

Classifier Declinations in an Isolating Language: On a Rarity in Weining Ahmao^{*}

Matthias Gerner

City University of Hong Kong

Walter Bisang

University of Mainz

In this paper, we scrutinize a rare classifier system in an isolating language. Weining Ahmao, a Miao-Yao language spoken in western Guizhou Province in the PRC, inflects each of its noun classifiers in twelve basic forms and stands in stark contrast to other isolating languages of East Asia (including other Miao languages), in which nominal classifiers are unique indeclinable morphemes. This paper focuses on a synchronic analysis of all aspects of the classifier system; i.e. a representation of its phonological, semantic, and pragmatic properties as well as the syntactic constructions in which the classifiers are involved. A data list of cognate classifiers from four Miao languages encapsulates the uniqueness of the Ahmao inflectional classifiers.

Key words: inflectional classifier, size classifier, indexical, Ahmao, Miao, China

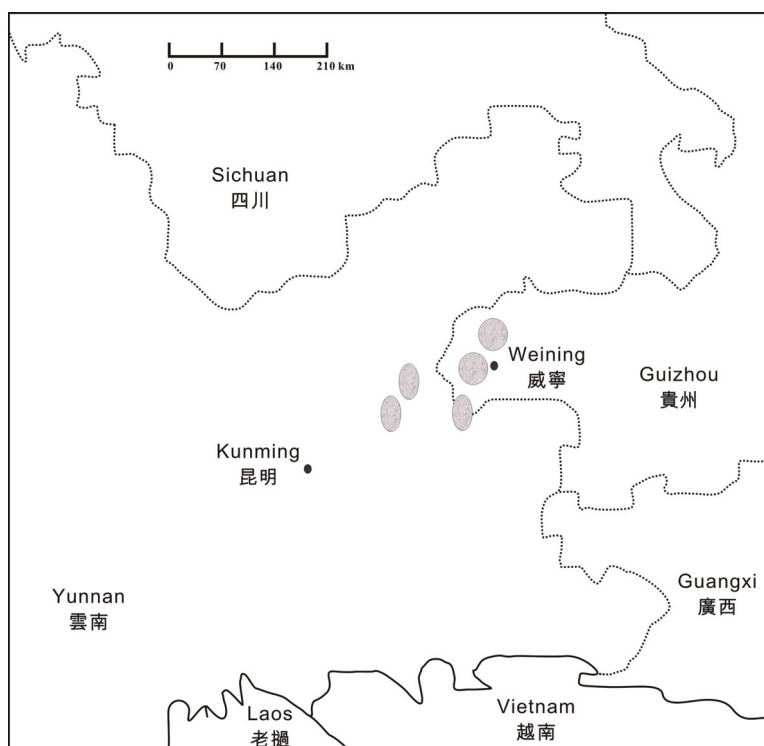
1. Introduction

This paper describes the Ahmao classifier system, a linguistic rarity whose historical development was hypothesized upon in a recent paper (Gerner & Bisang 2009). Ahmao is a Miao-Yao language¹ spoken by 300,000 natives in western Guizhou

^{*} We gave a talk on this topic at the international conference ‘Rara & Rarissima: collecting and interpreting unusual characteristics of human languages’ at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, March 29-April 1, 2006. Matthias Gerner is grateful for the support of City University of Hong Kong which sponsored this research project with two Strategic Research Grants (No. 7001921 & No. 7002188). We wish to express special gratitude to Wang Deguang, a native Ahmao speaker who provided valuable linguistic advice. We owe special thanks to two anonymous reviewers of *Language and Linguistics* who provided valuable feedback. Warm regards also go to Noel Johnston for comments on an earlier version of the manuscript.

¹ In this paper, we employ the Chinese exonym *Miao-Yao* for the language family that is also called *Hmong-Mien*. Most speakers of languages of this family live within the borders of the PRC. As ca. 75% of the Miao-Yao speakers refer to themselves by names other than *Hmong* or *Mien* (e.g. Qanao, Ahmao, Qoxung), and as these speakers readily accept the Chinese exonym, we also adopt this naming convention.

Province in the PRC. The following map illustrates the residence area of the Ahmao people. Although Ahmao is an isolating language in which parts of speech are realized as indeclinable one-form categories, the system of nominal classifiers is different in having developed a twelve-form paradigm for each item.



Map: The residence area of the Ahmao people in Southwest China

Since Greenberg (1974), scholars have recognized a correlation between the obligatory expression of the singular/plural distinction and the presence of numeral classifiers:

Numeral classifier languages generally do not have compulsory expression of nominal plurality, but at most facultative expression. (Greenberg 1974:25)

If one assumes that nouns in East Asian languages only express the concept itself without any reference to its number, it is the function of the classifier to individuate that concept to make it receptive to quantification by numerals. Classifiers refer to certain cognitive properties of concepts (e.g. dimensionality, animacy, flexibility, etc.) and thus assign them to different classes. The correlation between classification and individuation seems to hold through all the classifier systems of East Asia and mainland Southeast Asia

where classifiers are always used with numerals. This is because classifiers are used for highlighting the boundaries of concepts (Bisang 1999, 2002). In addition to individuation, we find classifiers in the context of (in)definiteness, relativization, and possession (Bisang 1999, 2002, Aikhenvald 2000, on ‘multiple classifier languages’).

- (1) *Definiteness*: Thailand Hmong (Mottin 1981:200)
 t^hau¹¹ u⁵⁵ mua⁵³ o⁵⁵ **tu**²² nia¹¹ tsi³⁴. **tu**²² tsi³⁴ tua³¹
 long.ago there have NUM:2 CL wife husband CL husband die
 lau¹¹ tu²² nia¹¹ qua⁵³ qua⁵³.
 finish CL wife cry cry
 ‘A long time ago there was a married couple. The husband died and [his] wife cried.’
- (2) *Indefiniteness*: Kam/Dong (Gerner 2006:248)
 mau³³ təm⁵⁵ **mɯŋ**³¹ nən¹¹ kəm⁵⁵.
 3P SG meet CL man Kam
 ‘He met a Kam man.’
- (3) *Relativization*: Cantonese (Matthews & Yip 1994:111)
 [ŋo³⁵tei hai³⁵ fat³³kwok³³ sik] **di**⁵⁵ je³⁵ kei³⁵ hou³⁵-sik ga.
 1P PL in France eat CL food quite good-eat PART
 ‘The food we ate in France was pretty good.’
- (4) *Possession*: Thailand Hmong (Mottin 1981)
 nɔ¹¹ **tu**²² tsi³⁴ntsau²¹ **tu**²² nts^hai¹¹
 3P SG CL uncle CL daughter
 ‘the daughter of his uncle’

In none of the languages in which the classifier marks functions of individuation is the classifier obligatory. Within this areal framework but also within classifier systems worldwide, the system of Ahmao seems to be unique. Whereas classifiers are morphologically invariable in all the other language families, Ahmao classifiers can take different forms in a paradigm that combines the functions of definiteness (definite vs. indefinite form), number (singular vs. plural form), size (augmentative, medial, diminutive) and social deixis as reflected in the social status defined by male, female, or child.

A few previous papers, mainly in Chinese publications, have provided sketches of the Ahmao classifier system (D. Wang 1987, F. Wang 1957, 1972), although the findings were very elementary. These publications are repeated and commented upon in a typological perspective by Bisang (1993:46-47, 1999:153-155). The data of this article are drawn from various sources. The classifier systems of §3 constitute our own elicited fieldwork data from four Miao languages in southwestern China. This is also the case for some of the Ahmao examples in §2. Other sample sentences were retrieved from published folk stories (D. Wang 1986). All the data were carefully checked by native

speakers in several rounds. The text statistics on Ahmao (§2.3.3) are based on the collection of folk stories available in the archives of the University of Southampton. In §2, we describe the phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties of this idiosyncratic classifier system. Section 3 catalogues the classifier forms of Weining Ahmao and three additional Miao languages.

2. Properties of the Ahmao inflectional classifier system

In this section we provide a synchronic analysis of the Ahmao classifier system, its phonological features (§2.1), its syntactic constructions (§2.2), and its semantic and pragmatic features (§2.3).

2.1 Phonological features

The Ahmao classifier forms are the result of two types of merger: (1) a segmental fusion with the two size prefixes a⁵⁵nie⁵³ ‘big/female’ and ŋa¹¹ ‘small/child’; (2) a blending with the glottal stop [ʔ] of the numeral iʔ⁵⁵ ‘one’ resulting in an array of suprasegmental features (Gerner & Bisang 2009).²

² Superscript numerals ⁵⁵, ¹³ etc. are tone markers and indicate relative pitch on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). The first number represents the beginning and the second number the end of the tonal contour. The transcription of sounds in this paper follows the International Phonetic Alphabet without shortcuts. For the interlinear glosses of the examples, please refer to the following table of abbreviations:

1P PL	First person plural	INT	Interrogative
2P SG	Second person singular	INT:what	Interrogative with gloss
3P SG	Third person singular	MED	Medial
AUG	Augmentative	N	Noun
C	Consonant	NEG	Negation
CL	Classifier	NOM	Nominalization
COV	Coverb	NUM	Numeral
COV:be at	Coverb with verbal origin	NUM:9	Numeral with its value
COV:take	Coverb with verbal origin	PART	Discourse particle
DEF	Definite	PREF	Prefix
DEM	Demonstrative	PL	Plural
DEM:FAM	Demonstrative: familia to Speaker & Addressee	QUA	Quantifier
DEM:MED	Demonstrative: medial-even distance to Speaker	REFL	Reflexive
DEM:MED-EVEN	Demonstrative: proximal distance to Speaker	REL	Relator
DEM:MED-HIGH	Demonstrative: proximal distance to Speaker	SG	Singular
DEM:PROX	Demonstrative: proximal distance to Speaker	SOL	Particle of solicitation
DIM	Diminutive	T	Tone
DP	Dynamic perfect particle	TOP	Topic
EXCL	Exclamation	V	Vowel
INDEF	Indefinite		

2.1.1 Segmental

All of the 48 Ahmao classifiers have merged with the size prefixes a⁵⁵nie⁵³ ‘big/female’ and ŋa¹¹ ‘small/child’ resulting in three basic forms distinguished by vowel and tone quality. The generic forms are displayed in the following table.

Table 1: The three generic forms of each classifier paradigm

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	CVT	The original unmerged classifier version
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	Cai ⁵⁵	Resulting from the merger with a ⁵⁵ nie ⁵³ ‘big/female’
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	Ca ⁵³	Resulting from the merger with ŋa ¹¹ ‘small/child’

Remarks: (1) C means ‘consonant’ (simplex, complex, affricated, etc.)
 (2) V means ‘vowel’ (simple, double)
 (3) T means ‘tone’

Two kinds of meanings are associated with these forms: (i) an intrinsic size-related quality of the noun which the classifier modifies (augmentative, medial, or diminutive); and (ii) a deictic meaning relating to the gender/age registers of the speaker (male, female, child). The size parameter correlates with the deictic in the following way. Men typically employ augmentative classifiers; medial (and sometimes diminutive) classifiers are reserved for women, and diminutive classifiers in general for children. The base form of this system is not the medial but the augmentative form. This asymmetry is owed to the way these forms have developed historically. As shown in Gerner & Bisang (2009), the base form was semantically reanalysed as augmentative *after* the medial and diminutive forms were fleshed out. Consider first the plural/mass quantifier *ti*⁵⁵.

Table 2: The plural and mass classifier

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	ti ⁵⁵
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	tiai ⁵⁵
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	tia ⁵⁵

For several classifiers, the merger with the two size prefixes is incomplete. For example, the classifier ʂey⁵⁵ for fields with the meaning ‘side’ or ‘edge’ has unmerged medial and diminutive forms.

Table 3: The classifier for partitioned landscape

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Singular</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	ʂey ⁵⁵
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	ʂ(e)yai ⁵⁵
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	ʂ(e)ya ⁵³

In the Miao languages, sortal classifiers are generally understood to have singular meaning. In Ahmao, sortal classifiers have generated plural versions by prefixing the plural morpheme ti^{55} together with the optional infix a^{11} (with allotones a^{55}/a^{31}) to the classifier stem.³ Consider again the following generic table.⁴

Table 4: The generic singular and plural forms

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	CVT	$ti^{55}a^{11}CVT'$
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	Ca^{55}	$tiai^{55}a^{11}CVT'$
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	Ca^{53}	$tia^{55}a^{11}CVT'$

The plural classifiers are only employed for expressing a general concept of plurality, but not for specific count constructions involving numerals greater than one. In such contexts, the singular classifier version must be used. As an illustration of this kind of six-form paradigm, consider the inanimate classifier lu^{55} :

Table 5: The general inanimate classifier

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	lu^{55}	$ti^{55}a^{11}lu^{55}$
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	lai^{55}	$tiai^{55}a^{11}lu^{55}$
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	la^{53}	$tia^{55}a^{11}lu^{55}$

2.1.2 Suprasegmental

For both sets of singular and plural forms, each classifier has split into definite/indefinite classifier forms as a result of a partial merger with the glottal stop [ʔ] of the numeral $iʔ^{55}$. The glottal stop was dispersed into an array of suprasegmental phenomena such as voicing, breathy voicing, or tone change. The following generic table represents the full number of distinctions in the Ahmao system.⁵ The distinction

³ This infix must be distinguished from the size prefixes mentioned in the introductory paragraph of §2.1.

⁴ We think that it is acceptable to talk of plural forms of classifiers. Although the notion of *plurality* is routinely applied to inflectional languages in which the noun is marked for the singular/plural distinction, it seems sensible to use this term for Ahmao classifiers too. In Ahmao, it is the composite CLASSIFIER+NOUN that is obligatorily marked for the singular/plural distinction.

⁵ In Bisang (1993:46-47, 1996:543-545, 1999:153-155), based on F. Wang (1957, 1972) and D. Wang (1986, 1987), only five basic forms are mentioned as omitting the augmentative-indefinite. As shown in detail in §3, there are classifiers for which the augmentative-indefinite form does not exist, but the great majority of classifiers can be declined in six basic (singular) forms.

between the plural-definite and plural-indefinite forms is obtained through voicing of the plural morpheme ti^{55}/di^{55} . (The asterisk * stands for ‘suprasegmental phenomena.’)

Table 6: The generic definite and indefinite forms

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
		<i>Definite</i>	<i>Indefinite</i>	<i>Definite</i>	<i>Indefinite</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	CVT	C*VT	$ti^{55}a^{11}CVT'$	$di^{31}a^{11}C*VT'$
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	Cai^{55}	$C*ai^{213}$	$tiai^{55}a^{11}CVT'$	$diai^{213}a^{11}C*VT'$
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	Ca^{53}	$C*a^{35}$	$tia^{55}a^{11}CVT'$	$dia^{55}a^{11}C*VT'$

We shall provide an example of each suprasegmental process. The voicing of the classifier’s initial consonant is one possible difference between definite and indefinite classifier forms. For example, the animate classifier distinguishes its forms through voicing. (For more examples see §3.)

Table 7: The animate classifier

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Sg-def</i>	<i>Sg-indef</i>	<i>Pl-def</i>	<i>Pl-indef</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	tu^{44}	du^{31}	$ti^{55}a^{11}tu^{44}$	$di^{31}a^{11}tu^{44}$
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	tai^{44}	dai^{213}	$tiai^{55}a^{11}tu^{44}$	$diai^{213}a^{11}tu^{44}$
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	ta^{44}	da^{35}	$tia^{55}a^{11}tu^{44}$	$dia^{55}a^{11}tu^{44}$

Several classifiers differentiate definite classifiers from indefinite classifiers through breathy voicing. The measure word ‘handful’ introduces breathy voicing for the indefinite forms. Breathy voicing is also used for all plural forms (definite and indefinite).

Table 8: The mensural classifier ‘handful’

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Sg-def</i>	<i>Sg-indef</i>	<i>Pl-def</i>	<i>Pl-indef</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	$ntsai^{53}$	$ndzfai^{11}$	$ti^{55}a^{31}ndzfai^{31}$	$di^{31}a^{55}ndzfai^{31}$
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	$ntsai^{213}$	$ndzfai^{213}$	$tiai^{55}a^{31}ndzfai^{13}$	$diai^{213}a^{31}ndzfai^{31}$
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	$ntsai^{35}$	$ndzfai^{35}$	$tia^{55}a^{31}ndzfai^{13}$	$dia^{55}a^{31}ndzfai^{31}$

Tone changes constitute another suprasegmental process. The two reference forms for which the tone change occurs are the augmentative definite/indefinite forms. For example, the classifier for torches exhibits a high tone for the augmentative-definite and a low tone for the augmentative-indefinite classifier version: $[^{55}] \rightarrow [^{11}]$. Furthermore, the medial and diminutive tones always change between the definite and indefinite classifiers: $[^{55}]$ to $[^{213}]$ and $[^{55}]$ to $[^{35}]$.

Table 9: The classifier for torches

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Sg-def</i>	<i>Sg-indef</i>	<i>Pl-def</i>	<i>Pl-indef</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	ɭau ⁵⁵	ɭau ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ɭau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ɭau ⁵⁵
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	ɭai ⁵⁵	ɭai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ɭau ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ ɭau ⁵⁵
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	ɭa ⁵⁵	ɭa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ɭau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ɭau ⁵⁵

Several classifiers do not distinguish between the augmentative-definite and augmentative-indefinite forms. Consider the classifier of air, *pau*¹¹ ‘draught’.

