CHAPTER - 4

Syntactic Characteristics of Verbs in War Dewsawlia

This chapter discusses on some of the syntactic characteristics of Verbs in War Dewsawlia. The main syntactic aspects discuss are:-

(i) **Tense**
(ii) **Aspect**
(iii) **Mood**
(iv) **Agreement patterns** and
(v) *The syntactic behavior of a certain verbs according to their semantics in the sentence.*

4.1. **Tense**

As mentioned in Chapter 2 above, tense in Khasi has been discussed by various authors and researchers. Pryse (1855) and Robert (1891) argue that there are three tense in Khasi *present, past* and *future*, whereas, Sten (1987) claims that Khasi is a *tense-less* language. Jyrwa (1995) is of the opinion that Khasi has only two tense: that is *past* and *future*. She points out that *present tense* is unmarked in Khasi.

Lyngdoh (2011) is of the opinion that Khasi exhibits *Future* and *Non-Future* tense system. *Future tense* is morphologically represented by affixes: (a) -^n which marks *near future*, and (b) -^n-sa which marks *remote future*. According to her the Non-Future includes *present tense* and *past tense*. She claims that in both cases (present and past tense), there is absence of overt tense marking morphology.

In War Dewsawlia, *present tense* and *past tense* are not overtly marked. However, similar to standard Khasi (Lyngdoh 2011), War Dewsawlia also exhibits two *future tense* markers: -n/yn for immediate future and -n sa? for remote future.
4.1.1. Present tense

As stated above, present tense is un-marked in War Dewsawlia. Sentences (106) – (109) are illustrative of the unmarked present tense marker. As we can see from the examples below there is no particle which marked the present tense and also there is no inflection in the verb to indicate present tense.

106. u ḋai
    3SGM ill
    ‘He is ill’.

107. u ṭɔ? ɛhɔi
    3SGM write letter
    ‘He writes a letter’.

108. u ɬɔi ḃa? ɛuŋ sɔ?men
    3SGM go LOC house alone
    ‘He goes home alone.’

109. ɲa kular bun su ja? pʰei ɛipʰew tengka
    1SG promise INF pay ACC 2 ten rupees
    ‘I promise to pay you ten rupees.’

4.1.2 Past tense

Past tense is also unmarked in War Dewsawlia. In this variety past tense is understood from the adverbial construction. The examples below show that there are no inflectional affixes or particles to indicate past tense.

110. u ɔi ḃa? ɛuŋ ɲin
    3SGM come LOC house yesterday
    ‘He came home yesterday.’
4.1.3. Future tense

Like standard Khasi (Lyngdoh 2011), War Dewsawlia also exhibits two future tense markers -n/yn and sa?. The suffix –n/yn indicates immediate future. When the suffix –n and the particle sa? combine together in a sentence, they indicate remote/later future as we can see in sentence (117) and (119) below:

111. u di? mencbemtaciew
    3SGM go last week
    ‘He went last week.’

112. u ruei n/yn
    3SGM sing yesterday
    ‘He sang yesterday.’

113. u ci da? cbna? n/yn
    3SGM come ABL village yesterday
    ‘He came from village yesterday.’

114. ja-n di? delhi labar
    1SG-FUT go delhi tomorrow
    ‘I will go to Delhi tomorrow.’

115. ci yn di? delhi labar
    2PL FUT go delhi tomorrow
    ‘We will go to Delhi tomorrow.’

116. u-n wan
    3SGM-FUT come
    ‘He will come.’

117. u-n sa? wan
    3SGM-FUT REM FUT come
    ‘He will come not immediately’
4.2 Aspect

There are three aspectual markers in War Dewsawlia:-

(i) Progressive aspect marked by *naŋ*

(ii) Perfective aspect marked by *laʔ* and

(iii) Habitual aspect marked by *ŋun* and *chait*.

### 4.2.1 Progressive aspect

*Progressive aspect* is marked by *naŋ, naŋ* indicates that action or process is imperfect or still in progress. The progressive aspectual marker *naŋ* in War Dewsawlia always precede the main verb.

121. u ban u *naŋ* sa so?pʰnat
   3SGM ban 3SGM PROG eat jackfruit
   ‘Ban is eating jackfruit.’

