

# DIRECTIONAL AUXILIARIES IN DAAI CHIN

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## 0. Introduction

The Daai Chin language<sup>1</sup> belongs to the Southern Branch of the Kukish Section of the Tibeto-Burman language family. It is spoken by approximately 30,000 people in the townships of Matupi, Mindat, Kanpetlet and Paletwa in the Southern Chin Hills of Burma.

Within the Chin language family Daai Chin is most closely related to M̄n Chin (also called Mindat Chin), Chin Pon (also called Ŭt P̄i) and Matu Chin.

This paper is based on a dialect of Daai Chin spoken in Kanpetlet township.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. The auxiliary verb system in general

Preverbal auxiliaries. Eight preverbal auxiliaries have been found so far. All of them are directional and they are mutually exclusive. They are never used as main verbs, except *jǎng*.

Postverbal auxiliaries. The postverbal auxiliary system is much more complicated. There are more than fifty postverbal auxiliaries, which can be divided into several sets according to their position and meaning. The auxiliaries closest to the verb tend to be directionals, following them are causatives, reciprocals, attitudinals, phases, speech act indicators, and the like.

## 2. Preverbal auxiliaries

The eight preverbal auxiliaries form four pairs. Three of these pairs express the spatial directions forward, down and up. The fourth pair expresses the temporal direction 'in advance'. The pairs are divided by the two manners reaching out (physical or mental, without change of present position) and going.

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David Bradley ed., *Papers in South-East Asian linguistics* No.11: *South-East Asian syntax*, 81-92. *Pacific Linguistics*, A-77, 1989.

	forward	down	up	in advance
reaching out	<i>hei</i>	<i>juk</i>	<i>jän</i>	<i>na</i>
going	<i>va</i>	<i>ju</i>	<i>jäng</i>	<i>ana</i>

Table 1: The preverbal auxiliaries

a) **hei**<sup>3</sup> 'to V to the front, to V in forward direction, to V over there'

*kah hei pyen*<sup>4</sup> *kyo*  
 I forward speak futile  
 I speak to them over there (though without success)

*lóu hei бүк-а*<sup>5</sup>  
 field front look-IMP  
 look in front to the field

*lung sun ah hei xot-in*  
 stone this he forward throw-quick  
 he quickly throws the stone over there

b) **va** 'to go and V to the front, to go and V in forward direction, to go and V over there'

*ah nih va-dou u*  
 he PL forward-greet mPL  
 go and greet them

*ím-a va-lut lü kah hmuh*  
 house-in forward-enter and I see  
 and I saw that he went and entered the house over there

*kah va-hmuh kti*  
 I forward-meet PRES  
 I go and meet (him) over there

c) **juk** 'to V downwards, to reach down and V'

*juk kkhui hlü be kti*  
 downward help want again PRES  
 he wants to help (him) again from above

*kahjuk péét*  
 I down give  
 I reach down and give

*juk pyén-a*  
 down speak-IMP  
 speak downwards

d) **ju** 'to go down and V'

*kah ju-lit lut ei be kkhai ni*  
 I down-go enter self again will indeed  
 I myself will go down and enter again

*ju-pe-a*  
 go-down-give-IMP  
 go down and give it

*ah ju-mtheh lo*  
 he go-down-tell come  
 he comes to the state of going down and telling

e) **jän** 'to V upwards, to reach upwards and V'

*ah jän kpyaai in*  
 he up discard quick  
 he quickly throws (it) away upward

*kah jän poh ei kkhai ni*  
 I up do self will indeed  
 I myself will reach upwards and do (it).

*jän kthäh be-a*  
 up ask again-IMP  
 ask again upwards (ask someone who is higher)

f) **jǎng** 'to go up and V'

*kah jǎng pyen*  
 I go-up speak  
 I go upwards and speak

*im kkhaan-a ah jǎng poh*  
 house up-in he go-up does  
 he goes up into the house and does (it)

*ah ve náák-a jǎng hmu-hüt-a*  
 he stay place-at go-up look-IMP  
 go up to the place where he is and look for (it) back there

g) **na** 'to V in advance, ahead'

*nah na-poh am ve*  
 you ahead-work not is  
 you have not done it in advance

*kei noh kah na-ei ma kti*  
 I SUBJ I ahead-eat go-ahead PRES  
 I eat in advance (of everybody else)

*ah na-mtheh*  
 he ahead-tell  
 he tells it in advance

h) **ana** ‘to go and V in advance, ahead’

**ana-ngshut**      *ip*      *kti-é*  
go-ahead-start sleep PRES-PL  
they go and fall asleep in advance

**ana-pyén**      *hü*      *kom*      *kti*  
go-ahead tell around of:course PRES  
of course he has gone and told it around in advance

**ana-poh**      *u*      *bä*  
go-ahead do PL all-right?  
go and do it in advance, will you?

3. Postverbal semidirectional auxiliaries

The semidirectionals, the first seven auxiliaries after the verb, do not form a tight semantic set, but are a composite of direction, phase, and distributiveness. Most of them can also be used as a main verb.

