be present; for example in sentence (65) the head noun *bek ndws* ‘book’ is not present in the second reference phrase: the possessive construction *gwf deib* ‘yours’ functions as the referring expression in this case.

(65) *nongb jongf xah deib bek ndws gwf nyongs muh nyongs gwf deib of?*

CLF table up PRT book DEIX be NEG be 2SG POSS PRT

‘That book on the table, is it yours?’ (HMM12)

Possessives in Mashan Miao are also more restricted as to their position in the reference phrase; they are always the first constituent, preceding a classifier. Relative clauses (see section 3.3), however, may occur before or after a classifier. This may suggest that possessives occur in a reference phrase initial position (see section 3.1.3); this is a position in the reference phrase comparable to left and right-detached positions in the clause (Pavey 2010, loc 1864; Van Valin 2005:26). The omission of the head noun may also be a discourse feature; reference phrases are frequently omitted when they are deducible from the context. In sentence (65) it is clear that the missing noun is *bek ndws* ‘book’ as it is mentioned explicitly in the first reference phrase. If this is simply a discourse feature then it seems most sensible to treat possessives in the same way as other peripheral modifiers. Figure 23 shows the syntactic structure of a possessive construction according to this analysis.

![Figure 23. Noun phrase showing possession.](image)

There are different ways, however, of marking alienable and inalienable possession. Inalienable possession may be a ‘part-whole’ relationship or a kinship relationship (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:190). In Mashan Miao kinship relations, parts of the home or parts of the body are inalienable. In inalienable possessive constructions the particle *deib* is not used. This is seen in sentence (66) which is an example of inalienable possession showing a kinship relationship.
(66) god boux
   1SG paternal.grandmother
   'my grandmother' (HMA01)

When referring to body parts a classifier (see section 3.2.1.1 for discussion of classifiers) is used but again the particle deib is omitted as in (67).

(67) god nongb ranx ndeit huat
   1SG CLF heart jump very
   'My heart was beating very fast.' (HMA08)

Sometimes the word biaed 'home, family' is used as a marker of inalienable possession. Sentence (68) shows that it occurs in the same position as deib; after the possessor god and before bal bat 'father'.

(68) nongx baeb juf god biaed bal bat xaul loul ndok ndaud
day three ten 1SG house dad get.up come make fake.money
   'On the 30th my dad got up and made fake money.' (HMA19)

This structure is also used with nouns that refer to parts of the family home, as in (69).

(69) maent baof nil nyab god biaed sengx biaed dongl god
   look see 3SG be.located 1SG family door.of.house wait 1SG
   '(I) saw her at the door of my house waiting for me.' (HMA02)

In the Central vernacular the particle bit is used when marking inalienable possession, as in (70). This particle may have been derived from the noun bjed meaning 'home' or 'family' (equivalent to biaed in the Southern vernacular).

(70) xih eit gongd bit guok nyoab xianh cengf hah gaok zongk.
time DET 1SG POSS older.brother be location county.town study high.school
   'At that time, my older brother was attending high school in the county town.' (HMM07)

Sentence (71) shows both particles being used in one reference phrase, first bit showing a relationship of inalienable possession between the speaker and her brother, then deib marking alienable possession between her brother and his mobile phone.

(71) gongd bit guok deib soud jik haos laeh jind muh ndok
   1SG POSS older.brother POSS mobile.phone number also remember NEG arrive
   'And (I) could not remember my brother's number.' (HMM07)

In (72) it seems there is a relationship of inalienable possession between the cow and its horn. The horn is a part of the cow's body; however, the particle deib is used here. So it seems that the concept of inalienable possession only applies to human possessors in Mashan Miao.

(72) dongl nngux deib jel gongb
   CLF cow POSS CLF horn
   'a cow's horn' (HMA24)

It should be mentioned, however, that while the difference between alienable and inalienable possessive marking as just described does hold as a general pattern, a number of exceptions have been found. It may well be that the occurrence of such exceptions reflects changes currently still ongoing in Mashan Miao, changes arising from contact with the Chinese possessive construction with de but not yet spread to all speakers and all contexts.
3.1.3 Noun phrase final position

The reference phrase may also have an initial or final position, similar to the right- and left-detached positions that occur in the clause (Pavey 2010, loc 1864). In Mashan Miao demonstratives occur in the reference phrase final position; sentence (73) shows that demonstratives follow the noun.

(73) nongb bongx naed jinb cangl nggaeb angb
    CLF cave DEM.PROX regularly flood water
    ‘This cave often fills with water.’ (HMA09)

Sentence (74) shows that demonstratives may also head the reference phrase on their own. The demonstrative is naed ‘this’. Thus they are pronominal (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:62).

(74) naed yongs dof zeit hreh
    DEM.PROX be what PRT
    ‘What is this?’ (HMA16)

As the demonstrative can occur on its own and only modifies definite referents (Pavey 2010, loc 1860), it appears in the reference phrase final position. The structure of a reference phrase final position is shown in Figure 24. The final position is outside of the reference phrase core but within the reference phrase.

![Figure 24. Noun phrase final position.](image)

Figure 25 shows the layered structure of a Mashan Miao reference phrase if it contained all of the constituents that have been described in Section 6.1.

![Figure 25. Layered structure of the reference phrase in Mashan Miao.](image)
3.2 Noun phrase operators

Noun phrases also have a set of operators that function at different layers of the reference phrase. The Mashan Miao data contain examples of the nuclear level quality operator, the core level quantification operator and the reference phrase level operators, definiteness and deixis.

3.2.1 Nuclear level operators

3.2.1.1 Quality

Mashan Miao has many noun classifiers. These are quality operators, they convey certain characteristics of the entity to which they refer (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:56). This phenomenon is also known as nominal aspect (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:56). Table lists some of the noun classifiers of Mashan Miao; it is not an exhaustive list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun Classifier</th>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lenx</td>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dongl</td>
<td>animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nongb</td>
<td>general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ses</td>
<td>things that you can hold in your hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biaok</td>
<td>long, soft things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank</td>
<td>flat, thin things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jel</td>
<td>horns or feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndiangb</td>
<td>granular things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngauf</td>
<td>noun classifier for pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dex</td>
<td>noun classifier for clothes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mashan Miao classifiers precede the noun as in (75). They are often preceded by a numeral. The noun classifier lenx is used with people and precedes the noun dongb juh ‘boy’, the numeral baeb ‘three’ precedes the classifier.

(75) maent baof baeb lenx dongb juh loul
  look see three CLF boy come
  ‘(He) saw three boys come.’ (HMA14)

If a numeral is used then a classifier is required; however, classifiers may occur without numerals as in (76).

(76) nongb muh mant mux njinx
    CLF eye see NEG clear
    ‘(Her) eyes cannot see clearly.’ (HMA01)

Figure 26 shows the operator projection of a reference phrase that means ‘cave’. The nominal aspect operator is joined to the nuclear node as it modifies the nucleus.
3.2.2 Core level operators

3.2.2.1 Quantification

Numerals and quantifiers are quantification operators that modify the core level of the reference phrase. In (77) the numeral *ab* 'two' precedes the noun classifier *lenx*.

\[(77) \quad ab \quad lenx \quad rangt \quad box \quad deib \quad dongb \quad nbiaih\]
\[
\text{two} \quad \text{CLF} \quad \text{beautiful} \quad \text{REL} \quad \text{woman} \\
\text{‘two beautiful women’ (HMA09)}
\]

In (78) the quantifier *ib pins* ‘some’ is used; again, it precedes the noun.

\[(78) \quad ib \quad pins \quad mengx \quad mub \quad las \quad dib \quad dongl \quad nbat \quad deib \quad nongb \quad njux \]
\[
\text{some} \quad \text{person} \quad \text{use} \quad \text{rope} \quad \text{tie} \quad \text{up} \quad \text{classifier} \quad \text{pig} \quad \text{REL} \quad \text{CLF} \quad \text{mouth} \\
\text{‘Some people use rope to tie up the pig’s mouth.’ (HMA11)}
\]

Sentence (79) contains another quantifier, *bux swh* ‘a few’.

\[(79) \quad biux \quad seih \quad lol \quad jinx \quad sek \quad vanb \quad bux \quad swh \quad nongx \]
\[
\text{speak} \quad \text{traditional} \quad \text{story} \quad \text{COMPL} \quad \text{then} \quad \text{play} \quad \text{a} \quad \text{few} \quad \text{day} \\
\text{‘After (they) finish telling the stories, (we) will visit for a few more days.’ (HMA15)}
\]

Quantification operators modify the core level of the reference phrase, shown in Figure 27.
3.2.3 Noun phrase level operators

Definiteness and deixis are reference phrase level operators. Deixis provides information about the position of the entire reference phrase in relation to a particular reference point (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:58). Definiteness concerns whether the hearer is able to identify the referent (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:58).

3.2.3.1 Indefinite

In Mashan Miao *ib* is an indefinite marker. In (80), the boy is unknown to the hearer and is indefinite; thus he is introduced as *ib lenx dongb juh* ‘a boy’.

(80) pouh dongb sek ib lenx dongb juh jex ndaex danb cex
     a.little.while pass.time PRT one CLF boy ride PROG bike

  hliah jix hrax ndieuh
  pass under tree go
  ‘After a little while, a boy riding a bike passed underneath the tree.’ (HMA14)

When the noun is definite no numeral is required. In (81) the boy is now known to the reader and is definite, and is therefore referred to as *lenx dongb juh* ‘the boy’.

(81) maent baof nil deib ab liof beid rax lenx dongb juh kauh
     look see 3SG POSS two basket pear CLF boy pick.up

     ndaex nil deib ib liof beid rax...
     COMP 3SG POSS one basket pear
     ‘(He) saw his two baskets of pears, the boy picked up one of his baskets of pears....’ (HMA14)

Sometimes a noun used alone can stand for a definite referent, as in (82). In the first sentence the two cows are introduced as *ab dongs nggux* ‘two cows’. In the following sentence, the cows, now definite, are simply referred to as *nggux* ‘the cows’.

