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A Dimasa Grammar

Contents

Acknowledgements and history of the essay

Glosses

	see	
A		Agent
Abl	3.4.5.	Ablative : *-ni-praŋ*
Acc	3.4.2.	Accusative : *-ke*
Adj	2.3.	Adjective prefix : *gV-*
Apt	2.2.3.2.3.	Actual Present : *-du*
Ass	2.2.3.2.2.	Assertive : *-bi*
Aux		Auxiliary verb
Cl	5.2.	Classifier (with number)
Cnt	2.2.1.4.	Continuative : *-sai-*
Com	2.2.2.4.	Comitative-Reflexive : *-pa-*
D	3.3.	determinative, genitive : *-ni*
Dat	3.4.8.	Dative : *-ne, -tane*
Def	2.2.4.	Negative imperative : *da²-*
Dis	2.2.1.1.	Distal : *-ha-*
Dw	2.2.1.3.	from up down : *-klei-*
Ela	3.4.5.	Elative : *-ni-ha²*
Emp	2.2.3.2.11	Emphatic particle : *ti*
Exs	1.2.4.	Existence : *doŋ*
Fac	2.2.2.1.	Factitive : *-ri-*
Fut	2.2.3.2.5.	Definite Future : *-ma-*
Gro	2.3.2.1.	"growing" : *-laŋ-*
Hpt	2.2.3.2.4., 2.2.3.1.1.	Habitual Present : *-re*
Ins	3.4.6., 2.2.2.2.	Instrumental : *-žaŋ*
INTR		Intransitive (of a V which cannot have a O)
Ip	2.2.3.2.1.	Imperative (simple) : *-ø*
Ipp	2.2.3.2.2.	Polite imperative : *-saŋ*
Loc	3.4.4.	Locative : *-ha²*
Neg	1.4.	Negation : *-ja*
O		Object, Patient (of a transitive verb)
Opt	2.2.3.1.1.	Optative : *-ža-*
P		Predicate
p1		1st person plural
p2		2nd person plural
p3		2rd person plural
Pf	2.2.3.2.8.	Perfect : *-ka*
Pos	2.2.3.2.6.	Possible Future : *-naŋ*
PosVN	2.2.3.1.1.	Possible future Verbal Noun : *-ma-*
Pot	2.2.3.1.2.	Potential : *-pu-*
Prx	2.2.1.2.	Proximal : *-bu-*
Ps	2.2.3.2.7.	Past : *-ba*
Psv	2.2.2.2.	Passive : *-žao-*
Ref	2.2.2.5.	Reflexive : *-la-*
Reg	2.2.3.2.10	Regret : *-mu²*
Rt	1.6.2.	Topic marker, non-adversative : *de*
S		Subject
s1		1st person singular
s2		2nd person singular
s3		3rd person singular
Sc	2.2.3.2.9.3.	time limit "no more" : *si*
So	2.2.3.2.9.2.	time limit "more" : *ko*
Soc	2.2.2.3.	Sociative-Reciprocal : *-lai-*
TAM		Time, Aspect, Mode (a category of suffixes)
TR		Transitive (of a V which may have a O)
U		Unique argument (actant) of an intransitive V

Up	2.2.1.3.	'from above' : *-hon-*
V		Verb
VN		Verbal Noun (noun derived from a V root)
VNc	2.4.2.	Vebral Noun, action : *-ba-*
VNf	2.4.2, 2.2.3.2.5.	Verbal Noun, Future : *-ma-*
VNg	2.4.1.	Verbal Noun, agent : *-ja-*
VNgc	2.4.3.	Verbal Noun, agentive : *-ja-ba-*
VNp	2.4.5.	Verbal Noun, succession : *-hi*
Vs	1.6.3.	Topic marker, adversative : *la*

A sketch of Phonology

We will give first charts of phonemes, islated or in groups or clusters. Then we will give examples of minimal pairs for consonants, vowels, and tones. Last, we will examine the phonetics.

1. Charts of phonemes

1.1. isolated

Dimasa has 16 consonnants

p	t		k	
b	d		g	
m	n		ŋ	
		s		h
		ž	j	
w	l	r		

All consonants may be initials except *ŋ-.

with possible initial clusters ;
And 5 vowels and 2 diphtongs

i	e	a	o	u
ai				au

and two tones.
In this book,   the lower tone is left unmarked
the higher tone is marked ²

1.2. groups

Initial consonant clusters according to our lexicon are :

	-l	-r	-m	-n
b	bl-	br-		
d		dr-		
g	gl-	gr-		
p	pl-	pr-		pn-
t	tl-			
k	kl-	kr-	km-	kn-

following groups result from reduced prefixes :
rd-, rz-
sb-, sd-, sg-, sk-, sl-, sm-, sr-, st-
zr-

possible codas are :

	a	e	i	o	u	ai	ao
-ø	a	e	i	o	u	ai	ao
-m	am	em	im		um		
-n	an	en	in	on	un	ain	
-ŋ	aŋ	eŋ	iŋ	oŋ	uŋ	aiŋ	
-r	ar	er	ir	or	ur		
-b	ab	eb	ib	ob	ub		
-g	ag		ig				

groupings of consonnant (clusters) with vowels or diphtongs are :

	a	e	i	o	u	ai	ao
vowel	+	+		+			
b	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
bl	+						
bw					+		
br	+			+			
d	+	+	+	+		+	+
ž	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
g	+	+	+	+	+		+
gr	+	+	+				
gw						*+	
h	+	=	=	+	+		
j	+				+		+
k	+	*+	+	+	+	+	+
kn	+						
kr				+			+
l	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
m	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
n	+		+	+	+	+	+
p	+		+	+	+	+	+
pn	+				+		
r		+	+	+	+		
rž	+		+				
ri						+	
s	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
sb	+						
sl							+
sm						+	+
sr			+		+		
st		+				+	
t	+		+	+	+	+	
w	+					+	

NB : miao, pium, riao, rien (see 3.3.)

2. minimal pairs with examples

2.1. consonants & vowels : a grid

These examples are chosen, as far as possible, among monosyllabic words, which explains the higher number of verb roots. We did not use bisyllabic words the first vowel of which is the same as the second one, for reasons that will be describes in chapter 3.

	a	e	i	o	u	ai	au
b	ba²-	be²ma	bi²-	bo²	bu-	bai²	bao²
	bear V	spider	pray	s3	sharp	be broken	think
g	ga²ku	ger-ku-		go²-	gu-	gaiŋ²	gao-
	climb	belch V		free	give birth	track N	shoot
d	da²	de²	di	do²	du-	daiko	dao²
	Def	big	water	six	swell	district	bird
h	ha²	hem-		ho²	hu-	haiŋga	
	earth	walk		belly	rub	adult	
j	ja²	ja²-			juŋ		jao²
	foot	poke			insect		hand
k	ka-		ki²	ko-	ku-	kai²-	kao²-
	tie V		stool N	collect	dig	run away	pick up
l	la-	leb-	lim-	loŋ²tai	lu²-	lai	lao²
	take	soft	ill	stone	spin	leaf	long
m	madai		mi		mu²kaŋ	mai	mao-
	god		beast		face	paddy	move
n	na²	ne²-	niŋ²	no²	nu²-	nai-	
	fish	push	you	house	see	look at	
ŋ							
p			pi	poŋ-	pu²-	pai²-	paokoŋ
			shield	fat	white	come	shoulder
r	ra²-		ri²	ro²-	ru-	raiŋ²-	rao²-
	old		clothes	comb	boil V	dry	strong
s	sa	se²-	si-	soŋ²-	su²-	sai²-	sao²
	people	grasp V	wet	cook	beat V	sow V	body
t	ta	tem-	ti²	tok²-	tu-	tai²-	tao
	arum	hide	blood	hit	sleep	bear fruit	oil
w	wa					wai²	
	bamboo					fire	
ž	za-	ze²	zi	zo	zu	zai²	zao²-
	become	net	ten	speak	beer	eight	red

Such a grid, however incomplete, shows differences in initial consonants (against the following vowel), and differences in the first vowels (against the initial consonant. It also shows that in each series, both tones occur.

2.2. initial vowels

They are rather rare. In our lexicon, the cases are :

a	aŋ²	I
a	abo-tai	breast
a	abra	mute
a	alu	cat
a	ansa	boy, girl
a	apna-rao	relatives
a	asim-sa	Asamese, Ahom
e	ebo	this
e	edeniŋ	somehow
e	ega	leg
e	era	here
i	isaba	something
o	ora	there

The pronouns are frequent in this list (*ebo*, *era* & *ora*, *edeniŋ*, *isaba*, and of course *aŋ²*). *Asim* is a borrowing.

2.3. final consonants

Open syllables are more common than closed syllables.

Our estimation is from first syllables only. Yet, it provides a good approximation of what is in use.

It is interesting to tabulate the results according to the vowels :

	-m	-n	-ŋ	-r	-b	-g	
-a-	13	4	25	8	3		53
-e-	5	2	6	8	5		26
-i-	9	4	8	2	5	2	30
-o-		8	18	5		1	32
-u-		2	5	1	2		10
-ai-	2	1	14				17
TOT	29	21	76	24	15	3	168

No diphtong in -ao is closed by any consonant. No -l ends a first syllable.

Some curious facts must be noticed :

1/ -b and -g are not common ; -d is absent

2/ -ŋ is by far the most common ; after -ai- it is nearly the only possibility.

3/ -r is as common as -m or -n.

3.4. tones

There are two tones in Dimasa, the higher one (here written with ²) being related to the Garo checked syllables. Contrasts in otherwise homophonous syllables are not uncommon :

to leak	bla-	bla²	an arrow
to spred mat	bo-	bo²	he, she, it
moon	daiŋ	daiŋ²	to cut
water	di	di²-	to be sweet
scales (in market)	do	do²	six

to swell	du-	du²-	dibble the earth
to shoot	gao-	gao²-	to break away
give birth (animals)	gu-	gu²-	catch fish with cloth
to tie	ka-	ka²-	to be bitter
to bear across sholder	kai-	kai²-	to flee, run away
to be ill	lim-	lim²-	to be submerged
cinamom	loŋ	loŋ²-	to call
to pour	lu-	lu²-	to spin (thread)
to crawl	maiŋ	maiŋ²-	to find
to move	mao-	mao²-	to be dejected
to sell	paiŋ-	paiŋ²-	to wrap
to be able	pu-	pu²-	to be white
to reap	ra-	ra²-	to be old (persons)
to give	ri-	ri²	cloth
to boil in water	ru-	ru²	nivrea
boat	ruŋ	ruŋ²-	to pile up
to sort out	sai-	sai²-	to spread, sow
sun	saiŋ	saiŋ²-	to ask for smthg
to rot	sao-	sao²	body
iron, metal	ser	ser²-	to turn, wind
to stand	soŋ-	soŋ²-	to cook
to live, be alive	taŋ-	taŋ²-	to go
oil	tao	tao²-	to stop
to die	ti-	ti²-	to say
to sleep	tu-	tu²-	to be deep
to feel	žao-	žao²-	to be red
ten	ži	ži²-	to eat
to speak	žo-	žo²-	to wear away, erode
rice beer	žu	žu²-	to wrap in plantain

3. phonetics

3.1. in monosyllables

Most sounds are straightforward, and we will make only remarks.
1/ All unvoiced stops are realized aspirated. We could have written /ph/, /th/, /kh/, were it not for the useless embarassement. All voiced consonants are voiced and unaspirated.
2/ The consonant /s/ is often closer to [š]. The consonant /ž/ is between [ž] and [dž]. This is the reason why we decided, against symmetry, to write "s" and "ž".
3/ The /j/ is strictly [j].
4/ The /r/ is slightly rolled.
5/ The vowel /e/ is closer to [i] is closed syllables.
6/ The diphtong /ao/ is indeed closer to [ao] than to [au].
7/ Although /ŋ/ is never in initial position, we can find it in the etymological *bo-ŋa 'five' which is prononced - a unique case of nazalisation outside Indo-Aryan borrowings - [bõʷa].

