A web of relations : a grammar of rGyalrong Jiǎomùzú (Kyom-kyo) dialects

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CHAPTER 4

NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

4.0   *Introduction*

In this chapter I describe nouns and noun adjuncts as used in Jiǎomùzú. Nouns can be the head of a noun phrase. In order to facilitate the discussion of nouns and noun adjuncts I give an overview of how the noun phrase is constructed in section 4.1.

Section 4.2 discusses features of nouns in three subsections. Subsection 4.2.a describes the nature of the noun and nominal prefixes. Jiǎomùzú has four nominal prefixes. My hypothesis is that prefixes *ta-* and *tǝ-* show the relation of the speaker with his environment. Objects in closer proximity to the speaker are marked with *tǝ-* and objects more distal or unrelated have prefix *ta-*. The animal prefixes *k^h-* and *k-* mark non-mammal and mammal, respectively. Subsection 4.2.b looks at distinctions in nouns. Beyond common and proper nouns Jiǎomùzú also distinguishes for animacy and countability of nouns. Both are expressed through number marking. Collectivity and definiteness are not marked distinctions for Jiǎomùzú nouns. The third subsection, 4.2.c, discusses derivational morphology. Derivation of nouns is common and employs both compounding and nominalisation. Compounding puts two words, most often nouns, together to form a new noun. Nominalisation makes use of nominalising prefixes *kǝ-*, *tǝ-*, *sa-* and suffix *-pa* to change words from other categories, such as verbs, into nouns, or to form new nouns out of already existing ones. Derivational morphology also marks gender and diminutives. There are no inherent gender categories but nouns are marked for gender when needed with the use of indigenous markers *-za* and *-mu* for male and female respectively, or with borrowed markers from Tibetan. Diminutives are formed with suffix *-puʔ*, from 'child' or *-tsa*, 'small'. Inflectional morphology, described in subsection 4.2.d, marks for number (including honorifics) as well as employing pronominal marking to form genitives. Number marking derives from the personal pronouns. Singular remains unmarked, dual employs *-ndʒ* and plural has *-ɲo*. Plural marking is also used to form honorifics. For vocatives nouns that express kinship terms are used, with the nominal prefix of the noun replaced by *a-*. Genitives, marked by a pronominal prefix on the noun, can express a host of different relations between two arguments. The first term in a genitive is the possessor while the second term, the noun on which the head marking appears, is the head and the possessed.

The last section of the chapter, 4.3, deals with noun adjuncts. The Jiǎomùzú dialects have a contrast marker, discussed in subsection 4.3.a, and a marker for indefiniteness which is described in subsection 4.3.b. Subsection 4.3.c deals with numerals and quantifiers, while subsection 4.3.d describes classifiers. Subsection 4.3.e contains a discussion of a discourse marker, the prominence marker *kǝ*. Contrast marker *tǝ* distinguishes a constituent from all other objects in the environment. Indefiniteness marker *ki* derives from a numeral meaning 'one' and is used in the sense of 'a' or 'one'.

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The marker also functions to introduce new topics in a discourse. Jiǎomùzú has a range of indigenous numerals and quantifiers. Depending on the context, speakers also often use Tibetan or Chinese numerals. Though Jiǎomùzú has classifiers, there are not many. Often nouns or other words are pressed into service when a classifier is needed. Discourse marker *kə*, finally, is a prominence marker which gives emphasis or prominence to one or more constituents in a sentence. Prominence marking also ensures that the subject keeps prominence, even if it is not in subject position, and it tracks prominence in complex sentences with switched subjects. The marker *kə* is usually considered an ergativity marker in other studies on rGyalrong. In Jiǎomùzú *kə* can and does mark ergativity, but it is also used to signal other functions, such as prominence and tracking of referential continuity. I have chosen to call it a 'prominence marker' rather than 'ergativity marker'.

4.1   *Building a noun phrase*

Before the head of a noun phrase there can be different constituents, usually locatives or the first term of a genitive construction, the possessor. The head of the noun phrase can be followed by adjectivals, which in turn can be modified by adverbs and expressives, and by numerals, quantifiers and classifiers. After these follow demonstratives. The noun phrase concludes with a contrast marker or an indefiniteness marker. All of these building blocks are optional. Only the head of the noun phrase is obligatory. The entire noun phrase can be marked for number by suffixing a number marker to the final building block of the phrase. Finally, a noun phrase can be marked by prominence marker *kə* which indicates the prominence of the noun phrase in the sentence.

Nouns, demonstratives and certain quantifiers can function as the head of a noun phrase. In this chapter I use nouns as the head of noun phrases, as in (1), where *tapuʔ*, 'boy' is the head of *tapuʔ kətsə*, 'the little boy', which is the subject, and *popotʰaŋ*, from Chinese 泡泡糖 *pàopàotáng*, 'bubblegum' is the object:

(1)   tapuʔ kətsə nə   popotʰaŋ¤   to-ndza-w.
        child small CON   bubblegum PFT-eat-3s
        The small child chewed gum.

Nouns can also be the predicate of a sentence with a copula:

(2)   ndə-ɲo   sloppən   ŋos-jn
        that-p   teacher   be-3p
        They are teachers.

In example (2) *sloppən*, 'teacher', is the predicate connected to the subject *ndəɲo*, 'they', by the linking verb *ŋos*, 'be'.

Noun phrases have to occur before the verb phrase in a sentence:

(3)　　təzapuʔ　bebe　　'na-ndza-w　　　　* təzapuʔ 'na-ndza-w bebe

　　　　boy　　noodles　OBS-eat-3s　　　　* bebe 'na-ndza-w təzapuʔ

　　　　The boy is eating noodles.　　　　* 'nandza-w təzapuʔ bebe

The subject and object in a simple declarative sentence occur in first and second position respectively. But topicalisation occurs frequently if there is no danger of ambiguity, see the section on topicalisation in section 8.1 of the chapter on sentences.

The smallest noun phrase consists of one noun, which is the head. The head can then be modified in a variety of ways by noun adjuncts. Terms that modify the head noun are placed after the noun. Usual modifiers are numerals and adjectives. Adjectives are nominalised forms of stative verbs, which I discuss in section 7.1 of the chapter on verbs:

(4)　　paktsa　　　　paktsa kəsam　　　　paktsa kə-neʔk

　　　　piglet　　　　piglet three　　　　piglet NOM-black

　　　　　　　　　　three piglets　　　　black piglets

Numerals occur after adjectivals. Several adjectivals can occur in one noun phrase. They are placed in a sequence that cannot be interrupted by a word from another lexical category such as a numeral. The positions of the terms that qualify the head noun are interchangeable if the terms are of the same lexical category. For example, in (5) *kəneʔk* and *kəsanərgaʔ*, both nominalised stative verbs that function as adjectives here, can change position, with 'black' in second and 'cute' in first, without changing the meaning of the sentence. Changing the internal order of the sequence of adjectives makes no difference in meaning:

(5)　　paktsa kə-neʔk　　　kə-sa-nərgaʔ　　　kəsam ndoʔ

　　　　piglet　NOM-black　NOM-CAUS-cute　three　have

　　　　There are three black, cute piglets.

　　　　paktsa kə-sa-nərgaʔ　　　kə-neʔk　　　kəsam ndoʔ

　　　　piglet　NOM-CAUS-cute　NOM-black　three　have

　　　　There are three cute, black piglets.

　　　　* paktsa kəsanərgaʔ kəsam kəneʔk ndoʔ

There is no syntactic limit on how many terms can be added, though the naturalness of an utterance becomes strained usually somewhere around the point of three or four terms.

Adjectives can be modified by adverbs, such as adverb of degree *makəndʐa*, 'very' in (6) or expressives, as *ŋkʰukŋkʰuk*, 'an ugly kind of black resembling the colour of pitch', in example (7).

Modifiers of adjectives are placed after the adjective and cannot be separated from it by other constituents:

(6)   paktsa kə-neʔk   makəndʐa kəsam ndoʔ
        piglet NOM-black   very   three have
        There are three very black piglets.

        * paktsa kəneʔk kəsam makəndʐa 'ndo

(7)   paktsa kə-neʔk   ŋkʰukŋkʰuk kəsam ndoʔ
        piglet NOM-black   like.ugly   three have
        There are three piglets so pitch-black that they're ugly.

        * paktsa kənək kəsam ŋkʰukŋkʰuk ndoʔ

Adverbials only cover the scope of the adjective after which they are positioned. In (8) *makəndʐa*, 'very' only covers *kəneʔk*, 'black'. And *tsa*, 'very' in (9) only covers *kəsanərgaʔ*, 'cute', not the other adjectives *kəneʔk* and *kətsʰo*, 'fat'. If the adverb should modify all stative verbs it has to be repeated after each one. In (10) *h-* in *hana*, 'down there' is a distal marker:

(8)   paktsa kə-neʔk   makəndʐa kə-tsʰo   kə-sa-nərgaʔ   tə
        piglet NOM-black   very   NOM-fat   NOM-CAUS-cute   C
        I'll sell the fat, cute, very black piglet.

        ŋa kə-mpʰel-ŋ   ŋos
        I NOM-sell-1s   be

(9)   tʈʰuŋgu w-əŋgi-j   paktsa kə-neʔk   kə-tsʰo   kə-sa-nərgaʔ
        stable 3s:GEN-inside-LOC piglet NOM-black NOM-fat   NOM-CAUS-cute
        The very cute, black and fat piglets that are in the stable are bKra-shis'.

        tsa   tə pkraʃis   wu-paktsa   ˈnə-ŋos
        very   C bKra.shis 3s:GEN-piglet   EV-be

(10)   h-ana   tʃe paktsa kəsam tə kə-sa-nərgaʔ tsa   ˈnə-ŋos
        D-down.there   LOC piglet three C NOM-CAUS   cute   very   EV-be
        The three piglets over there are very cute.

Nouns can be modified by quantifiers such as *wuvjot*, 'many', which come after adjectives and are in most cases mutually exclusive with numerals because of semantic clashes:

(11)   paktsa kə-neʔk   wuvjot ndoʔ
       piglet NOM-black many have
       There are many black piglets.

       * paktsa kəneʔk kəsam wuvjot ndoʔ

Classifiers modify nouns, often occurring after numerals:

(12)   ʃokʃoʔk kəsam pʰjar ndoʔ
       paper   three CL   have
       There are three sheets of paper.

Though demonstratives can either be placed in front or after the noun, the preference is to place them in front if there are many other noun adjuncts in the noun phrase. If the demonstrative comes first, it links to the head noun with a genitive construction, as shown in the examples under (13):

(13)   ndə ma-'nə-haʔw   tətʰa ma-'nə-haʔw
       DEM NEG-OBS-good   book NEG-OBS-good
       That is not good.   The book is not good.

       ndə w-ətʰa   ma-'nə-haʔw   tətʰa ndə ma-'nə-haʔw
       DEM 3s:GEN-book NEG-OBS-good   book DEM NEG-OBS-good
       That book is not good.   That book is not good.

Demonstratives come after numerals, adjectives, quantifiers and classifiers. But if the head noun is modified by numerous other terms, the demonstrative usually appears before the noun rather than at the end. It often forms a genitive construction with the noun:

(14)   ʃokʃoʔk kə-neʔk   kəsam pʰjar tʃəʔ tə ŋa ŋə-je   ŋos
       paper   NOM-black   three CL   DEM C I 1s-POSS be
       These three sheets of black paper are mine.

       tʃəʔ wu-ʃokʃoʔk   kə-neʔk   kəsam pʰjar tə ŋa ŋə-je   ŋos
       this 3s:GEN-paper NOM-black   three CL   C I 1s-POSS be
       These three sheets of black paper are mine.

A noun phrase with its head noun and several noun adjuncts can be modified by contrast marker *tə* or indefiniteness marker *ki*. The markers are mutually exclusive. Also, *ki* does not occur with numerals or demonstratives, though *tə* can occur with both:

(15)   raʔs   kə-neʔk   ŋkʰukŋkʰuk tə   wuvjot ndoʔ
        cloth   NOM-black   like.ugly   C   many   have
        There is a lot of ugly black cloth.

(16)   paktsa kə-neʔk   makəndʐa ki   ndoʔ
        piglet NOM-black   very   IDEF have
        There is a very black piglet.

        * paktsa kəneʔk makəndʐa kəsam ki ndoʔ
        * paktsa kəneʔk ki tə ndoʔ
        * paktsa kəneʔk tə ki ndoʔ
        * paktsa kənək ndə ki ndoʔ

Other arguments such as locatives can be incorporated into a noun phrase. Such arguments are added before the head noun if they modify the entire noun phrase. An argument that modifies only the head noun will be placed after the noun. Complex noun phrases can be topicalised by putting them in the first slot in the sentence, as shown in (17):

(17a)   [tʈʰuŋgu w-əŋgi-j   paktsa kə-neʔk   kə-tsʰo   kə-sa-nərgaʔ
         stable 3s:GEN-inside-LOC piglet NOM-black NOM-fat   NOM-CAUS-cute
         The very cute, black, fat piglet that is in the stable, I will sell it.

         tsa   tə] ŋa mpʰel-ŋ[100]
         very C   I   sell-1s

(17b)   soʃnu   ŋa [tʈʰuŋgu w-əŋgi-j   paktsa kəsam kə-neʔk
         tomorrow I   stable 3s:GEN-inside-LOC piglet three NOM-black
         Tomorrow I will sell the three black fat very cute piglets that are in the stable.

         kə-tsʰo   kə-sa-nərgaʔ   makəndʐa] kə-mpʰel   ŋos-ŋ
         NOM-fat   NOM-CAUS-cute   very   NOM-sell   be-1

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[100] The verb *kampʰel*, 'sell' has a dialect variant *kampʰer* which is used on the Jiǎomùzú grasslands. In this study I use only *kampʰel*.

(17c) soʃnu   ŋa [tʈʰuŋgu w-əŋgi-j   sonam   wu-je   paktsa kəsam
       tomorrow I   stable   3s:GEN-inside-LOC bSod.nams 3s-POSS piglet three
       Tomorrow I will sell bSod-nams' three black fat very cute piglets that are in the

       kə-neʔk   kə-tsʰo   kə-sa-nərgaʔ   makəndʐa] kə-mpʰel   ŋos-ŋ
       NOM-black NOM-fat NOM-CAUS-cute very   NOM-sell   be-1s
       stable.

(17d)   * sonam wuje paktsa tʈʰuŋgu wəŋgi kəneʔk kətsʰo kəsam tə ŋa kəmpʰelŋ ŋos

Placement of terms is flexible and depends on the meaning a speaker wants to express.
A term only modifies the term right before or after it, not other terms that are on the same level:

(18a) ŋa sonam   wu-je   tʈʰuŋgu w-əŋgi-j   paktsa   kəsam tə
       I bSod.nams 3s-POSS stable   3s:GEN-inside-LOC piglet   three C
       I'll sell the three piglets that are in bSodnam's stable.

       kə-mpʰel-ŋ   ŋos
       NOM-sell-1s be

(18b) ŋa tʈʰuŋgu w-əŋgi-j   sonam   wu-je paktsa kəsam tə
       I   stable 3s:GEN-inside-LOC bSod.nams 3s-POSS piglet three C
       I'll sell bSod-nams' three piglets that are in the stable.

       kə-mpʰel-ŋ   ŋos
       NOM-sell-1s be

In example (18a) *sonam wuje* modifies *tʈʰuŋgu*, 'stable', while in (18b) it modifies *paktsa*, 'piglet'.

4.2   *Features of nouns*

a.   The concept of noun in Jiǎomùzú

Consider the following example:

(19)   coktsə w-ərka-j   tətʰa ndoʔ
         table   3s:GEN-surface-LOC book have
         There are books on the table.
         There is a book on the table.

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The noun *tətʰa*, 'book' in (19) signals the class of all objects that qualify as 'book'. The information conveyed by the sentence is simply that the category 'book' is present on the table. The notion of 'book' here does not refer to a specific member of the category 'book' but rather to the concept of 'book', as opposed to all other possible objects. It is impossible to render sentences such as (19), which are exceedingly common in Jiǎomùzú, adequately in English, where some degree of definiteness, expressed by articles and number marking, is obligatory. Only if a speaker wants to give details about the one or several objects on the table that represent the category 'book' do number marking and other specifics occur in a sentence. In the following examples (20a) and (20b) show the use of a noun in its generic sense, representing an entire class of objects. Example (20c) shows the same noun but referring to individual entities of the class:

(20a)   təjmoʔk   ka-ʒgu   w-əʒak   ji-ˈa-vi
        mushroom   INF-mature   3s:GEN-time   PFT-NEV-come₁
        The mushrooms are ripe.

(20b)   pejvaʔ   təjmoʔk   ˈna-məca
        this.year   mushroom   OBS-many
        This year there are many mushrooms.

(20c)   ndʒ-əjmoʔk-ɲo   nə-nə-kro-ndʒ
        3d:GEN-mushroom-p   PFT-EREFL-divide-3d
        The two of them divided up their mushrooms.

In examples (20a) and (20b) the speaker makes general observations about mushrooms. It is mushroom season, and there are many of them this year. In both cases it is clear that his statement includes the entire population of mushrooms within the speaker's frame of reference. Undoubtedly there are individual mushrooms that are not ripe yet. There may also be some places where mushrooms are less abundant than in others. But since the speaker disregards the differences between individual mushrooms and gives a statement about the overall situation, the noun is understood to cover the concept of 'mushroom'. Rather like a collective noun, *təjmoʔk*, 'mushroom', remains unmarked for number. Example (20c) gives a different situation. Here two people have gone out to pick mushrooms. At the end of the day they divide their harvest between them. Now it concerns individually known and countable mushrooms. Accordingly, *təjmoʔk* is marked for plural. Note that the possessive is marked by third person dual *ndʒ-* prefixed to the noun. In light of the character of the Jiǎomùzú nouns as described above, it is not surprising that the Jiǎomùzú dialects do not have articles.

The nominal prefixes: ta-, tə-, kʰ- *and* k-

Jiǎomùzú nouns come in two formally distinguished categories, those that have nominal prefixes and those that do not. Earlier studies on rGyalrong all mention the occurrence of noun markers.[101] The use of noun prefixes *ta-* and *tə-* is attested for a wide range of dialects throughout the rGyalrong language area. Lín Xiàngróng, for Zhuōkèjī in the Central rGyalrong dialect area, reports the use of both *tə-* and *ta-*, which he considers variant forms of one prefix.[102] Mansier, who wrote a phonology of the Southern rGyalrong dialect of Xiǎojīn, gives *tə-* as well as *ta-*, as does Jacques for the Northern rGyalrong dialect of Japhug (Chábǎo), though there the phonetics are slightly different.[103] Sun[104] noticed for Cǎodēng, a Northern rGyalrong dialect, that most body part terms occur with *tə-* while *qa-* often occurs in animal and plant names, but thinks that the prefixes are semantically empty and their distribution random. However, every other affix in rGyalrong studied so far does carry meaning. It would be unexpected for the prefixes of a major category such as nouns to be semantically empty. To test this idea I checked the occurrence of nominal prefixes in the Jiǎomùzú dialects in a wordlist that I originally used for phonological data. The list was not designed for semantic analysis, and a full study of the noun prefixes from data properly classed according to semantic domains is beyond the scope of this study. But, considering my very preliminary findings, such a study might well be worthwhile.

The Jiǎomùzú dialects have many nouns that are prefixed by either *ta-* or *tə-*. Considered here are only those nouns that have a prefix *ta-* or *tə-* that can be replaced by a pronominal marker to form a genitive construction, which is the test for noun markers:

(21)   ta-wo   head   tə-ntok   beak
         ta-rmoʔk   thunder   tə-rnok   brains
         ta-pa   father   tə-mgri   arrow
         ta-sti   bladder   tə-rpa   axe
         ta-ru   thread   tə-ʃuʔ   berry

Beside the use of *ta-* and *tə-* I found that many animal names have prefix *kʰ-* or *k-*:

(22)   kʰ-orok   ant   k-əmbuʔ   calf
         kʰ-ajpololo butterfly   k-artseʔs   deer
         kʰ-əna   dog   k-əwas   fly
         kʰ-anɟararaʔ cicada   k-ətʰwe   fox
         kʰ-alɟu   hawk   k-əpar   jackal

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[101] Lín (1993: 161, 162), Nagano (2003: 471), Huáng 1993, Jīn (1958: 72-76), Sun 1998.

[102] Lín (1993: 626-730).

[103] Mansier (1983:171-288); Jacques (2004: 483-519).

[104] Sun (1998: 112).

But there are also numerous nouns that have no prefix at all:

(23) peʔs   badger   patʃu   bird

tsʰar   bharal   vaŋar   buzzard

zdi   stone wall   mbotan   ball

ʒbruʔ   coracle   spoʔs   incense

zgrok   bracelet   ardi   coloured material braided into a man's hair

Some words can occur with or without prefix. For these words the use of the prefix apparently depends on the speaker's preference:

(24) təkʰoŋbe   viscera   kʰoŋbe   viscera

kʰərŋamoŋ,   camel   rŋamoŋ   camel

kərŋamoŋ

Working with a wordlist of 998 nouns I found no phonological constraints for the occurrence of *ta*- and *tə*-, but the noun prefixes have an intriguing distribution. Occurrences of the prefixes *ta*- and *tə*- represent only 34% of the total wordlist. The percentages for the individual prefixes are nearly the same, with 16% for *ta*- and 18% for *tə*-. This is significantly different from the Jiǎomùzú verbs, which are consistently marked by the verbal prefixes *ka*- and *kə*-. The hypothesis of earlier studies that most nouns are prefixed with either *tə*- or *ta*- turns out to be false for the Jiǎomùzú dialects and must be discarded. The obvious next question is where these prefixes do occur and if they pattern in any significant way. I have found that, in my list of nouns, prefixes *tə*- and *ta*- do not occur with names of animals, apart from the word for 'bear', *təwaʔm*. The prefixes do appear in body parts, which are also used for humans, such as *tajiʔk*, 'paw, hand, arm'. Hardly any nouns that refer to temporal or spatial concepts have *ta*- or *tə*-. The category of abstract nouns consists of only sixteen words, which probably renders percentages of prefixes not meaningful. For other categories of nouns, the distribution of the prefixes is uneven. The table below shows the distribution of *ta*- and *tə*- in different categories of nouns, given as percentage of the total number of nouns in that category:

category	tə-, %	ta-, %	ta- and tə-, %
abstract nouns	19	0	19
animals		təwaʔm (bear)	[17.5]
			body parts
human body	50	27	77
daily life	17	17	34
human affairs	15	25	40
nature	10	21	31
plants, agriculture	12	15	27
miscellaneous	0	0	0
temporal and spatial	5	15	20

The category of nouns that refer to the human body has by far and away the highest occurrence of *ta-* and *tə-*, at 77%, with the categories of human affairs and daily life in second and third place respectively. The human affairs category predominantly contains nouns that cover human relations such as kinship terms. The daily life category covers most of domestic life in and around the house and in the village, with nouns for many objects used in daily life. The first tentative conclusion is that the meaning of *ta-* and *tə-* should be sought in the closest circle of life of a rGyalrong speaker, with the speaker at the centre. This interpretation is consistent with the analysis of *tə-* in the pronoun *təɟo*, 'self, oneself, one', see section 3.1.e of the chapter on pronouns. If the pronominal prefix *tə-* is connected to the meaning of the prefix *tə-* that co-occurs with nouns, then maybe it is not a coincidence that this prefix occurs so often with nouns referring to the human body and body parts, implying the body as the locus of 'self'. In the category human body half of the nouns have the prefix *tə-*, emphasising the link between oneself and one's own body. In all other categories *tə-* occurs in far smaller percentages only. Maybe also important in this context is contrast marker *tə*, see below, which functions to define and set apart one person or object from all possible other persons and objects, creating a sphere of 'self' as opposed to 'other'. If this interpretation of nominal prefix *tə-* is correct, it is also understandable that the categories that score the next highest percentages for occurrence of *tə-* are the category of nouns referring to daily life and the category of human affairs. For the farming population of Jiǎomùzú apparently the prefix *tə-* is used predominantly with those nouns that describe the closest circle of life, body, house, village and fields, as the most intimate, one's very own, the in-category, so to speak.