![Figure 27. Quantification operator.](image-url)
(82) nit deib swf houh, god biaed yongs dat nyab ab dongs nggux
small when 1SG house rear keep COMP have two CLF cow

‘When (I) was small, my family had two cows.’

nyab ib nongx, god ndeus god goud lins nggux dand
have one day 1SG and 1SG younger brother herd cow until
liauk ndiengl
in.side meadow.field

‘One day, my younger brother and I herded the cows out to the fields.’ (HMA12)

Figure 28 shows the constituent and operator projections for the reference phrase *ib lenx dongb juh* ‘a boy’. The indefiniteness operator connects at the reference phrase level node.

![Figure 28: Indefiniteness operator.]

### 3.2.3.2 Deixis

Deictic markers usually follow the noun in Mashan Miao. Mashan Miao has deictic markers showing varying degrees of proximity; they are listed in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deictic Marker</th>
<th>Degree of Proximity</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naed</td>
<td>nad</td>
<td>Near to the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gwx</td>
<td>gwf</td>
<td>Near to the addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eid</td>
<td>eid</td>
<td>Far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ongb</td>
<td>ongt</td>
<td>Farther than <em>eid</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mashan Miao differentiates between an entity that is proximal to the speaker and an entity that is proximal to the addressee. The deictic marker *naed* indicates a noun that is close to the speaker, as in (83).
The deictic marker gwf indicates that a noun is close to the addressee as in (84). It is believed that the equivalent marker in Hmong Daw may have been derived from the second person singular pronoun (Ratliff 1997:319), this may also be the case in Mashan Miao.

\[(84)\]  
\[
\text{CLF} \quad \text{table} \quad \text{up} \quad \text{DEM:PROX} \quad \text{book} \quad \text{DEM:PROX} \quad \text{be} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{be} \quad \text{2SG}
\]

\[
deib \quad \text{of}?
\]

\[
\text{POSS} \quad \text{PRT}
\]

\[
\text{That book on the table, is it yours?} \quad \text{(HMM12)}
\]

The deictic marker eid indicates a noun that is further away from the speaker, as in (85).

\[(85)\]  
\[
\text{be} \quad \text{CLF} \quad \text{person} \quad \text{DEM:PROX} \quad \text{cheat} \quad \text{1SG} \quad \text{REL}
\]

\[
\text{‘It was that person who deceived me.’} \quad \text{(HMA05)}
\]

The deictic marker ongb shows that something is far away from the speaker, further again than eid, as in (86).

\[(86)\]  
\[
\text{CLF} \quad \text{person} \quad \text{be.located} \quad \text{side} \quad \text{DEM:PROX} \quad \text{sing}
\]

\[
\text{‘One person would be on that side of the mountain singing.’} \quad \text{(HMA04)}
\]

These markers may all be described as deictic operators. Some demonstratives can also stand alone as referring expressions; these are called demonstrative pronouns. In Mashan Miao deictic operators distinguish between at least four degrees of distance, whereas the data only contain evidence of two demonstrative pronouns distinguishing only two degrees of distance. The data indicate that only the demonstrative pronouns naed and nub ongb may stand alone as referring expressions. In (87) naed shows proximal deixis; it shows that something is close.

\[(87)\]  
\[
\text{DEM:PROX} \quad \text{be} \quad \text{what} \quad \text{PRT}
\]

\[
\text{‘What is this?’} \quad \text{(HMA16)}
\]

In (88) nub ongb is referring to something that is far away; this is distal deixis.

\[(88)\]  
\[
\text{DEM:DIST} \quad \text{have} \quad \text{one} \quad \text{village} \quad \text{many} \quad \text{Miao.people}
\]

\[
\text{‘There is a Miao village.’} \quad \text{(HMA18)}
\]

These demonstrative pronouns occur in the reference phrase final position in the layered structure (see section 3.1.3) shown in Figure 29.
However, the deictic markers that are not pronominal are only represented in the operator projection as in Figure 30. They are not lexical items and are not represented in the constituent projection.

3.3 Relative clauses

3.3.1 Externally headed relative clauses

Relative clauses are clauses within reference phrases that modify the head noun. They provide more information about the referent (Pavey 2010, loc 2412). In relative clauses the head noun being modified is a missing argument in the relative clause; it is called a coreferring argument (Pavey 2010, loc 2415). Mashan Miao has externally headed relative clauses; that means the coreferring argument is outside of the relative clause (Pavey 2010, loc 2431). In Mashan Miao the relative clause precedes the head noun as in (89). The initial reference phrase contains the relative clause. The coreferring argument is lenx mengx eid ‘that man’. The relative clause is hlaut beid rax ‘picking pears’. The particle deib between these two constituents shows that it is a relative clause.
This structure seems to have been borrowed from Chinese. The Miao relative marker *deib* has come from the Chinese relative marker *de*. Chinese sentence (90) shows the relative marker *de* in use. It links the relative clause *zhāi lízi* ‘picking pears’ with the noun *nà gè rén* ‘the man’. The relative clause precedes the noun.

(90)  
zhāi lízi de nà gè rén bù zhīdào tā de lízi qù nǎlì le  
pick pear REL that CLF person NEG know 3SG POSS pear go where PRT

‘The man picking pears didn’t know where his pears had gone.’ (CMN)

In other Hmongic languages the relative clause follows the noun, in the same way that other modifying elements do, and they also have their own relative marker (Riddle 1993:58). The data do not show any examples of a relative clause following a noun, nor is there evidence of a relative marker native to Mashan Miao. It seems that these speakers have adopted the Chinese structure.

In the previous example, the relative clause is modifying the PSA. DCA reference phrases can also contain relative clauses, as in (91). The DCA is *lenx mengx* ‘the person’ and the relative clause *god biux deib* ‘that I was talking about’ precedes it.

(91)  
níl xangt hras mant baof god biux deib lenx mengx  
3SG lift up head look see 1SG speak REL CLF person

‘She looked up and saw the person I was talking about.’ (HMA20)

Phrases outside of the main clause may also contain relative clauses as shown in (92). The initial phrase appears in the left-detached position in the layered structure of the clause, it locates the sentence in time. The noun is *nongx eid* ‘that day’, the relative clause *dat nbat deib* precedes it, giving the meaning ‘the day that we kill the pig’.

(92)  
dat nbat deib nongx eid, xianb jaud ib yins angb xiaol  
kill pig REL day DEIX.PROX3 first boil one pan,pot water hot

‘On the day that (we) kill the pig, (we) first have to boil a pot of water.’ (HMA11)

Figure 31 shows the structure of a reference phrase containing a relative clause. The relative clause occurs in the constituent projection. It occurs in the periphery and modifies the reference phrase at the nuclear level.
3.3.2 Headless relative clauses

Headless relative clauses are clauses that function as an argument; they are referring expressions. They are headless as they do not have a head noun, and therefore cannot really be considered reference phrases (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:503). In Mashan Miao they look very similar to relative clauses, but they are standing as referring expressions rather than modifiers of the noun (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:504). In Mashan Miao headless relative clauses end with the particle deib; there is no noun following deib. Sentence (93) contains an example of a headless relative clause. It is the first constituent in the sentence, rangt nyax deib, and means ‘things that are good to eat’. The particle deib is functioning like a nominaliser here; it is nominalising the clause ‘good to eat’ so that it can stand as a referring argument.

(93) rangt nyax deib lax ndat huat
good eat NMLZ also many very
‘There were also many tasty things to eat.’ (HMA06)

Sentence (94) contains two headless relative clauses. The first one is nenb dongb waf blux deib which means ‘what the child said’. The second headless relative clause involves the nominalisation of huof ‘to be right’ using the particle deib.

(94) jof dief nenb dongb waf blux deib nyongs huof deib…
think CLF child say NMLZ be right.correct NMLZ
‘(She) thought that what the child said was right…’ (HMM16)
Sentence (95) also contains another example of a headless relative clause. The headless relative clause is *rangt angt xangf deib*, which in English could be translated as ‘something good to play with’, or literally ‘toy’. Here it occurs with a noun classifier which shows that it is functioning like a noun. It is also being modified by a possessive construction.

\[(95)\] nil fut ndieuh biasa dat nad nil deib nongb rangt angt xangf
\[
\text{deib} \quad \text{dat} \quad \text{daeb} \quad \text{lwx.}
\]
\[
\text{NMLZ} \quad \text{be.located} \quad \text{on.the.ground}
\]
\`
She ran to the house, forgetting her toy on the ground.’ (HMA20)
\`

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:504) claim that headless relative clauses do not have a layered structure; however, sentence (95) shows that in Mashan Miao they apparently do, as they can take operators and can be modified. Figure 32 illustrates the structure of the headless relative clause in (95). The nucleus of the reference phrase contains the nominalised clause. The nominal aspect operator is shown in the operator projection joining at the nuclear node. The possessor reference phrase is in the nuclear level periphery.

\[\text{Figure 32. Structure of headless relative clause.}\]

### 3.4 Summary

This chapter described the structure of the Mashan Miao reference phrase. Section 3.1 concerned the constituents that formed the nucleus and the periphery of the reference phrase, and also the reference phrase final position for demonstrative pronouns. In section 3.2 the four operators that function in Mashan Miao reference phrases were discussed: nominal aspect, quantification, definiteness and deixis. Section 3.3 described the structure of externally headed and headless relative clauses.
4 Adpositions

The existence of a class of words that may be called adpositions in Hmongic and other Southeast Asian languages is debatable. There are two sets of words that have been compared to prepositions; one set is derived from verbs, and the other set is derived from nouns (Clark 1989:188–190). The Mashan Miao data displays evidence of these two sets of words.

