

PERSON-MARKING IN TB LANGUAGES OF NORTH-EASTERN INDIA*

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It would be absurd to build up a typology of TB person marking only from NE (North-East) India examples. Yet, for historical reasons that are still not clear, the Brahmaputra middle valley (Assam) and its immediate surroundings have concentrated such a wide variety of TB languages¹ that a good understanding of what happens in NE India can always serve as a tentative guideline. Nearly all known TB subgroups are found in North-Eastern India^{2/3}.

SUMMARY

1. *No marking in the VP: possible use of personal pronouns*
 - 1.1. *PRO behave just like nouns (Tani, Bodo-Garo)*
 - 1.2. *PRO tend to become V-suffixes (Tiwa)*
 - 1.3. *PRO behave differently in 1st vs. 2nd person (N.Naga)*
2. *Person marking in the VP, with "possessive" person-markers*
 - 2.1. *with prefix and suffix (Lushai-Hmar and Anal types)*
 - 2.2. *with prefix or suffix (Kamhau type, Thado type)*
 - 2.3. *with prefix only, marking O: some 'Naga' languages*
3. *Person marking in the VP phrase, conjugations*
 - 3.1 *Nocte type, and the Yaongyimchen (Yacham) case*
 - 3.2 *Northern Mishmi: the Digaru problem*

* This paper is dedicated to my informants and friends in North Eastern India.

¹ There are also, apart from Indo-Aryan languages (Assamese and Bengali), Mon-Khmer languages (the Khasi group), and Tai languages (the most important, in number of speakers, being Khamti). In addition, there are a fairly good number of Munda speakers, working in tea-gardens.

² Loloish is represented by some hundreds of Lisu speakers. The Southern Mishmi languages belong, at least for some features, to the NE group. Jingpho is also represented, under the label Singpho. Burmese is spoken by the Mag group living in Tripura. Only Karen, I think, is not heard of.

³ Speakers of Qiangic and Baic languages are also not to be found in NE India, but only in China. [Ed.]

3.3 Southern Mishmi: Miju and the Meyor-Zakhring language

4. Final remarks

My coding of syntactic/semantic roles differs from Dixon's: **S** subject (answers to **P**: predicate); **U** unique actant with intransitive verbs; **A** agent with transitive verb; **O** patient with transitive verb. The main reason for this uncommon notation is that two different levels are merged in Dixon's scheme: **A** and **O** are semantic values that are variously encoded; **S** and **P** are morphosyntactic functions and are at a different level: an **S** may be **A**, or **O**, or **U**. This distinction has been well known among French linguists since Hagège (1980, 1982).

Persons are marked as follows: s[ingular]1, s2, s3; INC[lusive]; EXC, p[lural]1, p2, p3; d[ual]1, d2, d3. Transitive situations are diagrammed by arrows, e.g. 1>2 means 1 is agent while 2 is patient. "p1, p2, p3" is better than 1p, 2p, 3p, which is ambiguous (3rd plural or 3rd person, etc.).

1. NO PERSONAL AFFIX ON V

(Bodo-Garo, Tani, West-Kameng area, Karbi, most 'Naga' languages)

1.1. Personal pronouns behave like nouns - or nearly so.

1.1.1. Tani dialect group

Most of these people are high mountain dwellers, in Central Arunachal, although trade and so-called internecine strife have pushed or drawn many of them southward, down to the lower hills, or even (in the case of the Mishing) into the Valley. Among these groups, the Apatani are famous for their use of terraces, a very organized wet-rice cultivation in a secluded valley⁴ which has reached a high density of population.

All Tani dialects⁵ have a common set of personal pronouns, with a special suffix for the plural. Verbs are marked for Tense-Aspect-Mood, but not for person. About Tani dialects we have excellent papers, and a full Ph.D. dissertation by Jackson Sun (1993a), who seems now to have shifted his attention to more eastern peoples. The following examples are from Galo(ng)⁶:

⁴ See Bower 1953. The same author has also written about the Zemi Nagas, who live in the North Cachar Hills, and with whom she lived for several years. See also Fürer-Haimendorf 1946.

⁵ According to Jackson Sun, none has tones; vowel length is phonemic. But P.T. Abraham (1985:5-6) indicates 3 tones for Apatani.

⁶ Some dialects say [galō] and some say [galōŋ]. It is an eastern dialect. My informant here is Ito Riram, a good informant and a true Galō; he knows his linear genealogy for 23 generations. These sentences have been checked with other informants.

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------|
| (1) | <i>ŋo jup-do</i> | I sleep |
| (2) | <i>no jup-do</i> | you sleep |

In some (not all) dependent clauses, which are formed with nominalized verbal roots, subject pronouns are marked as genitive:

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| (3) | <i>no-k</i> | <i>a:-dak-lo</i> | when you came |
| | s2-GEN | come-T-LOC | |
| (4) | <i>bɿ</i> | <i>in-bo-lo</i> | if he goes |
| | s3 | go-VN-LOC | |

-lo is a locative marker, added to nominalizing morphemes *-dak* or *-bo*.

1.1.2. The Bodo-Garo group (BG).

The Bodo-Garo languages constitute the most important TB group in North-Eastern India, both in number of speakers and in historical importance. Most BG speakers live in the Brahmaputra valley, or close by, except the Garos of Western Meghalaya (some live in the Valley) and the people of Tripura State. The BG settlements in the Valley probably antedate the Christian Era, and in Upper Assam two powerful BG kingdoms⁷ resisted the Tai-Ahom inroads until the 16th c. Roughly speaking, this subgroup can be divided into three distinct branches: the Garo languages, the Boro-Dimasa-Kokborok (BDK) dialects⁸, and the Deuri language isolated in several villages in Upper Assam. The real founder of Bodo-Garo studies is Robbins Burling, who speaks Garo.

In none of these languages (except Tiwa, also called Lalung), is there any person marking in the VP. In most of them, pronouns behave like nouns, and p1 (1st person plural) has a special pronoun, which is not a pluralized form of s1⁹.

⁷ These are called in Assamese *Chutiya* and *Kachari*. The autonyms are Jimosaya (Deuri) and Dimasa, respectively

⁸ Burling recognizes a fourth subgroup, called 'Koch', but from what I know and from Burling's published evidence, some of his 'Koch' languages belong to my BDK group, while some belong to a wider 'Garo' subgroup. More information is needed to clear it up. The special feature of BDK languages is that they have diphthongs.

⁹ Garo from Burling 1961; Boro from Bhattacharya 1975; Dimasa and Deuri from my notes; Kokborok from Pai 1976.

(5)

	s1	s1	p1	p2
Garo	<i>aŋ-a</i>	<i>naʔ-a</i>	<i>ciŋ-a</i> <i>aʔn-ciŋ</i>	<i>naʔ-sim-aŋ</i>
Boro	<i>áŋ</i>	<i>nóŋ</i>	<i>zoŋ</i>	<i>noŋ-sór</i>
Dimasa	<i>áŋ</i>	<i>níŋ</i>	<i>zeŋ</i>	<i>ní-si</i>
Kokborok	<i>aŋ</i>	<i>nuŋ</i>	<i>tʃuŋ</i>	<i>no-rək</i>
Deuri	<i>ā</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>dʒu</i>	<i>lou</i>

The following examples are from Deuri¹⁰:

(6) *būro-maj ke-n*

which-ALL go-FT

Where are [you] going ?