So what about prefix *ta-*? Though the overall percentages of occurrence for *ta-* and *tə-* are similar, their individual distribution is not. In fact, in the three main categories for these prefixes their distribution is almost complementary. For the category human body *ta-* scores only 27%, whereas *tə-* stands at 50%. The prefixes are evenly distributed in the category for daily life. And for the category of human relationships *ta-* scores 50% while *tə-* only has 15%. My hypothesis is that prefix *ta-* mostly occurs with words that refer to entities that are outside of the category 'self', but with which the person at the centre of the category 'self' has a certain kind of relationship, such as family

members or relatives as expressed in the human relations category. Words prefixed with *ta-* belong in the category 'other', but it is still a category closely connected with the inner circle of 'self' as expressed by *tə-*. Support for this hypothesis comes from the categories of nouns referring to daily life and plant and agriculture respectively. For the daily life category the percentages for *ta-* and *tə-* are the same at 17% each, with *ta-* slightly more prevalent than *tə-* in the category of plants and agriculture. Outside of the direct sphere of the human body, where *tə-* scores very high because it concerns the physical reality of the category 'self', the spheres of domestic life and domesticated nature in the form of agriculture and plants are part of the self's immediate environment, where the category 'self' can be projected outward, but also includes many instances of relationships and objects that are in the category 'other, but connected' marked by *ta-*. In the category that groups nouns referring to nature at large, this division is emphasised even more. Prefix *tə-* scores only 9%, indicating most of the words in this category are not seen as part of the 'self' category and are perceived by speakers as outside of the circle of their domestic world. They are 'other'. Prefix *ta-* however scores 21% in this category, showing that many things of nature are in the category 'other, but connected'. My theory is that the Jiǎomùzú dialects preserve, in the nominal prefixes *tə-* and *ta-*, a system of marking all entities, objects and relations in a speaker's world according to concentric circles. Words marked with *tə-* form the smallest circle. Words with *ta-* are the middle circle, overlapping to some extent with the inner circle. And in the outer circle are all the words that are 'other, not connected'. Prefix *tə-* puts boundaries between oneself and all else, emphasising an inward focus. Prefix *ta-* signals the relation between two disparate entities, emphasising an outward focus.
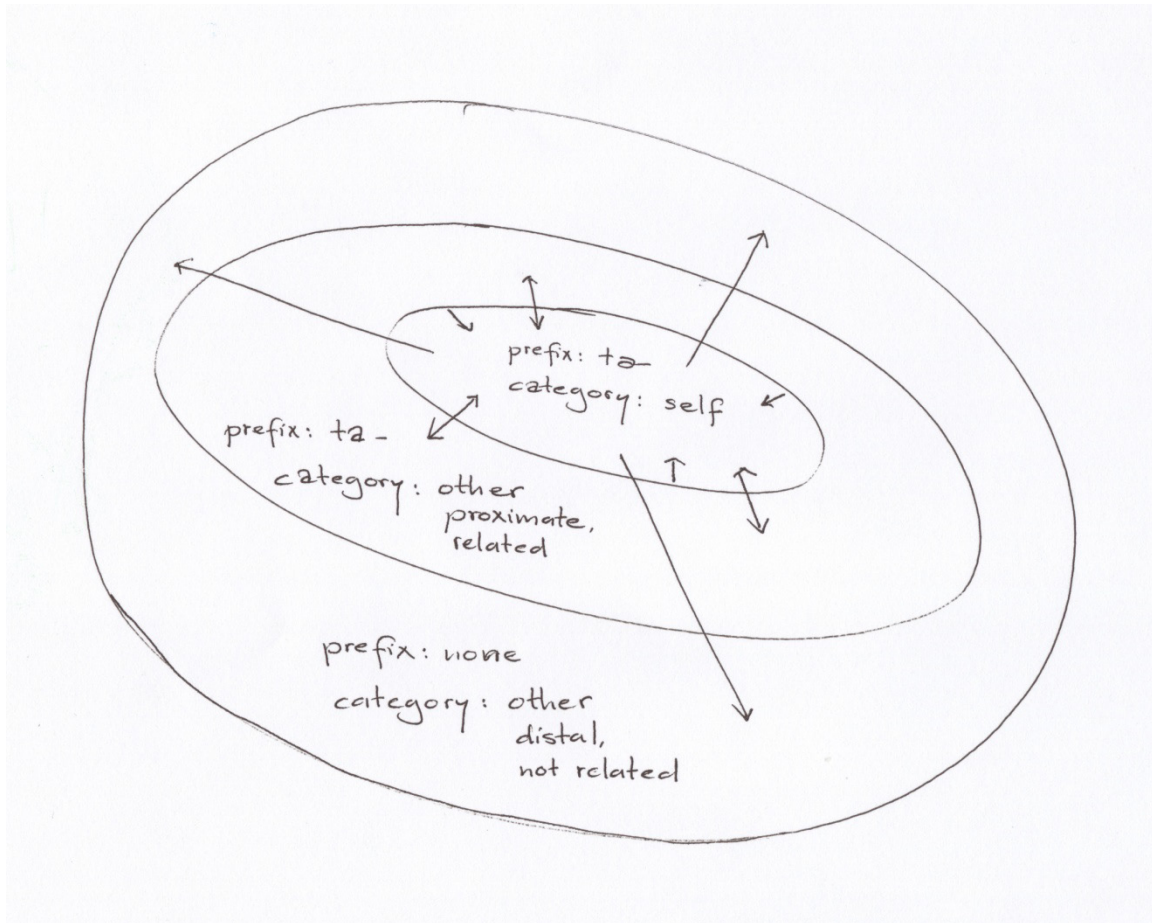
GRAPH 1: NOUN PREFIXES *ta-* AND *tə-*

This is not to say that in the innermost circle there are no unprefixed nouns or nouns with *ta-*, or that *tə-* does not occur outside the smallest circle. It is rather a matter of clustering, with the heaviest concentration of *tə-* in the smallest circle, *ta-* in circle two, and unprefixed nouns predominant in the boundless outer rim.

How do the prefixes k^h- and *k*- relate to the view of the world as set out above? Both k^h- and *k*- occur here and there in the wordlist, throughout the different categories. In some cases it concerns the nominaliser *kə-*, as in *kəʃmo*, 'thief', literally 'the one who steals' and *kəʃpət*, 'livestock', literally 'the ones that are bred'. Prefix k^h- occurs occasionally, for example in k^h*əzaʔ*, 'bowl'. However, there is one category where the prefixes are remarkably prevalent: roughly half of all animal names are prefixed by either k^h- or *k*-. A quick check shows that *k*- occurs mostly with mammals, while k^h- indicates all other categories of animal such as insects, amphibians, snakes, birds:

(25)	k^horoʔk	ant	kəmbuʔ	calf
	k^hajpololo	butterfly	kət^{h}we	fox
	k^hapriʔ	snake	kartseʔs	deer
	k^hovulolo	tadpole	kəruʔk	lynx
	k^halɉu	sparrow hawk	kalaʔ	rabbit

There are some notable exceptions to this rule. In the category mammals the word for 'dog', *kʰəna*, has the aspirated marker. A possible explanation for this is that *kʰəna* may be cognate to literary Tibetan ཁྱི *khyi*, 'dog' or a loan from Tibetan. Other words are less easily explained. For example, there are in my list two aberrant forms with *k-*: in *karma*, 'crossoptilon' (a kind of bird) and *kəwas*, 'fly'. In the *kʰ-* category I found *kʰaɲuk*, for 'pika' and *kʰəʃpʰeʔt*, 'marmot'. I have not found an explanation for these aberrant forms.[105] Also I have no explanation for the fact that about half of the vocabulary of animal names has neither *kʰ-* nor *k-*. In any case, there are more than enough words with the 'animal prefixes' *kʰ-* and *k-* to sustain the hypothesis that these prefixes are part of a system of noun prefixes which includes the concentric circles of 'self', 'other but related or near' and 'other and far' as well as the category 'animals', subdivided in mammal and non-mammal. The category for animals does not necessarily fit the idea of proximate and distal that is expressed in *tə-* and *ta-* but rather shows that nouns in this category belong to sentient beings, excluding humans. The suffix *-ɟo* which occurs only in pronouns that refer to humans, as discussed in section 3.1 of the chapter on pronouns, supports the idea that the Jiǎomùzú dialects distinguish between the categories of 'human' and 'other'. In essence, *ta-* and *tə-*, *kʰ-* and *k-* are not really noun markers. They do not just mark the category noun, but signal specific meaning. However, for ease of reference I will refer to these four as noun markers.

The Jiǎomùzú dialects have borrowed vocabulary from Chinese as well as Tibetan. Loanwords from Chinese and Tibetan often occur without the common Jiǎomùzú noun prefixes. In fact, I have in my data only two Chinese loans that have a nominal prefix, *təpeki*, 'bedding', from Chinese 铺盖 *pūgai*, 'bedding, bedclothes' and *tacən*, 'injection', from Chinese 针 *zhēn*, 'needle, injection'. In the case of 'needle' *ta* may actually not be a nominal prefix but rather a phonologically adapted form of the Chinese verb 打 *dǎ*, 'hit', which combines with 'needle' to form the verbal compound *dǎ zhēn*, 'give an injection'. In Jiǎomùzú such verbal compounds when borrowed are frequently interpreted as nouns, so that they then occur with a verb like *kaleʔt*, 'hit'. Loans from Tibetan occur with a noun marker more frequently, see the examples below. Example (26) shows Jiǎomùzú common nouns that are loans from Tibetan and Chinese:

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[105] Guillaume Jacques has pointed out that there may be historical reasons for the aberrant forms. The Central rGyalrong dialects do not have uvulars, but the Northern dialects have uvulars as well as velars. The word for 'fly', *kəwas*, has a velar in Ja-phug (βɣaza, 'fly') but most animal names there have a uvular, apparently without distinguishing between mammal and non-mammal: qachɣa, 'fox'; qala 'rabbit'; qapri, 'snake' (Jacques, personal communication). It may be that Jiǎomùzú had velars as well as uvulars historically and that some of the aberrant synchronic forms have their roots in forms that have disappeared.

(26)	mbroŋ	wild yak	literary Tibetan: འབྲོང་ *'brong*
	rɟaŋkə wumdoʔk	green	literary Tibetan: ལྗང་ཁུ *ljang-khu*
	blame	monk, lama	literary Tibetan: བླ་མ *bla-ma*
	rgambə	box	literary Tibetan: སྒམ *sgam*
	rŋamoŋ	camel	literary Tibetan: རྔ་མོང་ *rnga-mong*
	tʂʰaʔ	tea	Chinese: 茶 *chá*
	hajtsoʔ	chili pepper	Chinese: 辣椒 *làjiāo*
	pʰisijaŋ	leather chest	Chinese: 皮箱 *píxiāng*
	jaŋxwo	matches	Chinese: 洋火 *yánghuǒ*
	banteŋ	stool, bench	Chinese: 板凳 *bǎndèng*

Here are some examples of loans from Tibetan that do take the normal noun prefixes:

(27)	təsem	thought	literary Tibetan: བསམ་བློ *bsam-blo*
	təlaʔs	fortune, fate	literary Tibetan: ལས་དབང་ *las-dbang*
	təskaʔt	language, sound	literary Tibetan: སྐད *skad*
	təŋgo	beginning, head	literary Tibetan: མགོ *mgo*
	ʒak , taʒak	time	literary Tibetan: ཞག *zhag*
	təlo	(animal symbol of) year literary Tibetan: ལོ *lo*

All loanwords, including the ones from Chinese, do fit into the regular Jiǎomùzú patterns of morphology in that they inflect for number and take head marking to form genitives, see below.

b.   Distinctions in nouns

Jiǎomùzú nouns can be grouped according to three distinctions. There is first of all the large division between common nouns and proper nouns. Beyond that nouns can be grouped together in a category of animate and inanimate nouns and a category of count and non-count nouns. The distinctions between these categories are signalled by differences in number marking and, to some extent, by the scope of marking for definiteness. The distinctions are not indicated by differences in the form of the noun itself. A noun can belong to more than one category. For example, the noun *tarni*, 'gold', is a common noun as well as a non-count noun. In this section I give an overview of the different distinctions. There are no nouns that are inherently definite or indefinite. Indefiniteness is marked predominantly by the marker *ki*, while the contrast marker *tə* distinguishes, and thus defines, an entity from all other possible entities. The section finishes with a brief discussion of collective and

distributive nouns, leading to the conclusion that Jiǎomùzú does not distinguish for this category in its nouns.

Proper nouns and common nouns
Jiǎomùzú distinguishes between proper nouns and common nouns. Proper nouns indicate one specific member of the noun class such as *ɟakar*, 'India', *lhamo*, 'lHa-mo', or *renbamila*, '[the House] Renbamila'. Common nouns indicate any member of a subgroup of nouns, such as *tətʰa*, 'book' or *kʰəna*, 'dog'. Common nouns inflect for number:

(28)   kʰəna   dog
          kʰəna-ndʒ   two dogs (d)
          kʰəna-ɲo   dogs (p)

Proper nouns are frequently marked for associative plural, in which number marking occurs with a person's name, indicating not that there are several persons of the same name, but that there are several persons in the company of the person mentioned by name:

(29)   pkraʃis   bKra-shis
          pkraʃis-ndʒ   bKra-shis and one other person
          pkraʃis-ɲo   bKra-shis and several other people

Number marking does not normally occur on proper nouns that indicate geographic locations, such as names of countries. Constructions such as 'two Indias, one rich, one poor' cannot be formed with the use of dual marking:

(30)   * ɟakarndʒ ndoʔndʒ

If the situation requires a dual or plural form of such names, a numeral is used. The following example shows the use of two place names that often cause confusion:

(31)   daŋba   kəɲes   kə-ndoʔ   miʔ   kerek tə   gandzə danba
          Dānbā   two   NOM-have not.have one C   Gānzī Dānbā
          There are no two Dānbā's; there is one Dānbā in Gānzī and

          kərek tə   maerkʰaŋ   daŋba   ŋos
          one   C   Mǎěrkāng Dǎngbà be
          one Dǎngbà in Mǎěrkāng.

It is possible to use number marking on House names.[106] The noun then indicates the people of the house rather than several houses of the same name:

(32) zwaŋli   zwaŋli-ɲo   'mə-tə-ndoʔ-jn
      The House Zwangli Zwangli-p   Q-2-have-2p
                         People of the house of Zwangli, are you here?

Sentences such as example (32) are commonly used at village gatherings or in any other setting where the leader takes a head count and checks if all participants are present.

The number marking on the noun also occurs on the verb. The Jiǎomùzú dialects can leave implicit who exactly is with bKra-shis, giving only the number of people in the number suffix. The English gloss requires an explicit mention of who is with bKra-shis or resorts to constructions such as 'bKra-shis' party', 'the people with bKrashis':

(33) pkraʃis-ndʒ   ma-vi-ndʒ
      bKra.shis-3d   NEG-come₁-3d
      bKra-shis and [his friend] are not coming.

(34) harʈa-ɲo   tascok kə-leʔt   tʃʰi-jn   'nə-ŋos
      lHa.rgyal- p   letter NOM-write go₁-3p   EV-be
      lHa-rgyal [and his friends] are going to write letters.

In case the speaker wants to make clear who exactly will come with lHa-rgyal he can add the names of the company. Note that number markers are attached to the last syllable of the noun or noun phrase that they dualise or pluralise:

(35) pkraʃis   skalbzaŋ   harʈa-ɲo   tascok kə-leʔt   tʃʰi-jn   'nə-ŋos
      bKra.shis   sKal.bzang lHa.rgyal-p   letter NOM-write   go₁-3p   EV-be
      bKra-shis, sKal-bzang and lHa-rgyal are going to write letters.

For more on number marking, see section 4.2.d on inflectional morphology below.
Both proper nouns and common nouns form genitive constructions:

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[106] Traditional rGyalrong society is centred on the House. A House is a social unit which encompasses the House's buildings, land, and, in the past, taxes and labour service owed to the *tǔsī*. Terms such as 'family' or 'household' are not adequate, so I use the traditional term 'House' to refer to such extended family and economic structures.

(36) ɲi-sloppən   your teacher (2p)
      w-əska?t   his voice (3s)
      ŋ-ami?   my leg (1s)

      ɲi-pkraʃis   your bKra-shis (2p)
      wuɻoɲo ɲi-lhamo   their lHa-mo (3p)
      ji-comco   our Jiǎomùzú (1p)
      jini ji-adəŋtəŋ   our [House] Adingting

For more on genitives, see section 4.2.d on inflectional morphology below.

Animate and inanimate nouns
The Jiǎomùzú dialects distinguish the category of animacy for nouns. The difference shows in the
number marking on the verb. Animate nouns require number marking, whereas inanimate nouns do
not:

(37) tətʰa   ndo?   tətʰa   kəsam ndo?   * tətʰa kəsam ndo?jn
      book   have   book   three   have
      There is a book.   There are three books.
      There are books.

(38) ŋ-ajze   ndo?
      1s-older.brother have.
      I have an older brother.
      I have older brothers.

      ŋ-ajze   kəsam ndo?-jn
      1s:GEN-older.brother   three   have-3p
      I have three older brothers.

      *ŋajze kəsam ndo?
(39) w-əŋkʰu?   nə   wu-kʰakpe-ɲi   kə-ndo?
      3s:GEN-after   CON   3s:GEN-story-p   NOM-have
      Later, there were stories about him.

The animate category includes animals, but not plants:

(40) pak kəsam ndoʔ-jn   * pak kəsam ndoʔ
      pig three   have-3p
      There are three pigs.

      məntoʔk kəsam ndoʔ   * məntoʔk kəsam ndoʔjn
      flower   three   have
      There are three flowers.

Inanimate nouns normally do not mark for number on the noun itself either, but express plurality by adding a numeral or quantifier, as shown in (41a and b), though plural marking can occur, see (39) above and the discussion on count and non-count nouns below. The distinguishing fact for animacy is number marking on the verb, not on the noun:

(41a) ? məntoʔk-ɲo na-məca   (41b) məntoʔk kəʒu tə na-sna
       flower-p   PFT-many   flower   all   C   PFT-good
                                          All the flowers were good.

Sometimes an inanimate noun is understood to represent animate beings and is treated as an animate noun as to number marking:

(42) nənɉo tʰistok   ɉeʔm tə-ndoʔ-jn   kənes-zɉi-kəmɲi ɉeʔm caʔm ndoʔ-jn
      you   how.many house 2-have-2p   two-twenty-five   house about have-3p
      How many houses are there [in your village]? About twenty-five.

Though ɉeʔm, 'house', is an inanimate noun, the speaker obviously has the concept of households or family groups consisting of people in mind, and marks the verb in the second sentence for plural accordingly. Note that the plural marking on the verb in the question does not signal the plurality of ɉeʔm but rather of nənɉo, 'you', the subject. Even though nənɉo is singular, plural marking occurs because 'you' is a short form of address in which the speaker implies the wider meaning 'your home place'.

Though Jiǎomùzú employs an animacy hierarchy which influences the morphology of the verb in several ways, there is no marked difference in ranking between animate nouns and inanimate nouns, nor any difference between human and non-human. I discuss the animacy hierarchy extensively in section 7.2 of the chapter on verbs.

The distinction between animate and inanimate nouns, signalled through number marking is, to my knowledge, common throughout Jiǎomùzú. Only the nomadic pastoralists on the high altitude grasslands of the Jiǎomùzú Mùchǎng do not make the distinction. They would not use number marking on either sentence in example (38). When number marking does occur they interpret it as honorific marking, signalling respect being paid to the brothers because they are older. It may be

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that the Mùchăng pastoralists, who are bilingual in rGyalrong and a variety of nomad Amdo Tibetan, are influenced by the Tibetan verb system, which does not mark number on the verb.

Count and non-count nouns

Countable nouns are those that can be divided into individual entities, such as 'book, dog, flower'. Non-count nouns are considered continuous entities that have no natural boundaries, such as 'butter, information'. The usual rules for classifying nouns as count or non-count, namely whether a noun takes plural marking or can occur with an article or quantifier, can be applied with success to most words in Jiǎomùzú. However, in a number of cases the rules do not work very well. Most common animate nouns can be marked for plural. However, the plural marking changes the meaning of the root noun if it is a non-count noun. Instead of marking a number of three or more of the original entity, plural marking on a non-count noun breaks up the original entity into smaller parts. The following examples illustrate this with the use of the noun *makmə*, which can mean 'soldier' or 'army'. When plural marking occurs on *makmə* it is always understood to signify 'soldiers', the parts of a larger whole. It cannot mean 'armies':

(43)   makmə   makmə-ɲo

         soldier, army   soldier-p

                            soldiers

                            *armies

The plural of 'army' can only be expressed with the use of a classifier such as *təpʰok*, 'group', as in the following example:

(44)   makmə kəɲes təpʰok na-ndoʔ   ɉuʔ-kʰa   pʰari   ˈnə-ŋos

         army   two   group PFT-have river-bank across EV-be

         Two armies faced each other across the river.

Note that the numeral *kəɲes* here modifies the classifier, not the noun. Classifiers are normally used with non-count nouns that do not obviously consist of smaller parts, though not always. If it is clear from the context that the speaker is referring to bottles of water or ingots of gold, for example, the classifier may be dispensed with. However, not all native speakers consider this kind of construction correct:

(45)   təɉuʔ   ? təɉuʔ kəsam   təɉuʔ kəsam pʰiŋ¤

         water   water three   water three bottle

                            three [bottles of] water   three bottles of water

         tarni   ? tarni kəsam   tarni kəsam rdok

         gold   gold three   gold   three ingot

                            three [ingots of] gold   three ingots of gold

This type of sentence is like the English usage for example in a restaurant, where a waiter may tell the kitchen that table 5 needs 'three waters, a small beer and a lemonade', though there too normally a classifier or quantifier such as 'glass' or 'bottle' is required.

The plural marker *-ɲo* can occur with non-count nouns to express certain specific meanings. For example, when talking about the infrastructure of a village, a speaker may ask about the quality of the gas, electricity or water supply by using plural marking. In the speaker's mind, the non-count nouns have become countable since there is a separate feed into each house in the village:

(46) təɟuʔ-ɲo   ɟɛn¤-ɲo   tʃʰi¤-ɲo mə-'na-kʰut
      water-p   electricity-p gas-p   Q-OBS-ok
      How is the supply of water, electricity and gas?

Note that the plural marker here occurs with the Chinese loanwords 电*diàn*, 'electricity' and 气*qì*, 'gas'. Plural marking is also used to specify and set apart a certain amount of a non-countable substance or entity as distinguished from the rest or other quantities of this substance. Take the case of *tamar*, 'butter'. Normally, *tamar* is a non-count noun that requires a classifier to specify quantity:

(47) tamar   ? tamar kəsam   tamar kəsam lor
      butter   butter three   butter three ball
                   three [balls of] butter three balls of butter

However, the plural marker can occur with *tamar*, if the speaker refers to a certain quantity of butter that has been talked about earlier but that may not include all butter that is possibly around. For example, when a family invites monks to perform a ritual, much butter is needed. A neighbour, coming to help with the preparations and rummaging through the kitchen cabinets, may ask where the butter that has been set apart for use in the ritual is kept:

(48) tamar-ɲo   mə-ndoʔ
      butter-p   Q-have
      Do you have [the] butter?
      Where is [the] butter?

In this case it is clear, from the use of *-ɲo*, that the women have discussed a certain quantity of butter and that the neighbour refers to this specific amount of butter now. She is not asking about all the other butter that may be in the store room. Along the same lines are the following examples:

(49) tarni-ɲo ŋ-ambe   nə-'kʰam-n
      gold-p   1s:GEN-toward   IMP-give-2s
      Give me the gold!

(50) tarni ŋ-ambe   nə-ˈkʰam-n
     gold 1s:GEN-toward IMP-give-2s
     Give me [the] gold!

The speaker in (49) refers to a certain amount of gold, a number of ingots, that both the speaker and the hearer know about. There may be other gold around which is not included in the *tarniɲo* demanded by the speaker. In example (50) the speaker demands that he be given gold, either all the gold that is available, or gold as opposed to other valuables such as silver or jewels. But there is in this case no previous understanding with the hearer about the amount or even the availability of gold.

(51) wu-poŋeʔj-ɲo   mə-ˈna-rtak
     3s:GEN-money-p   Q-OBS-sufficient
     Does he have enough money?

(52) wu-poŋeʔj   mə-ˈna-rtak
     3s:GEN-money   Q-OBS-sufficient
     Does he have enough money?

In sentence (51) the speaker asks if the amount of money that the person referred to carries with him is sufficient, indicating by the use of *-ɲo* that this is not all the money possibly available. In (52) the speaker simply asks if the money carried by the person referred to is sufficient, without linking that amount to other quantities of money.