The word nyab is an example of a lexical verb in Mashan Miao that may also function in a similar way to a preposition. Sentence (96) contains an example: here nyab can be translated as a lexical verb meaning ‘to be located at’.

(96) nil deib ab lenx dongb liangh deib bid mis mux nyab biaed
3SG POSS TWO CLF grandchildren POSS father mother NEG be.located house
‘The parents of her grandchildren were not at home.’ (HMA24)

The word liauk is an example of a noun in Mashan Miao that may be described as a preposition. The word liauk is a noun that shows location, it can be translated ‘in’ or ‘inside’, as in sentence (97).

(97) liauk biaed nyab hax lws.
in.inside house have hailstones
‘Inside the house there were hailstones’. (HMA08)

These verbal and nominal prepositions frequently co-occur, as in (98). The verbal preposition nyab ‘be located at’ precedes the nominal preposition liauk ‘inside’.

(98) baeb jinb cangl nyab liauk rongl angt xangf
1PL often be.located in.inside village play
‘We often played in the village.’ (HMA10)

This grammaticalisation of verbs and nouns to preposition-like functions is a common feature of Southeast Asian languages. Lao, Thai, Mandarin Chinese and other languages of Southeast Asia display similar patterns (Goddard 2005:124; Clark 1989:188–190).

In section 4.1 verbs in Mashan Miao that have prepositional functions are discussed, and nouns that have prepositional properties, in section 4.2.

4.1 Verbal prepositions

Some verbs in Mashan Miao have also taken on the grammatical function of introducing arguments into the clause. It is difficult to determine whether they are verbs or prepositions. In other languages of Southeast Asia, such as Thai, Mandarin and Lao, similar grammaticalisation of verb to preposition is taking place (Enfield 2008:156; Goddard 2005:125–126; Li and Thompson 1981:360). They have been termed deverbal prepositions (Enfield 2008:156; Goddard 2005:125) or also coverbs (Li and Thompson 1981:360). Table 8 lists some verbs in the Mashan Miao data that appear to have taken on prepositional functions.

Table 8. Mashan Miao prepositions derived from verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern Vernacular</th>
<th>Central Vernacular</th>
<th>Prepositional Meaning</th>
<th>Meaning as a Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>diat</td>
<td>dwt</td>
<td>for, to, towards</td>
<td>to put, to give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dand</td>
<td>dand/huangb</td>
<td>to, until</td>
<td>to arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nyab</td>
<td>nyoab</td>
<td>at, in</td>
<td>to be located at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndeus</td>
<td>ndias</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>to follow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following sentences show these verbs in use, both as lexical verbs and in contexts where they behave more like prepositions. In sentence (99) the verb dìaṭ functions as a lexical verb meaning ‘put’.

(99) lenx dongb juh kauh ndaex nil delb ib liof beid rax diat xax 
    CLF boy pick.up PROG 3SG POSS one basket pear put on 
    danb cex ndiueh lex 
    bike go PERF 
    ‘The boy picked up one of his baskets of pears, put it on (his) bike and cycled away.’ (HMA14)

In sentence (100) dìaṭ has more of a prepositional function, marking the participant role of goal. Here it may be translated ‘on’.

(100) god mub songx biaeb diat dongl hrax 
    1SG use oil spill on CLF tree 
    ‘I poured oil on the tree.’ (HMA24)

In sentence (101) dìaṭ marks the participant role of location.

(101) box lol renh dws diat liauk biaed 
    witch die be.located in.inside house 
    ‘The witch died in the house.’ (HMA24)

The verb dànḍ as a lexical verb means ‘to arrive’ as in the following sentence.

(102) sek, god dand sob liaox, god hob ranx huak 
    so 1SG arrive city 1SG happy very 
    ‘So when I arrived in the city, I was very happy.’ (HMA06)

In (103), however, it is used with a temporal phrase and has more of a prepositional function; here it can be translated ‘at’.

(103) dand dongh mas hax lws qaf mux loul. 
    at half evening hailstones only NEG come 
    ‘At midnight, the hailstones finally stopped.’ (HMA08)

In sentence (96) in the opening section of this chapter, the verb nyab is being used as a lexical verb meaning ‘to be located at’. In sentence (104) it is used to show the location of the whole event and occurs in the periphery. In this case it is behaving more like a preposition; it introduces a peripheral adjunct and marks it for the participant role of location.

(104) god ndeus luol nyab liauk rongl angt xangf. 
    1SG with Luo be.located in.inside village play 
    ‘Luo and I were playing in the village.’ (HMA20)

Sentence (104) also shows the word ndeuš being used as a preposition marking the participant role of accompaniment. In the Southern Vernacular this word seems to have been derived from the verb nduš ‘to follow’. In the Central Vernacular the preposition ‘with’ and the verb ‘follow’ still have the same form, ndiās. Sentence (105) shows the verb ndiās in use as a lexical verb meaning ‘follow’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern Vernacular</th>
<th>Central Vernacular</th>
<th>Prepositional Meaning</th>
<th>Meaning as a Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mub</td>
<td>muob</td>
<td>instrumental, DCA fronting</td>
<td>to use, to take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zaol</td>
<td>zaof</td>
<td>by, passive marker</td>
<td>to hit, to come into contact with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three boys took the fruit, and followed the road that they had just come from.' (HMM11)

In many situations the word ndias could also be analysed as a coordinating conjunction meaning ‘and’ as in sentence (106). Coordinating conjunctions are used to link two nouns.

An old man brings a ladder and three baskets and goes picking pears to eat.' (HMM11)

This verb seems to be the furthest along the process of grammaticalisation from verb to preposition among Central Mashan Miao verbs, as in the Southern vernacular the verb and the preposition take different forms, the verb being ndus ‘follow’ and the preposition ndus ‘with’. However, in the Central vernacular there is only one form used for both the verb and the preposition.

The verb mub in (107) can be analysed both as a lexical verb with the meaning ‘use’, and as a preposition marking the participant role of instrument.

The equivalent to the verb mub in other Hmong languages has been compared to the Mandarin Chinese DCA fronting particle bǎ (McLaughlin 2013:38). In the bǎ construction the DCA is moved to a position preceding the predicate and is preceded by the particle bǎ. These sentences involve the semantic notion of ‘disposal’, meaning something happens to the bǎ argument (Li and Thompson 1981:468).

However, the verb mub (in Southern Mashan Miao, muob in Central Mashan Miao) seems to function more like a lexical verb with the meaning ‘use’, ‘take’, ‘put’ or ‘give’. It is more similar to the verb yòng in Mandarin Chinese, which Li and Thompson (1981:367) point out is a verb and not a coverb. For example in (109) muob functions as a main verb.

Therefore I think mub~muob behaves more like a verb than a preposition.

In other Hmongic languages the passive particle is also included as a deverbal preposition (Xiong and Cohen 2005:534), and in Mandarin Chinese the passive particle bèi is also considered a coverb (Li and Thompson 1981:492). The Hmongic passive particle is derived from a verb meaning ‘to hit’ or ‘to
come into contact with’ (McLaughlin 2013:53; Fuller 1987:148). There are no examples of the Mashan Miao particle *zaol* occurring as a predicate (which is why I treat it as a particle, rather than as a verb); however, it does function as a resultative state verb with the meaning ‘hit’ or ‘to come into contact with’, immediately following a verbal predicate, as in sentence (110), in which *zhuangh* ‘hit’ is the predicate, followed by *zaol* ‘hit’ as a resultative state verb. Therefore it also seems to have been derived from a lexical verb, as other prepositional verbs.

(110) *zhuangh zaol hax raeb congl danb cex hos ngil loul dios piaih lax*

hit hit stone from bike fall.off down.off come hurt leg

‘(He) hit a stone and fell off (his) bike, hurting (his) foot.’ (HMA14)

The verb *zaol* may also be analysed as a preposition that introduces the actor argument in a passive construction as in sentence (111).

(111) *nil biaed goud zaol lol renh nyax lex*

3SG house younger brother PASS witch eat PERF

‘His younger brother had been eaten by the witch.’ (HMA24)

I have demonstrated that most of these deverbal prepositions may function as main lexical verbs in a clause. Therefore it can be argued that these are verbs in complex constructions involving a core juncture (Jarkey 2010; Clark 1989; Warotamasikkhadit 1988), as they are essentially verbs (Enfield 2008:158).

Enfield (2008:157), however, argues that these are better considered as peripheral. One reason for this is that they occur in a position that has a particular grammatical function (Enfield 2008:156). This seems to be the case in Mashan Miao as phrases containing these deverbal prepositions usually occur between the PSA and the predicate. This is where argument adjuncts occur (see section 2.2). The exceptions to this are the verb *diat* and sometimes *dand*, which mostly follow the predicate (see table 8 and the discussion and examples following it, above).

Some other reasons Enfield (2008:156) suggests for treating deverbal prepositions as peripheral are that they cannot take overt PSAs, the deverbal preposition and the main verb cannot be separated into two distinct clauses, and the deverbal preposition does not take its own aspect or modality marking. The data suggest that these factors all apply to Mashan Miao as well. None of them take overt PSAs unless functioning as a main verb, there are no examples of the two verbs being treated as two separate clauses, and there are no examples of them taking their own aspect marking. This would need more testing to confirm.

Enfield (2008:157) claims that ‘the notion embodied in the preposition is not predicated as an event’ and I think this is the strongest argument for treating these verbs as prepositions in certain contexts. Take sentence (112) as an example, the main event in this sentence is denoted by the verb *angt xangf* ‘play’. The words *ndeus* and *nyab* are not predicating separate events. The word *nyab* is rather functioning as a predicative preposition meaning ‘at’. Prepositions are said to be predicative when they add semantic information to the clause (Van Valin 2005:21). In this way they function as modifiers to the main predicate (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:31). In sentence (112) *nyab* is introducing the semantic role of location; it locates the event in space and is therefore functioning as a core modifier. The word *ndeus* is also functioning as a predicative preposition, introducing the semantic role of accompaniment. Here, although the preposition is adding meaning to the core, it is not modifying the whole of the core. It also shares an argument with the core, namely ‘god’, the PSA. Therefore the phrase headed by *ndeus* is an argument adjunct (see Chapter 2).