3.2. the problem of first syllables

This problem is linked with the structure of compounded nouns and, less frequently, of compounded verbs. There exist several first syllables the vowel of which is weak, often [ə], or just dropped in quick speech. The most important of these syllables are :

1/ the prefix *bV-* very frequent in compounded nouns.   see Gr. 3.1.2.1.
2/ the prefix *gV-* typical of 'verbal adjectives'.   see Gr. 2.3.2.2.
3/ the verbal prefixes *sV-* and *pV-*, factitives.   see Gr. 2.1.2.1.
4/ the 'prefix' *mV-* in names of beasts.   see Gr. 3.1.2.2.3.

In such cases, we hear either [ə] or the same vowel as the next one. It is unwise to posit a /ə / vowels, since this realization seems a positional conditioning, and appears only in the above mentioned contexts. Yet, it is not easy to guess which is the underlying vowel.

3.2.1. The prefix in bV-

This prefix seems, in most cases, to draw its origin from the 3rd or indifferent person pronoun bo². This is, at least, what can be induced from kinship terms where it is a rule. But this original vowel is lost and what is really to be heard is a faint echo of the next vowel. For instance in :

basaiŋ 'day', we may hear a short /a/ in the first syllable when pronounced slowly. Otherwise we hear something like [bə saiŋ] or even [bsaiŋ]. Many nouns may be 'bV- prefixed' or not. One has to 'bV- prefix' them in order to make clear it is a non, when some confusion, either lexical or grammatical, is possible.

3.2.2. the prefix in gV-

This prefix is compulsory in postposed determinatives, for instance colour names (sse Gr. 6.4.) :

gu-pu²   'white'   pronounced [gə pu²] or [gpu²]
gisim   'black'   also pronounced [gə sim] or [gsim], etc.

and it is the same with other adjetives like :

gataŋ   'alive'
gebeŋ   'horizontal'
gisi   'wet'
gosoŋ   'vertical'
gužu   'tall'

When next vowels are /ai/ and /ao/, it seems advisable to write a "a".

garaiŋ²   'dry', or   gadaiŋ 'new'
gažao   'red'.

3.2.3. factitives in s- and p-

In these cases, the vowel is so faint that it seems better not to write it at all. In the p- prefix, it is not heard. In the s- prefix, which is still more or less analyzed, we may hear an echo vowel :

sa-grai-   'make fall'   or [sgrai]
sa-mao-   'shake'   or [smao]

3.2.4. other cases

Yet, there exist other cases of apophony. One of the most interesting is the /rž-/ cluster, of which there are many examples :

rža	100
ržab²-	'sing'
ržeŋ²	'light' N
ržiŋ²	1000

An echo vowel is heard, probably for acoustic reasons, in :

rožo²	'tree stump'.

Apophony is also the explanation for the pseudo-clusters mentioned above :

rd-, rz-
sb-, sd-, sg-, sk-, sl-, sm-, sr-, st-
zr-

All cases begin with /s-/, /z-/, or /r-/.

3.3. Other problems

A handful of words are not within this schematic description :

miao-		be soft
-pium	*in* bu-pium	younger brother
riao-		be sore
rien-		to trickle

These may be cases of apophony also, and be explained by *mV-jao, *pV-jum, *rV-jao, *rV-jen. But this is only tentative.

sentence types

1.1. general remarks

Dimasa is a typical Bodo-Garo language. There is no gender, no number, no concord of any kind : neither within the noun phrase, nor between subject and predicate. Verbs do not mark person reference. Functions of noun phrases in the clause are marked by case suffixes, except for the subject (nominative is -*ø*) and non-definite patient (or object) : these two arguments are identified by word order.

The only type of (pseudo-)concord is because of the classifier+numeral system, when the noun happens to use its second part as a classifier :

bopaŋ paŋ-si²   one tree
tree Cl-one

But this not so often, and is explained by the system of compounded nouns, and by the fact that classifiers are, etymologically, nouns.

Noun roots and verb roots are quite identical in general shape, and sometimes nearly identical indeed (*hon²*- 'to grind' ; *hon* 'powder'), but this a rare case because most nouns are compounded and bisyllabic, while verbs have to suffix one or more morphemes that indicate all kinds of precisions, except in the imperative where bare roots are possible. Predication (and negative predication) is different for nouns and for verbs.

Word order is of the general Tibeto-Burmese type : subject in the beginning, predicate at the end of the clause. Patient (object) is usually just before the verb, and this is compulsory when it is not marked.

1.2. nominal predicate

1.2.1.with the noun only

A nominal predicate can be a noun :

ebo kim   this is a flower
this flower

aŋ hožai   I am a priest
s1 priest

Negative predicate is with *nija*, which is formed with an auxiliary verb with the negation *ja.*

ebo khim nija   this is not a flower
aŋ hožai nija   I am not a priest

1.2.2. nominal predicate with *se²*

But it happens rather often in such equative sentences, that the nominal predicate is marked with *se²* (maybe 'one'), and rather often super-marked with *ti*, an emphatic clitic (see 2.2.3.2.10.). In the first of the following example, this type of ending is not compulsory :

misi gao-tai-ja-ba subuŋ-la a-ni bopa (se² ti)

tiger shoot-kill-VNgc man-Rt s1-D father (one Emp)
the man who shoot the tiger dead is may father

       But it becomes unescapable in such case :
misi wai-žao-ja-ba musu-la a-ni bopa-ni se² ti
tiger bite-Psv-VNgc cow-Rt s1-D father-D one Emp
the cow that was killed by the tiger is my father's.

       Or in far simpler idioms :
baola se²   he is drunk
compared with :
boala ža-ka   he has got drunk
drunk become-Pf

1.2.3. predicate of essence : ža

       However, when tense or aspect is to be expressed, the auxiliary verb *ža-* is involved. The behaviour of this verb is quite parallel to other verbs' :

aŋ hožai ža-ba   I was a priest
aŋ hožai ža-ja-ka   I am no longer a priest
aŋ hožai ža-ma   I will be a priest
aŋ hožai ža-pu-du   I can be a priest, etc.
See the section about verbs.

1.2.4. predicate of existence : doŋ <Exs>

       Yet, the auxiliary verb *doŋ* is used when existence is to be asserted :
a-ni musu ma-si doŋ
s1-D cow Cl-one is
I have a (one) cow
busi-ni musu ma-gni doŋ
p3-D cow Cl-two is
they have two cows

       One must be cautious not to mix such nominal predicates with verbal predicates such as :
busi-ni musu baŋ-bi
p3-D cow many-Ass
they cows are many (=they have many cows)
where *baŋ* is a verb.
Compare with :
na-pa-ni musu de²-bi
s2-father-D cow big-Ass
the cow of your father is big

1.3. verbal predicate

       Verbal predicates are flourishing in Dimasa. There is no morphological difference between intransitive and transitive verbs, but syntactic difference of course. See the section

about word order (1.5.), and the section about verbs (2.) for the numerous possibilities of suffixations on verb roots.

aŋ ora teŋ-ja   I did not go there
s1 there go Neg

1.4. negation

An interesting difference exists between :
ebo kim de žao-ja
this flower Rt red-Neg
this flower is not (so) red
and :
ebo kim de g☐ žao ni-ja
this flower Rt red Aux-Neg
this flower is not red (is not a red flower)
In the first example, the construction is verbal, *žao* is the verb 'be red' and the negation is *ja*. In the second one, *g☐ žao* is a verbal noun ('a red thing'), and the negation *ja* is actually suffixed to an auxiliary verb *ni*.

1.5. interrogation

Interrogative sentences are sufficiently marked with the sentence contour :
ebo dikoŋ tu²-bi
this river deep-Ass
this river is deep
ebo dikoŋ tu²-bi ?
is this river deep ?

1.6. subject and topic

1.6.1. less subjects, more topics

Under normal conditions, a sentence depends on what situation came out to stimulate it. So that many sentences sound like after-thoughts, once they are produced. Often, the stimulating factor is a previous sentence. And consequently, the topic of the new sentence is often extracted, so to speak, from what was said before, be it a narrative or a dialogue.

One might say there are - at the discourse level - two types of languages : those where each sentence is a new departure, and those where some reliance is had on the surroundings. In the first type, like in English or French, subjects of predicates have to be expressed for nearly every new predicate, even if it is to be repeated when strings of predicates have the same subject. In the second type, like in Dimasa and so many other Tibeto-Burmese languages, the hearer is supposed to understand (in the true meaning of the word) : subjects don't have to be repeated and, especially if pronouns, are commonly dispensed with. English says *it is far*, while Dimasa says *žaiŋ²-bi*.

This has a consequence in the expression of topics. In Dimasa, when a subject is expressed, it is less likely to be a simple topic, but more likely to be specified in some way. In Dimasa, there is a frequent need to grammaticalize the topic. This is achieved mainly by *de* and *la*. We gloss *de* with <Rt> and *la* with <Vs>, suggesting 'recto' & 'verso'.

1.6.2. the topicalizing *de* <Rt>

The clitic *de* marks the topic in a straightforward situation :
mijuŋ-de de²-bi
elephant Rt big-Ass
elephants are big
ebo kim-de žao-ja
this flower Rt red-Neg
this flower is not (really) red
It comes last in the noun phrase :
ebo kim butu-de gꞏ žao
this flower all Rt Adj-red
all these flower are red
and in such an example is also useful to mark clearly where the subject finishes and where the predicate begins, since *kim gꞏ žao* might mean 'a red flower'.

1.6.3. the adversative *la* <Vs>

The clitic *la* marks the adversative topic, and is somehow equivalent to 'but' :

ebo kim-de žao-ba mu	ebo kim-la žao-ja ti
this flower Rt red-Ps PN	this flower-Vs red-Neg Emp
this flower was red	(but) this flower was not red

aŋ-la ora taŋ-ja ti
s1-Vs there go-Neg Emp
but I never went there !
It may be by chance that this adversative *la* is not so far in meaning from the reflexive verbal suffix *-la* <Ref> (2.2.2.5.) in sentences like :

žeŋ ži-ni no²-ha taŋ-la-naŋ	nisi nisi-ni no²-ha taŋ-la
p1 p1-D house-Loc go-Vs-Pos	p2 p2-D house-Loc go-Vs
we go to our house	and you go to yours

Dimasa has a word meaning 'but, however' : *tikabo*.

1.7. word order

1.7.1. in the clause

As usual in Bodo-Garo (and Tibeto-Burmese) languages, the predicate comes last and the subject comes first. Typical examples are :

S		P	
U			V
bo	era		pai-ba
A		O	V
misi		musu	wai-ba

With intransitive verb and unique actant (U) :
bo era pai-ba   he came here

s3 here come-Ps
With transitive verb and 2 actants, agent (A) and patient (O) :
misi musu wai-ba   the tiger killed the cow
tiger cow kill-Ps

1.7.2. in the noun phrase

1.7.2.1. modifiers which come first

Normally, the head noun comes last, and determinatives come before. However, there are several exceptions which will be examined in the next section.

When a noun modifies another noun, it comes first. This is best understood under the principle of : the generic term comes before the specific one, because this is valid both for compounded nouns and for syntactic determination :

musu bogroŋ
cow horn
the horn of the cow, a cow horn

N + V-Ass

musu de²-bi
cow big-Ass
the cow is big

1.7.2.2. modifiers which come after the noun

1.7.2.2.1. deictics

1.7.2.2.2. adjectives

While verbal nouns in *-ba* or *-jaba* follow the main rule and come before the head noun, the adjective in *gV---ba* always follows it :

musu ge-de²-ba
cow Adj-V-VN
a big cow

1.7.2.2.3. numerals

A last exception is the modifier composed of classifier+numeral, or the numeral alone. See section 5.

2. verbs

2.1. Formation of verbs

2.1.1. monosyllabic verb roots

Most verb roots are monosyllables. A short list of such roots is given here as examples.

ba²	bear on back, perch
bai²	be broken
baiŋ	bear on shoulder
bam	bear in lap
baŋ²	be many
bao²	think
bar	bloom
bar	bear in mouth
bi²	pray
bir	fly, jump
bla	get a hole, leak
blao	forget
bo	lay cloth, spread mat
brai	buy, purchase
bu	be sharp, be cut

2.1.2. older process for verb formation

2.1.2.1. related verbs

In some few cases, we may suspect an older layer of compounding, now quite unproductive. We proceed from the most clear types down to the most obscure one, where there is some guessing.

