Syntax

5.1. Word order:

It refers to the linear sequence in which words occur in a sentence. The normal word order of the Hawar dialect of Dimasa is – Subject(S), Object (O) and Verb (V). For example:-

/aŋ laiʃi brai – kʰa/  
S O V  
i book buy – Past  
‘I bought (a) book’.

/bo aŋ – kʰe nu – kʰa/  
he i – Acc. see – Past  
‘He saw me’.

/aŋ nuŋ – kʰe do – ma/  
i you – Acc. beat – Fut.  
‘I will beat you’.

Apart from the SOV order, the Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa also to some extent exhibits the flexibility of word order. For example:-

/tʰaizu bo ram – ne ri – ba/ (O S V)  
mango he ram – Dat. give – Past  
‘He gave the mango to Ram’.

Moreover, some sentences can occur without the subject in this dialect. For example, the subject is optional in imperative sentences like –

/laiʃi pʰori/  
book read  
‘(you) read book’.
/(məkəm zì)/
rice eat
‘(you) eat rice’.

Also, a verb can make an imperative sentence without using the subject and object. For example:

/(nəi)/
‘look at’.

/(həŋ)/
‘go’.

/(baiza)/
‘get up’.

5.2. Constituents:

5.2.1. Noun Phrase:
The noun phrase (NP) consists of the head noun which may be followed or preceded by one or more modifiers. The modifier elements may be an adjective, a case marker, a numeral, a quantifier etc. These elements modify the head noun in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa. For example:

/(jubun hamba)/ ‘good man’
N + Adj.
man good
or
/hamba jubun/ ‘good man’
Adj. + N
good man
/no  gede/  ‘a big house’
N + Adj.
house  big
or
/gede  no/  ‘a big house’
Adj. + N
big  house

/ʃubuŋ  gini/  ‘two men’
N + Numeral
man  two
or
/gini  ʃubuŋ/  ‘two men’
Numeral + N
two  man

/alu  maʃi/  ‘one cat’
N + Numeral
cat  one
or
/maʃi  alu/  ‘one cat’
Numeral + N
one  cat

/ʃem  giziʃa/  ‘little salt’
N + Quantifier
salt  little
or
/giziʃaʃem/ ‘little salt’

Quantifier + N

little salt

When the head noun is modified by adjective and a case marker, the order is, the noun is preceded by adjective and the case marker follows the noun. For example:-

/hambaʃubun-ne/ ‘to the good man’

Adj. + N + Dat.

good man

/geدةno-ha/ ‘in the big house’

Adj. + N + Loc.

big house

In Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa, when the noun is modified by a demonstrative, and an adjective, the order is adjective may follow or precede the noun but demonstrative always precedes the head noun. For example:-

/ebo nोgede/ ‘this is (a) big house’

Dem. + N + Adj.

this house big

/houbo gede no/ ‘that is (a) big house’

Dem. + Adj. + N

that big house

The Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa does not allow double plural marker when the numeral higher than one is present in the noun phrase. For example:-

/alu gup’humabri/ ‘four white cats’

N + Adj. + Numeral

cat white four
/gini  guzu  jubaŋ/  ‘two tall man’
Numeral + Adj. + N
two  tall  man

5.2.2. Verb Phrase:

In Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa, the verb phrase (VP) may consists of a lexical verb or a ‘be’ verb which is obligatorily present in verb phrase and optional elements like NP, adverb etc. are found in the verb phrase which may follow or precede the verb. Moreover, there are some simple sentences in which the verb phrase consists of only verb. For example:--

/zi/  ‘eat’
V

/tʰaŋ/  ‘go’
V

/kʰam/  ‘sit down’
V

/bo  zi  -kʰa/  ‘he ate’
NP  V -Past
he  eat
or
/zi  -kʰa  bo/  ‘he ate’
V -Past. NP
eat  he

/ram  pʰai-naŋ/  ‘Ram will (certainly) come’
NP  V -Fut.
Ram  come
or
/pʰai-naŋ ram/ ‘Ram will (certainly) come’
V -Fut. NP
come Ram

doha pʰai/ ‘come now’
Adv. V
now come
or
/pʰai doha/ ‘come now’
V Adv.
come now

When the verb phrase consists of two Noun Phrases (NPs), i.e., NP₁ of direct object and NP₂ of indirect object, the two NPs can interchange their place of occurrence, but generally, the two NPs precedes the main verb. For example:

/ram ḟam –ne laifī ri –kʰa/
ram sham –Dat. book give –Past
‘Ram gave (a) book to Sham’.