(112) *god ndeus luol nyab liauk rongl angt xangf.*

1SG with Luo be.located in.inside village play

‘Luo and I were playing in the village.’ (HMA20)

Sentence (113) contains another example that supports this argument. The main event in this sentence is denoted by the predicate *dws* ‘die’. The form *diat* is not predicing a separate event, but
again functioning as a predicative preposition marking the semantic role of location. Again it modifies
the main core, providing information about where the event took place (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:31).

(113) box lol renh dws diat liauk biaed
witch die be.located in.inside house
‘The witch died in the house.’ (HMA24)

The verbs *mub* and *diat* are often used in combination to express the meaning ‘give’ or ‘put’. Sentence (114) contains an example of these two verbs being used together to mean ‘give’. Again the two verbs appear to be describing one event, in this case *diat* seems to behave like a preposition marking the semantic role of beneficiary.

(114) lenx dongb juh naed mub beid rax diat ves nyax
   CLF boy DEM.PROX take pear give 3PL eat
‘The boy took some pears and gave (them) to them to eat.’ (HMA14)

In sentence (115), an example from the Central vernacular, the two verbs *moab* and *dwt* are used together to mean ‘put’. This is another example of the two verbs describing one event, here *dwt* behaves like a preposition marking the semantic role of goal.

(115) moab dwt eib pies mengk.
   put be.located one CLF basket
‘(He) put (the pears) in a basket.’ (HMM11)

In sentences (114) and (115), the arguments introduced by *diat/dwt* are further examples of argument adjuncts. Argument adjuncts indicating goal, source, path, and beneficiary in Mashan Miao all seem to follow the predicate.

In (116) the verb *muob* is used as the main verb in the direct quote and *diat* is omitted. This suggests that in the other sentences *muob* is seen as the main verb and that *diat* is in the process of grammaticalisation to a preposition.

(116) hax nenb dongb waf, “muob gongd nyoax, muob gongd nyoax, anga njik!”
call CLF child give 1SG eat give 1SG eat fast a.little
‘(She) called to the child: “Give (it) to me to eat, give (it) to me to eat, quickly!”’ (HMM16)

Considering these examples, it seems that some verbs are taking on prepositional functions, and in some cases are better treated as prepositions introducing adjuncts and argument adjuncts, rather than verbs.

Figure 33 shows the syntactic representation of sentence (112) which contains both a prepositional phrase introducing an adjunct in the core periphery and a prepositional phrase marking an argument adjunct in the core.
4.2 Nominal prepositions

As well as these prepositions that have been derived from verbs, Mashan Miao also has nouns that behave like prepositions. These have been referred to as 'localisers' (Xiong and Cohen 2005:73) or 'relator nouns' (Clark 1989:188), as they provide information about the location of the referent in relation to the speaker or another point of reference that the speaker chooses (Jarkey 2010:116; Clark 1989:188). Unlike the prepositions derived from verbs, these relator nouns do not have the grammatical function of introducing participant roles (Jarkey 2010:116). Neither does their meaning and function change depending on the context in which they are used. Table 9 lists some of these relator nouns in Mashan Miao.

Table 9. Mashan Miao locator nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern Vernacular</th>
<th>Central Vernacular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On, on top</td>
<td>xax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under, underneath</td>
<td>jix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In front of</td>
<td>nzouk ndaex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind</td>
<td>hof gangb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near</td>
<td>rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In, inside</td>
<td>(hax) liauk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>daex rongl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next to</td>
<td>hax nbangt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left of</td>
<td>(jex) liux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of</td>
<td>(jex) rengx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I do not discuss each relator noun individually as I did for the deverbal prepositions, as they all behave in much the same way. I do give an overview of their structure with examples. The speakers use these slightly differently. In general in the Southern vernacular they occur before the noun as in (117), where the locator noun xax ‘on’ occurs before the noun danb cex ‘bike’.

\[
(117) \quad \text{lenx} \quad \text{dongb} \quad \text{juh} \quad \text{kauh} \quad \text{ndaex} \quad \text{nil} \quad \text{deib} \quad \text{ib} \quad \text{liof} \quad \text{beid} \quad \text{rax} \\
\quad \text{CLF} \quad \text{boy} \quad \text{pick.up} \quad \text{COMP} \quad \text{3SG} \quad \text{POSS} \quad \text{one} \quad \text{basket} \quad \text{pear} \\
\quad \text{diat} \quad \text{xax} \quad \text{danb} \quad \text{cea} \quad \text{ndieuh} \quad \text{lex} \\
\quad \text{direction} \quad \text{towards} \quad \text{up} \quad \text{bike} \quad \text{go} \quad \text{PERF} \\
\text{‘The boy picked up one of his baskets of pears, put it on (his) bike and cycled away.’} \quad \text{(HMA14)}
\]
In the Central vernacular they occur after the noun as in (118). The locator noun xah ‘on’ follows the noun dank cek ‘bike’.

(118)  moab  dwt  nil  deib  dank  cek  xah  jek,  nil  jiex  lwf
       put  be.located  3sg  poss  bicycle  up  then  3sg  ride  walk.away
‘(He) put (the basket of pears) onto his bike, and then rode away.’ (HMM11)

In other Hmongic languages relator nouns all precede the noun (Enfield 2001:260; Clark 1989:188). In Mandarin Chinese, however, relator nouns follow the noun (Enfield 2001:260). It seems the speaker of the Central vernacular is borrowing the Chinese structure placing the locator noun after the noun. Sentence (119) is a Chinese sentence showing the use of the relator noun shàng ‘on’; it follows the noun zhuōzi ‘table’.

(119)  wǒ  de  diànnǎo  zài  zhuōzi  shàng
       1sg  poss  computer  be.located  table  on
‘My computer is on the table.’ (CMN)

The speaker of the Southern vernacular seems not to have adopted this Chinese structure. These relator nouns may take the place of an argument as in (121), suggesting that they behave like nouns. The locator noun hax liauk ‘inside’ is the first argument of the predicate nyab ‘have’.

(120)  hax  liauk  nyab  rengx
       inside  have  dragon
‘Inside there are dragons.’ (HMA09)

These localisers may also be modified in the same ways as other nouns. In (121) liauk is the head noun and is being modified by the noun biaed following it. This is a similar structure to nouns that are being modified by stative verbs.

(121)  liauk  biaed  nyab  hax  lws.
       in.inside  house  have  hailstones
‘Inside the house there were hailstones.’ (HMA08)

In (122) the locator noun hax nbangt ‘beside’ is being modified by a preceding noun, nongb xongf ‘table’. The particle deib, used to connect modifiers and nouns, is used.

(122)  nongb  xongf  deib  hax  nbangt
       CLF  table  poss  beside.next.to
‘beside the table’ (HMA11)

This may also be compared to the possessive construction (see section 3.1.2.3) (Clark 1989:188). Sentence (123) shows that sometimes the particle deib may be omitted.

(123)  nongb  bongx  hax  liauk
       CLF  cave  inside
‘inside the cave’ (HMA09)

Figure 34 shows the syntactic structure of reference phrases containing these locator nouns. The locator noun is the head of the reference phrase, and the modifiers occur in the periphery attaching at the nuclear node, whether they precede or follow the head noun.
Jarkey (2010:115–116) claims that these relator nouns mark spatial deixis. Ratliff (1997) also includes them in her discussion of the White Hmong demonstrative system. However, they do not behave in the same way as other deictic operators (see section 3.2.3.2), which occur in the form of demonstratives in the reference phrase final position as in (124).

(124) nis  beid  rax  deib  len  dongb  juh  eid  
    steal  pear  REL  CLF  boy  DEM.DEIC  
    ‘the boy who stole the pears...’ (HMA14)

Sentence (125) shows that relator nouns may be modified by deictic markers; however, this is the only example of this in the data set.

(125) gwf  lwf  gongd  bit  diek  deib  sws  hlaex  eid  
    2SG  go  1SG  POSS  father  REL  bed  under  there  
    ‘You go, underneath my father’s bed...’ (HMM16)

This suggests that they should not be treated as deictic operators, but as nouns.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, I introduced two classes of words in Mashan Miao that are comparable to prepositions. In section 4.1, I discussed verbs that have prepositional functions. I concluded that in some contexts these verbs function as prepositions. In section 4.2, I described nouns that have been compared to prepositions. I concluded that they are nouns that have a locative meaning.
5 Complex Constructions

In this chapter, I describe the complex constructions found in Mashan Miao. Complex sentences are formed when two or more units are joined together (see section 1.1). Distinctions may be made between the linkage types and junctures at which the linkage occurs, thus resulting in nuclear, core and clause level junctures. There are three types of linkages that may occur: coordinate, subordinate and cosubordinate (Van Valin 2005:188; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:454). In sections 5.1 to 5.3, I explain the types of linkages that are found at each level of the clause in Mashan Miao. Some of these complex constructions are used to express particular semantic relations in Mashan Miao. I deal with these in section 5.4.

5.1 Nuclear level junctures

In Mashan Miao there is evidence of nuclear subordination. Several verbs have the grammatical function of marking aspect (see section 2.7.2.1). When they function as aspect markers they function as ‘non-predicating’ (Van Valin 2005:196) modifiers of the verb. They occur in the nuclear periphery. Therefore they are in a subordinate relation with the main verb. Sentence (126) provides an example of this: the verb hliah as a lexical verb means ‘to pass’ or ‘cross’, but marks experiential aspect when it follows the verb.

