

CHAPTER 4

PHRASES

4.0 Introduction

A phrase is a unit of two or more words, and functions as a constituent within a clause. Phrases involve one head which functions as a head (the central component) in a phrase, and modifiers which give extra information to a head. In Ngo Chang, nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs can be the heads of different phrases. In this section, each type of phrase is discussed: noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Note there are no prepositional and postpositional phrases. The word *ma*³ in *gai*³¹ *ma*³ 'to market' is interpreted as case.

4.1 Noun phrases

Ngo Chang noun phrases are modified noun phrases, with nouns functioning as the heads. Examples of Ngo Chang modified noun phrases are listed below.

modifiers	structure	examples
Nouns	noun + head noun (specific) (generic)	<i>ŋɔɽ³¹ tʃⁿan⁵ nie⁵</i> 'Ngo Chang language' <i>t^hai³ d̄zju³¹</i> 'Thai people'
Demonstratives	demonstrative + noun (singular) demonstrative + noun + plural marker (plural)	<i>hai⁵ mɔ³ saɔ⁵ bu³</i> 'this book', <i>hau⁵ j̄jen³ d̄zen³</i> 'those houses'
Possessive pronouns	possessive pronoun + noun	<i>ŋa⁵ ŋɔɽ³¹</i> 'my bird', <i>njam³ mɔ⁵ da³ sa³ la³</i> 'their teacher'

Adjectives	noun + adjective	<i>la³k^hui⁵ t^hi³ju⁵</i> 'white dog' <i>ban³juŋ⁵</i> 'beautiful flower'
Numeral classifiers	noun + numeral classifier	<i>lɔ³faŋ⁵ sɔm⁵ju³k³¹</i> 'three children', <i>la³k^hui⁵ ʔai³ du³¹</i> 'two dogs'
Quantifiers	noun + quantifier	<i>la³k^hui⁵ njɔ⁵fɔ³</i> 'many dogs', <i>lɔ³faŋ⁵ ta³jam⁵</i> 'some children'

Figure 9. Ngo Chang modified noun phrases

Some of the modifiers above can be combined as in the following examples.

133.

ŋa⁵ la³k^hui⁵ ʔai³ du³¹
1Sposs dog two CLF

'My two dogs'

134.

ŋa⁵ k^hup⁵ t^hi³ju⁵
1Sposs cup white

'My white cup'

135.

ŋa⁵ k^hup⁵ t^hi³ju⁵ gui³
1Sposs cup white broken

'My broken white cup'

136.

ŋa⁵ k^hup⁵ gui³ sɔm⁵ gu³
1Sposs cup broken three CLF

'My three broken cups'

137.

t^hai³ d̄zju³¹ ʔai³ juk^{7 31}
 Thai people two CLF

'Two Thais'

138.

hau⁵ t^hai³ d̄zju³¹ ʔai³ juk^{7 31}
 those Thai people two CLF

'Those two Thais'

The order of combined modifier constituents can be summarized as in the following chart.

Specifier	Modifier	HEAD	Modifier	Number
Demonstrative	Noun	Noun	Adjective	Quantifier
Possessive pronoun	(specific)	(generic)		Numeral classifier phrase

Figure 10. The structure of Ngo Chang modified noun phrases

As the above chart shows, demonstratives, possessive pronouns and nouns (specific) precede the head noun, and adjectives, quantifiers, numeral classifier phrases follow the head noun. In construction of Noun + Head Noun, nouns functioning as the modifier are specific words, and head nouns are generic words, like *ŋɔɽ³¹ tʃ^hay⁵ nie⁵* 'Ngo Chang language'. This construction, Noun + Head Noun is not considered to be the compound noun, because the semantic property of each word is not different from the combined meaning when each word combines.

The construction, Noun + Adjective is sometimes ambiguous in the interpretation as in the following examples. See section 3.10 for more discussion of adjectives.

139.

*ban*³ *juŋ*⁵
 flower beautiful

'A beautiful flower' or 'A flower is beautiful.'

140.

*dzei*³² *tʃam*³
 water cold

'Cold water' or 'Water is cold.'

Modified noun phrases function as argument of verbs in clauses as in the following examples.

141.

*ŋa*⁵ *la*³*k*^h*ui*⁵ *dzi*³*ʃap*⁵*ʃap*⁵ *me*³
 1SpOSS dog swim like

'My dog likes swimming.'

142.

*ŋ*³ *ga*³¹ *k*^h*up*⁵ *gui*³ *du*³*dja*³¹
 1SpOSS TOP cup broken throw away

'I threw away the broken cup.'

In example 141, the noun phrase *ŋa*⁵ *la*³*k*^h*ui*⁵ 'my dog' functions as the subject, and in example 142, the noun phrase *k*^h*up*⁵ *gui*³ 'broken cup' functions as the object.

4.2 Verb phrases

The head of a verb phrase is the main verb; it expresses the central meaning of a verb phrase. The modifiers of verb phrases add additional information to main verbs. Ngo Chang verb phrases include the main verb as the head, and auxiliary verbs as the modifiers. Examples are listed below.

The structure of the verb phrase, main verbs with auxiliary verbs, is described below.

