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ABSTRACT
This paper looks into the derivation of nominals in Biate at the word and sentence levels. This derivational process is productive compared to the nominalized clauses in the language. Nominalization is a key phenomenon in Kuki-Chin syntax. Languages like Hrangkhol, Khelma, Hmar and others mainly has open syllabic structure like *–pa, -na, -tu* etc as a nominalizer to derive nominals both at the word and clausal level. Biate has three morphological nominalizers: *-tu, -na, -a* and a zero morpheme which derives nominals at the word level. At the clausal level, the nominalizer *–a* and the zero morphemes are used. Unlike Kuki-Chin languages, the use of gender marker is not seen in case of Biate. Biate also lacks distal and proximal demonstratives common in Kuki-Chin languages. The relative clause markers in the Tibeto Burman languages behave as the nominalizer, Biate has a null relativizer. Nominalization process in Biate differ from Khelma, Hrangkhol, Hmar and others. This paper will provide a detailed account of the nominalization process in Biate.

KEYWORDS
Endangered language, Biate, nominalization, relative clause

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Nominalization in Biate[1]

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1 Introduction

Biate is spoken in the Dima Hasao district, former North Cachar Hills, of Assam, in the Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya and some parts of Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. In Dima Hasao district the Biate speakers reside in Fiangpui, Old Sangbar, Thingdol, Khobak, Lengpui, Vaitang, Mualdam, Kothlier villages (Brahma & Boro, 2017: 86).
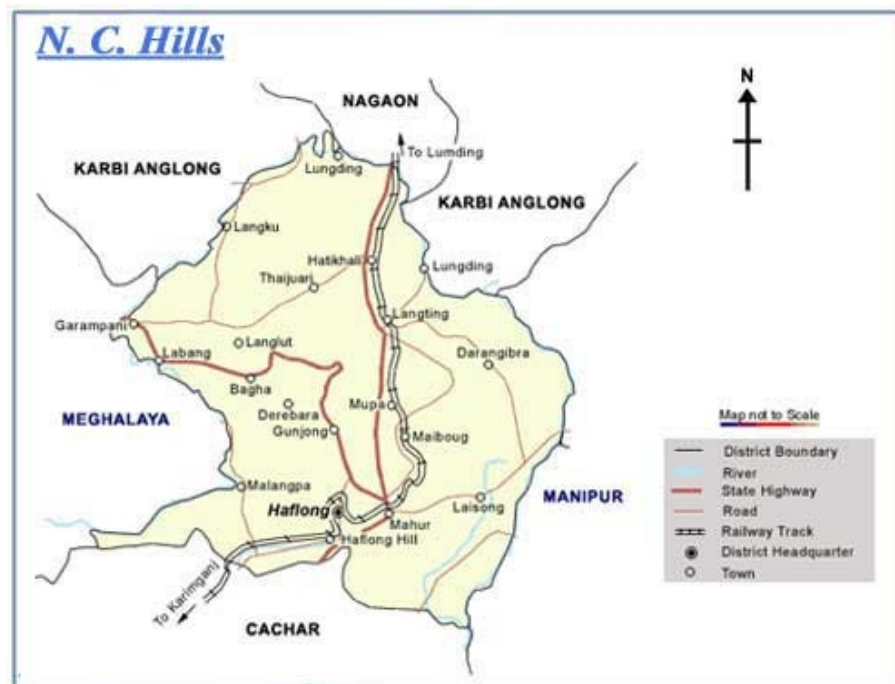
Figure 1 – Map of Dima Hasao District Source: http://nrhmdimahaso.gov.in/map.htm

Dima Hasao District is surrounded by Karbi Anglong district and Nagaland in the North-East, Manipur in the East, Hojai District in the North, West Karbi Anglong district on North-west, Meghalaya in the west and Cachar district in South. As per Ethnologue (2016) the population of the Biate speakers is 19000 in Northeast India. According to the locals the population of the Biate in Dima Hasao District of Assam is around 6500 approximately. Census report 2011 does not show Biate population count. As per SIL, Biate population is 19000 in North-East India.

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[1]The paper *Nominalization in Biate* was presented at the Himalayan Languages Symposium (HLS) 25 at University of Sydney from 28 to 29 June 2019.