(126) at hob, baeb mux neis angt xid hliah
     after 1PL  NEG be.angry EXP
     ‘After that, we didn’t fall out again.’ (HMA02)

Figure 35 shows the layered structure of a complex clause containing a nuclear subordinate juncture. The aspect marker hliah is in the periphery modifying the nucleus. The nuclear aspect operator attaches to the nucleus in the operator projection.

Sentence (127) contains another example: the verb jinx meaning ‘to finish’ is functioning as an aspect marker showing completive aspect. Again in this example it is not a predicating element but a nuclear modifier. The particle los is another completive aspect marker; it is not clear from the data,
however, whether this is also derived from a lexical verb or simply an aspect particle. If it is only an aspect particle then it would only occur in the operator projection marking aspect. There is a further aspectual relationship between the two nuclei `nzad` and `jus`. This construction is used in Mashan Miao to express a resultative (see section 2.7.2.1).

(127) `hax nyongl lauk jinx, nzad jus, sek huait kos los` intestines clean up COMPL wash clean then hang put COMPL

‘When the intestines have been cleaned up and washed, (they) are then hung up.’ (HMA11)

In resultative constructions the juncture is one of nuclear coordination. A resultative construction consists of two predicates. In this way it differs from verbs that have been grammaticalised to function as non-predicating aspect markers in certain circumstances. The second verb is predicative as it indicates the result of the first predicate. Another example is in sentence (128). The two nuclei `maent` ‘look’ and `baof` ‘see’ share the same two arguments, `lenx dongb juh` and `ib lenx dongb nbiah`. The second predicate `baof` shows that the first predicate was successful, the boy looked and saw.

(128) `dand dongh gaed lenx dongb juh maent baof ib lenx dongb nbiah` until half road CLF boy look see one CLF girl

‘Half way down the road, the boy saw a girl.’ (HMA14)

However, the second predicate may be negated to show that the first predicate was not successfully achieved. An example is sentence (129).

(129) `hlongb huak, maent mux baof hax liauk` black very look NEG see inside

‘(It’s) so dark, (one) can’t see inside.’ (HMA09)

Again this is a nuclear juncture involving the two predicates `maent` ‘look’ and `baof` ‘see’ which share one set of arguments. In (129), however, `baof` is being negated by the negative marker `mux`. This shows that the action of looking was not successful, it is too dark to be able to see. This provides further evidence that this is nuclear coordination (as opposed to cosubordination), as the two nuclei do not share operators. The negative operator `mux` only has scope over the second nucleus in this sentence. Figure 36 shows the syntactic representation of nuclear coordination in (128). The diagram shows that the two nuclei are coordinated inside the core.
Figure 37 shows the structure of sentence (129); the operator projection shows that the negation operator only has scope over the second nuclei baof ‘see’.

![Diagram of the structure of sentence (129)](image)

Figure 37. Nuclear coordination in Mashan Miao, operator not shared.

In some resultative constructions, there may be one set of arguments, but the DCA of the first predicate is coreferenced with the PSA of the second predicate (Jarkey 2010:118). Due to this coreferencing of arguments Jarkey (2010:118) believes this is a core cosubordinate juncture. However, as the two predicates are in a causative relationship, the second indicating the result of the first, this is still a nuclear juncture (Van Valin 2005:190–191, 208, 212). In example (130) there is a resultative relationship between the two predicates dengl ‘dye’ and lanb ‘red’. The adjectival predicate lanb ‘red’ shows the result, it has one single argument haet ‘egg’ which is coreferenced with the second argument of dengl ‘dye’. So in this case an argument occurs between the two coordinated nuclei.

(130) god ndeus Satsat ab lenx dengl haet lanb
     1SG and Sarah two CLF dye egg red
     ‘Sarah and I dyed the eggs red.’ (HMA19)

5.2 Core level junctures

There is evidence of core cosubordinate and subordinate junctures in Mashan Miao. Sentence (131) is an example of core cosubordination. The two cores contain the predicates ndieuh ‘go’ and hauk ‘chop’; they share the argument gwx, the second person singular pronoun. The verb daf functions as a core operator, expressing deontic modality, or an obligation. In this case the clause is negated. The addressee views chopping firewood as an obligation, the speaker asserts it is not. This core operator has scope over both cores, therefore the two cores have a cosubordinate relationship.

(131) gwx mux daf nongx nongx ndieuh hauk deul
     2SG NEG need.be.obliged.want day day go chop firewood
     ‘You don’t need to go out every day to chop firewood.’ (HMA01)

Figure 38 shows the layered structure of core cosubordination in sentence (131). There is a common core node in the operator projection to which the deontic modality operator attaches, as it has scope over both cores.
Jarkey (2010:113) argues that there are only core cosubordinate junctures in White Hmong, as there is always the potential for a core deontic modality operator to be modifying the core. Therefore sentences that involve a core juncture with no core operator, such as sentence (132), would also be examples of core cosubordination. I assume that this also applies to Mashan Miao; however, more testing would need to be done to confirm this.

(132) sek, god dit gongs god fis ndaex
then 1SG father let 1SG kneel PROG
‘Then, my father made me kneel…. ’ (HMA05)

Sentence (133) is a further example of core cosubordination. The verb yinh gaib ‘should’ expresses deontic modality, a core level operator. This sentence is a question, the two cores are linked by the clause linkage marker laeh ‘or’.

(133) gwf blux, gongd yinh gaib xianb noax gwf deib pjes sel laeh xianb noax gwf deib pjes dwt nit?
2SG say 1SG should first eat 2SG POSS hand or first eat 2SG POSS foot PRT
‘You tell (me), what should I eat first, your arm or your leg?’ (HMM16)

One form of core subordination is when a clause or a core acts as an argument of a predicate (Pavey 2010, loc 2236). In (134) the clause god goud nid lex ‘my brother was crying’ is the second argument of the verb baof ‘see’. This clause is embedded in the core of the main clause. Thus it is an example of core subordination.
Figure 39 shows the layered structure of the core subordinate structure in (134).

Figure 39. Core subordination in Mashan Miao.

Core subordination also occurs when a clause is modifying a core (Pavey 2010, loc 2231). This is also referred to as ad-core subordination (Van Valin 2005:194). In sentence (135) the verb ndieuh ‘go’ is functioning as a directional operator, modifying the verb ot ‘exit’. It shows the direction of the predicate (see section 2.7.3.1 for directional operators); therefore it occurs in the core periphery. The verb ndieuh ‘go’ only has this meaning when it functions as an operator. Therefore it is dependent on the main verb, making it a subordinate relationship. In other cases ndieuh may function as a main lexical verb meaning ‘to go’.

(135) god ot ndieuh maent
1SG exit DIR look
‘I went out to look.’ (HMA08)

Figure 40 shows the layered structure of the ad-core subordinate construction in (135).

Figure 40. Ad-core subordination in Mashan Miao.
5.3 Clause level junctures

The data shows evidence of clause coordinate constructions in Mashan Miao. Sentence (136) is an example of two co-ordinating clauses; they each have their own set of arguments and operators. The second clause contains the negative operator *muh*. The two clauses are joined by the clause linkage marker *nanh* ‘but’.

\[(136)\] nenh dongb waf ment nanh bot lol eid muh menk nil
clf child see but.however man old that neg see 3sg

‘The child saw (the old man), but the old man didn’t see him.’ (HMM11)

The layered structure of sentence (136) is shown in figure 41.

![Diagram of Clause Coordinate Construction](image)

Figure 41. Clause coordinate construction.

In sentence (137) there are examples of junctures at all three layers of the clause. There are four events: the boy seeing a girl, hitting the stone, falling off his bike and hurting his leg. Each event is expressed by a clause, the PSA (the boy) being the same in all of them. These are four coordinate clauses. There is a core cosubordinate juncture between *hos* ‘fall’ and *ngil* ‘come down’. There are also coordinate nuclear junctures between *maent* ‘look’ and *baof* ‘see’, and between *zhuangh* ‘hit’ and *zaol* ‘hit’.

\[(137)\] dand dongh gaed lenx dongb juh maent baof ib lenx dongb nbiaih
until half road clf boy look see one clf girl
zhuangh zaol hax raeb congl danb cex hos ngil loul
hit hit.contact stone from bike fall.off down.off come
dios piaih lax
hurt leg

‘Half way down the road, the boy saw a girl, (he) hit a stone and fell off (his) bike, hurting (his) foot.’ (HMA14)

5.4 Semantic relations in complex constructions

Complex constructions are used extensively in Mashan Miao to express a variety of meanings. RRG posits the hierarchy of interclausal semantic relations shown in Figure 42. It predicts that the closer the
semantic relation between two elements, then the stronger the syntactic juncture (Pavey 2010, loc 2394; Van Valin 2005:208–209). The relations do not correspond one-to-one with the syntactic structures, and often more than one syntactic construction may be used to express a particular semantic relation (Pavey 2010, loc 2394; Van Valin 2005:208–209).

[Figure 42. Interclausal relations hierarchy (Van Valin 2005, with permission).]

Here I show how this hierarchy applies to Mashan Miao. There are two types of causatives on the hierarchy; the first involves an event or an action directly bringing about a certain situation (Van Valin 2005:206). An example is in (138). The syntactic structure used to express this semantic relationship is nuclear coordination.

(138)  
\[
\text{dongl nbat dat dws lex} \\
\text{CLF pig kill die INCHO} \\
\text{‘The pig was slaughtered.’ (HMA11)}
\]

The second type of causative, the syntactic structure used to express the semantic relations of means, psych-action, purpose and cause is core cosubordination. For example in sentence (139) the verb *yas* ‘take’ or ‘use’ indicates the means, a hammer or mallet was used to beat the rice. The two predicates *lul* ‘come’ and *hlwl* ‘beat’ indicate a purposive relationship. Again the syntactic structure is a core cosubordinate relationship (as the core operator *yas* has scope over both cores).