Table 10: The classifier for gases

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Sg-def</i>	<i>Sg-indef</i>	<i>Pl-def</i>	<i>Pl-indef</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	pau ¹¹	pau ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ pau ¹¹
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	pai ¹¹	pai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	pa ¹¹	pa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹

A few other classifiers reveal atypical medial forms and to a lesser degree atypical diminutive forms. One of these, the classifier *tey*¹¹ ‘clump’, is presented below. It lacks an augmentative indefinite form, similar to the classifier mentioned above.

Table 11: The mensural classifier ‘clump’

<i>Gender/Age Register of Speaker</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Sg-def</i>	<i>Sg-indef</i>	<i>Pl-def</i>	<i>Pl-indef</i>
<i>Male</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	tey ¹¹	tey ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tey ¹¹
<i>Female</i>	<i>Medial</i>	tui ¹¹	tui ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹
<i>Child</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	tya ¹¹	tya ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ tey ¹¹

2.2 Syntactic constructions

Classifiers in Ahmao may be projected in eight noun phrase constructions which is the pattern also attested in other Miao languages, though with a few distinctive features. The syntax of these nominal constructions is represented in Table 12 by the maximal number of possible slots. Note that the non-alignment of DEM and QUA before or after the head noun points to the possibility of co-occurrence in combined nominal constructions.

Table 12: Classifier constructions in Ahmao

(i)	Numeral construction	NUM	CL.IN/DEF	N		
(ii)	Quantifier construction	QUA	CL.IN/DEF	N		
(iii)	Interrogative construction		CL.IN/DEF	N	QUA	
(iv)	Demonstrative construction		CL.DEF	N		DEM
(v)	Definite construction		CL.DEF	N		
(vi)	Indefinite construction		CL.INDEF	N		
(vii)	Relative clause construction		CL.DEF	N _{Head}	Clause	DEM
(viii)	Possessive construction	CL N _{Possessor} (DEM) (NUM/QUA)	CL	N _{Possessee}		(DEM)

Miao languages differ from other isolating languages of the area (such as Chinese or Kam-Tai languages) with respect to the use of bare nouns. In Miao languages, bare nouns always have a non-referential reading and cannot be used to refer to an entity in the physical world. Conversely, bare nouns in Chinese and Kam-Tai languages allow both referential and non-referential readings. Moreover, Chinese and Kam-Tai bare nouns with referential interpretations can be either definite or indefinite, depending on the settings of the discourse in which the noun is used. Relevant examples for Mandarin Chinese can be found in Li & Thompson (1981:126-132). In Miao languages, since bare nouns are non-referential, they may convey neither a definite nor an indefinite reading. The distinctive mark of noun phrase referentiality in the Miao group is therefore the presence of the classifier: noun phrases with classifiers are referential; noun phrases without classifiers are non-referential.

In §§2.2.1 to 2.2.6, we present the syntactic constructions of sortal and mensural noun classifiers in Ahmao.⁶ In addition, there are two or three noun classifiers that have an additional involvement as verb classifiers. They mainly relate to weather phenomena like ‘shower’ or ‘draught’. These classifiers exhibit morphosyntactic properties different from those presented below. For an analysis of these features see Gerner (forthcoming).

⁶ The morphosyntactic constructions are similar across the Miao group. The hallmark of the Miao languages is that the distinction of referring/non-referring (or specific/non-specific) is encoded along the lines of presence/absence of noun classifiers. The sole difference that exists between different Miao languages is whether the presence of the classifier always conveys a definite meaning. In Weining Ahmao, the difference between definite/indefinite is encoded with different forms of a classifier. In Kaili Qanao, the minimal construction CLASSIFIER+NOUN almost always has a definite interpretation. For other Miao languages, the string CLASSIFIER+NOUN is not always interpreted as a definite noun phrase.

2.2.1 Numeral construction

In the isolating Miao languages, basic numeral constructions (NUM + CL + N) are always interpreted as referential indefinite noun phrases. In Ahmao, which distinguishes between a set of definite and indefinite classifiers, definite versions are banned with numerals for every register: augmentative, medial and diminutive classifiers. Witness the following examples where (a) illustrates an ungrammatical combination with a definite classifier and (b) the use of the corresponding indefinite classifier in lieu of its definite counterpart. It is important to note that only singular classifiers may collocate with numerals, but not plural classifiers, see (8a-b).

- (5) a. *i⁵⁵ **tai**⁴⁴ ɲɸu³⁵ b. i⁵⁵ **dai**²¹³ ɲɸu³⁵
 NUM:1 CL.MED.SG.DEF ox NUM:1 CL.MED.SG.INDEF ox
 Numeral Noun classifier Noun Numeral Noun classifier Noun
 ‘the sole ox’ ‘one ox’
- (6) a. *tsi⁵⁵ **la**⁵³ tau⁵⁵ b. tsi⁵⁵ **la**³⁵ tau⁵⁵
 NUM:3 CL.DIM.SG.DEF hill NUM:3 CL.DIM.SG.INDEF hill
 Numeral Noun classifier Noun Numeral Noun classifier Noun
 ‘the three hills’ ‘three hills’
- D. Wang (1986:71)
- (7) a. *a⁵⁵ **ɖla**⁵³ ndlɸau³⁵ b. a⁵⁵ **ɖlɸa**¹¹ ndlɸau³⁵
 NUM:2 CL.AUG.SG.DEF picture NUM:2 CL.AUG.SG.INDEF picture
 Numeral Noun classifier Noun Numeral Noun classifier Noun
 ‘the two pictures’ ‘two pictures’
- (8) a. *tsi⁵⁵ **ti**⁵⁵**a**¹¹**lu**⁵⁵ ɕey⁵⁵ b. *tsi⁵⁵ **dai**²¹³**a**¹¹**lu**⁵⁵ ɕey⁵⁵
 NUM:3 CL.AUG.PL.DEF valley NUM:3 CL.MED.PL.INDEF valley
 Numeral Noun classifier Noun Numeral Noun classifier Noun
 Intended meaning: ‘the three hills’ ‘three hills’

2.2.2 Quantifier and interrogative constructions

Quantifiers combine with indefinite—not definite—classifiers, as is also the case with numerals. The noun phrase is interpreted as an indefinite noun phrase. This pattern is illustrated for one quantifier and one interrogative pronoun by the following two pairs of examples. Quantifiers are preposed to the head noun as in example (9), whereas interrogative elements are postposed as in (10).

- (9) a. *pi⁵⁵dzau⁵³ dzai⁵³ tci⁵⁵
 QUA:several CL.MED.SG.DEF road
 Quantifier Noun classifier Noun
 ‘the several roads’
- b. pi⁵⁵dzau⁵³ dzhai²¹³ tci⁵⁵
 QUA:several CL.MED.SG.INDEF road
 Quantifier Noun classifier Noun
 ‘several roads’
- D. Wang (1986:76)
- (10) a. *tai⁴⁴ pi⁵⁵tɿau⁵⁵ qa³³ʂə³³
 CL.MED.SG.DEF ghost INT:which
 Noun classifier Noun Interrogative
 ‘Which ghost?’
- b. dai²¹³ pi⁵⁵tɿau⁵⁵ qa³³ʂə³³
 CL.MED.SG.INDEF ghost INT:which
 Noun classifier Noun Interrogative
 ‘Which ghost?’

2.2.3 Demonstrative construction

Ahmao has a set of seven spatial demonstratives and one recognitional demonstrative (see Gerner 2009a, Diessel 1999).⁷ Noun phrases incorporating demonstrative pronouns are always referential and definite and therefore require the preposing of a definite classifier. No indefinite classifier may combine with demonstrative pronouns.

- (11) lu⁵⁵ a⁵⁵və⁵⁵ vfai³⁵
 CL.AUG.SG.DEF stone DEM:MED
 Noun classifier Noun Demonstrative
 ‘that stone (at medial distance from me)’
- (12) dzfau³⁵ tsi⁵⁵qu⁵⁵ i⁵⁵
 CL.AUG.SG.DEF maize DEM:FAM
 Noun classifier Noun Demonstrative
 ‘the maize corn (that I told you about or that you know)’

⁷ Recognition is a deictic feature (potentially with several values in a language). ‘Familiar’ vs. ‘unfamiliar’ are two values for the deictic feature of recognition.

2.2.4 Definite and indefinite constructions

In Mandarin Chinese, classifiers may not co-occur with nouns alone (CL + N), but must involve an additional modifier such as a numeral or demonstrative. In Cantonese, Kam-Tai, and Miao languages, classifiers can combine with nouns alone implying different meanings each time. In Cantonese and Kam-Tai languages, classifier-noun compounds are interpreted as indefinite noun phrases, whereas they generally convey a definite meaning in Miao languages. As there are definite and indefinite classifier versions in Ahmao, both concepts may be alternatively articulated.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------------------|-------------------|
| (13) a. | tu ⁴⁴ | ɲɦu ³⁵ | b. | du ³¹ | ɲɦu ³⁵ |
| | CL.AUG.SG.DEF | ox | | CL.AUG.SG.INDEF | ox |
| | Noun classifier | Noun | | Noun classifier | Noun |
| | ‘the ox’ | | | ‘an ox’ | |
-
- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (14) a. | ga ⁵³ | tu ⁵⁵ nu ⁵⁵ | b. | gua ³⁵ | tu ⁵⁵ nu ⁵⁵ |
| | CL.DIM.SG.DEF | person | | CL.DIM.SG.INDEF | person |
| | Noun classifier | Noun | | Noun classifier | Noun |
| | ‘the group of people’ | | | ‘a group of people’ | |

2.2.5 Relative clause construction

Like Cantonese and Kam-Tai languages, but unlike Mandarin, Miao languages can involve classifiers for framing relative clauses. The classifier and head noun occur at the leftmost end and a demonstrative pronoun at the rightmost end of the construction. In Ahmao, only definite classifiers can be involved in relative clause constructions, enforced by the use of the demonstrative. A definite classifier is generally paired with a demonstrative to form restrictive relative clauses in which the range of possible referents of the head noun is restricted. Although in principle each of the eight demonstratives may be involved, the proximal, medial, and recognitional are the preferred demonstratives in restrictive relative clauses.

- | | | | | | | |
|------|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| (15) | lu ⁵⁵ | a ³³ bɦo ³⁵ | dɦa ³⁵ | dɦi ³⁵ | dau ¹¹ | vɦai ³⁵ |
| | CL.AUG.SG.DEF | woman | <u>come</u> | <u>opposite side</u> | <u>DP</u> | DEM:MED |
| | Noun classifier | N _{Head} | | Clause | | Demonstrative |
| | ‘the woman who came from the opposite side (at medial distance from me)’ | | | | | |
-
- | | | | | | |
|------|---|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| (16) | lai ⁵⁵ | tɦo ³³ | gɦi ³¹ | və ³¹ | i ⁵⁵ |
| | CL.MED.SG.DEF | garment | <u>2P SG</u> | <u>admire</u> | DEM:FAM |
| | Noun classifier | N _{Head} | | Clause | Demonstrative |
| | ‘the garment that you admire (you know which one I mean)’ | | | | |

2.2.6 Possessive construction

In possessive noun phrases, the order of components is $N_{\text{Possessor}}-N_{\text{Possessee}}$. A classifier is generally required before the possessee noun. Usually, use of the definite classifier is made, yet in appropriate circumstances indefinite classifiers can be employed too. The main reason for the preference for the definite classifier in Ahmao is that items belonging to a given entity tend to be definite, even if that entity is indefinite or even non-referential in discourse. Thus, the definite classifier in (17a) is the unmarked classifier pointing to the whole range of teeth, whereas the indefinite variant points to an indefinite subset of teeth. Note that the classifier may also be dropped if the relationship between the possessor and possessee is inalienable and close, as in (17a-b). In alienable possessive relationships, such as in (18), the classifier (either definite or indefinite) is required.

- (17) a. pi^{55} ti^{55} nie^{55} hi^{44} zau^{55} .
 1P PL CL.AUG.PL.DEF tooth NEG good
 Possessor Noun classifier Possessee
 ‘Our teeth are not in a good state.’
- b. pi^{55} di^{31} nie^{55} hi^{44} zau^{55} .
 1P PL CL.AUG.PL.INDEF tooth NEG good
 Possessor Noun classifier Possessee
 ‘Some of our teeth are not in a good state.’
- (18) fau^{55} tsi^{55} ji^{55} lai^{55} $a^{55}lu^{55}$
CL.AUG.SG.DEF tree DEM:S:PROX CL.MED.SG.DEF fruit
 Possessor Noun classifier Possessee
 ‘the fruit of this tree’

2.3 Semantic and pragmatic features

The Ahmao classifiers qualify (i) the size of referents (augmentative/medial/diminutive), (ii) specify a value for discourse activation (definite/indefinite), and (iii) mirror gender/age information of the speaker (male/female/child). The previous works of F. Wang (1957, 1972) and D. Wang (1987) only mention (i) and (ii). There is a default correspondence between the size and deictic parameters—at least in conversation when the speaker can be indexed by forms in the language. The augmentative classifier form is typically employed by male speakers. Women create pragmatic effects when they utilize augmentative forms such as echoing male speech or taking the worldview of men (conveying daring, boyish, or angry overtones). Augmentative forms are rarely employed by children and are appropriate only for strong pragmatic effects. Child

speakers are primary users of diminutive forms in conversation. Adult speakers occasionally utilize diminutive forms if they talk to children. In conversation, medial forms are the default classifiers for women, but men and children may also utilize them. By drawing on medial forms, male speakers transmit a humble and sober tone and wish to describe entities reduced in size. When child speakers use medial forms, they generally evaluate physically or conceptually large entities. (Note that largeness cannot be depicted by diminutive classifiers.) Medial forms are indifferently utilized by all speakers, if an independent size adjective is involved for modifying the noun phrase.

2.3.1 In conversation

The first three sentences are based on an example selected from D. Wang (1986:75) and illustrate all possible combinations between size distinctions (augmentative/medial/diminutive) and types of speaker (male/female/child). For each classifier version, if uttered by the speaker canonically associated with it, the classifier phrase is pragmatically unmarked. If it is voiced by an atypical speaker, then a pragmatic effect occurs. In (19a) the augmentative-definite classifier qualifies the head noun ‘bird-skin garment’ with a big size and appears pragmatically unmarked if uttered by a male speaker. In (19b) the medial-definite classifier conveys medial size and is employed in a pragmatically neutral way by women. The version (19c) describes the referent with a small size and is used by child speakers in a pragmatically neutral way.

- (19) a. ku⁵⁵ la³¹ lu⁵⁵ tɕ^ho¹¹ pi³³tey³³ nau³¹ vɸai³⁵.
 1P SG like CL.AUG.SG.DEF clothes skin bird DEM:MED
Male speaker: ‘I like that large bird-skin garment.’ [Pragmatically neutral]
Female speaker: ‘I like that large bird-skin garment.’ [Audacious, daring or boyish tone]
Child speaker: ‘I like that large bird-skin garment.’ [Pragmatically odd]
- b. ku⁵⁵ la³¹ lai⁵⁵ tɕ^ho¹¹ pi³³tey³³ nau³¹ vɸai³⁵.
 1P SG like CL.MED.SG.DEF clothes skin bird DEM:MED
Male speaker: ‘I like that bird-skin garment.’ [Modest tone]
Female speaker: ‘I like that bird-skin garment.’ [Pragmatically neutral]
Child speaker: ‘I like that (large) bird-skin garment.’ [Pragmatically neutral]
- c. ku⁵⁵ la³¹ la⁵³ tɕ^ho¹¹ pi³³tey³³ nau³¹ vɸai³⁵.
 1P SG like CL.DIM.SG.DEF clothes skin bird DEM:MED
Male speaker: ‘I like that small bird-skin garment.’ [Taking perspective of children]
Female speaker: ‘I like that small bird-skin garment.’ [Taking perspective of children]
Child speaker: ‘I like that (small) bird-skin garment.’ [Pragmatically neutral]

The metapragmatic awareness of the Ahmao people provides the main piece of evidence for the existence of speaker roles (male/female/child) in conversation. In (20), the three forms of the human classifiers modify *q^ha⁵⁵ntey⁴⁴* ‘teacher’, a respected person in Ahmao society. Employing non-canonical classifier versions for qualifying people worthy of respect may represent a discourteous approach by the speaker. Male adults’ reference to teachers with the diminutive classifier version as in (20c) discloses an impolite behavior, unless it is understood that the perspective of children is taken.

- (20) a. ku⁵⁵ χə²¹ **di³¹a¹¹lu⁵⁵** q^ha⁵⁵ntey⁴⁴.
 1P SG lead CL.AUG.PL.INDEF teacher
Male speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Pragmatically neutral]
Female speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Audacious, daring or boyish tone]
Child speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Pragmatically odd]
- b. ku⁵⁵ χə²¹ **diai²¹³a¹¹lu⁵⁵** q^ha⁵⁵ntey⁴⁴.
 1P SG lead CL.MED.PL.INDEF teacher
Male speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Modest way of talking]
Female speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Pragmatically neutral]
Child speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Pragmatically almost appropriate]
- c. ku⁵⁵ χə²¹ **dia⁵⁵a¹¹lu⁵⁵** q^ha⁵⁵ntey⁴⁴.
 1P SG lead CL.DIM.PL.INDEF teacher
Male speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Taking perspective of children]
Female speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Taking perspective of children]
Child speaker: ‘I have come with some teachers.’ [Appropriate tone]

Now, if speakers wish to convey a size value that does not correlate with the gender/age status in the way described above, they may adopt one of the following two strategies: (i) employ a classifier which accords with the relevant size (at the expense of some pragmatic effects), or (ii) use the medial classifier form together with an adjective of size that may convey the intended size value. In examples (21a) and (21b), a child referring to a big dog can apply strategies (i) or (ii).