Biate is recognized as a Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. It has five clans viz, Ngamlai, Nampui, Darnei, Lalsim (Ngirsim) and Thiate. As per UNESCO report Biate language is definitely endangered. Linguists working on South Central languages have classified Biate under a number of sub-groups. Grierson (1904) states Biate language belongs to the Old Kuki sub- group of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Shafer (1955) classifies Biate as a Western unit of the old Kukish group. Post and Burling (2017) validates Van Bik's position (2007) which classifies Kuki-Chin languages into three groups: i) Central, ii) Maraic, and iii) North-Western and Peripheral. According to them, Biate belongs to the Central group. Simons and Fennig (2018) also considers Biate to be a Central– Kuki language: Biate>Mizo>Central-Kuki>Tibeto-Burman.

2 Nominalization in Tibeto-Burman Languages

Tibeto-Burman languages illustrates a typological syndrome found in a number of families throughout the world, characterized by verb-final constituents patterns and syntax, which is substantially centred on verb serialization (Matisoff 1969; DeLancy 1991) and nominalization (Matisoff 1972) According to La Polla (2008:46-66) nominals in Rawang, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in North of Kachin, Myanmar, uses the following strategies to derive a nominal as well as a nominal clause:

  i. the locative nominalizer,
 ii. the agentive nominalizer,
iii. nominalization by distal demonstrative,
 iv. nominalization by infinitival marker,
  v. nominalization by classifier or plural marker.

The nominalizer -pa is the oldest Bodish and Tibeto-Burman, nominalizer and is associated with perfectivity in most of the Bodish (DeLancy 2005). The nominalizer -pa, -pu and -nu which are also a gender marker is very common in Kuki-Chin languages like Hrangkhol and Khelma spoken in Dima Hasao, District of Assam.

In (1) and (2) there are examples of the nominalizers – nu and -pu deriving lexical nominals from verbs like mantsu 'read' and maziek 'writer' respectively, in Khelma. (Author 2021:111).

(1) *kei-ma   mantsu-nu   ka-riet*
     1-SG   teach-NMZ.F   1SG-know
     I know / knew female teacher.
     I know / knew the teacher.

(2) *ma maziek-pu-n   a-lekhabu   a-nin-pe:k*
     def write-NMLZ.M-ERG   3SG.POSS book   3SG-1PL-give
     'The writer gives /gave his book to us.'

According to Genetti (2011) in Monseng Ao a Kuki-Chin language has two nominalizers: *tə* and *paʔ* where *tə* is a prefix and *paʔ* is a suffix. The nominalizers *tə* and *paʔ* are used to derive lexical nominals. In (3) we have an instance of lexical nominalization. In (3) we find both the nominalizers *tə* and *paʔ* occur together to derive a nominal from the verb khəlem. To

derive a nominalized clause the nominalizer *paʔ* is used. In (4) we have an instance of a nominal clause being derived by the nominalizer *paʔ* followed by the proximal i 'this'. The Mongsen Ao sentences are taken from Coupe 2007:237.

(3) *[muŋsən-əɹ   tə-khəlem-paʔ]*NP
     Mongsen-GEN   NMZ-worship-NMZ
     'Mongsen person's manner of worship'

(4) *[tsɘ̀hŋi ku   hwaŋ-əkə   mən-paʔ   i]*NP   *aɹu-ɘ̀ɹ-uʔ*
     sun LOC   roast-SIM   sit-NOMZ   PROX   be.good-PRES-DEC
     This sitting [and] bathing in the sun is good.

3 Typological features of Biate

In this section we look at the typological features of Biate. These features are enumerated below:

   i. Biate is canonically a SOV language.
  ii. Morphologically, the language is agglutinating and partly inflectional.
 iii. Biate follows future versus non-future tense system.
  iv. The TAM features inflect to the verb.
   v. Biate has a rich agreement system. In Biate sentences, the agreement markers are prefixed to the finite verbs.
  vi. Biate is a pro-drop language. The status of the pronominal is determined by the corresponding agreement markers.
 vii. Biate shows split-ergativity.

In examples (5 -11) we provide a few examples to show the tense and agreement system that operate in the language.

3.1. Future versus non-future

In Biate the future sense is marked by the morpheme *'raŋ'* (5). The overt future tense marker follows the declarative marker *-t* and the agreement marker *ei-* prefixes to the copula *ni* 'be'.

(5) *eima-ni   mastor   ei-ni-t-raŋ*
     1-PL   teacher   1PL-be-DECL-FUT
     'We will be teachers.'