2.1.2.1.1. the old factitive in p-

This prefix is not restricted to Tibeto-Burmese, where it may be a borrowing from Mon-Khmer for instance. Some instances are quite clear in Dimasa :

raiŋ²-   be dry   >   p-raiŋ²-   make dry, smoke food

nu-   see   >   p-nu-   indicate

naŋ-   reach, hit   >   p-naŋ-   light (the fire)

nam pnaŋ- 'make involved in quarrel'

2.1.2.1.2. the old prefix in s-

There are cases of *s-* with transitive meaning, for instance :

s(a)-grai-   'make fall'   <   grai-   'fall' INTR

s(a)-bai²-   'break' TR   <   bai²-   'break' INTR, 'be broken' or 'dance'

    NB : bai²-ri- 'break'   NB : bai²-pa- 'jump'

s(a)-blao-   'shock smbdy' <   blao-   'forget'

    NB : blao-ri- 'make forget'

s(a)-mao-   'shake'   <   mao-   'move, start'

s(a)-mai-   'make even, smooth' < ?

The next example is probably of the same kind :

stai- TR   'kill'

which is linked with the common *-tai-* 'kill' in compounded verbs :

gao-tai-   kill by shooting, shoot to death

wai-tai-   kill by biting, bite to death

which should be interpreted : 'shoot so it be dead', 'bite so that it be dead', etc. This *-tai-* is probably related to *ti-* 'to die'.

       A complex group is :

dab²-pa-   stick something onto somthing
sdab- / stab-   stick to, be pasted to
tab-   apply, cover (something not sticky)

The *-pa-* suffix (see 2.2.2.4.) seems to imply that you do the movement with your own hand. In this case, the *s-* prefix looks like a detransitivizer, but we should understand that the basic form is *tab-* 'apply, cover' ; that *stab-* is a factitive : 'make cover > stick' ; and that *dab²-* with the high tone is a further elaboration.

2.1.2.1.3. voiced / unvoiced alternation

       bu-   be sharp
       pu-   prick, pierce

2.1.2.1.4. coda variation

       This may be the case with some verbs meaning 'bear' in the list above. Another one is :

nu   see
nai   look at

       Maybe a similar case (it was alluded to in the 2.1.2.1.2. section about *s-*) is :

ti-   to die
-tai-   'be dead' as a resultative, with
stai-   'to kill'

       Another case of this kind is the possible relationship between verbs of 'asking' :

sani-   request somebody (N-*ke*) to do something (V-*ma*)
saiŋ-   ask something (N-ø) from somebody (N-*niha*)
seŋ   ask somebody (N-*ke*) a question (*grao²*)

       A curious case is *laŋ-* 'take away'. It is probably in older compounded form of *la-* 'take'. This is all the more likely because it can be constrasted with *la-bu-* 'bring'. The *-bu-* suffix is alive and productive.

2.1.2.2. verb roots related to nouns

       A similar process is at work in :
klib-   'cover, hide'   and   -klim in *saiŋ-klim* 'shadow' ('sun-hide')

2.1.3. compounded verbs

       Compounded verbs exist, usually from two verbal roots, and this is probably how were historically produced the strings of successive suffixes we may now find in Dimasa verbal forms.
ka-si-   'to tie & hang'

       The most striking instance of this compounding is the 'kill' group, which can be found also in other Bodo-Garo languages :
ka-tai-   kill by hanging

gao-tai-   kill by shooting
wai-tai-   kill by biting

      It is an interesting question, to decide which is the rule for the ordering of roots in compounded verbs. Examples above show that both the first and the second root may look as a basis (*kasi-* and *katai-* ; *katai-* and *gaotai-*).

      But we have to take nto account compounded forms like :
saiŋ²-ti-   to inform (talk-say)

2.2. verb suffixes

      The basic form of the verb, which may be identical with the root, is commonly used as an imperative (see 2.2.3.1.). Apart from this special case, the verb root is followed by at least one suffix, often more, and these suffixes can be classified in three groups, from the most lexical ones (and closest to the root), to the more grammaticalized. Normally, the last of these suffixes is the negative *-ja*. After the negative *-ja*, only some special clitics can come (see 2.2.3.9.). Before the root, only the proclitic *da²-* (which should perhaps be written without the hyphen) can be heard (see 2.2.3.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
da²	ROOT	1st group	2nd group	3rd group	*-ja*	clitic

      Each group normally forms a paradigm, which means that within its group any sufiix is exclusive of the other ones. It would follow from this rule that a verb root can be followed by three suffixes at most, plus the negation. However, the rule is strict only for the second and third group, which we called actancy and tense / aspect / mode (usually abbreviated TAM) respectively. Within the first group, which is closer to lexicon, and to compounding, it seems that the suffixes do not form a true paradigm : they are not strictly exclusive. We decided to limit this categorization to three groups only, first because a over-refined categorization would produce more embarrassment than help for the reader, and secondly because the first group is easier to manage as a whole.

2.2.1. the first group of suffixes

      The best definition of this somewhat clumsy grouping is that any suffix in it can be followed by suffixes of the second and third group.

      This first group is very probably made of ancient verbs that became sufficiently specialized to be treated as verbal suffixes. Such are for instance the continuative in *-sai-*, the distal in *-ha-*.

2.2.1.1. distal in -ha- <Dis>

      The distal morpheme in *-ha-* indicates an action operated at a distance :
aŋ misi musu wai-ba-ke nu-ha-du
s1 tiger cow bite-VN-Acc see-Dis-Apt
I see that the tiger kills the cow

What is seen is 'the tiger killing (rather : biting) the cow', *misi musu wai-ba-ke*, a nominal clause. Since these events are usually considered from a prudent distance, the use of *-ha-* is quite expected. Many verbs of perception often use this morpheme.

It has a modal use in

pai²-ha-saŋ	please come for some time ! (see 2.2.3.2.1.1)
pai²-da-ha-saŋ	please come first !

2.2.1.2. proximal in -bu- <Prx>

Somehow contrasted with *-ha-* is *-bu-* which means 'coming close to the speaker'. It is very clear in :

la-bu !   bring (it) !, take it here !   <   la- 'take'

In this very case, it seems to be contrasted with *laŋ* 'take away', which may be an older compounded verb (see 2.1.2.1.)

2.2.1.3. from above and from under : -hon- <Up> and -klei- <Dw>

Two other 'locational' suffixes can be described in the same category as *-ha-* and *-bu*, albeit of a less extensive use. These are *-hon-* 'from down up', and its opposite *-klei-* 'from up down'. The classic example for *-hon-* is 'to draw water (from a well)' :

kao²-hon-   draw up or pick up something which is down, draw water
kao²-klei-   draw down or pick smthg wich is up from an lower position

Another interesting exemple of *-hon-* :

seb-   'squeeze'   >   seb-hon-   'squeeze out'

The suffix *-hon-* is probably linked with the verb *kon-* 'pick smthg from down'.

2.2.1.4. continuative in -sai- <Cnt>

The continuative in *-sai-* is most commonly used with the present in *-du* and the past in *-ba*. In this latter case, either in its predicative function <Ps> or in its verbal noun <VN> function.

bo era-ha pai-sai-du
s3 here-Loc come-Cnt-Apt
He is coming here

An example with *-ba* in verbal noun function, an equivalent for dependant clause, is the following one. Such instances of its use show that *-sai-* is rather close to the root, and semantically not far from a compounded (or serial) verb :

bo pai-sai-ba-ha, aŋ bo-ke goron-ba
s3 come-Cnt-VN-Loc, s1 s3-Acc meet-Ps
while he was coming, I met him

Another example in a nominal dependant clause is :

aŋ misi musu wai-sai-ba-ke nu-ha-du
s1 tiger cow bite-Cnt-VN-Acc see-Dis-Apt
I see that the tiger is killing a cow.

2.2.2. actancy suffixes

factitive	-ri-
passive	-žao-
reciprocal	-lai-

2.2.2.1. factitive in *-ri* <Fac>

Two morphemes compete on the factitive, but only one is alive. One is the old prefix *p-*, common not only in Tibeto-Burmese but in Mon-Khmer also. This was examined in 2.1.2.
The other one is the suffix *-ri.*

	V-	V-ri-	
remember	waiŋso-	waiŋso-ri-	remind smbdy

Etymologically, this suffix is the verb 'to give' *ri-*.

2.2.2.2. passive in -žao <Psv>

Dimasa has a passive. In a transitive 'active' sentence, the agent (A) comes first, and the patient (O) is normally close to the verbal phrase ; if definite, this patient is marked with *-ke,* as we shall see when studying the nouns. This means that the agent is peripheric.
In the passive construction, the patient is the subject of the predicate, and the agent, if it is expressed at all, is marked with the instrumental morpheme *-žaŋ*. Example :

active	active	passive
O unmarked	O marked	A marked
misi musu wai-ba	misi musu-ke wai-ba	musu misi-žaŋ wai-tai-žao-ka
tiger cow bite-Ps	tiger cow-Acc bite-Ps	cow tiger-Ins bite-kill-Psv-Pf
a/the tiger killed a cow	a/the tiger killed the cow	the cow was killed by the tiger

In the passive example, we have added the circumstancially expected *-tai-* 'kill', which does not interfere in any way with the logic of the construction. The perfect marker *-ka* is, however, what we expect in a sentence where the focus is on the result.
The simpler sentence :

musu wai-tai-žao-ka   the cow was killed (or : bitten to death)
or the still simpler :
musu wai-žao-ka   the cow was / is bitten
are perfectly admissible.
The *-žao-* marker is certainly linked with the verb *žao-* 'to feel' as in :
aŋ g☐ žaŋ žao-du   I feel feverish
s1 feverish feel-Apt

2.2.2.3. sociative-reciprocal in *-lai* <Soc>

The suffix *-lai-* means that some action is conducted in common. It often implies reciprocality - and is by all means the common suffix in Dimasa for reciprocals.

daŋ-lai-	work together	<	daŋ-	work
saiŋ²-lai-	discuss	<	saiŋ²-	talk
gao-lai-	part mutually, divorce	<	gao-	part
daiŋ²-lai-	fight (war)	<	daiŋ²	cut

bunsi de nam ža-lai-ba
p3 Rt quarrel fight-Soc-Ps
They are quarelling

2.2.2.4. comitative-reflexive in -pa <Com>

The situation of this suffix may be discussed, and its position among actancy markers can certainly be disputed. But it is convenient to describe it with the reflexive suffix.
The meaning is best described by examples :

bo-ke niŋ-žaŋ laŋ-pa
s3-Acc s2-Ins take+away-Com
take it away with you
It is also used with *la-bu-* 'bring' : *la-bu-pa* 'bring (it) with you'
Its use implies the object one handles is with oneself.

2.2.2.5. the reflexive in -la <Ref>

Something closer to a true reflexive is the suffix *-la* :

ti-	'to die'	>	ti-la-	'to commit suicide'
ka-tai-	'to kill by hanging'	>	ka-tai-la-	'to hang oneself'

But it is used with intransitive verbs, in which case it means 'by oneself' :

žeŋ ži-ni no²-ha taŋ-la-naŋ   nisi nisi-ni no²-ha taŋ-la
p1 p1-D house-Loc go-Vs-Pos   p2 p2-D house-Loc go-Vs
we go to our house   and you go to yours

This is close to the meaning of 'separately', and we may wonder if there is a link (or a convergence) between this <Ref> and the adversative *la* <Vs> which is discussed in 1.5.3.
See also 2.2.3.2.1.3.

2.2.3. mode, tense, aspect

It is useful to distinguish modes on the one hand, and tense and aspect on the other hand. Combinations of all these suffixes have to be studied in more detail.