Negation ²	Modifier	HEAD	Modifier	Aspect		Tense	Perfect
Negative	Modality (ability)	Main verb	Modality (possibility, necessity, obligation, probability, prohibition)	Aspect			
						Past	Perfect
				Progressive			Perfect
				Aspect	Aspect	Tense	

Figure 11. The structure of Ngo Chang verb phrase

Ability modality occurs before main verbs, and other modifiers, such as tense, aspect, possibility modality, necessity modality, obligation modality and probability modality occur after main verbs. Generally when tense and aspect occur together as the modifier of the main verb, the order is Main verb + Aspect + Tense. However, when past tense and perfect aspect are combined, the order is rearranged into Main verb + Past Tense + Perfect Aspect. Some examples are listed below. The underlined word is the head of each verb phrase.

²Negation is included in this chart so that its position relative to other words in the verb phrase can be demonstrated. However, see section 6.6 for a discussion of negation.

Tense markers

Past

$l\omega^5$ $k^h\omega^5$
go PAST

'went '

Future

$l\omega^5$ da^{31}
go FUT

'will go'

Aspect markers

Perfect

$dz\omega^3$ gu^{31}
eat PERF

'have eaten'

Experiential

$dz\omega^3$ ku^3
eat EXPE

'have eaten'

Progressive

$dz\omega^3$ $njei^{31}$
eat PROG

'be eating'

Inceptive

$dz\omega^3$ ba^5 ge^3
eat INCEP

'be about to eat'

Aspect markers + Tense markers

Perfect + Future

$dz\omega^3$ gu^{31} da^{31}
eat PERF FUT

'will have eaten'

Experiential + Future

$dz\omega^3$ ku^3 da^{31}
eat EXPE FUT

'will have eaten'

Progressive + Future

$dz\omega^3$ $njei^{31}$ da^{31}
eat PROG FUT

'will be eating'

Tense markers + Aspect markers

Past + Perfect

dzɔ̃³ k^hɔ̃⁵ gu³¹
eat PAST PERF

'had eaten'

Past + Experiential

dzɔ̃³ k^hɔ̃⁵ ku³
eat PAST EXPE

'had eaten'

Aspect markers + Aspect markers

Progressive + Perfect

dzɔ̃³ njei³¹ gu³¹
eat PROG PERF

'have been eating'

Aspect markers + Aspect markers + Tense markers

Progressive + Perfect + Future

dzɔ̃³ njei³¹ gu³¹ da³¹
eat PROG PERF FUT

'will have been eating'

Aspect markers + Tense markers + Aspect markers

Progressive + Past + Perfect

dzɔ̃³ njei³¹ k^hɔ̃⁵ gu³¹
eat PROG PAST PERF

'had been eating'

Modality markers

Ability

jɔ̌³ (or seɿ³¹) *kǎ³*
can speak

'can speak'

Necessity, Obligation and Probability

kǎ³ *tfǎ⁵*
speak must

'need speak', 'must speak', 'probably speak'

Possibility

k^hwǎ⁵ *mǎ³bě⁵*
lie may

'may lie'

Prohibition

mǎ³¹ *dzǎ³* *uŋ³¹*
NEG eat should

'should not eat'

4.3 Adverb phrases

In a modified adverb phrase, an adverb is a head and a modifier is an adverb.

143.

haǐ⁵ *lǎ³k^huǐ⁵* *sɔ̌³sɔ̌³* *njap⁸¹-fɔ̌⁵* *wuǐ³*
this dog INTS fast-ADVLZR run

'This dog ran very fast.'

In example 143, the intensifier *sɔ̌³sɔ̌³* occurs before the adverb *njap⁸¹-fɔ̌⁵* 'fast' and intensifies it.

4.4 Adjective phrases

Not only can nouns be modified, but an adjective can also be modified. In a Ngo Chang modified adjective phrase, an adjective is a head and an intensifier is a modifier.

144.

hai⁵ dzi³ sai³ dzain³ sɔ³ sɔ³ njaŋ³¹ ɲat⁶
 this tree INTS tall COP

'This is a very tall tree.'

In example 144, the intensifier *sɔ³ sɔ³* occurs before the adjective *njaŋ³¹* 'tall'. The intensifier *sɔ³ sɔ³* modifies the adjective *njaŋ³¹* 'tall' and intensifies it.

The intensifier *dze⁵ la³¹*, which describes the comparative degree, also functions as a modifier in modified adjective phrases.

145.

hai⁵ sai³ dzain³ gaɪ³¹ hau⁵ sai³ dzain³ da³ t^hɔɪ⁵ li³¹ dze⁵ la³¹ njaŋ³¹
 this tree TOP that tree GEN than INTS tall

'This tree is much taller than that tree.'

In example 145, the intensifier *dze⁵ la³¹* modifies the adjective *njaŋ³¹* 'tall'.

The marker *t^hɔɪ⁵* 'most', which expresses the superlative degree, can be found in modified adjective phrases.

146.

njaŋ³ nɔɪ³¹ t^hɔɪ³¹ gi³ laŋ⁵ ma³ dzi³ ʃap⁶ ʃap⁶
 3S deep most river LOC swim

'She/He swam in the river which is deepest.'

In example 146, the marker *t^hɔɪ³¹* 'most' modifies the adjective *nɔɪ³¹* 'deep' and expresses the superlative degree of the adjective *nɔɪ³¹* 'deep'.