In contrast the non-future tense does not take any overt morphological marker to indicate the present and past tense distinction. The non-future sentence in (6) can be interpreted as either present or past depending on the context in which it is used.

(6) *keima-ni   bu   ei-nek*
     1-PL   rice   1PL-eat
     'We eat / ate rice.'

3.2. Agreement

In examples (5) and (6) we observe the subject agrees with the verbs for number and person. In (7a-c), the singular pronominal subjects take the agreement markers *ki* 'first person singular' (7a), *ni* 'second person singular' (7b) and *a* 'third person singular' (7c).

(7a) *keima   satui   ki-in*
      1SG   tea   1SG-drink
      'I drink / drank tea.'
(7b) *naŋma   satui   ni-in*
      2SG   tea   2SG-drink
      'You drink / drank tea.'
(7c) *ama   satui   a- in*
      3SG   tea   1SG-drink
      'He/She drinks / drank tea.'

In sentences (5) and (6) we have observed that the agreement marker for first person plural subject is *ei* in contrast to the first person singular *ki* in (7a). In (8a) we have the agreement marker for third person plural and in (8b) of the second person plural.

(8a) *anma-ni   satui   ei-ni*
      3-PL   tea   3PL-drink
      'They drink / drank tea'
(8b) *naŋma-ni   satui   nin-ni*
      2-PL   tea   2PL-drink
      'You all drink / drank tea.'

3.3. Personal Pronouns in Biate

To understand the agreement system in Biate properly, we need to look at the pronominal system in the language. In Table 1 we have the subject pronouns in Biate.

Person	Singular	Plural
First	keima 'I'	keima-ni 'we (exclusive)' eima-ni 'we (inclusive)'
Second	naŋma 'you' ama 'he/she/it'	naŋma-ni 'you (plural)'
Third	himpa 'he' himnu 'she'	ama-ni 'they'

Table 1 – Subject Pronoun in Biate

The first person plural form has two variants *keima-ni* 'we' which is exclusive and *eima-ni* 'we' which is inclusive. In (9a-b) we can see the exclusive and inclusive contrast.

(9a) *keima-ni-n   bu   kin-pek*   (exclusive)
      WE-PL-ERG   rice   1PL-eat
      'We ate rice.'

(9b)   *eima-ni-n*   *bu*   *ei-pek*   (inclusive)
    we-PL-ERG   rice   1PL-eat
    'We ate rice'

The third person singular pronoun has two forms: *ama* and *him* 'he/she/it'. Third person singular '*ama*' is used when there is a general reference to an entity and when there is a reference to a particular or specific situation the third person singular *him* 'he/she' occurs in a sentence. The gender markers *–pa* 'masculine' and *–nu* 'feminine' suffix to *him* to indicate the gender distinctions. In (10a) we have the third person singular pronoun *ama* in the subject position .The subject pronoun can be dropped as (10b).

(10a)   *ama*   *bu*   *a-nek*   (10b)   *bu*   *a-nek*
    s/he   rice   3SG-eat   rice   3SG-eat
    'S/he ate rice.'   'S/he ate rice.'

In (11a) and (11b) the subject pronouns *himpa* 'he' and *himnu* 'she' is obligatorily followed by the proximal *hiʔ* 'this'. The sentences in (11a) and (11b) are used in context specific situations where the pronominal subjects have to be obligatorily overt unlike *ama* 'he/she' which can be obligatorily dropped as shown in (10b).

(11a)   *him-pa*   hiʔ   *bu*   *a-nek*   (11b)   *him-nu*   hiʔ   *bu*   *a-nek*
    3-M   PROX   rice   3SG-eat   3-F   PROX   rice   3SG-eat
    'He ate rice.'   'S/he ate rice.'

(11c)   *anma-ni*   bu   *an-nek*
    3-PL   rice   3PL-eat
    'They eat rice.'

Biate is a pro-drop language. The status of the Biate pronominal subjects is determined by the agreement markers. Subject NPs agree with the verb in Person and Number. In (12a-b) we have examples of non-verbal predicate constructions. In (12a) we observe that the first person singular subject when present in the sentence; the copula *ni* 'be' is dropped. In (12b) the pronominal subject is dropped and the first person singular agreement marker *ki-* prefixes to the copula *ni* 'be' indicating the status of the subject.