(139)  
\[
\text{jek yas zuob hluox njat} \\
\text{then take CLF hammer.for.beating.rice come beat.make} \\
\text{‘Then beat it with the hammer used for beating rice.’ (HMM08)}
\]

The semantic relations of direct or indirect perception, cognition and direct or indirect discourse are all expressed using the syntactic structure of core subordination. A subordinate clause functions as one of the core arguments, indicating what was perceived, spoken or thought. In sentence (140) the semantic
relation of indirect perception is expressed in the second clause: the boy realised that his younger brother had been eaten. The first clause in this sentence explains how the boy deduced this fact; he touched a pool of blood. The clause *nil biaed goud zaol box lol renh nyax lex* ‘his brother had been eaten by the witch’ is a core argument of the clause *nil bab* ‘he realised’.

(140) sah zaol ib bongt njol sek nil bab nil biaed goud
    touch reach one CLF blood so 3SG know 3SG house younger brother
    zaol box lol renh nyax lex
    PASS witch eat PERF

‘(He) touched a pool of blood and he knew that his younger brother had been eaten by the witch.’ (HMA16)

Simple juxtaposition, that is putting two elements next to each other, is a common feature of Hmongic languages (Niederer 2001:373–377), and in Mashan Miao clauses are often juxtaposed with no explicit indication of the semantic relation between the two clauses. Sentence (141) is an example of two clauses that have been juxtaposed; the semantic relation between the two clauses is conditional. The first clause expresses a condition under which the second clause would happen. The syntactic structure used to express this relationship in Mashan Miao is clause co-ordination.

(141) gwx yux hait nbank lol sax hwx pas gwx ndiax
    2SG as.one.pleases shout.at.curse elderly lightning strike 2SG PRT

‘If you are disrespectful to your elders, lightning will strike you.’ (HMA05)

Sometimes clause linkage markers may also be used to link units. Sentence (142) contains an example of the clause linkage marker *sek*, which in this case means ‘so’. The semantic relation between the two clauses is one of reason; the first clause explains the reason behind the speaker’s action in the second clause. Again this is expressed using a clause coordinate construction.

(142) god maent baof jix sws mux rus nengs sek god jongx god
    1SG look see under bed NEG leak rain so 1SG bring 1SG
    goud ndieuh jix sws nzai.
younger brother go under bed hide

‘I saw that under the bed it was not leaking rain, so I took my brother to go and hide under the bed.’ (HMA08)

The examples that I have discussed in this section demonstrate the types of syntactic constructions that are used to express certain semantic relations in Mashan Miao, and how they generally accord with the interclausal relations hierarchy. The closer semantic relations are generally expressed using stronger syntactic structures.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter the linkages that may occur at each level of a Mashan Miao clause were described. At the nuclear level there is evidence of subordination and coordination, at the core level core cosubordination and core subordination. At the clause level there is evidence of clause coordination. In section 5.4 complex constructions were analysed in relation to the interclausal relations hierarchy. In Mashan Miao the closeness of the semantic relation is reflected in the strength of the syntactic construction used to express it.
6 Conclusion

In this book I have given a brief sketch of the syntactic structure of the Mashan Miao dialect, using Role and Reference Grammar, in which clauses are analyzed in terms of three levels (nucleus, core and clause), as the theoretical framework behind the analysis.

In Chapter 2 I used the concept of the layered structure of the clause to analyze the structure of the clause in Mashan Miao. The nucleus generally contains a verb; nominal predicates take a copula verb whereas adjectival predicates require no copula. The default structure for core arguments is SVO. I also presented other core templates. Adverbs and temporal prepositional phrases occur in the periphery. There is also evidence of a left-detached position where the topic occurs. In section 2.7 I described some of the operators that function in the Mashan Miao clause. Negation may function at all three levels. At the nuclear level Mashan Miao displays a rich aspectual system; directionals and deontic modality function at the core level; and status and illocutionary force function at the clause level. Verbs often have grammatical functions as operators, for example marking aspect and direction.

In chapter 3 I applied the layered structure to the reference phrase. The nucleus most often contains a noun; however, other constituents may stand as referents, such as demonstrative pronouns. The noun may be modified by state verbs that follow it, occurring in the reference phrase periphery. Other modifiers such as possessives and relative clauses all seem to behave in a similar way, preceding the noun and taking the particle deib. Mashan Miao has externally headed and headless relative clauses.

In chapter 4 I discussed adpositions in Mashan Miao. There are two sets of words in Mashan Miao that may be compared to prepositions in other languages, one set derived from verbs, and the other from nouns. After my analysis I concluded that some verbs may function as prepositions in some contexts, introducing argument adjuncts to the core and peripheral arguments to the clause. I concluded that the so-called denominal prepositions do not have prepositional functions, but are nouns that have a locative meaning.

In chapter 5 I analysed complex constructions in Mashan Miao. There is evidence of coordinate and subordinate junctures at the nuclear level, cosubordinate and subordinate junctures at the core level, and coordinate junctures at the clause level. I also showed how the stronger syntactic junctures often corresponded with tighter semantic relationships, as predicted by the interclausal relations hierarchy.

My findings in this work were based on the analysis of texts that were recorded and transcribed. For further research, specific testing could be done to confirm my conclusions, for example to determine word classes and the nature of the junctures in complex constructions. There are many other areas which could be further researched. Some of these I have suggested in my analysis, for example determining the function of sentence final particles and whether the tone changes that take place in negation are phonological or grammatical processes. I have also briefly mentioned discourse features such as the frequent omission of reference phrases; further investigation into this subject would also be of use. Here I have focussed on syntactic structure; I have not been able to touch on the relationship between syntax and semantics in Mashan Miao. This would be an interesting topic for further research.
## Appendix A

### List of Texts, Southern Vernacular

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Appendix B

The Pear Story – Southern Vernacular (HMA14)

1. nyab ib nongx ib lenx mengx nyab xax hrax hlaux beid rax
   have one day one CLF person at up tree pick pear
   ‘One day a man was up a tree picking pears.’

2. nil hlaux dat ab liof
   3SG pick obtain two basket
   ‘He had picked two basketfuls.’

3. sek nil yuh njaet ndieuh xax hrax hlaux
   then 3SG again climb DIR up tree pick
   ‘Then he climbed back up the tree and (continued) picking pears.’

4. nyab ib lenx mengx jangb ndaex xeh congl jix
   have one CLF person walk.on.a.lead PROC sheep.goat from under
   hrax hliah gaed
   tree cross road
   ‘Someone walking a goat on a lead crossed the road from under the tree.’

5. pouh dongb sek ib lenx dongb juh jex ndaex danb cex
   a.little.while pass.time PRT one CLF boy ride PROC bike
   hliah jix hrax ndieuh
   pass under tree go
   ‘After a little while, a boy riding a bike passed under the tree.’

6. maent baof nil deib ab liof beid rax lenx dongb juh kauh ndaex
   look see 3SG POSS two basket pear CLF boy pick.up PROC
   nil deib ib liof beid rax diat xax danb cex ndieuh lex
   3SG POSS one basket pear direction.towards up bike go PROC
   ‘He saw the two baskets of pears, he picked up one basket, put it on his bike and cycled away.’

7. dand dongh gaed lenx dongb juh maent baof ib lenx dongb nbiaih
   until half road CLF boy look see one CLF girl
   ‘Half way down the road the boy saw a girl.’

8. zhuangh zaol hax raeb congl danb cex hos ngil loul
   hit nit.contact stone from bike fall.off come.down DIR
   dios piaih lax
   hurt leg
   ‘He hit a stone and fell off his bike, hurting his foot.’
9. nil deib beid rax biaeb ox loul jengl lex
   3SG POSS pear spill come.out come COMPL ASP
   ‘His pears spilled out all over the road.’

10. nyab baeb lenx dongb yut maent baof nil hos lex loul bangb
    have three CLF child small look see 3SG fall.off ASP come help
    nil kauh beid rax xangt nil xaul loul kauh nil deib douf diat nil
    3SG pick.up pear lift up 3SG get.up DIR pick.up 3SG POSS hat give 3SG
    ‘Three boys saw him fall (off his bike), they came to help him, picked up his pears, helped him up and gave his hat to him.’

11. lenx dongb juh naed mub beid rax diat ves nyax
    CLF boy DEM.PROX take pear give 3PL eat
    ‘That boy gave them some pears.’

12. hlaut beid rax deib lenx mengx eid mux bab nil deib beid rax
    pick pear REL CLF person DEM.DEIX NEG know 3SG POSS pear
    hliah nub dut ndieuh lex
    pass.cross.go where place go PERF
    ‘The man picking the pears did not know where his pears had gone.’

13. maent baof beab lenx dongb juh loul
    look see three CLF man come
    ‘He saw three boys coming.’

14. nil yuh mux bab nil deib beid rax hliah dut ndieuh
    3SG again NEG know 3SG POSS pear pass.cross.go where go
    ‘He didn’t know where his pears had gone.’

15. nis beid rax deib lenx dongb juh eid xins huat nbank nis ves
    steal pear REL CLF boy DEM.DEIX sly very too steal 3PL
    deib beid rax neieuh lex ves yuh mux bab nil nis ndieuh
    POSS pear go PERF 3PL again NEG know 3SG steal DIR
    ‘The boy who stole the pears was so sly, he stole their pears, they didn’t even know he had stolen (them).’

16. lenx hlaut beid rax deib lenx mengx eid dux nggengs huat nyab
    CLF pick pear REL CLF person DEM.DEIX stupid very at
    xax hrax hlaut beid rax beid rax zaol nis lex dub mux bab
    up tree pick pear pear PASS steal PERF all NEG know
    ‘The man picking the pears was so stupid, he was up the tree, (he) didn’t even realise his pears had been stolen.’
Folktale – Southern Vernacular (HMA24)

1. xix eib nyab ib lenx box lol renh
   before have one CLF witch
   ‘Once upon a time there was a witch.’