2.2.3.1. modals

2.2.3.1.1. optative in -ža- <Opt>

This mode usually implies the suffix *-re* following :

aŋ hožai ža-ža-re
s1 priest be-Opt-Hpt
I should be / become a priest

        The logical negative form is in -ža-ja :

aŋ hožai ža-ža-ja
s1 priest be-Opt-Neg
I should not be a priest

        But there is another more congenial structure for the negative, by using the possible future in *-ma*, as a verbal noun, and negating this nominal predicate with *nija* :

aŋ hožai ža-ma ni-ja
s1 priest be-PosVN be-Neg
I should not be a priest (=I am not a possible priest)

2.2.3.1.2. potential in -pu- <Pot>

        This mode, which marks ability or capacity, usually implies the suffix *-du*, or the suffix *-ka* :

aŋ hožai ža-pu-du
s1 priest be-Pot-Apt
I can be / become a priest

        The negative is logically in -pu-ja :

aŋ hožai ža-pu-ja
s1 priest be / become-Pot-Neg
I cannot be / become a priest.

žaiŋ-ba-ni taŋ²-pu-ja
far-VNc-D go-Pot-Neg
I cannot go because of the distance

        With the perfective suffix, we have :

aŋ hožai ža-pu-ka
s1 priest be-Pot-Pf
I could have become a priest

2.2.3.2. tense and aspect

        The basic Tense / Aspect suffixes are summed up here :

	positive	negative
imperative	-ø	da²-
assertive	-bi	-ja
actual present	-du	-ja
habitual present	-re	
possible future	-ma	
definite future	-naŋ	
past	-ba	
perfect	-ka	

2.2.3.2.1. Imperatives

As long as we deal with the suffixless root, it is somewhat indifferent to situate imperative in any category. The suffixless imperative -ø <Ip> is marked of course by contour, usually with a rising pitch and and louder voise on the end of the word, if it happens to have more than one syllable. Enticing expression, or whatever kind of feeling one would like to introduce in an order or demand, provides the hearer with a full array of variation.

Yet, it is quite possiible to add several kinds of suffixes in order to enrich the communication, if not the purpose, but their grammatical status is often delicate since we do not have here such border-lines as the negation.

For negative imperative in *da²*- <Def>, see 2.2.3.

2.2.3.2.1.1. polite -saŋ <Ipp>

pai²-saŋ   please come !
pai²-ha-saŋ   please come for some time !
pai²-da-ha-saŋ   please come first !
ebo hondra-ke bugur ku-saŋ
this orange-Acc skin peel-Ipp
Please peel this orange

2.2.3.2.1.2. insistant –di and –dou²

pai²-di   come indeed !
pai²-dou²   do come (without fail) !

2.2.3.2.1.3. empathic -la

The suffix -*la*- is something like a reflexive, and belong to the actancy group verbal of suffixes (2.2.2.5.). Nevertheless, when used in an imperative, or rather an incitative situation, it has the specific meaning of 'you may very well do that, there is no obstacle'
pai²-la   you may come
An interesting elaboration is :
pai²-la kala   why don't you come ?!

2.2.3.2.2. Assertive -bi <Ass>

The asssertive in -*bi* is most common with intransitive verbs for aoristic sentences, which do not express any specific ordering of events.
1/   dikoŋ tu²-bi
        river deep-Ass
        the river is deep
2/   di rao-bi
        water large-Ass

water runs quickly
3/   loŋtai risi-bi
        stone heavy-Ass
        the stone is heavy

This assertive, because of its meaning, cannot be negated. The previous sentence, if negated, is just marked with -*ja*, without the -*bi* :

        dikoŋ tu²-ja
        river deep-Neg
        the river is not deep

The assertion can be (and often is) emphasized with a final *ti* :

        ebo dikoŋ la tu²-bi ti
        this river Rt deep-Ass Emp
        this river is really deep.

2.2.3.2.3. Actual present -du <Apt>

This actual present is contrasted both with the aoristic present in -*bi*, and with the habitual present in -*re*. In English, it can often be translated by an "-ing" form.

1/   di glaglag gudu-du
        water *glaglag* boil-Apt
        the water is boiling
2/   a-ni bupa lim-du
        s1-D father ill-Apt
        my father is ill
3/   aŋ kim kao-du
        s1 flower pick+up-Apt
        I pick up flowers (presently)
4/   di baola pai²-du
        water overflowing come-Apt
        water is flooding

We may stress the continautive aspect by using -sai-du :
bo era-ha pai-sai-du
s3 here-Loc come-Cnt-Apt
He is coming here

        The usual negative of -du is simply -ja :
aŋ nu-du   I see (presently)
aŋ nu-ja   I do not see

2.2.3.2.4. Habitual present in -re <Hpt>

Compare this example with the one just above :
aŋ kim kao-re
s1 flower pick+up-Hpt
I pick up flowers (habitually)

2.2.3.2.5. definite future in -ma <Fut>

The definite future is in *-ma*.

aŋ hožai ža-ma
s1 priest be-Fut
I will be a priest

This *-ma* suffix, as we shall see, is actually a verbal noun, and this explains why the most common expression, when the subject is 3ʳᵈ person, is with *se²* 'one' at the end :

ebo jaokrai lao-ma se²
this bridge long-VNf one
this bridge will be long (will be a long one)

Note that the negative in such cases is *ža-ja* :

aŋ hožai ža-ja
s1 priest be-Neg
I will not be a priest

while the present negative with nominal predicates is in *ni-ja*, and *-ja* with verbal predicates.

2.2.3.2.6. possible future in -naŋ <Pos>

A less definite future is with *-naŋ*. This suffix actually is a verb meaning 'need', 'have to'. However, its status is disputable.

Examples like the following one imply a suffix-status :

aŋ nu-naŋ
s1 see-Pos
I shall see

aŋ hožai ža-naŋ
s1 priest become-Pos
I may become a priest

But it can certainly be seen as a verbal noun, since the negative form is with *ni-ja* in such sentences as :

bo jaokrai lao-naŋ ni-ja
that bridge long-Pos be-Neg
that bridge will not be a long one

Yet, it should be considered as a verb in :

žiŋ taŋ-ma naŋ-ja
p1 go-Fut need-Neg
we do not have to go

bo pai²-ma naŋ-ja
s3 come-Fut need-Neg
he need not come

Another, and stronger, way of expressing uncertainty about the the future is to use *lapure*, which might be a verbal form in *-re* :

bo² taŋ²-lapure   he may go (or not)
s3 go-maybe

di de²-lapure   the water may grow (or not)
water big-maybe

2.2.3.2.7. Past in -ba <Ps>

This is the common past tense, and it differs fromm the perfect in *-ka* (see next section) in being a purely narrative marker :

misi musu wai-ba   the tiger killed the cow
tiger cow kill-Ps
misi musu wai-ka   the tiger has killed the cow (it's over, now)
tiger cow kill-Pf
Another better example may be :
era pai-ba   he came here (yestreday ; for shopping ; for visiting me…)
here come-Ps
era pai-ka   he has arrived here
here come-Pf

The most interesting fact about this *-ba* is that it is actually a verbal noun. Comparison with other Bodo-Garo languages would easily show this, but it can be demonstrated within Dimasa itself with such examples as :

bo pai-sai-ba-ha, aŋ bo-ke goron-ba
s3 come-Cnt-Ps-Loc, s1 s3-Acc meet-Ps
while he was coming, I met him

The locative marker *-ha* normally marks nouns, certainly not verbs. Here, it marks a verbal noun and provides an equivalent for a temporal secondary clause. Note that the same *-ba* marks the predicate in the main clause, at the end of the sentence.

2.2.3.2.8. Perfect in -ka <Pf>

Technically, this is an aspectual marker, denoting either something that has happened or something that has began happening. It implies some kind of border between before and after, a limit.

taižu bubar bar-ka
mango flower flower-Pf
mango has flowered

also :

musu go²-ka
cow get+free-Pf
the cow got free

Also :

saiŋ baigo-ka   saiŋ žoro-ka
sun is up   sun has set

as opposed to :

saiŋ rao-bi
sun is very hot

2.2.3.2.9. negative perfects in 'no longer', 'no more' and 'not yet'

When perfects are negated, the meaning often is that the situation is inverse on either side of the border : negative on one side, positive on the other side. But either it is negative

before the border and positive after ("not yet"), or positive before and negative after ("no longer").

We should notice that this a rare case in Dimasa of suffixes coming after the negation.

We give here translations in English and in French.

	without Neg	with Neg	gloss
-ka	previously	no longer	
-si	more	not any more	<Sc>
-ko	up to now	not yet	<So>

In French :

	without Neg	with Neg	gloss
-ka	auparavant	ne plus	
-si	davantage	pas davantage	<Sc>
-ko	encore	pas encore	<So>

2.2.3.2.9.1. the simple negative in *-ja-ka* <Neg-Pf>

A negative form of *-ka* is in *-ja-ka* and means "no more, no longer". Some situation was positive before the border, but negative after it.

aŋ hožai ža-ja-ka   I am not a priest any more

The same is possible with the verb *ni-* instead of *ža-*.

2.2.3.2.9.2. the time limit in *-ko* <So>

The limit clitic in -ko can be used in the positive :

ži !   eat !

ži-ko   eat more ! (go on eating !)

With negations, either *-ja-* or *da²-*, it means 'not yet' : some event is pending, but has not happened up to now.

With *-ja* :

     aŋ nu-ja-ko

     s1 see-Neg-NP

     I have not yet seen

Note that the English translation uses a perfect tense, while the Dimasa sentence does not; we could gloss it with 'I am still in the state of not seeing'.

With *da²-* :

     da²-ži-ko

     Def-eat

     don't eat yet (wait) !

2.2.3.2.9.3. the time limit in *si* <Sc>

Constrast with the previous example :

da²-ži-si
Def-eat
don't eat more (it's enough) !

Another instance :

bo-tane žu da²-ri si !
s3-Dat beer Def-give
Don't give him any more beer

From the negative, it is easy to realize that *si* and *ko* form a sharp contrast : with *-ko* something with begin, with *-si* something will stop. This is the reason why we chose for *ko* the gloss <So> 'stop will be opened', for *si* the gloss <Sc> 'stop will be closed'. This has the inconvenience of commenting upon the negative side, but we think that it is clear.

2.2.3.2.10. the suffix -mu² <Reg>

The suffixe (or postposition) *mu²* implies that what happened or happens was or is not happy, and is regretted.

aŋ hožai ža-ba-mu²
s1 priest be-Ps-Reg
I was a priest (yes, but…)

a-ni musu de²-bi mu²
s1-D cow big-Ass-Reg
my cow was big (but there is/was something wrong with it)

2.2.3.2.11. the emphatic clitic ti <Emp>

Maybe it is the place to describe the common emphatic clitic *ti*. This comes at the end of the predicate. It is specially common in intransitive sentences like :

ebo dikoŋ la tu²-bi ti
this river Rt deep-Ass Emp
this river is really deep.

ou :　aŋ-la ora taŋ ni-ja ti
s1-Vs there go be-Neg Emp
but I never went there !

2.2.4. verbal prefix da²- <Def>

The negative order ('don't do that !') is marked, probably in all Bodo-Garo languages, by the prefix (or proclitic ?) *da*. It is *da²* with a higher tone in Dimasa.

glaglag da²-ža !
glaglag Def-be
don't be talkative !

The imitative *glaglag* can also be said of boiling water.

bo-ke da²-pai²-ri
s3-Acc Def-come-Fac
don't let him come

Please note the difference with :

bo da²-pai²-tiŋ
s3 Def-come-¶
let him not come
The da²- prefix or preposition may be associated with *-ko* or *-si* :
bo-tane žu da²-ri si
s3-Dat beer Def-give Sc
don't give him any more beer
These two clitics are described in 2.2.2.3.9.

2.3. the problem of the adjective

2.3.1. introducing the morphology and syntax of 'adjectives'

It is a complicated topic, to know if there is a category of 'adjective' in Dimasa. Basically, all would-be adjectives are built on verb roots.