122. ci *naŋ* jaʔ *niew* leʔbɔʔr
   2P PROG ACC See football
   ‘We are watching football.’
4.2.2 Perfective aspect

The perfective aspect is marked by the particle laʔ. Repetition of laʔ after the verb phrase or post-sentential is allowed in War Dewsawlia. However, this repetition is optional since the co-occurrence of laʔ₁ and laʔ₂ brings the meaning of emphasis upon the completion of the action.

125. u laʔ₁ sa laʔ₂
3SGM PRF eat PRF
‘He has eaten’.

126. u laʔ₁ tʰʔ cʰitʰi laʔ₂
3SGM PRF write letter PRF
‘He had written a letter.’

127. ŋa laʔ ji jaʔ pʰei
1SG PRF See ACC 2
‘I have seen you.’

Or,

128. ŋa laʔ₁ ji jaʔ laʔ₂ pʰei
1SG PRF See ACC PRF 2
‘I have seen you.’
Or,

129. ka pla pisa jəŋ ŋa ka laʔ kma
3SGF bag money GEN 1SG 3SGF PRF lost

‘I have lost my wallet.’

Moreover, the occurrence of the perfective marker laʔ is optional when the sentence is headed by an adverb of past time. This is illustrated in (131) below:

131. , nin u lɔi haʔ cuŋ sɔʔmen
yesterday 3SGM go LOC house alone

‘Yesterday, he had gone home alone.’

Or,

132. , nin u lɔi laʔ haʔ cuŋ sɔʔmen
yesterday 3SGM go PRF LOC house alone

‘Yesterday, he had gone home alone’

### 4.2.3 Habitual aspect

**Habitual aspect** is marked by jun and cʰait to indicate that the action are regular or habitual in nature. These two habitual markers can co-occur in the same sentence as in the example (137) and (138) below:

133. u diʔ kai step jun
3SGM go walk morning HAB

‘He uses to go for morning walk’.
Similar to Perfective, habitual marker is also found to be optional when an adverb of time occurs in a sentence. (139) and (140) below show this optional dropping of the habitual markers.

134. u kʰaŋ ɲun kʰendai baje
   3SGM close HAB nine clock
   ‘He used to close at 9:00 am’.

135. u cʰait kʰaŋ kʰendai baje
   3SGM HAB close nine clock
   ‘He used to close at 9:00 am.’

136. u cʰait diʔ kai step
   3SGM HAB go walk morning
   ‘He uses to go for morning walk.’

137. u cʰait diʔ kai step ɲun
   3SGM HAB go walk morning HAB
   ‘He uses to go for morning walk.’

138. u cʰait kʰaŋ ɲun kʰendai baje
   3SGM HAB close HAB nine clock
   ‘He used to close at 9:00 am.’

Similar to Perfective, habitual marker is also found to be optional when an adverb of time occurs in a sentence. (139) and (140) below show this optional dropping of the habitual markers.

139. u diʔ kai step manlasŋeį
   3SGM go walk morning everyday
   ‘He used to go for morning walk every day.’

140. ɲa diʔ tre manlasŋeį
   1s go work everyday
   ‘I go to work every day.’
4.3 Mood/ Modality

In War Dewsawlia the *indicative mood* is unmarked. In this variety the *imperative mood* is marked by the particle *ma*. The *subjunctive mood* is marked by *da*.

4.3.1 Indicative mood

As mentioned above the *indicative mood* is unmarked in War Dewsawlia as shown in the examples below:

141. u naŋ diʔ ciew  
     3SGM PROG go market  
     ‘He is going to the market.’

142. u tʰɔʔ  
     3SGM write  
     ‘He writes.’

4.3.2 Imperative mood

*Imperative mood* is indicated by the particle *ma*. However, the occurrence of this particle is optional.

143. ma cieŋ hitew  
     IMP stand DEM  
     ‘Stand there.’

Or,

144. cieŋ hitew  
     stand DEM  
     ‘Stand there.’

145. ma sŋap ʃar  
     IMP listen quite  
     ‘Keep quite.’
Or,

146. ṣṣap  ḟjar
listen  quite
‘Keep quite.’

4.3.3 Subjunctive mood
As mentioned above subjunctive mood is marked by da.

147. da  pʰei  diʔ  a  diʔ  rei  ḟa  ḟa-n  diʔ
SBJV  2  go  or  go  NEG  1SG  1SG-FUT  go
‘Whether you go or not, I, myself will go.’

