CHAPTER 3
Syntactic Characteristics of Nouns in War Dewaswlia

Syntactic characteristics define a grammar of any language. Aspects of any language that contribute to the structure of the units of a sentence are subject to a syntactic study of that language. Therefore, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to analyze and describe in detail, some of the syntactic characteristics of War Dewaswlia. The major focus in this chapter will be on the case system, case markers, and the phonological changes of case markers when they are linked or associated with the different nominal and pronominal forms that occur after them.

3.1. Case System

Like the standard Khasi, War Dewaswlia is a nominative-accusative type of variety. There are eight case-forms in War Dewaswlia. Nominative case is morphologically unmarked. The list of case markers in War Dewaswlia is given in table 1 below:

3.1.1. List of Case Markers in War Dewaswlia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Case markers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>ja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>ha?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental (+animate)</td>
<td>da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental (-animate)</td>
<td>cʰi, and da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>jɔŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ablative</td>
<td>da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comitative</td>
<td>bɔd.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-1: Lexical Case markers in War Dewaswlia
In standard Khasi, cases are marked by prepositions. Though the same can be assumed for case marking in War Dewsawlia, however, the analyses of the syntactic relation between these case markers and the nouns seem to show a great deal of phonological change in their pronunciations when they are juxtaposed with the different types of nouns following them. This suggests that case markers may be seen as bound morphemes that are found to attach morphologically to the different types of nouns. The change is a syntactic process conditioned by the gender distinction of the nouns following them.

This phonological change is attested in at least *accusative, dative, instrumental,* and *ablative.* These case markers are derived by morphophonemic rule of (i) **Fusion** and (ii) **Glottal stop insertion** and (iii) **Deletion** as shown below.

The other case markers like *locative, genitive, comitative* can be claimed to be purely prepositions preceding nouns and noun phrases.

### 3.1.2. Nominative Case

As mentioned above in (3.1), *nominative case* in Dewsawlia is not overtly marked. Sentences (58) – (63) are illustrative of the unmarked nominative case marker.

58. u na?rit u kra?
   3SGM boy 3SGM laugh
   ‘The boy laughs’

59. u ban u lon ju ben
   3SGM ban 3SGM beat ACC M ben
   ‘Ban beats Ben’
3.1.3. Accusative Case

In War Dewsawlia, *accusative case* is marked by *ja*. This preposition changes its underlying morphological structure once it is phonologically linked to nouns or noun phrases carrying distinct gender markers.

Two morphemes are merged together as a result one of the vowels i.e. the preceding vowel gets deleted where the accusative marker *ja* when followed by a feminine gender *ka* becomes *ja* or *ja* *ka* and the accusative marker *ja* when followed by the masculine gender *u* becomes *ju* respectively.

When the accusative marker *ja* is followed by the feminine gender marker *ka* the occurrence of the feminine marker *ka* in the sentence is optional (the bracket () in the following sentences indicate optional) as shown in sentence (64) and (65) below.

The morphophonemic rule involve in accusative case markers is given below:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Morphology</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60. u ban u sa ja</td>
<td>3SGM ban 3SGM eat rice</td>
<td>‘Ban eats rice.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. ja di? en kam</td>
<td>1SG go AUX work</td>
<td>‘I go for a work.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. ka na?luŋ ka kyaŋ</td>
<td>3SGF baby 3SGF cry</td>
<td>‘The baby cries.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. u pencha jap ja masei</td>
<td>3SGM kill ACC cow</td>
<td>‘He kills the cow.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fusion or Coalescence

ja (underlying accusative case marker) + ka (feminine gender marker) $\rightarrow$ ja or ja ka

ja (underlying accusative case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) $\rightarrow$ ju

The following sentences are evident of these phonological changes (fusion or coalescence) that the accusative case marker undergoes:

64. u ban u kenjat ja (ka) bol
   3SGM ban 3SGM kick ACC 3SGF ball
   Ban kicks the ball.’

65. u jon u sian ja (ka) meri
   3SGM john 3SGM love ACC 3SGF mary
   ‘John loves Mary.’

66. ka meri ka sian ju jon
   3SGF mary 3SGF love ACC M john
   ‘Mary loves John.’

67. u ban u løn ju ben
   3SGM ban 3SGM beat ACC M ben
   ‘Ban beats Ben.’

There is an insertion of a glottal stop ñ when the accusative marker ja is followed by the first and second person. The morphophonemic rule involve here is given below:-

Glottal Stop Insertion

ja (underlying accusative case marker) + ña (first person singular) $\rightarrow$ ja? ña

ja (underlying accusative case marker) + ci (first person plural) $\rightarrow$ ja? ci

ja (underlying accusative case marker) + pñei (second person) $\rightarrow$ ja? pñei
3.1.4. Dative Case

In War Dewsawlia dative case is marked by ha. Here also the same phonological process is operating as in (3.1.3).