(12a)   *keima*   mariam   *athra*
    1SG   human   good
    'I am a good man'

(12b)   *Mariam*   athra   *ki-ni-t*
    human   good   1SG-be-DECL
    'I am a good man'

Similarly, in (13a) when the first person plural pronominal *keimani* 'we' occurs in the subject position, the copula *ni* 'be' is obligatorily dropped. In (13b) the first person plural agreement

marker *kin* prefixes to the copula *ni* when the subject is dropped. The derived nominal *ridaitu* 'player' functions as a predicate nominal in the sentence (12) and (13).

(13a)   *keimani*   futbol   *ɾidai-tu*
      1PL   football   play-NMZ
      'We are football players'

(13b)   *futbol*   ɾidai-tu   *kin-ni-t*
      football   play-NMZ   1PL-be-DECL
      'We are football players'

The Person and Number agreement markers in Biate are shown in Table 2 below.

Person	Singular	Plural
First	ki-	kin- (exclusive) ei- (inclusive)
Second	ni-	nin-
Third	a-	an-

Table 2 – Subject Agreement markers in Biate

In the above examples we can see that the agreement marker gets prefixed to the finite verb in positive sentences. In case of negative sentences when the verb is marked for future tense, the agreement marker follows the main verb. Comparing the positive sentence in (5) which is in future tense to the negative sentence in (14), we observe that *-niŋuŋ* indicates both future tense and agreement. This bound morpheme is suffixed to the negative copula *ni-no*.

(14)   *keima-ni*   futbol   *ɾidai-tu*   *ni-no-niŋuŋ*
     1-PL   football   play-NMZ   be-NEG-1PL.FUT
     'We will not be football players.'

Our analysis of the Biate tense feature we observe that tense follows the verb as in (5). Therefore in future negative sentences the distribution of the agreement marker undergoes a change in future negative sentences. This feature needs to be examined in detail but is outside the scope of this paper.

4 Nominalization

Nominalization is a grammatical process by which nouns are derived from lexemes of different grammatical categories. Comrie and Thompson (1985:349) define nominalization as "turning something into a noun" indicating that a derivational process is involved in the formation of lexical nouns.

4.1. Nominalization at Word Level

Biate makes extensive use of this derivational process to create nominals both at the word level and at the sentence level language uses three nominalizers *-tu*, *-na* and *-a* to derive a noun

and the nominalizer *-a* to derive a nominalized clause. The language has a null nominalizer as well.

4.1.1. Nominalizer *-tu*

Nominals derived with *-tu* indicate trade, occupation, agentivity or profession of an individual. Table 3 shows some examples of the *-tu* derived nominals.

Verb root	Gloss	Deverbal Nominal	Gloss
lasak	'song'	*lasak-tu*	'singer'
lam	'dance'	*lam-tu*	'dancer'
ridai	'play'	*ridai-tu*	'player'
riliai	'swim'	*riliai-tu*	'swimmer'
lon	'drive'	*lon-tu*	'driver'
tep	'read'	*tep-tu*	'reader /-ing'
fak	'eat'	*fak-tu*	'eater/-ing'
nek	'eat'	*nek-tu*	'rice eater'
pe	'give'	*pe-tu*	'giver/-ing'
ti	'tell'	*ti-tu*	'teller/-ing'

Table 3 – Derived Nomials with –tu nominalizer

In the examples shown below the derived nominals occur in core argument position in finite clauses.

(15) *lam-tu-kha-n   bus   ata   a-trul*
      dance-NMZ-DEF-ERG   bus   from   3SG-fall
      'The dancer fell from the bus.'

(16) *lam-tu- kha   a-pa- kha   a-bem*
      dance-NMZ DEF   3SG-hand-DEF   3SG-break
      'The dancer broke his hand.'

In (15) the subject *lamtu* 'dancer' takes the definite *kha* and the ergative case *-n*. In (16) the subject argument *lamtu* does not take the ergative case. The subject *lamtu* in (15) and (16) has the semantic role of a patient. Biate has 'optional' ergativity.

Direct objects in Biate do not take overt morphological case marker irrespective of whether the NP in the direct object position is animate or not. In (16) the [- animate] object NP *apa-kha* 'his hand' and the [+ animate] direct object NP *lasak-tu* 'the singer' are not case marked.

(17) *zon-an   lasak-tu   a-thla*   SOV
      John-ERG   song sing-NMZ   3SG-saw
      'John saw the singer.'