- (21) a. qa⁵⁵ **ʂə³³** **du³¹** tʰi⁵⁵ ɕau¹¹ dʰa³⁵. (Strategy i)
 INT:who family CL.AUG.SG.INDEF dog run come
Child speaker: ‘Whose family’s big dog comes running?’ [Strong pragmatic effect]
- b. qa⁵⁵ **ʂə³³** **dai³³** a¹¹lɰau¹¹ tʰi⁵⁵ ɕau¹¹ dʰa³⁵. (Strategy ii)
 INT:who family CL.MED.SG.INDEF big dog run come
Child speaker: ‘Whose family’s big dog comes running?’ [No pragmatic effect]

One recurrent source for atypical matching of size values and speaker roles relates to the tendency of speakers to take the perspective of addressees. In the following elicited example, suppose that a wife (C) and a husband (B) have tense relations. When a remote male relative of the husband (A) pays a visit to the family, he starts paying compliments about the house they live in. Politeness obliges the husband to make a modest reply, whereupon the wife is persuaded to make a negative comment. In his utterance, the husband involves the medial/female classifier, which corresponds to a tone of modesty. His wife draws on the visitor's use of the augmentative/male form, which is in the augmentative/male form. It sounds slightly provocative.

- (22) A: "gfi³¹ lu⁵⁵ ngfia⁵⁵ ji⁵⁵ zau⁴⁴ ku¹¹."
 2P SG CL.AUG.SG.DEF house DEM:PROX good very
 B: "qha⁵⁵ tsau⁵⁵ ku⁵⁵ lai⁵⁵ ngfia⁵⁵ ji⁵⁵."
 NEG IMP praise 1P SG CL.MED.SG.DEF house DEM:PROX
Male speaker (A): 'Your house is so nice.' Male speaker (B): 'Don't praise my house.'
- (23) C: lu⁵⁵ ngfia⁵⁵ ji⁵⁵ d̥zi¹¹ ku⁵⁵ hi³³ dau²¹.
 CL.AUG.SG.DEF house DEM:PROX TOP 1P SG NEG like
Female speaker (C): 'I do not like this house.'

In examples (24) and (25), the indefinite and definite (diminutive) versions of the classifier for inanimacy are contrasted. The formal mark of the definite/indefinite distinction is breathy voice (breathy voicing for definite form, ordinary voicing for indefinite form). Sentence (24) is uttered by the narrator and introduces a section within a larger story. The referent (= the story) is definite and introduced cataphorically. In (25), the same referent is indefinite and would fit with a narrative setting in which the storyteller only mentions the existence of a story without further elaborating upon it. The diminutive classifier form in both examples reflects the narrator's view of the tale as something reduced in significance.

- (24) a³³lau³³ mfi³⁵ dzfi³⁵ pi³¹d̥fi³¹au³¹ li³³ ni⁵⁵: (...)
 old people, ancestor have, exist CL.DIM.SG.DEF story manner DEM:PROX
 'The ancestors have a saying (= little story) which goes like this: (...)'
- (25) a³³lau³³ mfi³⁵ dza³⁵ pi³¹d̥fi³¹au³¹
 old people, ancestor have, exist CL.DIM.SG.INDEF story
 'The ancestors have a saying (= little story).'

This selection of elicited examples and sentences in context has shown that a typical speaker register is attached to each of the twelve-classifier forms. Pragmatic effects may be generated whenever the alignment is atypical.

2.3.2 In recorded folk stories

In narratives, there is a gap between the speaker situation and the linguistic situation. Classifier forms do not reflect the gender/age role of the narrator or of story participants, but only encode size values. Gender/age roles have only evolved for conversation, but not in neutral reports. In this subsection, each of the classifiers could be replaced by another form of the same paradigm entailing a different size value but not producing the kind of pragmatic effects we have described in the previous section.

Examples (26)-(28) below are chosen from different passages of Wang's lengthy folk story 'Ngucha and Daushenau' (D. Wang 1986:69ff). Examples (26) and (27) involve indefinite and definite forms of the animate classifier (tu^{44}/dai^{213}). Although the classifier reflects the gender of the subject of the clause in both cases, it is not the case that in narratives the classifier mirrors the gender/role of the subject or the NP referent they modify. In (26) and (27), both classifiers could be replaced with other size forms, as confirmed by our informant.⁸

- (26) nfi^{11} nfa^{31} dzi^{11} **dai^{213}** $a^{11}lfa^{11}$ $mpa^{33}zau^{55}$.
 3P SG see perceive CL.MED.SG.INDEF big wild boar
 'She saw a big wild boar.'
- (27) $zhey^{11}ba^{53}li^{11}bhy^{11}$ $xə^{11}$ nfi^{11} **tsi^{55}** tu^{55} $a^{11}la^{11}$ $nda^{31}sa^{55}nau^{55}$
 name of man bring 3P SG CL.AUG.SG.DEF son young name of man
 $dzfo^{35}$ **tu^{44}** $mpa^{33}zau^{55}$ lfo^{11} .
 COV:follow CL.AUG.SG.DEF wild boar come
 'Yuebaliping followed the wild boar with his son Daushenau.'

The following example is uttered by the story narrator to provide a descriptive account of a state of affairs. The augmentative form of the classifier refers to the size of two stones, but it is disconnected from the gender or age of the narrator.

- (28) a^{55} **$thau^{11}$** $a^{55}və^{55}$ gi^{11} hi^{11} $ndzhi^{11}$ gi^{11} hi^{11} sy^{11} .
 NUM:2 CL.AUG.SG.DEF stone and REFL weigh and REFL resemble
 'The two stones do match each other.'

Sentence (29) represents the first clause of the folk story it is taken from and exhibits two classifiers. The first classifier is in the augmentative form qualifying the

⁸ In (26), the medial classifier collocates with an adjective of size, which is always a possible strategy (see §2.3.1). In (27), an argumentative classifier categorises a noun modified by the adjective 'young'. The person depicted in this way is a young adult and the adjective does not convey any idea of size here.

noun for woman: the second is a diminutive form modifying the noun for child. F. Wang (1957:94, 1972:140) notes that augmentative forms have to be involved at first mention, for example in the opening passages of narratives, but our informant did not confirm this claim and would allow variant forms to occur in lieu of the augmentative form in (29).

- (29) a³³thau³³li³³ mfa³⁵ i⁵⁵ lu⁴⁴ a³³bfi³⁵ ku¹¹ ntsi³³
 long ago have NUM:1 CL.AUG.SG.INDEF woman NOM name
 ni¹¹bo⁵⁵bu⁵⁵bfi¹¹, mfa³⁵ tau¹¹ i⁵⁵ la³⁵ ntshai¹¹ ku¹¹.
 name of woman have get NUM:1 CL.DIM.SG.INDEF girl NOM
 ‘Long ago, there was a woman named Nyibobuha, who bore a girl.’

2.3.3 Text statistics

It is useful to know more about the distribution of the size distinctions in folk stories. The chart below presents figures of diverse Ahmao classifiers and classifier forms found in 63 lengthy folk stories compiled by Kenneth Parsson. These folk stories were recorded in the 1940s and are archived at the University of Southampton. The text material is written in the Pollard Script with interlinear glosses and translation into English.⁹ Yet, suprasegmental processes (e.g. voicing, aspiration, tone pitch) do not seem to have been recorded faithfully in this stock of texts. The folk stories thus do not appear to be of any great use for illustrating the contrast between definite and indefinite classifier forms. On the other hand, rhyme differences displaying size nuances appear to have a robust and faithful transcription. We counted the number of classifiers occurring in the text material (see Table 13).

⁹ These folk stories are stored electronically in the archives of the University of Southampton and are available for download (cf. <http://www.archives.ecs.soton.ac.uk/miao/songs/index.html>, [assessed March 2010]). The British missionary Samuel Pollard (1864-1915) devised an alphabetic script for southwestern Chinese minority peoples (the so-called Pollard Script) in which the New Testament of two languages was translated and published: (i) Weining Ahmao (first edition in 1917) and (ii) Nashupho (first edition in 1948), a language of the Yi Nationality spoken in Luquan County of Yunnan Province. After Pollard's death, Harry Parsons was appointed to continue missionary work in western Guizhou Province. His twin sons Keith and Kenneth were born in SW China in 1916 and were bilingual speakers of both Ahmao and English. In the 1940s, Kenneth Parsons started compiling a substantial stock of folk stories tracing the pre-Christian roots of the Ahmao people. In 1949, the Parsons family had to leave China as the Communist Party forced foreigners to quit the country. Consequently, Keith and Kenneth were appointed to Africa and other missionary outposts. After their retirement, they returned to the unfinished task of compiling the Ahmao text material. Their work is now conserved in the archives of the University of Southampton.

The distribution of classifiers is as follows: only 19 of the 48 Ahmao classifiers actually occurred in the stock of the Southampton archives, though the remaining 29 classifiers have been ascertained by our informant to be frequently used in appropriate discourse contexts. In the Ahmao archives, a total of 2,352 mentions of classifiers can be divided up into 1,468 augmentative, 586 medial, and 298 diminutive classifiers. The frequency values seem to mirror the rank in size values encoded in the classifiers. There are, however, a few exceptions. The animate classifier **№ 1** *tu*⁴⁴ exhibits more occurrences of the medial (439) than of the augmentative (242). The classifier **№ 78** *gau*⁵³ registers a much higher rate for the diminutive (50) than for the augmentative (3) classifier. The exact reason for these atypical statistical distributions is unknown and may relate to a variety of causes (such as idiolect patterns of a storyteller, etc.).

The statistics in Table 13 appear to articulate the following property: the higher the overall frequency of a classifier the more likely its medial and diminutive forms will be used. The high number of augmentative classifiers supports the idea that they are more underlying and that medial and diminutive forms are derivatives—an idea that we hypothesized upon in the diachronic reconstruction of the Ahmao system (Gerner & Bisang 2009).

Table 13: Text statistics for Ahmao classifier forms based on the Southampton archives

<i>ID</i>	<i>Classifier</i>	<i>Augmentative</i>	<i>Medial</i>	<i>Diminutive</i>	<i>Total:</i>
№ 1	<i>tu</i> ⁴⁴ (animate & tools)	242	439	128	809
№ 3	<i>lu</i> ⁵⁵ (human)	696		1	697
№ 4	<i>dzi</i> ⁵³ (human male)	2			2
№ 5	<i>tshai</i> ¹¹ (entities in pairs)	11			11
№ 6	<i>dzi</i> ⁵³ (for ‘branch’, ‘leg’)	142	15	54	211
№ 7	<i>fau</i> ⁵⁵ (entities in pairs)	19			19
№ 9	<i>tə</i> ⁵⁵ (plant)	3			3
№ 13	<i>bau</i> ⁵³ (1-dim landscape)	4			4
№ 14	<i>tso</i> ¹¹ (1-dim entities)	2			2
№ 24	<i>lu</i> ⁵⁵ (general, 3-dim)	226	124	63	413
№ 25	<i>thau</i> ¹¹ (‘lump’)	1	2		3
№ 30	<i>dlau</i> ⁵⁵ (‘row’, ‘plot’)	39	1	2	42
№ 31	<i>dlfi</i> ³⁵ (‘granula’, ‘drop’)	1	2		3
№ 37	<i>qho</i> ⁵⁵ (‘place’)	4	1		5
№ 38	<i>sey</i> ⁵⁵ (‘side’, ‘edge’)	3			3
№ 77	<i>təo</i> ⁵⁵ (‘piece’ for landscape)	10	2		12
№ 78	<i>gau</i> ⁵³ (‘block’, ‘group’)	3		50	53
№ 87	<i>ti</i> ⁵⁵ (plural and mass)	54			54
№ 101	<i>lo</i> ¹¹ (‘mouth’ for words)	6			6
<i>Total:</i>		1468	586	298	2352

3. Data list of noun classifiers in Weining Ahmao and three other Miao languages

In this section, we record the nominal classifier systems of four representative Miao languages, Hekou Hmong, Kaili Qanao, Huayuan Qoxung and Weining Ahmao (see Appendix for geographic information). Nominal classifiers are divided into six groups: sortal animate classifiers (§3.1), sortal inanimate classifiers (§3.2), small-range sortal classifiers (§3.3), mixed nominal/verbal classifiers (§3.4), standard mensural classifiers (§3.5), non-standard mensural classifiers (§3.6).

Although most of the classifiers cannot occur as independent nouns, some contribute independent meanings to the nominal complex. These meanings are indicated with glosses. When no gloss is given, then the semantic input of the classifier is weak. Each classifier is given an identification number for easy cross-reference in the main text of the paper.

3.1 Sortal classifiers: animacy

The Miao languages exhibit one general classifier of animacy and a number of more specialized classifiers for humans, body parts, and plants (cf. §3.1.2 below).

3.1.1 Wide-range classifier

There is one general classifier for animates with similar sound structure throughout the Miao group: **to**¹³ (Hekou)/**te**¹¹ (Kaili)/**tu**⁴² (Huayuan)/**tu**⁴⁴ (Weining). In Huayuan (Hunan), the atypical cognate form **tu**⁴⁴ is restricted to a few inanimate instruments (e.g. ‘plough’), whereas the general animate classifier is **ŋoŋ**¹¹. In addition, there is a cognate prefix **ta**³³ that occurs before most animal nouns, although it is dropped in numeral constructions. It is a former classifier that has been lexicalized as a derivative prefix of animacy and has been replaced by the classifier **ŋoŋ**¹¹.

- (30) *Huayuan Qoxung*
- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|----|---|---|
| a. | $\begin{array}{c c} \text{ta}^{33} & \text{zu}^{11} \\ \text{ta}^{33} & \text{zu}^{11} \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c c} \text{a}^{35} & \text{ŋoŋ}^{11} \\ \text{a}^{35} & \text{zu}^{11} \end{array}$ | b. | $\begin{array}{c c} \text{ta}^{33} & \text{mpu}^{44} \\ \text{ta}^{33} & \text{mpu}^{44} \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c c} \text{a}^{35} & \text{ŋoŋ}^{11} \\ \text{a}^{35} & \text{mpu}^{44} \end{array}$ |
| | PREF ox NUM:1 CL ox | | | PREF pig NUM:1 CL pig | |
| | ‘ox’ ‘one ox’ | | | ‘pig’ ‘one pig’ | |

In Weining, but not in other Miao languages, the animate classifier also categorizes physical tools.