Definite and indefinite nouns

Jiǎomùzú nouns are not lexically definite or indefinite. However, different degrees of definiteness are signalled by the presence or absence of the contrast marker *tə* and the indefiniteness marker *ki*, as required by the situation. The marker *tə* references entities as opposed to and excluding all other entities. Often it can be glossed as 'the'. The meaning of *ki* encompasses 'one' or 'a', rather like an indefinite article. But it can also be used to broaden a definition of an entity or object. I discuss these markers in sections 4.3.a and 4.3.b below.

Collective and distributive nouns

Collective nouns are words that can be seen as a single collective entity or as a collection of individual entities, such as English 'committee' or 'government'. I have not found such a distinction in Jiǎomùzú, despite the odd example that seems to indicate otherwise. In example (53) *wutwan*, 'dance troupe' is a loan from Chinese 舞团 *wǔtuán*. The indigenous term for 'dancer' is *tarngaʔ kəva*. Suffixing with *-ɲo* for plural forms 'dancers' as well as, by extension, 'dance troupe'. At first sight the marking on the verb for plural and singular indicates that *wutwan* is indeed a collective noun:

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(53a) wutwan¤   ji-məndə
       dance.troupe   PFT-arrive
       The dance troupe has arrived.

(53b) wutwan¤   ji-məndə-jn
       dance.troupe   PFT-arrive-3p
       The dance troupe have arrived.

(53c) wutwan¤-ɲo   ji-məndə-jn
       dance.troupe-p   PFT-arrive-3p
       The dance troupe have arrived.

(53d) wutwan¤   kəsam təpʰok ji-məndə-jn
       dance.troupe three   group   PFT-arrive-3p
       Three dance troupes have arrived.

Native speakers agree that sentences (53a), (53b) and (53c) are all grammatical. But since a troupe consists of several dancers, examples (53b) and (53c), which have plural marking, are much preferred. Native speakers apparently do not think in abstract terms of a group or troupe but rather mark for the number of people that make up the group. The concept of 'group' is inherently plural. To express that several troupes have arrived, a quantifier or classifier is used, as in (53d), and according to the treatment of non-count nouns discussed above. In light of the lack of indigenous vocabulary that exhibits the characteristics of collective and distributive nouns it seems best to regard Jiǎomùzú as lacking this category.

c.   Derivation of nouns.

A morphological process is derivational if it creates new words with meanings that differ from the meaning of their root words, though those meanings can be related. In Jiǎomùzú there are several important processes for the creation of new words from old roots. In compounding two words, usually nouns, combine in various ways to make one new noun. For the process of nominalisation the Jiǎomùzú dialects employ several prefixes that are attached to verbs. Gender is not normally marked on Jiǎomùzú nouns. Though there are words that use entirely different forms to express certain categories such as male and female in gender, I have not found forms that use morpho-phonemic alternations alone (as in 'man' and 'men'). Diminutives are formed with the suffixes *-puʔ* or *-tsa*. Below follows an overview of the most commonly used ways of forming compound nouns and of nominalisation. The sections after that describe gender marking and diminutives.

Compounds

Compound nouns are very common in Jiǎomùzú. The four most common ways of forming compounds are as follows:

* Two complete words combine to make a new word:

(54)   təʒba   cheek
            ʃarə   bone
            təʒba ʃarə   cheek bone

            tarmoʔk   dragon
            kʰəluʔ   insect, worm
            tarmoʔk kʰəluʔ centipede

            təvok   intestines, belly
            kətsə   small
            təvok kətsə   lower abdomen, belly

* One noun of the compound retains its full form while the second noun of the compound loses its prefix:

(55)   təpʃiʔ   excrement
            tərboʔ   drum
            təpʃirboʔ   fart

            pkwaʔ   chicken
            tapuʔ   child, offspring, young
            pkwaʔpuʔ   chick

            tawo   head
            tarɲi   hair
            taworɲi   hair (of the head)

            kam   door
            təmpʰi   the outside
            mpʰikam   gate

* The prefixes of both words that make up the compound disappear:

(56) təmɲak   eye
      tarɲi   hair
      mɲakrɲi   eyelash

      tamar   butter
      kəser   fresh
      marser   fresh, newly churned butter

      tastoʔk   bean
      kəktu   big
      stoʔkktu   broadbean

* A noun is modified as part of a genitive construction:

(57) mbroʔ   horse
      tarmbok   mane
      mbroʔ w-armbok   mane ('the mane of the horse')
      horse 3s:GEN-mane

      təmtʃʰu   mouth
      tərɲi   hair
      təmtʃʰu w-ərɲi   beard ('the hair of the mouth')
      mouth   3s:GEN-beard

      təʃmi   tongue
      tawo   head
      təʃmi   w-awo   tongue tip ('the head of the tongue')
      tongue 3s:GEN-head

It can be quite unclear which part of a compound is the head. A good test is to turn the compound into a genitive construction. The pronominal affix is prefixed to the head of the compound, in (58) *təmto*, 'forehead', not *tərɲi*, 'hair':

(58) təmto   tərɲi   təmtorɲi
      forehead   hair   fringe, bangs

      w-əmtorɲi   * təmto wərɲi
      3s:GEN-fringe
      his fringe

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The last form, *təmto wəɹɲi*, is only grammatical in the sense of 'hair on the forehead', but not in the normal meaning of 'fringe'. This in contrast to the forms in (57), where the head is the second part of the compound rather than the first.

In compounding, changes of vowel can occur:

(59) cʰe   liquor   lhe   deity
      tələ   yeast   bzova   maker, artisan
      cʰalə   distiller's yeast lhabzo   thangka painter

Finally, there are also compounds that combine a non-noun such as an interrogative with a verb or a nominalised verb to express adverbial meanings such as 'everywhere' and 'all kinds of':

(60) kətʃe   where   tʰi   what
      kəndoʔ   have (nom)   ndoʔ   have
      kətʃe kəndoʔ everywhere,   tʰi ndoʔ ndoʔ all kinds; all possible,
                   wherever   whatever

(61) wuɟo tʰindoʔndoʔ nə-kə-pcər   tə w-əmdoʔk   'na-kə-mpʃer
      he   all   PFT-NOM-make   C   3s:GEN-colour   OBS-NOM-beautiful
      All that he made was beautiful in colour.

      ˈnə-ŋos
      EV-be

(62) ŋa kətʃe kə-ndoʔ   pok to-kə-natso-ŋ   stʃi
      I   where NOM-have all PFT-NOM-look-1s   be:CD
      I've looked everywhere!

Nominalisers

Jiǎomùzú employs different kinds of nominalisers. The nominalisers *ka-* and *kə-* are employed in participant nominalisation and action nominalisation. Participant nominalisation forms objects, including those with a patient or recipient role, by prefixing a root with *ka-*, while subjects of intransitive verbs and agents of transitive verbs are formed by prefixing a verb root with *kə-*. I describe this kind of nominalisation extensively in section 7.1 of the chapter on verbs. Here I just give a few examples. The subscript number 1 with 'write' in example (64) indicates verb root 1 for infinitive:

(63) agent noun   patient noun
      ka-ʃmo   steal   kə-ʃmo   thief
      ka-lok   herd   kə-lok   herder
      ka-nətʃʰe   drink; get drunk   kə-nətʃʰe   drunk

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(64)	citation form		patient noun	
	ka-vəja	fetch	ka-vəja	that which is fetched
	ka-cop	burn	ka-cop	that which is burned
	tascok ka-leʔt	write₁	ka-laʔt	that which is written

This kind of nominalisation is especially productive with verbs that can form noun-verb compounds, such as *kataʔ*, 'put', *kaleʔt* , 'hit' and *kava*, 'do':

(65)	tatpe ka-taʔ	have faith	tatpe kə-taʔ	believer
	kʰorlo ka-leʔt	drive a car	kʰorlo kə-leʔt	driver
	tarngaʔ ka-va	dance	tarngaʔ kə-va	dancer

Also frequently used is the oblique nominaliser *sa-*, which forms nouns that signal places or instruments:

(66)	tascok ka-leʔt	write (letter + hit)
	tascok sa-leʔt	writing material, an object that facilitates writing
	ka-mpʰel	sell
	sa-mpʰel	place for selling goods, a place that facilitates selling

Note that the meaning of the nominalised construction with *sa-* is very broad and does not necessarily refer to a specific object. The nominalised form of *kanəɟup*, 'sleep' does not actually mean 'bed', though beds are included in the meaning. Any place or object where a person may sleep is called a *saɟup*, from hammocks to beds to patches of sidewalk. In the same way, *tascok saleʔt*, 'writing materials', includes pens, paper, brushes, ink, and any other object that may be used for writing. And *sampʰel*, 'place for selling', may refer to a shop, a stand on a market, or a piece of cloth on which a hawker displays his wares. Earlier studies of rGyalrong have not always made this distinction, leading to glosses such as 'paper' for *saleʔt*, which is generally correct of course, but rather too narrow.[107]

Unlike other rGyalrong varieties, Jiǎomùzú does not have a nominaliser *tə-*. I discuss the case of *tə-* in section 7.1 on nominalisation of the verbs chapter.

According to Jīn and Lín[108] the aspectual prefix *to-* can be used as a nominaliser in constructions such as *tokanapu*, 'adopted child, foster child', from *kanapu*, 'adopt' (I use Jīn's transcriptions here for his examples). Jīn and Lín interpret the prefix as a perfective marker. The Jiǎomùzú dialects differ in this respect from Zhuōkèjī and Suōmò. In Jiǎomùzú it is not the appearance of past

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[107] Nagano (2003: 471) correctly describes the meaning of nominalised constructions with *sa-* as 'a place/utensil to do something' but then gives examples in which the glosses are too narrow. For example, *sa-top* (from *ka-top*, 'hit') does not mean 'hammer' as Nagano glosses it, but 'object for hitting'. The word for 'hammer' is *kʰatʃak*.

[108] Jīn (1958: 74), Lín (1993: 163).

imperfective aspect marker *to-* but the presence of *kə-* that nominalises this type of construction. The appearance of *to-* in past tense sentences simply signals past imperfective, while *na-* marks perfective, as shown in the following pair:

(67)   kʰalat   ka-ndza   na-səjoʔk-w
        rtsam.pa NOM-eat PFT-finish-3s
        He finished eating rtsam-pa.

        kʰalat   ka-ndza   to-səjoʔk-w
        rtsam.pa NOM-eat PSTIMP-finish-3s
        He finished off the rtsam-pa.

This distinction remains in nominalised constructions such as the pair in (68). The first sentence signals an action, the taking along of the donkey, about which more remains to be said, while the second sentence conveys the meaning that the taking along of the donkey happened and is now finished.

(68)   tarke   tə w-apsi   na-kə-ndʐu-w   ˈnə-ŋos
        donkey C 3s:GEN-with PFT-NOM-take-3s EV-be
        He took the donkey with him.

        tarke   tə w-apsi   to-kə-ndʐu-w   ˈnə-ŋos
        donkey C 3s:GEN-with PSTIMP-NOM-take-3s EV-be
        He took the donkey with him.

The examples above show that *to-* cannot be the nominaliser of the construction, since the same construction with *na-* is still nominalised. Nominalisation here is caused by *kə-*, not by the aspect markers.

Both Lín and Nagano[109] mention the prefix *a-* as a converter of nouns into terms of endearment or vocatives as in *apa*, 'dad' from *tapa*, 'father' and as a nominaliser for direction markers. In Jiǎomùzú vocatives indeed mostly have *a-* as initial, while their root nouns have noun prefix *ta-*, see section 4.2.d on vocatives below. But for the orientational nouns, though they do have *a-* as initial, see section 7.3 on orientation in the verb chapter, *a-* does not function as a nominaliser. Nagano gives *ta* for 'upward' and *ʔata* for '(the) above'. But in Jiǎomùzú the directional words for the set meaning 'vertically up' are as follows:

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[109] Lín (1993: 162), Nagano (2003: 471).

(69)	vertically up	ata	noun	the place on high, the high place
		sto	adverb	above, high
		katʰo	verb	go up
		to	direction marker	upwards

The direction marker *to* differs from and cannot be the root of *ata*, which is a noun. There is no separate root **ta* which functions as a direction marker. Prefix *a-* does not work as a nominaliser in Jiǎomùzú.

Finally, Jiǎomùzú employs the nominaliser *-vu* to derive nouns from nouns forming the meaning 'person that is from…':

| (70) | wuɟo | j-ərpe-vu | ŋos | |
| | he | 1p:GEN-village-NOM | be | |

He is from our village.

| | wuɟo | mkʰono-vu | ˈnə-ŋos | |
| | he | Kǒnglóng-NOM | EV-be | |

He is from Kǒnglóng.

Sometimes Jiǎomùzú speakers use the Tibetan nominaliser *-pa*. This nominaliser only occurs with Tibetan loan words. Sometimes a reduplication of this nominaliser occurs, as shown in the following example. There are two terms for 'trader' that regularly occur in Jiǎomùzú. In (71a) the noun of the noun-verb compound *tsʰoŋ kava*, 'do business' is borrowed from Tibetan *tshong*, 'trade'. Nominalisation of this compound results in *tsʰoŋ kəva*, literally 'doer of trade'. The second term, as shown in (71b) is *tsʰoŋpe*, 'trader', a direct loan from Tibetan *tshongpa*, in which the suffix *–pa* is a nominaliser. In Jiǎomùzú yet one more nominaliser *-pa* is suffixed to the entire form. In Amdo Tibetan, the nominaliser *-pa* is realised as [pa] or [wa], depending on the phonetic environment. In Jiǎomùzú I have only found the form *-wa*:

(71a)	Jiǎomùzú		literary Tibetan
	tsʰoŋ ka-va	do business	ཚོང་རྒྱག tshon rgyag
	tsʰoŋ kə-va	trader	

| (71b) | tsʰoŋ-pe | trader (loan from Tibetan) | ཚོང་པ tshong-pa |
| | tsʰoŋ-pe-wa | trader (loan from Tibetan re-nominalised with -*pa*) | |

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A final example is (71c). The loan *mbrokpe*, which already has the Tibetan nominaliser –*pa*, is re-nominalised with -*wa*:

(71c)   mbrokpe   nomadic herder, from literary Tibetan འབྲོག་པ *'brog-pa*

          mbrokpewa   nomadic herder

Gender

The default for Jiǎomùzú nouns is to remain unmarked for gender. There are also no articles or verb endings that indicate gender. When the need to distinguish gender arises Jiǎomùzú can employ one of three different kinds of marking. Some nouns express gender by using entirely different forms for the three categories of male, female and young or offspring:

(72)   tərmu   person   təza   man, male
                                     təmu   woman, female
                                     tapuʔ   child, young

       kəɟoʔ   sheep   sarna   ram
                                     ɟomo, moluk   ewe
                                     ɲaɲa   lamb

Other nouns take suffix -*mu* or -*za*, from *təmu*, 'female', and *təza*, 'male', to mark gender for female and male respectively:

(73)   tapuʔ   child
       tapuʔ-mu   a female child
       tapuʔ-za   a male child

However, in most cases *təza* and *təmu* are used in their full form adjectivally to express gender:

(74)   sloppən   teacher
       * sloppənza   sloppən təza   a male teacher
       * sloppənmu   sloppən təmu   a female teacher

In some cases loanwords can mark gender with suffixes based on the native terms for male and female but normally the entire gender word is used. Speakers from different dialects may disagree on which words can or cannot be suffixed with the gender markers:

(75) lawsə¤   teacher, from Chinese 老师 *laŏshi*, 'teacher'
      lawsə¤ təmu   female teacher

      Jiǎomùzú: * lawsəmu
      Běnzhēn: lawsəmu   female teacher

(76) lawsə¤ təmu   ʒik ndoʔ lawsə¤ təza ʒik ndoʔ
      teacher woman also have teacher man   also have
      There are male as well as female teachers.

A third way of marking gender is through suffixing with the Tibetan markers for male and female, -p^ho and -*mo* respectively:

(77) pkwaʔ   chicken $k^ho\eta$ tiger
      pkwaʔ-mo   hen $k^ho\eta$-mo   tigress
      pkwaʔ-p^ho rooster $k^ho\eta$-p^ho male tiger

One of my language consultants said that these days younger native speakers tend to use *təza* and *təmu* also with nouns that traditionally take Tibetan gender markers, so that one can also hear things like $k^ho\eta$ *təmu* for 'tigress'.[110] For some words, borrowed gender markers do not occur as a pair. In example (78) the female gender marker is –*mo* but the male gender marker is -*jo* rather than -p^ho:

(78) pak   pig
      pak-mo   sow
      pak-jo   boar

The borrowed gender markers cannot be attached indiscriminately to any noun. Most native nouns by far only take the native gender markers -*mu* and -*za*, either in full or shortened form, while the Tibetan gender markers apparently occur mostly with loanwords from Tibetan:

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[110] Namkha, personal communication.

(79)	rta		horse, from literary Tibetan ཪྟ *rta*
	rta-mo, rgonme		mare, literary Tibetan: རྟ་རྒོད་མ *rta rgod-ma*
	rta-pʰo		stallion, literary Tibetan: རྟ་གསེབ *rta-gseb*, or རྟ་ཕོ *rta-pʰo*, 'male horse'
	mbroʔ		horse
	* mbroʔ-pʰo		
	* mbroʔ-mo		
	mbroʔ təmu		mare
	mbroʔ təza		stallion

Interestingly, the word normally used for 'horse' is the indigenous *mbroʔ* rather than Tibetan *rta*. But when it comes to gender distinctions, *rtamo* and *rtapo* often occur.

In some cases, the borrowed gender markers occur as prefixes rather than suffixes. In example (80) *holək*, 'ram' follows the Amdo nomad pronunciation of gender prefix *pʰo-*, while *pʰolək* follows the more formal literary Tibetan form:

(80)	kʰəna	dog	kəɟoʔ	sheep
	pʰo-tʃʰə	male dog	pʰo-lək, holək	ram
	mo-tʃʰə	bitch	mo-lək	ewe

Note that not only does the gender marker become prefixed, but also the root used is a Tibetan loan rather than the root of the native word, as in literary Tibetan ཁྱི *khyi*, 'dog' and literary Tibetan ལུག *lug*, 'sheep'. In some cases the root changes to something not recognizably Tibetan or native:

(81)	lolo	cat	literary Tibetan: ཞི་མི *zhi-mi*
	pʰo-rə, horə	tom cat	
	mo-rə	female cat	

It may be that there was an indigenous term for 'cat' with the root *–rə*, which is now replaced with *lolo*. The word *lolo* may be more of an areal term, since it occurs in one form or another throughout south-west China.[111]

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[111] Katia Chirkova, personal communication.

Diminutives

Many diminutives are formed by adding a third person possessive form of *tapuʔ*, 'child, young', to the noun. The resulting diminutives are syntactic constructions rather than morphologically derived:

(82) kʰoŋ   tiger   kʰoŋ w-apuʔ
                                 tiger   3s:GEN-child
                                 tiger cub

      kəzu   monkey   kəzu   w-apuʔ
                                 monkey 3s:GEN-child
                                 young of a monkey

      kʰapri   snake   kʰapri w-apuʔ
                                 snake   3s:GEN-child
                                 young of a snake

Some nouns can be simply suffixed with *-puʔ*, from *tapuʔ*:

(83) təmu   woman   təmu-puʔ   girl, daughter
      təza   man   təza-puʔ   boy, son
      pwaʔ   chicken   pwaʔ-puʔ   chick
      sarna   ram   sarna-puʔ   young ram, male lamb
      kʰəna   dog   kʰəna-puʔ   pup

Some nouns can be modified by either form:

(84) lolo   cat
      lolo-puʔ   kitten
      lolo w-apuʔ   kitten

Note that *-puʔ* always indicates a relationship between a mature member of people or animals and their offspring. It conveys the meaning of 'born of…'. It cannot be used to form diminutives for inanimate nouns:

(85) tətʰa   book   * tətʰa-puʔ
      tajiʔk   hand   * tajiʔk-puʔ
      məntoʔk   flower   * məntoʔk-puʔ

The meaning 'small' is marked by the suffix *-tsa*, which forms diminutives mostly for inanimate nouns, though some animate nouns also require this suffix. Sometimes this leads to derived meanings, as in *kamtsa*, 'window', which literally means 'small door':

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(86)	pak	pig	pak-tsa	piglet, small pig
	rgambe	box	rgambe-tsa	small box
	kam	door	kam-tsa	window

Some nouns can take either suffix. Usually the distinction between the meanings 'small' and 'offspring of' remains, as in (86), but not always. Some nouns take only one or the other suffix, as in the examples for 'pig' and 'chicken':

(87)	kʰəna	dog
	kʰəna-puʔ	pup, young of a dog
	kʰəna-tsa	pup, small dog
	pwaʔ	chicken
	pwaʔ-puʔ	chick, small chicken
	* pwaʔtsa	
	pak	pig
	pak-tsa	piglet, small pig
	* pakpuʔ	

It is not possible to have both -*tsa* and -*puʔ* to generate meanings like 'a small boy':

(88)	təza	man, male
	təza-puʔ	boy
	* təzaputsa	

Meanings like 'a small girl' are formed with the use of a diminutive prefix plus *kətsə*, 'small':

(89)	təmu	woman, female
	təmu-puʔ	girl
	təmu-puʔ kətsə	a small girl

(90)	pak	pig
	pak-tsa	piglet
	pak-tsa kətsə	a small piglet

The diminutive suffix-*tsa* cannot occur with any and all nouns. In fact by far the most nouns do not take -*tsa* but have to be modified by *kətsə*, 'small', to express diminutives:

(91) tətʰa   book   * tətʰa-tsa   tətʰa kətsə   a small book
      təʃna   nose   * təʃna-tsa   təʃna kətsə   a small nose
      kʰəzaʔ bowl   * kʰəzaʔ-tsa   kʰəzaʔ kətsə a small bowl
      məntoʔk flower   * məntoʔk-tsa   məntoʔk kətsə a small flower

d.   Inflectional morphology

Apart from the class and subclass markers *tə-*, *ta-*, *kə-*, *kʰ-* and *k-*, which have been discussed in section 4.2.1 above, the Jiǎomùzú dialects use bound affixes to mark person and number, genitive constructions and locatives. Person and number are expressed by suffixes on the noun. Jiǎomùzú uses both special vocabulary and person and number marking to form honorifics. Terms of endearment are formed by adding *lelej* after a kinship term or noun. I treat this term as a separate word rather than as a suffix. Genitive constructions employ prefixes based on pronouns to mark person. Locatives are discussed extensively in section 5.6 of the chapter on adverbs.

Number

The Jiǎomùzú dialects mark nouns for dual and plural. The default is the unmarked form, which denotes either the entire category of entities referred to by the noun or one entity of that class, as discussed in section 4.2.a on the nature of the Jiǎomùzú noun above. Dual is marked by *-ndʒ* and plural with *-ɲo*, as familiar from the non-first person pronominal marking described in section 3.1 of the chapter on pronouns:

(92)   tətʰa   book   tərmu   person
       tətʰa-ndʒ   two books   tərmu-ndʒ   two people
       tətʰa-ɲo   books   tərmu-ɲo   people

The dual marker means 'exactly two'. The plural marker specifies 'three or more'. The plural cannot be used to simply indicate 'more than one', nor can the dual mean 'two or more' or 'two out of many'. The numeral *kəɲes*, 'two', cannot occur with a noun marked for dual, since dual marking already specifies that there are two and only two of a certain thing. Consider the following examples, which are all imperatives:

(93a) tətʰa-ndʒ   to-ˈku-w
       book-d   IMP-buy-2s
       Buy the two books!

(93b) tətʰa   kəɲes   to-ˈku-w
      book   two   IMP-buy-2s
      Buy two books!

      * tətʰandʒ kəɲes tokuw

(93c) tətʰa-ɲo to-ˈku-w
      book-p   IMP-buy-2s
      Buy books!

In example (93a) there are two and only two books. The speaker demands that the hearer buys those two books. In (93b) there are many books, and the speaker asks that the hearer buys two out of the many that are available. Example (93c) exhorts someone to buy three or more books. Note that the plural marker does not occur if the noun is modified by a numeral:

(94a) kʰəna-ɲo   to-ˈku-w
      dog-p   IMP-buy-w
      buy the dogs!

(94b) kʰəna   kəmŋi   to-ˈku-w
      dog-p   five   IMP-buy-w
      buy five dogs!

Plural marking with -ɲo can be used to mark the wider meaning of 'et cetera, and such, the like', as in example (95):

(95)   kantʃʰak-j   ka-ndza   kə-mpʰer wuvjot ˈna-ndoʔ   swej-ɲo   pakʃu-ɲo
      market-LOC NOM-food   NOM-sell   many   OBS-have barley-p apple-p
      In the market there are many foodstuffs for sale, [grains] like barley and such,
      [fruit] like apples and so on.