/ram laifī ḟam –ne ri –kʰa/
ram book sham –Dat. give –Past
‘Ram gave (a) book to Sham’.

/aŋ bo –ne moli ri –ba miyaha/
I he –Dat. medicine give –Past yesterday
‘I gave (a) medicine to him yesterday’.

/aŋ moli bo –ne ri –ba miyaha/
I medicine he –Dat. give –Past yesterday
‘I gave (a) medicine to him yesterday’.
5.2.3. Adjective Phrase:

The adjective phrase consists of at least one adjective and may or may not be accompanied by an intensifier. The intensifier precedes the adjective. The adjective can either precede or follow the noun. For example:-

/hamʃínunŋ məzanba no/
Inten. beautiful house
‘(a) very beautiful house’.

/məzanba no/
beautiful house
‘(a) beautiful house’.

/no məzanba/
house beautiful
‘(a) beautiful house’.

/hamba ʃubuŋ/
good man
‘(a) good man’.

/ʃubuŋ hambi/
man good
‘(a) good man’.

5.2.4. Adverb Phrase:

The adverb modifies the verb in adverb phrase. The adverb can either precede or follow the verb. For example:-

/doha pʰai –nəŋ/
now come –Fut.
‘Will (certainly) come now’.
5.3. Clause:

Clause may be divided into two types in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa. They are the main or principal clause which occurs independently on its own in a sentence and the subordinate clause which is always dependent on the main clause.

5.3.1. Main Clause:

The main clauses are basically simple sentences. For example:-

/aŋ  mitʰi –du/
I  know –Pre.
‘I know’.

/aŋ  pʰai –nəŋ/
I  come –Fut.
‘I will (certainly) come’.

/bo  zi –kʰa/
he  eat –Past
‘He ate’.
5.3.2. **Subordinate Clause:**

The subordinate clause is marked by either conjunction or particle and precedes the main clause. For example:-

/zodi bo zi –du tʰikʰade aŋ zi–naŋ/
Sub. Clause Main Clause
‘If he eats, I will eat’.

/bo pʰai –kʰade aŋ tʰaŋ –ma/
he come Cond. I go –Fut.
Sub. Clause Main Clause
‘If he comes, I shall go’.

5.3.3. **Coordinative Clause:**

The function of coordination is to join words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Coordinative clause in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa is expressed by using conjunctive particles. Due to a close contact with the Bengali speaking people, the Hawar dialect of Dimasa is gradually substituting the original Dimasa conjunctive/disjunctive particles by Bengali particles /ar/ ‘and’, /kint̪u/ ‘but’, /ba/ ‘or’. For example:-

(i) /odehe/ ‘and’
/aŋ odehe bo tʰaŋ –ma/
I and he go –Fut.
‘I and he will go’.

/aŋ no –ha tʰaŋ –kʰa odehe məkʰam zi –kʰa/
I home –Loc. go –Past and rice eat –Past
‘I went home and ate rice’.
/ramʃam odehe mona tʰaŋ –kʰa/
ram sham and mona go –Past
‘Ram, Sham and Mona went’.

However, the Indo-Aryan Bengali word /ar/ is incorporated in Hawar dialect of Dimasa instead of /odehe/ and almost all the Hawar dialect speakers are using /ar/. For example:-

/binoi laiʃi ruŋ –bi ar ʃubuŋ bo ham –bi/
binoi book educate –Pred. and person also good –Pred.
‘Binoi is educated and also (a) good person’.