148. da  u  ści  ma  saʔ  ai  kitew  ki  ḟaiɲ
SUBJ  3SGM  come  please  FUT  give  DEM  3P  cloth
‘If he comes, please give those clothes.’

Apart from the above, there are other particles and modal auxiliary which indicate:

(i) permission
(ii) possibility
(iii) ability
(iv) necessity.

In War Dewsawlia the particle laʔ indicates permission, possibility and ability. This particle also functions as a perfective marker as shown in (4.2.3) above. However, when it is function as a modal marker it is always followed by an infinitive bun as shown in sentences below. The auxiliary dei indicates necessity. There is another modal marker which indicates necessity i.e. the particle hap.
4.3.4 Permission

149. pʰei laʔ bun duit duma hinei kamra
    2 MOD INF drink tobbaco DEM room

   ‘You may smoke in this room.’

150. pʰei laʔ laʔ bun diʔ ju:n
    2 MOD PRF INF go jones

   ‘You may go, Jones.’

4.3.5 Possibility

151. ka laʔ bun hlap kata sŋei
    3SGF MOD INF rain ADV sun

   ‘It may rain today.’

152. u laʔ bun cəi labar
    3SGM MOD INF come ADV

   ‘He may come tomorrow.’

4.3.6 Ability

153.ŋa laʔ bun cəʔji
    1SG MOD INF see

   ‘I can see.’

154.ŋa laʔ bun kai
    1SG MOD INF walk

   ‘I can walk.’

As mentioned above dei is an auxiliary. This auxiliary can also function as modal marker which indicates the meaning of necessity as shown in the examples (155) and (156) below:
4.3.7 Necessity

155. u dei bun di?
    3SGM MOD INF go
    ‘He should/must go.’

156. ci dei bun minɔt
    1PL MOD INF work hard
    ‘We should/must work hard.’

Comparing \textit{dei} which functions as a modal marker in sentence (155) and (156) above and \textit{dei} which function as an auxiliary in sentence (157) to (159) below we can see that \textit{dei} which function as a modal marker is always followed by the infinitive \textit{bun} and \textit{dei} which function as an auxiliary always follows the subject.

157. u dei u naʔrit u bu b^a
    3SGM AUX 3SGM boy 3SGM ADJ good
    ‘He is a good boy.’

158. ŋa dei u naŋhikai
    1SG AUX 3SGM teacher
    ‘I am a teacher.’

159. ci dei daʔ dewsawlia
    2PL AUX ABL dewsawlia
    ‘We are from Dewsawlia.’

Another modal of \textit{necessity} is the particle \textit{hap}. This particle also always precedes the infinitive \textit{bun}.

160. u hap bun di?
    3SGM MOD INF go
    ‘He has to go.’
4.4 Agreement

4.4.1 Subject Verb Agreement

War Dewsawlia shows subject-verb agreement in person, number and gender. Since subject-verb agreement is consistent in the variety, pronominal subject dropping is also a consistent syntactic phenomenon as we can see in the examples (163) to (165) below where the pronominal subject is dropped. However, when the subject is emphasized as shown in sentence (166), to (168), the pronominal subject (1st person singular) is not dropped.

The illustrations below in (169) to (171) show agreement in gender. In (169) the subject is a feminine noun. Therefore, the verb following it carries a feminine agreement marker \(\text{ka}\) and in (170) and (171) the subject is a masculine noun, therefore, the verb following carries a masculine agreement marker \(\text{u}\).

Sentences (169) to (171) below also show agreement in number. In (169), (170) and (171) the subject is singular. Therefore, the verb following it carries a singular agreement marker \(\text{ka}\) in (169) and \(\text{u}\) in (170) and (171) whereas; in (172) and (173) below the subject is plural, therefore, the verb following carries plural agreement marker \(\text{ki}\).
163. ʧa  pule  kōt  
1SMG  read  book  
‘I read book.’

164. ʧa  sian  jaʔ  pʰei  
1SG  love  ACC  you  
‘I love you.’

165. ʧi  sian  jaʔ  pʰei  
2PL  love  ACC  2  
‘We love you.’

166. ʧa  sian  ʧa  jaʔ  pʰei  
1SG  love  1SG  ACC  2  
‘I love you.’

167. ʧa  ʧa-n  diʔ  tre  
1SG  1SG-FUT  go  Work  
‘I will go for work.’

168. ʧa  ʧa-n  saʔ  bɔd  pʰei  
1SG  1SG-FUT  stay  work  2  
‘I will stay with you.’