Table 14: The animate classifier and classifier for tools

Classifier		Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Animate</i> (& <i>Tool</i>)	№ 1	to ²¹	te ¹¹	(tu ⁴²)	Aug	tu ⁴⁴	du ³¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tu ⁴⁴	di ³¹ a ¹¹ tu ⁴⁴
					Med	tai ⁴⁴	dai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tu ⁴⁴	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ tu ⁴⁴
					Dim	ta ⁴⁴	da ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tu ⁴⁴	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tu ⁴⁴
Classifieds	№ 2	---	---	ŋoŋ ²²	---				
‘person’		tua ⁴³ nen ¹³ : 1	ne ⁵⁵ : 1,3	ne ⁴² : 3			tu ⁵⁵ nu ⁵⁵ : 3		
‘man’		zeu ¹³ : 1	te ³³ taŋ ¹³ : 1,3	qo ³⁵ ni ⁵⁴ : 3			a ⁵⁵ zey ⁵³ : 4		
‘woman’		po ³¹ : 1	tɕu ³³ me ¹³ : 1,3	qo ³⁵ bha ⁴⁴ : 3			a ⁴⁴ bho ³⁵ : 4		
‘ox’		no ³¹ : 1	lio ³⁵ : 1	zu ²² : 2			nfiu ³⁵ : 1		
‘pig’		mpua ⁴⁴ : 1	pa ⁴⁴ : 1	ba ⁵⁴ : 2			mpa ⁴⁴ : 1		
‘sheep’		tshi ³³ : 1	li ³⁵ : 1	zoŋ ⁴² : 2			zfiaw ³⁵ : 1		
‘duck’		o ³³ : 1	ka ¹³ : 1	nu ³¹ so ⁴⁴ : 2			o ¹¹ : 1		
‘tiger’		tso ⁵⁵ : 1	co ³⁵ : 1	tco ⁴⁴ : 2			tso ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘bear’		tai ³³ : 1	tia ⁵³ : 1	ze ¹¹ coŋ ²² : 2			tiai ¹¹ : 1		
‘fish’		ntse ²¹ : 1	nei ¹¹ : 1	mlu ²² : 2			mba ⁴⁴ : 1		
‘snake’		naŋ ⁴³ : 1	naŋ ³³ : 1	nən ³⁵ : 2			pi ⁵⁵ nau ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘worm’		gaŋ ⁴³ : 1	kaŋ ³³ : 1	ken ³⁵ : 2			pi ⁵⁵ kau ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘ghost’		ttaŋ ⁴³ : 1	tiaŋ ³³ : 1	qwen ³⁵ : 2			pi ⁵⁵ lau ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘soul’		pli ¹³ : 1	ŋin ³⁵ : 23	pjɣ ⁴² kwei ³⁵ : 2			a ⁵⁵ dli ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ dlfo ¹¹ : 1		
‘tail’		ko ⁴⁴ tu ⁵⁵ : 1	qa ³³ da ³⁵ : 15	pi ⁴⁴ tx ⁴⁴ : 16			a ⁵⁵ ndzfiaw ¹¹ : 1		
‘finger’		nti ⁵⁵ te ²¹ : 1	qa ³³ da ³⁵ pi ¹¹ : 6	pi ⁴⁴ da ⁴⁴ təu ²² : 16			a ⁴⁴ ntsi ⁵⁵ dhi ¹¹ : 17		
‘tooth’		kou ²¹ ŋa ⁵⁵ : 1	ŋi ³⁵ : 24	qo ³⁵ ce ⁴⁴ : 16			ŋie ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘tongue’		mplai ¹³ : 1	ni ³¹ : 15	qo ³⁵ mja ²² : 16			a ⁵⁵ ndlfi ¹¹ : 1		
‘bone’		pau ⁴³ tshan ⁴⁴ : 1	po ³⁵ shon ³⁵ : 24	qo ³⁵ coŋ ⁴⁴ : 16			a ⁴⁴ tshau ⁴⁴ : 1		
‘root’		tcaŋ ¹³ : 1	qa ³³ tcoŋ ⁵⁵ : 15	tcoŋ ⁴² : 16			a ⁵⁵ dzau ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘knife’		ta ¹³ : 20	tɕu ⁵³ : 20	dən ⁴⁴ : 20			a ⁵⁵ dhi ¹¹ : 1		
‘plough’		voŋ ²⁴ : 1	kha ³³ : 20	qo ³⁵ xi ⁴² : 1			li ⁵⁵ vfiaw ³¹ : dzi ⁵³ : 1		
‘scissors’		tɕa ⁴³ : 20	ken ⁵³ : 20	dzi ³⁵ : 20			tshə ¹¹ : 1		
‘ax’		tou ³³ : 20	to ⁴⁴ : 20	to ⁵⁴ : 20			a ⁵⁵ tau ¹¹ : 1		
‘nail’		tin ⁴³ ntsi ⁵⁵ : 1	caŋ ⁴⁴ : 24	dze ⁵⁴ : 20			so ⁵⁵ lau ⁴⁴ : 1		
‘saw’		keu ⁴⁴ : 20	tɕu ⁴⁴ : 20	cu ⁴⁴ : 20			shau ⁵⁵ : 1		
‘fortune’		ŋoŋ ⁵⁵ : 24	---	tce ⁵⁴ tsi ⁵⁴ : 24			ki ⁵⁵ lau ⁵³ : 1		
‘matter’		plou ⁴³ : 46	---	si ³⁵ : 71			nu ⁵³ : 1		

3.1.2 Specialized classifiers

Besides the general classifier for animacy there are a number of more specialized classifiers, like two human classifiers (§3.1.2.1), two classifiers for dual body parts (§3.1.2.2), and several classifiers for plants (§3.1.2.3).

3.1.2.1 Human classifiers

All four Miao languages surveyed recognize a human classifier which is realized as **lən**⁴² (Hekou)/**le**⁵⁵ (Kaili)/**le**³⁵ (Huayuan)/**lu**⁵⁵ (Weining). Moreover, Weining

Ahmao involves the classifier **tsi**⁵⁵ solely for ‘man’, which is only declined in singular-definite forms and switches to **lu**⁵⁵ for all other forms.

Table 15: Human classifiers

		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
Classifiers			(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Animate</i> <i>Human</i>	№ 3	lən ⁴²	le ⁵⁵	le ³⁵	Aug	lu ⁵⁵	lu ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
					Med	lai ⁵⁵	lai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
					Dim	la ⁵³	la ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
	№ 4	---	---	---	Aug	tsi ⁵⁵	lu ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
Classifieds					Med	tsai ⁵⁵	lai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
					Dim	tse ⁵³	la ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
	‘person’	tua ⁴³ nen ¹³ : 3	ne ⁵⁵ : 1,3	ne ⁴² : 3				tu ⁵⁵ nu ⁵⁵ : 3	
	‘man’	zeu ¹³ : 3	te ³³ ɕaŋ ¹³ : 1,3	qo ³⁵ ni ⁵⁴ : 3				a ⁵⁵ zey ⁵³ : 4	
	‘woman’	po ³¹ : 3	ɕe ³³ me ¹³ : 1,3	qo ³⁵ bha ⁴⁴ : 3				a ⁴⁴ bfi ³⁵ : 3	
	‘friend’	phoŋ ³¹ zu ²¹ : 3	ga ³³ pu ¹¹ : 3	ku ³⁵ pu ²² : 3				zie ⁵³ la ³¹ : 3	
	‘farmer’	to ⁴³ qoŋ ⁴³ nen ⁴³ : 3	ne ⁵⁵ ɛ ⁴⁴ qau ³³ : 3	ne ⁴² dza ⁵⁴ : 3				tu ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ qau ⁵⁵ : 3	

3.1.2.2 Classifier for dual body parts

There are two classifiers for dual body parts (e.g. hand, ear), one is **tshai**¹¹ and the other **ɕei**¹¹. The latter means ‘branching’ in Weining Ahmao and classifies body parts like ‘leg’ or ‘arm’. Both classifiers are in use to variable extent.

Table 16: The classifiers for dual body parts and clothing items

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>					
Classifiers		(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef	
<i>Animate</i> for dual nouns	№ 5	tshai ³³	---	dʒfi ⁴⁴	Aug	tshai ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tshai ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ tshai ¹¹
					Med	tshai ¹¹	tshai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tshai ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tshai ¹¹
					Dim	tsha ¹¹	tsha ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tshai ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tshai ¹¹
	№ 6	---	tɕi ¹¹	---	Aug	dʒi ⁵³	dʒi ³¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒfi ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ dʒfi ³¹
					Med	dʒai ⁵³	dʒai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒfi ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ dʒfi ³¹
Classifieds					Dim	dʒa ⁵³	dʒa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒfi ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒfi ³¹
‘foot’	ko ⁴⁴ teu ⁴⁴ : 5	lo ³³ : 6	qo ³⁵ to ³⁵ : 5				tey ⁴⁴ : 5		
‘leg’	tɕəu ¹³ pua ⁴³ : 5	qa ³³ pa ³³ : 6	qo ³⁵ pa ³⁵ : 5				a ⁵⁵ dʒi ⁵³ : 5,6		
‘hand’	te ²¹ : 5	bi ¹¹ : 6	tu ²² : 5				di ⁴⁴ : 5		
‘ear’	qhau ⁵⁵ ntʂe ³¹ : 5	qa ³³ nei ⁵⁵ : 6	tun ⁴² mlu ⁴² : 5				a ⁴⁴ mbfi ³⁵ : 5		
‘wing’	kou ³¹ ti ³³ : 5	qa ³³ ta ⁵³ : 6	pi ⁴⁴ te ⁴⁴ : 16				a ⁵⁵ ti ¹¹ : 5		
‘shoe’	khou ⁴⁴ : 5	ha ³³ : 6	ɕo ⁵⁴ : 5				khau ¹¹ : 5		
‘sleeve’	te ²¹ tʂhau ⁴⁴ : 24	qa ³³ mu ¹¹ u ³⁵ : 6	tun ²² x ⁴⁴ : 5				a ⁴⁴ di ⁴⁴ ɕo ⁴⁴ : 5		
‘branch’	tɕe ¹³ nton ⁴⁴ : 1	qa ³³ tɕi ¹¹ te ⁴⁴ : 6	ku ²² du ⁵⁴ : 16				a ⁵⁵ dʒfi ³¹ ntau ⁴⁴ : 6		
‘meat’	nqai ³¹ : 29	ŋi ⁵⁵ : 29	na ⁴² : 26, 28, 29				ŋɕfi ³⁵ : 6		
‘water bucket’	thon ³³ : 24	ti ³¹ əu ³³ : 6	dʒfi ⁴⁴ kx ⁴⁴ : 5				thau ⁵⁵ : 23		

3.1.2.3 Classifier for plants

In the Miao languages surveyed, five classifiers are employed for diverse plants. The first two are general plant classifiers with complementary regional distribution.

Table 17: The classifiers for trees and plants

Classifier		Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Animate	№ 7	---	fhu ³⁵	---	Aug	fau ⁵⁵	fau ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ fau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ fau ⁵⁵
Plant					Med	fai ⁵⁵	fai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ fau ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁵⁵ fau ⁵⁵
					Dim	fa ⁵³	fa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ fau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ fau ⁵⁵
Classifieds	№ 8	tšau ⁴³	---	tšou ³⁵	---				
'tree'		ntoŋ ⁴⁴ : 8	te ⁴⁴ : 1	qo ³⁵ du ⁵⁴ : 8			ntau ⁴⁴ : 7		
'flower'		paŋ ³¹ : 9	paŋ ⁵⁵ : 10	qo ³⁵ pən ⁴² : 9			bfiaw ³⁵ : 7		
'bamboo'		coŋ ⁴³ : 8	tə ⁴⁴ ho ³⁵ : 1	fo ³⁵ : 16			qfiy ³¹ : 7		
'riceplant'		mple ³¹ : 8	qa ³³ she ³⁵ : 7	nou ⁵⁵ : 10			ndlfi ³⁵ : 7		
'vegetable'		zou ⁴³ : 24	vo ³³ : 7	---			zau ⁵⁵ : 7		
'grass'		ŋtau ³¹ : 1, 8	naŋ ⁵⁵ : 15	ntshou ³⁵ : 10			NGu ⁵⁵ : 7		
'cloud'		hua ⁴³ : 9	te ³³ əu ³³ : 1	tə ⁴⁴ tu ⁴⁴ : 8			bfiaw ³⁵ : 9		

The third classifier **tou⁵⁵/tə⁵⁵** is attested in Hekou and Weining and is borrowed from the Chinese classifiers *duǒ* 朵 for clouds and flowers implying that there have been multiple borrowings or a very early borrowing of a proto-language. The other classifier, **kəu³⁵**, appears as a classifier for flowers though its regional distribution is different (in Kaili and Huayuan only). In Kaili, it also has a collective meaning ('a bundle of').

Table 18: The classifiers for plants and flowers

Classifier		Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Animate	№ 9	tou ⁵⁵	---	tu ⁴⁴	Aug	tə ⁵⁵	tə ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tə ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ tə ⁵⁵
Plant					Med	təai ⁵⁵	təai ²¹³	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tə ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tə ⁵⁵
					Dim	təa ⁵³	təa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tə ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tə ⁵⁵
Classifieds	№ 10	---	kəu ³⁵	ko ⁴⁴	---				
'mushroom'		nŋce ⁴³ : 24	ti ³³ : 24	gu ³⁵ : 9			ntci ⁵⁵ : 9		
'flower'		paŋ ³¹ : 9	paŋ ⁵⁵ : 10	qo ³⁵ pən ⁴² : 9			bfiaw ³⁵ : 9		
'grass'		ŋtau ³¹ : 1, 8	naŋ ⁵⁵ : 15	qo ³⁵ dʒfiu ⁴⁴ : 10			NGu ⁵⁵ : 7		
'riceplant'		mple ³¹ : 8	qa ³³ she ³⁵ : 7	nu ⁴² : 10			ndlfi ³⁵ : 7		
'leaf'		mplon ³¹ : 29	qa ³³ no ⁵⁵ : 10	qo ³⁵ nu ⁴² : 21			a ⁴⁴ ndlfiaw ³⁵ : 9		
'paper'		nteu ⁵⁵ : 23	chi ⁴⁴ : 10	dɣ ⁴⁴ : 21			ntey ⁵⁵ tley ⁵⁵ : 9		

The last two classifiers in this series are partitioners implying the more specialized meanings 'ear' or 'spike' of various plants. One of these classifiers comes out in Kaili

as **tso**¹³ where it functions as collectivizer with the meanings ‘bunch’ and ‘sheaf’.

Table 19: The classifiers ‘bunch’, ‘ear’ and ‘spike’

		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
Classifiers			(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Animate</i>	№ 11	ŋʃa ⁴⁴	tso ¹³	---	Aug	dzɰau ³⁵	dzaʷ ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzɰau ³⁵	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ dzɰau ³⁵
<i>Plant</i>					Med	dzɰai ²¹³	dzai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzɰau ³⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ dzɰau ³⁵
‘bunch’					Dim	dzɰa ³⁵	dza ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzɰau ³⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzɰau ³⁵
‘ear; spike’	№ 12	---	---	ŋən ³⁵	Aug	ŋau ⁵⁵	ŋau ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ŋau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ŋau ⁵⁵
					Med	ŋai ⁵⁵	ŋai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ŋau ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁵⁵ ŋau ⁵⁵
Classifieds					Dim	ŋa ⁵⁵	ŋa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ŋau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ŋau ⁵⁵
‘maize’		pau ⁴³ ku ³³ : 11	ka ³⁵ waŋ ⁵⁵ : 11	px ⁴⁴ zɰ ⁴⁴ : 10				tsi ⁵⁵ qu ⁵⁵ : 11	
‘rice’		ŋʃa ⁴³ : 24	qa ³³ she ³⁵ : 11	nu ⁴² : 10				ndlɰi ³⁵ : 11	
‘wheat’		---	maŋ ¹¹ lu ¹¹ : 11	qo ³⁵ mu ²² : 12				tshu ⁵⁵ : 12	
‘barley’		mau ¹³ : 11	maŋ ¹¹ tɕaŋ ³⁵ : 11	tɕaŋ ³⁵ me ²² : 12				mo ⁵³ : 12	
‘oats’		---	---	qo ³⁵ mu ²² pən ⁵⁵ : 12				ʃau ⁵⁵ : 12	
‘vegetable’		zou ⁴³ : 8	yo ³³ : 11	---				zau ⁵⁵ : 11	
‘cucumber’		tɰi ⁴³ : 24	fa ³³ qa ⁴⁴ : 11	qwa ³⁵ : 23				ki ⁵⁵ tɰi ⁵⁵ : 11	
‘bean’		tou ²⁴ : 11	təu ³¹ : 11	nu ⁴⁴ : 23				dau ⁵³ : 11, 31	
‘grass’		ŋɰau ³¹ : 1, 8	naŋ ⁵⁵ : 11	qo ³⁵ dzɰu ⁴⁴ : 10				ŋɰu ⁵⁵ : 11	

3.2 Sortal classifiers: inanimacy

For inanimate entities, the SHAPE parameter with its three values of one-dimensionality, two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality is crucial for categorization in the Miao group.

3.2.1 Shape: classifiers for one-dimensional entities

Four wide-range classifiers and a number of more specialized classifiers are available across the Miao group to categorize long entities.

3.2.1.1 Wide-range classifier

Four basic classifiers with different regional distribution categorize long entities in the Miao languages.

Table 20: The classifiers for inanimate one-dimensional entities

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>					
Classifiers		(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef	
<i>Inanimate</i> <i>1-dim</i>	№ 13	---	---	qu ³⁵	Aug	bau ⁵³	bau ³¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiaw ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ bfiaw ³¹
					Med	bai ⁵³	bai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiaw ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ bfiaw ³¹
					Dim	ba ⁵³	ba ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiaw ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiaw ³¹
	№ 14	tso ³¹	---	---	Aug	tso ¹¹	tso ³¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tso ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tso ¹¹
					Med	tsui ⁴⁴	tsui ⁵³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tso ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tso ¹¹
					Dim	tsua ⁴⁴	tsua ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tso ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tso ¹¹
	№ 15	---	tɕo ⁵⁵	---	Aug	dza ⁵³	dʒɦa ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒɦa ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ dʒɦa ³¹
					Med	dʒai ⁵³	dʒɦai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒɦa ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ dʒɦa ³¹
					Dim	dʒa ⁵³	dʒɦa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒɦa ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dʒɦa ³¹
Classifiers	№ 16	(to ¹³)	təu ⁴⁴	te ²²	---				
	‘river’	tʰe ³¹ : 16	əu ³³ : 15	ŋa ³¹ u ³⁵ : 16	dlfi ³⁵ : 13				
	‘water’	tʰe ³¹ : 16	əu ³³ : 15	u ³⁵ : 16	au ⁵⁵ : 13				
	‘road’	ke ⁵⁵ : 14, 17	ki ³⁵ : 15, 17	ne ⁴⁴ kw ³⁵ : 16, 18	tci ⁵⁵ : 15				
	‘bridge’	tɕɦau ³¹ : 16	tɕu ⁵⁵ : 15	kju ⁵⁵ : 42	ja ⁵⁵ .dʒo ⁵⁵ : 42				
	‘smoke’	paŋ ⁴⁴ : 16	boŋ ⁴⁴ : 15	ʒe ⁴⁴ : 29	pau ¹¹ : 80				
	‘beam’	---	lɔ ⁵⁵ tse ³⁵ : 15	---	ʒu ⁴⁴ ŋɦa ³⁵ : 1				
	‘hair of head’	plou ⁴³ ɦou ⁴⁴ : 14	qa ³³ ɦiu ³³ :kho ³³ :15,16	pi ³⁵ plei ⁴⁴ : 13	tlaʊ ⁵⁵ fau ⁴⁴ : 14				
	‘hair of body’	plou ⁴³ : 14	qa ³³ ɦiu ³³ : 15,16	qo ³⁵ pi ³⁵ : 13	tlaʊ ⁵⁵ : 14				
	‘tongue’	mplai ¹³ : 16	ni ²⁴ : 15,16	qo ³⁵ mja ²² : 16	a ⁵⁵ ndlfi ¹¹ : 1				
	‘back’	ŋtɕou ³³ qou ²⁴ : 24	diu ³³ : 15	tei ⁵⁴ tu ³⁵ : 24	ti ⁵⁵ ɦɦau ¹¹ : 24				
	‘tail’	ko ⁴⁴ tu ⁵⁵ : 16	qa ³³ ta ³⁵ : 15	pi ⁴⁴ tx ⁴⁴ : 16	a ⁵⁵ ndʒɦau ¹¹ : 1				
	‘grass’	ŋɦau ³¹ : 16	naŋ ⁵⁵ : 15,16	qo ³⁵ dʒɦu ⁴⁴ : 13	ŋɦu ⁵⁵ : 14				
	‘thread’	so ⁵⁵ : 14	ɦɦa ³⁵ : 15	qo ³⁵ tsei ⁴² : 13	so ⁵⁵ : 14				
	‘strength’	zo ¹³ : 24	ɣəu ¹³ : 15	zo ³¹ : 8	dlɦau ³⁵ ʒɦio ¹¹ : 1				
	‘principle’	---	li ¹¹ : 16	li ¹¹ : 16	---				

3.2.1.2 Specialized classifiers

The Miao languages display two types of classifiers: classifiers for entities with sections and classifiers for tools with a handle.