Whether a noun can take number marking or not depends on distinctions such as animacy and countability, and modification of the noun by quantifiers, classifiers etc., as discussed above. The presence or absence of number marking also influences the degree of definiteness conveyed by a form, see section 4.3.b on indefiniteness marking below.

The number markers are clitic postpositions. When a noun phrase consists of more than one word the number marker is attached to the last constituent in the noun phrase, even if that constituent is not a noun. For example, in (96) the third person dualis marker -ndʒ is suffixed to the contrast marker tə, the final constituent of the noun phrase:

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(96) [h-ato   təmu-puʔ tə-ndʒ] ndʒa-vlu   'na-ndʐa
     D-up.there girl   C-3d   3d:GEN-age OBS-like
     Those two girls are the same age.

Number marking occurs after the last constituent also when several noun phrases are coordinated:

(97) jino swej jimaʔ taji-ɲo 'kə-ji-j   manɟuʔ ʒugolor pakʃu ndoʔ
     we:e barley corn wheat-p PRIMP-grow-1p besides walnut   apple have
     We grow barley, corn and wheat as well as walnuts and apples.

The placement of the number marker in a noun phrase can signal subtle shades of meaning or emphasis:

(98a) pak-ɲo tə təɟeʔm w-əŋgi   ka-sə-tsʰi   ma-kʰut kəne
      pig-p C   house 3s:GEN-in NOM-CAUS-go NEG-can MD:C
      Pigs are not allowed inside the house.

(98b) pak tə-ɲo təɟeʔm w-əŋgi   ka-sə-tsʰi   ma-kʰut   kəne
      pig C-p house 3s:GEN-in NOM-CAUS-go NEG-can MD:C
      Pigs are not allowed inside the house.

In (98a) the speaker simply states that pigs are not allowed inside the house. In the second example the speaker is more emphatic about the pigs: *they* can't come into the house, but other animals, such as the cat, can. In the examples above *kəne* is a mood marker which conveys that the speaker thinks that the fact stated, here that pigs are not allowed in the house, should be obvious to the listener. Number is marked on the last constituent of the second noun phrase if two noun phrases are linked:

(99) [[tʃəʔ w-aʃasto]   manɟuʔ [ndə w-əŋgi]-ndʒ]   ndʒə-vu   'na-kəktu
     this 3s:GEN-shirt also   that 3s:GEN-inside-3d 3d:GEN-price OBS-big
     Both this shirt and the one inside are expensive.

Because number marking does not occur for singular nor in general statements like the ones in example (100), it is not always clear if a speaker refers to one or many of a particular entity, as discussed above in section 4.2.a on the nature of the Jiǎomùzú nouns:

(100) coktse w-ərka-j   tətʰa ndoʔ
      table   3s:GEN-top-LOC book have
      There is a book on the table.
      There are books on the table.

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Example (100) gives a general statement about what is on the table. The speaker makes clear that he is talking about the entity 'book' but he does not specify whether he talks about one or more books. The relevant information in the statement concerns the nature of the item or items on the table, not their number. The ambiguity of such statements can be resolved by adding numerals, quantifiers or classifiers, or one of the markers *tə* and *ki* which define the degree of definiteness of a noun. Plural marking can be used in accordance with the rules for animacy and countability of nouns that govern such marking, see above. If the speaker wants to specify the number of books on the table, if there is only one, he has to use a numeral like *kərek*, 'one', or *ki* which can mean 'one' or function rather like an indefinite article, similar to English 'a':

    (101a) coktse w-ərka-j   tətʰa kerek ndoʔ
              table   3s:GEN-top-LOC book one   have
              There is one book on the table.

    (101b) coktse w-ərka-j   tətʰa ki   ndoʔ
              table   3s:GEN-top-LOC book IDEF have
              There is a book on the table.

If a speaker wants to convey information about the number of books on the table, if there are more than one, he can use a numeral:

    (102)   coktse w-ərka-j   tətʰa kəsam ndoʔ
              table   3s:GEN-top-LOC book three   have
              There are three books on the table.

Note that no plural marking occurs on *tətʰa*, 'book', when a numeral occurs. Plural marking also does not occur when there is another word specifying quantity in the sentence:

    (103)   coktse w-ərka-j   tətʰa kə-məca ndoʔ
              table   3s:GEN-top-LOC book NOM-many   have
              There are many books on the table.

    (104)   wuɟo kʰəzaʔ təgɲes me   miʔ
              she   bowl few   only   not.have
              She has only a few bowls.

Number marking on the noun phrase can also be omitted if marking on the verb makes clear how many people or objects are involved and the noun phrase lists them. There is no difference in marking for proper nouns and common nouns in this respect:

(105a) pkraʃis-ndʒ   ʃintəhu   ɲu-ndʒ
        bKra.shis-3d Chéngdū   live-3d
        bKra-shis and [his friend] live in Chéngdū.

(105b) pkraʃis   narə w-andʐiʔ   ʃintəhu   ɲu-ndʒ
        bKra.shis and 3s:GEN-friend Chéngdū live-3d
        bKra-shis and his friend live in Chéngdū.

(105c) pkraʃis   narə lhamo-ndʒ   ʃintəhu   ɲu-ndʒ
        bKra.shis and lHa.mo-3d   Chéngdū   live-3d
        bKra-shis and lHa-mo live in Chéngdū.

(105d) rənbamila-ndʒ   ʃintəhu   ɲu-ndʒ
        Renbamila-3d   Chéngdū   live-3d
        The two people of the house Renbamila both live in Chéngdū.

(105e) ŋ-andʐiʔ-ndʒ   ʃintəhu   ɲu-ndʒ
        1s:GEN-friend-3d   Chéngdū live-3d
        My two friends live in Chéngdū.

(105f) * ŋandʐiʔ ʃintəhu ɲu-ndʒ

(105g) * ŋandʐiʔndʒ ʃintəhu ɲu

The examples above all involve two persons living in Chéngdū. In (105a) there is, along with bKra-shis, one unspecified person. Examples (105b) and (105c) show that number marking can be dispensed with if the number is clearly marked on the verb and the parties referred to are listed in the noun phrase. Example (105b) does not have marking on the noun phrase, which leaves the number of people unspecified since the hearer does not know how many friends are with bKra-shis. But the noun phrase lists bKra-shis as well as at least one friend, and the number marking on the verb for third person dual signals that there is only one. Example (105c) does mark number on the noun phrase. Both (10bb) and (105c) are grammatical. Example (105d) shows that number marking for what in essence is an entity that cannot be counted, the house of Renbamila, is divided up in countable quantities by the use of a number marker. As discussed above, sentence (105d) also indicates that there are two and only two people of the house of Renbamila, and that they both live in Chéngdū. If there were more people in the house, two of which lived in Chéngdū, the numeral *kəɲes*, 'two', would occur instead of the dual marker. Example (105e) and (105f) show that marking on the noun phrase cannot be omitted if the parties referred to in the noun phrase are not listed, even though number is marked on the verb. Number marking on the verb has to agree with the number marking on the noun phrase if that noun phrase is the referent of the verb.

Loanwords retain native number marking:

(106)	kʰajswepʰiŋ¤	thermos.flask	Chinese:
	kʰajswepʰiŋ¤-ndʒ	thermos.flask-d	开水瓶 *kāishuǐpíng*
	kʰajswepʰiŋ¤-ɲo	thermos.flask-p	
	dijanʂə¤	television	Chinese:
	dijanʂə¤-ndʒ	television-d	电视 *diànshì*
	dijanʂ¤ə-ɲo	television-p	
	rɟarpo	king	literary Tibetan:
	rɟarpo-ndʒ	king-d	རྒྱལ་པོ *rgyal-po*
	rɟarpo-ɲo	king-p	
	tsʰoŋpe	businessman	literary Tibetan:
	tsʰoŋpe-ndʒ	businessman-d	ཚོང་པ *tshong-pa*
	tsʰoŋpe-ɲo	businessman-p	

Honorifics

Honorifics are high register forms of common nouns which are used when speaking of or addressing a person of higher social rank than oneself. Both the dismantling of traditional rGyalrong society with its royal houses and the more egalitarian approach to relationships favored over the last few decades has caused a lapse in use of honorifics and polite forms of address. Still, honorifics do occur regularly in the Jiǎomùzú dialects. Predominantly they are used in connection with all persons to whom respect is due. This includes people from the religious establishment such as lamas, monks and incarnations, people that hold positions of authority in secular society, such as teachers and government officials, and any other people in roles that merit honour, such as elderly people and guests. Honorifics are formed by simply suffixing a noun with the plural marker *-ɲo*:

(107)	blame-ɲo	kʰezaʔ-ɲo	təɟeʔm-ɲo
	lama-3s:HON	bowl-3s:HON	house-3s:HON
	honoured lama	bowl (HON)	house (HON)

A noun marked for honorific also requires plural marking on the verb:

(108)	smonbe-ɲo	ʃintəhu	tə-ɲu-jn	me
	Doctor-3s:HON	Chéngdū	2-live-2s:HON	INTR
	Honoured doctor, do you live in Chéngdū?			

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Proper nouns as well as common nouns can be marked for honorific:

(109) amɲi   zgordəŋ-ɲi   kə   w-awo-j   ʃamtok   kərek
       A.myis Sgo.ldung-3s:HON PR   3s:GEN-head-LOC iron.hammer one
       A-myis Sgo-ldung dealt him a blow with the iron hammer.

       to-leʔt-jn
       PFT-hit₂-3s:HON

Honorific marking is not obligatory on nouns, but it is on verbs:

(110) bdət   tə   kə   tərmu   ʃi   kə-ndza   na-kə-ŋos-jn   ˈnə-ŋos
       demon C   PR   person often NOM-eat   PFT-NOM-be- HON EV-be
       The demon often ate people.

In this example the demon is an entity that in and of itself requires the speaker's utmost respect. The noun *bdət*, 'demon' is singular and does not need to be marked for honorific, but the verb shows honorific marking in the plural suffix *-jn*. Example (111) is along the same lines, with *ɟarpo*, 'king', not inflected for number while the plural *-jn* on the verb marks honorific:

(111) ɟarpo kə   nə   kə-mak   kə-ndoʔ   miʔ   na-cəs-jn
       king   PR   CON NOM-other NOM-have not.have   PFT-say-3s:HON
       The king said: "There is no other!"

Genitive constructions also mark honorifics through prefixing the plural marker to a noun or other constituent. The honorific marker used in genitives is *ɲi-*, see section 3.1 of the chapter on pronouns. When an honorific marker replaces a nominal prefix the consonant of the nominal prefix is replaced but not the vowel:

(112) ɟarpo kə   ʃamto   ɲ-apkʰe   nə-kə-nərko-jn   ˈnə-ŋos.
       king   PR   iron.hammer 3s:HON:GEN-fold PFT-NOM-put-3s:HON EV-be
       The king put the iron hammer in the fold of his robe.

Nouns marked for honorific in a genitive construction, such as *ɲapkʰe*, 'his fold' in (112), show respect for the possessor, in this case the king, rather than to the marked noun, here the fold of the robe, itself.

Some nouns have a special honorific equivalent of their common form. This kind of honorific does not take the plural marker *-ɲo*. Mostly these honorific forms are loanwords from Tibetan. This is understandable since traditionally Tibetan was both the language of religion, in its literary form, and the language of high prestige used for occasions where high register was required, such as events at the royal courts. The higher the register, the more Tibetan loanwords are inserted in speeches, rituals

etc. Though rGyalrong society no longer has royalty or nobility, Tibetan loanwords are still frequently used when a situation requires high register or very polite forms of speech. At present, Tibetan loans employed as honorifics most often occur in connection with persons from the religious establishment such as monks, lamas and incarnations, and in speeches held on important occasions such as new year's celebrations, weddings etc. Here are some examples of common nouns with their honorific equivalents:

(113)

low register	high register, HON	Tibetan		gloss
tajiʔk	tapʰjak	ཕྱག	phyag	hand
təndze	gsolve	གསོལ་བ	gsol ba	food
taworɲi	skra, gtʂa	སྐྲ	skra	hair
tamiʔ	taʒap	ཞབ	zhab	leg
tawo	wə	དབུ	dbu	head
təmɲak	spjen	སྤྱེན	spyen	eye

Honorifics based on loans do form genitives and inflect for number like other nouns:

(114a)

tapʰjak	hand	ɲi-pʰjak	your hand (HON)
təmɲak	eye	ɲi-spjen	your eye (HON)
tʂʰaʔ	tea	ɲi-gsolɟa	your tea (HON)

(114b) ɲi-pʰjak-ɲo   your hands (HON, p)

In (114b) there is no distinction between second person plural and second person singular, so that the listener cannot know if it concerns the hands of only one respected person or of more than one. See also part on status, forms of address and honorifics in the chapter pronouns.

Vocatives

Vocatives are used in direct address and convey social position or speaker attitude. Jiǎomùzú vocatives are derived from kinship terms, most of which have noun prefix -ta. The nominal prefix is replaced with vocative prefix a-:

(115)

noun		vocative	
ta-pa	father	a-pa	dad
ta-mo	mother	a-ma, a-mo	mum
ta-jze	older brother	a-jze	older brother
ta-ja	older sister	a-ja	older sister

Most often vocatives occur marked for genitive, even when used as a term of address when speaking directly to the person indicated by the term of address. In example (116) a son addresses his father as 'my father':

(116) aha   ŋ-apa   n-aka-j   ʒik kənəmdok ki   wu-gzək
      oho   1s:GEN-father 2s:GEN-bottom-LOC also strong   IDEF 3s:GEN-build
      "Oh boy, dad, there is someone out there who is stronger than you,

      kəmdok ki   ˈnə-ŋos to-kə-cəs   na-ˈa-ŋos
      strong IDEF EV-be   PFT-NOM-say   PFT-NEV-be
      handsome and well-built, his strength is greater!"

 For more on status and terms of address, see section 3.1 of the chapter on pronouns.

Genitive constructions

Genitive constructions in the Jiǎomùzú dialects link a head noun, the possessed, to a modifying noun, the possessor. The genitive marker is prefixed to the head noun or possessed. Genitives can signal a broad variety of grammatical relationships. Close relationships such as possessives and many varieties of time and place references are all expressed through genitive structures. To form genitives, pronominal markers are prefixed to the noun that is the head of the construction. All genitive markers derive from the free personal pronouns, including, for some special cases, the generic personal pronoun *təɟo*, 'self, one'. I discuss bound and free possessive forms more extensively in section 3.2 of the chapter on pronouns. Here I just give a short overview of the pronominal markers and the manner of their prefixation to the noun.

For nouns that are prefixed with *ta-* or *tə-* the pronominal prefix replaces the consonant of these prefixes, while the vowel remains. Genitive marking does not distinguish between inclusive and exclusive forms, though the distinction does occur in the pronouns.

The plural marker *-ɟo* for nominals, which derives from the verbal non-first plural marker *–jn*, is used to form honorifics, see section 4.2.d on honorifics above. The genitive marker is the common variant of *ɟo-*, *ɲi-*. As for the other genitive markers, the consonant of the noun prefix is replaced while the vowel remains. Here is the overview of markers:

(117) person marker   tə-tʰa   book   ta-ɟu   key

1s	ŋ-	ŋ-ətʰa	my book	ŋ-aɟu	my key
1d	tʃ-	tʃ-ətʰa	our book	tʃ-aɟu	our key
1p	j-	j-ətʰa	our book	j-aɟu	our key
2s	n-	n-ətʰa	your book	n-aɟu	your key
2d	(nɟo)ndʒ-	(nɟo)ndʒ-ətʰa	your book	(nɟo)ndʒa-ɟu	your key
2p	ɲ-	ɲ-ətʰa	your book	ɲ-aɟu	your key
3s	w-	w-ətʰa	his book	w-aɟu	his key
3d	wuɟondʒ-	wuɟondʒ-ətʰa	their book	wuɟondʒ-aɟu	their key
3p	wuɟiɲ-,	wuɟiɲ-ətʰa	their book	wuɟiɲ-aɟu	their key
	wuɟoɲ-	wuɟoɲ-ətʰa		wuɟoɲ-aɟu	
HON	ɲ-	ɲ-ətʰa	his book	ɲ-aɟu	his key

The second person dual form is usually shortened to *ndʒ-*, while the third person dual *wuɟondʒ* mostly occurs in full. Third person plural forms *wuɟoɲo* and *wuɟiɲo* both occur, apparently without difference in meaning. A special case is the indefinite personal pronoun *tɜɟo*, 'self, one, one self'. It can be used in genitive constructions and some native speakers do accept such forms as *tɜtətʰa*, 'one's own book'. Note that in such cases the noun marker *tə-* is not replaced, so that it is actually not a standard form of genitive construction. Mostly genitives derived from *tɜɟo* occur with limited semantic scope or carry different meanings. I discuss some cases below, but, because of the special features of this kind of form, I do not list them in the tables with the genitive forms of free pronouns. Nouns that do not have noun marker *tə-* or *ta-* are prefixed with the entire first syllable of the appropriate pronoun, as shown in the following example for *mɜntoʔk*, 'flower':

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(118)	1s	ŋa-	ŋa-mənto?k	my flower
	1d	tʃə-	tʃə-mənto?k	our flower
	1p	ji-	ji-mənto?k	our flower
	2s	nə-	nə-mənto?k	your flower
	2d	(nənɟo)ndʒ-	(nənɟo)ndʒ(ə)-mənto?k	your flower
	2p	ɲi-	ɲi-mənto?k	your flower
	3s	wu-	wu-mənto?k	his flower
	3d	wuɟondʒ-	wuɟondʒ(ə)-mənto?k	their flower
	3p	wuɟiɲi-	wuɟiɲi-mənto?k	their flower
	HON	ɲi-	ɲi-mənto?k	his flower

The animal prefixes *kʰ-* and *k-* also are not replaced when a pronominal marker is prefixed to the noun, maybe because replacing the markers would cause the loss of the distinction between 'mammal' and 'non-mammal', expressed in *k-* and *kʰ-* respectively. Or maybe the prefixes have become fully lexicalised and are no longer productive:

(119)	kʰalɟu	ŋə-kʰalɟu	kala?	wu-kala?
	hawk	1s:GEN-hawk	rabbit	3s:GEN-rabbit
		my hawk		his rabbit

Nouns marked with *wu-* for third person singular are commonly used to form adverbial or adjectival meanings, mostly pertaining to place or time. Genitive constructions of nouns that indicate location in space or time can be modified by locative markers. Such nouns can have a wide range of meanings, as exemplified by *wəŋkʰu?*, which can mean 'after', 'behind' or 'later', depending on the context in which it is used:

(120) tə-ŋkʰu?   back (n)   back, as in 'the back of a chair or building'
      w-əŋkʰu?   3s:GEN-back   the back of an entity, the time after an event

      kəsam ʃnu w-əŋkʰu?   təɟe?m w-əŋkʰu?
      three day 3s:GEN-back   house 3s:GEN-back
      after three days   the back of the house

      təɟe?m w-əŋkʰu?-j   tə
      house 3s:GEN-back-LOC C
      The one at the back of the house. (The one behind the house.)

I discuss genitives used to mark location in time and space in section 5.6 of the chapter on adverbs.

Genitives can be formed with a noun phrase the head of which is modified by other words:

(121) ŋa [tʃəʔ tə sok w-əmdoʔk] nərgaʔ-ŋ
       I   [this C like 3s:GEN-colour] like-1s
       I like a colour like this one [has].

(122) pkraʃis [tʰi ki w-ətʰa] to-ku-w
       bKra.shis [what IDEF 3s:GEN-book] PFT-buy-3s
       bKra-shis bought a book about something or other.

Genitives can be part of another genitive construction:

(123) tʃəʔ w-aka-j wu-ʃwetʃʰi¤
       this 3s:GEN-bottom-LOC 3s:GEN-semester
       last semester

Below are some examples of the kinds of relationships that are commonly expressed with genitives:

benefactive: (124) ŋa pkɽaʃis w-ətoʔn to-kə-va-ŋ ŋos
                     I bKra.shis 3s:GEN-matter PFT-NOM-do-1s be
                     I did it for bKra-shis.

              (125) ŋa nənɟo nə-tʃʰe ta-kə-va-ŋ ŋos
                     I you 2s:GEN-reason 1/2-NOM-do-1s be
                     I did it for you.

dative: (126) tʃəʔ pkraʃis w-əmba-j nə-ˈmbuʔ-w
                this bKra.shis 3s:GEN-vicinity-LOC IMP-give-3s
                Give this to bKra-shis.

source:
If there is a source in the sense of a giver as well as a specified recipient the source and recipient are marked on the verb, often with occurrence of prominence marker marker *kə*. Otherwise a genitive construction is used:

(127) tʃəʔ tə kəɟoʔ w-əsmok ˈna-ŋos
       this C sheep 3s:GEN-wool OBS-be
       This is wool from a sheep.

comitative:

Comitatives are formed with *tapso*, 'together'. A comitative can be negated only through negative marking on the verb, not on *tapso*:

(128) ŋa pkraʃsi w-apso ji-rɟi-ŋ
I bKra.shis 3s:GEN-together PFT-go$_2$-1s
I went with bKra-shis.

(129) pkraʃis ŋa ŋ-apso ɟi-vu
bKra.shis I 1s:GEN-together NEG/PFT-come$_2$
I went without bKra-shis. (Literally: bKra-shis did not come with me)

circumstance: (130) ana tʃe tapuʔ w-ajiʔk kə-ŋkər ki 'na-ndoʔ
there LOC child 3s:GEN-hand NOM-dirty IDEF OBS-have
There is a child with dirty hands.

(131) ana tʃe tapuʔ w-əktsa kə-miʔ ki 'na-ndoʔ
there LOC child 3s:GEN-shoe NOM-not.have IDEF OBS-have
There is a child without shoes.

possessives:

There is no difference in marking for alienable and inalienable possession:

(132) tapuʔ w-amiʔ tapuʔ w-ətʰa
child 3s:GEN-leg child 3s:GEN-book
The child's leg. The child's book.

There is also no difference in possessive marking for things that are temporarily possessed or those that are permanently possessed. Such differences, if marked at all, are shown in the use of verb:

(133) ndə wu-je   paktsa ki   ndoʔ
that 3s-POSS piglet IDEF have
He has a piglet.

ndə   wu-paktsa   ki   ndoʔ
that   3s:GEN-piglet IDEF have
He has a piglet.

ndə paktsa ki   na-varo-w
he   piglet IDEF PFT-own-3s
He had a piglet.

ndə wu-je   paktsa ki   'na-varo-w
that 3s-POSS piglet IDEF OBS-own-3s
He owns a piglet.

ndə wu-paktsa   ki   'na-varo-w
that 3s:GEN-piglet   IDEF OBS-own-3s
He has a piglet.

There is no difference between present and past tense marking:

(134) wu-paktsa   ki   'na-varo-w
3s:GEN-piglet   IDEF OBS-own-3s
He has a piglet.

wu-paktsa   ki   na-varo-w
3s:GEN-piglet   IDEF PFT-own-3s
He had a piglet.

quality: (135) ana tʃe w-əvok   kə-ktu   ki   'na-ndoʔ
there LOC 3s:GEN-stomach NOM-big   IDEF OBS-have
There is a [man] with a big stomach.

(136) ana tʃe   təʃla ma-kə-ʃpaʔ   ki   'na-ndo
there LOC joke   NEG-NOM-can$_1$ IDEF OBS-have
There's a [man] without humour.

Note that the nominalised verb in (136) remains unmarked for person and number since the verb is used in a generalised sense.

(137) ana tʃe tərmu wu-jontan   makəndɽa
there LOC person 3s:GEN-knowledge   not.the.same
The knowledge of that person is great.

purpose: (138) ŋa tamaʔ ka-va-j   ŋə-ka-ptʃo   ŋos
I work   NOM-do-LOC 1s:GEN-NOM-use be
I use it for my work.

(139) wuɟo tarngaʔ ka-va   w-əŋge   nə-və-rŋeʔ-w
he   dance   NOM-do 3s:GEN-clothes PFT-VPT-borrow₂-3s
He borrowed the clothes for the performance.

In example (139) *və-* is a viewpoint marker, which indicates that the action is perceived from the perspective of the speaker: the subject came, maybe to the speaker's house, to borrow the clothes needed for the performance. I discuss viewpoint marking in section 7.7 of the chapter on verbs.

function: (140) kʰajtʃak w-ascək   ɟilək to-va-ŋ
hammer 3s:GEN-change stone PFT-do-1s
I used a stone as a hammer.