169. ʧa  meri  ʧa  ruei  namar  bu  ka  kmen  
3SGF  mary  3SGF  sing  because  ADJ  MAR  3SGF  happy  
‘Mary sings because she was happy’.
4.4.2 Other Types of agreement

4.4.2.1 Determiners Noun Agreement

Since determiners are noun modifiers, they agree with their head noun in terms of gender and number.

170. **u** ban **u** lôn ju ben
3SGM ban 3SGM beat ACC ben

‘Ban beats Ben.’

171. **u** ban **u** c₅et kan
3SGM ban 3SGM cook know

‘Ban knows how to cook’.

172. **ki** na?rit **ki** laʔ tʰpan
3PL child 3PL PRF hungry

‘The children are hungry.’

173. **ki** liput **ki** dei ki dak jɔŋ u hlap
3PL cloud 3PL AUX 3PL sign GEN 3SGM rain

‘Clouds are sign of rain.’

4.4.2 Other Types of agreement

4.4.2.1 Determiners Noun Agreement

Since determiners are noun modifiers, they agree with their head noun in terms of gender and number.

174. **ka-nei** ka kɔt
3SGF-DEM 3SGF book

‘This book.’

175. **ka-tui** ka kɔt
3SGF-DEM 3SGF book

‘That book.’

176. **u-nei** u kʰɔn jɔŋ ᵇa
3SGM-DEM 3SGM son GEN 1SG

‘This is my son.’
4.4.2.2 Head Noun Adjectives Agreement

Adjectives also are noun modifiers that show agreement in number and gender with their head noun.

As mention in (4.4.1) above that pronominal dropping is consistent in the variety therefore first person and second person agreement on predicate adjectives is not morphologically realized as in sentence (180) and (181) below. However, we can see that adjectives show agreement in third person as in sentence (182) and (183) below:

177. u-nei  u  di
    3SGM-DEM  3SGM  tree
    ‘This tree.’

178. ki-nei  ki  kɔt
    3PL-DEM  3SGF  Book
    ‘These books.’

179. ki-tui  ki  kɔt
    3PL-DEM  3SGF  book
    ‘Those books.’

180. ŋa/ci  tʃit
    1SG/1PL  dirty
    ‘I am dirty/We are dirty.’

181. pʰei/pʰa/me  tʃit
    2  dirty
    ‘You are dirty.’
4.5 The Syntactic Behavior of a Certain Verbs in War Dewsa\-wlia

In War Dewsa\-wlia there are sets of verbs that carry sameness of meaning but are represented by different morphemes. However, these lexical verbs that carry the same meaning are used to indicate specific contexts. Moreover, one cannot replace the other since in the context where they are not allowed to occur, they become meaningless. The examples of these kinds of verbs are shown below:-

4.5.1 Verbs di? ‘go’ and lo\-i ‘go’

The verb lo\-i is used specifically in the context when we refer to the going which is toward destination familiar to the goer or own by the goer e.g. his house, his village or our house, our village etc i.e. when a person goes to his own home or village or town the verb lo\-i is used. Whereas, when he goes to school/college/office or a village/town other than his own, the verb di? is used.

The following examples illustrate that the verb lo\-i and di? cannot be used interchangeably as we can see the ungrammaticality of the sentence (185) (marked by asterisk) when the verb di? is used instead of the verb lo\-i and the ungrammaticality of the sentence (187) when the verb lo\-i is used instead of the verb di?.
“He went to village yesterday.”

“I will go home.”

“I will go to London.”

“Ban goes to work/ office every day.”
4.5.2 Verbs \( \text{oi} \) ‘come’ and \( \text{wan} \) ‘come’.

Similar as in (4.5.1) above the verb \( \text{oi} \) is used specifically when a person comes from his own home or village or town. Whereas, when he comes from school/college/office or a village/town other than his own otherwise the verb \( \text{wan} \) is used.

These two verbs also cannot be used interchangeably as we can see the ungrammaticality of the sentence (191) and (193) when these verbs are used interchangeably.

\[
\text{come}
\]

\( \text{oi} \) \( \text{wan} \)

190. \( ^{\text{1SG}} \text{oi} \) \( \text{da} \) \( \text{c}^{\text{bnoj}} \) \( \text{kata} \) \( \text{snej} \)

‘I came from village today.’