A/ in predicative use (*the bird is blue*), we may have

1/ either the verb root itself, as a normal intransitive verb (*the bird is blue- very blue*)

2/ or the verb root prefixed with *gV-*, which behaves as a noun (*the bird is blue - not red*)

B/ in determinative use (*a blue bird*), the 'verbal noun' is always used after the noun

1/ either by itself, with an indefinite meaning (*a blue bird*)

2/ or suffixed with -ba, with a definite meaning (*a bird which is blue*)

The fact that the 'adjectival noun' in *gV-* comes after the noun may look like an exception to the rule of determination order (what dertermines comes first, whet is determined comes last) so obvious in compounded nouns (*musu bogroŋ* : cow horn). But we may consider this from another point of view, and wonder if the 'adjectival noun' is not indeed what is determined and the noun what determines : the 'bird' is the generic term, and the 'blue' is the specific. In this respect, the rule of determination order holds good.

To facilitate understanding, we thought reasonable to gloss the *gV-* prefix by <Adj>.

Phonetically, the *gV-* prefix on verbs is parallel with the *sV-* prefix (factitive) and the old *pV-* prefix (factitive) ; and also with the *bV-* prefix (mainly in kinship / part of the body terms) or the *mV-* prefix (big quadrupeds) on nouns : the "*V*" here indicates a vowel, the sound of which depends on the following (and root) vowel.

2.3.2. morphology of the predicates

2.3.2.1. the verbal form

The simplest case, as far as morphology is concerned, is the verbal form (A-1). When it is a case of general truth or present realization (which would be -ø with a nominal predicate), the necessary morpheme is *-bi* <Ass>, a suffix that was introduced in the first chapter about predicates.

žaiŋ²-bi	it is far
far-Ass	
mijuŋ de²-bi	elephants are big (indeed)
elephant big-Ass	
ebo mijuŋ de de²-bi	this elephant is big (indeed)

this elephant Rt big-Ass

ebo dao sim-bi   this bird is (very) black

this bird black-Ass

dikoŋ tu²-bi   the river is deep

river deep-Ass

In such occurrences, the affirmation may be stressed with the clitic *ti* (2.2.3.2.11.) :

ebo dikoŋ la tu²-bi ti

this river Rt deep-Ass Emp   this river is really deep.

The negative form drops the *-bi*, since it is not assertive any more, and has <Neg> *-ja* :

ebo dikoŋ de tu²-ja   this river is not deep

this river Rt deep-Neg

   Such verb forms can have various common verbal suffixes. A specific one is *-laŋ-* :

kasi-laŋ-ba   he became thin, he grew thin

thin-Gro-Ps

   Since they are verbs, these roots can by suffixed as verbs. Negative forms occur more often since some of these roots have no lexical negatives. For instance, 'bad' is *ham-ja-* (*ham-* 'good'), 'shallow' is *tu²-ja-* (*tu²-* 'deep'), 'ugly' is *mažaŋ-ja-* (*mažaŋ-* 'pretty'). Of course, the opposite situation is met with : r☐ gao²- 'clean', r☐ ge² 'unclean'.

ham-ja-du   it goes bad

good-Neg-Apt

ham-ja-ka   it has gone bad

good-Neg-Pf

2.3.2.2. the nominal form

   The simplest case, as far as semantics is concerned, is the nominal form (A-2). This is simpler because there is no trouble about modes, tenses : it just means the subject is so, and not something else ; for instance it is someting black, not something red or white.

ebo dao gi-sim   this bird is black

this bird *gV*-black

   Perhaps this is more clearly felt in the negative :

ebo kim de žao-ja   verbal   this flower is not (so) red

ebo kim de g☐ -žao ni-ja   nominal   this flower is not red (but some other colour)

What underlies the second, nominal, construction is 'this flower is not a red thing'.

   This construction is a nominal one. This appears from the fact that the predicate may be without any further coding, as is the case with nouns. A further piece of evidence is the possibility of using of the verb ža- 'be, become'.

gi-si ža-du   it's wet (it's becoming wet)

Adj-wet become-Apt

And it is confirmed by some instances like :

g☐ -ti-ni kusi the duty for the dead   <   ti-   'to die'

Adj-die-D duty

g☐ -taŋ-ni kusi   the duty for the living   <   taŋ-   'be alive'

Adj-live-D duty

where the determinative ('genitive') case suffix is used, as with a noun.

2.3.3. morphology of the determinatives

2.3.3.1. the indefinite form

Here, the simplest case when morphology is considered is the pure postposition of the 'adjectival noun' (B-1). Semantically, it is rather close to compounded nouns :

ri gi-sim   black cloth
cloth Adj-black
na² g□ raiŋ²   dry fish   <   raiŋ²- be dry
fish Adj-dry   cf. p-raiŋ²- 'make dry'

By indefinite, we do not mean that the noun phrase is indefinite, but that there a closer relationship between modifier and modified. For instance :

bo kim g□ -žao-ke nu-du ?
this flower Adj-red-Acc see-Apt
do you see this red flower ?

This example shows that the noun phrase may be definite as a whole, and that what is definite is the total thing 'a red flower'.

NB : with *gV-* forms, *-bi* <Ass> is impossible in syntax. The phrase *gi-sim-bi* can be heard, but it is a denomination, for instance in a dictionary entry : 'the form *gisim*' ; it contrasts with *gisim-ba*, which is described in the next section.

2.3.3.2. the definite form

The previous construction may be suffixed with the verbal noun suffix *-ba* <VNc>. This provides a definite meaning, something more like (see next example) 'a cloth which is black' than 'a black cloth'.

ri gi-sim-ba   a (definite) black cloth
cloth *gV*-black-VNc
musu ge-de²-ba   a big cow
cow *gV*-big-VNc
dikoŋ gu-tu²-ba   a deep river
river Adj-deep-VNc
mijuŋ mi ge-de²-ba   elephants are big animals
elephant beast Adj-big-VNc

¶ may be TR predicates with -ba :
g□ žai-ba   sieve V   see   mai-žai   a sieve

2.4. Verbal morphemes in secondary clauses : verbal nouns

There exist two verbal nouns in Dimasa, an agent verbal noun in *-ja* (quite distinct from the homophonous negation), and an action verbal noun in *-ba*. This latter one is used as an 'infinitive' to name verbs : 'to bite' will usually be uttered as *wai-ba*.

But there is a nice difficulty with the compounded suffix in *-ja-ba*.

2.4.1. The agent verbal noun in -ja <VNg>

This suffix is commonly met with in such nouns as :

daŋ-ja	worker
saiŋ-ja	counter
žo-ja	speaker

from the corresponding verbal roots. This is a productive formation. But some of these have produced specialized meaning :

daiŋ-ja   (cutter) is the priest responsible for sacrifices, and who is in charge of the secrificial knife, the *seŋ*.

This verbal noun has no extended valency : it cannot have verbal complements. See section 2.4.4. for the agentive verbal noun.

2.4.2. the future verbal noun in -ma <VNf>

It seems that the verbal predicative suffix in *-ma*, denoting possible future (section 2.2.3.2.5.) is actually a verbal noun. This is deduced from a sentence like :

aŋ hožai ža-ma ni-ja
s1 priest be-VNf be-Neg
I should not be a priest (=I am not a possible priest)

The final *ni-ja* clearly shows the preceding word to be a noun, since only nominal predicates can be negated with *ni-ja* ; it follows that *-ma* marks a verbal noun.

This future verbal noun is of common use in sentences like :

aŋ bo-ke ebo kusi daŋ-ma sani-ba
s1 s3-Acc this job do-VNf request-Ps
I asked him to do this job

Because when you request it, of course the job is still not done. We need note that in this sentence, *bo-ke* is marked with the accusative case, the nominal clause *ebo kusi daŋ-ma* is not.

2.4.2. The action verbal noun in -ba <VNc>

Secondary clauses, in Dimasa, are normally nominal clauses, and are marked as nouns. The most common verbal noun (VN) in such occurrences is *-ba*. We saw above that this same *-ba* was also a common predicative suffix of past time.

When discussing the past in *-ba*, we gave the following example :

bo pai-sai-ba-ha, aŋ bo-ke goron-ba
s3 come-Cnt-Ps-Loc, s1 s3-Acc meet-Ps
while he was coming, I met him

In that instance, the verbal noun in *-ba* is with the locative case in *-ha*, and the whole nominal clause is an equivalent for a temporal secondary clause. Actually, it could be glossed 'at the moment of his coming'. But the equivalent of the subject, 'he' *bo*, is not marked as a determinative.

Another example, with the nominal clause marked in the accusative :

aŋ misi musu wai-ba-ke nu-ha-du
s1 tiger cow bite-VN-Acc see-Dis-Apt
I see that the tiger kills the cow

Here, the nominal clause is *misi musu wai-ba-* and is as a whole the object of *aŋ nu-ha-du*. Within the nominal clause, neither the agent *misi* nor the patient *musu* are marked, except by word order of course.

2.4.3. the agentive verbal noun in *-ja-ba* <VNgc>

This is one of the curious features of the Dimasa language.
bo pai-ja-ba subuŋ-ke (niŋ²) nu-du ?
this come-VNgc man-Acc (s2) see-Apt
do you see this man who comes ?
In this example, *pai-ja-ba* means '(the one) coming, who comes'. It is a noun that can determine another noun, *subuŋ*, and behaves like an adjective. Such a function is impossible for *pai-ja*, that would just form a designation for an office, if such an office existed. Here and often, the *-ja-ba* compounded suffix provides and equivalent for a relative clause.
It can be used with intransitive verb roots, as above, and with transitive ones :
aŋ musu wai-ja-ba misi-ke nu-du
s1 cow bite-VNgc tiger-Acc see-Apt
I see the tiger that killed the cow
We can observe that the verbal noun dertermines *misi*, the agent ; and *wai-ja-ba misi* means 'the tiger that killed'. This is the reason why we call 'agentive' such verbal noun. This is logical in Dimasa, since in this language the unique actant (U) and the agent (A) normally have the same position : *pai-jaba subuŋ* 'the man (U) who comes' and *wai-jaba misi* 'the tiger (A) who bites' are parallel constructions.
We may now compare some examples in order to get an idea of the possibilites of *-ja-ba* considered from the point of view of voice and actancy :

	pai-ja-ba	subuŋ	the man that comes
	come-VNgc	man	
(misi)	gao-tai-ja-ba	subuŋ	the man who killed (the tiger)
tiger	shoot-kill-VNgc	man	
(musu)	wai-tai-ja-ba	misi	the tiger that killed (the cow)
cow	bite-kill-VNgc	tiger	
(misi-(žaŋ))	wai-tai-žao-ja-ba	musu	the cow that was killed (by the tiger)
tiger-(Ins)	bite-kill-Psv-VNgc	cow	

The conclusion is fairly simple. As long as *-žao-* does not interfere, the VN-*jaba* determines U or A, which follows, and may be determined in its turn by O, which precedes. When *-žao-* is inserted, the reverse is true : O comes after and A may come before ; in this latter case, the instrumental suffix *-žaŋ* may be added to the agent for clarity, but is not compulsory.

2.4.4. dependant clause equivalents, a resume

All equivalent of relative clauses - clauses that determine a noun - are in Dimasa nominal clauses in *-jaba*. When the head noun is a U or a A within this dependant clause, the VNgc *-jaba* is sufficient. When the head noun is a O within this clause, the Psv *-žao-* is to be added to form a complex string of suffixes *-žao-jaba*.

Equivalents of completive or circumstancial clauses - clauses that detrmine a verb - are in Dimasa nominal clauses in *-ba*. According to the function, this VNc in *-ba* will be suffixed with the corresponding case marker, exactly in the same way as a noun would be.

This simple syntax is not widely spread in Bodo-Garo languages.

2.4.5. the verbal noun in -hi <VNp>

The suffix *-hi* may be found with 'adjectives', where it indicates the manner :

kiri quick, rapid > *kiri-hi* rapidly

In successive predicates, it may be suffixed to the first verb, likewise, to indicate a circumstance of the main (and last) predicate :

bo² taŋ²-hi² pai²-ka
s3 go-VNp come-Pf
he has come after going

As this example shows, it is used as a converb, or gerund, to indicate an action that was effected before anoter one took place.