(ii) /tʰikʰabo/ ‘but’

/alu guʃum tʰikʰabo mɔzaŋbi/
cat black but beautiful
‘The cat is black but beautiful’.

The inclusion of Indo-Aryan word /kin̥u/ meaning ‘but’ is found in the Hawar dialect. For example:-

/aŋ bo –kʰe zuɾu –ba ʃin̥u bo pʰai –ya –kʰa/
I he –Acc. call –Past but he come–Neg.–Past
‘I called him but he did not come’.

(iii) /niyakʰade/ ‘or’

It functions as disjunctive construction which is formed by placing /niyakʰade/ in between two propositions expressing the idea that only one of the possibilities can be realized. For example:-

/aŋ niyakʰade bo pʰai –nɔŋ/
I or he come –Fut.
‘I or he will (certainly) come’.

/bo niyakʰade nʊŋ/
he or you
‘he or you’.
However, /ba/ a borrowed Indo-Aryan word is used by the Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa. For example:-

/aŋ ba bo/
I or he
‘I or he’.

/ram ba jám ḫopʰai –naŋ/
ram or sham arrive –Fut.
‘Ram or Sham will (certainly) come’.

5.3.4. Conditional Clause:

Conditional clause in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa is introduced by using double conditional particle –one is /zodi/ a borrowed Indo-Ayan word which occurs in the initial position of the subordinate clause and the other forms like /-kʰade/, /-kʰahi/, /-kʰaha/ are suffixed to the verb root of the subordinate clause implying same meaning ‘if’. The conditional particle like /-tʰikʰade/, /-tʰikʰaha/, /-tʰikʰahi/ are also suffixed to the verb root of the subordinate clause when aspect and tense marker are used and it comes after the aspect, tense marker. For example:-

/zodi nuŋ tʰaŋ –kʰade ram pʰai –naŋ/
/zodi nuŋ tʰaŋ –kʰahi ram pʰai –naŋ/
/zodi nuŋ tʰaŋ –kʰaha ram pʰai –naŋ/
if (Cond.) you go –if(Cond.) ram come –Fut.
‘If you go, Ram will (certainly) come’.

/zodi hadi ha –du –tʰikʰade anŋ tʰaŋ –naŋ –niya/
/zodi hadi ha –du –tʰikʰaha anŋ tʰaŋ –naŋ –niya/
/zodi hadi ha –du –tʰikʰahi anŋ tʰaŋ –naŋ –niya/
if(Cond.) rain fall–Pre. if(Cond.) I go –Fut. –Neg.
‘If it rains, I will (certainly) not go’.

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/zodi  kʰuʃi  daŋ–blai–kʰa–tʰikʰade  aŋ  tʰaŋ–naŋ/  
if(Cond.) work  do  –Perf.–Past  –if(Cond.)  I  go  –Fut.
‘If the work has done/had done, I will (certainly) go’.

/zodi  nuŋ  tʰaŋ–fai–du–tʰikʰade  aŋ  pʰai–naŋ/  
if(Cond.)  you  go  –Prog.–Pre.–if(Cond.)  I  come  –Fut.
‘If you are going, I will (certainly) come’.

5.3.5. Complement Clause:

The complement clause in Hawar dialect of Dimasa is not introduced by any native complementizer as there is no overt complementizer in standard Dimasa but the complement clause is introduced by complementizer /ze/ meaning ‘that’ which is borrowed by Hawar dialect of Dimasa from Indo-Aryan language Bengali. The complement clause always follows the main clause in Hawar dialect. For example:-

/aŋ  miʰi–du  ze  bo ʃubuŋ  hamya/  
I  know  –Pre. Comp.  he  man  bad
‘I know that he is a bad person’.

/ram  aŋ–kʰe  tʰi–kʰa  ze  bo  pʰai–kʰa/  
ram  I  –Acc.  say  –Past  Comp.  he  come–Past
‘Ram said to me that he came’.