(7) *no būro-si-na la-ha-n*

s2 take-N-AC take-DIS-FT

Which will you take (marry) ?

(8) *bej ba-si-na ā la-ha-n*

girl that-N-AC s1 take-DIS-FT

I will take that one.

In many BG languages, there is a morpheme for marking the subject or, more often, the topic. In Deuri, this topic marker is *-wa* (*-ja*, *-a*). In Garo, this morpheme is *-a*, and is always suffixed to the “nominative” case of pronouns. This is now a typical feature of pronouns within the Garo nominal lexicon. In this respect, there is a morphological pronominal category in Garo.

1.2. A new development in Tiwa (Lalung)

The Tiwa people (known as Lalung by the Assamese) lived for a long time on the eastern slopes of the Jaintia kingdom (East Khasi Hills), often with Karbi (=Mikir) speakers. Because of Bengali influence on the Jaintia kingdom, many

¹⁰ Deuri was studied a century ago by W.B. Brown, a British officer in Lakhimpur. He spent two or three days in the beautiful Deuri village where I have been living for two or three months. His book, *An Outline Grammar of the Deuri Chutiya language*, Shillong, 1895, is clever and useful. An Assamese professor, Upendra Nath Goswami, published papers about Deuri that have recently been made into a booklet (1994).

Bengali words are found in Tiwa, along with some East-Khasi and some Karbi words. Tiwa people usually admit this quite openly. Several booklets about their language have been published by Father Balawan¹¹, and K.H. Grüssner also became interested in Tiwa while working with Mikir¹². Tiwas living in the (Jaintia) hills usually speak their own language, while those who live closer to Gauhati have often shifted to Assamese.

From our point of view Tiwa is interesting because, although it is a BG language, personal pronouns are used as personal agreement suffixes. Father Balawan apparently overlooked this feature, although examples from his own publications¹³ demonstrate the fact clearly. I checked in two Tiwa villages. Variations are obviously important, but the pattern is common. In my opinion this is a result of Bengali influence, where personal morphemes are suffixed and, as in Tiwa, identical for singular and plural.

(9) Informant Dipali Doloi, in Jalubari, near Sonapur:

	<i>pronouns</i>	<i>come (past)</i>	<i>see (past)</i>
S1	<i>aŋ</i>	<i>phi-dom-aŋ</i>	<i>nu-dom-aŋ</i>
S2	<i>na</i>	<i>phi-dom-na</i>	<i>nu-dom-na</i>
S3	<i>be</i>	<i>phi-dom</i>	<i>nu-dom</i>
P1	<i>ceŋ</i>		<i>nu-dom-aŋ</i>
P2	<i>na-bor</i>	<i>phi-dom-na</i>	
P3	<i>pe-bor</i>	<i>phi-dom</i>	

(10) Informant Lalit Chandra Bharali, in Rangaldoi, near Sonapur:

	<i>pronouns</i>	<i>see (past)</i>	<i>eat (prs./fut.)</i>
s1	<i>aŋ</i>	<i>nɯj-dõ-(ŋ)</i>	<i>tʃa-ŋ</i>
s2	<i>na ~ ɲa</i>	<i>nɯj-do/dʒu-na</i>	<i>tʃa-ɲa</i>
s3	<i>be ~ pe</i>	<i>nɯj-do</i>	<i>tʃa-me</i>
p1	<i>tʃeŋ</i>	<i>nɯj-dõ</i>	<i>tʃa-ŋ</i>
p2	<i>na-ru</i>	<i>nɯj-do/dʒu-na</i>	<i>tʃa-ɲa</i>
p3	<i>pe-bur</i>	<i>nɯj-do</i>	<i>tʃa-me</i>

¹¹ Some people have told me that Balawan was a local pronunciation, and that he was French by origin. Ivan Simon, the kind and able author of the *Gazetteers* for Meghalaya, knew him well, but does not know whether he was French.

¹² Grüssner has written a very good grammar of Mikir (1978). His excellent Mikir dictionary is still unpublished.

¹³ See his *Outlines of Lalung Grammar* (1975). This book was called to my attention by Grüssner, whom I heartily thank.

As in all BG languages, patient pronoun is marked, in Tiwa by *-go*. Examples from L.C. Bharali:

(11)

we see him	<i>tʃeŋ</i>	<i>bo-go</i>	<i>nuj-dɔ̃</i>
he sees us	<i>pe/be</i>	<i>tʃeŋ-go</i>	<i>nuj-do</i>
we see you	<i>tʃeŋ</i>	<i>na-go</i>	<i>nuj-dɔ̃</i>
you see us	<i>na</i>	<i>tʃeŋ-go</i>	<i>nuj-do-na</i>
I see you (pl.)	<i>aŋ</i>	<i>na-bur-go</i>	<i>nuj-dɔ̃</i>
I see him	<i>aŋ</i>	<i>pe-go</i>	<i>nuj-dɔ̃</i>

According to the French researcher A. Daladier,¹⁴ a similar agreement system is in the making in Eastern War, a Khasi language. This is for the same reason, in my opinion, since it is known that Eastern Khasi people have been influenced for a long time by Bengali culture (Jacquesson 1999a). But, while the agreement looks compulsory in Tiwa, it is not in War. Both cases demonstrate that verbal personal agreement with a subject may well be a recent development.

1.3. Northern Naga : different behaviours for *s1* and *s2*

Within reach of British control were the so-called 'Unadministered Territories', bordering on Burma. These are the hills to which Mills made Haimendorf promise never to go, before Mills went to live with the 'Naked Nagas', mainly the Konyak (Fürer-Haimendorf 1946). Mills himself made a tour through some of those places with Hutton, in 1923¹⁵. On both sides of the border live the Chang, whose language Hutton described (from Mokokchung, which is an Ao town) between 1915 and 1917, and the Khiamnungan, a numerous tribe.¹⁶

In Khiamnungan, two pronouns co-exist for *s1*, *ni* as subject of intransitive V (U) and patient of transitive V (O), *ŋo* as agent of transitive (A). Such a difference does not exist with other pronouns.¹⁷

(12)

	A	O=U	Pos
<i>s1</i>	<i>ŋo</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>tʃi-</i>
<i>s2</i>	<i>ŋja</i>	<i>ŋja</i>	<i>a-</i>

¹⁴ Cf. her speech at LACITO (Paris), June 2000.

¹⁵ More recent information is to be found in Sardeshpande 1987. The 1923 Tour Report was republished by Mittal in 1995, and once again we can meditate before the piled up skulls.

¹⁶ In 1971, 14,000 Khiamnungan were living in Nagaland.

¹⁷ Forms and examples are from my informant Taniu Lam (April '96), an energetic and spirited student. I checked with another informant, P. Mono.

- (13) **ni fɪ fɪ** **nja ni ep fɪ** **ŋo nja ep fɪ**
 s1 come CT s2 s1 see CT s1 s2 see CT
 'I come' 'you see me' 'I see you'

Such a type is close to the English and general Indo-European cleavage between the two roots for s1, Latin *ego* and *me*, while forms for s2 are from one root only, *tu* and *te*.

