CHAPTER THREE

NOUNS

1. INTRODUCTION

Nouns include the names of persons, places, things and concepts. Typical categories associated with nouns across languages are case, number, class or gender and definiteness (Schachter: 1985). Case in Rawang is marked at phrase level by post-positions. Generally, Rawang nouns are not marked morphologically for gender and number. Number markers are analyzed as clitics, which distinguish singular, dual and plural (see Chapter One section 6.4.).

In the Rawang noun morphology, compounding, and derivation are the prominent word formation processes.

2. COMPOUNDING

Compound nouns in Rawang are formed by various combinations of noun, verb and classifier roots. Verb roots may be either process verbs or adjectival verbs. These verb roots in the compound nouns are uninflected forms. The various combinations of roots in noun compounds are:

noun + process verb,

noun + adjectival verb,

noun + classifier,

process verb + adjectival verb,

process verb + noun,

noun + noun,

process verb + classifier,

noun + classifier + noun,

noun + noun + classifier, and

noun + verb + noun.

2.1. Noun + Verb (process)

This combination results in names of things such as the wall, broom, confluence, etc. In these forms, a falling tone on the first core element changes into a non-distinctive, i.e. neutral, tone. For example:

(239) *kɔ̀m* + *kūl* > *kɔmkūl*
house to fence
'wall'

(240) *ti* + *tuq* > *tituq*
water arrive/meet
'confluence'

In some instances, if the first element is disyllabic, the second syllable of it is deleted. For example:

(241) *tāngrà* + *sɔ́m* > *tangsɔ́m*
floor sweep
'broom'

2.2. Noun + Verb (adjectival)

This kind of compound word is an adjectivally modified noun. The adjectival verb follows the noun it modifies. The two elements of the compound word are articulated rapidly. Moreover, adjectives are

interpreted as adjectival verbs that free adjective words unlikely to occur. Verbs do not occur after a noun as a free form modifying the noun. Thus, the **noun + adjectival verb** combination is interpreted as a compound word. For example:

(242) *yoq + naq > yōnaq ~ yoqnaq*
cloth black
'a black cloth'

The above example shows the deletion of the syllable final glottal stop of the first element. This deletion process occurs in free variation. Mostly, this occurs in rapid speech.

2.3. Noun + Classifier

Some **noun + classifier** combinations are interpreted as compound nouns. Compound nouns of this type have a semantic feature of indefiniteness. When a **noun + classifier** combination refers to a definite thing, it is interpreted as a noun phrase. A phonological criterion is relevant to the differentiation of whether the combination is a compound or a noun phrase: the compound is articulated more rapidly than is the noun phrase. For example, of the following two examples, the first example is a compound and the second is a phrase.

(243) *shǿng + gòng > shǿnggòng*
wood classifier
'a log or logs' (in general)

(244) *shǿng + gòng > shǿng gòng*
wood classifier
'the log' (definite)

2.4. Verb (process) + Verb (adjectival)

Some compound nouns are formed by combining process verbs and adjectival verbs. For example:

(245) *rõng* + *ɑdãng* > *róngdãng*
sit to be stuck
'chair'

In this example, the mid tone of the first element changes into high tone in the compound word, and the initial vowel /ɑ/ of the second element is deleted.

2.5. Verb (process) + Noun

Compounds of this combination are rare, and the only verbs observed so far in this combination are /øp/ (to sleep) and /rong/ (to sit). For example:

(246) *øp* + *gù* > *øpgù*
to sleep bed
'bed'

(247) *rõng* + *tàng* > *róngtàng*
to sit floor
'floor/throne'

2.6. Noun + Noun

Combinations of two or more nouns also form compound nouns. This combination can have several semantic constructions. For example:

a) Both elements have similar meaning.

This is semantic reduplication. For example:

(248) *tì* + *rɑ̀mè* > *tìrɑ̀mè*
water river
'river'

b) purpose - thing

The first element modifies what the second element is made for. For example:

(249) *waq* + *kōng* > *waqkōng*
pig trough
'a swine trough'

c) material - thing

The first element identifies what material the second element is made of. For example:

(250) *tɑwā* + *dóng* > *tɑwādóng*
bamboo tube
'bamboo tube'

2.7. Verb (process) + Classifier

This compound structure is derived from a modified noun phrase in which the modifier is a process verb with non-final verb suffix /-lɑ́m/ (Chapter One section 4.2.9.) by a process which deletes the suffix /-lɑ́m/. In this compound, the classifiers observed so far are /rà/ (locative classifier) and /wà/ (a classifier for things in general). In combination with /rà/, it results in the semantic reference to a place where the action of the process verb is done. For example:

(251) *øp* + *rà* > *øprà*
sleep Clss
'place to sleep = bed'

The combination with /wà/ denotes an object or an instrument. For example:

(252) *ɑ̄m* + *wà* > *ɑ́mwà*
eat + Clss
'things to eat = food'

2.8. Noun + Verb + Noun

This compound results from the modified noun phrase in which the modifier is a verb phrase with non-final verb suffix /-lɑm/ by a process which deletes the suffix /-lɑm/. Thus, the first two elements of this compound modify the third element. For example:

(253) *ɑ̄m* + *dúr* + *jɑk* > *ɑ̄mdúrjɑk*
rice pound machine
'Rice pounding machine = rice mill/ rice huller machine'

2.9. (Noun + Classifier) + Noun

This combination is simply a compound noun embedded in the structure of **Noun + Noun** combination. The embedded compound noun is of **Noun + Classifier** structure (See section 2.3.). For example:

(254) *(shǿng* + *kɔ̀m)* + *kɔ̀m* > *shǿngkɔ̀mkɔ̀m*
wood Clss house
'Wood-plank house = wooden house'

2.10. Noun + (Noun + Classifier)

This is another case of a compound embedded in the **Noun + Noun** compound structure. The **Noun + Classifier** structure is embedded in the second element. Since the first part or element of the **Noun + Noun** compound modifies the second element, the embedded part is modified by the first element. For example:

(255) *tɑwā + (dóng + tān) > tɑwādóngtān*
bamboo tube Clss
'Bamboo tube'

3. DERIVATION

Derivation is another prominent process in noun formations. This derivation is manifested by affixation. Derivational affixes are divided into prefixes and suffixes. These affixes change verbs and classifiers into nouns and nouns into derived noun forms. Some nouns are derived by compounding. (See compounding above.)

3.1. Prefixes

There are only four derivational prefixes observed: /ɑ-/, /ɑng-/, /dɑ-/ and /tɑ-/. Both /ɑ-/ and /ɑng-/ may correspond to a noun prefix of vague meaning that appears all over Tibeto-Burman languages, exemplified by Burmese /qə/, Bisu /ang-/ ~ /ak-/, Jinghpaw /qə/, Written Tibetan /ḥ-/, etc. (See Matisoff: 1973).

3.1.1. /α-/ Nominalizer 1

This prefix is only and always attached to some process verb roots to derive a form which refers to the subject or agent of the verb root. For example:

(256) *α- ngə̄́* > *αngə́́*
Nom cry/weep
'a person who weeps easily'

3.1.2. /ᾱ̃ng-/ Nominalizer 2

This prefix changes some classifiers and verbs into nouns, and some nouns into derived noun forms.

a) /ᾱ̃ng-/ + classifier

Derived words of this type denote the abstract property to which the classifier refers. For example:

(257) tòng = Classifier for long and round objects
ᾱ̃ng- tòng > αngtòng
Nom Clss
'the state of being round and long (cylindrical shape)'

b) /ᾱ̃ng-/ + Verb (process)

Derived words of this type denote an instrument used in performing the activity to which the verb refers. For example:

(258) *ᾱ̃ng- wᾱ̃m* > *ᾱ̃ngwᾱ̃m*
Nom to cover
'The cover'

c) /ɑ̃ng-/ + Verb (adjectival)

Derived words of this type denote the abstract state or property to which the adjectival verb refers. For example:

(259) *ɑ̃ng- mòng > ɑ̃ngmòng*
Nom to be white
'The white colour'

d) /ɑng-/ + Noun

Some nouns are derived from nouns by the prefix /ɑng-/[12] . Again, the derived form denotes an abstract status or state. For example:

(260) *ɑ̃ng- tì > ɑ̃ngtì*
Nom water
'Liquid'

3.1.3. /dɑ-/ Nominalizer 3

This prefix changes some verbs into nouns. For example:

(261) *dɑ- løp > dɑløp*
NOM bury
'Grave'

An allomorph /tɑ-/ is observed occurring in free variation. For example:

(262) *dɑløp* = grave
tɑløp = grave

[12] Some nouns which are derived by this process have become frozen forms such that their root forms cannot be found as free forms and cannot be glossed. For example: *ɑngkè* = solid thing, but *kè* = ?

3.1.4. /tɑ-/ Nominalizer 4

This prefix changes some classifiers into nouns. For example:

(263) *yø* = a classifier for things in row
tɑ- yǿ > *tɑyǿ*
Nom Clss
'Row'

3.2. Suffix

There is only one derivational suffix observed, /-shú/. This morpheme derives some action verb roots into nouns. The resultant noun refers to the agent of the verb. For example:

(264) *ɑ̄m -shú* > *ɑ́mshú*
eat Nom
'Person who eats'

/-shú/ can be attached to non-final verbs. As mentioned above, the resultant noun refers to the agent of the verb root. For example:

(265) *tɑp -lɑ́m -shú* > *tɑplɑ́mshú*
catch prp Nom
'Person who catches'