/ebo  grao  gibi–nuŋ  ze  bo  tʰi–kʰa/  
this  word  true  –Emph.  Comp.  he  die  –Past
‘This is true that he died’.

5.3.6. Relative Clause:

In Hawar dialect of Dimasa, the relative clause is expressed by the relative pronoun /ze/ which is a borrowed Indo-Aryan word. In standard Dimasa, the relative clause is introduced by the participle /-yaba/ and the relative clause can either precedes or follow the
head noun. But in Hawar dialect, the relative pronoun /ze/ always precedes the head noun. For example:-

Standard Dimasa: - /miyaha pʰai – yaba məʃainzu boni bubí/
   yesterday come–Partl. girl his sister

Standard Dimasa: - /miyaha məʃainzu pʰai – yaba boni bubí/
   yesterday girl come–Partl. his sister

Hawar dialect: - /miyaha ze məsainzu pʰai – ba bo boni bubí/
   yesterday RP. girl come–Past she his sister
   ‘The girl who came yesterday is his sister’.

5.4. Sentences:

The sentences in the Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa can be classified into three types, such as (i) Simple, (ii) Complex and (iii) Compound.

(i) Simple Sentence:

A simple sentence consists of only one clause, i.e., the main clause, it has at least a subject and a predicate except in imperative sentences in which the use of subject is optional. For example:-

/aŋ məkʰam zi – du/
  I rice eat–Pre.
  ‘I eat rice’.

/həŋ no – ha/
  go house – Loc.
  ‘Go at home’.
/kʰam/
sit
‘Sit down’.

/bo pʰai –fai –du/
he come –Prog. –Pre.
‘He is coming’.

(ii) Complex Sentences:
A complex sentence in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa consists of one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses. The subordinate clause in the complex sentence is introduced by the Bengali subordinator (particle) which usually precedes the main clause. For example:

/zodi bo tʰaŋ –kʰade aŋ pʰai –naŋ/
if(Cond.) he go –if(Cond.) I come–Fut.
‘If he goes, I will (certainly) come’.

/zodi hadnai ha –du –tʰikʰade aŋ tʰaŋ–naŋ –niya/
if(Cond.) rain fall–Pre.–if(Cond.) I go –Fut.–Neg.
‘If it rains, I will (certainly) not go’.

/aŋ mitʰi –du ze bo jubaŋ hamya/
I know–Pre. RP. he person bad
‘I know that he is bad person’.

(iii) Compound Sentence:
Compound sentence consists of two or more main clauses and it is conjoined coordinately either by the conjunctive participle /odehe/ ‘and’ or by the disjunctive co-ordinator /ba/ or /niyakʰade/ having the same meaning ‘or’. For example:
5.5. Negation:

The Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa has two ways of expressing negation, one is by negative particles /nɪya/, /-ya/, /da-/ and the other is by negative copula /giri/. The negative particle /-ya/ is mostly used to negate affirmative sentences and it occurs in the post-verbal positions and /nɪya/ is used in equative sentences and nominal predicates. The negative marker /da-/ is used to negate imperative sentences and occurs in the pre-verbal position.

For example:-

/bo məʃainzu nɪya/
she girl Neg.
‘She is not (a) girl’.
/alu gu⁹º niya/
cat white Neg.
‘The cat is not white’.

/ŋ ha⁶⁴ ai tʰaŋ –ya –kʰa/
I market go –Neg.–Past
‘I did not go to market’.

/da– zi/
Neg.– eat
‘Do not eat’.

5.5.1. Negative Copula:
The negative copula /giri/ is used in existential constructions, locative predicates and possessive sentences. For example:
/lama -ha jubuŋ giri/
road -Loc. man Neg. Cop.
‘There is no man on the road’.

/bo no –ha giri/
he home –Loc. Neg. Cop.
‘He is not at home’.

/ani ran giri/
my money Neg. Cop.
‘I do not have money’.