(141) wu-sarɟup   w-əŋge   kə-miʔ
3s:GEN-bed   3s:GEN-clothes NOM-not.have
Since he had no blankets on his bed he used his clothes as a blanket.

w-əŋge   saɟup   w-əŋge   to-va-w
3s:GEN-clothes sleeping.place 3s:GEN-clothes PFT-do-3s

reference: (142) wuɟo kə   kəʃmo wu-tanxwa   na-va-w
she PR thief 3s:GEN-talk   PFT-do-3s
She talked about the thief.

(143) wuɟo kə poŋeʔj w-ətʃʰat   kə sonam   w-ascok
he PR   money 3s:GEN-reason PR bSod.nams 3s:GEN-letter
He wrote to bSod-nams about the money.

na-laʔt-w
PFT-write₂-3s

part and whole: (144) ʃu w-awo   kʰə w-ajmiʔ
tree 3s:GEN-head   dog 3s:GEN-tail
the top of the tree   the tail of the dog

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price: (145) poŋeʔj kəɲes mpʰjar w-əvə   to-ku-ŋ
             money two   CL   3s:GEN-price PFT-buy-1s
             I bought it for two yuan.[112]

value: (146) ŋa poŋeʔj pərɟa wu-piru   ki   ndoʔ
             I money hundred 3s:GEN-coral IDEF have
             I have a piece of coral worth one hundred yuan.

       (147) piru poŋeʔj kətʂoʔk-pərɟa w-əvə   ki   ndoʔ
             coral money six-hundred   3s:GEN-price IDEF have
             A piece of coral worth six hundred yuan.

extent: (148) lijaŋsəɟu¤   w-əɟeʔm   w-ambro kərscat tascək ˈnə-ŋos
              grain.bureau 3s:GEN-house 3s:-high eight   layer EV-be
              The building of the grain bureau is eight floors high.

       (149) ana   tʃe sogle kə-kʰi   w-askriʔn ˈna-ndoʔ
             there LOC saw   one-metre 3s:GEN-long OBS-have
             There is a one metre long saw.

4.3   *Noun adjuncts*

Noun adjuncts modify nouns or other words that can be the head of a noun phrase, such as demonstratives and certain quantifiers. In this section I discuss contrast marker *tə*, indefiniteness marker *ki*, quantifiers and numerals, classifiers and prominence marker *kə*. Numerals occur after a noun and its adjectivals and cover the scope of the noun phrase. Quantifiers also cover the noun phrase, occurring after the head noun, adjectivals and numerals. The markers *tə* and *ki* occur after and cover the scope of the noun phrase. Prominence marker *kə* is actually a discourse marker. The marker is placed after and covers the scope of the entire constituent to which it is attached.

a.   Marking contrast: *tə*

Contrast marker *tə* does not determine a referent as such but specifies a referent in its environment, as I will show below. The marker only occurs when a speaker wants to convey information about the specific relation of certain objects to their environment. It is not obligatory. The form of the contrast marker does not vary according to distal or proximal relationship between an object and the speech participant, since the marker defines only the relationship between an object and its

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[112] The *yuan* (圓) is the basic unit of the Chinese currency. One *yuan* is divided into ten *jiǎo* (角).

environment, not between speaker and object. Contrast marker *tə* can modify any word that can be the head of a noun phrase. The marker occurs immediately after the constituent it modifies, whether it is a single word or a phrase. Contrast marking can modify all sorts of nouns, including proper nouns and abstract nouns:

(150)   pkraʃis   w-əmpʰi   w-ərmu   ŋos
        bKra.shis 3s:GEN-outside 3s:GEN-person be
        bKra-shis is an outsider.

        pkraʃis   tə w-əmpʰi   w-ərmu   ŋos
        bKra.shis   C 3s:GEN-outside 3s:GEN-person   be
        bKra-shis is an outsider (as opposed to other people there who are insiders).

        sonam   tə-ɲo w-əmpʰi   w-ərmu   ŋos-jn
        bSod.nams   C-p   3s:GEN-outside 3s:GEN-person be-3p
        bSod-nams and his people are outsiders (as opposed to other people there who are insiders).

(151)   wu-ɲəgʒu   tə ma-ˈnə-haʔw
        3s:GEN-hatred C NEG-OBS-good
        Hatred is not a good thing (as opposed to other qualities that may be talked about).

Contrast marker *tə* cannot occur independently:

(152)   tətʰa   kəsam tə   rɟaŋkə w-əmdoʔk   ˈnə-ŋos
        book   three C   green 3s:GEN-colour   EV-be
        The three books are green.

        * tə rɟaŋkə wəmdoʔk nəŋos

But *tə* can modify a noun phrase in which the head is implicit, as in the first clause of (153), where the head of the noun phrase, 'burden', only occurs in full form in the second clause:

(153)   pəʃnu tə na-ˈa-ɟo   ŋ-əpkor   tə na-ˈa-ɟo
        today C PFT-NEV-light 1s:GEN-burden C PFT-NEV-light
        Today['s burden] has become light, my burden has become light.

Nagano analyses *tə* as a component of the definite demonstrative pronouns and calls it a 'referential indefinite demonstrative pronoun'.[113] However, unlike a pronoun *tə* cannot occur by itself in pronoun position:

(154) tʃəʔ ʃokʃoʔk ŋos   * tə ʃokʃoʔk ŋos
       this paper   be
       This is paper.

       nənɟo mə-tə-tʃʰi-n   * tə 'mətətʃʰi-n
       you   Q-2-go$_1$-2s
       Are you going?

It also cannot replace a pronoun in adjectival position:

(155) ndə kʰəzaʔ nənɟo nə-je   mə-ŋos   * tə kʰəzaʔ nənɟo nəje məŋos
       that bowl you 2s-POSS Q-be
       Is that bowl yours?

Though it is possible to have *tə* after the noun or pronoun, it does not replace the head there but rather carries specific contrasting meaning as discussed extensively in the section below:

(156) kʰəzaʔ ndə nənɟo nə-je   mə-ŋos
       bowl that you 2s-POSS Q-be
       That bowl is yours, right?

       kʰəzaʔ ndə tə nənɟo nə-je   mə-ŋos
       bowl that C you 2s-POSS Q-be
       That bowl (as opposed to other bowls present) is yours, right?

       kʰəzaʔ tə nənɟo nə-je   mə-ŋos
       bowl C you 2s-POSS Q-be
       That bowl (as opposed to other objects present) is yours, right?

Since *tə* does not signify any referent as such, it is empty of referential meaning and cannot occur by itself. In the Jiǎomùzú dialects it is not a pronoun.

Contrast marker *tə* can modify demonstratives:

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[113] Nagano (2003: 473).

(157) tʃəʔ   tə ʃokʃoʔk ŋos
      DEM   C paper   be
      This is paper.

There can be several contrast markers within one larger noun phrase, modifying smaller noun phrases that are nested within the larger phrase:

(158) ŋa [[tʃəʔ tə] sok   w-əmdoʔk   tə] to-ku-ŋ
      I   this C manner 3s:GEN-colour C   PFT-buy-1s
      I bought the one that is similar to this one in colour.

The following examples further illustrate the use of *tə*. In the first set example (159) shows that contrast marker *tə* can define its referent, unlike the marker for indefiniteness *ki*. Markers *tə* and *ki* are incompatible, see example (188) below. Examples (160) show how *tə* can be used to determine different sentence constituents, allowing for subtle differences in meaning.

(159) tərmu tə   tərmu ki
      person C   person IDEF
      the, that person   a person

(160) nənɟo təɟeʔm h-ato-j   mə-ŋos
      you   house   D-up-LOC Q-be
      Is your house up on the mountain?

      nənɟo təɟeʔm hato   tə mə-ŋos
      you   house D-up C Q-be
      Is your house the one up on the mountain?

      h-ato təɟeʔm tə nənɟo nə-je   mə-ŋos
      D-up   house C you   2s-POSS Q-be
      The house up on the mountain, is that yours?

Actually the main function of *tə* is not to define a constituent, but rather to signal that the constituent it refers to is unique in its semantic environment.

(161) tʃəʔ   ʃokʃoʔk ŋos   tʃəʔ   tə ʃokʃoʔk ŋos
      DEM   paper   be   DEM   C paper   be
      This is paper.   This is paper.

The first sentence in (159) indicates that there is paper, without saying anything about what else might be there. There might be more or different paper, or there might be other things. It is unclear

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to the listener and apparently not relevant to the speaker. The second sentence however specifies that there are other things around, and that they are not paper. The sentence might be paraphrased as 'This here is paper, as opposed to the other things around'. Another example of the determining and excluding function of *tə* is:

(162) tʃəʔ   ʃokʃoʔk   tə   ŋos
        DEM   paper   C   be
        This is the paper [that, which….]

There might be other paper around, but there is only one kind of paper that the speaker obviously had referred to earlier, to the exclusion of other kinds of paper.

(163a) təza tʃəʔ   ŋa   ŋ-ajze   ŋos
         man   DEM   I   1s:GEN-older.brother   be
         This man is my older brother.

(163b) təza tə   ŋa ŋ-ajze   ŋos
         man   C   I   1s:GEN-older.brother   be
         The man is my older brother.

(163c) təza tʃəʔ   tə ŋa ŋ-ajze   ŋos
         man   DEM   C   I   1s:GEN-older.brother   be
         This man is my older brother.

Example (163b) indicates that in a group of people there is only one man, and that this man is my older brother. Sentence (163a) is the most general statement, pointing out a person in a group of people about the composition of which the speaker gives no clarification. In (163c) the speaker points out the older brother in a group about which nothing further is known, but it is clear that the brother has been referred to earlier in a conversation between the speaker and the listener.

(164a) tʃəʔ   məntoʔk   kəsam 'na-mpʃar
         DEM   flower   three   OBS-beautiful
         These three flowers are beautiful.

(164b) tʃəʔ   məntoʔk   kəsam tə   'na-mpʃar
         DEM   flower   three   C   OBS-beautiful
         These three flowers are beautiful.

In (164a) three flowers out of many are singled out as beautiful. In (164b) there are only three flowers among perhaps a variety of other things. The flowers are described as beautiful in contrast to the other things, which are implied to be not beautiful. In some instances this use of *tə* is best

interpreted as a way to give emphasis, especially when it is used to modify personal pronouns. In English intonation the stress is on 'you' in (165) and (166):

(165) nənɟo tə kətʃe   ji-kə-tə-vu-n   ŋos
       you   C   where   PFT-NOM-2-come$_2$-2s   be
       Where do you come from?

(166) kʰaʃpa tə kə nə   nənɟo tə təŋgli na-tə-va-w   to-kə-cəs-w   ŋos
       frog   C   PR CON   you   C   lie   PFT-2-do-2s   PFT-NOM-say-3s   be
       "You are [the one who] lied!" said the frog.

The presence or absence of *tə* can be used to signal genericness, as shown in the following examples. In (167a), the most generic form, there is no additional information about other possible animals or other possible cats:

(167a) lolo kə-neʔk   ŋos
        cat NOM-black be
        The cat is black./The cats are black.

Example (167b) sets the black cat in opposition to other cats that are all of different colours, while (167c) sets a black cat in opposition to other animals, which are not black.

(167b) tʃəʔ tə lolo kə-neʔk   ŋos   (167c) lolo tə kə-neʔk   ŋos
        this C   cat   NOM-black be   cat C   NOM-black be
        This is a black cat.   *The cat* is black.

Sentence (167d) contrasts the black cat to other cats that did not eat sausage: 'The one who ate the sausage is the black one':

(167d) paʒgar kə-ndza   tə   lolo kə-neʔk   tə   ˈnə-ŋos
        sausage NOM-eat   C   cat NOM-black   C   EV-be
        This is the black cat that ate the sausage. (The sausage eater is the black cat.)

And (167e) shows that cats like to eat sausage, as opposed to other possible animals such as birds:

(167e) lolo tə-ɲo paʒgar   ka-ndza   kə-rgaʔ-jn   ŋos
        cat C-p   sausage   NOM-eat   NOM-like-3p   be
        Cats like to eat sausage.

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The last example in this series, below, does not give information about other possible animals around that may or may not like to eat sausage. But the speaker makes clear that some specified cats like to eat his sausage, though not his other food.

(167f) lolo-ɲo ŋa ŋə-paʒgar tə ka-ndza 'na-rgaʔ-jn
cat-p I 1s:GEN-sausage C NOM-eat OBS-like-3P
The cats like to eat *my sausage*.

b.　　Marking indefiniteness: *ki*

Marker *ki* derives from numerals *kərek* and *kərgi*, meaning 'one'. In sentences *ki* can mean 'one' or can be used to mark indefiniteness, forming meanings similar to the English indefinite article *a* or signalling 'a certain', 'some…':

(168a) tətʰa ndoʔ　　　　　(168b) tətʰa ki ndoʔ
　　　 book have　　　　　　　　　 book IDEF have
　　　 There are/is a book(s).　　　　 There is a book.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　 There is one book.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　 There is a certain book.

The difference between the statements in (168) is that in (168a) the speaker doesn't know the quantity - or doesn't say anything about it, while in (168b) he specifies that there is one. Like contrast marker *tə*, indefiniteness marker *ki* can modify any head of a noun phrase. The marker occurs in the final slot of a noun phrase and cannot occur independently:

(169) cokrtse w-ərka-j tətʰa ki ndoʔ
desk 3s:GEN-top-LOC book IDEF have
There is a book on the desk.

* cokrtse wərkaj ki ndoʔ

The indefiniteness marker only occurs directly after the constituent it modifies and cannot be placed in the middle of a syntactical unit:

(170)   [təza   w-əvok   kə-ktu   ki]   'na-ndoʔ
         man   3s:GEN-stomach   NOM-big   IDEF   OBS-have
        There's a man with a big belly.

        * [təza ki wəvok kəktu ki] 'nandoʔ

        * [təza ki wəvok kəktu] 'nandoʔ

(171)   [tajam kəsam zəm kə-ndʒəʔt   ki]   'na-ndoʔ
         pot   three   litre NOM-hold   IDEF   OBS-have
        There is a pot of three litres.

Marking with *ki* is not obligatory. In (171), for example, it is possible to leave out *ki*. If the marker is there the speaker is not entirely certain that the pot will be adequate for the job at hand. A sentence without *ki* conveys that the speaker does not doubt that the pot will do. He simply directs the listener to the pot that the speaker knows is there and wants to use.

Indefiniteness cannot be marked on non-singular nouns, as demonstrated in the following examples. Sentence (172a) shows the generic or non-specific sense of *kəɟoʔ*, 'sheep', while (172b) refers to sheep known to the speaker:

(172a) pəzar   kajve   kəɟoʔ   'na-ndoʔ
        summer   meadow   sheep   OBS-have
        Sheep graze in the meadow in summer.

(172b) pəʃnu   kajve   kəɟoʔ   'na-ndoʔ-jn
        today   meadow   sheep   OBS-have
        The sheep are grazing in the meadow today.

The second example indicates that all the sheep are in the meadow. If a speaker wants to specify some sheep over other possible animals he has to use contrast marker *tə*: the sheep are in the meadow, but not the cows. In (172b), adding *tə* after *kəɟoʔ can* also indicate that at some other point in time these particular sheep were not in the meadow, but now they are. It is also possible to have *kəɟoɲo*, which agrees with the plural marking on the verb. These strategies all make more specific and immediate the sheep that the speaker is referring to. However, modifying *kəɟoʔ* with *ki* signals that there is only one sheep in the meadow. Number marking cannot occur:

(173)   pəʃnu   kajve   kəɟoʔ   ki   'na-ndoʔ
        today   meadow   sheep   IDEF   OBS-have
        A/one sheep is grazing in the meadow today.

        * pəʃnu kajve kəɟoʔ ki 'nandoʔjn

With non-count nouns, as in the examples above, it is number marking, not the indefiniteness marker, that indicates generalness and non-specificness. When number marking is used to indicate generalness the meaning is often best translated with an anaphoric pronoun:

(174) sətʂwan-j   tʂʰaʔ¤ kə-ji   ndoʔ-jn
       Sìchuān-LOC tea   NOM-grow   have-3p
       Tea grows in Sìchuān. (They grow tea in Sìchuān.)

In (175) *tə* can be omitted but *ki* cannot occur to mark generalness:

(175) tʂʰaʔ¤ kəsna tə   w-əjmbak   kə-tsətsə   ŋos
       tea   good C   3s:GEN-leave NOM-small   be
       A good tea has very small leaves.

       * tʂʰaʔ¤ kəsna ki wəjmbak kətsətsə ŋos

(176) tamar kə-haʔw   tə serpo ŋos
       butter NOM-good   C   yellow be
       Good butter is yellow.

       * tamar kəhaʔw ki serpo ŋos

       tamar serpo leŋleŋ tə kə-haʔw   ŋos
       butter yellow EXPR   C   NOM-good   be
       Pure yellow butter, that is good butter.

       * tamar serpo leŋleŋ ki kəhaʔw ŋos

There is only one marker for indefiniteness, *ki*. To distinguish between referential and non-referential indefinites other strategies have to be employed:

(177a) pkraʃis   tətʰa to-ku-w
       bKra.shis book   PFT-buy-3s
       bKra-shis bought a book/books.

(177b) pkraʃis   tətʰa ki   to-ku-w
       bKra.shis book   IDEF PFT-buy-3s
       bKra-shis bought a book.

(177c) pkraʃis   tʰi   w-ətʰa   to-ku-w
        bKra.shis what 3s:GEN-book   PFT-buy-3s
        bKra-shis bought some book or other.

(177d) pkraʃis   tʰi   kə w-ətʰa   to-ku-w
        bKra.shis what PR   3s:GEN-book   PFT-buy-3s
        bKra-shis bought a book about something or other.

(177e) * pkraʃis tʰi wətʰa ki tokuw

(177f) pkraʃis   tʰi   w-ətʰa   tə to-ku-w
        bKra.shis what 3s:GEN-book   C   PFT-buy-3w
        bKra-shis bought some book or other.

Of the examples above, the first sentence (177a) is the most general. The speaker does not indicate how many books bKra-shis bought. The emphasis is on the entity 'book', as opposed to other things. Sentence (177b) specifies that it was one book, or a book, as opposed to more than one. Example (177c) specifies that the speaker does not know which kind of book or books bKra-shis bought. Sentence (177d) shows that bKra-shis bought a book for sure, but the speaker does not know what the book is about. Prominence marker *kə* here gives prominence to *tʰi*, 'what', which indicates the speaker's lack of knowledge about the contents of the book. Example (177e) has an undefined referent. Adding *ki* doubles the indefiniteness marking, which is ungrammatical in Jiǎomùzú. Adding *tə* though is possible, as evidenced by (177f). The contrast marker *tə* here does not make it any clearer what book bKra-shis bought but rather defines bKra-shis' purchase as 'some book' rather than 'some other object'.
The marker for indefiniteness, *ki*, can occur after numerals to express the meaning 'about, around, some':

(178)   ndə wu-je   kəɟoʔ kəbdu kəmŋi ki   ndoʔ
        that 3s-POSS sheep four   five   IDEF have
        He has a handful of sheep.

The marker *ki* can also modify a numeral already modified by a quantifier such as *caʔm*, 'no more than, at most', as in the following example. The speaker is not sure of the exact amount of money, but he knows it does not exceed fifty, and that it is somewhere close to that amount:

(179)   poŋeʔj kəmŋi-zɟi caʔm   ki   ndoʔ
        money five-ten   at.most IDEF have
        There is something like fifty [yuan], no more.

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Note that if the numeral is exact, without modifying quantifier or other indication of indefiniteness, *ki* cannot occur:

(180) ŋa pakʃu zɟi caʔm ki ndoʔ
I apple ten at.most IDEF have
I have about ten apples, no more.

* ŋa pakʃu zɟi ki ndoʔ

The same sense of *ki* occurs when it is used with nouns to express the speaker's lack of clarity about a fact. In these cases *ki* can occur with common nouns as in (181a) as well as with proper nouns, as in example (181b). Note that marking the proper noun with *ki* does not generate a meaning such as 'in Chéngdū or some other place' but rather 'somewhere in Chéngdū':

(181a) ndə makmə ŋos
that soldier be
He is a soldier.

(181b) ndə makmə ki ŋos
that soldier IDEF be
He is a soldier or something.

(182a) lhamo ʃintəhu na-ɲu
lHa.mo Chéngdū PFT-live
lHa-mo lived in Chéngdū.

(182b) lhamo ʃintəhu ki na-ɲu
lHa.mo Chéngdū IDEF PFT-live
lHa-mo lived somewhere in Chéngdū.

The indefiniteness marker is used also on the discourse level, when a new person or topic is introduced in a conversation or a story:

(183a) ndə nɟilək to-vəja-w
that stone PFT-pick-3s
He picked up the stone.

(183b) ndə nɟilək ki to-vəja-w
that stone IDEF PFT-pick-3s
He picked up a stone.

The constructions in (183) are both correct, but used in different situations. Sentence (183a) without *ki* is a simple statement, used in a known context. The stone that he picked up has already been mentioned before. The listener does not necessarily expect to get more information. Sentence (183b) with *ki* introduces the stone as a new twist in the plot or as a new topic, and sets the listener up to anticipate more information about the stone. By the same logic, at the beginning of a story, *ki* must occur:

(184) kəsce kəsce tərmu ki ʃintəhu ji-kə-vu ˈnə-ŋos
before before person IDEF Chéngdū PFT-NOM-come₂ EV-be
Long long ago a man came from Chéngdū.

* kəsce kəsce tərmu ʃintəhu jikəvi nəŋos

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Indefiniteness can be marked with nouns marked for plural or other words expressing plural such as 'many, much, all':

(185)   jino   pakʃu   wuvjot ki   na-kʰit-j
           we:e   apple   many   IDEF PFT-pluck-1p
           We picked lots of apples.

In this sort of sentence *ki* conveys a feeling of amazement or surprise. In (183) the speaker is amazed that they picked such a large quantity of apples.

The marker *ki* can also express 'small quantity, a little', either together with a quantifier or by itself:

(186)   jino   kʰalet   ki   to-ndza-j
           we:e   rtsam-pa   IDEF   PFT-eat-1p
           We ate a little rtsam-pa.

           jino   kʰalet   kə-tsətsə   ki   to-ndza-j
           we:e   rtsam-pa   NOM-little   IDEF PFT-eat-1p
           We ate a little rtsam-pa.

           jino   kʰalet   kə-tsətsə   to-ndza-j
           we:e   rtsam-pa   NOM-little   PFT-eat-1p
           We ate a little rtsam-pa.

(187)   hajtso   ki   kə-sə-raʔm-j
           chili.pepper   IDEF   PFT-CAUS-dry-1p
           We dried a few chili peppers.

The contrast marker *tə* cannot occur together with *ki*:

(188a)   təza   w-əvok   kə-ktu   ki   'na-ndoʔ
           man   3s:GEN-stomach   NOM-big   IDEF   OBS-have
           There is a man with a big stomach.

(188b)   təza   w-əvok   kə-ktu   tə kətʃe w-ərmu   ŋos
           man 3s:-stomach   NOM-big   C where 3s:GEN-person be
           The man with a big stomach, where is he from?

           * təza wəvok kəktu ki tə 'nandoʔ

           * təza wəvok kəktu tə ki 'nandoʔ

c.   Numerals and other quantifying words

Numerals

Jiǎomùzú numerals are based on the decimal system. There are few classifiers in the Jiǎomùzú dialects (see below). Numerals follow the noun which they modify, though they can appear by themselves, if the speech participants know the entity referred to:

(189)   tərmu   kəsam ndoʔ   kəsam ndoʔ
         person   three have   three have
         There are three people.   Three. (There are three.)

There is no term to express zero or nought. If needed literary Tibetan སྟུག *thug* is used. Numerals from one through to nine are all prefixed by *kə-*:

(190)   kərek   1   kətʂoʔk   6
         kəɲes   2   kəʃnəʔs   7
         kəsam   3   kərscat   8
         kəbdu   4   kəngu   9
         kəmŋi   5   zɟi   10

The prefix *kə-* is used with nouns and classifiers to express the meaning 'one of…'. Note that in the last two examples in this series nouns such as *kʰəzaʔ*, 'bowl' and *təʃnu*, 'day', function as classifiers:

(191)   mpʰjar   sheet
         kə-mpʰjar   one sheet of…
         ʃokʃoʔk kə-mpʰjar   one sheet of paper
         ʃokʃoʔk kəbdu mpʰjar   four sheets of paper

         kʰəzaʔ   bowl
         kə-kʰəzaʔ   one bowl of…
         kʰrəʔw kə-kʰəzaʔ   one bowl of rice
         kʰrəʔw kəsam kʰəzaʔ   three bowls of rice

         təʃnu   day
         kə-ʃnu   one day
         kəsam ʃnu   three days

There are three words in Jiǎomùzú that express the number one. The word *kərek* is used throughout the township. The two other words are *kərgi* and its dialect variant *kərtok* or *kərdok*:

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(192) kʰəna kərek   one dog

       kʰəna kərtok   one dog

       kʰəna kərgi   one dog

Neither *kərgi* nor *kərtok* can be used in counting:

(193) kərek, kəɲes, kəsam….

