OPTIONAL SUBJECT MARKING IN AN ACCUSATIVE LANGUAGE

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Example 1

*Kavang* dî pîtang ...

bee dî get.up:NF

‘Bee starting/standing up ...’ (080103-000.wav 371)

Example 2

*Kavang* Ø pîtang ...

bee Ø get.up:NF

‘Bee starting/standing up ...’ (080103-000.wav 166)
Differential Argument marking (DAM)

Any kind of situation where an argument of a predicate bearing the same generalized semantic argument role may be coded in different ways

Witzlack-Makarevich & Seržant (2018:3)
Differential Argument marking: Local triggers

**LOCAL** = related to the argument

- **Semantics**: inherent properties (person; number; animacy)
  - see Silverstein 1976 hierarchy/scale

- **Morphology**: part of speech (pro. vs NP); noun class (gender)

- **Syntax/Discourse**: definiteness; specificity

(Adapted from Witzlack-Makarevich & Seržant 2018)
Differential Argument marking: Global triggers

GLOBAL = related to the event
  • The predicate: Number of arguments in the clause; Verb class; Telicity
  • The clause: Main vs. dependent; Polarity; Degrees of transitivity; TAM
  • Discourse/Style: Information status (topic, focus); unexpectedness; prominence

(Adapted from Witzlack-Makarevich & Seržant 2018)
Differential Argument marking: Obligatory vs. Optional

- **Type 1**: argument marking is obligatory, both markings are in complementary distribution
- **Type 2**: argument marking is optional
- **Type 3**: argument marking is obligatory in some contexts and optional in others

(Adapted from Witzlack-Makarevich & Seržant 2018)
Data: Tayatuk (ISO: smc)

(Hooley & McElhanon 1970:1069)

• SV; AOV
• Switch reference
• Agreement
  • Nominative-accusative
Questions

1a. What argument markings are possible in Tayatuk?
   - S, A and O

1b. What is the default marking for core arguments?
   - The default marking is the functionally unmarked form (Koenig 2006)

2a. Is differential marking optional or obligatory? What factors condition the marking?

2b. What role does differential marking play?
Data

- 2 field trips, 6 months total, 2014-2015
- Pilot study: 8 texts
  - 1 written
  - 7 oral
  - n= 558 clause/intonational units
- Text genres:
  - 4: Historical account (life a few decades ago; events taking place in the village; personal history)
  - 1: Discussion in church
  - 3: Legend
- Coding
  - Only overt NPs
  - ~42% of all clauses / intonational units are coded
    - 235 out of 558 overt NPs are unambiguously S, A or O
1a. Possible argument marking -SV

Example 3

*Kavang dî pîtang ...*

bee dî get.up:NF

‘Bee starting/standing up ...’ (080103-000.wav 371)

Example 4

*Kavang Ø pîtang ...*

bee Ø get.up:NF

‘Bee starting/standing up ...’ (080103-000.wav 166)
1a. Possible argument marking - OV

Example 5

*Kavang ø înyitak...
bee ø 3SG.O:tel1:3SG:PRS
‘s/he told Bee...’ (080103-000.wav 239)
(*‘Bee told him/her’ – based on context)

Example 6

*Kavang nîng înyitak...
bee nîng 3SG.O:tel1:3SG:PRS
‘s/he told Bee’ (080103-000.wav 389)
1a. Possible argument marking - AOV

kavang dî gupa nîng înyitak...
bee dî frog nîng 3SG.O:tell:3SG:PRS
‘Bee tells Frog...’ (080103-000.wav 63)

datnyi gotip dî uyapnyi bunga pîn pîn ø înyigut
young.sib:3SG:POSS gotip dî old.sib:3SG:POSS bunga pîn pîn ø 3SG.O:tell:3SG:PST
‘Young brother Gotip told his older brother Bunga pîn pîn...’ (VG2_2014_021.005)

Example 7

ne ø Kising ø înyigum
1SG ø Kising ø 3SG.O:tell:1SG:SG
‘I told Kising...’ (140313-000.wav 119)

Example 8

Example 9

Unattested: A ø O nîng V
1a. Possible core argument markings in Tayatuk

- **S:**  $dî$ or $\emptyset$
- **A:**  $dî$ or $\emptyset$
- **O:**  $nîng$ or $\emptyset$
1b. What is the default marking?

