CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.0 Introduction

This section summarizes the findings of this thesis in 8.1, and gives the suggestions for further study in 8.2.

8.1 Summary of findings

This thesis aims to describe the important elements of the syntax of the Ngo Chang language. The important elements of the syntax are Word classes, Phrases, Clause types, Clause modification and Sentences.

In word classes, nouns, pronouns, determiners and demonstratives, quantifiers and numerals, classifiers, verbs, auxiliaries, adverbs, adjectives and case are analyzed.

Some properties are related to nouns: number, classifier and possession. There is a distinction of singular and plural number. Noun singularity is unmarked, and noun plurality is marked by the plural marker $d\widetilde{ʒɛn}^3$. There is another plural marker $mɔ^5$ which can be used only for human nouns. A classifier system is employed in Ngo Chang. Classifiers are identified by the human vs. non-human distinction, and by the shape of entities. Possessing is indicated by possessive pronouns, noun phrases and nouns. Possessors occur with the genitive marker da^3. The genitive marker can be omitted except when the human body parts are possessed in the possessive expressions.

Pronouns refer only to humans; animals and inanimate objects are not described by pronouns. There are first, second and third person pronouns, and also the inclusive/exclusive distinction in the first person pronouns. There are singular, dual

and plural distinctions. All pronouns have non-possessive and possessive forms depending on the grammatical function.

Demonstratives have three forms hai^5 'this', hau^5 'that' and t^hi^5 'yonder' depending on the distance relative to the speaker and/or the hearer. Three quantifiers $ta^3gaŋ^5$ 'all', $njɔ^5ʃɔ^3$ 'many' and ta^3jam^5 'some' are shown. The plural markers $\overline{dʒɛn}^3$ and $mɔ^5$ optionally used with these quantifiers.

Seven kinds of verbs are found: intransitive verbs, existence verbs, transitive verbs, ditransitive verbs, locative transitive verbs, copula verbs and stative verbs. Intransitive verbs allow only one argument, that is the grammatical subject in a clause. Existence verbs are of two forms: One is $njei^{31}$ which is used for describing the existence of humans, animals and insects; the other is $\overline{dʒɔʔ}^{31}$ which describes the existence of plants and inanimate entities. Transitive verbs take two participants: subject and object. There are two kinds of transitive verbs: One requires an overt object; the other does not require an overt object. Ditransitive verbs take two objects; a primary object and a secondary object. The primary object is obligatorily marked by the accusative li^{31} and the secondary object is unmarked. Locative transitive verbs take a subject, an object and an obligatory location. Locative transitive verbs should occur with the locative marker ma^3 for the obligatory locative noun phrases. One copula verb $ŋɔat^5$ is found. The copula verb $ŋɔat^5$ links noun phrase subjects with noun predicates. The property concepts that are often categorized in the adjective class in many languages are stative verbs in Ngo Chang. The property concepts with a lesser degree of time stability are considered to be stative verbs. When stative verbs modify a noun, they occur in relative clauses rather than directly modifying the noun.

Ngo Chang auxiliaries are tense, aspect and modality. Some auxiliaries occur before main verbs; other auxiliaries occur after main verbs. Tenses are divided into three

categories: past, present, and future. Present tense is unmarked and past tense is mostly omitted. Aspects have four categories; the perfect aspect, the experience aspect, the progressive aspect and the inceptive aspect. Perfect aspects can occur with tense markers to make the categories of past perfect and future perfect. Progressive aspect can be combined with other aspects and tenses except for the past tense. The past tense is mostly unmarked, so speakers tend to use the perfect aspect when they want to express the past time. The ongoing action at the past time is described by the progressive aspect with the perfect aspect or with the past perfect. There are also other devices which express aspectual values. The lexical verbs $l\mathfrak{I}^3$ 'come' and $l\mathfrak{I}^5$ 'go' function as the inchoative aspect and imperfect aspect respectively when they follow main verbs in clauses. Four categories of modality are found: ability, possibility, necessity and prohibition.

Adverbs modify a whole sentence, a verb, and the intensifier $s\mathfrak{I}^3s\mathfrak{I}^3$ modifies an adjective and an adverb. Adverbs which modify verbs express time, location and manner. Adverbs are formed by stative verbs + the adverbial marker $\int \mathfrak{I}^5$, or by reduplicating the stative verbs.

Adjectives function in noun phrases, and they can also function as predicates without a linking verb in clauses. Ngo Chang adjectives have the same functions as verbs.

Seven case makers are found in Ngo Chang: li^{31} 'accusative marker', da^3 'genitive marker', ma^3 'locative marker', ja^3 'instrumental marker', hi^3li^3 'beneficative marker', $ga\mathfrak{I}^{31}$ 'topic marker' and k^ha^3 'contrastive topic marker'. Ngo Chang employs a nominative-accusative case system; where nominative case is unmarked and the accusative case is marked by li^{31}.

In noun phrases, heads are nouns and modifiers are demonstratives, possessive pronouns, nouns, adjectives, quantifiers and numeral classifier phrases.

Demonstratives, possessive pronouns and nouns precede the head noun and adjectives, quantifiers and numeral classifier phrases follow the head noun.

Verb phrases include verbs as the head and auxiliaries as the modifiers. Ability modality precedes the head, and other auxiliaries follow the head. When the combination of aspect and tense modifies the head, the constituent order is main verb (head) + aspect + tense; however, only the combination of the past tense and the perfect aspect occurs in the constituent order of main verb (head) + past tense + perfect aspect.