A. Classifier for entities with sections

Three classifiers across Miao languages may categorize sections of lengthy entities or function as time units: **zəŋ³⁵**, **toŋ³³**, and **qɛ³⁵**.

Table 21: The classifiers for entities with sections

Classifiers	№ 17	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i> (invariable)	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
					Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Inanimate</i>		zan ⁵⁵	zan ³⁵	---	Aug	zau ⁵⁵	zau ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ zau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ zau ⁵⁵
					Med	zai ⁵⁵	zai ²¹³	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ zau ⁵⁵	dai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ zau ⁵⁵
					Dim	za ⁵⁵	za ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ zau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ zau ⁵⁵
‘section’	№ 18	tau ¹³	toj ³³	toj ⁴²	Aug	dzho ³⁵	dzo ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzho ³⁵	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ dzho ³⁵
					Med	dzhai ²¹³	dza ²¹³	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzho ³⁵	dai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ dzho ³⁵
					Dim	dzha ³⁵	dza ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzho ³⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dzho ³⁵
Classifieds	№ 19	---	qe ³⁵	---	---				
‘field’		te ⁴³ : 17	da ³³ : 17	lu ⁵⁴ : 29				ti ⁵⁵ : 17	
‘finger’		nti ⁵⁵ te ²¹ : 16	qa ³³ da ³⁵ bi ¹¹ : 17	pi ⁴⁴ da ⁴⁴ du ²² : 16				a ⁴⁴ ntsi ⁵⁵ dhi ¹¹ : 17	
‘road’		ke ⁵⁵ : 14, 17	ki ³⁵ : 15, 17	ne ⁴⁴ ku ⁴⁴ : 16, 18				tci ⁵⁵ : 17	
‘wood’		ntoj ⁴⁴ : 17, 18	tou ⁴⁴ : 19	qo ³⁵ du ⁵⁴ : 18				ntau ⁴⁴ : 18	
‘cord’		---	tha ⁴⁴ : 19	qo ³⁵ ta ⁵⁴ : 67				la ⁴⁴ : 18	
‘story’		lo ²¹ njua ²¹ : 95	qa ³³ tcou ³⁵ qo ⁴⁴ : 24	qo ⁵⁴ : 24				pi ⁵⁵ dhiu ³¹ : 18	
‘song’		ηkou ³¹ : 95	cha ⁵³ : 95	sa ⁴⁴ : 95				ηghiau ³⁵ : 18	
‘time’		tcai ⁵⁵ nou ¹³ : 24	qa ³³ chi ³³ : 18	qo ³⁵ ηaj ⁴² : 18				dzhai ³⁵ nfiu ¹¹ : 1	

B. Function: classifiers for tools with a handle

With the exception of Weining Ahamo (which employs the general classifier for animacy to categorize tools), all other Miao languages seem to exhibit special classifiers for tools.

Table 22: The classifiers for tools

№ 20	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>
Classifier	(invariable)			
<i>Tools</i>	tan ⁴³	tian ³³	tan ³⁵	---
Classifieds				
‘knife’	ta ¹³ : 20	tiu ⁵³ : 20	dən ⁴⁴ : 20	a ⁵⁵ dhi ¹¹ : 1
‘scissors’	tsa ⁴³ : 20	kən ⁵³ : 20	qo ³⁵ dzi ³⁵ : 20	tshə ¹¹ : 1
‘saw’	keu ⁴⁴ : 20	tcu ⁴⁴ : 20	qo ³⁵ cu ⁴⁴ : 20	shau ⁵⁵ : 1
‘ax’	tou ³³ : 20	to ⁴⁴ : 20	qo ³⁵ tao ⁵⁴ : 20	a ⁵⁵ tau ¹¹ : 1
‘plough’	voj ²⁴ : 20	kha ³³ : 20	qo ³⁵ li ⁴² : 1	li ⁵⁵ vfiu ³¹ : 42
‘hatchet’	lou ⁴⁴ : 16, 20	sho ³⁵ : 20	qo ³⁵ kho ³⁵ : 20	lau ⁴⁴ tla ⁵⁵ : 1
‘pen’	tcu ³¹ nteu ⁵⁵ : 16, 20	tsən ⁵³ lei ⁵⁵ : 20	pi ²² : 42	pi ³¹ : 1

3.2.2 Shape: classifiers for two-dimensional entities

There are three different classifiers for flat and extended (let us say two-dimensional) entities, but each Miao language only involves one or at most two versions of them. In Kaili, **liu**¹¹ means ‘slice’, ‘sheet’, or ‘piece’, whereas **lanj**¹¹ classifies flat and thin objects.

Table 23: The classifiers for inanimate two-dimensional entities

		Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
Classifier		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Inanimate 2-dim	№ 21	---	liu ¹¹	nu ⁴²	Aug	tlau ⁵⁵	tlau ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tlau ⁵⁵
					Med	tlai ⁵⁵	tlai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵
					Dim	tla ⁵⁵	tla ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵
	№ 22	---	lan ¹¹	---	---				
Classifieds	№ 23	tʂaŋ ⁴³	---	ntʂe ³⁵	---				
	‘paper’	ndəu ⁵⁵ : 23	çi ⁴⁴ : 21,22	dɣ ⁴⁴ : 21				n-tey ⁵⁵ tley ⁵⁵ : 9	
	‘leaf’	mploŋ ⁵⁵ : 29	qa ³³ nau ⁵⁵ : 21,22	qo ³⁵ nu ⁴² : 21				a ⁴⁴ ndlɬau ³⁵ : 9	
	‘cloud’	hua ⁴³ : 9	te ³³ əu ³³ : 1	tɔ ⁴² tu ⁴⁴ : 8				hau ⁵⁵ po ¹¹ : 21	
	‘land’	te ⁴³ : 30	ta ³³ : 24	lu ⁵⁴ : 23				ti ⁵⁵ : 21	

3.2.3 Shape: classifiers for three-dimensional entities

Classifiers of three-dimensional entities which exhibit a number of wide-range (§3.2.3.1) and specialized devices (§3.2.3.2) form the majority of shape classifiers. Some of them are default classifiers for inanimates.

3.2.3.1 Wide-range classifiers

There are seven classifiers for objects with relatively large membership range: one default classifier (subsection A) and various classifiers for massive objects (subsection B).

A. Default classifiers of three-dimensional entities

This classifier is well attested in all languages of the Miao group with divergent realization of the rhyme: **lo**⁴³ (Hekou), **le**³³ (Kaili), **le**³³ (Huayuan), and **lu**⁵⁵ (Weining).

Table 24: The classifiers for inanimate three-dimensional entities

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
№ 24 Classifier		(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Inanimate</i>	lo ⁴³	le ³³	le ³⁵	Aug	lu ⁵⁵	lu ³³	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
<i>3-dim</i>				Med	lai ⁵⁵	lai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
Classifieds				Dim	la ⁵³	la ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ lu ⁵⁵
‘hill’	toŋ ⁴³ : 24	pi ¹¹ : 24	pi ⁴⁴ qɣ ²² : 24				tau ⁵⁵ : 24	
‘lake’	paŋ ²¹ : 24	he ⁵⁵ : 24	---				cey ⁵⁵ : 24	
‘hole’	qhau ⁵⁵ : 24	khaŋ ³⁵ : 24	qo ³⁵ qhu ⁴⁴ : 24				qho ⁵⁵ : 24	
‘village’	zau ¹³ : 24	yaŋ ¹¹ : 24	qo ³⁵ zan ²² : 24				zo ⁴⁴ : 24	
‘head’	tou ⁴³ hou ⁴⁴ : 24	kho ³³ : 24	ko ⁴⁴ lei ⁴⁴ : 24				li ⁴⁴ fau ⁴⁴ : 24	
‘eye’	qhau ⁵⁵ mua ¹³ : 24	nioŋ ¹³ me ¹³ : 6	le ³⁵ qe ³⁵ : 5				a ⁵⁵ ma ⁵³ : 24	

'nose'	qhau ⁵⁵ ŋtsu ¹³ : 24	po ³⁵ nei ¹³ : 24	pa ⁴⁴ mlx ³¹ : 16	a ⁵⁵ mpy ⁵³ : 24
'belly'	plan ⁴³ : 24	qa ³³ tchiu ³³ : 24	qo ³⁵ tchi ³⁵ : 24	a ⁵⁵ tchau ⁵⁵ : 24
'blood'	ŋtshau ⁵⁵ : 33	chian ³⁵ : 24, 32	dzhon ⁴⁴ : 24	ŋtshau ⁵⁵ : 24
'tear'	kua ⁴⁴ mua ¹³ : 33	əu ³³ me ¹³ : 24	u ³⁵ me ³¹ : 24	ka ⁴⁴ ma ³¹ : 24
'sweat'	fu ³³ : 33	əu ³³ nian ⁵³ : 24	u ³⁵ ten ⁵⁴ : 24	ngfiau ³⁵ lau ⁴⁴ : 24
'peach'	tsi ⁵⁵ tua ³¹ : 24	tsən ³⁵ lən ⁵⁵ : 24	pi ⁴⁴ qwa ⁴² : 24	tsi ⁴⁴ dlfa ³⁵ : 24
'cherry'	tsi ⁵⁵ hua ⁴³ poŋ ⁴³ : 24	tsən ³⁵ va ³³ : 24	pi ⁴⁴ wa ³⁵ : 24	tsi ⁴⁴ pau ⁵⁵ : 24
'pear'	tsi ⁵⁵ zua ³¹ : 24	tsən ³⁵ ya ⁵⁵ : 24	pi ⁴⁴ za ⁴² : 24	tsi ⁴⁴ zha ³⁵ : 24
'walnut'	tsi ⁵⁵ tŋe ⁴⁴ : 24	tsən ³⁵ hai ³¹ tho ³¹ : 24	pi ³⁵ he ²² do ²² : 24	tsi ⁴⁴ tley ⁴⁴ : 24
'house'	tse ⁵⁵ nthan ¹³ : 24	tse ³⁵ : 24	plu ⁴⁴ : 24	ngfa ³⁵ va ⁵³ : 24
'barn'	tshan ⁴³ khu ²⁴ : 24	noŋ ¹¹ : 24	qo ³⁵ ze ²² : 24	ngfa ³⁵ zu ⁵³ : 24
'lamp'	ten ⁴³ : 24	dən ³³ : 24	qo ³⁵ mle ¹³ : 24	tau ⁵⁵ : 24
'door'	qhau ⁵⁵ toŋ ³¹ : 24	tiu ⁵⁵ : 24	pe ⁴² tu ⁴² : 24	a ⁴⁴ dlfa ³⁵ : 24
'window'	qhau ⁵⁵ tai ⁴⁴ : 24	khan ³⁵ toŋ ³⁵ : 24	qhu ⁴⁴ plu ⁴⁴ : 24	bfi ³¹ tci ⁵⁵ : 24
'wall'	tshan ³¹ : 95	ho ³³ : 15	təŋ ⁴² : 16	a ⁵⁵ dŋu ¹¹ : 24

B. Classifiers for massive objects

The first classifier implies the meaning of 'lump' and is probably borrowed from the Chinese *tuó 砣* 'lump', although in Weining, for example, it has undergone some rhyme transformation. In Kaili, it refers more precisely to something with the shape of a ball.

Table 25: The classifiers for precious materials ('lump')

Classifier		Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
			(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Inanimate	№ 25	tho ³¹	tho ¹³	dhon ³⁵	Aug	thau ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ thau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ thau ¹¹
'lump'					Med	thai ¹¹	thai ²¹³	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ thau ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ thau ¹¹
					Dim	tha ¹¹	tha ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ thau ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ thau ¹¹
Classifieds	№ 26	---	po ¹³	pu ⁴⁴	---				
'soil, clay'		aŋ ⁵⁵ : 25	qa ³³ ta ³³ : 25	tu ³⁵ : 26				a ⁴⁴ lfa ³⁵ : 25, 29, 30	
'mud'		aŋ ⁵⁵ : 25	qa ³³ ta ³³ : 25	qa ⁴⁴ la ⁴² : 26				au ⁵⁵ : 25	
'stone'		ze ⁴³ : 25	bo ³⁵ yi ³³ : 25	qo ³⁵ zu ³⁵ : 26				a ⁵⁵ vo ⁵⁵ : 25, 29, 30	
'gold'		ko ⁴³ : 25	tcin ³³ : 25	gie ³³ : 26				ku ⁵⁵ : 25	
'silver'		na ³¹ : 25	ni ⁵⁵ : 25	ŋon ⁴² : 26				nfi ³⁵ : 25	
'coal'		ŋtsua ²⁴ : 25	ta ³³ tu ¹¹ : 25	me ²² : 26				a ⁴⁴ lfa ³⁵ tlu ⁵⁵ : 25	
'grass'		ŋjau ³¹ : 1, 8	qa ³³ naŋ ⁵⁵ : 26	qo ³⁵ dzhu ⁴⁴ : 26				NGu ⁵⁵ : 7, 11, 14	

The Weining classifier **tlo⁵⁵** (№ 27) categorises only clouds and its etymology may be more obscure, but it may be borrowed from the Chinese classifier *duǒ 朵*.

Table 26: The classifier for clouds

Classifier		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Inanimate</i>	№ 27	---	---	---	Aug	tlo ⁵⁵	tlo ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlo ⁴⁴	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tlo ⁴⁴
	‘lump’				Med	tluai ⁵⁵	tluai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlo ⁴⁴	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tlo ⁴⁴
Classifieds					Dim	tlua ⁵⁵	tlua ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlo ⁴⁴	dia ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tlo ⁴⁴
	‘cloud’	hua ⁴³ : 9	te ³³ əu ³³ : 1	to ⁴⁴ tu ⁴⁴ : 8				hau ⁵⁵ po ¹¹ : 27	

Another classifier for bulky items is **ki⁴⁴** implying two closely related meanings: (i) ‘pound’ (= standard measure for 500 gram), and (ii) ‘lump’. Both meanings are attested in Weining, whereas in Hekou and Huayuan only the latter is confirmed. In Kaili a cognate form (**ki³⁵**) exists but with the divergent meaning ‘a kind of’.

Table 27: The classifiers for solid materials (‘pound’)

№ 28 Classifier		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Measure Word</i>		ki ⁴⁴	(ki ³⁵)	tɕi ⁴²	Aug	ki ⁴⁴	ki ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ki ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ ki ⁴⁴
	‘lump, pound’				Med	kiai ¹¹	kiai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ki ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ ki ⁴⁴
Classifieds					Dim	kia ¹¹	kia ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ki ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ki ⁴⁴
	‘gold’	ko ⁴³ : 28	tɕin ³³ : 28	gje ³³ : 28				ku ⁵⁵ : 28	
	‘silver’	na ³¹ : 28	ni ⁵⁵ : 28	ŋon ⁴² : 28				nɸie ³⁵ : 28	
	‘salt’	ŋtɕe ⁵⁵ : 28	ɕi ³⁵ : 28	dzu ⁴⁴ : 28				ntɕə ⁵⁵ : 28	
	‘meat’	ŋqai ³¹ : 28	ŋi ⁵⁵ : 28	na ⁴² : 26, 28, 29				ŋɸiai ³⁵ : 28	
	‘sugar’	than ³¹ : 28	tan ³¹ : 28	dan ²² : 28				mu ⁵⁵ : 28	

The last pan-Miao classifier in this series is the classifier ‘piece’ which is realized as **tɬai²⁴** (Hekou), **ɬei³¹** (Kaili), **lei⁵⁵** (Huayuan) and **dla⁵³** (Weining). It categorizes a wide range of objects such as solid materials, land, documents, etc.

