THE DAAI PRONOUNS AND PRONOMINAL AGREEMENT SYSTEM: ALTERNATE SETS AND FOCUS

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0. INTRODUCTION

Daai is a Southern Chin language, spoken by approximately 45 000 people in the townships of Matupi, Mindat, Kanpetlet and Paletwa in the Southern Chin Hills of Myanmar. The data for this paper[1] is based on the speech of a subgroup called "Yang", who lives in the Kanpetlet township along the Pilong river.

In Daai[2], the agreement constituent of the verb phrase consists of pronoun-like elements, free morphemes that can function as separate units and can combine in a variety of combinations.

The verb phrase is complicated by a multitude of verbal auxiliaries. Most Daai verbs alternate between two stem forms, here referred to as 'Stem A' and 'Stem B'. A complete account of this alternation goes beyond the limits of this paper. However, the alternation is triggered by factors relevant to the agreement system that will be mentioned below as it becomes pertinent to the discussion. The translation of the examples will show the usage of stem A or stem B. If the verb is marked with neither 'A' nor 'B', then it belongs to a verb class that does not show stem alternation.

Daai, like most Chin languages, is an ergative language. The subject of the transitive clause is marked with the ergative marker *noh*, the subject of the intransitive clause and the object of the transitive clause are unmarked.

This paper describes the interaction between pronouns within the noun phrases, functioning at clause level and the agreement constituent of the verb phrase.

1.PRONOUNS AND AGREEMENT IN THE INTRANSITIVE CLAUSE

1.1. First person Pronouns and Agreement

There is only one set of pronouns for both intransitive and transitive clauses.

	1st Person	2nd Person	3rd Person
Singular	Kei	nang	ah nih
dual exclusive	kei nih	nang nih	ah nih nih
dual inclusive	nih nih		
plural exclusive	kei nih-e	nang nih-e	ah nih nih-e
plural inclusive	nih nih -e		

Table 1. Free Pronoun Forms

Subject agreement forms are the same for both intransitive and transitive clauses.

	1st Person	2nd Person	3rd Person
singular	kei	nah	(ah)
du/pl exclusive	kah nih	nah nih	(ah nih)
du/pl inclusive	nih		

Table 2. Subject Agreement Forms (Parenthesized forms are omitted under conditions discussed in Section 1.3.)

These two tables make the contrastive categories of the free pronoun set and the set of subject agreement form apparent, as they show that there is no dual/plural distinction found with subject agreement forms.

Example 1

a. *Kei* *kah* *dong* *kti* **I** run/ran-B'

NP:1S AGR:1S run- RL

b. *Kah* *dong* *kti* 'I **run/ran-B'**

Example 2

a. *Kei nih* *kah nih* *sit* *kkhai* **'We two** (not you) will go-B'

NP:1EX.D/PL AGR:1EX.D/PL go FUT

b. *Kei nih* *œõõng* *wõõng jah* *kah nih* *sit* *khai.*

NP:1EX.D/PL Ṇng and Ṛng AGR:1EX.D/PL go FUT

'We two, Ṇng and Ṛng, (not you)will go'

c. *Kah nih* *sit* *kkhai* 'We two (not you) **will go-B'**

AGR:1EX.D/PL go FUT

Example 3

a. *Nih nih* *nih* *ngđi* *kti* '**We two** stand/stood-B'

NP:1IND/PL AGR:1IN.D/PL stand RL

b. *Nih* *ngđi* *kti.* 'We two **stand/stood-B'**

AGR:1IN.D/PL stand RL

Example 4

a. *Kei nih-e* *kah nih* *ip* *kti-e* '**We** (not you) sleep/slept-B'

	NP:1EX.D/PL-PLM	AGR:1EX.D/PL	sleep *ip*	RL-PLM	
b.		*Kah nih*		*kti-e.*	'We (not you) **sleep/slept-B'**
c.	*Kei nih athoi-e*	*kah nih*	*ip*	*kti-e.*	**'We young people** (not you) sleep/slept-B'
d.	NP:1EX.D/PL youth-PLM	AGR:1EX.D/PL	sleep RL-PLM		'We young people (not you) **sleep/slept-B'**
	Athoi	*kah nih*	*ip*	*kti-e.*	
	Youth	AGR:1EX.D/PL	sleep	RL-PLM	