191. \( ^{\text{1SG}} \text{wan} \) \( \text{da} \) \( \text{c}^{\text{bnoj}} \) \( \text{kata} \) \( \text{snej} \)

‘I came from village today.’

192. \( ^{\text{1SG}} \text{wan} \) \( \text{kata} \) \( \text{snej} \) \( \text{da} \) \( \text{delhi} \)

‘I came from Delhi today.’

193. \( ^{\text{1SG}} \text{oi} \) \( \text{kata} \) \( \text{snej} \) \( \text{da} \) \( \text{delhi} \)

‘I came from Delhi today.’
4.5.3 Verbs *oįlam* ‘bring’ and *wanlam* ‘bring’.

Similar as in (4.5.1) and (4.5.2) the verb *oįlam* is used specifically when a person brings something from his own home or village or town. Whereas, when he bring something from school/college/office or a village/town other than his own the verb *wanlam* is used. These two verbs also cannot be used interchangeably.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bring</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oįlam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

194. *ŋa* *oįlam* sɔʔpʰnat daʔ ćʰnɔŋ
1SG bring jackfruit ABL village
‘I brought jackfruit from village’.

195. *ŋa* *wanlam* kwei daʔ ćʰnɔŋ
1SG bring jackfruit ABL village
‘I brought bettle nut from village’.

196. *ŋa* *wanlam* sɔʔ daʔ delhi
1SG bring fruit ABL delhi
‘I brought fruit from Delhi’.

197. *ŋa* *oįlam* sɔʔ daʔ delhi
1SG bring fruit ABL delhi
‘I brought fruit from Delhi’.

4.5.4 Verbs *sa* ‘eat’ and *bam* ‘eat’

The word *sa* indicates plural and *bam* indicates singular. The examples below show that ‘rice’, ‘jackfruit’ is plural in number so the word *sa* is used. Whereas, ‘mango’,
‘snack’ etc can be eaten in number therefore, the word **bam** is used. The verb **sa** and **bam** cannot be used interchangeably.

![Diagram](image.png)

198. **pʰi-n** **sa** ɬa
    2PL-FUT eat rice
    ‘You will have food?’

199. ***pʰi-n** **bam** ɬa
    2PL-FUT eat rice
    ‘You will have food?’

200. **ci** **naŋ** **sa** sɔʔpʰnat
    1PL PROG eat jackfruit
    ‘We are eating jackfruit’

201. ***ci** **naŋ** **bam** sɔʔpʰnat
    2PL PROG eat jackfruit
    ‘We are eating jackfruit’

202. ɬa **bam** sɔʔpi
    1SG eat mango
    ‘I eat mango’

203. ***ɬa** **sa** sɔʔpi
    1s eat mango
    ‘I eat mango’.
4.6 Conclusions

From the above analyses we observe the following:

(i) In War Dewsawlia, **present tense** and **past tense** are not overtly marked. However, similar to Standard Khasi (Lyngdoh 2011), War Dewsawlia also exhibits two **future tense** markers: -n for immediate future and -n sa? for remote future.

(ii) There are three **aspectual** markers in War Dewsawlia naj for progressive or imperfective and la? for perfective, nun and chait for habitual aspect. Repetition of la? after the verb phrase or post-sententially is allowed in War Dewsawlia. However, this repetition is optional since the co-occurrence of la?1 and la?2 brings the meaning of emphasis upon the completion of the action.

(iii) The indicative **mood** is unmarked in War Dewsawlia, imperative is marked by ma and subjunctive is marked by da. Modality can also be expressed by the particle la? and hap and also by the auxiliary dei. la? indicates permission, possibility and ability whereas, dei and hap indicates necessity.

(iv) War Dewsawlia exhibits subject verb agreement. The verb shows

204. $p^h$-i-n **bam** jɔŋbam
    2-FUT **eat** **snack**
    ‘You will have snack’

205. *$p^h$-i-n **sa** jɔŋbam
    2-FUT **eat** **snack**
    ‘You will have snack’
agreement in *person, number* and *gender*. Determiners agree with their head noun in terms of number and gender. Adjectives also agree with their head noun in terms of PNG (*person, number and gender*).

(v) In War Dewsawlia there are sets of verbs that carry sameness of meaning but are represented by different morphemes. These are used differently for different context. Moreover, one cannot replace the other since in the context where they are not allowed to occur, they becomes meaningless.