5.6. Interrogatives:
Interrogatives in the Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa may be discussed into – (i) Yes/ No question, (ii) Wh-question (iii) Alternative question and (iv) Tag question.
(i) Yes/No questions:

The Yes/No question is indicated by (i) adding question marker /tʰi/ to the verb, noun, adjective and (ii) by rising intonation.

While interrogative sentences are expressed by rising intonation, question marker /-tʰi/ is optionally used.

However, when negative statement is converted into interrogative sentences, the question marker /-tʰi/ is not used. For example:-

/emakʰam don -tʰi ?/

rice exist Int.
‘Is there rice?’

/emakʰam don ?/(rising intonation)

rice exist
‘Is there rice?’

/nun tʰan –ma –tʰi ?/

you go –Fut. –Int.
‘Will you go?’

/nun tʰan –ma ?/(rising intonation)

you go –Fut.
‘Will you go?’

/nun tʰan –ya ?/(rising intonation)

you go –Neg.
‘Do not go?’

/ebo na –tʰi ?/

this fish –Int.
‘Is this (a) fish?’
Is he good man?

(ii) Wh-questions:

Wh-questions in Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa are formed by using appropriate interrogative pronouns. For example:

/nini bumu ŋnadı ?/
your name Wh.
‘What is your name?’

/nuŋ ŋere ?/
you Wh.
‘Who are you?’

/nuŋ bɔkʰali pʰai –ma ?/
you Wh. come –Fut.
‘When will you come?’

/nuŋ braha tʰan –ma ?/
you Wh. go –Fut.
‘Where will you go?’

/nuŋ bedehe kʰlaí –kʰa ?/
you Wh. do –Past
‘How did you do?’
(iii) **Alternative questions:**

It consists of two alternatives only and the question particle /na/ which is a borrowed Indo-Aryan word is placed after the first alternative. It is accompanied by a rising intonation. For example:-

/gibi na moʃol/ (rising intonation)
true Q. Partl. false
‘is it true or false?’

/ebo hambi na ham -ya/ (rising intonation)
this good Q. Partl. good-Neg.
‘is this good or bad?’

(iv) **Tag questions:**

In Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa, tag questions are formed by the combination of verbal roots and negative particle /-ya/ when the negative tag is used with affirmative statement or the combination of verbal roots and tense marker when affirmative tag is used with negative statement. The verbal root of the tag questions are the same as that of the sentence on which the tags are formed. It is always accompanied by a rising intonation and the particle /k[h]unu/ which is a nativised sound borrowed from Sylheti. For example:-

/bo zu luŋ –du luŋ –ya k[h]unu/
he liquor drink –Pre. drink –Neg. Part.
‘He drinks liquor, does not he?’

/nuŋ tʰaŋ –ya tʰaŋ –du k[h]unu/
you go –Neg. go –Pre. Part.
‘You do not go, do you?’
/ram pʰai –nəŋ pʰai –ya kʰunu/
ram come –Fut. come –Neg. Part.
‘Ram will (certainly) come, will not he?’

/bo kʰuʃi daŋ –ya daŋ –du kʰunu/
hé work do –Neg. do –Pre. Part.
‘He does not work, does he?’

5.7. Passivization:

In the Barak Valley dialect of Dimasa, the active sentences are made passive by suffixing the instrumental case marker /-zaŋ/ to the subject and /-zao/ to the verb. However, it must be noted that Dimasa does not use passive sentences in normal conversation. For example:-

Active: /aŋ miʃi do²ai –kʰa/
I tiger kill –Past
‘I killed the tiger’.

I –by tiger kill –PM. –Past
‘The tiger is killed by me’.

Active: /alu məkʰam zi –kʰa/
cat rice eat –Past
‘The cat ate the rice’.

cat –by rice eat –PM. –Past
‘The rice is eaten by the cat’.
Active: /əŋ bo –kʰe do –ma/
   I he –Acc. beat –Fut.
   ‘I shall beat him’.

Passive: /əŋ−zaŋ bo do –zao –ma/
   I –by he beat –PM.–Fut.
   ‘He will be beaten by me’.