In Chang, the difference reaches both S1 and S2, but comes from suffixation. Here are the forms published by Hutton:

- (14)

	A	O=U	Pos
s1	ŋɛ	ŋo	ka-
s2	ŋji	nô	kā-

Pronouns in A function result from amalgamation with an agentive **-i** suffix, which is also agentive for both pronouns and nouns in Phom, a language closely similar to Chang. My own informants¹⁸ for Chang have slightly different forms, especially **ŋai** instead of **ŋɛ**. Forms for O also look like the result of an **-o** suffix: my informants have **ŋo** or **ŋwo** in S1, and **nu** in S2.

Both features (a difference in roots as in Khiamnungan, functional suffixation as in Chang) occur in my Konyak notes:¹⁹

- (15)

	A	O	U	Pos
s1	tawe	a(ŋ)	tau	ka-/a-
s2	naŋe	naŋ	naŋ	naŋ-

An agentive suffix in **-e** is obvious. s1 **tau** is typical for the numerous (and mostly unknown) Konyak dialects. The patient form for s2 is **aŋ**, which is interesting because it is also typical for all Bodo-Garo languages (see Burling 1983, and above 1.1.).

Such cases, for which investigation is hardly beginning, will probably multiply when we know more about these languages. Classification of TB languages according to their pronominal forms (such as Thurgood 1985b) have to take this into account. Ergativity obviously complicates matters.

¹⁸ Yongchingkumla Ongbou Oungh from Tuensang Village, and J. Alila Khangshou, from Noksen Village.

¹⁹ Informant: W. Manyeih Tangtok. I had to use a translator (speaking Nagamese) for this case.

2. PERSON MARKING IN THE VP, WITH “POSSESSIVE” PERSON-MARKERS : KUKI TYPE

The more we know about Kuki languages, the more interesting they look. A lot of Kuki speakers have come into the present-day Lushai Hills (Mizoram, in India) from the so-called Chin Hills (in Burma) since the 17th c., and this slow migration is somehow still going on. The political border is meaningless for linguistics; Chins and Kukis are the same people. Consequently, ‘Kuki-Chin’ (KC) is a good label.

It is fairly easy to know whether a language is Kuki or not: it is Kuki if its verbs have prefixed person markers that are identical with possessives (POS). Two remarks are necessary:

1/ most Kuki dialects also use suffixed person markers, quite different from POS, and rather like modified PRO. Various patterns exist with respect to the single or joint use of these two sets of person markers.

2/ some Naga languages (Angami, Sema, Lotha) also use prefixed POS on verbs to mark person.

2.1. *Prefix and suffix are used together*

Most KC languages have two sets of person-markers. One set is prefixed and identical with the POS in nouns; it usually marks agreement with U. The other set (where the s3 marker is -∅) is suffixed, and often looks inherited from older suffixed PRO.

Both sets may be used in combination to mark A and O with transitive verbs (part of the Hmar system, and the Anal case), but usually portmanteau morphemes are to be used in 1>2 or 2>1 situations (sagittals²⁰), and inverse markers may be detected.

2.1.1. *Hmar and Lushai*

Hmar (spoken in Northern Mizoram and in Cachar in Assam) is a language very close to its neighbour, the more famous Lushai, which is the core dialect in Mizoram. Yet, it is different in a subtle detail. See the following Hmar forms (tones not indicated).

(16)

I see him

you see him

I see you

you see me

ka- mhu

i- mhu

ka- mhu-dʒe

i-me-mhu

²⁰ About 'sagittals' see (3) under Final Remarks (§4, below).

he sees me	<i>ama-n</i>	<i>a-me-mhu</i>
he sees you	<i>ama-n</i>	<i>a- mhu-dʒe</i>
he ses him	<i>ama-n</i>	<i>a- mhu</i>

Singular number markers are charted in (17) and (18):

(17)

	A=U (Pos.)	O
s1	<i>ka-</i>	<i>-me-</i>
s2	<i>i-</i>	<i>-dʒe</i>
s3	<i>a-</i>	<i>∅</i>

(18)

	O1	O2	O3
A1		<i>ka-dʒe</i>	<i>ka-</i>
A2	<i>i-me-</i>		<i>i-</i>
A3	<i>a-me-</i>	<i>a-dʒe</i>	<i>a-</i>

The situation is slightly different in Lushai proper:

(19)

	O1	O2	O3
A1		<i>ka-ce</i>	<i>ka-</i>
A2	<i>min-</i>		<i>i-</i>
A3	<i>min-</i>	<i>a-ce</i>	<i>a-</i>

where the *min-* prefix indicates O1, whatever the A. The identity of A can be expressed by full pronouns, marked with the agentive *-n*.

There are several intriguing facts in such a system. The first is the use of nominal personal markers in U function. The second is the O2 suffix (to which we shall return soon). The third is the use of the O1 prefix. We may hope that, as in a good Sherlock Holmes case, the three nice little difficulties will bloom into a full solution.

2.1.2. The Anal case

Some years ago, when in Dimapur, I briefly met an Anal family, the Pishels. The Anal tribe is mostly found in the south-eastern corner of Manipur, and actually lives on both sides of the India/Burma border (Kabui 1985). In this language, there are both prefixes (which function as possessives as well) and suffixes, but their use is different:

(20)

Anal		
	prefixes	suffixes
s1	ka-	-niŋ
s2	a-	-ti
s3	wa-	-∅

For subjects of intransitive verbs (U), suffixes are used. Prefixes can be used alone, to mark agents when patient in 3rd person, exactly as in Lushai or Hmar.

- (21) **avan̄ka-niŋ** 'I come' **ka-tival** 'I see (him)'
 avan̄ka-ti 'you come' **a-tival** 'you see (him)'

There can be markers for both agent and patient. The agent is marked by the suffix,²¹ and the prefixes mark the patient:

- (22) **a-tival-niŋ** 'I see you'
 s2-see-s1
 ka-tival-ti 'you see me'
 s1-see-s2

Note the suffix in **-ti** for patient s2, which is historically the same as those **-ce/-dʒe** we have met in the Hmar-Lushai type.

2.2. Prefixes and suffixes are used separately

2.2.1. A tour abroad: Eugénie Henderson in Tiddim

To try to clear up Kuki-Chin problems solely within the borders of India is nonsense, since many Kuki languages are spoken in Burma. In 1954, during a memorable 'tour' with G.H. Luce and Th. Stern in the Chin Hills of Burma, Eugénie Henderson spent ten days in Tiddim, studied the local dialect which is called Kamhau, and discovered that there were actually two stylistic varieties, one for narratives, and another for everyday speech (Henderson 1957). When characters in narratives happen to speak (which they like to do), we shift from the first style to the second. The phonology and the lexicon sound the same in both styles, but there is a striking difference in the system of personal agreement. Markers in the narrative style are prefixes, and identical to nominal

²¹ Balthasar Bickel remarks here (pers. comm.) that "suffixes are used for subjects of intransitive and transitive verbs". But it seems to me that it is exactly because the same markers are used in both situations that this grammatical rule can be identified as "subject". He adds quite rightly that a similar pattern is found in Belhare (see Bickel 1995).

possessive prefixes. Personal markers in the everyday speech are suffixes (tones not indicated here):

(21)

<i>Kamhau</i>		
	<i>narrative</i>	<i>spoken</i>
s1	<i>kǎ-</i>	<i>-iŋ</i>
s2	<i>nǎ-</i>	<i>-te?</i>
s3	<i>ǎ-</i>	<i>-∅</i>

Actually, I here slightly simplify the problem, since the suffixes have variants after certain morphemes, but the main fact remains: both sets can be used in the same story, but not on the same verbal forms. One can easily see that both sets are nearly identical with those in Anal, though with significant differences.