But with *doŋ*, which marks predicates of existence, it has a kind of continuative or durative meaning :

1/ bo taŋ-hi doŋ
  s3 live-VNp Exs
  he is alive

2/ derga kru-hi² doŋ
  door open-VNp Exs
  the door is (kept) open

3/ bo-žaŋ stab-pa-hi doŋ
  s3-Ins attach-Com-VNp Exs
  (you) remain attached to him

2.5. Clause clitics and syntax

Many syntactic devices rely on clitics just after the predicate, be it main clause or not. Consequently it is logical, as far as Dimasa is concerned, to describe such morphemes after, and actually quite a sequel to, the last verbal suffixes. In fact, we just introduced clitics in the last sections about verbal suffixes.

bo² taŋ²-<u>hi²</u> pai²-ka
he has come after going

niŋ² pai²-ka-<u>se</u>, aŋ taŋ²-ma
if you come, I will go

saiŋ-ha tati-ka-<u>se</u>, hor-ha maiŋ-ba
if you have put aside during day, you get it at night

bo-la sao de²-bi-<u>mu</u>; lim-dada-<u>se</u>, kasi-laŋ-ba
he had a big body ; after being ill, he became thin

¶
žaiŋ-ba-ni taŋ²-pu-ja
far-VNc-D go-Pot-Neg
I cannot go because of the distance

aŋ miti-du bo² o²ra²-ha doŋ
I know that he is here
bo² pai²-re ti²ka²-de, an²ta²ne² saiŋ²-ti² (/kna-ri)
if he comes, tell me (let me know)

I will eat when the bus stops	bas matao-ka-de, aŋ makam ži-ma
if it stops	matao-ka-de
when it stops	matao-hi² dada

3. nouns

3.1. formation of nouns

The vast majority of Dimasa nouns are bisyllabic. This is the result of either true compounding, associating two noun roots, or prefixation. In prefixes, the vowel may be a reduced /ə / or assimilated to the next vowel.

Monosyllables are not so common, but usually correspond to widely used items.

3.1.1. monosyllabic nouns

A list of examples follows. One will easily remark that nouns of frequent use abound, among which generic names for animals and plants, and a number of names for war equipment.

aŋ²	I
baiŋ	placenta
bar	wind
bim	spleen
bla²	arrow
bo²	he
bon	wood, firewood
daiŋ	moon
dao²	bird
di	water
do²	six, 6
do	scales
gaiŋ²	track
grao²	word, sentence
gu²	grasshopper
ha²	earth
ho²	belly
hon²	powder
hor	night
ja²	foot, leg
jao²	hand, arm

juŋ	worm, insect
ki²	excrement
kim(bar)	flower
ko	place
koŋ	course
kor	hole
kram	drum
krao	heart of wood
ku²	mouth
kun	cotton, thread
lai, b☐ lai	leaf
lam, lama	path, road
lig²	necklace
loŋ	cinamom
mai	paddy
maŋ²	corpse
mi²	beast
na²	fish
nam	quarrel N
niŋ²	you
no²	house
pi	shield
pin²	dust
raŋ	money, coin
ri²	cloth
roŋ	colour <
ruŋ	boat
sa	people
saiŋ	sun, day
sam	grass
sao²	body
se²	one, 1
sem²	salt
ser	iron, metal
ta²	arum
taŋ²	sword
tao	oil
ti²	blood
wai²	fire
žai²	eight, 8
že²	net
žer	middle
ži	ten, 10
žiŋ	we
žoŋ²	spear
žon	people
žu	rice-beer

3.1.2. bisyllabic nouns

As was said before, these nouns may be classified under two categories. The first category is made of those nouns that have a weak first syllable, often with the *bV-* prefix. The second category is made of true compounded nouns.

3.1.2.1. prefixed nouns

For instance :

bedeb²	branch
b da	elder brother
b dai, badai	grand-mother
b tai²	fruit
batain	forehead
basaiŋ, saiŋ	day
badim	wall
bahao	father in law
baka²	liver (heart)
basa²	son
basai	husband
bede²	sister of father
bere²	bee
bidi²	egg
bihi²	wife
biti², ti²	blood
bogodo², godo²	throat
boho²	stomach
basao², sao²	body
bosro²	lungs
boai	eld. bro. of hus.
bokro²	head
bubi	elder sister
buguŋ	nose
buma²	mother
bumu	name
bupa	father
burun	goat
busu²	thorn
bužu	grand-father

In many cases, the first vowel is only a replica of the second one. One notices also that in many cases, the noun can appear with or without the prefix. Moreover, most of these nouns belong to the 'inalienable' semantic category : kinship names or parts of the body.

This *bV-* prefix is certainly to be compared with the demonstrative *bo²*.

In the most common kinship terms, it can be substituted by a possessive prefix, itself a restricted phenomenon since the possessive is normally expressed by the determinative form (with *-ni*) of the pronoun.

	father	mother	
	bu-pa	bu-ma²	
my	a-pa	a-ma²	
your	na-pa	na-ma²	

Such cases show that the *bu-* prefix, with an often weakened vowel, is etymologically a 3rd person marker : *bupa* is 'the father of somebody', 'a father'.

But this is a very restricted phenomenon, and normally the *bV-* prefix is non-separable. For instance, with *musu* 'cow' and *bogroŋ* 'horn' you may say :

musu-ni bogroŋ   a cow's horn   (with the *-ni* for marking the determinating noun)

musu bogroŋ   (without the *-ni* : the noun order is enough)

but you cannot say *musu-groŋ* - except in poetical compositions.

In many cases the root is also a verb root :

taižu bubar bar-ka
mango flower flower-Pf
mango has flowered
taižu b tai tai-ka
mango fruit fruit-Pf
mango has given fruits

This construction is also possible with real compounded nouns :

dao-no dao-di di-ka
hen egg egg-Pf
hens have laid eggs

although in this case we may remark that *bidi* is possible for 'egg'.

3.1.2.2. compounded nouns : 2 roots

The majority of Dimasa nouns are compounded with two noun roots. In such cases, the first root has a generic meaning, the second a specific one. The process is most clear in 'families' of nouns, of which we will give several examples, among many more.

Normally, each of the two roots is left unchanged. Yet, there are cases when the first one is transformed : see the 'quaruped' group (3.1.2.2.3.) and some erratic cases like *midig* 'pot' which is possibly from *mai-dig, and should belong to the 'rice' group (compare with *di-dig* 'pitcher' < *di* 'water').

3.1.2.2.1. the "foot" and "hand" groups

The roots for 'foot, leg' *ja²*, and 'hand, arm' *jao²*, provide good examples of composition. The compounded word have 2 or more syllables, depending on the second part.

ja²	foot
ja²-bailig²	ankle
ja²-gaiŋ	foot-step, foot-print
ja²-kitu²	shin
ja²-kloŋ	hoof
ja²-ga²	foot, leg

ja²-si-	toe
ja²-sgu²	knee
ja-der	root
ja-klem², jao-klem²	ladder
ja-poŋ	thigh
ja-tai²	step

In the 'arm' group, we find parallels to some items of the previous list, the most obvious one being *jao²pa* 'hand' and *ja²pa* 'foot' ; see also 'wrist' and 'ankle'. 'Elbow' and 'knee' might be etymological parallels also. In this 'arm' group, a secondary grouping is made on *jao²si* 'finger'.

jao²	arm
jao²-su-gur	nail
jao²-bajlig	wrist
jao²-da²	right (hand/side)
jao²-pa	hand
jao²-pa	palm of hand
jao²-si	left (hand/side)
jao²-sguŋ	elbow
jao²-si	finger
jao²-si-bejeŋ	phalange
jao²-si-boto	knuckle
jao²-si-dam	finger-ring
jao²-si-ma	thumb (finger-big)
jao²-si-sa	little finger
jao²-si-ž□ la	middle-finger
jao²-si-žu	index

3.1.2.2.2. the 'bird' group

dao²	bird
dao² bu²ku²	beak
dao² jaosugur	claw (=nail)
dao²-graŋ	wing (of bird)
dao²-bla²ker	bat
dao²-du-ma	hoopoe ? (eat crabs)
dao²-dai(ro)	peacock
dao²-di²	egg (of hen, duck)
dao²-ku²	owl
dao²-ka	crow
dao²-kreŋ	peacock
dao²-la	cock
dao²-liŋ	kite
dao²-me²-ser	jungle hen
dao²-no²	hen
dao²-no² kaŋkra	hen-basket

dao²-plamdu² (bi²di²)	goose, duck ('egg)
dao²-pri (bi²di²)	pigeon ('s egg)
dao²-sa²	chicken
dao²-sari	sparrow
dao²-sim	black-bird
dao²-tu	dove

3.1.2.2.3. the 'quadruped' group

This group is especially interesting because the root, which is *mi²* and exists by itself with the meaning 'beast, untamed animal', is becoming a prefix with a weakened vowel : usually, this vowel is assimilated by the next one.

me-seb²	buffalo
mi²	beast
mi²-di	porcupine
mi²-juŋ	elephant
mi²-sai	deer, barking-deer
mi²-si²	tiger
mi²-si², mi²si² huŋ²gorija	leopard
mo²-so²	deer (sambar)
mo²-sroŋ	fox, jackal
mo²-žo²	rat, mouse
mu-ru	wild cat
mu²-si	mole
mu²-su²	cattle, cow
mu²-subu	lizard (tree lizard)
mu²-subur-ma²	bear

3.1.2.2.4. the 'rice' group

mai	paddy
mai-bar seb-	winnow
mai-bar (bar-si²)	paddy flower
mai-ko²	paddy granary (not movable)
mai-lai (lai-si²)	paddy leaves
mai-mu²	paddy seed
mai-mu² tar-ba	purification ceremony
mai-paŋ (paŋ-si)	paddy plant
mai-roŋ	uncooked rice
mai-sa²	paddy (small)
mai-si	millet
mai-su²-ba	pound V
mai-tai²	year (crop time)

mai-žai	sieve N
mai-žu	rice mixed with common rice (for rice-beer)

3.1.2.2.5. the 'water' group

di	water
di-juŋ	big river
di-kro²	up-stream (water-head)
di-ža-paŋ	down-stream
di-bai	water flow, course
di-barai	river dam
di-bu	river
di-dab²	mud, clay cover (of pot)
di-dig²	jar, pitcher
di-gaŋ²-ba	thirsty be
di-grig	clear water
di-kaŋkra	basket (loose woven)
di-koŋ	river
di-kor	pond
di-lam	water-way
di-mu²	source
di-nar	river-bank
di-poŋ	long bamboo container
di-sa²	stream

Of course, *di* may also appear as the second term in the compounded word. For instance in *bere-di* 'honey' (bee-water).

3.1.2.2.6. some other interesting cases

kun	cotton (=thread)
kun-bar	cotton flower
kun-paŋ	cotton tree

3.1.2.3. verbal nouns in -ba, -ja

The grammar of verbal nouns, when they provide equivalents for dependant chauses, is examined in its own place (2.4.).

But many of these verbal nouns are just a way of constructing nouns from verbs. This is obvious for job names in *-ja* (see 2.4.1.) like *daŋ-ja* 'worker' or *saiŋ-ja* 'counter'. But it is true also with verbal nouns in *-ba* :

ha-gao²-ba   land-slide

land-break-VNc

3.2. plural & feminine

3.2.1. plural, ethnic names

Plural is not grammatical in Dimasa. A -*rao* suffix is found with nouns of humans when the plurality is to be stressed, but does not appear with counted nouns.

subuŋ-rao   people, many humans

This suffix is probably correlated with the verb root *rao*- 'be hard, strong, in great quantity'.

For ethnic denominations, the word *sa²* is used :

magam-sa²   the Nagas
pna-sa²   the Karbis (see Assamese *Pnar*)
gataŋ-sa²   the Khasis or Jaintias
tipra-sa²   the Tripuris
taŋgum-sa²   the Kukis
moŋlai-sa²   the Manipuris
asim-sa²   the Assamese, or Ahoms
hadi-sa²   the Bengalis

NB : this last name is a true Dimasa coinage, from *ha* 'land', and *di* 'water'. It means 'the people who do wet cultivation'.

dima-sa²   the people of the bigger river : the Dimasas.