Direct object NPs whether derived as in (17) or non-derived nominal as in (18). Do not take overt accusative case marker.

(18) *lalrem-a   chongi   a-bem*   SOV
      lalrem-ERG   Chongi   3SG-hit
      'Lalren hit Chongi.'

Indirect objects in Biate too are not morphologically case marked. In (19) the derived nominal occupies the indirect object position having the thematic role of a *recipient*. The indirect object, like the direct objects in (17) and (18) do not take an overt morphological case marker.

(19) *lalrem-a   lasak-tu   puan   a-pek-tak*
      Lalrem-ERG   song-sing-NMZ   traditional scarf   3SG-give-perf
      'Lalrem gave a puan to the singer.'

In (20) the non-derived nominal *pu* 'grandfather' in the indirect object position do not take a morphologically overt case marker.

(20) *lalrem-a   pu   puan   a-pek-tak*
      Lalrem-ERG   grandfather   traditional scarf   3SG-give-perf
      'Lalrem gave a puan to grandfather.

Form the above examples, we can say that the core cases like nominative and accusative are not morphologically marked. While the ergative case is overtly marked as *-a, -n* and *-an* respectively in the language, optionally. The above examples (15-20) show the instances of 'optional' ergativity. In Biate the intransitive sentences, the subject in (15) takes ergative case which is suffixed to the definite marker *kha*. The nouns in the subject position of the transitive sentences may or may not take the ergative marker irrespective of verb types or its degree of control over the verb. The direct object and indirect object has no overt case marking. Biate do not have an overt possessive case marker. In (16) prefix a- is juxtaposed with *pa* 'hand' deriving *apa* 'his/her hand' Biate uses definite marker *-k^{h}a* which suffixes to *apa* to give an complete NP *a-pa-k^{h}a*.

4.1.2. Null Nominalizer

Biate can derive a nominal with a null nominalizer. These nominals can occur in core argument positions as in (21) and (22) where we have examples *inrimu* 'sleep' and *tui riliai* 'swim' without an nominalizer. An over nominalizer verbs, which functions as a nominalas shown in (21) and (22). These examples are an instance of Biate deriving a noun from a verb without an overt nominalizer.

(21) *inrimu ki-duh*   OV
      sleep   1SG-like
      Lit: 'I like to sleep.'
      'I like sleeping.'

(22) *tui   riliai   ki-nuam*   OV
      water   swim   1SG-love
      Lit: I love to swim.'
      'I love swimming.'

4.1.3. Nominalizer *-na*

The nominalizer marker *-na* derives nominals which indicate activities or the location where the activities take place. In Table 4, we have some examples of the *-na* derived nominals.

Verb	Gloss	Nominal	Gloss
fak	'eat'	*fak-na*	'act of eating'
in	'drink'	*in-na*	'act of drinking'
tep	'study'	*tep-na*	'act of study'
lam	'dance'	*lam-na*	'act of dance'

Table 4 – Derivation of nominals with –*na* and –*tu*

We have observed the nominalizer –*tu* derives nominals referring to the occupation, trade and profession of an entity. In (23) the verb *risei* 'study' obligatorily takes the nominalizer –*na* to derive *riseina* to indicate the activity of study. The nominalizer –*na* can derive nominals to indicate activities like study, dance etc. compared to the –*na* nominalizer the nominalizer –*tu* is less productive.

(23) *william-a   risei-na-aʔ   a-thiam*
      William-ERG   study-NMZ-LOC   3SG-expert
      'William is good in studies'

(24) *ram   risei-na   raŋin   ikhom   a-tho   thei*
      Ram   study-NMZ   POSP   anything   3SG-do   can
      'Ram can do anything for studies.

(25) *lalɾem-a   risei-tu   t͡sha-kan   malam   a-pan-mai*
      lalrem-ERG   study-NMZ   good-ADV   forward   3SG-move-PROG
      Lit: 'Lalren is moving good in learning.'
      'Lalren is doing good with studies.

In (23) the derived nominal obligatorily takes the locative case *-aʔ* to form an oblique argument and in (24) *riseina* takes the postposition *raŋin* 'for' to form an oblique argument.

5 The Nominalized clause and the nominalizer *-a*

The nominalizer *-a* normally derives nominals which occur in oblique argument position. These oblique arguments also indicate an activity. In § 5.1 we look into the derivation of an oblique argument and in § 5.2 that of the derivation of a nominalized clause.