1.2. Second person pronouns and agreement

Example 5

a.	*Nih nih-e*	*Nih*	*sit*	*kkhai-e.*	'**We** will go-B'
	NP:1IN.D/PL-PLM	AGR:1IN.D/PL	go	FUT-PLM	
b.		*Nih*	*sit*	*kkhai-e.*	'We **will go-B'**

Example 6

a.	*Nang nih-e*	*nah nih*	*ngshut*	*kti-e.*	'**You** sit/sat'
	NP:2D/PL-PLM	AGR:2D/PL	sit	RL-PLM	
b.		*Nah nih*	*ngshut*	*kti-e.*	'You **sit/sat'**
c.	*Nang nih asang-e*	*nah nih*	*ngshut*	*kti-e.*	'**You leaders** sit/sat'
	NP:2D/PL leader-PLM	AGR:2D/PL	sit	RL-PLM	
d.	*Asang*	*nah nih*	*ngshut*	*kti-e.*	'You leaders **sit/sat'**
	Leader	AGR:2D/PL	sit	RL-PLM	

For the first and second person the agreement form (exemplified in (1) by '*kah*' AGR:1S) is an obligatory constituent of the clause and generally precedes the verb. The pronoun forms (exemplified in (1) a. by '*kei*' NP:1S) are optional. If the noun phrase consists of a full noun, the pronoun form for first and second person can co-occur with the noun or can be omitted. See also examples (4) c. and d., (6) c. and d.

The key to the presence or absence of the pronoun form is found in the focus at clause level. If the subject is in focus, the pronoun form is used. Where the pronoun form is omitted, the focus recedes to the verb phrase, moving the emphasis from agent to action, even if the noun phrase, realized by a full noun, is present (see examples (4) d. and (6) d.). Pronouns distinguish singular, dual, and plural number

as well as inclusive and exclusive within first person. Agreement forms are less rich, lacking the dual/plural distinction.

1.3. Third person

Example 7

a.	*Ah nih*	*dong*	*kti*	'**He** runs/ran-B'
	NP:3S	run	RL	
b.		*Dong*	*kti.*	'He **runs/ran-B**'
c.	*Bebe*	*dong*	*kti.*	'The **older brother** runs/ran-B'

Example 8

a.	*Ah nih nih*		*lok*	*kti*	*xooi*	'**They** (two) come/came-B'
	NP:3D/PL		come	RL	DU	
b.			*Lok*	*kti*	*xooi.*	'They (two) **come/came-B**'
c.	*Mnaai jah Ngthang*		*lok*	*kti*	*xooi.*	'**Mnaai and Ngthang** come'/came-B'
d.	*Ngbe*	*ngna*	*xooi*	*lok*	*kti*	*xooi*	'**The brothers(two)** come/came-B'
	NP:older-brother	younger-brother	DU	come	RL	DU	
e.	*Ngma*	*xooi*	*lok*	*kti*	*xooi*	'**The two brothers-in-law** come/came-B'

Example 9

a.	*Ah nih nih-e*	*lok*	*kti-e*	'**They** come/came-B'
	NP:3D/PL-PLM	come	RL-PLM	
b.	*Lok kti-e.*			'They **come/came-B**'

Example 10

a.	*Athoi-e*	*sit*	*ktie-e.*	'The young people go/went-B'
	Youth-PLM	go/went	RL-PLM	
b.	*Kpami kking ni ah nih seh*			'**Only men** go/went-A'
	NP:Men just only AGR:3D/PL go/went			

Example 11

Ah nih nih-a	*seh mse*	*ni*	*ah*	*khỹh*	'**Only their cow** has disappeared-A'
NP:3D/PL-POS	cow	only	AGR:3S	disappeared	