Table 28: The classifiers for documents (‘piece’)

№ 29 Classifier		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
for documents & ‘piece’		tɬai ²⁴	ɬei ³¹	lei ⁴²	Aug	dla ⁵³	dlɸa ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dlɸa ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ dlɸa ³¹
					Med	dlai ⁵⁵	dlai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dlɸa ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ dlɸa ³¹
Classifieds					Dim	dla ⁵³	dla ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dlɸa ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dlɸa ³¹
	‘land’	te ⁴³ : 29	ta ³³ : 29	lu ⁴⁴ : 29				ti ⁵⁵ : 77	
	‘crops field’	qon ⁴³ lon ⁴⁴ : 29	qe ³³ la ¹³ : 29	san ³³ ndza ⁴⁴ : 58				qau ⁵⁵ : 77	
	‘gold’	ko ⁴³ : 29	tɕin ³³ : 29	gje ³³ : 26				ku ⁵⁵ : 28	
	‘silver’	na ³¹ : 29	ni ⁵⁵ : 29	ŋon ⁵⁵ : 26				nɸie ³⁵ : 28	
	‘iron’	ɬou ⁴⁴ : 29	ɬhe ⁴⁴ : 29	ɬao ⁴⁴ : 26				lau ⁴⁴ : 1	
	‘tile’	vua ²¹ : 29	ŋi ¹¹ : 29	wa ¹³ : 24				va ⁴⁴ : 29	
	‘bone’	pau ⁴³ tshaŋ ⁴⁴ : 1	po ³⁵ shon ³⁵ : 29	son ³⁵ : 16				a ⁴⁴ tshau ⁴⁴ : 1	
	‘meat’	ŋqai ³¹ : 29	ŋi ⁵⁵ : 29	na ⁴² : 26, 28, 29				ŋɸiai ³⁵ : 28	

‘letter’	so ⁵⁵ : 23	cen ³⁵ : 29	sen ³³ : 70	mau ⁴⁴ : 29
‘book’	so ⁵⁵ : 23	tu ³⁵ : 58	---	n ⁵⁵ tey ⁵⁵ : 29
‘cloth’	---	to ³³ : 58	---	ntau ⁵⁵ : 29
‘paper’	n ⁵⁵ teu ⁵⁵ : 29	ci ⁴⁴ : 58	dx ⁴⁴ : 21	n ⁵⁵ tey ⁵⁵ tley ⁵⁵ : 9
‘leaf’	mploŋ ³¹ : 29	qa ³³ nə ⁵⁵ : 58	qo ³⁵ nu ⁴² : 21	a ⁴⁴ ndlɬau ³⁵ : 9

3.2.3.2 Specialized classifiers

The majority of three-dimensional shape classifiers are specialized small-range classifiers. They categorize landscapes (subsection A), granular or drop-shaped entities (B), layered entities (C), places (D), clothes and cloth (E), and frames (F). The last two classifiers are classifiers of FUNCTIONALITY, which, besides ANIMACY and SHAPE, is one of the three parameters that organize the system of Miao classifiers.

A. Classifier for landscape

A classifier for landscape meaning ‘piece’, ‘plot’, or ‘row’ categorizes flat land, mountain chains, crops (implying then the connotation ‘a plot of crops’) and comes out in the Miao languages as **plaj**¹³ (Hekou), **tcaŋ**³⁵ (Kaili), **tcaŋ**³⁵ (Huayuan), and **tlau**⁵⁵ (Weining). The sense of **tcaŋ**³⁵ in Huayuan has shifted to categorize solid materials and to imply ‘lump, chunk’, rather than to be a classifier for landscape.

Table 29: The classifiers for landscape (‘row’, ‘plot’, ‘piece’)

№ 30 Classifier	Hekou	Kaili (invariable)	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
				Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
‘row’, ‘plot’	plaj ¹³	tcaŋ ³⁵	tcaŋ ³⁵	Aug	tlau ⁵⁵	tlau ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tlau ⁵⁵
‘piece’				Med	tlai ⁵⁵	tlai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵
Classifieds				Dim	tla ⁵⁵	tla ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tlau ⁵⁵
‘cloud’	hua ⁴³ : 9	te ³³ əu ³³ : 1	to ⁴² tu ⁴⁴ : 8				hau ⁵⁵ po ¹¹ : 30	
‘land’	te ⁴³ : 30	da ¹³ : 30	lu ⁴⁴ : 29				ti ⁵⁵ : 30	
‘mountain’	toŋ ⁴³ : 30	pi ¹¹ : 24	pi ⁴⁴ qɿ ²² : 25				tau ⁵⁵ : 94	
‘crops’	qoŋ ⁴³ loŋ ⁴⁴ : 30	qəu ³³ la ¹³ : 30	---				qau ⁵⁵ : 77	
‘barley’	mau ¹³ : 30	maŋ ¹¹ : 30	tcaŋ ³⁵ me ²² : 31				sau ⁵⁵ : 77	
‘rice’	ŋtʂa ⁴³ : 24	qa ³³ she ³⁵ : 30	ndzo ⁵⁴ : 31				ndlɬi ³⁵ : 77	
‘paper’	n ⁵⁵ teu ⁵⁵ : 23	ci ⁴⁴ : 30	dx ⁴⁴ : 21				n ⁵⁵ tey ⁵⁵ tley ⁵⁵ : 9	
‘stone’	ze ⁴³ : 25	bo ³⁵ vi ³³ : 24	qo ³⁵ zu ³⁵ : 30				a ⁵⁵ va ⁵⁵ : 25, 29, 30	
‘clay’	aŋ ⁵⁵ : 25	qa ³⁵ ta ³³ : 24	qa ⁴⁴ la ⁴² : 30				a ⁴⁴ lɬa ³⁵ : 25, 29, 30	

B. Classifier for granular or drop-shaped entities

Three of the four Miao languages have a classifier for granular or drop-shaped entities. In Huayuan, no such classifier is reported, whereas Hekou Hmong exhibits two

classifiers: **nt̥sa**⁴⁴ (for granular) and **nt̥cao**⁴⁴ (for drop-like entities). The classifiers **niu**¹³ (Kaili) and **dl̥hi**³⁵ (Weining) are restricted to granular only; drop-like entities are categorized by a general broad-range classifier.

Table 30: The classifiers for granular and drop-shaped entities

Classifier	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao			
				Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-indef
‘granula’, ‘drop’	№ 31	---	---	Aug	dl̥hi ³⁵	dl̥i ⁴⁴	t̥i ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dl̥hi ³⁵
				Med	dl̥hai ²¹³	dl̥iai ²¹³	t̥iai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dl̥hi ³⁵
				Dim	dl̥ɦa ³⁵	dl̥ia ³⁵	t̥ia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ dl̥hi ³⁵
№ 32	---	niu ¹³	---	---			
№ 33	nt̥sa ⁴⁴	---	---	---			
Classifieds № 34	nt̥cao ⁴⁴	---	---	---			
‘sand’	ɣua ⁴³ : 33	qa ³³ sha ⁴⁴ vi ³³ : 32	qo ³⁵ t̥sa ²⁴ : 24	a ⁵⁵ dz̥ɦi ¹¹ a ⁵⁵ və ⁵⁵ : 31			
‘salt’	nt̥se ⁵⁵ : 33	ci ³⁵ : 32	d̥zu ⁴⁴ : 24	nt̥so ⁵⁵ : 31			
‘seed’	noŋ ⁴³ : 33	ɦiu ³³ : 32	qo ³⁵ ɦu ³⁵ : 24	t̥sau ⁵⁵ : 31			
‘barley’	mau ¹³ : 33	maŋ ¹¹ t̥caŋ ³⁵ : 32	t̥caŋ ³⁵ me ²² : 24	mo ⁵³ : 31			
‘bean’	tou ²⁴ : 33	tə ³¹ : 24	nu ⁴⁴ : 24	dau ⁵³ : 31			
‘rice’	nt̥sa ⁴³ : 24	qa ³³ she ³⁵ : 32	dzo ⁵⁴ : 24	ndl̥ɦi ³⁵ : 31			
‘sugar’	than ³¹ : 33	taŋ ³¹ : 32	daŋ ²² : 24	mu ⁵⁵ : 31			
‘money’	t̥sa ⁵⁵ : 24	pi ⁵⁵ sei ⁵⁵ : 32	t̥ce ⁴² : 24	n̥ɦie ³⁵ : 31			
‘tear’	kua ⁴⁴ mu ¹³ : 34	əu ³³ me ¹³ : 24	u ³⁵ me ³¹ : 24	ka ⁴⁴ ma ³¹ : 24			
‘blood’	nt̥shaŋ ⁵⁵ : 34	chiaŋ ³⁵ : 24, 32	d̥ɦien ⁴⁴ : 24	nt̥shaw ⁵⁵ : 24			
‘sweat’	fu ³³ : 34	əu ³³ ɦiaŋ ⁵³ : 24	u ³³ ten ⁵⁴ : 24	ŋɦiauw ³⁵ ɰau ⁴⁴ : 24			

C. Classifier for layered entities

A classifier for layered or storeyed entities exists in only two Miao languages: in Kali and in Weining. No confirmation on this classifier could be obtained from Xiong & Cohen (2005) for Hekou; no information for Huayuan is available either.

Table 31: The classifiers for layered or storeyed entities

Classifier	Kaili (invariable)	Weining Ahmao			
		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-indef
Inanimate ‘layer’	№ 35	Male-Aug	t̥i ¹¹	---	t̥i ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ t̥i ¹¹
		Fem-Med	t̥iai ⁵⁵	t̥iai ²¹³	t̥iai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ t̥i ¹¹
		Child-Dim	t̥ia ⁵⁵	t̥ia ³⁵	t̥ia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ t̥i ¹¹
Classifieds № 36	lən ³¹	---			
‘soil’	qa ³³ ta ³³ : 36	a ⁴⁴ l̥ɦa ³⁵ : 35			
‘dust’	qa ³³ phən ³³ ta ³³ : 36	ɦi ⁵⁵ tlau ¹¹ : 35			
‘skin’	qa ³³ liu ⁴⁴ : 36	pi ⁴⁴ tey ⁴⁴ : 35			

D. Classifier for places

A classifier for places is reported in two Miao languages as **khau**⁵⁵ (Hekou) and **qho**⁵⁵ (Weining). In Kaili there is an obvious cognate nominal form **qha**⁴⁴, although it may not be involved as classifier with the sense ‘place’. In Huayuan, the cognate form **qho**³⁵ functions as nominal prefix attached to a wide range of nouns; it may not be involved as classifier.

Table 32: The classifiers for places

№ 37 Classifier	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
	(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Inanimate</i>	qhou ⁵⁵	(qha ⁴⁴)	(qho ³⁵)	Aug	qho ⁵⁵	qho ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ qho ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ qho ⁵⁵
‘place’				Med	qhai ⁵⁵	qhai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ qho ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ qho ⁵⁵
Classifieds				Dim	qha ⁵⁵	qha ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ qho ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ qho ⁵⁵
‘locality’	te ³³ tcheu ⁴⁴ : 37	fan ³³ : 15	qo ³⁵ te ⁴² : 24				ti ⁵⁵ tchey ¹¹ : 37	
‘meat’	Nqai ³¹ : 37	ŋi ⁵⁵ : 29	na ⁴² : 26, 28, 29				NGhai ³⁵ : 28	

The Miao languages exhibit two classifiers meaning ‘side’ or ‘edge’: (i) **saŋ**¹³ (in Hekou) with the related form **sey**⁵⁵ (in Weining), and (ii) **phi**⁴⁴ (in Kaili). In Kaili, the classifier **saŋ**⁵⁵ appears cognate to the forms in (i), but it has shifted its meaning to ‘layer, stratum’.

Table 33: The classifiers for entities with sides and edges

Classifier	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
	(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Inanimate</i>	№ 38	saŋ ¹³	(saŋ ⁵⁵)	---	sey ⁵⁵	sey ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ sey ⁴⁴	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ sey ⁴⁴
‘side’				Med	s(e)yai ⁵⁵	s(e)yai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ sey ⁴⁴	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ sey ⁴⁴
‘edge’				Dim	s(e)ya ⁵³	s(e)ya ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ sey ⁴⁴	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ sey ⁴⁴
Classifieds	№ 39	---	phi ⁴⁴	---				
‘field’	te ⁴³ : 38	la ¹³ : 39	lu ⁵⁴ : 29				ti ⁵⁵ : 38	
‘river’	tŋe ³¹ : 38	ɔu ³³ : 39	ŋa ³¹ u ³⁵ : 16				dlfi ³⁵ : 38	
‘meat’	Nqai ³¹ : 38	ŋi ⁵⁵ : 39	na ⁴² : 26, 28, 29				NGhai ³⁵ : 38	

E. Function: classifier for clothes (and cloth)

Two classifiers categorize clothes and cloth: (i) **phau**³³ (Hekou), **phaŋ**³³ (Kaili), **phaŋ**³³ (Huayuan), and **pho**⁵⁵ (Weining); (ii) **tɕəu**⁴⁴ (Kaili) and **ntan**³³ (Huayuan). The sound structure of the two latter forms is different, but they share the property of specifically categorizing ‘skirts’.

Table 34: The classifiers for cloth and clothes

Classifier	№ 40	Hekou	Kaili (invariable)	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
					Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Inanimate 'garment'		phau ⁴³	phaŋ ³³	phaŋ ³⁵	Aug	pho ⁵⁵	pho ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ pho ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ pho ⁵⁵
					Med	phai ⁵⁵	phai ²¹³	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ pho ⁵⁵	dai ²¹³ a ⁵⁵ pho ⁵⁵
					Dim	pha ³⁵	pha ³⁵	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ pho ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ pho ⁵⁵
Classifieds	№ 41	---	tchəu ⁴⁴	ntan ³³	---				
'quilt'		le ⁵⁵ : 40	tiu ¹¹ : 40	qho ³⁵ lou ⁴⁴ : 40			a ⁵⁵ nau ⁵⁵ ntəu ⁴⁴ : 40		
'garment'		tshau ⁴⁴ : 24	u ³⁵ : 40	ɣ ⁴⁴ : 41			tsho ⁴⁴ : 24		
'skirt'		ta ⁴³ : 24	khəu ⁵³ : 41	tɛ ³⁵ : 41			tie ⁵⁵ : 93		

F. Function: classifier for frames

In Hekou and Weining, two cognate classifiers for framed entities are attested: **tu²²** (Hekou) and **dzi⁵³** (Weining).

Table 35: The classifiers for frames

№ 42 Classifier	Huayuan (invariable)	Weining Ahmao				
		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Inanimate for frames	tu ²²	Aug	dzi ⁵³	dzi ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dzhɪ ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ dzhɪ ³¹
		Med	dzai ⁵³	dzai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dzhɪ ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ dzhɪ ³¹
		Dim	dza ⁵³	dza ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dzhɪ ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ dzhɪ ³¹
Classifieds						
'table'	tɕi ³⁵ pəu ⁵⁵ : 42				ki ⁴⁴ q̥hau ³⁵ : 42	
'bed'	təu ⁵⁵ beu ⁴⁴ : 42				dzhau ³⁵ : 42	
'bridge'	kjou ⁵⁵ : 42				la ⁵⁵ : 42	
'plough'	qo ³⁵ ʔi ⁴² : 1				li ⁵⁵ v̥hau ³¹ : 42	
'meat'	na ⁴² : 26, 28, 29				ŋghai ³⁵ : 42	

3.3 Diverse sortal classifiers attested in one language only

In this section, we group various classifiers that are restricted to one Miao language only. Most of them are of the sortal kind with small ranges of compatible classifieds in each case. Two or three plural/mass classifiers with the broad scope of classifieds also fall into this group.

3.3.1 Hekou Hmong

Among the classifiers that are used only in Hekou Hmong are classifiers for air containers, houses, cloth and garments, etc.

Table 36: Diverse small-range classifiers in Hekou Hmong

Classifier		Classified
№ 43	container for air	tu ⁵⁵ hua ⁴³ ‘cloud’, paŋ ⁴⁴ ‘air’, etc.
№ 44	for houses	tɕaŋ ⁵⁵ tɕe ⁵⁵ ‘house’, tɕe ⁵⁵ nthaŋ ⁴³ ‘multistory building’, tshaŋ ⁴³ khu ²⁴ ‘storehouse’, ŋkua ³¹ no ¹³ ‘cowhouse’, ŋkua ³¹ qai ⁴³ ‘henhouse’, etc.
№ 45	for cloth & garment	phau ⁴³ le ⁵⁵ ‘mat’, tɕaŋ ⁴³ ntsi ⁵⁵ ‘felt rug’, ta ⁴³ ‘skirt’, etc.
№ 46	for matter & topic	ntən ²¹ plou ⁴³ ‘matter, topic’, etc.
№ 47	‘section’	tau ¹³ ntoŋ ⁴⁴ ‘wood’, etc.
№ 48	‘noise’	tɕhe ⁵⁵ so ⁴³ ‘thunder’
№ 49	‘shower’	ɕua ²⁴ naŋ ¹³ ‘rain’, mpo ⁴⁴ ‘snow’, leu ¹³ ‘hail’
№ 50	‘ball’, ‘clew’	ɕo ⁵⁵ plou ⁴³ ‘feather’, ŋɕau ³¹ ‘grass’, phaŋ ⁴⁴ ‘smoke, exhalation’, etc.
№ 51	‘nest’, ‘clew’	so ⁴³ ŋtɕou ²⁴ ‘ant’, mo ⁵⁵ ‘bee’, etc. [so ⁴³ other meanings: ‘arrow’, ‘thunder’]
№ 52	‘breed’	zaŋ ¹³ mi ⁵⁵ mpua ⁴⁴ ‘piglet’, mi ⁵⁵ tɕe ⁵⁵ ‘puppy’, etc.
№ 53	‘nest’	ze ²¹ noŋ ¹³ ‘bird’, qai ⁴³ ‘chicken’, Nqua ⁴³ ‘dove’, tɕua ¹³ ‘mouse’, etc.
№ 54	‘armful’	tɕua ¹³ tɕe ¹³ ntoŋ ⁴⁴ ‘twig’, ɕoŋ ⁴³ ‘bamboo’, ŋɕau ³¹ ‘grass’, teu ²¹ ‘firewood’, etc.
№ 55	plural and mass	tɕau ⁵⁵ with almost every count and mass nouns (expressing plural or ‘some’)
№ 56	plural and mass	ua ³³ idem

3.3.2 Kaili Qanao

The classifiers restricted to Kaili are classifiers for songs, books, places, tobacco, words, etc.