2. nil nyab ab lenx dongb liangh
   3SG have two CLF grandchildren
   ‘She had two grandchildren.’

3. nyab ib nongx nil deib ab lenx dongb liangh deib bid
   have one day 3SG POSS two CLF grandchildren POSS father
   mis mux nyab biaed
   mother NEG be.located house
   ‘One day the parents of her grandchildren were not at home.’

4. sek nil deib ab lenx dongb liangh loul ndeus nil but
   so 3SG POSS two CLF grandchildren come with 3SG sleep
   ‘So her two grandchildren came to stay with her.’

5. dongh mas lenx dongb liangh liaox nal box lol renh nyax hax diaex
   half night CLF grandchildren big hear witch eat bone
   nzaes
   make.a.sound
   ‘In the middle of the night, the oldest grandchild heard the sound of the witch eating bones.’

6. sek dongb liangh liaox nus nil
   so grandchildren big ask 3SG
   ‘So the oldest grandchild went to ask her:’

7. “boux eib, boux gwx nyax zeit?”
   paternal.grandmother PRT paternal.grandmother 2SG eat what
   “Grandma, Grandma what are you eating?”

8. box lol renh daeb daex “god mux neis nyax zeit”
   witch say say 1SG NEG eat what
   ‘The witch replied, “I wasn’t eating anything.”’

9. lenx dongb liaox dax njaih sek mub sel ndieuh sah
   CLF child big fear.worry so use hand go touch
   ‘The eldest grandchild was scared, so he touched (something) with his hand.’
10. **sah zaol ib bongt njol sek nil bab nil** touch reach one **CLF** blood so 3SG know 3SG

`biaed goud zaol box lol renh nyax lex`

house younger brother PASS witch eat **PERF**

‘He touched a pool of blood and knew that the witch had eaten his younger brother.’

11. **sek nil biux daex** “**boux god sans ndieuh ot daeb**” so 3SG speak **COMP** paternal.grandmother 1SG want go use.the.toilet

‘Then he said, “Grandma, I want to use the toilet.”’

12. **box lol renh daex** “**gwx ndieuh mal, god mub las dib ndaex**” witch say 2SG go prt 1SG use rope tie.up **PROG**

`gwx piaih sel”`

2SG **CLF** hand

‘The witch replied: “Off you go then, I’ll tie a rope around your wrist.”’

13. **sek lenx dongb liaox bux yangb bux yangb deib mub las** so **CLF** child big secretly secretly **PRT** use rope

`dib diat dongl nggux deib jel gongb`

tie.up be.located **CLF** cow **POSS** **CLF** horn

‘Then the oldest grandchild secretly tied the rope around the horn of a cow.’

14. **sek nil njaet hliah xax hrax ndieuh** so 3SG climb cross up tree **DIR**

‘Then he climbed up a tree.’

15. **box lol renh maent lenx dongb liaox jinb dongb mux tah hob loul** witch look **CLF** child big continually **NEG** return after come

‘The witch saw that the older child had not come back.’

16. **sek nil ot ndieuh maent, biaok las dib ndaex gongb nggux** so 3SG exit **DIR** look **CLF** rope tie.up **PROG** horn cow

‘So she went out to look, the rope was tied to the cow’s horn.’

17. **dongs hrax deib hax liab nyab ib lenx mengx** **CLF** tree **REL** shadow have one **CLF** person

‘There was (the shape of) a person in the shadow of the tree.’

18. **nil xangt hras maent, lenx dongb liaox nyab xax hrax** 3SG lift.up head look **CLF** child big be.located up tree

‘She looked up, the oldest grandchild was in the tree.’

19. **sek nil aut daex, “dongb, gwx ngil loul, god mux nyax gwx”** so 3SG call say child 2SG down.off **DIR** 1SG **NEG** eat 2SG

‘Then she called out, “Child, you come down, I’m not going to eat you!”’
20. lenx dongb liaox daeb daex, “god mux ngil loul,”
   CLF child big say say 1SG NEG down.off DIR
   ‘The grandchild replied “I’m not coming down!”

21. “god goud dub zaol gwx nyax lex”
   1SG younger brother all PASS 2SG eat PERF
   “My younger brother has already been eaten by you!”

22. box lol renh daex, “god njaet ndieuh nbiael gwx ngil loul”
   witch say 1SG climb DIR catch 2SG down.off DIR
   ‘The witch said “I’ll come up the tree and bring you down.”’

23. lenx dongb liaox daeb daex, “gwx njaet mux loul”
   CLF child big say ASP 2SG climb NEG DIR
   ‘The child replied “You can’t climb up.’

24. “god mub songx biaeb diat dongl hrax, nbiat deib gwx njaet mux loul”
   1SG use oil spill be.located CLF tree slippery PRT 2SG climb NEG DIR
   ‘I poured oil all over the tree, (it is so) slippery you won’t be able to climb up.’

25. nongx hob, lenx dongb deib bid mis tas hob loul biaed
    day after CLF child POSS father mother return after come house
   ‘The next day, the child’s parents returned home.’

26. bab lenx dongb yuk zaol box lol renh nyax lex
    know CLF child small PASS witch eat PERF
   ‘(They) found out that the younger child had been eaten by the witch.

27. sek yes od ndaex ib nbob but nbef niaeb diat box lol renh
    so 3PL carry.on.back PROG one CLF chilli spill be.located witch
    deib xax biaed mub deul sad box lol renh dws diat liauk biaed
    POSS up house use firewood burn witch die be.located in.inside house
   ‘So, they carried a lot of hot chilli peppers and poured them all over the witch’s house, (they) used
    firewood to burn (it). The witch died inside the house.’
The Pear Story – Central Vernacular (HMM11)

1. *dand nbwl heb hax, nenb bot lol jongx eib zoab tuoah ndias*
morning chicken call **CLF** man old bring one **CLF** ladder and

*baeb pies mengk lwf nguank beid rax noax.*
three **CLF** basket go pick.fruit pears eat
‘(It is) morning and a cockerel is crowing, an old man brings a ladder and three baskets and
goes to pick pears to eat.’

2. *nil xianb jab zoab tuoah dwt tongl waf, jek njet*
**3sg** first put.up.ladder **CLF** ladder be.located **CLF** tree then climb

*lwf xah nguank beid dwt nongb bwk hlad.*
dir up pick.fruit fruit put **CLF** apron
‘He first put the ladder against the tree, then climbed up. He picked pears, putting them in his
apron.’

3. *nguank bongd nongb bwk hlad jek nil hed jongx lul*
pick.fruit full **CLF** apron then **3sg** again bring.take dir

*hlaex, moab dwt eib pies mengk.*
under put be.located one **CLF** basket
‘When his apron is full, he comes back down again, and puts them in one of the baskets.’

4. *nil moab dwt eib pies mengk bongd jinx, jek, bof nyoab eib*
**3SG** put be.located one **CLF** basket full **COMPL** then see have one

*nenh dongb joah ngongl tongl seis lul guoh tongl waf had hlaex.*
**CLF** boy.man pull.lead **CLF** sheep.goat come cross **CLF** tree underneath
‘When he had filled one of the baskets, he saw a man leading a sheep walk under the tree.’

5. *nenb dongb joah guoh hloas jek nil dwt hed njet lwf congf xinb langt.*
**CLF** boy.man cross go then **3SG** again climb **DIR** start.over pick.fruit
‘When the man had walked past, he climbed up again to pick fruit.’

6. *nil njet lwf xah langt jek, nyoab eib nenb dongb waf*
**3SG** climb **DIR** up pick.fruit then have one **CLF** child

*jiex dank cek lul.*
ride bicycle come
‘When he had climbed up and was picking fruit, a child came along riding a bicycle.’

7. *nenh dongb waf ment nanh, bot lol eid muh menk nil,*
**CLF** child see but.however man old that **NEG** see **3SG**

*ment muh bof nil, muh zuh yih nil.*
see **NEG** see **3SG** **NEG** notice **3SG**
‘The child saw him, but the old man didn’t see the child, he didn’t notice him.’
8. nil sanm ndas oab baeb nongb, gaed huob sanm eib nblangh, nil
   3SG want take two three CLF later.on think one moment 3SG

   haif sws juef dinh jwk eib zend pies mengk deib beid rax lwf.
   still decide pick.up one whole CLF basket POSS pears go

   ‘He wanted to take two or three pears, then (he) thought for a moment. He decided to take a whole basket.’

9. nil moab eib pies mengk beid rax eid moab dwt nil deib
   3SG take one CLF basket pear that put be.located 3SG POSS

   dank cek xah jek, nil jiex lwf.
   bicycle on then 3SG ride DIR

   ‘He put the basket of pears onto his bike, and then rode away.’

10. nenb bot lol laeh ment muh bof.
    CLF man old also see NEG see

    ‘The old man couldn’t see him.’

11. bof nzouk ndaex nyoab nenb dongb nbies jiex dank cek lul.
    see in.front have CLF girl.woman ride bicycle come

    ‘He see a girl riding a bike coming in the opposite direction.’

12. nil jind ment jind ment nenb dongb nbies, nenh
    3SG continually.constantly look continually.constantly look CLF girl.woman

    nanh pongs nongb raeb jek nil huos dwt hlaex.
    so hit.collide.with CLF stone.rock then 3SG fall.over be.located ground

    ‘He was looking at the girl, so hit a rock and he fell onto the ground.’

13. beid jek zit qengl njab qengl.
    fruit PRT spill.fall.out all.completely spill.fall.out all.completely

    ‘The pears spilled out everywhere.’