5.1. Nominalizer *-a* in oblique arguments

In (26) we have two derived nominals; the verb *tui riliai* 'swim' takes the nominalizer *-a* and the verb *neh* 'win' takes the nominalizer *-na*, where the derived nominal *tui riliai-a* functions

as an adjunct indicating an activity and the other derived nominal *neh-na* a theme argument, functions as object having the thematic role of a theme.

(26) tui   riliai-a   neh-na   a-chang
      water   swim-NMZ   win-NMZ   3SG-become
      Lit: 'He became winner of swimming'
      'He won the swimming competition.'

Comparing sentence (26) with sentences (21) and (22) in §3.1.2, we note that the nominals derived with a null nominalizer *inrimu* 'sleeping' and *tui riliai* 'swimming' occur in a core argument positions, whereas *tui riliai-a* with the nominalizer *-a* occurs in an oblique argument position.

5.2. Nominalizer *-a* in Biate nominalized clauses

In (27) we have a complex sentence, where the nominalizer *-a*, derives a nominalized clause *satui in-a* 'tea drinking'. The nominalized clause is non-finite and acts as an adjunct. There is another nominalized clause *mei kol-aʔ trung hiʔ* 'sitting by the fire'. This clause does not take the nominalizer *-a* but the proximal *hiʔ* 'this' in the clause final position indicates its nominal clause status. It is non-finite and functions as an adjunct too. The main clause is *ei-toksa an-lum ngai* 'We make our body warm' carries the finite features.

(27) [satui in-a   [mei kol-aʔ   trung-hiʔ   [ei-toksa   an-lum-ngai]]]
      tea   drink-NMZ   fire near-LOC   sit-PROX   1.POSS-body CAUS-hot-HAB
      'Drinking tea and sitting near fire makes our body warm'.

The complex sentence in (27) has two non-finite nominalized clause embedded inside the finite main clause. In (27) the habitual marker *ŋai* indicates this activity of drinking tea near the fireside is a regular feature and is context specific.

In (28) we look at the clauses that form a complex sentence in (27) in detail. In (28a) we have the finite clause where the possessive pronoun *ei* 'our' prefixes to *toksa* 'body', *ei toksa* is the direct object having the thematic role of a *theme*, The adjective *lum* 'hot / warm' takes the causative marker *in-* as a prefix which is preceded by the first person plural agreement marker *kin-* to indicate the status of the pronominal subject in the sentence. In (28a) the habitual marker *ŋai* does not occur.

(28a) ei-toksa   kin-in-lum
       1PL.POSS-body   1PL-CAUS-hot
       'We make our body warm.'

In (28b) we have the finite clause in progressive which is derived into a nominalized clause *mei kol-aʔ trung hiʔ* 'sitting near the fire' when the proximal demonstrative *hiʔ* occurs after the verb *trung* 'sit' in (27).

(28b) mei   kola-aʔ   kin-ithrung-mai
       fire   near-LOC   1PL-sit-PROG
       'We are sitting near the fire.'

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In (27) the clause *'mei kol-aʔ trung-hiʔ'* the proximal demonstrative *-hiʔ* has derived the whole clause into the non-finite nominalized clause whereas in (28 b) *-hiʔ* is substituted by the finite features namely the first person plural agreement *kin-* and the progressive *-mai* to form a finite clause.

In (28c) we have the finite clause in the progressive. With the suffixation of the nominlizer *-a* the finite clause in (28c) is derived into a nominalized clause *satui ina* 'tea-drinking' in (27).

(28c)   satui   kin-in-mai
        tea   1PL-drink-PROG
        'We are drinking tea.'

The subject of the matrix clause and the two embedded nominalized clauses is the first person plural pronominal *keimani* 'we' is obligatorily dropped. Evidence of the status of the pronominal subject comes from the overt presence of the first person plural agreement marker *kin-* which prefixes to the finite verbs *ithung*[1] 'sit'(28b) and *in* 'drink'(28c) and to the adjective *lum* 'hot' in (28a). In (27) we find the complex clause does not have an overt subject or an agreement marker, the presence of the possessive pronouns in Biate *ei* 'our' establishes the status of the subject of both the matrix clause and the two embedded nominalized clauses. The embedded nominalized clauses operate as adjuncts.