- The citation form / vocative
- Possessor in juxtaposed possession
- Nominal predicate
- Locational predicate
- Existential construction
- SV
- AOV
- OAV

See Koenig 2006, Handschuh 2014
1a. What is the default marking in Tayatuk?

- The citation form / vocative is \( \emptyset \) marked
- \( \emptyset \) is the form used in most contexts / with most constructions
  - Nominal predicate constructions, both NPs are \( \emptyset \) marked
    
    \[
    \text{Mannyi} \quad \text{sogep} \\
    \text{mame:3SG:POSS} \quad \text{cassowary} \\
    \text{‘its name is cassowary’} \\
    \]
    Example 10

  - Possessor in juxtaposed possession is \( \emptyset \) marked
    
    \[
    \text{Kwakwasu} \quad \text{nok} \\
    \text{teacher} \quad \text{food} \\
    \text{‘the teacher’s food’} \\
    \]
    Example 11
1b. What is the preferred marking for O?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>O argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nîng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOV</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAV</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OV</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1b. What is the preferred marking for S?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$dî$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SV</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPPV</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S + non-VP predicate</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1b. What is the preferred marking for A?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A argument</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(dî)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\emptyset)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More data needed!
1. Argument marking in Tayatuk

Hypothesis 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Default</th>
<th>DAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>dî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>dî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>nîng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Default</th>
<th>DAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>dî</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>dî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>nîng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2a. Is the DAM on S/A optional or obligatory?

- **Type 1:** DAM is obligatory, both markings are in complementary distribution
- **Type 2:** DAM is optional
- **Type 3:** DAM is obligatory in some contexts and optional in others
Factors triggering DAM on S/A

- Semantic classes of verbs
  - die > see > talk > get up > go
  - No agentivity effect (control, volition)

Example 12

`datna mareyi rî kumgut.`
elder.sib.ssx:1SG.POSS big dî die:3SG:PST
‘my big brother died.’ (UME-002.wav 181 )
Factors triggering DAM on S/A (cont.)

- Polarity, TAM
- Clause types
  - Main clause
  - Dependent clause (time adverbial in (13), relative clause)
  - Medial clause
  - Final clause

Example 13

*Dî kîyi nan dî pang kuwak agut ken ...*
SEQ finish dad dî get:NF garden do:3SG:PST LOC
‘when dad was working here...’ (140303-002.wav 139)
Factors triggering DAM on S/A (cont.)

- Mood
  - Declarative: optional marking
  - Interrogative: optional marking
  - (Exclamative)
  - (Imperative: overt S/A rare, always ø marked?)

Example 14

Wase, ga ya!
Wase, 2SG say
‘Wase, you talk!’ ?'(140507.wav 28)
Factors triggering DAM on S/A (cont.)

■ Information status: Optional with topic marker *ko*

Example 15

*amnara nin dî ko ko bîn tut bîn dî ko*

*men 1PL dî TOP TOP with boy with dî TOP*

*kîyi pompom pagumîng*

*finish wall make:1PL:PST*

‘we men and boys then made the bamboo wall’ (140308-001.wav 128)
Factors triggering DAM on S/A (cont.)

- Information status: Optional in questions (focus)

Q: namên dî wamanggut?
who dî break:3SG:PST
‘who broke (up the soil)?’

A: mingna rî bisak wamanggut.
mother:1SG.POSS dî DUB break:3SG:PST
‘I think my mother did.’ (140408-000.513)
Factors triggering DAM on S/A (cont.)

- Optional with determiner *u* (definite) and with *bu* ‘one’ (indefinite)
- Optional with proper names, common names (animate, inanimate)
  - But so far no AOV with inanimate A

Example 17

*kenuk*  *karîp*  *u*  *mak*  *kung*  *kung*  *bîn*  *mak*

*tree.SP*  *wood*  *DEM*  *ground*  *hot*  *hot*  *with*  *ground*

*sorîp*  *dîn*  *pidying*  *ken*  *yiktak.*

*wind*  *GEN*  *middle*  *LOC*  *stay:3sg:PRS*

‘Kenuk trees grow/live in between cold and hot places’ (2014-019.002)
Factors triggering DAM on S/A (cont.)

- Not found with pronouns 1SG and 2SG... yet?!  
  - Optional with u ‘3SG/PL’
  - Optional with nin ‘1PL’, dan ‘2DU’, din ‘2PL’

- Side note: 2SG + nîng

**Example 18**

nin dî  sak pukung,  kap otang ken   papîng,
1PL dî  first go.down:NF  song bed  LOC  bring.down:NF
‘we going down first, we going down to the stage’ (080116-002.wav 238)
2a. Is the marking optional or obligatory?