<i>pha</i>	to arrive at the state of Ving
<i>lo</i>	to come to the state of Ving
<i>vaai</i>	to go and V, to V frontward
<i>seh</i>	to V and bring along
<i>hü</i>	to V from place to place
<i>táák</i>	to V and leave behind
<i>hüt</i>	to V back there

Note that Table 2 shows *lo*, *vaai*, and *seh* as a mutually exclusive set, though their relationships with other auxiliaries are different.

<i>pha</i>	R	O	X	X	X	X
<i>lo</i>		O	O	X	R	X
		<i>vaai</i>	O	R	R	R
			<i>seh</i>	O	X	X
				<i>hü</i>	R	X
					<i>táák</i>	R
						<i>hüt</i>

X = fixed order  
R = reversible order  
O = mutually exclusive

Table 2: Postverbal semidirectionals: pairwise co-occurrence and order

### 3.1 Meaning and usage

a) *lo*. When used as a main verb it means ‘come, bring along’. When used as an auxiliary verb it means ‘to come to the state of Ving, to V toward somebody or something’. The auxiliary *lo* can co-occur with all other directional postverbal auxiliaries except *vaai* and *seh*, since *lo* implies a movement toward and *vaai* and *seh* a movement away. *Lok* is an allomorph of *lo*, occurring before preglottalised consonants.

main verbs:

<i>kah <b>lok</b> kkhai</i>	I will come
<i>loua ksim ah <b>lo</b></i>	he brings the knife to the field

auxiliary:

*jah hmu-**lok** kkhai ni*  
 them see-come will indeed  
 I will come to the state of seeing them

*thing-kdung ah kkoh **lo***  
 firewood he carry come  
 he comes to the state of carrying the firewood

*ip **lok** kti*  
 sleep come PRES  
 he falls asleep

*kah sá, nah dām **lo** hnüh kti ni*  
 my son you big come finally PRES indeed  
 my son, you have become big finally

*ah bóóí **lo**-pyéí mjoh*  
 he rich come-much told  
 he became very rich, it is told

*sa kah yuk **lo***  
 letter I write come  
 I write a letter (to you)

b) *pha*. When used as a main verb it means ‘arrive’. When used as an auxiliary verb it means ‘to arrive at the state of Ving’. The occurrence of *pha* as an auxiliary verb is rather restricted. It has been found so far only occurring after the main verbs *lo* ‘come’ and *mán* ‘catch’. But it can co-occur with all the other directional postverbal auxiliaries except *vaai*.

main verb:

*íma **pha**-lobe kti*  
 he arrives coming back home

auxiliary verb:

*ah mán pha hnüh*  
 he catch arrive finally  
 he finally arrives at the state of catching (him)

*ah lo pha am kah hmuh ni*  
 he come arrive not I see indeed  
 I did not see him coming

c) *vaai*. Does not occur as a main verb. When used as an auxiliary verb it means 'to V forward, to go and V'. *Vaai* cannot co-occur with *lo*, *pha*, *seh*, but it does co-occur with *hü*, *táák* and *hüt* and is reversible with them.

*ah maláma su kshuuk-ku ah hmuh vaai*  
 his front-road on tortoise he see front  
 he sees the tortoise in front of him on the road

*sá-apyén vaai kom kti*  
 there-at speak go of course PRES  
 tell it over there of course

*lóu phyóu vaai-a*  
 field weed go-IMP  
 go and pull the weeds in the field

*mó-a ve hü vaai khüng vai*  
 jungle at stay around go probably will  
 he will probably go and stay around in the jungle

d) *seh*. When it is used as a main verb it means 'go, take along'. When it is used as an auxiliary verb it means 'bringing along'. Its occurrence as an auxiliary verb is very restricted, occurring only with the main verb *lo*. It can co-occur with the auxiliaries *pha*, *táák*, *hüt*, but not with *lo*, *hü*, or *vaai*.

main verb:

*kah seh ta kah phak kkhai ni*  
 If I go then I will arrive indeed

*paai noh ksim ah seh*  
 father takes the knife along

auxiliary:

*thing lo seh tu bă*  
 wood come bring INTENS all-right  
 do bring the firewood along, will you?