Table 37: Diverse small-range classifiers in Kaili Qanao

Classifier		Classified
№ 57	for songs	pa ¹³ ɕha ⁵³ ‘song’, tɕiaŋ ³³ ɕaŋ ¹³ ‘story’
№ 58	for books	pen ⁵⁵ tu ³⁵ ‘book’
№ 59	for places	pəu ⁴⁴ qha ⁴⁴ ‘place’
№ 60	for cigarettes	tion ⁵⁵ jən ³³ ‘tobacco’
№ 61	for bows and hooks	tiu ⁵⁵ ŋe ³⁵ ‘bow’, nəŋ ⁴⁴ ‘hook’
№ 62	for words	kən ³³ tɕa ⁵⁵ ‘word of wisdom’
№ 63	‘mouthful’	ha ³⁵ ka ³⁵ ‘rice’, əu ³³ ‘rice’
№ 64	‘nest’	mi ¹¹ qa ³³ tɕe ³³ tɕa ³⁵ ‘dog’
№ 65	‘kind’	tia ¹¹ ne ⁵⁵ ‘person’
№ 66	plural and mass	tin ³³ with almost every count and mass nouns (expressing plural or ‘some’)

3.3.3 Huayuan Qoxung

Classifiers exclusively in use in Huayuan Qoxung include two classifiers for one-dimensional entities, and a classifier for thread, letters, etc.

Table 38: Diverse small-range classifiers in Huayuan Qoxong

Classifier	Classified	
№ 67 1-dim	du ⁵⁴	qo ³⁵ ŋa ³¹ ‘big river’
№ 68 1-dim	ŋu ⁴²	qo ³⁵ ɬa ⁵⁴ ‘cord’
№ 69 for threads	çi ³⁵	qo ³⁵ tsei ⁴² ‘thread’
№ 70 for letters	hoŋ ⁴⁴	sən ³⁵ ‘letter’
№ 71 for matter & topic	kjan ¹³	si ³⁵ ‘matter, topic’, etc.
№ 72 ‘form, body’	tɕu ⁴⁴	ŋɤ ⁵⁵ ta ³³ ‘carcass’; zɔ ¹³ ‘strength’
№ 73 ‘knob’	pa ³⁵	qa ³⁵ ki ³⁵ nu ³⁵ ‘mucus’
№ 74 ‘(cow) pat’	tɕo ¹¹	qa ³⁵ zu ¹¹ ‘dung’
№ 75 ‘pill’	hu ³³	ŋga ³⁵ ‘medicine’

3.3.4 Weining Ahmao

A number of classifiers are only reported in Ahmao. These are classifiers for torches and classifiers meaning ‘piece’, ‘block’, etc.

Table 39: Diverse small-range classifiers in Weining Ahmao

	Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef	Classified
№ 76 Classifier <i>Functional</i> <i>for torches</i>	Male-Aug	ɬau ⁵⁵	ɬau ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ɬau ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ɬau ⁵⁵	tau ⁵⁵ ‘torch’
	Fem-Med	ɬai ⁵⁵	ɬai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ɬau ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ ɬau ⁵⁵	
	Child-Dim	ɬa ⁵⁵	ɬa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ɬau ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ɬau ⁵⁵	
№ 77 Classifier <i>Landscape</i> <i>‘piece, plot’</i>	Male-Aug	tɕo ⁵⁵	tɕo ⁴⁴	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tɕo ⁵⁵	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ tɕo ⁵⁵	ti ⁵⁵ ‘land’
	Fem-Med	tɕai ⁵⁵	tɕuai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tɕo ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ tɕo ⁵⁵	
	Child-Dim	tɕa ⁵⁵	tɕua ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tɕo ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ tɕo ⁵⁵	
№ 78 Classifier <i>Inanimate</i> <i>‘block’, ‘group’</i>	Male-Aug	gau ⁵³	gɕiau ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ gɕiau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ gɕiau ¹¹	tu ⁵⁵ nu ⁵⁵ ‘people’, ŋgɕia ³⁵ va ⁵³ ‘house’, nɕei ⁵⁵ ‘mushroom’
	Fem-Med	gai ⁵³	guai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ gɕiau ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ gɕiau ³¹	
	Child-Dim	ga ⁵³	gua ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ gɕiau ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ gɕiau ³¹	
№ 79 Classifier <i>Inanimate</i> <i>‘clump’</i>	Male-Aug	tey ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tey ¹¹	qa ⁵⁵ nɕiu ³⁵ ‘dung’
	Fem-Med	tui ¹¹	tui ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	
	Child-Dim	tya ¹¹	tya ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tey ¹¹	
№ 80 Classifier <i>Inanimate</i> <i>‘bunch’</i>	Male-Aug	qai ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ qai ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ qai ¹¹	so ⁵⁵ ‘money’, haw ⁵⁵ po ¹¹ ‘cloud’
	Fem-Med	qai ¹¹	qai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ qai ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ qai ¹¹	
	Child-Dim	qa ¹¹	qaia ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ qai ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ qai ¹¹	
№ 81 Classifier <i>Inanimate</i> <i>‘bundle’</i>	Male-Aug	tsau ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tsau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ tsau ¹¹	dey ⁴⁴ ‘firewood’, ŋgu ⁵⁵ ‘grass’, a ⁵⁵ nau ⁵⁵ ɕau ⁵⁵ ‘wheat straw’
	Fem-Med	tsuai ¹¹	tsuai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tsau ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ⁵⁵ tsau ¹¹	
	Child-Dim	tsua ¹¹	tsua ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ tsau ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ tsau ¹¹	
№ 82 Classifier <i>Measure Word</i> <i>‘backload’</i>	Male-Aug	ŋɕau ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ŋɕau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ŋɕau ¹¹	dey ⁴⁴ ‘firewood’
	Fem-Med	ŋɕai ¹¹	ŋɕai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ŋɕau ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ ŋɕau ¹¹	
	Child-Dim	ŋɕa ¹¹	ŋɕa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ŋɕau ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ŋɕau ¹¹	

3.4 Mixed nominal and verbal classifiers

A number of nouns may be interpreted as physical entities and as events. Weather phenomena like ‘rain’ may be viewed as entities with matter and as happenings. A small number of mixed (= nominal and verbal) classifiers such as ‘shower’ and ‘draught’ categorize these experiences. For more information on these double-function classifiers, see Gerner (2009b). The classifier ‘shower’ is realized as **kau**⁴³/**kaŋ**⁵⁵ in Hekou, Kaili, and Huayuan, although appearing as **zo**⁵³ in Weining.

Table 40: The classifiers for precipitation (weather)

		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
Classifier			(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Weather</i> ‘shower’	№ 83	---	---	---	Aug	zo ⁵³	zo ³¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ zo ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ zo ³¹
					Med	zuai ⁵⁵	zuai ²¹³	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ zo ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ zo ³¹
					Dim	zua ⁵³	zua ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ zo ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ zo ³¹
Classifieds	№ 84	kau ⁴³	kaŋ ⁵⁵	kaŋ ³⁵	---				
‘rain’		naŋ ¹³ : 84	noŋ ¹³ : 84	noŋ ³¹ : 84	nauw ⁵³ : 83				
‘snow’		mpo ⁴⁴ : 84	pe ⁴⁴ : 84	mpəu ⁵⁴ : 84	mpu ⁴⁴ : 83				
‘hail’		leu ¹³ : 84	ho ³³ liu ¹¹ : 84	ʂa ⁴⁴ : 84	nauw ⁵³ tley ⁵⁵ : 83				
‘ice’		tʰou ³³ : 84	ʈiu ⁵³ : 84	kje ⁴⁴ : 84	tlau ¹¹ : 83				

In Hekou and Weining, two genetically unrelated classifiers for ‘wind’ are reported. They imply the meaning of ‘draught’: **pau**¹¹ (Weining) and **ntu**¹³ (Hekou).

Table 41: The classifiers for wind

Classifier		Hekou	Weining Ahmao				
		(invariable)	Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Weather ‘draught’	№ 85	---	Aug	pau ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ pau ¹¹
			Med	pai ¹¹	pai ²¹³	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹
			Dim	pa ¹¹	pa ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ pau ¹¹
Classifieds	№ 86	ntu ¹³	---				
‘wind’		tɕua ⁴⁴ : 86				tɕa ⁴⁴ : 85	

3.5 Mensural classifiers: collectivizers and partitioners

A large number of collectivizers and partitioners are attested across Miao languages. To start with, in three of the four languages surveyed a plural quantifier is reported.

Table 42: The plural and mass classifiers

№ 87 Classifier	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao		
	(invariable)			Register	Plural Definite	Plural Indefinite
Collectivizer	te ³¹	to ¹¹	---	Male-Aug	ti ⁵⁵	di ³¹
plural and mass				Fem-Med	tiai ⁵⁵	diai ²¹³
Classifieds				Child-Dim	tia ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵
‘person’	tua ⁴³ nen ¹³ : 87	ne ⁵⁵ : 87	ne ⁴² : 87		tuu ⁵⁵ nur ⁵⁵ : 87	
‘water’	tʰe ³¹ : 87	ɔu ³³ : 87	u ³⁵ : 24		au ⁵⁵ : 87	
(...)	(...)	(...)	(...)		(...)	

Three collectivizers corresponding to ‘group’ are attested in the Miao languages: (i) **phu**⁴³ (Hekou) and **phi**³⁵ (Kaili); (ii) **khu**³³ (Kaili); (iii) **paŋ**³⁵ (Huayuan).

Table 43: The collectivising classifiers (‘group’)

Classifier	№	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao
		(invariable)			
Collectivizer	№ 88	phu ⁴³	phi ³⁵	---	---
‘group’	№ 89	---	khu ³³	---	---
Classifieds	№ 90	---	---	paŋ ⁴⁴	---
‘man’		zeu ¹³ : 88	ne ⁵⁵ : 88	qo ³⁵ ni ⁵⁴ : 90	a ⁵⁵ zey ⁵³ : 78, 87
‘ox’		no ³¹ : 88	lio ³⁵ : 89	ta ³⁵ zu ²² : 91	nfiu ³⁵ : 87
‘ghost’		tʰaŋ ⁴³ : 88	tʰiaŋ ³³ : 89	ta ³⁵ qwen ³⁵ : 90	pi ⁵⁵ lau ⁵⁵ : 87

Another collectivizer has cognate relatives in three of the surveyed Miao languages, though with slightly divergent meaning: **tsha**⁴⁴ ‘some’ (in Hekou), **ntsha**⁴⁴ ‘group’ (in Huayuan), **ntsha**¹¹ ‘group, bunch’. Each collectivizer is compatible with a large range of nouns.

Table 44: The collectivising classifiers (‘bunch, collection’)

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
№ 91 Classifier	(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Collectivizer</i>	tsha ⁴⁴	---	ndzha ⁵⁴	Aug	ntsha ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ntsha ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ntsha ¹¹
<i>‘group, bunch’</i>				Med	ntshai ¹¹	ntshai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ntsha ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ ntsha ¹¹
Classifieds				Dim	ntsha ¹¹	ntsha ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ntsha ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ntsha ¹¹

Across the Miao group, two classifiers with the meaning ‘pair’ exist. The classifiers **neu**²⁴ (Hekou) and **ŋkey**⁵³ (Weining), in addition to implying ‘pair’, turn out to be classifiers of skirts. The cognate form **niu**³¹ ‘pair’ in Kaili only categorizes entities that occur in pairs (such as certain body parts like hand, etc.), whereas there is a non-cognate classifier **poŋ**¹¹ ‘pair’ that occurs in combination with other non-dual

nouns. The classifier **kou¹¹/ho⁴⁴** ‘pair’ in Huayuan compounds with dual and non-dual nouns, though excluding dual clothing items like shoes or sleeves where it projects the classifier **ɲoŋ¹¹** ‘pair’. This last classifier is identical in sound to the animate classifier **№ 2 ɲoŋ²²**.

Table 45: The classifiers for pairs

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>					
Classifier		(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef	
Collectivizer № 92	ŋkeu ²⁴	niu ³¹	kou ¹¹ /ho ⁴⁴	Aug	ŋkey ⁵³	ŋgey ³¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ŋgey ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ŋgfey ³¹	
‘pair’				Med	ŋkai ⁵³	ŋgai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ŋgey ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ ŋgfey ³¹	
				Dim	ŋkya ⁵³	ŋgeya ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ŋgey ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ŋgfey ³¹	
Classifieds № 93	---	poŋ ¹¹	ŋoŋ ²²	---					
‘foot’	ko ⁴⁴ teu ⁴⁴ : 5	lo ³³ : 92	ʔao ³³ : 92				tey ⁴⁴ : 92		
‘hand’	te ²¹ : 5	pi ¹¹ : 92	tou ¹¹ : 92				di ⁴⁴ : 92		
‘eye’	qhau ⁵⁵ mua ¹³ : 92	nioŋ ¹³ me ¹³ : 92	le ³³ qəu ³³ : 92				a ⁵⁵ ma ⁵³ : 92		
‘ear’	qhau ⁵⁵ ŋʃe ³¹ : 92	qa ³³ nei ⁵⁵ : 92	tuŋ ⁴² mlu ⁴² : 92				a ⁴⁴ mbfio ³⁵ : 92		
‘wing’	kou ³¹ ti ³³ : 92	qa ³³ ta ⁵³ : 92	pi ³⁵ tei ³⁵ : 92				a ⁵⁵ ti ¹¹ : 92		
‘shoe’	khou ⁴⁴ : 92	ha ³³ : 92	cao ⁴⁴ : 93				khau ¹¹ : 92		
‘sleeve’	te ²¹ tʃhau ⁴⁴ : 5	qa ³³ mu ¹¹ u ³⁵ : 92	qao ³³ toŋ ¹¹ : 93				a ⁴⁴ di ⁴⁴ tso ⁴⁴ : 92		
‘skirt’	ta ⁴³ te ¹³ : 92	qhu ⁵³ : 41	tan ³³ : 41				tie ⁵⁵ : 92		
‘person’	tua ⁴³ nei ¹³ : 92	ne ⁵⁵ : 93	ne ⁵⁵ : 92				tuw ⁵⁵ nuw ⁵⁵ : 92		
‘ox’	no ³¹ : 92	lio ³⁵ : 93	zu ¹¹ : 92				n.fu ³⁵ : 92		
‘table’	toŋ ³¹ : 24	ta ⁵⁵ : 93	tei ³⁵ pəu ⁵⁵ : 92				ki ⁴⁴ qfau ³⁵ : 92		

Two other classifiers imply the meaning of ‘row, sequence’ and may co-occur with concrete noun entities such as ‘mountain’ or with abstract entities like ‘story’. The first **ŋkhə¹¹** is regionally restricted to Weining, whereas the other is attested as **zəŋ³¹** in Hekou, **yoŋ³³** in Kaili and **za¹¹** in Huayuan.

Table 46: The collectivising classifiers (‘sequence, row’)

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>					
Classifier		(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef	
Collectivizer № 94 'row', 'sequence'	---	---	---	Aug	ŋkhə ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ŋkhə ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ŋkhə ¹¹	
				Med	ŋkhai ¹¹	ŋkhai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ŋkhə ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ ŋkhə ¹¹	
				Dim	ŋkha ¹¹	ŋkha ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ ŋkhə ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ŋkhə ¹¹	
Classifieds № 95	zaŋ ³¹	yoŋ ³³	za ²²	---					
'table'	toŋ ⁴³ : 24	ta ⁵⁵ : 95	ʔei ⁴⁴ pe ⁴² : 95				ki ⁴⁴ dʃiau ³⁵ : 94		
'wall'	tʃhaŋ ³¹ : 95	ho ³³ : 15	ʔəŋ ⁴² : 16				a ¹¹ dʃiu ¹¹ : 24		
'mountain'	toŋ ⁴³ : 95	pi ¹¹ : 95	pi ⁴⁴ qʷ ²² : 24				ʔau ⁵⁵ : 94		
'tooth'	kou ²¹ pa ⁵⁵ : 95	ŋi ³⁵ : 95	qo ³⁵ ce ⁴⁴ : 97				ŋie ⁵⁵ : 94		
'story'	lo ²¹ ŋʈua ²¹ : 95	qa ³³ ʔəu ³⁵ qə ⁴⁴ : 95	qo ⁵⁴ : 24				pi ⁵⁵ dʃiau ³¹ : 18		
'proverb'	lo ²¹ paŋ ³¹ : 101	---	tu ⁵⁴ qo ⁵⁴ : 95				lu ⁴⁴ ndzʃia ¹¹ : 18		
'riddle'	mi ²⁴ ʔsi ⁵⁵ : 95	---	---				pi ⁵⁵ dʃiau ³¹ : 1		
'song'	ŋou ³¹ : 95	ca ⁵³ : 95	sa ⁴⁴ : 95				ŋgʃiau ³⁵ : 101		

One additional classifier implying ‘row’ and ‘cluster’ categorizes different kinds of fruit and is realized in only two Miao languages as **koŋ**⁵³ (Kaili) and **nqhau**¹¹ (Weining).