Stern's description of Sizaŋ (Stern 1963), a dialect very similar to Kamhau, documents approximately the same stylistic cleavage.

In quite another context, I encountered a similar problem (Jacquesson 1996 and 1999b). In Itelmen ('Kamchadal'), an East-Siberian language akin to Chukchee and Koriak, we have similar narratives where there is a grammatical shift when one comes to characters speaking. There, the whole verbal morphology is involved, but the basic facts are simple: in the narrative style, special verb forms are used that are 'non-evidential' in original meaning, and nominal in form. These verbal nouns are marked for person in a specific way. But often in these stories, gods or spirits or other mythanthropoids speak, and then we are back to normalcy and everyday speech, with regular verb agreement. In Kamhau, I do not know whether the same process can be assumed, but it is striking that narrative morphology is nominal, while 'normal verb' morphology is not. The point is, the use of nominal person prefixes is widespread in the whole KC area.

2.2.2. *Thado and hierarchy*

Thado is an important Kuki language in Manipur, where it is sometimes called Khongsai, with families scattered here and there, as is often the case among Kuki people. It is now the northernmost KC language, with speakers even in the Somra Tract, close to the Saramati Peak.

In Thado (more prudently: according to the scattered pieces of information we have about Thado), person markers exist, both prefixed and suffixed, but apparently not in combination. The prefixed set is normally found. Suffixed markers seem to appear only in the future (Krishan 1980).

Since (apart from the future) only one set of person markers is available, it is not surprising to find a case for hierarchy in Thado. Possessive prefixes are required to mark U, as in most KC languages. When the verb is transitive, this same 'possessive' prefix marks the agent when the patient is 'inferior' in a 1>2>3 hierarchy:²²

- (22) **ama** **ka-mu-i** **ama** **na-mu-i** **naŋ** **ka-mu-i**
 PRO3 s1-see-PST PRO3 s2-see-PST 2 s1-see-PST
 'I see him' 'you see him' 'I see you'

In 3>2, the same s2 prefix is used as in 2>3, but with a different syntax (The suffix **-n** with the pronoun for s3 is the usual agentive marker with nouns):

- (23) **ama-n** **na-mu-i**
 PRO3-A s2-see-PST
 'he sees you'

In 2>1, the typical situation for Lusha *min-*, a specific *nej-* appears :

- (24) **naŋ** **nej-mu-i**
 s2 *nej*-see-PST
 'you see me'

nej- is probably *na+i-*, the prefix *na-* for s2 and the exclusive prefix *i-*, used also in p1 situations.

2.3. POS used to mark O in some Naga languages

This happens in Sema (Sumi), Lotha, and in Angami. My Angami examples are from Novizuono Angami, my main informant for the southern dialect. This dialect, like Central Angami, has 5 tones, which I number from the lowest to the highest from 1 to 5.

- (25)

<i>house</i>	<i>o³- ki⁵</i>
<i>my house</i>	<i>a³- ki⁵</i>
<i>thy house</i>	<i>n- ki⁵</i>
<i>his/her house</i>	<i>po³- ki⁵</i>
<i>our house</i>	<i>a³-yo³-ki⁵</i>
<i>your house</i>	<i>ni³-yo³-ki⁵</i>
<i>their house</i>	<i>po³-yo³-ki⁵</i>
<i>my houses</i>	<i>a³- ki-ko⁵</i>

²² Informant: Lunsieh Kipgen.

(26)

<i>I have seen him</i>	<i>i⁵</i>	<i>po³-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>
<i>I have seen you</i>	<i>i⁵</i>	<i>n-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>
<i>you have seen me</i>	<i>no⁵</i>	<i>a³-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>
<i>you have seen him</i>	<i>no⁵</i>	<i>po³-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>
<i>he has seen him</i>	<i>po³</i>	<i>po³-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>
<i>we have seen him</i>	<i>a³-ŋo³</i>	<i>po³-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>
<i>he has seen us</i>	<i>po³</i>	<i>a³-ŋo³-ŋo⁴</i>	<i>a³</i>	<i>de³</i>

It is easily seen that no suffix is involved, nor any specific morpheme in such sagittal situations as 1>2. The other 'Naga' languages with personal prefixes follow this pattern, which is far simpler than in KC.

3. PERSON MARKING IN VP, CONJUGATIONS

In other languages, person markers on verbs are, or sometimes look like, suffixes only. Sometimes, the suffix not only indicates person, but also notions of tense, etc., providing syncretic conjugations similar to those in flexional morphology.

Such languages in NE India form two groups. In the first, with the large Nocte and Tangsa dialect group, and the more isolated Yacham (Yaongyimchen) dialect of Ao, person markers are reduced to a vowel, or sometimes a vowel and a consonant. I will call it the 'Simple Conjugation Group'. In this respect, this group is related to Pumi and Qiang, and to close-by Jingpho.

In the second group, which is more directly related to Trung and Gyarung (=rGyalrong), we again find prefixes and suffixes, but grafted onto an auxiliary verb that comes after the semantically main verb. This is the reason why I call it the 'Complex Conjugation Group'. This is the morphology displayed by two 'Mishmi' languages: Miju-Geman and the Zaiwa (Meyor-Zakhring) language which I 'discovered' in December 1994.

3.1. Simple Conjugation Group

3.1.1. The Nocte-Tangsa dialects

We do not know much about the numerous Tangsa dialects, spoken in this northern part of the Patkoi Range which was often crossed in both directions in and out of Assam. What we know is from a few booklets for officers' use and from DasGupta 1980, which sporadically indicates person markers in about ten dialects. These markers look very similar to those of Nocte, according to DasGupta 1971 and to notes by Weidert.

My informant for Nocte, Princess Changan Lowang, was somewhat clumsy with the system of aspirates²³ that Weidert described and which was explained as an inverse marker by DeLancey. But she had a clear distinction between two sets of endings:

(27)

<i>PRO</i>	<i>INTR</i>	<i>past</i>	<i>present</i>
ŋa	U s1	-t-ak	-aŋ
naŋ	U s2	-t-o	-o
Ati	U s3	-t-a	-a
Ni	U p1	-t-i	-e
Ne	U p2	-t-ət	-əŋ ~ ən
təniŋ	U p3	-t-a	-a

The most interesting feature of her verbal morphology was the use of the p1 ending for sagittal syntax, as in Tupi-Guarani languages:

(28a)

<i>present</i>	<i>O s1</i>	<i>O s2</i>	<i>O s3</i>	<i>O p1</i>	<i>O p2</i>	<i>O p3</i>
A s1		-e	-aŋ		-e	-aŋ
A s2	-aŋ		-o	-i		-o
A s3	-aŋ	-o	-a	-i	-ən	-a
A p1		-e	-e		-e	-e
A p2	-aŋ		-ən	-i		-ən
A p3			-a			-a

(28b)

<i>past</i>	<i>O s1</i>	<i>O s2</i>	<i>O s3</i>	<i>O p1</i>	<i>O p2</i>	<i>O p3</i>
A s1		-i	-ak		-a	-ak
A s2	-aŋ		-o	-i		-o
A s3	-aŋ	-o	-a	-i	-ən	-a
A p1		-i	-i		-a	-i
A p2	-aŋ		-ət	-i		-ət
A p3			-a			-a

²³ I thank Balthasar Bickel for his remarks about this, during a conference in Heidelberg.