3.2.2. masculine and feminine

There is no grammatical feminine. When needed, the expression of feminine sex is lexical, either with a specific noun, as is often the case with human beings especially in kinship terms ; or with a suffix with domesticated animals.

The lexicon of kinship terms is the subject of a special chapter.

The most common suffixes for sexual difference are -*ž□ la* for males and -*žik²* for females.

mu²su²   cow, cattle

mu²su²-ž□ la   ox

mu²su²-žik²   cow

Let us note that *jao²si-ž□ la*, 'the male finger', is the middle finger, the medius.

The -*žik²* feminine suffix appears also for instance in :

buba ganai-žik²   sister's daughter
bobao-žik²   elder brother's wife
baham-žik²   daughter-in-law
sagaiŋ-žik²   witch
hožai-žik²   midwife   (hožai 'priest')

Another pair of suffixes is present in :

dao-la   cock
dao-no²   hen

3.2.3. big and small

It is useful to add that the youngs (chicks, etc.) are also marked with a suffix *-sa²* :

dao-sa²   chicken

This suffix -sa² is not limited to animates, and we may have :

hagra²-sa²   small forest, bush

hažik-sa²   small mountain, hill

Remember that ba-sa² means 'son'

But there also is a suffix for the bigger things, which is *-ma²* :

di-sa²   smaller river

di-ma²   bigger river

mu²subur-ma²   bear

gra²-juŋ-ma²   cicada   <   gra²- 'cry, weep' & juŋ 'insect'

In a small number of cases, the suffix *-juŋ* seems to mean 'big, very big' :

di-juŋ   big river

mi-juŋ   the big animal (=elephant)

3.3. noun determinating a noun

Except when forming a compounded noun, the determinating noun or pronoun comes first, and is marked with the suffix *-ni*.

bo²-ni kaolai žao-bi

s3-D cheek red-Ass

his cheeks are red

However, when the two nouns are intimately associated, the *-ni* suffix is not used :

misai bokro²   a deer's head

misai ega   a deer's leg

mu²su² bogroŋ   a cow's horn

mi²juŋ hatai²   elephant's tusk

mi²juŋ busudi   elephant's trunk

In most cases, the construction with *-ni* is also possible :

mu²su²-ni bogroŋ

3.4. noun determinating a verb (case forms)

The basic case suffixes on nouns :

nominative	-ø
accusative	-ke
locative, allative	-ha
ablative	-ni-praŋ
elative	-ni-ha
instrumental	-žaŋ
dative	-ne , -ta-ne

3.4.2. defiinite accusative in -ke <Acc>

The accusative marker -*ke* is actually, as is often the case in such languages, a definite accusative.

```
1/      aŋ mi²si² nu-du                          aŋ mi²si²-ke nu-du
        s1 tiger see-Apt                         s1 tiger-Acc see-Apt
        I see a tiger                            I see the tiger
2/      ebo kim butu-ke nu-du ?
        this flower all-Acc see-Apt
        do you see these flowers ?
3/      aŋ mi²si² mu²su² wai-ba-ke nu-ha-du
        s1 tiger cow bite-VN-Acc see-Dis-Apt
        I see that the tiger kills the cow
```

In this last example, the -*ke* marks the whole (nominal) clause *mi²si² mu²su² wai-ba-* 'the fact that the tiger kills the cow', which is the object of *aŋ nu-ha-du* 'I see (from a distance)'.

Definite patient within nominal clauses behave in the same way :

```
ebo no²-ke daŋ-ja-ba subuŋ mi²si² gao-tai-ba
this house-Acc build-VNgc man tiger shoot-kill-Ps
the man who built this house killed a tiger
```

3.4.3. -ke and -ø as patient markers

In many sentences, two patients appear, one with -ø and one with -*ke*. In all cases, the complement with -*ke* comes first, while the more internal complement, the one closer to the verb, is left unmarked.

The simplest cases are those with an 'internal accusative', that is a noun which is semantically so closely knit with the verb that the group N+V appear as an extended verb phrase :

```
ebo hondra-ke bugur ku²-saŋ
this orange-Acc skin peel-Ipp
Please peel this orange
```

Here, *bugur* 'skin' makes a verb phrase with *ku²*- 'peel', and *hondra* 'orange' is marked with -*ke* because it is definite. The same is true in a slightly different example, where the verb *leb²*- 'peel with knife' is used :

```
ebo ta²tai²-ke bugur leb²-saŋ
this potato-Acc skin peel-Ipp
Please peel this potato.
```

Interestingly, in the next example, although the closer patient is definite ('this question'), it is not marked by -*ke*, but the farther one is. The rule is the same as above : 'question' makes a quasi-verbal phrase with *seŋ²*- 'ask' :

```
aŋ bo²-ke ebo grao² seŋ²-ba
s1 s3-Acc this question ask-Ps
I asked him this question
```

An extension of this rule is when the closer patient is a whole nominal clause :

```
aŋ bo²-ke ebo kusi daŋ²-ma sani-ba
s1 s3-Acc this job do-VNf request-Ps
I asked him to do this job
```

There again, the closer patient is with -ø, while the farther one *bo²-ke* is marked.

3.4.4. locative in -ha² <Loc>

This suffix has a wide variety of use. Strictly locative are examples like :
saiŋ-ha² praiŋ²-
sun-Loc make-dry
dry (something) in the sun
Examples with an 'into' meaning are :
maiko²-ha² mai deŋ-
granary-Loc grain keep
keep grain in the granary
ebo gabla-ha² didab² dab²-pa
this hole-Loc mud paste-Com
put some mud into this hole
In this other example, it does not mean 'into' but 'on' :
ni²-ni žuta-ha² didab² stab-ka
s2-D shoe-Loc mud stick-Pf
mud got stuck to your shoe
Allative example :
žiŋ ži²-ni no²-ha² taŋ-ma
p1 p1-D house-All go-Fut
we (will) go to our house
It may have a temporal meaning as well. Here is a proverb :
saiŋ²-ha² tati²-ka² se², hor²-ha² maiŋ²-ba ¶tones
day-Loc store-Pf Cd night-Loc get-Ps
If you have stored (goods) during the day, you find (them) at night.

3.4.5. ablatives in -ni-praŋ <Abl> and -ni-ha <Ela>

It is a remarkable fact that the Dimasa ablative *-ni-ha* is a compounded suffix, obviously from *-ni* <D> and *-ha²* <Loc> :
aŋ bu²-ni²ha² raŋ saiŋ²-ba
s1 s3-Ela money ask-Ps
I asked money from him
The ablative in -ni-praŋ <Abl> is also compounded, and is ised with localities, not with people :
1/   maibaŋ era-nipraŋ žaiŋ²-bi
        Maibong here-Abl far-Ass
        Maibong is far from here
2/   era-nipraŋ hatai žaiŋ²-bi
        here-Abl market far-Ass
        the market is far from here
3/   žel-nipraŋ go²-ka
        jail-Abl get+free-Pf
        (he) got free from jail (=he was freed from jail)

4/   niŋ² bra²-ni²praŋ pai-ba ?
       s2 where-Abl come-Ps
       where do you come from ?
       As in the case of *-ha²* <Loc>, there is no distinction if there is a movement or not.

3.4.6. Instrumental in -žaŋ

       The instrumental case can be used with objects in the true instrumental sense, or with animates in an agentive meaning ; with persons, it can also mean 'with'. The agentive meaning is common in constructions with the passive in *-žao-*.
sisoŋ-žaŋ daiŋ²
dao-Ins cut
cut with the dao
       An example of passive cnstruction, here within a nominal dependant clause :
mi²si²-žaŋ wai-tai-žao-ja-ba subuŋ ebo no²-ke daŋ²-ba
tiger-Ins bite-kill-Psv-VNgc man this house-Acc build-Ps
the man who was killed by a tiger (had) built this house
       The meaning 'with' is examplified in :
bo²-ke niŋ²-žaŋ laŋ-pa
s3-Acc s2-Ins take+away-Com
take him away with you

3.4.7. locative postpositions

       Apart from the locative suffix *-ha²*, a number of nouns play the role of postpositions :
ba-sao / b□ sao   'above'
       no² b□ sao   above the house
       ha b□ sao   'above the earth' is lexicalized : 'the world'

3.4.8. dative in -ne or -ta-ne <Dat>

       It is not clear when one can use -ne ; it seems that -tane is more common. These are used for the beneficient, as in situation with *ri-* 'to give' :
aŋ-tane ri !   give (it) to me
aŋ niŋ²-tane ri-naŋ
s1 s2-Dat give-Fut
I'll give (it) to you
bo²-tane žu da²-ri si
s3-Dat beer Def-give Sc
do not give him any more rice-beer
       These suffixes are also used for comparison :
aŋ-tane riŋdao
s1-Dat learned
more learned than I am

4. pronouns

4.1. personal pronouns

	1	2	3
sing.	aŋ	niŋ²	bo²
plur.	žiŋ, žeŋ	ni²-si²	bo²-si² bon-si¶

As in most Bodo-Garo languages, the 3rd person pronoun is a demonstrative. The plural suffix -*si* is typical of the personal pronouns. Again as in most BG languages, Dimasa has only 3 personal pronouns : aŋ, niŋ², and žiŋ.

These pronouns may suffix case morphemes, sometimes on reduced bases :

	D	Dat	Acc
s1	a-ni	an-ne /an-tane	aŋ-ke
s2	ni²-ni	niŋ² / niŋ²-tane	niŋ²-ke
p1	ži-ni	žin / žiŋ-tane	žiŋ-ke
p2	ni²si²-ni	ni²si²-ne / -tane	ni²si²-ke
s3	bo²-ni	bo²-tane	bo²-ke
p3	bo²si²-ni bon(i)si-ni	bo²si²-ne / -tane	bo²si²-ke bon(i)si-ke

Of course, it is also possible to interpret the "nominative" forms as augmented with -*ŋ*.

In Dimasa, as with other Bodo-Garo languages, the morphosyntax of personal pronouns follows the noun pattern :

aŋ bo²-ke nu²-du   I see him / her / it
niŋ² bo²-ke nu²-du   you see him / her / it
aŋ niŋ²-ke nu²-du   I see you
niŋ² aŋ-ke nu²-du   you see me, etc.

We mentioned above the special situation of some kinship terms when 'possessed' :

	father	mother
	bu-pa	bu-ma²
my	a-pa	a-ma²
your	na-pa	na-ma²
my !	a-bai	a-mai

But the normal construction is always possible :
a-ni bu-pa lim-du
s1-D b-father ill-Pst
my father is ill

The last line in the chart mentions the adress terms : *abai* '(my) father !'. See 6.1.

4.2. demonstrative modifiers and pronouns

Deictic structures may be simple, in which case they come before the noun they modify.

Deictic demonstratives are :

ebo	this	*ebo jaokrai*	this bridge (here)
bo	that	*bo jaokrai*	that bridge (there)

but also, when pointing :

hobo   this one there

All such demonstratives can also be pronominal.

The form *bo* is obviously the basis the 3rd person pronoun, singular and plural. It is likely to be also the basis for the *bV-* prefix we discussed under the section of 'prefixed nouns'.

Locative demonstratives are :

era   here

ora   there

bo² era-ha pai-sai-du	bo² ora-ha taŋ-sai-du
s3 here-Loc come-Cnt-Apt	s3 there-Loc go-Cnt-Apt
he is coming here	he is going there

See also 1.5.

4.3. interrogative, indefinite, & negative pronouns

As in other Bodo-Garo languages, interrogative pronouns or adjectives (e.g. 'who') are the basis for the building of indefinites ('somebody'), and on these the negatives ('nobody') are built when the negation is added.

It seems there are only 2 interrogative roots in Dimasa :

The first one is in *sV²-* and provides :

sere²	~	sre²	'who'
sumu²	~	smu²	'what'

The second one is in *bV²-* and provides :

ba²ra²	~	bra²	'where'
ba²ka²li²		'when'
be²dehe		how ?

The suffix *-ra* in *bra²* 'where' is identical with *-ra* in the demonstatives *e-ra* 'here' and *o-ra* 'there'.