*ah lo seh hli-a ta lo seh kom*  
 he come bring want if come bring of course  
 if he wants to bring it along let him do so of course

e) *hü*. Does not occur as a main verb. When it is used as an auxiliary verb it means 'Ving from place to place, Ving around, Ving aimlessly'. It can co-occur with all other directional auxiliaries except with *seh*.

*asun kba su khü hü pah pah lü sit hü kti*  
 this like this call around go go and go around PRES  
 like this he calls around while going and goes from place to place

*mó kpyonga long kkóng-a khüüi hü kti*  
 jungle jungle-at stream land-at work around PRES  
 he works at different places, in the jungle, at the stream and on the land

*nah sit hü kti-o*  
 you go around PRES-doubtful  
 did you really go?

*nah seh lo hü kkhai ni*  
 you run come around will indeed  
 you will come to run around here and there (confused and aimless)

f) *táák*. When used as a main verb it means 'keep, put'. When used as an auxiliary verb it means 'to V leaving (somebody) in place or behind, to V in advance of somebody'. (The one left behind may also be moving but more slowly.) *Táák* can co-occur with all the other directional auxiliaries and is reversible with all of them except with *seh* and *pha*.

main verb:

*paai noh she ah táák*  
 the father keeps (raises) cows

*íma ksim ah táák*  
 he puts the knife in the house

auxiliary:

*ah don táák*  
 he run leave-behind  
 he runs and leaves behind (somebody running slower)

*nah ve táák hüt ta i am do*  
 you live leave back if GEN not good  
 it is not good if you live (somewhere else) and leave (him) in place

*nih seh táák in vai u ni*  
 we go leave quickly will PL indeed  
 we will quickly go in advance (of someone coming later)

g) *hüt*. Does not occur as a main verb. When used as an auxiliary verb it means 'to V back there, to V at a different time or place, to V so that it stays back'. It co-occurs with all the other directional auxiliaries, and is reversible with *vaai* and *táák*.

*ah sá ve hüt kti*  
his child stay back PRES  
his child stays back (at a different place)

*ah sük hüt*  
he order back-there  
he ordered back there (afterwards he died or went away)

*ah poh hüt am ve tí*  
he do back not is any more  
nothing remains from what he did

*ah tú hmu-hüt lü thik kti*  
his grandchild see-there and die PRES  
he saw his grandchild back there and died

*asun pyén hü hüt kom*  
like:this talk around there of:course  
talk around like this back there of course

### 3.2 Simple co-occurrence

The pairwise co-occurrence relations of these auxiliaries are shown in Table 2. Following are examples of each such pair.

*am man lo pha tí*  
not catch come arrive any more  
he cannot catch him any more

*ei o pha lo to kkhai ni*  
eat drink arrive come proper will indeed  
he will arrive in time to eat

*nah sén lo hü kkhai ni*  
you run come around will indeed  
you will run around confused

*nih ve lo táák u ni*  
we live come leave PL indeed  
we come to live (somewhere else) and leave him behind

*nih ve táák lo u ni*  
we live leave come PL indeed  
we come to live (somewhere else) and leave him behind



*kah nih бүк lo hüt kti-é ni*  
 I we see come back PRES-PL indeed  
 we will see him back there

*ning lo pha seh táák kkhai ni*  
 you come arrive take leave will indeed  
 they will arrive in advance to take (it) and leave you behind

*lo pha hū ma she*  
 come arrive around go:ahead let  
 let him arrive at these places

*ning lo pha táák kkhai-é ni*  
 you come arrive leave will-PL indeed  
 they will arrive in advance of you

*lo pha hüt ma kkhai shü*  
 come arrive here go-ahead will should  
 he should have come to arrive here

*ning lo seh táák kkhai ni*  
 you come bring leave will indeed  
 he will come and bring it in advance and leave you behind

*bebe ah lo seh hüt tata do kkhai shü*  
 brother he come bring here if good will should  
 if the elder brother would have brought it along it would have been good

*mó-a ve hū vaai khüng vai*  
 jungle-in stay around go probably will  
 he will probably go and stay around in the jungle

*mó-a ve vaai hū khüng vai*  
 jungle-in stay go around probably will  
 he will probably go and stay around in the jungle

*kah ei hū táák phi am kshing*  
 I eat around leave also not know  
 he does not know that I have eaten in advance (without him)

*nah ve táák hū ta i am do*  
 you stay leave around if GEN not good  
 it is not good that you stay around at other places and leave him behind