       *kərgi, kəɲes, kəsam….

       *kərtok, kəɲes, kəsam….

But the roots of these numerals can be used as classifiers:

(194) kərgi   təmɲok kəbdu rgi

       one   bread   four   CL

                      four pieces of bread

       kərtok   tarni kesam rtok

       one   gold   three   CL

                      three ingots of gold

These numerals have a grammaticalised function as marker of indefiniteness, in the shortened form of *ki*, which often translates as 'one' or indefinite article 'a', but has some other uses besides. I discuss *ki* more fully in section 4.3.b on definiteness marking above.

Numerals from 11 through 19 are formed by adding a numeral without *kə*- to *zɟi*, 'ten'. Note that for the numerals 11, 12, 13 and 18 the /i/ of *zɟi* becomes /a/:

(195) zɟatek   11   zɟitʈoʔk   16

       zɟaɲes   12   zɟiʃnəʔs   17

       zɟasam   13   zɟarscat   18

       zɟibdu   14   zɟingu   19

       zɟimɲi   15   kəɲes-zɟi   20

Numerals for multiples of 10 up to 90 are formed by adding *zɟi* to numbers 2 through 9:

(196) zɟi   10   kətʈoʔk-zɟi   60

       kəɲes-zɟi   20   kəʃnəʔs-zɟi   70

       kəsam-zɟi   30   kərscat-zɟi   80

       kəbdu-zɟi   40   kəngu-zɟi   90

       kəmɲi-zɟi   50   pərɟa   100

Adding a number from 1 through 9 forms numerals up to one hundred:

(197)   kesam-zɟi-kəsam   33

        kəʃnuʔs-zɟi-kətɽoʔk   76

        kəɲes-zɟi-kəmɲi   25

        kərscat-zɟi-kəngu   89

        kəngu-zɟi-kərek   91

Larger numbers are formed along the same principles:

(198) 300   kəsam-pərɟa   stoŋtso   1000

       500   kəmɲi-pərɟa   krətso   10,000

       425   kəbdu-pərɟa-kəɲes-zɟi-kəmɲi   krətso-zɟi; mbəmkter   100,000

       687   kətɽoʔk-pərɟa-kərscat-zɟi-kəʃnəʔs   krətso pərɟa   1,000,000

Other often used terms for 'one million', *pʃawa* and *saja* are derived from literary Tibetan ས་ཡ *sa-ya*.

Numerals come after nouns but before classifiers. This is an important distinction especially for those nouns that also function as classifier:

(199)   məntoʔk kəsam ndoʔ
        flower   three have
        There are three flowers.

(200)   ŋa kəsam tətsʰot na-ta-najo-n
        I   three hour   PFT-1/2-wait-2s
        I waited for you for three hours.

(201)   tətsʰot kəsam tʃe ji-məndə
        hour   three LOC PFT-arrive
        [The bus] arrived at three o'clock.

(202)   təza kəsam   tavlu kəmɲi pa   vi   lo   kəsam pa
        man three   age   five CL   come₁   year three CL
        three men   be five years old   three years old

        * kəsam lo vi   kəsam pa vi   be three years old
        * kəsam lo wəŋkʰuʔ tʃe kəsam pa wəŋkʰuʔ   after three years.

I have not found ordinal numbers. When counting, for example, in ritual offerings of liquor a speaker will use normal numerals as in *kərek tə…* , *kəɲes tə….*, *kəsam tə…* for 'the first one…, the second one…, the third one…'. When the speaker uses a high register of language, he may use loans

from Tibetan for ordinal numbers, such as *taŋbo* from literary Tibetan དང་པོ *dang-po*, 'first' and *ɲipa*

from གཉིས་པ *gnyes-pa*, 'second'.

I have not found native terms for fractions other than 'half' and percentages. If need be words like 'part, share, half' or otherwise quantities like 'a bowl' or 'a bucket' are used. Apparently in the past mathematical functions like addition, subtraction and multiplication were expressed using Jiǎomùzú.[114] But these days the use of Chinese has replaced rGyalrong in this semantic domain.

Indefinite numerals with meanings such as 'about, approximately' can be formed in several ways. The prefix *wa-* combined with a numeral gives the meaning 'at least':

(203) zɟi   wa-zɟi
       ten   at.least-ten

Prefix *wa-* cannot occur with nouns or quantifiers, unless the quantifier is based on a numeral:

(204) təvek   * wavek   wuvjot   *wawuvjot
       half   many

(205) kəkərgi[115]   some (Q)
       wa-kəkərgi   at least some

       laktʃʰe   ɲi-rɲi   wa-kəkərgi   ma-ˈnə-ʃpaʔ-ŋ
       thing   p:GEN-name   at.least-some   NEG-REFL-can$_1$-1s
       I don't know some of the names for things.

The meaning 'at most' is generated by qualifying a numeral with quantifier *caʔm*, 'at most':

(206) tətʰa   kəbdu   kəmɲi   caʔm
       book   four   five   at.most
       at most four or five books.

A noun can occur between the numeral and the quantifier if that noun functions as a classifier:

(207) kəŋes-zɟi-kəmɲi   ɟeʔm   caʔm   ndoʔ-jn
       two-ten-five   house   at.most   have-3p
       There are at most twenty-five households.

---

[114] Tshe-dbang sGron-ma, personal communication.

[115] The quantifier *kəkərgi* also occurs as *kərgirgi*, see example (231).

Combining a numeral with the noun *təro*, 'surplus, extra' forms the meaning of 'more than':

(208) zɟi təro zɟi-ro
       ten extra more than ten

Prefix *wa-* and quantifier *caʔm* are semantically incompatible and cannot be used to modify the same numeral:

(209) * wazɟi caʔm

But *wa-* and *caʔm* can occur individually to modify a numeral already modified by *təro*:

(210) wa-zɟi-ro   (211) jigə-ʃiŋtʃi¤-ro   caʔm
       at.least-ten-extra   one-week-extra   at.most
       definitely more than ten   More than one week but less than two
                                         weeks

Numerals in daily life

Though Jiǎomùzú numerals occur regularly in conversations, there are many situations in which native speakers find it more convenient to use Chinese numerals, which are shorter. Code-switching between Chinese and Jiǎomùzú is common. For some time references in contemporary contexts there is no proper Jiǎomùzú equivalent, in which case a Chinese numeral is used. For example, day, month and year tend to be all in Chinese numerals:

(212) ndə aʈliŋliŋɟo¤ nijan¤ ndə w-əpa   na-kə-sci   ˈnə-ŋos
       that 2009   year   that 3s:GEN-CL PFT- NOM-be.born   EV-be
       He was born in 2009.

In (212) *aʈliŋliŋɟo nijan* is loaned from Chinese 二零零九年, *èr líng líng jiǔ nián*. It is possible to use Jiǎomùzú numerals to express the year. In more formal situations or among older people one might still hear something like (213):

(213) lo   stoŋtso-kəɲes-kəngu   w-əpa
       year thousand-two-nine   3s:GEN-CL
       [in] the year 2009.

However, in traditional time reckoning the Tibetan twelve year cycle is used. The symbols of the years are the equivalents of the Tibetan symbols, but rGyalrong names are used, except for the Year of the Tiger, which uses the Tibetan word for 'tiger', སྟག *stag*, instead of the indigenous *kʰoŋ*:

(214) pak-lo   year of the pig   tarmok-lo   year of the dragon
       mbro-lo   year of the horse   kʰə-lo   year of the dog
       stag-lo   year of the tiger   mbala-lo   year of the ox
       kəɟoʔ-lo   year of the sheep   pəɟu-lo   year of the rat
       kəzu-lo   year of the monkey   kalaʔ-lo   year of the rabbit
       kʰapri-lo   year of the snake   patʃu-lo   year of the bird

Jiǎomùzú has no names for months, but rather uses seasons to indicate time within the year. There are two seasons, winter and summer. If there is a need for more detail or precision to pinpoint an event in time, usually the speaker will use a recurring event that takes place around that time as his reference point:

(215) ndə   pəzar   ndzamlaŋ sci-psəŋ   tʃe na-kə-sci   ˈnə-ŋos
       that summer world   birth-offering LOC PFT-NOM-be.born   EV-be
       He was born in summer, at the time of the Festival of Creation.

The agricultural year revolves around a lunar cycle of twelve months, each of which has thirty days. The first half of the month, in which the moon is waxing, is called *kətʰo* or *tʰowa*. The second half, with the waning moon, is called *kəmbot* or *ɟowa*. Days are counted in native numerals:

(216) kətʰo kəsam   the third day of the waxing moon
       ɟowa kəɲes   the second day of the waning moon

For dates as required for horoscopes and certain types of divination, the Tibetan system of counting months is used, simply saying 'the first month, the second month…'. The word for 'month, moon' as well as the numerals are loans from:

(217)   literary Tibetan

       zlawa daŋbo   the first month   ཟླ་བ་དང་པོ *zla-ba dang-po*

       zlawa ɲespa   the second month   ཟླ་བ་གཉེས་པ *zla-ba gnyes-pa*

       zlawa səmba   the third month   ཟླ་བ་གསུམ་པ *zla-ba gsum-pa*

There are also no names for the day of the month. Dates can be expressed either in Jiǎomùzú numerals or in Chinese:

(218) pəʃnu kəsam-zɟi ŋos
       today three-ten be
       Today is the thirtieth.

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(219) ndə tə tə kəsam-zɟi-kərek w-əʃnu   na-kə-sci   ˈnə-ŋos
      that C C three-ten-one 3s:GEN-day PFT-NOM-be.born EV-be
      He was born on the thirty-first.

When using the traditional lunar calendar rather than the modern calendar days are counted by *tsepsa*, the classifier for dates, with the Jiǎomùzú numeral from one through to thirty:

(220) tsepsa kərek   the first day (of the month)
      tsepsa kəŋes   the second day
      tsepsa kəsamzɟi   the thirtieth day

To express things like 'weekend' or 'Monday' native speakers use Chinese terms, sometimes with an adapted meaning:

(221) pəʃnu ʃiŋtʃʰi¤ ˈnə-ŋos kə-rətʰa   ma-ra
      today day   EV-be NOM-read NEG-need
      Today it is the weekend, we don't need to go to school.

In example (221) *ʃiŋtʃʰi* is a loan from Chinese 星期 *xīngqī*, 'day', which in rGyalrong areas is now widely used in the sense of 'weekend', and by extension 'holiday, day off, break'. For workdays the Chinese names are used:

(222) ʃiŋtʃʰiji¤   ka-rətʰa
      Monday   INF-go.to.school
      go to school on Monday

In (222) *ʃiŋtʃʰiji*, from Chinese 星期一 *xīngqīyī*, literally 'day-one' is used for Monday, the first working day of the week.
In formal circumstances, such as the drawing up of a horoscope in the monastery or the yearly divination that take place at New Year, the monk will ask for year and time of birth, using Jiǎomùzú vocabulary:

(223) tʰi   w-əlo   tʰi   w-əʒak
      what 3s:GEN-year   what 3s:GEN-time
      What year, what date?

For birth year speakers make use of the traditional twelve year cycle of the Tibetan calendar with its animal symbols, or simply use Chinese, as they do for the date:

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(224) stag-lo   wu¤ jwe¤ san¤ haw¤
tiger year   five month three   number
The third day of the fifth month of the year of the tiger.

In (224) *wu jwe san haw* are from Chinese 五月三号 *wǔ yuè sān hào*.

Days are divided into several periods that each have their own name, beyond the normal morning, afternoon and evening, such as *ʃarkʰa*, 'the time when the cock crows; the crack of dawn' and *tanam*, 'when the sun comes up; very early morning'. Traditionally rGyalrong also divided the day into set periods of hours, with a name for each period, still mentioned by some of the texts in the Collection Āwàng.[116] These time references are, to my knowledge, no longer current among native speakers.

In telling time the use of Jiǎomùzú numerals is common, both for hours and minutes:

(225) wuɟo tətsʰot kəsam tʃe ji-rɟi
he   hour   three   LOC PFT-go₂
He went at three o'clock.

(226) xwotse¤ tətsʰot kəsam təvek tʃe ji-məndə
train   hour   three   half   LOC PFT-arrive
The train arrived at half past three.

(227) kəmɲi hən¤   w-əŋkʰuʔ   tʃe kə-rətʰa   ra
five   minute   3s:GEN-back LOC NOM-study need
Class will start in five minutes.

The word for minute, *hen*, is a loan from Chinese 分 *fēn*. Note that *hen* functions as a classifier, with the numeral preceding, while *tətsʰot*, 'hour', behaves like a noun.

Prices of goods etc. can be given in Chinese but are often in Jiǎomùzú numerals. Often the price precedes the quantity. The classifier is not obligatory:

(228) kərscat [mpʰjar] tʃe kə-tərpa ˈnə-ŋos
eight   [CL]   LOC one-pound EV-be
It's eight (yuan) per pound.

Phone numbers are exclusively in Chinese, including emergency numbers:

(229) ka-ŋalalat   mə-na-ndoʔ   rə jawjawliŋ¤   ka-nakʰo
NOM-fight   COND-PFT-have CON one-one-zero   INF-call
If there is a fight, call 110.

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[116] Zànlā Āwàng Cuòchéng and Prins 2006.

The emergency number here, 110, is from Chinese 一一零 *yāoyāolíng*. Numbers of public transportation such as busses or trains, hotel rooms, dorms, and house numbers most often use Chinese numerals but, especially if they are small numbers that are convenient to pronounce, Jiǎomùzú numerals can occur. Age tends to be expressed with Jiǎomùzú numerals more often than with Chinese numbers, though either one is acceptable.

There is no way to distinguish partitive and non-partitive numerals in Jiǎomùzú. Adding contrast marker *tə* defines the entity as opposed to other entities around. However, the presence of *tə* does not single out some part of a whole, as the English 'some of the…' construction does. In (230a) the listener cannot know if there are more boys beside the two who went running, if only 'some of the boys' went running:

(230a) təzapuʔ tə kə-rɟəʔk   ji-rɟi-ndʒ
      boy   C NOM-run   PFT-go$_2$-3d
      The two boys went running.

(230b) təzapuʔ kə-rɟəʔk   ji-rɟi-ndʒ
      boy   NOM-run PFT-go$_2$-3d
      Two boys went running.

Other quantifying words

Non-numeral quantifiers are modifiers of nouns and pronouns that indicate quantity or scope, such as English 'many, much, few, all, some'. Here is an overview of the most frequently used quantifiers in Jiǎomùzú:

(231)	wuvjot	much, a lot, many	rere…kaka	each…one
	təgɲes	(a) few	ndoʔmiʔ	about; approximately
	kəʒu	all	kətəpʰok	several
	kəmcok	some, several	tʰomatʰo	about; more or less
	kəkərtokrtok	some	ndoʔndoʔ	all; every
	caʔm	at most	kərgirgi	some
	stamce	all, entire	kəmənɟu	all, whole
	tsat	a little		

Some of the quantifiers derive from numerals, classifiers or verbs. Most often compounding or reduplication form quantifiers derived from other words:

(232) ndoʔ   have (verb)   təpʰok   group (CL)

       miʔ   not have (verb)   kə-   one

       ndoʔmiʔ   about, approximately   kətəpʰok   several

       kərgi   one (numeral)   kərtok   one (numeral)

       kərgirgi   some, a few   kəkərtokrtok some

Quantifiers occur after the noun they modify or stand alone as the head of a noun phrase. Marking for plural does not influence the place of the quantifier. But markers for indefiniteness or contrast cannot occur between the noun and the quantifier if the quantifier precedes the noun:

(233) kəruʔ   kəʒu tə   kəʒu kəruʔ-ɲo
       Tibetan all C   all   Tibetan-p
       all Tibetans   all Tibetans

       kəʒu kəruʔ-ɲo   tə   kəruʔ-ɲo   kəʒu tə   * kəʒu tə kəruʔɲo
       all   Tibetan-p C   Tibetan-p all   C
       all the Tibetans   all the Tibetans

Some quantifiers have a prefix *kə*, as do non-process verbs. However, the quantifiers do not inflect for verbal categories like evidentiality and person and number. By this distinction *kəʒu*, 'all' is a quantifier but *kəməca*, 'many' is a stative verb:

(234) kəʒu   all   * 'naʒu   * 'naʒujn

       kəməca   many   'na-məca   'na-məca-jn
                                   OBS-many   OBS-many-3p

Here are some sample sentences:

(235) tsʰe wuvjot 'na-ndoʔ   tətʰa təgɲes ki   'na-ndo
       salt   much   OBS-have   book   few   IDEF OBS-have
       There is a lot of salt.   There are a few books.

       tətʰa kəmcok ndoʔ   ʃu   kətəpʰok na-pʰo-jn
       book   several have   tree several   PFT-cut-3p
       There is a pile of books.   Several trees were cut.

       tandzam w-ətʳə   tsat tʃe ŋos
       bridge   3s:GEN-front   little LOC be
       It's just before the bridge.

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Quantifiers can stand alone, like numerals, and be the head of a noun phrase:

(236) kəʒu na-cu   ŋa kəmcok kaku ŋ-əsi   ˈna-vi
      all   PFT-rot   I some   buy 1s:GEN-heart OBS-come
      All were rotten.   I want to buy some.

Quantifiers can occur with markers of indefiniteness and contrast:

(237) ndoʔndoʔ tə ji-ɟo¤   kəmŋi kaka ˈnə-ŋos
      all   C one-jiǎo five   each EV-be
      Each one is five jiǎo.

(238) wuvjot ki   na-kʰit-j
      many   IDEF PFT-pick-1p
      We picked an amazingly large amount.

They also occur with prominence marker *kə*:

(239) piɟo¤ w-apkap   kəkərtokrtok kə nə   mbərzaʔ kə ˈna-vəja-jn
      beer 3s:GEN-cap   some   PR CON   knife   PR OBS-fetch-3p
      Some open beer bottles with a knife,

      kəkərtokrtok kə   nə   ɲ-əʃwa   kə ˈna-ci-jn
      some   PR   CON   3p:GEN-tooth PR OBS-open-3p
      some use their teeth.

There is no difference between partitive and non-partitive quantifiers in Jiǎomùzú.

(240a) təza-ɲo w-əvek   tə comco-vu   ˈnə-ŋos
       boy-p   3s:GEN-half C   Jiǎomùzú-person EV-be
       Some of the boys are from Jiǎomùzú.

(240b) təza-ɲo laŋtʃin ka-leʔt   kərgaʔ   kə-təpʰok
       boy-p   ball   NOM-hit   NOM-like   one-group
       Some boys like football.

In (240a) *təvek* literally means 'half', but it can be used to express 'a part of', as can *kətəpʰok* . There are also no special partitive negative quantifiers. If such a difference in meaning has to be expressed normally it is done through number marking, the use of contrast or indefiniteness markers or other strategies:

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(241a) tʃəʔ   jirpe   tapuʔ-ɲo kərtok ʒik   ɉi-ˈa-rətʰa-jn
       this   village boy-p   one   also NEG-NEV-study-3p
       None (not even one) of the boys of this village went to school.

(241b) təzapuʔ ji-kə-vu   miʔ-jn
       boy   PFT-NOM-come₂   not.have-3p
       No boys came.

It is possible to indicate a difference in meaning through word order:

(242a) kətəpʰok təza-ɲo mbotan ka-leʔt   ˈna-rgaʔ-jn
       several boy-p   ball   NOM-hit OBS-like-3p
       Some of the boys like to play football.

(242b) təza kətəpʰok mbotan kaleʔt kərgaʔ   makəndra ˈna-ndoʔ
       man   several ball   hit   NOM-like very   OBS-have
       Some guys love to play basketbal.

If the quantifier is emphasised by putting it before the noun, as in (242a), the sentence implies that there are other boys in the context of the conversation who do not like to play. Sentence (242b), in which the quantifier occurs after the noun, is a general statement without any reference to a specific group of guys, some of whom love to play.

d.   Classifiers

Classifiers mark lexical items as belonging to the same semantic class, based on features like shape, size, colour, animacy, movability etc. They occur when a noun is also modified by a numeral, demonstrative or certain non-numerical quantifiers. The Jiǎomùzú dialects have both bound classifiers, which cannot occur independently, and free classifiers based on nouns, though Jiǎomùzú does not very frequently employ them. Most nouns by far do not require a classifier and are modified by a numeral or quantifier only:

(243) tapuʔ kəsam   three children
       mbotan kəmɲi   five balls

For those nouns that do take a classifier, the use of the classifier is often optional, as for *məntoʔk*, 'flower'. The classifier comes after the numeral:

(244) məntoʔk kəsam   məntoʔk kəsam pʃu   kəsam pʃu
       flower   three   flower   three CL   three CL
       three flowers   three stems of flowers   three stems

The classifier here is *pʃu*, which is used with objects of long thin shape. Nouns that take *pʃu* include *məntoʔk*, 'flower', *ɟopɟop*, 'fish', *kʰapri*, 'snake', *takʰu*, 'cigarette', *ɲangən*, 'river' and *scape*, 'sword' - but not *mbərzaʔ*, 'knife'. Other commonly used classifiers in Jiǎomùzú are:

(245) mpʰjar   sheet, layer; for flat rectangular things
       bəm   pair
       pʃu   for long thin things
       kor   pack load (animals as well as humans, carried on the back)
       tʰən   for food; meal
       kpʰu   for trees
       tʃʰe   set; for clothes
       cʰa   time; turn
       mpʰrəm   line, row, queue
       rdok   piece

The classifiers are unmarked when used with a numeral but are prefixed by *kə-*, which derives from the numeral *kərek* or *kərgi*, 'one', when they express the meaning 'one of…'. Classifiers follow the noun they modify, with numerals inserted before the classifier:

(246) mpʰjar   classifier for flat rectangular things, 'sheet', 'unit of
                                      money'

       poŋeʔj kə-mpʰjar   poŋeʔj zɟi mpʰjar
       money   one-CL   money   ten CL
       one yuan   ten yuan

       ʃokʃoʔk kəsam pʰjar   * ʃokʃoʔk kəsam kəmpʰjar
       paper   three CL
       three sheets of paper.

Frequently only a numeral and a classifier are used, with the head noun implicit:

(247) tʰistok   kə ra   kəmɲi mpʰjar
       how.many   PR need   five   CL
       How many do you want?   Five (sheets).

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In some cases it is also possible to have just the numeral without the classifier, but it seems to depend on the classifier. A classifier such as *mpʰjar*, which is extensively used in daily conversation, will rarely be omitted. Some non-numeral quantifiers can be modified by classifiers, as in (248) where quantifier *wuvjot*, 'many', is modified by classifier *cʰa*, 'time'. Quantifiers, like numerals, are placed before the classifier. Note that the classifier in its turn is modified by locative marker *-j*:

(248)   ndə tənge wuvjot cʰa-j   to-ˈa-ku-w
         that clothes many CL-LOC PFT-NEV-buy-3s
         He often bought clothes. (He bought clothes many times.)

Nouns can be used as classifiers, especially those nouns that measure volume, time or distance. This subset of classifiers is often called measure words. Because the nouns in this subset behave like other classifiers I call them all classifiers in this study. As with other classifiers, *kə-* is prefixed to the noun to express 'one'. The prefix does not replace the normal noun prefixes *tə-* and *ta-*:

(249) kʰəzaʔ   kʰrəʔw kə-kʰəzaʔ   kʰrəʔw kebdu kʰəzaʔ
        bowl   rice   one-CL   rice   four   CL
                          one bowl of rice   four bowls of rice

      tərpa   pakʃu kə-tərpa   pakʃu kəɲes tərpa
      pound   apple one-CL   apple two   CL
                          one pound of apples   two pounds of apples

Unlike quantifiers classifiers cannot indicate greater measure by reduplication of the root. For example, doubling the root *jam* of 'pot' does not form the meaning 'many pots':

(250) tajam   pot   * tajamjam   *tajam tajam
      kʰəzaʔ   bowl   * kʰəzaʔzaʔ   *kʰəzaʔ kʰəzaʔ

It is, however, possible to use reduplication or repetition of classifiers when they are marked with *kə-* for 'one':

(251) wuɟo kʰrəʔw kə-kʰəzaʔ   kə-kʰəzaʔ to-ndza-w
         he   rice   one-CL   one-CL   PFT-eat-3s
         He ate bowl after bowl of rice.

