

Abstract

The study examines the Finite clause Structure in Biate; Kuki Chin Language spoken in the Dima Hasao District of Assam, India. This thesis initially describes the finite clause structure and then we try to analyse these structures within the Minimalist Framework. Biate follows a canonical word order SOV. It is a future vs non-future tense language. Biate syntactically follows Nominative-Accusative case system; we can also see the phenomenon of split ergativity. The finite verb in Biate agrees with subject in person and number. However, unlike other Kuki Chin languages we find no evidence of object agreement. The first and third person pronominal objects are clitic; which is affixed to the verb. The second person pronoun object *naŋ* is in free form. The agreement markers in the language vary according to its sentence types. The agreement markers are prefix in the positive sentences and it is suffix in the negative sentences. We can also see in Biate that the agreement markers are different in future and non-future sentence constructions. In the derivation of the Biate sentences we followed the Agr less model. We assumed that in Biate ergative case is not grammatical rather it is pragmatically oriented. So, we assume that ergative as an inherent case and this case is assigned in situ by *v* in the Spec of *vP*. When the subject takes the nominative case it moves for Spec of *vP* to Spec of *T*. The internal arguments are assigned *V* in the derivation. The direct object in the derivation moves to Spec of *VP*; as mention earlier pronominal objects are clitic and verbs in Biate are highly affixal so they move with the verb to *T*. Spec of *VP* remains empty as the object is clitic; this empty category is assumed as *pro* which inherits case and theta roles and they co-index with the clitic. To maintain the word order of di-transitive sentence construction in the language we have assumed that the indirect object originates in the spec of *vP2* which is placed below the *vP1*. So, our derivation indicates that the Spec of *vP1* is responsible for the external case and the indirect object gets its case and theta role in *vP2* from *v*.

Keywords: Split-Ergativity, Inherent Case, Agr Less Model, Clitic, Affixal.