These charts are not complete, and show some discrepancies. Therefore, we must take them with caution. Nevertheless, we may note that:

- 1/ s1 *aŋ* and p1 *i* are indexed whenever they occur as O in a transitive situation.
- 2/ when s3 and p3 occur as O, on the contrary A is indexed.
- 3/ when the situation is 2>3, s2 *o* is indexed

Up to this point this is a typical hierarchic syntax. But there are two remarkable features:

- a/ there are two s1 markers in the past, *-aŋ* and *-ak*.
- b/ the ending for 1>2 is identical with the p1 ending.

3.1.2. The Yacham problem

Yaongyimchen (=Yaongyachem) was first sketched, under the name of Yacham, by Mills in his book about the Ao Nagas (1926). It is a language spoken in three villages on the outskirts of the Phom area. The two bigger villages are Yaong and Yachem. Most (if not all) speakers also speak Phom, but Yaongyimchen is not Phom at all, but rather a variety of Ao, at least for most of its lexicon. Nevertheless it has a verbal conjugation, of a type reminiscent of Nocte. Neither Ao nor Phom, to the best of my knowledge, has any kind of person agreement. What I know about this language comes from a brief interview with one informant only, Merenchila Yemyachi. The language very probably has tones.

(29)

'to come'			
	<i>pronouns</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>past</i>
s1	<i>ɲə</i>	<i>lo-ta</i>	<i>lu</i>
s2	<i>naŋ</i>	<i>lo-ŋ</i>	<i>lu-i</i>
s3	<i>pə</i>	<i>lo-to</i>	<i>lu-o</i>
EXC	<i>panewe ?</i>	<i>lo-to</i>	<i>lu</i>
INC	<i>i-khala</i>	<i>lo-ta</i>	<i>lu</i>
p2	<i>nə-khala</i>	<i>lo-ŋ</i>	<i>lu-i</i>
p3	<i>pali-khala</i>	<i>lo-to</i>	<i>lu-o</i>

Singular and plural are not different, as far as suffixation is concerned (which reminds us of the Tiwa case). Any close connection with Nocte is unlikely; Nocte has different forms for plural (except 3rd person), and the Yacham forms

either for singular or plural are not the same as these. Nagamese cannot be accused, since it mostly has no conjugation. Phom has none either (at least for the dialect I studied). The history of these villages is linked with that of the Ao in a complicated way.

3.2. *Complex Conjugation Group*

It is not surprising that the most complex types of person marking in verbs are located in the extreme north-east of North-Eastern India, since within the TB area such types are known in Western China.

In those parts, which correspond to the Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh, are found the so-called Mishmi tribes. There have been, since the beginning of the 20th c., four 'Mishmi' tribes. In the north live the Idu (also known by the Assamese as 'Chulikata', in the Dibang Valley), and the Digaru (or 'Taraon', or 'Darang Deng', on the mountainous slopes between the river Dibang and the right-hand tributaries of the Lohit). These two tribes are rather different from each other, but their languages have many points in common, and there are dialects halfway between both.

On the upper Lohit and its tributaries live the Miju (or Geman Deng), who used to go and work in the winter, when the border was open, in the Rima region of Tibet. In the beginning of this century two small migrating clans appeared on the border passes, the Zakhing and the Meyor. After much trouble and many casualties, they were allowed to settle in and around Walong. They now number about two or three hundred people. They began tending cattle (often for the local Miju) and began agriculture and trade. They call their language Zaiwa, but there is no close link with the Tsaiwa which belongs, with Atsi and others, to the Burmic group.²⁴ Actually, their language is close to Miju in all respects: phonology, lexicon, and grammar. The interesting feature for our present purposes, is that the verbal morphology of this language, with its agreement system, is one of the most complicated in the whole of TB. All the information given here is from Mrs. Chhinjo Meyor-Gao, who taught me some Zaiwa when she was a student in Khanapara, near Gauhati.

3.2.1. *Digaru and Idu, the modal conjugations*

Although verbal agreement in Northern Mishmi (Digaru and Idu) is a special problem, and has nothing in common with what happens in Southern Mishmi (Miju and Zaiwa), I think it is convenient to insert here some notes about it.

²⁴ Tsaiwa (=Zaiwa in *pinyin* transcription) and Atsi are actually the same Burmish language, so called by the Chinese and the Jingpho, respectively. [Ed.]

In 1984, Devi Prasada Sastry published a remarkable book about Digaru (also called Taraon), under the confusing title of *Mishmi Grammar*. Among many interesting facts, Sastry produces one conjugational paradigm (Sastry 1984: 129-30), for the future:²⁵

(30)

	PRO	future
I shall eat	<i>hǎ́</i>	<i>thá -ne</i>
you will eat	<i>nyú</i>	<i>thá -yà</i>
he will eat		<i>thá -bìŋ</i>
we shall eat	<i>níŋ</i>	<i>thá-rě-ke</i>
you (pl.) will eat	<i>áně</i>	<i>thá-rě-yà</i>
they will eat		<i>thá-rě-bìŋ</i>

Apparently, this type of conjugation (with 4 different suffixes, plus plural) exists only for the future.

I have no Digaru informant, but I do know two reliable Idu young people, Anima Mega and Thōwe Mihū, and I worked with them about agreement. Although they speak different dialects, because Th-owe lives in the upper Dibang, not far from Anini, while Anima comes from a family living much closer to the plains, they both use different endings for the 1st person on the one hand, and for the 2nd and 3rd on the other. This can be summed up as follows:

(31a)

	<i>past</i>	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2 and 3</i>
sg	<i>-la</i>	<i>-hiba</i>
pl	<i>-ga-la</i>	<i>-ga-hiba</i>

(31b)

	<i>present</i>	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2 and 3</i>
sg	<i>-ʒi</i>	<i>-ga</i>
pl	<i>-ga-ʒi</i>	<i>-ga-ga</i>

The suffixes have nothing to do with the pronouns, and the conjugation seems basically modal in origin.

²⁵ For pronouns and deixis, see Sastry p.80.

3.2.3. Miju and Zaiwa

In order to show the relationship between Miju and Zaiwa, and the lack of any direct link between Zaiwa and Tsaiwa=Atsi, I give some lexical comparisons. Miju and Keman are the same language, here probably slightly different dialects. Miju words (where the letter “y” is for IPA [j]) are from Boro 1978, Keman (=Miju) and Tsaiwa (=Atsi) data, on the right, are compiled from Dai Qingxia 1992 (Keman from Sun Hongkai and Liu Guangkun, Tsaiwa from Xu Xijian).

Zaiwa (Zakhring-Meyor) is closer to the Miju dialect recorded by Boro (see: banana, monkey, water, blood, fly, man, eye, hand, sell) than to the dialect studied by Sun Hongkai.