Sometimes a noun is modified by another classifier which can, in its turn, be modified by a numeral to express volume or measure, as in (252):

(252) tajam kəsam zəm kə-ndʒəʔt ki 'na-ndoʔ
      pot three litre NOM-hold IDEF OBS-have
      There is a pot of ten litres. (There is a pot that holds ten litres.)

Traditionally distance is not expressed by standardised units of ten, as in the metric system, but by nouns derived from geographical features, as is the system of geographical direction marking:

(253) kəʃpət kandɽek kəɲes tanənes stəki na-ndrek-ŋ
      livestock chase two stretch like.that PFT-pursue-1s
      I chased the cow for some two kilometres.

(254) kəɟoʔ kərtok na-pʰo kʰonə ŋa ɟigəɟiga wuvjot na-ndɽek-ŋ
      sheep one PFT-flee CON I bend many PFT-pursue-1s
      One sheep ran away and I chased it all over the place.

(255) ɟiga kəsam na-ndɽek-ŋ kʰonə ka-vəja ɟi-cʰa-ŋ
      bend three PFT-chase-1s CON NOM-catch PFT/NEG-able-1s
      I chased it for a distance of three bends but I could not catch it.

In (253) *tənənes*, 'stretch', literally means 'resting point'. Since in the rGyalrong area traditionally all distances were travelled by foot, there were resting points at regular intervals along the road, such as a convenient rock or a shady tree. By extension, the distance between two resting points became called *tənənes*, the stretch of road one can walk before one needs a break. The word *ɟiga*, 'bend' in (254) and (255) literally means bend in a river or road. It is also used as a measure of distance in a known environment to indicate how far things are in relation to one another. The measure has direct relation to the road or the river it refers to. It cannot be used for just any river or road, since it is then unclear how long the distance between bends is or even if there are bends at all. Another traditional measure of distance in Jiǎomùzú is *təmbriʃam*, which is a length of twenty meters. The measure is used to express distance between two villages as well as shorter measures, such as the width of a house. Other frequently used classifiers of this type are *təʃə*, 'one lap', for a distance back and forth, *cʰa*, 'time, turn', *tajam*, 'pot'.
Classifiers can modify the head of a genitive construction:

(256) tsəla kə-tsəla w-əpʰok
      moon, month 1-CL 3s:GEN-salary
      a month's salary

      təpa kə-pa w-ərkok
      year 1-CL 3s:GEN-grain.harvest
      a year's worth of grain

But classifiers themselves cannot be marked for genitive. Expression of possession must employ free possessives, as in (257) where the speaker gave the pound of apples he possessed to his mother:

(257) tərpa   pound   * ŋə-tərpa
                                      * ŋ-ərpa
                                      * ŋə-kə-tərpa

ŋa ŋə-je   kə-tərpa tə ŋ-amo   nə-mbuʔ-ŋ
I 1s-POSS one-CL   C 1s:GEN-mother PFT-give-1s
I gave my pound to my mother.

Time words can function as classifiers, with the numeral before the classifier:

(258) təʃnu   day
       kə-ʃnu   one day
       kəsam ʃnu   three days
       kəsam ʃnu w-əŋkʰuʔ   after three days
       * təʃnu kəsam

For some time words there is a noun as well as a separate classifier, which cannot be used interchangeably. For example, Jiǎomùzú borrowed the noun for 'year', *təlo*, from Tibetan ལོ *lo*. But the classifier used with *təlo* is *pa*:

(259) tʃəʔ tə w-əlo   pkraʃis   tətʰa kə-sə-joʔk   ŋos
       this C 3s:GEN-year bKra.shis book NOM-CAUS-finish be
       bKra-shis graduates this year.

(260) ndə   lo   kəmɲi pa   ŋos
       that year five CL   be
       He is five years old.

The same principle holds for the noun and classifier 'moon' or month'. Jiǎomùzú uses *tsəla* for 'moon' as well as 'month':

(261) pəʃnu tsəla 'na-kəktu
       today moon OBS-big
       Today the moon is big

(262) w-əpʰok   kə-tsəla kərscat-pərɟa 'na-ndoʔ
       3:GEN-salary one-CL   eight-hundred OBS-have
       His salary is 800 [yuan] a month.

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In some instances classifiers borrowed from Chinese become nouns in Jiǎomùzú, as in (263). The Chinese classifier 角 *jiǎo*, 'one tenth of one unit of money', is in Sìchuān dialect pronounced as [ɟo]. Prefixed with the Chinese numeral 一 *yī* for 'one' the construction occurs as a noun followed by a numeral:

(263) ndoʔndoʔ tə jiɟo¤ kəmɲi kaka ˈnə-ŋos
      each C one.jiǎo five each EV-be
      Each one is five jiǎo.

Some of these reinterpreted classifiers then require a classifier of their own, although such constructions have a syntactic twist:

(264) ndə arliŋliŋɟu¤ nijan¤ ndə w-əpa na-kə-sci ˈnə-ŋos
      that 2009 year that 3s:GEN-CL PFT-NOM-be.born EV-be
      He was born in 2009.

In example (264) *arliŋliŋɟu nijan* is borrowed from Chinese 二零零九年 *èrlínglíngjiǔ nián*, 'the year 2009', were *nián* is a classifier. In the Jiǎomùzú sentence the Chinese numeral with the Chinese classifier occur followed by the Jiǎomùzú classifier for 'year', *pa*. The Chinese construction of numeral plus classifier is clearly treated as a unit and considered a noun by native speakers. But unlike the normal classifiers *-pa* in (264) occurs as the head of a genitive construction, with the demonstrative *ndə* as the possessor. The whole construct is perhaps best translated as 'He was born in 2009, [in] that year'.

e.   Prominence marker *kə*

The Jiǎomùzú marker *kə* usually occurs in previous studies on rGyalrong labelled as 'case marker' or 'ergativity marker'. In Jiǎomùzú *kə* can be used to mark ergativity and to disambiguate subject and object, as well as for the marking of prominence of one or more constituents in a clause or sentence and tracking of subjects to ensure referential continuity across clause and sentence boundaries. But actually all those uses are rather a by-product of the marker's overarching function. The primary function of prominence marking with *kə* is to apportion prominence to a constituent relative to the prominence of other constituents in the sentence. Prominence marking functions as a watchdog: it keeps track of the prominence of each constituent in the clause or sentence relative to the prominence of all other constituents. Jiǎomùzú constituents each have their own level of prominence, based on their position in the sentence and on the Jiǎomùzú animacy hierarchy. When the prominence due a certain constituent is lost to another constituent, due to operations that influence speaker empathy or change prominence of constituents such as topicalisation and attention low marking, prominence marker *kə* occurs to even out the imbalance. In some cases adjustment of the prominence balance must occur. In these cases marking with *kə* is obligatory. In other cases,

when the basic balance of constituents is not in danger, a speaker can use *kə* to give prominence to one or more constituents of his choice. The Jiǎomùzú marker *kə* is a discourse marker rather than a case marker. But because most authors discuss the equivalent of Jiǎomùzú *kə* in terms of case, and because this grammar does not have a separate chapter on information structure, I discuss *kə* here in the section on noun adjuncts. The following subsection gives an overview of the functions of *kə*, first as a marker of prominence used at the speaker's discretion, and then as the obligatory marker of prominence in situations where constituents' relative prominence needs adjusting. The second subsection contains a discussion of ergativity and case, and the role of *kə* as described in previous studies of rGyalrong varieties.

For the purposes of the following discussion I define 'discourse' as a structural series of sentences, the development of which constitutes a coherent whole and is recognised as such by speakers of a language. A conversation and a story are different forms of discourse. A 'context' is a situation defined by the interlocutors: a set of circumstances given a cultural interpretation.[117] I base my definitions of empathy, topic-comment and focus-presupposition on Avery Andrews' overview of pragmatic functions of the noun phrase and on the work of Lambrecht.[118] I define 'empathy' as the point of view taken by the speaker on the situation under discussion. The 'topic' in a sentence is the matter of current interest which indicates what the sentence is about while 'comment' is the remainder of the sentence which is relevant to and provides information about the topic. The body of a sentence is the 'presupposition', which represents a situation with which the hearer is presumed to be familiar, or old information. The 'focus' noun phrase gives the identity of an unpredictable participant that is chosen to supply the missing argument in an open proposition.

The use of prominence marker kə

Jiǎomùzú has a prominence marker *kə*, which occurs when a speaker wants to give prominence to one or several constituents in a sentence. In Jiǎomùzú sentences, which have a basic subject-object-verb order, the first slot has inherently more prominence than the second slot. In neutral sentences the first slot is occupied by the subject, the second slot by the object. In a neutral sentence, that is a sentence in which each constituent has prominence according to its normal place in the sentence, no marking with *kə* occurs. By marking a constituent with *kə* a speaker gives prominence to that particular constituent. Marking with *kə* can be used to signal subtle differences in meaning by shifting the focus from one constituent to another. Consider the following examples:

(265a)	nənɟo	ŋa	ko-top-ŋ		(265b)	nənɟo	kə	ŋa	ko-top-ŋ
	you	I	2/1-hit-1s			you	PR	I	2/1-hit-1s
	You will hit me.					You will hit me.			

Say, for instance, that the object *ŋa*, 'I' in (265a) anticipates being hit if a certain task is not done to the satisfaction of the subject *nənɟo*, 'you'. Sentence (265a) without *kə* is a simple statement. The

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[117] These definitions follow Foley and Van Valin (1996: 282-283).
[118] Andrews (1996: 77-80); Lambrecht (1994: 117-131, 206-218, 334-340).

sentence provides information about what 'you' will do. It answers the question 'What will you do next?' The subject is also the topic, *nənɟo*, 'you'. The comment is *ŋa kotopŋ*, 'will hit me'. In terms of focus, the question that is answered by (265a) is 'Who will you hit (if the task is not performed properly)? The presupposition is that 'you will hit x', the missing argument or focus is 'me'. The only difference between the two sentences of (265) is the occurrence of *kə* with the subject *nənɟo*, 'you'. Sentence (265b) is not the answer to 'What will you do next?' The question answered by (265b) is 'Who will hit me?' The presupposed information here is 'x will hit me'. The focus of (265b) is *nənɟo*. In sentence (265b), where the subject is marked by *kə*, the speaker gives prominence to the subject which is in focus. This sentence might be uttered by someone who either is incredulous that 'you' can have the nerve to think 'you' can hit him, or by someone who is scared and does not want to go near 'you' because he knows or anticipates that 'you' will hit him. Another example along these lines is (266):

(266a)	ŋa	nənɟo	ta-top-n		(266b)	ŋa	kə	nənɟo	ta-top-n
	I	you	1/2-hit-2s			I	PR	you	1/2-hit-2s
	I will hit you.					I will hit you.			

The first sentence, (266a), is the neutral form. The subject *ŋa*, 'I' is also the topic. Sentence (266a) provides information about what the topic *ŋa* will do. Focus is on *nənɟo*, 'you', as (266a) answers the question 'Who will I hit?' The second sentence (266b) with *kə* can be used in situations where 'I' am near losing my temper, maybe because 'you' have been pestering me for a long time. The presupposition in (266b) is 'x will hit you'. The question answered by (266b) is 'Who will hit you?' The focus in (266b) has shifted from *nənɟo*, 'you' to *ŋa*, 'I'. In all these cases the presence of *kə* signals focus on the subject. It would be tempting to consider *kə* as a focus marker. But note that topicalisation by switching the object *nənɟo*, 'you' to the first slot in the sentence puts prominence on the object, implying that there may be other people around who 'I' will not hit. Still *ŋa*, 'I' is marked with *kə* :

(266c)	nənɟo	ŋa	kə	ta-top-n
	you	I	PR	1/2-hit-2s
	You I will hit.			

In the case of (266c) *kə* is obligatory and occurs to give due prominence to the syntactic subject, to balance the prominence obtained for the object by moving it into the first slot. I discuss constructions in which *kə* is obligatory later in this section. Here I will just note that *kə* does not exclusively mark focus, so that focus marker is not an appropriate term. I have chosen to call *kə* a prominence marker. For more on topicalisation, see section 8.1 of the chapter on sentences.

It is possible to have two or even several prominence markers that give prominence to different constituents in one sentence. In example (267) both the subject *wuɟo*, 'he' and the reason for the writing, *poŋeʔj*, 'money', occur with *kə*. In (268) the speaker gives prominence to the subject and agent *amɲi*, 'ancestor' as well as the instrument *ʃamtok*, 'hammer':

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(267) wuɟo kə poŋeʔj w-ətʃʰat kə sonam w-ascok na-laʔt-w

he PR money 3s:GEN-reason PR bSod.nams 3s:GEN-letter PFT-write₂-3s

He wrote to bSod-nams about the money.

(268) amɲi kə nə ʃamtok kə wuɟo w-awo-j kərek

ancestor PR CON hammer PR he 3s:GEN-head-LOC one

The ancestor dealt him a blow with the iron hammer.

to-kə-laʔt-jn ˈnə-ŋos

PFT-NOM-hit₂-3s:HON EV-be

It is entirely up to the speaker which constituents he chooses to highlight. For example, in (269) two constituents are given prominence, both of which give reasons why the implicit subject fell asleep:

(269a) karama ʃi kə təspap kə w-əmɲak na-ɟu

work much PR exhaustion PR 3s:GEN-eye PFT-sleep

Exhausted by the hard work [he] fell asleep.

The logical order of the sentence is 'because he had worked hard he was exhausted, and because he was exhausted, he fell asleep'. It is possible to leave out the first marker, so that *karama ʃi*, 'much work' and *təspap*, 'exhaustion' form one unit giving the reason for the subject falling asleep. But omitting only the second marker gives an ungrammatical construction:

(269b) karama ʃi təspap kə w-əmɲak na-ɟu

work much exhaustion PR 3s:GEN-eye PFT-sleep

Exhausted by the hard work he fell asleep.

(269c) * karama ʃi kə təspap wəmɲak naɟu

Example (269c) is ungrammatical because without *kə* the logical link between the immediate reason, which is his exhaustion, and the action expressed by the verb, his falling asleep, is no longer there. Prominence marking can give prominence not only to subjects and objects, but also other constituents such as adverbials:

(270) ŋa nənɟo nə-pʰa-j kə tətʰa nə-kʰam-ŋ

I you 2s:GEN-vicinity-LOC PR book PFT-pass-1s

I handed you a book.

In example (270) *nənɟo* looks like an indirect object but actually the constituent here is *nənɟo nəpʰaj*, 'to the place in your proximity, towards you', which is a locative. The semantics of the verb *kakʰam*, 'hand, pass' imply that the book will be passed on to a third person, it cannot remain with the person

it was handed to. The locative in (270) expresses a location which the book passes on its way to its final destination, a person or place beyond the scope of the sentence.

Prominence marking is used to give prominence to constituents that express a variety of semantic roles, such as agent, instrument, cause, reason, source, manner and translative, as well as subject and object. Marking depends on the importance or relevance the speaker accords the specific information of the marked constituent in relation to the information given in the other constituents of the sentence. Below are some examples of *kə* marking different constituents and different roles. The first sentence shows *kə* giving prominence to the subject and agent *amɲi*, 'ancestor':

(271)   amɲi   kə   nə   wuɟo w-awo-j   ʃamtok kərek to-kə-laʔt-jn
           ancestor PR CON he   3s:GEN-head-LOC hammer one   PFT-NOM-hit$_2$-3s:HON
           The ancestor dealt him a blow with the iron hammer.

           ˈnə-ŋos
           EV-be

Example (272) has a topicalised object which is also marked for focus:

(272)   pakʃu kə   lhamo pkraʃis   nə-mbuʔ-w
           apple   PR   lHa.mo bKra.shis   PFT-give-3s
           An apple is what lHa-mo gave bKra-shis.

Example (273) highlights the means or manner or implement with which something is done, marking the instrument *kʰajcak*, 'hammer':

(273)   kʰajcak kə   tərmu   na-sə-top-ŋ
           hammer PR   person PFT-CAUS-hit-1s
           I hit him with a hammer.

Translatives, constructions in which a subject causes an object to take action or acquire a position, can be marked with *kə*:

(274)   jino   kə   wuɟo j-ascok   kə-leʔt   to-sə-ve-j
           we:e   PR   he   1p:GEN-letter NOM-write$_1$ PFT-CAUS-do-1p
           We appointed him as secretary.

Note that often in sentences with *kə* marking agent or instrument the verb will be marked for indirect causativity by *-sə* or *-sa*, indicating that there is an outside agent or instrument that causes the action on the recipient or goal, rather than the subject acting directly on the object. The literal meaning of sentence (274), for example, is 'I caused him to be hit by using a hammer'. For more on the use of different causativity markers, see section 7.8.h and 7.8.i in the chapter on verbs.

Prominence marker *kə* can occur with constituents that signal cause of an action, a reason or a result. In these situations the marked constituent is often an adverbial phrase or other constituent rather than the subject or object:

(275) tamkʰu kə-neʔk   tə   kʰalu kə   to-kə-va-w   kʰonə
       cloth   NOM-black   C   wind   PR   PFT-NOM-do-3s   CON
       Because the wind blew, the black cloth made a flapping sound in the wind.

       tʃəʔ sok vej-vej-vej   to-kə-cəs   ˈnə-ŋos
       this like flap-flap-flap PFT-NOM-say   EV-be

(276) w-apa   nə   w-əʒder   kə   w-aʃcu   nə-ʃlak tʃəʔ tʃe nə…
       3s:GEN-father CON 3s:GEN-afraid PR 3s:GEN-urine PFT-pass this LOC CON
       When his father wet his pants out of fear….

(277) karama ʃi   təspap   kə w-əmɲak   kə-ɟu
       work   much exhaustion   PR 3s:GEN-eye   PFT-close
       Exhausted by the hard work he fell asleep.

To give prominence to source, marker *kə* also can appear:

(278) tamar tolo kə nə-ka-va   ˈnə-ŋos
       butter milk PR PFT-NOM-do   EV-be
       Butter comes from milk.

Marker *kə* also occurs with constituents signalling manner:

(279) w-əza   w-ajiʔk   w-əŋkʰuʔ-j   təɟuʔ cʰot cʰot kə-cəs   kə
       3s:GEN-son   3s:GEN-hand   3s:GEN-back-LOC   water plink plink NOM-say   PR
       The water dripped onto his son's hand, making a plinking sound.

       na-kə-vu   na-ˈa-ŋos
       PFT-NOM-conme₂   PFT-NEV-be

Another example for manner is (280). The speaker gives prominence to the way things are done:

(280) kartsʰe kəngu w-əngem   tə w-apʰispo-j   ka-rko
       deer   nine   3s:GEN-corpse C   3s:GEN-armpit-LOC NOM-put
       He put the nine dead deer under his armpit, that's how he managed.

       ndə sok   w-ərca   tə kə to-kə-cʰa   na-kə-ŋos   ˈnə-ŋos
       that like 3s:GEN-likeness C   PR PFT-NOM-able PFT-NOM-be   EV-be

The second clause in the previous example shows that prominence marker *kə* can occur with noun phrases modified by contrast marker *tə*. Unlike contrast marker *tə*, prominence marker *kə* does not cover just the scope of a noun phrase but rather indicates how the speaker wants the hearer to interpret the importance of different sentence constituents in relation to each other. Prominence marking functions on the level of the sentence or clause. Prominence markers occur after *tə*. The function of *kə* and *tə* can seem rather similar. But there are subtle differences of meaning depending on which marker is used:

(281a) pkraʃis   pakʃu nə-mbuʔ-w
        bKra.shis   apple PFT-give-3s
        bKra-shis gave apples.

(281b) pkraʃis   tə pakʃu nə-mbuʔ-w
        bKra.shis   C   apple PFT-give-3s
        [Only] bKra-shis gave apples.

(281c) pkraʃis   kə   pakʃu nə-mbuʔ-w
        bKra.shis   PR   apple PFT-give-3s
        bKra-shis gave apples.

(281d) pkraʃis   tə kə pakʃu nə-mbuʔ-w (manɟi   tərmu-ɲo tʰi   ʒik
        bKra.shis   C   PR apple PFT-give-3s (other   person-p what also
        bKra-shis gave apples (the other people did not give anything at all).

        nə-mbuʔ-jn   miʔ)
        PFT-give-3p not.have)

(281e) * pkraʃis kə tə pakʃu nəmbuʔw

The five sentences above all express the same idea: bKra-shis gave apples. They may be used in the context of people discussing the gifts that different guests brought for the birth of a baby. The neutral sentence is (281a). In (281a) the topic is bKra-shis. The sentence gives information about

what bKra-shis did in the comment *pakʃu nəmbuʔw*, 'give apples'. The sentence does not give any indication about possible other guests and what they did or did not give. In sentence (281b) the subject bKra-shis is marked with contrast marker *tə*. The contrast here is between bKra-shis and his gift and all the other guests and their gifts. The sentence indicates that there were other people who also gave things, but only bKra-shis gave apples, see the discussion on contrast marking in section 4.3.a. The question answered by (281b) is 'What did bKra-shis give?', with the answer *pakʃu*, 'apples', being the focus of the sentence. In sentence (281c) prominence marker *kə* gives prominence to the giver, bKra-shis, as the source of the apples. The question answered by (281c) is 'Who gave apples?', with focus on bKra-shis. The question answered by example (281d) is 'Who gave the apples?', indicating the focus of the sentence is on bKra-shis. Note that this sentence is normally followed by another clause or sentence, in which information about the other guests is forthcoming. The marking with *kə* gives prominence to bKra-shis as a giver of a gift, indicating that the other guests did not give gifts. This is one case in which the scope of *kə* goes beyond the noun phrase. For a discussion on marking with *kə* as a referential tracking devise, see the discussion of example (294) below. Contrast marker *tə* in this context, since bKra-shis is the only person in the company who gives a gift, indicates that bKra-shis gave apples, rather than some other kind of fruit, or tea, or butter. Sentence (281e), in which the place of *tə* and *kə* is inverted, is not grammatical.

Marking with *kə* is normally a matter of the speaker's discretion. But marking becomes obligatory when the hearer's attention is with an unmarked constituent in the sentence rather than with the constituent which, in the normal course of events, would be the more prominent and thus be the locus of the hearer's attention. In such sentences the prominence marker *kə* must occur with the constituent that by rights should be the most prominent, to balance the unmarked constituent which has drawn the hearer's attention and restore the internal relative prominence of constituents in the sentence. I have found four scenarios which trigger the obligatory use of *kə*. They all involve the syntactic subject of a sentence or clause, which is normally the most prominent constituent in a sentence and the locus of the hearer's attention.

In the first scenario, a change of constituent order through topicalisation causes the constituent that normally occupies the first slot, the subject, to be in the second slot. As mentioned before, in sentences with a neutral word order, in which the subject occupies the first slot, followed by the object, the arguments remain unmarked, no matter the person of the argument, unless the speaker wants to give prominence to one or the other constituent. However, the arguments in a neutral sentence do not have equal prominence. The subject is in the first slot, and has most prominence, meaning that the hearer's empathy is with the subject. The object is in the second slot and is less prominent, that is to say, the empathy of the hearer is less with the object than with the subject. Topicalisation reverses constituent order, putting the object in the first slot with subject in the second, for the express reason of giving more prominence to the object. The hearer's empathy accordingly is with the constituent in the first slot, which is now the unmarked object, while the subject in second slot is less prominent. This still does not matter much if the hearer is clear which constituent is the subject, and thus the appropriate locus of his empathy. As discussed in section 8.1 of the chapter on sentences, in most cases, person and number marking on the verb as well as the semantic context of the sentence is enough for the hearer to pick the right constituent as the subject.

But in some situations neither the marking on the verb nor the constituent order give enough indication for the hearer to know which constituent is the subject. In the Jiǎomùzú dialects in such situations the subject must be marked with prominence marker *kə*, to show that it is inherently the most prominent constituent in the sentence, even though it is in the second slot. This kind of ambiguity only occurs in sentences with two third person arguments. The examples in (282) clarify this issue. Sentence (282a) has neutral constituent order, with the subject *bSod-nams* in the first slot, so no marking occurs. But in a topicalised sentence such as (282b), with object *bSod-nams* in the first slot and subject *bKra-shis* in the second slot, the subject is marked with *kə*:

(282a) sonam   pkraʃis   na-sat-w
        bSod.nams bKra.shis PFT-kill-3s
        bSod-nams killed bKra-shis.