- **Type 2**: argument marking is optional in all contexts

- **Type 3**: argument marking is obligatory in some contexts and optional in others
  - *Not with pronouns: 1SG and 2SG*
  - *Optional with other pronouns*
    - Gap in the data?
  - *Not in imperative mood*
    - S/A in imperative mood is rare, in focus
2b. What is the function of \textit{dî}? (based on single factor analysis)

**NOT:**

- Discriminative
  - Rare to have A and O in a sentence
  - Optional with S too
  - 50\% chance to have S/A + dî

- Semantic property of the S/A
  - Agentivity, volition, control
  - Animacy?

- Information structure
  - Optional with both topic and focus
2b. What is the function of dî? (cont.)

Example 19

kangun dî godeng nangîkwîn, tut dî kangun nangîkwîn, nan dî tut nangîkwîn,
dog dî kumala eat:3SG:DS boy dî dog eat:3SG:DS dad dî boy eat:3SG:DS
‘the dog eating the sweet potato, the boy eating the dog, the father eating the boy…’

Example 20

Kuwe Tetevik dî nagut, kuwe Bullet dî nagut.
one Tetevik dî eat:3SG:PST one Bullet dî eat:3SG:PST
‘One, Tetevik bit it, one Bullet bit it.’
2b. What is the function of \( dî \)? (cont.)

Example 21

\( kîyi \) tunde \( \text{ken ko namîn} \) Nungga \( rî \) yuwîn \( \text{tamîng bu} \) pasîgut. finish Tuesday LOC TOP who \( \text{Nungga} \) \( dî \) say:3SG.SS jungle one chop:3SG:PST

‘then on Tuesday, whozat? Nungga said he had clearcut an area.’

Example 22

\( \text{Kuvîn uka ken engîk, tut naru nin dî gîn nannin bîn ing} \)
die:3SG:DS this.one LOC put:NF boy girl 1PL \( dî \) only dad-1PL:POSS with come.up:NF

‘(my mom) Having died, being buried there, only us kids, with our father coming...’
Contrast and…

- **Prominence**: “[...] singles out the NP and/or its referent for particular attention [...] The feature [prominent] is presumed to be an abstract one that can contextualise in different ways in different languages: it might contextualise as unexpectedness (prominence being naturally associated with what is unexpected), with contrastive focus, with definiteness, with agentivity or potency” (McGregor 2010:1625)

- See also **Discourse Prominence** in Light Warlpiri and Gurindji Kriol (Meakins and O’Shannessy 2010) and in Yali (Riesberg 2018); and **Foregrounding** (Jenny and Tun 2013; McGregor 2013)

2b. What is the function of $dît$? (cont.)
Summary

1a. Tayatuk default argument marking:
   - $S$: ø
   - $O$: ø
   - $A$: dî / ø ?

1b. Differential argument marking
   - $S$: dî
   - $O$: nîng
   - $A$: dî / ø ?

2a. Differential S and A marking is optional
   - in all contexts

2b. Differential S and A marking: function
   - Contrast
Remaining questions

- Differential marking DM and single factor analysis vs. combination of factors
  - *Isn’t DM sensitive to the number of arguments in a sentence?*
    - If OV, unmarked O
    - If SV, marked S
    - If AOV, mark A if...
  - *Isn’t DM sensitive to the number of arguments + animacy? + other features?*
    - If SV, and S is animate, then ...
    - If SV, and S is inanimate, then ...
    - ...
    - *How does DM interact with switch reference? (cf. Hynum 2010 on Numanggang); with possessive marking?*
    - *Does the frequency of overt marking vary with text genre? (cf. Jenny and Tun 2013 in Burmese)*
      - Is DM a stylistic feature?

- Differential marking = case marking
  - Are we dealing with case here?

- What is the function of DOM nîng?
  - *Triggering factors?*

- How many dî and nîng are there?
  - dî ablative and nîng instrumental
  - dî clause initial (SEQ?) and clause final (?)

- Origin of DM in Tayatuk
  - Borrowed from neighboring language Yopno?
    - Similar forms (*da* and *nang*) and similar functions (Reed 2003)
Bibliography

- Reed, Wes. 2003. The clitics *da* and *nang* in Yopno. Ms. Ukarumpa: SIL.