(32)

Zaiwa (Mishmi)	Miju	Keman	Tsaiwa (Burmish)	
<i>tʃi:</i>	<i>fin</i>	<i>cin</i>	<i>fo</i>	meat
<i>tʃiŋ</i>	<i>iŋ</i>	<i>iŋ</i>	<i>nõ phjo</i>	ear
<i>tʃip</i>	<i>sip</i>	<i>cip</i>	<i>vui</i>	buy
<i>fomdʒuŋ</i>	<i>hambyu:ŋ</i>	<i>a la</i>	<i>ŋo?mju?</i>	banana
<i>rui</i>	<i>ri:l</i>	<i>ta ruul</i>	<i>tʃhi</i>	wash (clothes)
<i>a-ku</i>	<i>ko:u, to:u</i>	<i>kuu</i>	<i>ulɯm</i>	head
<i>a-kun</i>	<i>ku:ŋ</i>	<i>kun</i>	<i>atʃi</i>	grand father
<i>a-lan</i>	<i>lõuŋ</i>	<i>kõuŋ</i>	<i>lõ?kok</i>	stone
<i>a-muk</i>	<i>a-muk</i>	<i>a-mun</i>	<i>mju?</i>	monkey
<i>a-seŋ</i>	<i>saŋ</i>	<i>saŋ</i>	<i>sik tɯm</i>	wood
<i>a-ti</i>	<i>a-ti:</i>	<i>a-li</i>	<i>itʃam</i>	water
<i>a-wi:</i>	<i>i-wi:</i>	<i>a-lui</i>	<i>sui</i>	blood
<i>a-won</i>	<i>(ro-)wan</i>	<i>a-wan</i>	<i>mau</i>	rain
<i>a-woso</i>	<i>o:wa</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ŋo?</i>	bird
<i>bacik</i>	<i>jik</i>	<i>giul</i>	<i>janʃkhuŋ</i>	fly (n.)
<i>cuo</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>(t)ca</i>	<i>tso</i>	eat
<i>dʒim</i>	<i>tim-min</i>	<i>tim</i>	<i>tʃhui</i>	sweet
<i>graj-fit</i>	<i>krai-sit</i>	<i>krai sit</i>	<i>a-u</i>	egg
<i>grut</i>	<i>kri:t</i>	<i>krit</i>	<i>vui</i>	laugh
<i>gzon</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>a-wai-sa</i>	<i>pju</i>	man
<i>ŋhjit</i>	<i>ŋit</i>	<i>ŋit</i>	<i>se</i>	know
<i>jɪŋ</i>	<i>daiyiŋ</i>	<i>di-iŋ</i>	<i>mut</i>	hungry
<i>ktʃo</i>	<i>ketʃa</i>		<i>nat</i>	demon
<i>ko</i>	<i>kam</i>	<i>kam</i>	<i>vo</i>	have
<i>kui</i>	<i>kui</i>	<i>kui</i>	<i>khui</i>	dog

<i>laj</i>	<i>lai</i>	<i>lai</i>	<i>taŋ</i>	language
<i>lak</i>	<i>lo</i>	<i>lo</i>	<i>jo?</i>	lick
<i>lap</i>	<i>lap</i>	<i>lǎp</i>	<i>tsuŋ</i>	sit
<i>lik</i>		<i>li</i>	<i>va?</i>	pig
<i>lo</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>kat</i>	<i>ju</i>	take
<i>loŋ</i>	<i>loŋ</i>	<i>loŋ</i>	<i>jaŋ</i>	stand
<i>meŋ</i>	<i>a-maŋ</i>	<i>a-mǎŋ</i>	<i>mjiŋ</i>	name
<i>mik</i>	<i>(a)mik</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>pui</i>	sun
<i>mik</i>	<i>mik, mĩ</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>mjoʔʔi</i>	eye
<i>ŋal</i>	<i>ŋai</i>		<i>ŋau</i>	weep
<i>nuntʃo</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>lum</i>	<i>niʔklum</i>	heart
<i>nuŋŋo</i>	<i>(r)aŋa</i>	<i>a-ŋa</i>	<i>ŋoʔtso</i>	fish
<i>phat</i>	<i>phat</i>	<i>phat</i>	<i>phat</i>	vomit
<i>phi</i>	<i>phit</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>pji</i>	give
<i>phreŋ</i>	<i>ka-phlaŋ</i>	<i>phǎŋ</i>	<i>pjiŋ</i>	full
<i>rak</i>	<i>rok</i>	<i>xu</i>	<i>lo?</i>	hand
<i>ram</i>	<i>ram</i>		<i>puptʃe?</i>	rot
<i>səl</i>	<i>sal</i>	<i>sǎl</i>	<i>ʃin</i>	louse
<i>sam</i>	<i>syam</i>	<i>cam</i>	<i>u tsham</i>	hair
<i>samdu</i>	<i>sǒndit</i>	<i>sundut lat</i>	<i>niʔ jo</i>	angry
<i>sar</i>	<i>kasal</i>	<i>sal</i>	<i>xui</i>	dry
<i>sat</i>	<i>tʃat</i>	<i>sat</i>	<i>sat</i>	kill
<i>si:</i>	<i>rasi:</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>i</i>	liquor
<i>su</i>	<i>sii</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>tsui</i>	tooth
<i>tongu</i>	<i>toŋ, tauŋ</i>	<i>tauŋ</i>	<i>atshau</i>	old (thing)
<i>wit</i>	<i>wi:t</i>	<i>soŋ ta xa</i>	<i>uŋ</i>	sell

3.2.3.1 The Zaiwa and Miju Intransitive Verb

The personal pronouns in Zaiwa and Keman/Miju²⁶ are given in (33), followed by a few examples of Zaiwa intransitive verb forms (34):

²⁶ Miju forms, from DasGupta 1977, are sometimes contradictory. It seems that DasGupta, the first researcher to work on Miju, was puzzled by its grammar.

(33)

	Zaiwa	Keman	Miju
s1	ko	ki	ki
s2	no	njo	nu
s3	u	wi	wi
p1	ki	kin	kin
p2	ni(siq)	njo nin	nunin
p3	mi(siq)	win	win

(34)

ko	khuk min	I come / shall come
no	khuk tfilo	you came
kəmo gzoŋ	khuk lo	one man came

charts

All the morphemes in the following charts (35 a-c) come after the verb root. I have labelled the three charts with the traditional names for tenses, though this is of course only a wild approximation.

(35a) *Past tense*

	Zaiwa	Keman	Miju
s1	li ʔŋ	jin ŋa	ke / ke,ki
s2	tfilo	tci	ke /ci ka
s3	lo	ji	ci ka / ka
d1		jin xa	
d2		tci naŋ	
d3		a ji	
p1	laj	ji jaun	ci ka / ke,ki
p2	tfiloniŋ	tci jaun	ka /ci ka
p3	loko	wi	ka / ka

(35b) *Present tense*

	Zaiwa	Keman	Miju
s1	min	maŋ	mang / mang
s2	i	mun	mai / man
s3	ŋ	mun	man / man
D1		mun xa	
D2		mun naŋ	
D3		mun p'raŋ	
P1	maj	mai	mai / mai
P2	iniŋ	me	man / mai
P3	ŋko	mun tau	tao / tao

(35c) Future tense

	Zaiwa	Keman	Miju
s1	<i>miŋ</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>ming / ming</i>
s2	<i>ilek</i>	<i>maŋ</i>	<i>mai / mang</i>
s3	<i>lek</i>	<i>maŋ</i>	<i>mang / mang</i>
d1		<i>nt'it</i>	
d2		<i>nt'it</i>	
d3		<i>nt'it</i>	
p1	<i>maj</i>	<i>nt'it</i>	<i>mai / mai</i>
p2	<i>ilekniŋ</i>	<i>nt'it</i>	<i>mang / mai</i>
p3	<i>lekko</i>	<i>nt'it</i>	<i>mang tao</i>

The following analysis of the Zaiwa intransitive forms is basically by formal, not functional, slots. Yet, some functional identifications, I think, are possible in this way.

