FUNCTIONS OF NAAK/NA IN DAAI CHIN WITH EXAMPLES FROM OTHER CHIN LANGUAGES*

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with the different uses of naak/na in Daai Chin. The analysis, at least for Daai, is mainly based on findings in a large collection of texts, rather than on elicited data. No claim is made that this paper is an exhaustive account or analysis of every possible usage of naak.

Though in Daai Chin naak is in the process of becoming grammaticalized, it has not completed this process, unlike in other Chin languages. As a free verb naak is highly restricted in its occurrence with nouns (as can be seen in section 2).

In Daai naak/na occurs as a free verb, as an auxiliary (showing verb stem alternation) and as a nominaliser (realized as naak only and showing no alternation).

1. PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE VERB PHRASE IN DAAI

1.1. The auxiliary verb system

Eight preverbal auxiliaries have been found in Daai. They are all directional and mutually exclusive. Two of them also occur as main verbs (see

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* This paper was originally presented at the 33rd International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok and Trang Province, 2nd-6th October 2000.

1 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 is based on the speech of a subgroup called “Yang”, who live in the Kanpetlet township along the Pilong river. The Daai Chin data used for this analysis has been collected since 1975. It mainly consists of a large corpus of texts that had been recorded and transcribed first by my late husband U Chaing So, then by U Ling So and U Nääng Küüi. A compilation of write-up’s about the Daai Chin Agricultural and Ceremonial Cycle, that is still in the process of being edited by U Nääng Küüi, has proved to be a valuable additional resource. Many of the examples used are taken from original texts and have been simplified for the purpose of this paper. They are complemented by data elicited from U Nääng Küüi. All of the examples used in this paper have also been re-checked with U Nääng Küüi in the last few months. I am very much indebted to him and want to acknowledge his patience and enthusiasm with gratitude.
Hartmann-So:1989). The postverbal auxiliary system is much more complicated. There are more than fifty postverbal auxiliaries; they can be divided into several sets according to their position, function and meaning. As auxiliary, *naak* occurs immediately after the main verb. The only exception is the co-occurrence of *naak* with the reflective marker *ei*. In that case *naak* takes the second position after the main verb. Other auxiliaries closest to the verb tend to be directionals, followed by causatives, attitudinals, phases, speech act indicators, and the like.

1.2. *Verb stem alternation*

Daai Chin verbs can be categorized into three classes. The verbs of class I are non-alternating. Verbs of class II and class III have alternating forms that I have labeled stem A and stem B. Stem A is realized in condition I, stem B in condition II. The terms ‘condition I’ and ‘condition II’ are preliminary and since they are not really relevant for the purpose of this paper, they will not be explained here.

The verbs showing stem alternation have been subdivided into class II and class III for two reasons:

a) their patterns of stem alternation are different;

b) for verbs of class II the more basic or complete form of the verb is realized under condition I, whereas for verbs of class III the complete form of the verb is realized under condition II.

Class II and class III could be further divided into subgroups, according to the syllabic pattern of the verb roots.

In the subgroup of class II we are concerned with, stem A has a long vowel, an optional high falling tone (which is not marked in the Daai orthography) and an unreleased stop (*p, t, k*). Verb Stem B is reduced to a short vowel with level tone, the stop ending is lost, and the syllable becomes a bound morpheme.

If *naak* occurs as part of a verb phrase, it alternates according to the same pattern.

**Examples:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem A</th>
<th>Stem B</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>táák</td>
<td>ta</td>
<td>‘put, keep’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>péét</td>
<td>pê</td>
<td>‘give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheet</td>
<td>shê</td>
<td>‘bad’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>náák</td>
<td>nã</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **NAAK AS A FREE VERB**

As a free verb *naak* may co-occurs with a highly restricted set of object nouns. They are of three types: relationship nouns, important cultural events (customs, naming, funerals, planting), and with ‘heart’.

### 2.1 Relationship nouns and naak

Relationship nouns all refer to human beings. In combination with *naak* a new kinship relationship is created, or the relationship changes into an action. However, this does not work for all nouns that might be considered potential ‘relationship nouns’. So far only the following group of nouns have been identified as relationship nouns:

- **kkhyu** ‘wife’
- **khong pa** ‘husband’
- **sa** ‘child’
- **na** ‘younger sibling’
- **pu** ‘uncle, father-in-law’
- **tu** ‘nephew, son-in-law’
- **hlüh püi** ‘lover’
- **khong** ‘leader’

(1) **Nghnumi sa jah kpami sa ah jah sa naak.**
Woman child and man child AGR<sub>sub:3S</sub> AGR<sub>obj:1/3D/PL</sub> child give_birth.

‘She gave birth to a baby girl and a baby boy.’

(2) **Kah ning kkhyu naak vai ni.**
AGR<sub>sub:1S</sub> AGR<sub>obj:2S</sub> wife take FUT.IRR EMP

‘I must indeed take you as my wife.’

(3) **Asunüng ta mat noh Yok Ui Yok sun khong pa**
Then as_for one ERG Yok Ui Yok DEM husband

na-lü mat noh joontang ah khongpa naak mjoh.
take and one ERG monkey AGR<sub>sub:3S</sub> husband take RPS

‘Then one took Yok Ui Yok for her husband and one took a monkey, it is told.’

It is interesting to note that these constructions do not work with *nghnumi* ‘woman’ or *kpami* ‘man’. Both are generic terms that in recent years have been adopted for the usage as ‘wife’ and ‘husband’; the older forms *kkhyu* and *khong pa* are now considered to be rude.
2.2. Key cultural events and naak

ning sho ‘custom’ ning sho naak ‘practice a custom’
ngming ‘name’ ngming naak ‘give (a) name/to name’
yook ‘corpse’ yook naak ‘make a funeral feast’
lou ‘mtn rice field’ lou naak ‘plant mtn rice/ use as mtn field’

(4) Asun kba nih ning sho na -khoi kti-e.
    This like AGR_{sub:1IN.PL} custom practice AUX-habit S.FIN-PLM
    ‘Like this we used to practice our customs.’

(5) Yook na-lo ma-a.
    corpse VBL-AUX-come go_ahead-IMP
    ‘Go ahead and give the funeral feast!’

(6) Shih Sa Ngjung kah nih jah lou na-kti-e.
    Shih Sa Ngjung AGR_{sub:1PL} AGR_{obj:3PL} mtn_field plant –S.FIN-PLM
    ‘We planted our mountain fields on Shih Sa Ngjung (name of mountain).’

This sentence could also be translated as ‘We used the Shih Sa Ngjung ranges as mountain fields.’

2.3 ‘Heart’ and naak

mlung ‘heart’ / mlung naak ‘take to heart’ (can be positive or negative)

(7) Ah she nu kah mshun ah nah
    POSS:3S cow female AGR_{sub:1S} hurt AGR_{sub:3S} AGR_{obj:1S}
    mlung naak ta kah veei-a lo she.
    heart_take if AGR_{sub:1S} LOC-GR come let.
    ‘If he has a grudge against me, because I have hurt his cow, let him come to me.’

(8) Ngkoi am kah pyen nah
    Wife_arranged not AGR_{sub:1S} speak AGR_{obj:1S}
    mlung na-lü ah nah ngvook püi.
    heart_take-and AGR_{sub:3S} AGR_{obj:1S} quarrel AUX-together
    ‘Because I did not ask for the wife that was arranged for me, he has a grudge against me and quarrels with me.’

(9) Mlung nalü poh-a.
    Heart take-and do-IMP
    ‘Regard it as important and do it!’