**Fusion or Coalescence**

ha (underlying accusative case marker) + ka (feminine gender marker) → ha or ha ka

ha (underlying accusative case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) → hu.

72. 마다 ㅐpʰaʔ ㅐcʰi thʰi ㅐha ㅐmɛɾi
1SG  send  letter  DAT F  mary
‘I send a letter to Mary.’

73. ʰka едак ʰpʰaʔ أسب cʰitʰi ʰhu ʰmɔn
3SGF mary 3SGF send letter DAT M john
‘Mary sends a letter to John.’
3.1.5. Instrumental Case

Instrumental case is marked by da both for animate and inanimate and c^{bi} for inanimate. The case marker c^{bi} can be used interchangeably with du/dau or da but only with the inanimate noun. It cannot be used for animate noun. The same phonological process is also operating here for instrumental case markers as in (3.1.3).

Fusion or Coalescence

da (underlying accusative case marker) + ka (feminine gender marker) → da or da ka
da (underlying accusative case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) → du or dau

74. u ai ja ka kət ha? ɲa/ɲi
   3SGM give ACC F 3SGF book DAT 1SG/1SPL
   ‘He gives the book to me/us.’

75. u ai ju c^{abi} ha? p^{ei}
   3SGM give ACC M key DAT 2
   ‘He gives you the key.’

76. ci ut jʰur c^{bi}/da waite^{b}akʰu
   2P cut vegetable INS knife
   ‘We cut the vegetable with a knife’.

77. u ɲon u pencap ja syiar c^{bi}/da waite^{b}akʰu
   3SGM john 3SGM kill ACC hen INS knife
   ‘John used the knife to kill the hen.’

78. u pencap ju ju da/c^{bi} waitlam
   3SGM kill ACC him INS sword
   ‘He killed him with a sword.’
As mentioned above that the case marker \( \mathcal{c}^h/\text{da} \) can be used interchangeably with \( \mathcal{d}^a \) or \( \mathcal{d}^u/\text{dau} \) for inanimate as shown in the above sentences. Whereas, \( \mathcal{c}^h/\text{di} \) cannot be used interchangeably with the animate things as in sentence (83) and (85) below. Asterisk (*) indicates ungrammatical.

80. \( u \) \( \mathcal{z}^\circ \) \( \mu \) plei \( ja? \) \( \mathcal{z}^\circ k^h a\) \( \mathcal{c}^h/\text{dau} \) \( c^h/\text{abi} \)  
   3SGM  john  3SGM  open  ACC  door  INS  key  
   ‘John opened the door with a key.’

81. \( u \) \( \mathcal{z}^\circ \) \( \mu \) plei \( \text{du}/\mathcal{c}^h/ \) \( c^h/\text{abi} \) \( ja? \) \( \mathcal{z}^\circ k^h a\)  
   3SGM  john  3SM  open  INS  key  ACC  door  
   ‘John used the key to open the door.’

82. \( ka \) \( c^h/\text{na} \) \( \text{da} \) ktei \( laj^\omega \)  
   3SGF  made  INS  hand  GEN  
   ‘She made with her own hand’

83. \(*ka\) \( c^h/\text{na} \) \( c^h/\text{di} \) ktei \( laj^\omega \)  
   3SGF  made  INS  hand  GEN  
   ‘She made with her own hand’

84. \( \eta \) \( \text{lai} \) \( \mathcal{c}^\omega j^i \) \( \text{da} \) \( k^h/\text{mat} \) \( laj^\omega \)  
   1SG  PRF  see  INS  eye  own  
   ‘I have seen with my own eyes.’
3.1.6. Ablative Case

*Ablative case* is marked by *da*. There is deletion of a feminine gender marker *ka* and is being replaced by a glottal stop *ʔ* when the ablative marker *da* is followed by a feminine gender marker and there is fusion of vowels when it is followed by a masculine gender.

The morphophonemic rules involving here are given below:-

(a) Deletion

\[ da + ka \rightarrow da? \]

(b) Fusion

\[ da + u \rightarrow dau \]

85. *ŋa lαʔ cɔʔi chì kʰmat laʔηρ*

1SG PRF see INS eye own

‘I have seen with my own eyes.’

86. ŋa cıləm kweï daʔ dewsawlia

1SG bring bettle nut ABL F dewsawlia

‘I brought bettle nut from Dewsawlia’

87. ci cɔʔ dud daʔ masei

2PL get milk ABL F cow

‘We get milk from the cow’.