14. jek pot nenb baeb nenb dongb joah ment bof nil bangb, then
    three CLF boy.man see see 3SG fall

    beid dwt hlaex, jek lul bangb nil kws.
    fruit be.located ground so come help 3SG pick.up

    ‘Then at that moment, three boys saw him fall off and the fruit fall out all over the ground, so (they) came to help him pick (them) up.’
When (they) had finished picking up (the pears), (they) helped him lift the basket of pears back onto his bike.

Then he was about to push his bicycle away.

The child took three pears and gave them to the three boys.

'As they went, the passed that tree where the old man was picking fruit.'
22. **bot** lol **bot** eid ngil hlaex, nanh ment bof nil deib
man old man DEM come.down under however see see 3sg poss
beid eid, haod xangh nyoab eib pies mengk muh nyoab.
fruit that it.seems have one CLF basket NEG have
‘That old man came down (from the tree), but when he saw the pears, it seemed that there was one basket missing.’

23. nanh muh boab nil jind ment jind
but.however NEG certain 3SG continually.continually look continually.continually
ment baeb nenh dongb waf noax beid lwf laeh nil muh
look three CLF child eat fruit go also 3SG NEG
boab nyongs dwf sis.
know be what
‘But (he) wasn’t certain, he kept looking, the three boys went by eating pears, still he didn’t know what was going on.’

24. **bot** lol eid hof qangs muh jint nil nyoab laex douh nongb
man old that it.seems NEG remember 3SG have how.many CLF
pies mengk, muh boab nil deib beid hloas tus mengl.
CLF basket NEG know 3SG POSS fruit arrive.at where go
‘That old man couldn’t seem to remember how many baskets he had, (he) didn’t know where his pears had gone.’

25. angt muh qinh cud suang kuangs.
do.make NEG clear situation
‘(He) couldn’t figure out what had happened.’
The Witch and the Boy (HMM16)

1. **nyoab eib nongh, eib nenh dongb waf dongb joah bim bid mis**
have one day one CLF child boy.man POSS parents

   *lwf pus gil lwf.*
go to.market PERF

   ‘One day, a boy’s parents went to market.’

2. **los nil eib nenh nyoab bjed.**
leave 3SG one CLF be.located home

   ‘(They) left him at home alone.’

3. **bid mis hol nil muh ngoh yux heih sangx dwm wes.**
parents tell 3SG NEG as.one.pleases open door give 3PL

   ‘(His) parents told him not to open the door for anyone.’

4. **muh mjengh hangd jiek, bux duoh lul noax nil.**
NEG listen speech if witch come eat 3SG

   ‘If (he) didn’t listen, a witch would come and eat him.’

5. **nenh dongb waf bim bid mis cuf lwf eib nblangh, jous nyoab**
CLF child POSS parents go.out PERF one a.while then have

   *mengh lul pws sangx.*
person come knock door

   ‘The child’s parents had been out for a while, when someone knocked at the door.’

6. **nenh dongb waf nongs tangl hangl, “nyongs nenb sis ang?”**
CLF child ask say be who PRT

   ‘The child asked: “Who is it?”’

7. **bux duoh blux tangl hangl, “gongd deib dongb hraf, nzad mus nzad**
witch say say 1SG POSS child PRT wash.face wash

   *dwt jinx muh nans ang?”*
feet COMPL NEG PRT

   ‘The witch said: “My child, have you washed your hands and feet yet?”’

8. **“gongd nyongs gwf bim box goh, heih sangx mat!”**
1SG be 2SG POSS Grandmother PRT open door PRT

   ‘“I’m your grandmother, open the door!”’

9. **nenh dongb waf heih sangx dwt bux duoh.**
CLF child open door give witch

   ‘The child opened the door for the witch.’
10. nil heth sangx nit.
   3SG open door PRT
   ‘When he opened the door,’

11. bux duoh ment bof nenh dongb waf.
    witch see see CLF child
    ‘the witch looked at the child’

12. blux tangl hangl hrat, “yus hlwb yus nens deib nenh dongb waf.”
    say say PRT both white both tender REL CLF child
    ‘and said: “What a white and tender looking child.”’

13. “gwf blux, gongd yinh gaib xianb noax gwf deib pjes sel laeh
    2SG say 1SG should first eat 2SG POSS hand or
    xianb noax gwf deib pjes dwt nit?”
    first eat 2SG POSS foot PRT
    “You tell me, should I first eat your arm or first eat your leg?”

14. nenh dongb waf dax njes huat lwf nil zuangb njik dongb dwt muh njies.
    CLF child fear very INCHO 3SG pretend a.little all NEG fear
    ‘The child was very afraid, but he pretended he wasn’t afraid at all.’

15. sant lwf eib nblangh.
    think ASP one a.while
    ‘(He) thought for a moment,’

16. qins ndos deib nenh dongb waf blux
    clever very REL CLF child say
    ‘the very clever child said:’

17. “box, gwf noax gongd gongd muh njies…”
    Grandmother 2SG eat 1SG 1SG NEG fear
    “Grandma, if you eat me, I am not afraid…”

18. “gongd bjed deib nzouk huob nyoab eib tongs (wah) beid rax.”
    1SG home REL behind have one CLF tree pear
    “but behind my house there is a pear tree.”

19. “beid rax yus huob reb yus rangt nyoax, gongd xianb jongx gwl
    pear both sweet both delicious 1SG first bring 2SG
    lwf hlwt buh qws nongb nyoax max, nyoax jinx beid rax jek
    go pick some CLF eat PRT eat COMPL pear then
The pears are sweet and tasty, I’ll first take you to pick some pears to eat, then when you have finished eating pears, you can eat me, and it won’t be too late.”

The witch listened to what the child said, ‘The witch said: “Mmm, ok,”’

The child said: “Grandma, the tree is very tall, and you are very old, let me climb the tree and pick the pears for you to eat!”

‘The child climbed up the tree and pretended that no matter how hard he tried, (he) could not pick the pears.’
27. nil  hax  box duoh  tangl hangl,  “box,  gongd  deib  pjes sel  longd
   3SG  call  witch  say  Grandmother  1SG  POSS  hand  short
   huat  lwf,  langm  muh  dok  beid rax,  gwf  lwf  gongd  bit  diek  deib
   very  ASP  pick  NEG  obtain  pear  2SG  go  1SG  POSS  father  REL
   sws  hlaex  eid,  kuoh  eib  zuob  mongm  lul,”
   bed  under  there  find  one  CLF  lance.spear  come
   ‘He called out to the witch: “Grandma, my arms are too short, I can’t reach the pears. You go to
   underneath my father’s bed, find a lance and come back,’

28. “jix nias  jek,  gongd  kod yid  langm  yus  loh  yus  huob reb  deib
   in.this.way  PRT  1SG  be.able  pick  both  big  both  sweet  REL
   beid rax  dwf  gwf  nyoax  gohl’
   pear  give  2SG  eat  PRT
   ‘“then I can pick some big, juicy pears to give you to eat!”’

29. eib  nblangh,  box duoh  kod  dot  zuob  mongm  lul,  muob  dwf
   one  a.while  witch  find  obtain  CLF  lance.spear  come  take  give
   nenb  dongb waf,  nenb  dongb waf  muob  zuob  mongm  langm  doat
   CLF  child  CLF  child  take  CLF  lance.spear  pick  obtain
   eib  nongb  beid rax.
   one  CLF  pear
   ‘After a while, the witch found the lance, (she) gave (it) to the child. The child used the lance to
   pick a pear.’

30. box duoh  huob ranh  huak  lwf.
   witch  happy  very  INCHO
   ‘The witch was delighted.’

31. hax  nenb  dongb waf,  “muob  gongd  nyoax  muob  gongd  nyoax,  angs  njik!”
   call  CLF  child  give  1SG  eat  give  1SG  eat  fast  a.little
   ‘(She) called to the child: “Give (it) to me, give (it) to me, quickly!”’

32. nenb  dongb waf  blux:  “box,  gwf  nzat  njux  maf,  gwf  nzat  njux
   CLF  child  say  Grandmother  2SG  open  mouth  PRT  2SG  open  mouth
   loh  loh  deib,  gongd  mad sangh  muob  beid rax  dwt  gwf  deib
   big  big  PRT  1SG  immediately  give  pear  give  2SG  POSS
   nongb  njux!”
   CLF  mouth
   ‘The child said: “Grandma, you open (your) mouth, you open your mouth as wide as you can, I will
   put the pear straight in your mouth!”’
33. *box duoh nzat njux loh loh deib, nenb dongb waf yit yad rus.*
   witch open mouth big big PRT CLF child as soon as use strength
   ‘The witch opened her mouth as wide as she could, the child used all his strength.’

34. *muob zuob mongm dwf box duoh deib nongb njux, yit*
   take CLF lance.spear put witch POSS CLF mouth as soon as
   *yad rus nit, zuob mongm jous longm hloas box duoh deib*
   use strength PRT CLF lance.spear then enter.insert COMP witch POSS
   *nongb hangm, box duoh jous tias lwf!*
   CLF throat witch then die INCHO
   ‘to put the lance into the witch’s mouth, as soon as he put it in, the lance went down into the witch’s throat, and the witch died.’
Appendix C

The data for the Southern vernacular was transcribed using a pinyin-based orthography that was adapted from the Standard Miao script by Andrew Castro (2013) for use with the Mashan Miao dialect. Andrew taught WZ how to write it. It is very similar to the Central vernacular; however, the Southern vernacular has a smaller inventory of consonants and vowels, and also fewer tones. The consonant chart for the Southern Mashan Miao vernacular is shown in Table C.1.

Table C.1. Southern Mashan Miao consonant chart

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Table C.2 shows the vowel inventory of the Southern Mashan Miao vernacular.

Table C.2. Southern Mashan Miao vowel inventory

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Table C.3 shows the diphthongs of the Southern Mashan Miao vernacular.

Table C.3. Southern Mashan Miao Diphthongs

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Table C.4 shows the tones of Southern Mashan Miao.

Table C.4. Southern Mashan Miao tone inventory

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