In (29) we have another example of a nominalized clause derived with the suffixation of the nominalizer *–a*, to the compound verb *hong chung* 'come reach'. The subject of the nominalized clause is dropped and the Second Person agreement marker *ni-* prefixes to the copula *ni* 'be' of the main clause. Indicating agreement markers affixes only to finite verbs. In (29) *hong chung-a* 'arriving' is non-finite so the second person agreement *ni-* prefixes to the copula *ni* 'be' of the finite matrix clause. In (29) the, *william* in the matrix clause agrees with the main verb *rikhel* and the copula is prefixed by the object pronoun clitic *ni*. Here *rikhel* undergoes morphophonemic change to form *arkhel* when the third person singular agreement marker *a-* is prefixed to it. In embedded clause the instances of agreement is not observed as it is a non-finite clause. However the subject of the embedded clause can be indicated or recoverable from the corresponding agreement clitic of the main clause.

(29)   [hong chung-a   [William   a-rkhel   ni-ni-t]]
        come reach-NMZ   Willian   3SG-surprise   2SG-be-DECL
        Lit: 'You arriving William is surprised.'
        'Willian is surprised at your arrival.'

In (30a-b) below, we have two finite clauses, these two finite clauses constitutes the complex construction in (29). The embedded nominalized clause *hong chung-a* 'come-reach-NOMZ' operates as an adjunct of the matrix clause. In (30a) we have an intransitive construction where the verb *hong chung* 'arrive' takes the second person singular agreement marker to indicate the status of the obligatorily dropped pronominal subject *ni* 'you'.

(30a)   ni-hong chung
        2SG-come-reach
        'You arrived.'

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[1]Biate uses *trung / ithung* for the intransitive verb 'sit'. This variation is found in Fiangpui and Mualdam villages.

In (30 b) we have an adjectival predicate. The subject William agrees with the verb in Person and Number as is evident by the third person singular agreement marker *a-* prefixes to the copular verb *ni* 'be'.

(30b) William rikhel a-ni-t
    William surprise 3SG-be-DECL
    'William is surprised.'

When both (30a) and (30b) combine to form the complex clause as in (29), the finite intransitive verb *hong chung* 'arrive' becomes non-finite as is evident with the nominalizer *-a* suffixed to it. The agreement marker prefixed to copular verb *ni* 'be' is *a-* in (30b). However, in (29) the matrix verb *ni* 'be' takes the second person singular *-ni-* not the third person singular *a-*, indicating the status of the subject of the nominalized clause is realized on the finite verb. One thing is evident from this data that agreement markers prefix only to finite verbs and not to a derived nominal. The third person singular agreement marker *-a* prefixs to *rikhel* 'surprise' in (29).

5.3. Interim Observation

Going by the nominalization process in the Kuki-Chin language, we find Biate uses two overt nominalizers: *-tu* and *-na* and the null nominalizer to derive nouns at the word level. At clausal level it takes the nominalizer *-a*. In nominalized clauses Biate takes the nominalizer *-a* and the null nominalizer followed is by the demonstrative *hiʔ*. Table 5 below shows the nominalizers used in Biate and the argument positions these derived nominals occur in.

Nominalizers	Core Argument	Oblique Argument
-tu	√	√
-na		√
null	√	√
-a		√

Table 5 – Nominalizers in Biate

6 Relative clause in Biate

Relative clauses modify an argument, whereas a nominalized clause provides extra information and functions as an adjunct. In the preceding sections we have observed that the derived nominals can sit either in core argument position or in oblique argument position carrying a thematic role; in case of derived nominal clauses they occur as adjuncts. Tibeto-Burman languages normally take the nominalizer markers to derive relative clauses. In Biate, the nominalizer *-tu*, *na-* and null nominalizers are used to derive a relative clause. When the relative clause does not take an overt nominalizer it is followed by a definite marker *kha*, In § 5.1 we look at the nominalizer *-tu* in a relative clause and in 4.2 we have the nominalizer *-na* in relative clause construction.

6.1. Nominalizer *-tu* in Relative clause

In (31) we have a Biate non-finite relative clause. The complex sentence in (31) constitutes a copula sentence as the main clause and the derived relative clause as the embedded or subordinate clause.

(31) lekhabu [relcl ne pe-tu-kha] a-lian.
      book me give-NMZ-DEF 3SG-big
      Lit: 'The book he giving me is big.
      'The book that he gave me is big.'