88. u wan daʔ ciew ,nin

3SGM come ABL F market yesterday

‘He came from the market yesterday.’
3.1.7. Locative Case

**Locative case** is marked by the preposition *ha?.* The preposition *ha?* can also be combined with the bound morpheme *po?* to indicates interior location, *lur* to indicates up or exterior location and *dem* to indicates posterior location. This preposition can also be combined with the free morpheme *kʰmat* to indicate front location, and *jen* to indicate proximate location.

91. ṃa en *ha?* cuŋ
1SG AUX LOC house
‘I am at home’

92. ka mijau ka en *ha?-po?* meŋ
3SGF cat 3SGF AUX LOC-down table
‘The cat is under the table’

93. ka keslint ka en *ha?-lur* meŋ
3SGF book 3SGF AUX LOC-up table
‘The book is on the table’

94. ṃa en *ha?-lur* dɔm
1SG AUX LOC-up hill
‘I am on the top of the hill’
3.1.8. Genitive/Possessive Case

Genitive case is marked by the preposition ןוֹן. The occurrence of Possessive/Genitive marker is optional.

95. ַNano en ha?DEMÎn Naomi phei
1SG AUX LOC-behind GEN 2
‘I am behind you.’

96. ka kali ka en ha?khit mat cuņ
3SGF car 3SGF AUX LOC-front house
‘The car is in front of the house.’

97. ka mijau ka en ha?qen di
3SGF cat 3SGM AUX LOC tree
‘The cat is beside the tree.’

3.1.8. Genitive/Possessive Case

Genitive case is marked by the preposition ןוֹן. The occurrence of Possessive/Genitive marker is optional.

98. ka kjet (ןוֹן) phei
3SGF vehicle GEN 2
‘Your foot.’

99. ka cuņ (ןוֹן) ci
3SGF house GEN 2PL
‘Our house.’

100. kanei ka para (ןוֹן) ַNano
DEM 3SGF sister GEN 1SG
‘This is my wife.’

101. u khit (ןוֹן) phei
3SGM son GEN 2
‘Your son.’
3.1.9. Comitative Case

Comitative case is marked by the conjunction bod.

103. u jon bod ar meri ki jale?kai lum
    3SGM john COM two mary 3PL play together
    ‘John and Mary are playing together.’

104. meri bod lili ki ja?dei cbi kenbew kenmen
    mary COM lily 3PL Aux one younger sister elder sister
    ‘Mary and lily is sister.’

105. u-n di? lum bod phei
    3SGM- FUT go together COM 2
    ‘He will go with you.’

To sum up we can say that there are different case markers for feminine and masculine for accusative case, dative, instrumental and ablative in War Dewsawlia. From the analyses above we can see that the accusative case is marked by ja for feminine and ju for masculine, dative case is marked by ha for feminine and hu for masculine, instrumental case is marked by du/dau for masculine and da for feminine and ablative case is marked by da? for feminine and dau for masculine. The table 2 below shows the derived case markers with gender distinction.
Case markers showing gender distinction in War Dewsawlia.

3.1.10 Conclusions

From the analyses given above, War Dewsawlia exhibits case forms of two types:

1. Where case markers are morphologically attached to the nouns with distinct gender markers,
2. Where case markers are seen as prepositional heads occurring before the noun phrase.

The first form of case marking processes is conditioned by certain phonological processes. When we look into the first four case marking system which include *accusative, dative, instrumental,* and *ablative* we can see that all case markers end up in a vowel. For example: *Accusative case* marker is *ja,* *dative case* marker is *ha,* *instrumental case* marker is *da,* and *ablative case* marker is *da.* On the other hand, all nouns are marked for grammatical gender. Masculine marker is *u* and feminine marker is *ka.*

Therefore, we can assume the following morphophonemic rule to take place when case markers and gender markers are juxtaposed together.

1. **Fusion or coalescence**

(a) **Accusative case markers**

*ja* (underlying accusative case marker) + *ka* (feminine gender marker) $\rightarrow$ *ja* or *ja ka*
ja (underlying accusative case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) → ju

(b) Dative case markers
ha(underlying dative case marker) + ka (feminine gender marker) → ha or ha ka
ha(underlying dative case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) → hu

(c) Instrumental case markers
da (underlying instrumental case marker) + ka (feminine gender marker) → da or da ka
da (underlying instrumental case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) → du or dau

(d) Ablative case markers
da (underlying ablative case marker) + u (masculine gender marker) → dau

2. Glottal stop insertion

Accusative case markers
ja (underlying accusative case marker) + ηa (first person singular) → ja? ηa
ja (underlying accusative case marker) + ci (first person plural) → ja? ci
ja (underlying accusative case marker) + p^bei (second person) → ja? p^bei

3. Deletion

Ablative case markers
da (underlying ablative case marker) + ka (feminine gender marker) → da?