*asun pyén hū hüt kom kti*  
 like this talk around back of course PRES  
 like this he tells around of course

*püi ei vaai táák am do*  
 friend eat go leave not good  
 it is not good to go and eat and leave your friend behind

*püi ei táák vaai am do*  
 friend eat leave go not good  
 it is not good to go and eat and leave your friend behind

*pyén vaai hüt kom u*  
 talk go back course PL  
 go and tell it back there of course

*seh hüt vaii shü*  
 go back go should  
 he should have gone back there

*ve táák hüt ta mpyeen-seh-hlü-kba*  
 stay leave back if pitiful  
 if he is left behind he is to be pitied

*ve hüt táák ta mpyeen-seh-hlü-kba*  
 stay back leave if pitiful  
 if he is left behind he is to be pitied

### 3.3 Co-occurrence of more than two postverbal auxiliaries

No more than three postverbal directionals have been found together, though a maximum of five is logically possible according to Table 2.

*seh lo hü táák tü kkhai-é ni*  
 go come around leave again will-PL indeed  
 they will go again from place to place and leave him behind

*ning lo pha seh táák kkhai-é ni*  
 you come arrive take leave will-PL indeed  
 they will arrive to take it in advance and leave you behind

### 4. Co-occurrence of preverbal and postverbal directionals

Many of the preverbal and postverbal directionals can occur together, but there are some restrictions, as shown in Table 3. Note the complementary distribution of *vaai* and *seh*. And note the somewhat defective distribution of *ana*. This table also shows that the neat semantic matrix of the preverbals given in Table 1 does not fully correlate with the distributional realities; there are apparently other semantic factors that have not yet been fully taken into account.

	<i>lo</i>	<i>pha</i>	<i>vaai</i>	<i>seh</i>	<i>hü</i>	<i>taak</i>	<i>hüt</i>
<i>hei</i>	X	O	O	X	X	X	X
<i>va</i>	X	O	O	X	X	X	X
<i>juk</i>	X	O	O	X	O	X	X
<i>ju</i>	X	O	X	O	O	X	X
<i>jän</i>	X	O	O	X	O	X	X
<i>jäng</i>	X	O	X	O	X	X	X
<i>na</i>	X	O	X	O	X	X	X
<i>ana</i>	O	O	X	O	X	X	O

X = occurring, O = non-occurring

Table 3: Co-occurrence of preverbal and postverbal directionals

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See also the introduction to Hartmann-So 1985.

<sup>2</sup> The data for this paper were collected between 1975 and 1983. The basic analysis is based on about twenty different texts by several speakers from different villages in Kanpetlet township. For the composition of this paper my husband Chaing So and Mr Nääng Küüi from Nghmu Khim Mding village have been my main informants; I am grateful to them for their efforts and patience. I am also indebted to Paulette Hopple and David Thomas who gave advice and help in the analysis and writing of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> Key to the orthography:

ph, th, kh, sh	represent	aspirates [p <sup>h</sup> , t <sup>h</sup> , k <sup>h</sup> , s <sup>h</sup> ]
syllable-final h	"	glottal stop [ʔ]
hm, hn, hng	"	voiceless nasals [M, N, ŋ]
hl	"	voiceless lateral [L]
x	"	voiceless velar fricative [χ]
v, j, y	"	semivowels [w, y, ɹ]
kC, k'C, k'V	"	preglottalised [ʔC], [ʔV]
mC, m'V, ngC, ng'V	"	prenasalised [mC, mV, ŋ C, ŋ V]
Cy	"	palatalised [C <sup>y</sup> ]
i, ü, u	"	high vowels [i, ɨ, u]
e, ä, o	"	mid vowels [ɛ, ə, ɔ]
a	"	low central vowel [a]
VV	"	long vowel
Vu, Vi	"	VC [Vw, Vy]

Tone: there are two contrastive tones throughout the dialect area, a plain level tone and a tense high falling tone. But there is much variation between villages as to which words take which tone, so tone is not marked in practical orthography. The tones indicated in this paper represent the speech of Yang Msaai village.

- 4 The verbs *pyen* 'to speak' and *man* 'to catch' belong to a verb class which has both verb Stem A and Stem B. There exists a tone alternation between these two stems (Hartmann-So, 1985). Therefore in this paper they are sometimes marked with plain-level tone and sometimes with high-tense tone.
- 5 Suffix *-a* is a mild imperative, a gentle urging (combined with appropriate intonation). Suffix *-kti* is a common suffix whose meaning is not yet entirely clear. It has a component of present tense, in contrast with *-kkhai* 'future', and may also serve to mark the end of a verb phrase.

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