In (32) we have the finite clauses. In (32a) we have the adjectival predicate and in (32b) the finite di-transitive clause.

(32a) lekhabu lian   (32b) ne lekhabu a-pe
       book big   me book 3SG-give
       'The book is big.'   'He gave me a book.'

When the nominalizer *-tu* and the definite marker *kha* suffixes to the ditransitive verb *pe* 'give'; it transforms the finite clause to a non-finite relative clause as in (31). In the process of the derivation the direct object of the di-transitive clause (32b) is dropped. The derived relative clause occurs immediately after the subject NP *lekhabu* 'book' giving an NP-Rel.Cl word order. The structure of the relative clause is shown in Figure 2.
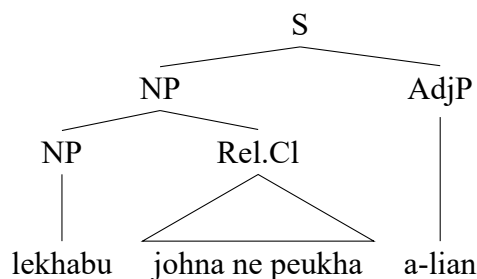

Figure 2

6.2. Nominalizer *–na* in Relative clause

Biate has one more strategy to derive a relative clause. The nominalizer *-na* when suffixed to the verb derives nominals which refer to items, location and such. In § 4.1.3, Table 4 we have shown how the *-na* nominalizer suffixes to a verb. In (33) and (34) we have instances where these derived nominals form a relative clause.

(35)　[mizana　pasal-te　ki-mu-kha]　sin-na　　　zong　　a-ni
　　　　yesterday　boy-DIM　1SG-see-DEF　work-NMZ　search　3SG-be-DECL
　　　　Lit: 'Yesterday, I seeing a young boy, searching for work.'
　　　　'The boy who I saw yesterday is looking for a job.'

(33)　tiang-im　a-risei-na　　　ki-riet
　　　　where-Q　3SG-study-NMZ　1SG-know
　　　　Lit: I know where he studying.'
　　　　'I know the place where he studies.'

(34)　bu　　　ki-nek-na　　　kheng kha　nun　　nupang　a-mu
　　　　rice　　1SG-eat-NMZ　　plate DEF　which　girl　　3SG-see
　　　　Lit: 'The girl saw the plate on which I eating rice.'
　　　　'The girl saw the plate on which I ate rice.'

In these examples we observe that question words like *tiangim* 'where' and *num* 'which' occur in the relative clauses. It is also observed that the agreement markers occur in both the relative clause and the matrix clause. In both the examples we can see that both the clauses i.e relative and matrix agrees with its corresponding subjects, similarly it can be also seen in case of co-relative clause in (34).

6.3. Null nominalizer in Relative clause

In (35) we have another example of a non-finite relative clause. The derived clause does not take a nominalizer and the relative clause is formed by the definite marker *kha*. This indicates that a relative clause can be formed in the language without a nominalizer. In (35) the subject *pasalte* 'boy' of the matrix clause is dropped. In (35) the nominalizer –*na* suffixes to the transitive verb *sin* 'work' to derive a nominal category *sinna* 'job'.

7 Conclusion

In our analysis of the nominalization processes in Biate , we observed the following features:

At the word level:

   i.　The nominalizer –tu derives word to indicate trade, profession or profession (see table 3)
  ii.　The nominalizer –na derive words to indicate activity. (see table 4)
 iii.　The null nominalizers indicates activity at the word level. (see example 21)
  iv.　The proximal demonstrative -hiʔ derives a nominal. (see example 27)
   v.　The definite marker -kha derives a nominal. (see example 35)

At the sentence level:

   i.　The nominallizers –a and null derives an adjunct clauses. (see example 29)

Abbreviations

1	first person	HAB	habitual
3	third person	LOC	locative
ADJM	adjectival marker	M	masculine
ADV	adverb	MED	medial
ADVM	adverbial marker	NMZ	nominalizer
CAUS	causative	PERF	perfective
COMPL	completion	PL	plural
DECL	declarative	POSP	postposition
DEF	definite	PROG	progressive
DIM	dimunitive	PROX	proximal
DIR	direction	Q	question particle
DISTL	distal	SG	singular
ERG	ergative		
FUT	future		

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