(36)

past

	1	2	3	4	5	6
s1			<i>l</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	
s2	<i>tf</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>o</i>		
s3			<i>l</i>	<i>o</i>		
p1			<i>l</i>			<i>aj</i>
p2	<i>tf</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>aj/iŋ</i>
p3			<i>l</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>aj/o</i>

future

s1			<i>m</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	
s2		<i>i</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>ek</i>		
s3			<i>l</i>	<i>ek</i>		
p1			<i>m</i>			<i>aj</i>
p2		<i>i</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>ek</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>aj/iŋ</i>
p3			<i>l</i>	<i>ek</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>aj/o</i>

present

s1			<i>m</i>		<i>iŋ</i>	
s2		<i>i</i>				
s3			<i>ŋ</i>			
p1			<i>m</i>			<i>aj</i>
p2		<i>i</i>			<i>n</i>	<i>aj/iŋ</i>
p3			<i>ŋ</i>		<i>k</i>	<i>o</i>

It seems reasonable to analyze these forms as combinations of auxiliary verbs (column 3) and affixes, both prefixes (for the 2nd person only, columns 1 and 2) and suffixes (columns 4 to 6).

a/ Auxiliary verbs in column 3 change according to 'tense', which is not surprising, but also according to person (this is clearer in the future than in the present), which is not strange either.

b/ 2nd person is marked by prefixes. This is the case in Trung (prefix *nu-* according to Sun Hongkai 1982) and in Gyarung (prefix *tə-* according to Kin P'eng 1949, and other authors).

3.2.3.2 The Transitive Verb

Some indications are lacking, and the picture is certainly not complete, but I think the following charts may be useful:

(37) examples

ko	<i>u-vik ɲoŋ moŋ</i>	I	see him
no	<i>ko-vik ɲoŋ imo</i>	you	see me
ni-siŋ	<i>mi-vik ɲoŋ inaj</i>	you (pl.)	see them
ko	<i>u-vik ɲoŋ khuk kiŋ</i>	I	shall see him ²⁷
no	<i>ko-vik ɲoŋ ikhuk</i>	you will	see me

(38a) past tense

	Os1	Os2	Os3	Op1	Op2	Op3
As1		<i>joʔŋ</i>	<i>joʔŋ</i>		<i>joʔŋ</i>	<i>joʔŋ</i>
As2	<i>ʈʃik</i>		<i>ʈʃik</i>	<i>ʈʃik</i>		<i>ʈʃik</i>
As3	<i>phu</i>	<i>phu</i>	<i>ʃik</i>	<i>phu</i>		
Ap1		<i>jop</i>	<i>jop</i>		<i>jop</i>	<i>jop</i>
Ap2	<i>ʈʃiknaj</i>		<i>ʈʃiknaj</i>	<i>ʈʃiknaj</i>		<i>ʈʃiknaj</i>
Ap3	<i>phu(ko)</i>	<i>phu(ko)</i>	<i>ʃik</i>	<i>phu(ko)</i>	<i>phu(ko)</i>	

(38b) present tense

	Os1	Os2	Os3	Op1	Op2	Op3
As1		<i>moŋ</i>	<i>moŋ</i>		<i>miŋ</i>	<i>moŋ</i>
As2	<i>imo</i>		<i>imo</i>	<i>imo</i>		<i>imo</i>
As3	<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	<i>mo</i>			
Ap1		<i>maj</i>	<i>maj</i>		<i>maj</i>	<i>maj</i>
Ap2	<i>inaj</i>		<i>imonin</i>	<i>inaj</i>		<i>inaj</i>
Ap3	<i>ŋko</i>	<i>ŋko</i>	<i>moko</i>	<i>ŋko</i>	<i>ŋko</i>	

²⁷ Note that the auxiliary for the future is *khuk* 'to come.'

(38c) future tense

	Os1	Os2	Os3	Op1	Op2	Op3
As1		<i>kiŋ</i>	<i>kiŋ</i>		<i>kiŋ</i>	<i>kiŋ</i>
As2	<i>i-</i>		<i>i-</i>	<i>i-</i>		<i>i-</i>
As3			Ø			
Ap1			<i>kaj</i>			
Ap2			<i>inaj</i>			
Ap3			<i>ko</i>			

The agreement is mostly only with A, the agent; exceptions appear in A3>O3 situations. But the markers for A are not identical with the markers for U (for intransitive verbs, see above).

Analysis of transitive forms:

(39)

past

	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>s1</i>			<i>j</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	
<i>s2</i>	<i>tʃ</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>k</i>			
<i>s3</i>			<i>ph</i>	<i>u</i>		
<i>p1</i>			<i>j</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>p</i>	
<i>p2</i>	<i>tʃ</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>k</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>aj</i>
<i>p3</i>			<i>ph</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>o</i>

future

<i>s1</i>			<i>k</i>		<i>iŋ</i>	
<i>s2</i>		<i>i</i>				
<i>s3</i>						
<i>p1</i>			<i>k</i>			<i>aj</i>
<i>p2</i>		<i>i</i>			<i>n</i>	<i>aj</i>
<i>p3</i>					<i>k</i>	<i>o</i>

present

<i>s1</i>			<i>m</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	
<i>s2</i>		<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>o</i>		
<i>s3</i>			<i>ŋ</i>			
<i>p1</i>			<i>m</i>			<i>aj</i>
<i>p2</i>		<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>iŋ</i>
<i>p3</i>			<i>ŋ</i>		<i>k</i>	<i>o</i>

Charts (40 a-c) present a comparison of Zaiwa transitive and intransitive forms:

(40a)

past tense						
transitive			intransitive			
s1		<i>jo-ʔŋ</i>			<i>li</i>	<i>ʔŋ</i>
s2	<i>ʔʃi-</i>	<i>k</i>		<i>ʔʃi-</i>	<i>lo</i>	
s3		<i>phu</i>	<i>/jik</i>		<i>lo</i>	
p1		<i>jo-p</i>			<i>laj</i>	
p2	<i>ʔʃi-</i>	<i>knaj</i>		<i>ʔʃi-</i>	<i>lo-</i>	<i>nin</i>
p3		<i>phu-ko</i>	<i>/jik</i>		<i>lo-</i>	<i>ko</i>

(40b)

present tense		
	transitive	intransitive
s1	<i>mo-ŋ</i>	<i>m-iŋ</i>
s2	<i>i-mo</i>	<i>i-</i>
s3	<i>ŋ / mo</i>	<i>ŋ</i>
p1	<i>m-aj</i>	<i>m-aj</i>
p2	<i>i-n-aj / i-monin</i>	<i>i-nin</i>
p3	<i>ŋ-ko / mo-ko</i>	<i>ŋ-ko</i>

(40c)

future tense		
	transitive	intransitive
s1	<i>khuk kin</i>	<i>m-iŋ</i>
s2	<i>i-khuk</i>	<i>i-lek</i>
s3	<i>khuk</i>	<i>lek</i>
p1	<i>khuk kaj</i>	<i>m-aj</i>
p2	<i>khuk i-naj</i>	<i>i-lek-nin</i>
p3	<i>khuk ko</i>	<i>lek-ko</i>

4. FINAL REMARKS

Researchers interested in the history of person agreement (so-called 'pronominalization', a wrong name in many respects) have usually paid much heed to morphemes. Thurgood 1983, for instance, dealt with forms for pronouns and person markers, and later (1985) with sets of markers in what he called the Rung Languages. Recently Sun Hongkai (1995) tried to consider person markers on verbs as historical developments of personal pronouns.