4.3.1. sre² : who ?

the interrogative basis :

Examples :

sre² pai²-ba   who has come ?

who come-Ps

bo²-la sere²-ni no²   whose house is this ?

s3-Vs who-D house

provides the indefinite *sere²-ba* 'somebody'

A plural is built by iteration :

sere²ba sere²ba   somebody (several persons)

sere²ba pai²-ka ti²   has anybody come ?

who-VNc come-Pf Emp
sere²ba pai²-ka   somebody has come
who-VNc come-Pf
sere²ba-ke nu²-ba   did you see somebody ?
who-VNc-Acc see-Ps

      and from *sre²ba* one can build :

sere²-ba sao²-si   someone
who-VNc Cl-one

For 'anyone', see 4.4.4.

      The negative pronoun is :

sao²sibo² V-ja   nobody
sao²sibo² pai²-ja   nobody came
Cl-one-s3 come-Neg

4.3.2. sumu² : what ?

      As an interrogative, *sumu* cannot be alone :

sum(u)bo²   which ?
sumu² ža²di²   what ?
sumu² ža-ba-ni   why ?

      The indefinite is :

sum(a)ba   something

but it is often pronounced *humba* or even *hmba*.

niŋ² hmba bostu naŋžao-du
s2 what-VNc thing want-Apt
do you want anything ?

      The negative is

musibo² V-ja   nothing
Cl-one-s3

4.3.3. bra² : where ?

      It can be used alone :

bo² bra² taŋ-ba (or : taŋ-re)   where does he go ?
s3 where go-Ps (go-Hpt)

      But in the locative without movement more often with *-ha* :

bo²-la bra²-ha²   where is he ?
s3-Vs where-Loc

      When a ablative is needed, one has to add -nipraŋ, as with nouns :

niŋ² bra²-nipraŋ pai²-ba ?
wher do you come from ?

4.4.4. isaba 'any'

isaba ma-si   anything (among several)
isaba muŋ-si labu   bring any one

| isaba sao²-si | anyone | Cf. | sere²ba sao²-si | 'someone' |
| isaba | anything | | sumaba | 'something' |

5. Numerals and classifiers

In Dimasa, nearly all objects are numbered with the help of classifiers. The normal order is :

<center>noun   classifier + numeral</center>

Examples :
žiŋ mi²sai-bokro² kro²-si soŋ ži-ba
p1 deer-head Cl-1 cook eat-Ps
we cooked and ate one deer's head
žiŋ mi²saj-ega goŋ-si soŋ ži-ba
p1 deer-leg Cl-1 cook eat-Ps
we cooked and ate one deer's leg
In such cases, all numerals appear as suffixes after classifier bases.

Yet, there are nouns that are counted, partly or completely, without classifiers and with the fuller form of the number :

One man	subuŋ sao-si
2 men	subuŋ geni
3 men	subun gatam

Here, a classifier *sao* meaning 'body' is used only for 1.

5.1. numeral suffixes

1	-si²	se²
2	-gni	geni
3	-tam	getam
4		biri
5		bôa < *boŋa
6		do²
7		sini
8		žai²
9		sugu²
10		ži

From 11 to 19 and from 10 to 90

11	ži-se²	10	ži
12	ži-gni	20	kon
13	ži-tam	30	tim-ži
14	ži-bri	40	bisa-gni

15	ži-bôa, žra	50	dan
16	ži-do²	60	bisa-tam
17	ži-sni	70	bisa-tam-ži
18	ži-žai²	80	bisa-bri
19	ži-sgu²	90	bisa-bri-ži

100 : rža-si²
      200 : rža-gni, etc.
1000 : ržiŋ²-si²

5.2. classifiers

		examples	
deb²-	branch & twig		
do²-	log		
goŋ²-	bamboo-like	ega	leg
graŋ-	flat : leaf, cloth, book	no²	house
kro²-	round	bo-kro²	head
ma-	flat ; animals		
paŋ-	tree		
sao-	man		
soŋ-	group of trees or plants		

NB : the curious case of *no²* 'house' being categorized as a leaf-like object is to be compared with *no²-lai* 'village' where *-lai* means 'leaf'.

Examples :
bu²-ni no² graŋ-si² doŋ
s3-D house Cl-1 être
He has one house
bondo² do²-si²   one log
wa goŋ²-si²   one bamboo
ri² graŋ-si²   one cloth
mu²su² ma-si²   one cow
bopaŋ paŋ-si²   one tree
subuŋ sao-si²   one man
laisoŋ soŋ-si²   one group of plantain trees
wasoŋ soŋ-si²   one bamboo group
NB : for men the use of the classifier *sao* 'body' is limited to one unit. One says *subuŋ gini, subuŋ g□ tam* etc.
     Many nouns use their second term as a classifier, for instance :
mai-lai lai-si²   one paddy leaf   *lai* 'leaf'
mai-bar bar-si²   one paddy flower   *bar* 'flower'
bo-paŋ paŋ-si²   one tree, etc.
     Containers use the classifier when the object is concerned, but not when used as measure :
didig tai-si²   one pitcher
didig-si²   one pitcherful
di didig-si²   one pitcherful of water

dipoŋ poŋ-si²	one *dipoŋ* (a long bamboo container)
dipoŋ-si²	one *dipoŋ*ful
di dipoŋ-si²	the water contained in one *dipoŋ*.

6. lexicon

We add here several notes about parts of the Dimasa lexicon. Some remarks on the lexicon have been given above in the chapter about noun compounding where we detailed some 'noun families' built from a common root.

6.1. kinship terms

First, charts are given. Alaphabetic listing follows.

6.1.1. charts

'Family' generally is *no²kor*, on the root *no²* 'house'. 'Relatives' are *apna-rao*.

boboda	*bomajuŋ*			
great-gd-father	great-gd-mother			
bužu	*badai*			
gd-father	gd-mother			
	bupa		*buma*	
	father		mother	
bada	*bubi*		*bupiuŋ*	*bahandao*
eld. brother	eld. sister	EGO	you. brother	you. sister
bobaoži	*bigimi*		*boai*	*bigimi*
eld bro's wife	eld sis's husband		you bro's wife	you sis's husb.
basa	*buba ganai*			
eld bro's son	eld sis's son			
	buba ganaižik			
	eld sis's daughter			

Husbands of sisters call each other bustu.

bahao	*busuma*		
fath. in law	mo. in law		
boai	*basai*	*bihi²*	*bobraoliŋ*
hus's eld bro	husband	wife	wife's you sis
	basa	*bisik*	
	son	daughter	
	busu tai		
	gd-son/ daughter		
	basa tai		
	great gd son		

A son-in-law is bažamadi, a daughter-in-law bahamžik². Fathers (& mothers) of parents of son/daughter-in-law are bažamai (& bažamaižik).

boboda	bede	bupa	bedi	bede
fath's eld bro	fath's eld sis	father	fath's you bro	fath's you sis
bumajuŋ			bumadi	
his wife			his wife	

bede	bumajuŋ	buma	bede	bumaosi
moth's bro	moth's eld sis	mother	moth's bro	moth's you sis
bada			bupium	
his son=bro.			his son=bro.	

This last chart shows that sons & daughters of the brothers of the mother are considered as sons and daughters. Son of the elder brother is also a son.

A friend is a *lugu* ; you adress him with *namai !* A guest is *naroai*. A stranger is *malai*.

Several names of personal relationships outside the domain of kinship begin with na- :

na-mai	friend !
na-ga	bachelor, unmarried man
na-na	small child
na-roai	guest

These seem unrelated with *na²-* 'your', which is of restricted use and has the high tone.

6.1.2. listing of Dimasa kinship terms

The listing is given by alphabetical order of roots, since all terms begin with the *bV*-prefix.

-ai	bo-ai	elder brother of husband wife of youger brother
-ba	bu-ba ganai	son of the elder sister
-ba	bu-ba ganaižik	daughter of the elder sister
-baoži	bo-baoži	wife of elder brother
-bi	bu-bi	elder sister
-boda	bo-boda	elder brother of father father of grand-father
-braoliŋ	bo-braoliŋ	younger sister of wife
-da	ba-da	elder brother
-dai	ba-dai	grand-mother
-de	be-de	brother (eld. & you.) of mother sister (eld. & you.) of father
-di	bi-di	younger brother of father

-gimi	bi-gimi	husband of sister (eld. or you.)
-handao	ba-handao	younger sister
-hao	ba-hao	father in law
-hi²	bi-hi²	wife
-ma	bu-ma	mother
-majuŋ	bu-majuŋ	elder sister of mother mother of grand-mother wife of *boboda*
-maosi	bu-maosi	younger sister of mother
-pa	bu-pa	father
-piuŋ	bu-piuŋ	younger brother
-sa	ba-sa	son
-sa tai	ba-sa tai	son of grandson
-sai	ba-sai	husband
-sik	be-sik	daughter
-su tai	bu-su tai	son or dauhter of son, grandson
-suma	bu-suma	mother in law
-žu	bu-žu	grand-father

Synonyms are widely different in function.
(a) -majuŋ & -boda have similar functions : the elder brother (or sister) of father (or mother) is considered a classificatory equivalent of his (or her) grand-father (or mother).
(b) -ai is a reciprocal term and marks shunning : elder brother do not interfere with the wives of their younger brothers, and conversely.
(c) -de is a generic term for all uncles on the mother's side, and all aunts on the father's side.
It is not surprising to note that closer relationships correspond to shorter denominations.

6.2. clan names

The Dimasas are remarkable among Bodo-Garo speaking people in having different clans for women and for men. Male clans, actually male lineages are called *seŋpoŋ* ; female lineages are called *žadi* or *želik* (this name *želik* is pronounced *želu* by the Plains Dimasas). All men have a *seŋpoŋ*, all women have a *žadi*.

6.3. The 12 daiko²

In older times, the Dimasas had 12 territorial divisions called *daiko²*. Some of these are :

<div style="text-align:center">

alu daiko²
manža daiko²

</div>

(JKT's)   misim daiko²

¶
A worship place is called *madaiko²*, from *madai* 'god, divine being'.

6.4. colours & metals

Rudimentary notes only are provided here :

roŋ	colour (a borrowed word)
gu-pu²	white
gi-sim	black
g☐ -žao	red
ga-taŋ	green, not ripe
ga-kraŋ	green
gu-rmu	yellow
gu-rmu g☐ -ra²	dark yellow ('old yellow')
ga-kraŋ gisim	blue ('black green')
ga-kraŋ gi-li	light green (young (as of leaves) green)
ser	metal, iron
g☐ žao	gold ('red')
gu²pu²	silver
tamar	copper (< Ass. or Beng.)
gãhã	brass, bell-meatl (<Ass or Beng.)

6.5. times and dates

A 'day' is *basaiŋ* or *saiŋ*, which also means 'sun'. A good rhyme is *daiŋ* 'moon' but 'night' is *hor*. *Badaiŋ* means 'month'. A 'year' is *maitai* and has to do with crop-time (*mai* 'crop, paddy').

¶ 'time'

3 days ago

All time phrases that follow are usually (but not always) marked with the locative *-ha*.

manaŋ g☐ da-ha	in the very old days	(see *manaŋ* below)
g☐ da-ha	in the olden days	*g☐ da* 'old'
tamni-ha	on the 3ʳᵈ day next	*tam* '3'-D
agasika	the day before yesterday	
mija-ha	yesterday (often prononuced *mjaha*)	
di²ni²-ha	to-day	
da²kna²-ha	to-morrow	
soni-ha	the day after to-morrow	

The contrast between 'before' and 'after' is also a rhyme :

manaŋ (-ha)	before
danaŋ (-ha)	after
du-ha	now

This *du-* may be compared with the verbal suffix of Actual present <Apt> *-du*.

For 'last month' & 'next month' one can say *manaŋ-ni badaiŋ-ha* & *danaŋ-ni badaiŋ-ha*, but perhaps more commonly : 'last month' *lailaŋjaba badaiŋha* and 'next month' *pai²ginjaba badaiŋha*, which can be explained :

lai-laŋ-jaba   pai²-gin-jaba

come-¶-VNgc