Table 47: The collectivising classifiers (‘row, cluster’)

№ 96 Classifier	Kaili (invariable)	Weining Ahmao				
		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Collectivizer ‘row, cluster’	koŋ ⁵³	Aug	Nqhau ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ Nqhau ¹¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ Nqhau ¹¹
		Med	Nqhai ¹¹	Nqhai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ Nqhau ¹¹	diai ²¹³ a ¹¹ Nqhau ¹¹
		Dim	Nqha ¹¹	Nqha ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ Nqhau ¹¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ Nqhau ¹¹
Classifieds						
‘grape’	tsən ³⁵ qei ³⁵ : 96			tsi ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ma ⁵³ nfiu ³⁵ tsi ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ma ⁵³ nfiu ¹¹ : 96		
‘fruit’	tsən ³⁵ : 96				tsi ⁵⁵ : 96	
‘tooth’	mi ³⁵ : 96				ɲie ⁵⁵ : 96	

The last mensural classifiers in this section are the collectivising classifiers **peu**¹³ (Hekou), **pə**⁴⁴ (Kaili), **plu**⁵⁵ (Huayuan) and **bey**⁵³ (Weining). For the inflections of the Weining classifier **bey**⁵³, it is important to note that only for the augmentative are the definite and indefinite forms distinguished through breathy voice.

Table 48: The collectivising classifiers (‘heap, row’)

	<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
№ 97 Classifier		(invariable)		Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Partitioner</i>	peu ¹³	pə ⁴⁴	plu ⁵⁵	Aug	bey ⁵³	bfiy ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiy ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ bfiy ³¹
‘heap’, ‘row’				Med	bai ⁵³	bai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiy ³¹	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ bfiy ³¹
Classifieds				Dim	ba ⁵³	ba ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiy ³¹	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ bfiy ³¹
‘dung’	---	qa ³³ : 97	qa ³³ zu ¹¹ : 74	tɕhi ⁵⁵ : 97				
‘mud’	aŋ ⁵⁵ : 97	qa ³³ ta ³³ : 97	---	a ⁴⁴ lɰa ³⁵ : 97				
‘sand’	ɣua ⁴³ : 97	qa ³³ sha ⁴⁴ ɣi ³³ : 97	qo ³⁵ tsha ⁵⁴ : 97	a ⁵⁵ dzɰi ¹¹ a ⁵⁵ vo ⁵⁵ : 97				
‘coal’	ŋtɕua ²⁴ : 97	ta ³³ tu ⁵³ : 97	---	a ⁴⁴ lɰa ³⁵ tlu ⁵⁵ : 97				
‘wood’	nton ⁴⁴ : 97	tə ⁴⁴ : 97	---	ntau ⁴⁴ : 97				
‘chaff’	sua ⁴⁴ : 97	qa ³³ fɰa ⁴⁴ : 97	---	hi ⁵⁵ bɰiau ¹¹ : 97				
‘grape’	tsi ⁵⁵ qa ⁵⁵ : 97	tsən ³⁵ qei ³⁵ : 97	---	tsi ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ma ⁵³ nɰu ³⁵ tsi ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ma ⁵³ nɰu ¹¹ : 96				
‘fruit’	tsi ⁵⁵ : 97	tsən ³⁵ : 97	qo ³⁵ pi ³⁵	tsi ⁵⁵ : 96				
			qo ³⁵ ku ⁵⁴ : 97					
‘tooth’	kou ²¹ ɰa ⁵⁵ : 97	ɲi ³⁵ : 97	qo ³⁵ ɕe ⁴⁴ : 97	ɲie ⁵⁵ : 96				
‘leaf’	mplon ³¹ : 97	qa ³³ no ⁵⁵ : 97	---	a ⁴⁴ ndɰiau ³⁵ : 97				
‘maggot’	kaŋ ⁵⁵ mau ¹³ : 97	kaŋ ⁴⁴ : 97	---	kau ⁵⁵ kau ¹¹ : 97				

3.6 Mensural classifiers: standard measures

Standard measures are measures that are socially recognized and have a precise value. They are measures of length, time, weight, volume, etc. In the Miao languages measure words are borrowed from Chinese in a long history of social interaction. It is interesting to note that the measure words have been integrated into the Miao sound

systems. Below is the example of ‘litre’, which originates from Chinese *shēng* 升.

Table 49: The measure word ‘litre’

№ 98 Classifier	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
	(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Measure Word	ʂən ⁴⁴	çən ³³	çən ⁴⁴	Male-Aug	ʂə ⁵⁵	ʂə ⁴⁴	tɿ ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ʂə ⁵⁵	dɿ ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ʂə ⁵⁵
Classifieds				Fem-Med	ʂiaɿ ¹¹	ʂiaɿ ²¹³	tiaɿ ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ʂə ⁵⁵	diaɿ ²¹³ a ¹¹ ʂə ⁵⁵
				Child-Dim	ʂia ¹¹	ʂia ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁵⁵ ʂə ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ ʂə ⁵⁵
‘seed’	non ⁴³ : 98	ŋiu ³³ : 98	qo ³⁵ ŋu ³³ : 98				tʂau ⁵⁵ : 98	
‘water’	tʂe ³¹ : 98	əu ³³ : 98	---				au ⁵⁵ : 98	

3.7 Mensural classifiers: non-standard measures

The set of non-standard measures is open, since many entities can be transformed into containers of some other object. Non-standard measures share the property of being vague and not socially recognized. Below, a small number of frequently used non-standard measure words are listed. To start with, the measure words ‘bowl’ and ‘cup’ have two exponents in the Miao languages: (i) **khau**⁴³ (Hekou) or **kho**⁵⁵ (Weining), (ii) the other cognate root is **nti**²⁴ (Hekou), **ti**³⁵ (Kaili), and **te**⁵³ (Huayuan). In Hekou, only the classifier **khau**⁴³ means ‘cup’, whereas **nti**²⁴ implies ‘bowl’—two senses that are conflated in the measure words of other Miao languages. In Weining, the measure word **kho**⁵⁵ may be declined in twelve forms, which is a property not shared by most other non-standard measures.

Table 50: The measure words ‘cup’, ‘bowl’

Classifier	Hekou	Kaili	Huayuan	Weining Ahmao				
	(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
Measure Word	№ 99	khau ⁴³	---	Aug	kho ⁵⁵	kho ⁴⁴	tɿ ⁵⁵ a ¹¹ kho ⁵⁵	dɿ ³¹ a ⁵⁵ kho ⁵⁵
‘cup, bowl’				Med	khuaj ⁵⁵	khuai ²¹³	tiaɿ ⁵⁵ a ³¹ kho ⁵⁵	diaɿ ²¹³ a ³¹ kho ⁵⁵
				Dim	khua ⁵⁵	khua ⁵⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ kho ⁵⁵	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ kho ⁵⁵
Classifieds	№ 100	nti ²⁴	ti ³⁵	---				
‘food’	mau ⁵⁵ : 100	ka ³⁵ : 100	ʃhe ⁵³ : 100			va ¹¹ : 100		
‘water’	tʂe ³¹ : 99	əu ³³ : 100	u ³⁵ : 100			au ⁵⁵ : 100		
‘soup’	kua ⁴⁴ : 99	əu ³³ tsa ¹³ : 100	u ³⁵ kja ⁴⁴ : 100			ka ⁴⁴ ka ⁴⁴ : 100		
‘tea’	tʂhua ³¹ : 99	tçɿ ¹¹ : 100	ki ²² : 100			ka ⁴⁴ tçɿ ⁵⁵ dɸu ¹¹ : 100		

The noun **lo**⁴⁴/**lo**¹¹ ‘mouth’ appears as non-standard measure word for speech in three of the four Miao languages surveyed. In Huayuan, the corresponding (non-cognate) form for ‘mouth’ is **ndao**⁴⁴.

Table 51: The measure word ‘mouth’ (for spoken words)

Classifier		<i>Hekou</i>	<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Huayuan</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
		(invariable)			Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Measure Word</i> ‘mouth’	№ 101	lo ⁴⁴	lo ⁴⁴	---	Aug	lo ¹¹	---	ti ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ lo ⁴⁴	di ³¹ a ⁴⁴ lo ⁴⁴
					Med	lai ¹¹	lai ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ lo ⁴⁴	diai ²¹³ a ⁴⁴ lo ⁴⁴
					Dim	la ¹¹	la ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ lo ⁴⁴	dia ⁵⁵ a ⁴⁴ lo ⁴⁴
Classifieds	№ 102	---	---	do ⁵⁴	---				
‘word, language’		lo ²¹ : 101	shei ³⁵ : 101	tu ⁵⁴ : 102	lu ⁴⁴ : 101				
‘proverb’		lo ²¹ paŋ ³¹ : 101	---	tu ⁵⁴ qo ⁵⁴ tu ⁵⁴ zo ³¹ : 102	lu ⁴⁴ ndzɕia ¹¹ : 101				
‘song’		ŋou ³¹ : 95	ɕa ⁵³ : 95	sa ⁴⁴ : 95	ŋɕiau ³⁵ : 101				

The last classifier in this series implies the meaning ‘handful of’ and has cognate exponents in two Miao languages: **thia**³³ (Kaili) and **ntsai**⁵³ (Weining).

Table 52: The measure word ‘handful’

№ 103 Classifier		<i>Kaili</i>	<i>Weining Ahmao</i>				
		(invariable)	Register	Sg-def	Sg-indef	Pl-def	Pl-indef
<i>Measure Word</i> ‘handful’		thia ³³	Male-Aug	ntsai ⁵³	ndzɕia ¹¹	ti ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ndzɕia ³¹	di ³¹ a ⁵⁵ ndzɕia ³¹
			Fem-Med	ntsai ²¹³	ndzɕia ²¹³	tiai ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ndzɕia ¹³	diai ²¹³ a ³¹ ndzɕia ³¹
			Child-Dim	ntsa ³⁵	ndzɕia ³⁵	tia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ndzɕia ¹³	dia ⁵⁵ a ³¹ ndzɕia ³¹
Classifieds							
‘oats’		maŋ ¹¹ qa ³³ dli ³⁵ : 24	ɕo ⁴⁴ ɕo ⁵⁵ : 103				
‘vegetable’		yo ³³ : 103	zau ⁵⁵ : 103				

4. Conclusion

In this paper we have described the system of inflectional classifiers in Weining Ahmao, a Miao language spoken in western Guizhou Province of the PRC. Ahmao distinguishes for most classifiers a paradigm of twelve forms encoding size values (augmentative/medial/diminutive) and the gender or age of the speaker in terms of male/female/child. This complex system can be best understood as a product of grammaticalization resulting from the merger of two size/gender prefixes with various classifiers of the system.

Appendix: The four Miao languages surveyed

Internationally, the better known appellation for the Miao group is Hmong or Hmongic. Westerners' acquaintance with this Southeast Asian people derives primarily from the Indo-Chinese wars, in the aftermath of which more than 100,000 Hmong fled to the United States, France, and Australia. The homeland of this group is southwestern China, from which migration started in the eighteenth century to neighbouring Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma. In the 2000 census, more than 8 million Miao were reckoned to be scattered over southwestern China. In the Chinese linguistic tradition, three 'dialects' (方言) of the Miao 'language' (苗語) have been distinguished: Western, Central, and Eastern (F. Wang 1985, Niederer 1998). These dialects would correspond to the concept of language in the Western tradition if the vague notion of intelligibility was taken as a criterion. Using available sources, Niederer retrieved phonological material from 71 Miao varieties (Niederer 1998:298). Taking intelligibility as the base we would estimate that there are perhaps as many as 100 Miao languages in Southeast Asia. In fact, taking intelligibility alone as the criterion we would estimate that there are perhaps 100 Miao languages in southwestern China.

Table 53: Background information on the Miao languages cited

<i>Language</i>	<i>Branch</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of speakers</i>
① Hekou Hmong	Western	China/Yunnan/Honghe (Hekou...)	ca. 500,000
② Kaili Hmu-Qanao	Central	China/Guizhou/Kaili (Kaili...)	total ca. 1,800,000
③ Huayuan Qoxung	Eastern	China/Hunan/Xiangxi (Huayuan...)	ca. 50,000
④ Weining Ahmao	Between Central/Western	China/Guizhou/Bijie (Weining...)	ca. 350,000

References

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2000. *Classifier: A Typology of Noun Categorization Devices*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bisang, Walter. 1993. Classifiers, quantifiers and class nouns in Hmong. *Studies in Language* 17.1:1-51.
- Bisang, Walter. 1996. Areal typology and grammaticalization. *Studies in Language* 20.3:519-597.
- Bisang, Walter. 1999. Classifiers in East and Southeast Asian languages: counting and beyond. *Numeral Types and Changes Worldwide*, ed. by Jadranka Gvozdanović, 113-185. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bisang, Walter. 2002. Classification and the evolution of grammatical structures: a universal perspective. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung (STUF)* 55.3: 289-308.
- Diessel, Holger. 1999. *Demonstratives: Form, Function, and Grammaticalization*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Gerner, Matthias. 2006. Noun classifiers in Kam and Chinese Kam-Tai languages: their morphosyntax, semantics and history. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 34.2:237-305.
- Gerner, Matthias. 2009a. Deictic features of demonstratives: a typological survey with special reference to the Miao group. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 54.1:43-90.
- Gerner, Matthias. 2009b. Instruments as verb classifiers in Kam (Dong). *Linguistics* 47.3:697-742.
- Gerner, Matthias. (forthcoming). Verb classifiers in East Asia. To be published in *Worldwide Verb Classification*, ed. by William McGregor, Eva Schultze-Berndt & Thekla Wiebusch. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Gerner, Matthias, and Walter Bisang. 2009. Inflectional classifiers in Weining Ahmao: mirror of the history of a people. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 30.1:183-218.
- Greenberg, Joseph H. 1974. Numeral classifiers and substantival number: problems in the genesis of a linguistic type. *Proceedings of the 11th International Congress of Linguists*, 17-37. Bologna, Italy.
- Li, Charles N., and Sandra A. Thompson. 1981. *Mandarin Chinese: A Functional Reference Grammar*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Matthews, Stephen, and Virginia Yip. 1994. *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Mottin, Jean. 1981. *Contes et légendes Hmong Blanc*. Bangkok: Don Bosco Press.
- Niederer, Barbara. 1998. *Les langues Hmong-Mjen (Miáo-Yáo): Phonologie historique*. München: LINCOM Europa.

- Wang, Deguang. 1986. Weining Miaoyu huayu cailiao [Language material in the Weining dialect of the Miao language]. *Minzu Yuwen* 1986.3:69-80.
- Wang, Deguang. 1987. Guizhou Weining Miaoyu liangci shiyi [Additional remarks on the classifiers of the Miao language in Weining, Guizhou province]. *Minzu Yuwen* 1987.5:36-38.
- Wang, Fushi. 1957. Guizhou Weining Miaoyu liangci [The classifier in the Weining dialect of the Miao language]. *Yuyan Yanjiu* 2:75-121.
- Wang, Fushi. 1972. The classifier in the Weining dialect of the Miao language in Kweichow. *Miao and Yao Linguistic Studies: Selected Articles in Chinese* (translated by Yü-hung Chang & Kwo-ray Chu), ed. by Herbert C. Purnell, 111-185. Ithaca: Cornell University.
- Wang, Fushi. 1985. *Miaoyu Jianzhi* [An Outline Grammar of Miao]. Beijing: Nationalities Press.
- Xiong, Yuyou, and Diana Cohen. 2005. *Miao-Han-Ying Xuexi Shiyong Shouce* [Student's Practical Miao-Chinese-English Handbook]. Kunming: Yunnan Nationalities Publishing House.

[Received 3 December 2009; revised 22 March 2010; accepted 15 April 2010]

Matthias Gerner
Department of Chinese, Translation & Linguistics
B 7704 Academic Building
City University of Hong Kong
83 Tat Chee Avenue
Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR, China
mgerner@cityu.edu.hk

Walter Bisang
Institut für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft
Universität Mainz FB 14.2
Jakob Welder-Weg 18
D-55099 Mainz
Germany
wbisang@mail.uni-mainz.de

在孤立型語言中的屈折量詞： 威寧苗語的稀有現象

馬嘉思

香港城市大學

Walter Bisang

德國美因茲大學

本文分析了在孤立型語言中少見的量詞系統。威寧苗語是中國貴州西部苗瑤語系中的一種語言，每個量詞可有十二種屈折變化的形式，在亞洲其他的孤立型語言中沒有這種現象，包括其他苗語也不存在這種現象，除威寧苗語外，其他語言的每個量詞只是一個單獨的詞，不能有屈折變化。本文著重從共時語音、語義、語用及句法結構的角度分析了威寧苗語的量詞系統。並在文章附錄列出了三種苗語和威寧苗語對應關係的量詞。

關鍵詞：屈折量詞，大小量詞，索引，威寧苗語