In adverb phrases, heads are adverbs and modifiers are adverbs. In adjective phrases, heads are adjectives and a modifier is the intensifier $sɔ^3sɔ^3$. The intensifier $\widetilde{dze}^5la^{31}$, which describes the comparative degree, and the marker $t^haŋ^{31}$ 'most', which describes the superlative degree, also modify the adjective in adjective phrases.

Seven types of clauses are found in Ngo Chang: intransitive clauses, locative intransitive clauses, transitive clauses, ditransitive clauses, locative transitive clauses, equative clauses and stative clauses.

Intransitive clauses allow only one participant argument which is defined as the subject. If the argument is marked by the topic case $gaʔ^{31}$, it is considered to be the topic.

Locative intransitive clauses describe the existential location of an entity. Locative intransitive clauses involve the existence verb $njei^{31}$ for human, animals and insects or the existence verb $\widetilde{djɔ}ʔ^{31}$ for inanimates and plants, and a specific location.

Transitive clauses take two arguments: the subject and the object. The subject is unmarked, and the object is marked by the accusative case li^{31}. The accusative case

li^{31} can be omitted, however, if the two arguments are in the same saliency class, the accusative case li^{31} should be marked to the object.

Ditransitive clauses have three arguments: the subject, the primary object and the secondary object. The subject is unmarked, the primary object is marked by the accusative case, and the secondary object is unmarked. The accusative case li^{31} is usually marked, although the subject and the primary object are not in the same saliency class.

Locative transitive clauses take three arguments: the subject, the object marked by the accusative li^{31} and the obligatory locative argument marked by locative case marker ma^3.

Equative clauses consist of a topic, a complement and a copula. The topic is obligatorily marked by the topic case $ga?^{31}$, because the topic and the participant in complement are identical participant.

Stative clauses employ stative verbs in order to express the subject's state of being. In Ngo Chang, the interpretation is sometime ambiguous between stative clauses and noun phrases because of the same structure.

Six types of clause modifications are identified in Ngo Chang: interrogative clauses, imperative clauses, voices, relative clauses, complement clauses and negation.

Interrogative clauses are of two types: Yes/No questions (including confirmation questions) and information questions. Yes/No questions are structured as a declarative clause + question marker la^5. Confirmation questions are formed with negative marker $?a^{31}$ + verb + question marker la^5 or a tag question $?a^{31}$ $\eta ɔat^{5}$ la^5. In information questions, question-words occur directly before verbs and verb phrases.

In imperative clauses, the imperative marker $\mathit{?a}^3$ occurs after the verb in order to express the speaker's command.

Passive clauses are described in the agent-patient grammatical relation, rather than the verb passivization. Passive clauses are formed with Patient with the accusative case li^{31} + Agent with the instrumental ja^3 + Verbs. Ngo Chang passive clauses are an impersonal passive which has no grammatical subject.

Causative clauses consist of three types: transitive clause type, dintransitive clause type and causativized ditransitive clause type. In causative clauses, the causative verb $na\eta^{31}$ is employed.

In reflexive clauses, the reflexive verb $\widehat{dz\jmath}^3$ is utilized. Reflexive clauses often occur with emphatic pronouns. There are two types of emphatic pronouns indicating intentional or accidental actions.

Relative clauses use the relativizer da^3 in order to indicate the relationship between the relative clause and the head noun. The head nouns function as the subject or the object in relative clauses. An oblique cannot be the head of a relative clause, but the oblique can be the head if it is promoted to the object.

There are two types of complement clauses; a finite complement clause and an infinitive complement clause. A finite complement clause utilizes the complementizer $\widehat{dz\imath}^{31}$ in the final position of the clause. An infinitive complement clause is dependent on the matrix verb.

Negation is clausal negation, not constituent negation. The negative marker ma^{31} occurs immediately before verbs and verb phrases.

Sentences consist of two types: complex sentences and compound sentences. Five categories are found in complex sentences: time, reason, condition, concession and simultaneous. Only in the sentence which describes the reason, does the subordinate clause occur after the main clause; In other sentences, the subordinate clauses occur before the main clauses. In compound sentences, three kinds of coordinate conjunctions are found: addition, contrast and alternation. There are also sentence constructions which express the comparison. Three types of comparison are found: equative, comparative and superlative.

8.2 Further investigation

If more time and energy were available for further research, it would be worthwhile to investigate the verb phrase in more depth. The structure of verb phrase is discussed in 4.2. In one of the structures, which includes main verbs as a head and auxiliary verbs as a modifier, there are three kinds of auxiliary verbs, such as tense, aspect and modality. These auxiliary verbs modify the main verb, and also the combination of auxiliary verbs, such as tense + aspect, tense + modality, aspect + modality and tense + aspect + modality, modify the main verb. The combination of tense + aspect is examined in this thesis, however, other combinations, such as tense + modality, aspect + modality and tense + aspect + modality are not discussed in this thesis. The modality system of Ngo Chang is so complicated, that it is too involved a subject to be treated here in detail. To examine the modality system of Ngo Chang would require another thesis. Also, the interaction between pragmatic particles and case markers, the infinitive complement/serial verb choice, cf., section 6.5, and the investigation for a greater depth of functional analysis can be mentioned only briefly in my short study.