I think we underestimate the flexibility of such languages, and their innovative processes - I mean the innovative power of the speakers. We must remember how the pronominalizing crux arose.

Agreement was unexpected. These languages are spoken on the border between the large non-agreement language area of South-East Asia and the various surrounding groups that exhibit agreement (Dravidian, Indo-Iranian, Altaic being the main ones). During the first decades of research, it was obvious that, since neither Tibetan nor Burmese had any trace of agreement, TB was on the SE Asia side - or to put it bluntly: on the Chinese side. When scattered evidence for agreement was first systematically published in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, this topic was highlighted.

Since then, it seems that the basic question remains the same: did Proto-TB have agreement, or not? As if it needed a yes or no answer. The file has been rapidly thickening since the beginning of the century, and, roughly speaking, discoveries in Nepal, in NE India, in Western China, have documented numerous cases of agreement. Debates, cold in written language and sometimes hot in spoken songs, often by excellent experts and deliciously rich in data, have argued about only one question: does it prove that Proto-TB had agreement? Writers will discuss systematics (do languages with agreement belong to only one sub-family within TB?), or grammaticalization (did Tangut have agreement or not?), or about morphemes (we find *-ŋ* everywhere, don't we?), etc.

My reader must not believe I think poorly of such discussions. On the contrary, we learn a lot by them. This paper is also modestly contributing to make the file thicker. But, since this paper emphatically does not enlist, neither with the Proto-TB-agreementists, nor against them, I would like to make three remarks.

(1) Until now, it has not been possible to handle all known cases of agreement by one explanation only. On the contrary, it is fairly clear that several factors are contributing, and certainly were contributing in the past, to the building of agreement. Such cases as Idu and Digaru (3.2.1.), where modal markers look like person markers, should give us pause. Remember that in Zaiwa (Zakhring-Meyor) modal marking and person marking cooperate (3.2.2.). The Tiwa case (1.2.), where the suffixation of personal pronouns as person

markers is under way (dialects differ, and agreement probably did not exist one or two centuries ago) also strikingly shows how agreement can be triggered within reach of our own refined ears, so to speak, and not only among rough Archanthropes. Of course there were also refined Archanthropes. A good question would be: how and why is it triggered ?

(2) Speakers are not stubborn. It is difficult to resist the idea that, especially in a decently remote past, tribals were very imitative people, because they lived in so-called traditional cultures. Yet when one considers Kuki dialects, that look so much like each other in many respects, one has to explain why, as far as their agreement systems are concerned, they are so subtly different. Part of this can be explained by local differentiation, and certainly the use of possessive markers looks like a typical feature (although this is a morphology that could have developed independently in several places). But the use of both prefixes and suffixes, the selective choice of 1st or 2nd person, are found again in Complex Conjugation Languages, and had probably been in use before the specific Kuki stage. Consequently, it seems reasonable to assume, in a given language, several stages of morphological invention and implementation. For instance, let us suppose - a reasonable hypothesis, according to me - that the use of possessive prefixes with verbs was a 'local' affair, i.e. it did not reach the whole range of TB languages, for various reasons. It is of course difficult to know if the other set of personal endings was in use at that stage. But what we know, is that each set exists in several versions (see 2.) and that it is unlikely that all versions developed at the same time. Consequently, versions of the first set could be mixed with versions of the second in different ways, and this is exactly what we observe now, and we have no reason to think that this process is new, or that it will stop soon. Everything does not need to be explained by Proto-TB in order to be true: things also develop in the meantime, at all periods.

(3) A last remark is about *sagittals*. In some languages, the situation 1>2 (I verb you), or less often the reverse 2>1 (you verb me) is encoded not by two morphemes, but by one only. Often, it is a problem of selection, and the result is either the morpheme for 1, or for 2, according to hierarchies at work in the language. But sometimes the encoding morpheme is neither 1 nor 2, but a special morpheme, which does not encode persons separately but a specific and oriented relationship between persons. This phenomenon is not so rare (it is a classic feature of Hungarian, for instance), nor new in TB lore since it is also a classic feature of Kiranti languages. Such a morpheme is called a *sagittal* morpheme. The term was coined by Hagège in 1982, who wanted to underline the fact that the movement from one person to another (*sagittal* is from Latin *sagitta* 'arrow') is here more central than the persons themselves. I harped on this topic in several publications, because I was embarrassed by the fact that,

years after the Silverstein paper about hierarchies, linguists still considered persons only like facts or figures, and not also like relations, and person systems like structures. The existence of sagittal morphemes made this very clear, as did the related fact that in many languages there are more markers for s1 than for s2. There are many examples of this in TB, and within the borders of India it is obviously the case in Nocte-Tangsa (-*ak* is not -*aŋ*, 3.1.1.), and in some Naga languages (see 1.3.). In Nocte, as in Hayu (Kiranti)²⁸ but with a different morphology, there is a sagittal morpheme (-*no* in Hayu). In Nocte (as in Tupi-Guarani), the sagittal 1>2 is a transitive version of what is p1 with intransitive syntax, as if “we” at one level was translated into “I you” at another (or conversely). This kind of fact explains, I think, why I do not feel satisfied by studies, however courageous, like Thurgood 1985b, where this scholar unrolled all possible items meaning ‘I’ and ‘you’ in grammars, and tried to group languages according to such similarities.²⁹ What happens, when he comes to Khiamnungan: which of ‘I’ or ‘me’ is the good one ?

It is a delicate task to reconstruct anything, especially when tribes were so eager to split in dark jungles and high hills and deep rivers (Jacquesson 2000a, 2000b). Morphemes are certainly what we can rely on; yet morphology is not only morphemes, but also the way they are reciprocally organised, and even a window on history. Working in NE India, where there are historical sources in Tai-Ahom, Assamese, and Meitei, I am not prejudiced against historical researches, and believe we can learn something about the ‘migrations’ of these TB speakers. I recently asked French geologists boring into glaciers in Eastern Tibet to tell me the news about the climate over there during the last ten millennia: you never know, it could help. Broadly speaking, I believe in this type of linguistics which loves morphemes, but also remembers that people meet on the river and in the market-place, where they exchange herbs and words, recipes and syntax.

²⁸ Michailovsky 1988.

²⁹ In Jacquesson 1993, I tried to show how person markers have to be considered as systems, not as units.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	accusative
ALL	allative
BG	Bodo-Garo subgroup
CT	continuous
DIS	distal (distant position)
EXC	exclusive
FT	future
GEN	genitive
INC	inclusive
INTR	intransitive
KC	Kuki-Chin subgroup
LOC	locative
N	nominalizer
NE	North-East(ern)
POS	possessive
PRO	pronoun
PST	present
SE	South-East(ern)
T	tense
TR	transitive
V	verb(al)
VN	verbal noun

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