(282b) sonam   pkraʃis   kə   na-sat-w
        bSod.nams bKra.shis PR   PFT-kill-3w
        It was bSod-nams that bKra-shis killed.

If *kə* does not occur in such situations, the hearer will automatically think of the argument occupying the first slot as the most prominent and thus as the subject. Prominence marking with *kə* functions to disambiguate sentences in which syntactic roles have become ambiguous because of topicalisation. The object remains in the first slot and so receives emphasis. The prominence due to the subject is ensured by marking with *kə*.

A second situation in which marking with *kə* is obligatory is when the object in a sentence attracts more attention than the subject because it ranks higher on the animacy hierarchy which the Jiǎomùzú dialects employ. In the verb chapter I show that Jiǎomùzú has the following animacy hierarchy: 1 > 2 > 3 human > 3 animate, non-human > 3 inanimate. Transitive relations which have an object that outranks the subject are marked on the verb as inverse. To some extent the animacy hierarchy also influences the occurrence of prominence marker *kə*. In sentences with a third person human subject and a first person human object, subject marking with *kə* is optional. Since the hearer's attention will rest with the object rather than with the subject, even though the subject is in the first slot, the verb is often marked for passive with *ŋo-*, as in (283):

(283)   pkraʃis   [kə]   ŋa   ŋo-mbuʔ-ŋ
        bKra.shis [PR]   I   PAS-give-1s
        [It] will be given to me by bKra-shis.

However, third person non-human subjects must be marked with *kə-* if they occur with first person objects:

(284) təwaʔm kə ŋa no-najo-ŋ   * təwaʔm ŋa nonajoŋ
       bear   PR I AF/PFT-wait-1s
       The bear waited for me.

Example (284) shows a sentence with a third person subject and a first person object. The subject is in the first slot, the most prominent slot. Still marking with *kə* occurs. However, it is a third person animate subject, while the object is first person human. The prominence marker appears to offset the loss of prominence at the subject slot because the hearer's attention is drawn to the first person human, which outranks third person animate, in the object slot. Sentence (285) shows again a third person subject with a first person object. Marking with *kə* appears even though the subject is in the first slot. Clearly the demon, though animate, is considered less than human:

(285) tʃəʔ tə bdət tə kə jiɟi-ɲo pəʒək wu-veravla-j   konə
       this C demon C PR we:1-p again 3/1:INV-destroy-1p MD
       This demon will once again destroy us all!

In my data the only instances of obligatory marking of a third person subject with *kə* due to a higher ranking object as defined by the animacy hierarchy is for third person non-human subjects with first person objects and third person inanimate subjects with third person human and animate objects. All other third person subjects can occur with first and second person objects without triggering obligatory marking with *kə*, as in (286), which has an example of a third person subject with a second person object:

(286) pkraʃis   nənɟo to-najon-n   me
       bKra.shis you   3/2-wait-2s INTR
       Will bKra-shis wait for you?

A third situation in which marking with *kə* is obligatory is when an unmarked constituent attracts unwarranted prominence because that constituent undergoes or experiences an action which draws the empathy of the hearer, taking prominence away from the rightful locus, the first constituent in the sentence. In such cases also the constituent that naturally would be most prominent, the constituent in the first slot of a neutral sentence, must be marked by *kə*. Example (287) shows such a sentence. The sentence is not topicalised, the subject is in the first slot. There is no ambiguity as to which constituent is subject or object. Also there is no problem with the person hierarchy, since the subject is first person. Still marker *kə* occurs with subject *jino*, 'we', drawing the hearer's empathy there. Though there is no unclarity here about syntactic roles, *kə* cannot be omitted:

(287a) jino   kə wuɟo j-ascok   kə-leʔt   to-sə-va-j
       we:e PR he   1p:GEN-letter NOM-write₁ PFT-CAUS-do-1p
       We appointed him as secretary.

       * jino wuɟo jascok kəleʔt tosəvaj

The issue in this sentence is one of double action. In this simple sentence with just one clause the hearer's empathy is with *wuɟo*, 'he', because he is involved in an action, he is changing and becoming something else, a secretary. However, the actual agent of the action, the cause of the change in status that *wuɟo* is experiencing or undertaking, is *jino*, 'we'. The speaker must mark *jino* with *kə* so that the hearer will give appropriate prominence to the actual agent of the main action in the clause, with is *tosəvaj*, literally 'caused to do'. It is not ambiguity about syntactic or semantic roles that makes use of *kə* here obligatory, but unclarity about which is the main event in the clause: the becoming of secretary or the causing to become secretary. The same sentence without prominence marking becomes grammatical only when there is a second clause giving the hearer more information about *wuɟo*, firmly establishing *wuɟo* and his actions as the topical constituent for the hearer. It is for example possible to have (287b):

(287b) jino   wuɟo j-ascok   kə-ləʔt   to-sə-va-j   koronə
       we:e he   1p:GEN-letter NOM-write₂ PFT-CAUS-do-1p   but
       We appointed him as our secretary,

       kə-haʔw   ma-ˈnə-ʃpeʔ-w
       NOM-good   NEG-OBS-able₃-3s
       but he doesn't do a very good job.

In a sentence with two clauses the hearer finds out more about *wuɟo* and how the action of becoming secretary panned out. The hearer, who put his empathy with *wuɟo* in the first clause, is vindicated, in knowing that indeed the main locus of the action is *wuɟo* and what happens to him. The grammatical subject *jino* is what caused the events but it is not the topic. Prominence marker *kə* does not need to appear. If there is only one clause, as in (287a), no more information on *wuɟo*, 'him' is forthcoming and the speaker needs to give prominence to *jino*, 'we' to balance the constituents. The use of prominence marking in (287a) and (287b) shows that *kə* does not mark syntactic prominence for subject or semantic prominence for agent, but rather it marks what the speaker thinks is important about an action or event if the hearer's empathy may be with another constituent because the locus of the action is there. Marker *kə* functions as a tracking device for prominence with a scope larger than just the constituent it marks. Marking *wuɟo* for prominence also leads to ungrammaticality:

(287c) * jino wuɟo kə jascok kəva tosəvaj

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The sentence is ungrammatical because marking with *kə* links *wuɟo* with the main action of *tosəvaj*. But the person and number marking on the verb as well as the genitive marking on *jascok*, 'letter' agree with first person *jino*, not with third person *wuɟo*. Verb agreement in this case might be considered inconclusive, since Jiǎomùzú verbs agree with object if there is a third person subject, as shown in (287d). Note that *wuɟo* is now in the first slot, the subject position, and *tascok*, 'letter' is not marked for genitive. The sentence is ungrammatical if *tascok* is marked for first person plural genitive with *j-*:

(287d) wuɟo kə   jino   tascok kə-va   to-sə-va-j
           he   PR   we:e   letter NOM-do PFT-CAUS-do-1p
           He made us secretaries.

(287e) * wuɟo kə jino jascok kəva tosəvaj

And finally, the sentence is ungrammatical if *jino* is in the proper subject slot, *wuɟo* is marked for prominence with *kə* and the genitive marking on *tascok* is *w-* for third person singular rather than *j-* for first person plural:

(287f) * jino wuɟo kə wascok kəva tosəvaj

Third person *wuɟo* cannot be marked for prominence unless there is agreement on the other constituents.

This sort of referent tracking is also common in quotes, in which the subject is almost always marked with *kə*. Jiǎomùzú quotes are always direct, which means that the action takes place in the complement clause. The empathy of the hearer is drawn back to the subject of the main clause by prominence marker *kə*. Note that *kə* occurs not only with transitive verbs but also with intransitives like *kacəs*, 'say':

(288) nənɟo kə ŋa ma-tʃʰi-ŋ   na-tə-cəs-n
       you   PR I NEG-go$_1$-1s PFT-2-say-2s:vi
       You said that you won't go.
       You said: "I won't go."

The following sets of examples in (289) and (290) illustrate the same principle of assigning prominence by marking with *kə* to a constituent that, though naturally prominent in a sentence, has lost the empathy of the hearer in favour of another constituent. In both examples the subjects or agents are rather intangible forces while the results of the action on the objects are very prominent. In the three sentences of (289) the empathy of the hearer naturally is drawn to the objects because of the terrible things that have happened to them, the burning of respectively *təɟeʔm*, 'house', *patʃu*, 'chicken' and, maybe most horrific of all, *bKra-shis*. The hearer gives little or no empathy to the actual cause of the burning, the syntactic subject and semantic agent *təmtʃuk*, 'fire'. The speaker

must restore this imbalance by giving prominence to *təmtʃuk* with prominence marker *kə*, so that the subject and agent of the sentences is given, as it were, its proper due. It could be argued that the animacy hierarchy comes into play here, since the objects in (289b) and (289c) are animate while the subject is not. But that still leaves (289a), which has an inanimate object, unaccounted for:

(289a) təmtʃuk kə   təɟeʔm kəmənɟu tə   kə-ˈa-cop
      fire   PR   house   entire   C   PFT-NEV-burn
      The fire burned up the entire house.

(289b) təmtʃuk kə   patʃu   kəʒu tə   kə-ˈa-cop
      fire   PR   chicken all   C   PFT-NEV-burn
      The fire burned all the chickens.

(289c) pkraʃis   təmtʃuk kə-ktu   kə   kə-ˈa-cop
      bKra.shis fire   NOM-big   PR   PFT-NEV-burn
      The fire burned up bKra-shis.

Note that in sentences with a human object and a non-human subject the preference is for the object to occur in the first slot of the sentence. However, topicalisation in such cases is only preferred, not obligatory, as shown by (290b). Somewhat less dramatic but still following the same principle of marking for inherent prominence are the sentences in example (290). The tendency is for a hearer to give empathy to the result of the action signalled in the verb phrase on the objects, respectively the overturned car, the fallen bKra-shis and the sand that is now gone. The speaker must restore proper prominence on the logical cause of all this by marking the subject *kʰalu*, 'wind' with *kə*. Once again, neither the animacy hierarchy nor object prominence explains the occurrence of *kə* in the first sentence:

(290a) kʰalu kə   kʰorlo   kə-ˈa-tʃʰwek
      wind PR   vehicle   PFT-NEV-overturn
      The wind blew the car over.

(290b) kʰalu kə   pkraʃis   na-ˈa-tɽap
      wind PR   bKra.shis   PFT-NEV-push
      The wind blew bKra-shis down.

(290c) kʰalu kə   pʰjema   ji-ˈa-tsep
      wind PR   sand   PFT-NEV-take
      The wind blew the sand away.

Marker *kə* occurs in sentences with implicit arguments:

(291) pkraʃis   kə   no-kə-mbuʔ-ŋ   ŋos
bKra.shis PR   AF-NOM-give-1s   be
bKra-shis gave it [to me].

In sentence (291) the object, I, is implicit, though it is marked with –*ŋ* for first person singular in the verb phrase. Still the hearer's empathy is with the implicit object rather than with the subject *bKra-shis*, because the first person object ranks higher than the third person subject in the person hierarchy. Furthermore, the attention flow marker *no-* in the verb phrase lets the hearer perceive the action of giving from the perspective of the receiver, 'I'. Though the neutral sentence would simply state that 'bKra-shis gave [it] to me', attention flow marking and person hierarchy make the object the locus of the hearer's empathy. An English translation that reflects this more appropriately would be 'I got [it] from bKra-shis'. In order to ensure that the subject does retain the prominence it should have it is marked with *kə*, even though it is already in the first slot of the sentence.

In some sentences the occurrence of *kə* is the only indication of the syntactic role of the constituent. In (292) for example, the subject is implicit. No marking appears with *wuɟo*, 'he'. But when the implicit subject becomes explicit marking appears, even though the object is implicit as in (292b):

(292a) wuɟo   lhabzo   kə-va   kə-skoʔr-w
he:O   thangka.painter NOM-do   PFT-hire-3s
[She] hired him as a thangka painter.

(292b) wuɟo   kə   lhabzo   kə-va   kə-skoʔr-w
he:AG PR   thangka.painter NOM-do   PFT-hire-3s
He hired [someone as] a thangka painter.

The presence of *kə* in (292b) makes clear that *wuɟo*, 'he' is the subject, whereas in example (291a), which has an implicit subject, *wuɟo* is the object. Marker *kə* does not occur independently to represent an implicit argument:

(292c) * kə wuɟo lhabzo kəva kəskoʔrw

Also in sentences that have an implicit object or subject but have clear agreement marking on the verb *kə* still appears:

(293) pkraʃis   kə   kʰəzaʔ soʃnu   wu-mbuʔ-ŋ
bKra.shis PR   bowl   tomorrow   3/1-give-1s
bKra-shis will give me the bowl tomorrow.

Note that the agreement marking on the verb is for a third person subject and a first person second object, 'I', not the first object 'bowl'.

The fourth situation in which marking with *kə* is obligatory occurs when the subject of an event or action switches in a complex sentence. For example, in the first clause of (294) the empathy of the hearer is with *patʃu*, 'chicken', the constituent in the first slot and the subject. But in the second clause the subject is no longer the chicken, but *lolo*, 'cat'. Besides, the chicken, now the object, is implicit in the second clause. The speaker disambiguates the sentence by marking the subject of the second clause with prominence marker *kə*, assigning it due prominence. It is not the chicken who chases the cat but rather the cat chases the chicken. Without *kə* to mark *lolo* the sentence means that the chicken came in through the window and is now chasing the cat. Note that the attention flow marker *no-* in the verb phrase of the second clause ensures that the hearer's attention remains with the chicken. The hearer's perspective is, as it were, with the chicken while it comes down through the window as the subject in the first clause, and stays with the chicken while it is being chased by the cat, even though the cat is now the grammatical subject and the speaker has made that clear through the use of prominence marker *kə*. For more on attention flow, see section 7.6 in the chapter on verbs.

(294) ntoməndə   rə   patʃu   kamtsa   sku   ka-vi   rə
       originally   CON chicken window   down NOM-come₁   CON
       Originally a chicken had come in through the window and

       lolo kə   no-na-ndʐek-ndʐek-w
       cat   PR   AF-PFT-RED-chase-3s
       [now] the cat was chasing it back and forth.

In this section I have shown that prominence marker *kə* serves several functions. It gives prominence to one or several constituents in a sentence. Marker *kə* also ensures due prominence for the syntactic subject of a clause, sometimes by disambiguating the syntactic roles of constituents. And lastly *kə* functions as a tracking device to ensure referential continuity for the syntactic subject in discourse over the scope of several clauses. Since the functions of discourse marker *kə* all involve the marking of prominence, I call it a prominence marker.

Prominence marker kə *and case*

In previous studies of rGyalrong scholars have interpreted *kə* and its variant forms as a case marker, marking ergativity in a split-ergative system. Given the use of *kə* in the Jiǎomùzú dialects as described in the previous section, case is not the most appropriate category for *kə* in these dialects. In this section I first test if Jiǎomùzú marks for case in the traditional sense of the word at all. Then I give an overview of earlier analyses of markers like *kə* to see if they can apply to the Jiǎomùzú data.

In a nominative-accusative case system marking of the subject or agent of transitive and intransitive verbs differs from marking for the object. The marking can be inflection on the argument or

morphologically independent. Since the goal of the exercise is to clarify the function and meaning of marker *kə* I do not look at marking on the verb phrase, only at markers that occur with constituents that are subjects and objects. In Jiǎomùzú there is no difference in marking for subjects and objects on the noun phrase or on the pronoun, as the following examples make clear. The sentences in (295) show no difference in inflection, form or marking for subject and object:

(295)   ŋa nənɟo ta-top-n   nənɟo ŋa ko-top-ŋ
        I   you   1/2-hit-2s   you   I   2/1-hit-1s
        I will hit you.   You will hit me.

Topicalisation, as in (296) where the object is in the first slot of the sentence, does also not trigger marking:

(296)   tapuʔ-ɲo ŋa ʃi-sə-rwe-ŋ
        child-p   I   VPT-CAUS-rise-1s
        The kids I'll wake.

Clearly Jiǎomùzú does not employ a nominative-accusative marking system for the subject or object. In an ergative-absolutive system the expectation is for the subject of an intransitive verb and the object of a transitive verb to show the same marking, as opposed to the subject of a transitive verb. The Jiǎomùzú dialects do not evidence such a system of marking on noun phrases or pronouns. In the examples of (297) below, the intransitive subject *ŋa*, 'I' in (297a) and the object *ŋa*, 'me' in (297c) both remain unmarked and unchanged in their pronominal form, as does the transitive subject *ŋa*, 'I' in (297b):

(297a) ŋa ʃintəhu   tʃʰi-ŋ
        I   Chéngdū   go$_1$-1s
        I'll go to Chéngdū.

(297b) ŋa nənɟo ta-top-n   (297c) nənɟo ŋa ko-top-ŋ
        I   you   1/2-hit-2s   you   I   2/1-hit-1s
        I will hit you.   You will hit me.

Scott DeLancey, working with a limited set of data from Jīn's monograph on Suōmò,[119] proposed that rGyalrong, like several other languages in the Tibeto-Burman family, is a split ergative language which marks third person transitive agents for case, while first and second person agents remain unmarked.[120] DeLancey links marking for split ergativity on noun phrases with *kə* to a person hierarchy in which first and second person rank higher than third person. His evidence for

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[119] Jīn 1958.
[120] DeLancey (1980: 7).

such ranking comes from the agreement system on the verb, which marks for first and second person objects if the subject is a third person but for subject if the object is a third person. DeLancey's analysis covers the second scenario of obligatory marking with *kə* in Jiǎomùzú, which is linked to the animacy hierarchy, as I have described above. But it cannot account for obligatory marking with *kə* occurring with a first or second person subject and a third person object. However, the Jiǎomùzú data do have such examples, shown in the third scenario above. DeLancey then introduces the psychological notion of viewpoint, which is the perspective from which an event is viewed.[121] In a situation with natural viewpoint a first or second person is preferred over a third person, and no marking appears. If viewpoint rests with a third person, rather than with a first or second person, an ergative marker *kə* appears after the third person argument.[122] When a prototypical viewpoint locus is the starting point of an action or event the first or second person argument is not marked. That is to say, when the speaker presents an interaction between subject and object in the most neutral way, with subject and object in the first and second slot respectively, which in the viewpoint hypothesis is the unmarked situation. But when a less natural viewpoint locus is the starting point, it must be marked for its role. Marker *kə* occurs when and only when the more natural viewpoint is not the starting point.[123] So *kə* marks viewpoint, and the split-ergative system in rGyalrong marks semantic roles rather than syntactic case. DeLancey's viewpoint resembles the interpretation of *kə* as a prominence marker, that is as a marker that draws the empathy of the hearer to the marked constituent. The notion of viewpoint can account for the first scenario above, in which a subject ends up in the second slot of a sentence because of topicalisation, and the second scenario in which first and second person constituents outrank a third person subject. However, viewpoint cannot account for the other situations in which obligatory marking with *kə* occurs in Jiǎomùzú, and it clearly is no solution for the numerous cases of non-obligatory occurrence of *kə* with a variety of constituents, especially not if two or more markers occur in the same sentence.

Jackson Sun, in his study of Cǎodēng nominal morphology, describes an ergative-instrumental case marker *-kə*.[124] The marker is, he notes, frequently subject to ellipsis. Nominals bearing patient or recipient roles are usually not case-marked. But generally speaking, Cǎodēng has a split-ergative system where the applicability of the ergative-instrumental marker *-kə* is determined by the relative ranking of the agent and patient-recipient arguments on an animacy-empathy hierarchy. The major function of the ergative case is to indicate marked agency such that ergative marking is required if and only if the patient argument outranks the agent argument on the hierarchy, which runs as follows: speaker > hearer > non-participant > non-human animate > inanimate, with the speaker having the highest rank. In Sun's hierarchy first and second person outrank third person, which accounts for the occurrence of an ergativity marker with third person subjects in constructions with a first or second person object, as covered by DeLancey's split-ergativity hypothesis and my

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[121] DeLancey (1981: 626).

[122] DeLancey (1980: 33).

[123] DeLancey (1981: 642).

[124] Sun (1998: 129-133).

scenario two. The system cannot account for Jiǎomùzú data in which a first person subject, in Sun's hierarchy the speaker, still occurs with *kə*, as in Jiǎomùzú quotes with a first person subject or in cases of tracking for referential continuity for subject over the scope of several clauses or even sentences. As I have shown above, the animacy hierarchy has only limited influence on prominence marking with *kə* in Jiǎomùzú. Compare the sentences in examples (289) and (290) above. In the first series, (289), *təmtʃuk*, 'fire' is the inanimate subject. Prominence marker *kə* occurs in each sentence, even though the object in one case is inanimate, in the second animate but not human, and in the third case human. If the animacy hierarchy were responsible for prominence marking in Jiǎomùzú, *kə* would not occur in sentences with an inanimate agent and an inanimate patient, such as the first sentence of (289). Another example makes this even clearer:

(298a) pak kə kam   na-sənɟət-w
        pig PR door   PFT-open-3s
        The pig opened the door.

In sentence (298a) animate subject *pak*, 'pig' is marked with *kə*, even though there is an inanimate object. However, the marker disappears if there is a second clause in which the speaker gives more information about *kam*, 'door', along the principles set out in scenario three and four:

(298b) pak kam na-sənjət-w   rənə kam ….
        pig door PFT-open-3s CON door....
        The pig opened the door and then the door....

Furthermore, if the object is human and the subject is animate, the object ranks higher on the animacy hierarchy than the subject but *kə* is not obligatory, contrary to the expectation:

(299a) təwaʔm tərmu   na-sat-w   (299b) təwaʔm kə tərmu na-sat-w
        bear   person PFT-kill-3s   bear   PR person PFT-kill-3s
        The bear killed a man.   The bear killed a man.

Both sentences in (299) are perfectly grammatical. If the animacy hierarchy would be the only trigger for marking with *kə* the sentence without *kə* would be ungrammatical.

Also, *kə* can occur with subjects of all persons when the third person argument is inanimate, as in direct speech quotations:

(300) ŋa kə nənɟo kə-nəndze   katʃʰi ra   na-cəs-ŋ
      I   PR you   NOM-have.a.meal go   need PFT-say-1s
      "You should go and have a meal," I said.

Sun does make the important observation that for constituents which do not have obligatory marking with ergative marker -*kə*, the marker can still be used to give emphasis to that particular constituent.

Though Sun's analysis only deals with subjects and objects, his understanding that *-kə* can mark emphasis beside ergativity goes a long way towards explaining the non-obligatory marking with *kə* that occurs so frequently in the Jiǎomùzú dialects. However, a split-ergative system cannot account for the occurrence of several markers in one sentence. Sun remarks that in Cǎodēng it is not possible to have two ergativity markers in one sentence.

Lín Xiàngróng, writing about Zhuōkèjī, reports on a marker *kə* which can mark a number of different semantic roles. He lists agent, instrumental, cause, and reason. Lín calls this marker 'agentivity marker' but avoids the term 'case'. Lín notes that marking does not occur with first and second person constituents, unless the speaker wants to emphasise that constituent, and that topicalisation of the non-agent triggers marking on the agent. His examples for topicalised sentences include sentences in which an animate subject is marked with *kə* while the object is inanimate.[125] Animacy-empathy hierarchy as described by Sun for Cǎodēng is clearly not the only determining factor in Zhuōkèjī. This affirms the conclusions for Jiǎomùzú, as does the obligatory marking for third person subjects when they occur with a first or second person object and the non-obligatory marking to emphasise a constituent. However, Lín's agentivity marker cannot deal with scenario three and four in the Jiǎomùzú data, nor does he list the possibility of having more than one marker in a sentence.

One of the most recent descriptions of a rGyalrong dialect is Guillaume Jacques' description of Chábǎo. Jacques recognises that case is not a very appropriate term to cover the meaning or function of markers like *kə*, but since other scholars work with the category he retains it in his description. The Chábǎo dialect has an ergative marker *kɯ* which can mark agent and instrumental. The ergativity marker rarely occurs with first or second person and can be used to emphasise a particular constituent. The marker can also mark reason, and can be reinterpreted as a sentence connector. There can be two markers in one sentence.[126] The Chábǎo marker *kɯ* seems quite close to Jiǎomùzú's prominence marker *kə*, in that it is used to prominence to constituents, it can occur with more than one constituent in a sentence, and it occurs more frequently with third person agents than with first or second person agents.

In view of the usage of *kə* in Jiǎomùzú, case, even in the sense used by other scholars, is not the right syntactic category. Marker *kə* is best categorised as a discourse marker.

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[125] Lín (1993: 336-338).
[126] Xiàng (2008: 162-167).