

SEDANG PRONOUNS

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0. Introduction
1. Pronoun functions
2. The content of 3rd-person singular pronoun gá referents
3. The determination of 3rd-person singular pronoun gá referents
4. The determination of 1st-person-exclusive dual pronoun má referents

0. Introduction. The ten principal Sedang personal pronouns are charted in the traditional manner in Chart 1. These same pronouns have also been analyzed utilizing the four features: + hearer, + speaker, + non-singular, and + non-specific number (Smith, 1969. 115-122) as shown in Chart 2. This analysis was made to relate Sedang pronouns to the Reciprocal Transformation with Prefix tɔ-, for which there is the following Pronoun Restriction for Reciprocal tɔ- Affixation Transformation:

If either Pron_i or Pron_j is marked [+ Hearer] the other must be marked [- Hearer]; similarly, if either Pron_i or Pron_j is marked [+ Speaker] the other must be marked [- Speaker].

It was not within the scope of the Smith (1969) article, however, to give consideration to the matter of pronoun reference.

Of other Vietnam languages, pronoun reference has been discussed only for Chrau (Thomas, 1971); cf. the use of the pronoun něh '3rd person' in paragraph topic (page 203-206) and in presubject focus (page 82-83). Otherwise the matter of pronoun reference has

		singular	dual	plural
1st person	exclusive	á	má	ngian
	inclusive		pá	pian
2nd person		eh	pó	
3rd person		gá	préi	vai

Chart 1. Sedang pronouns

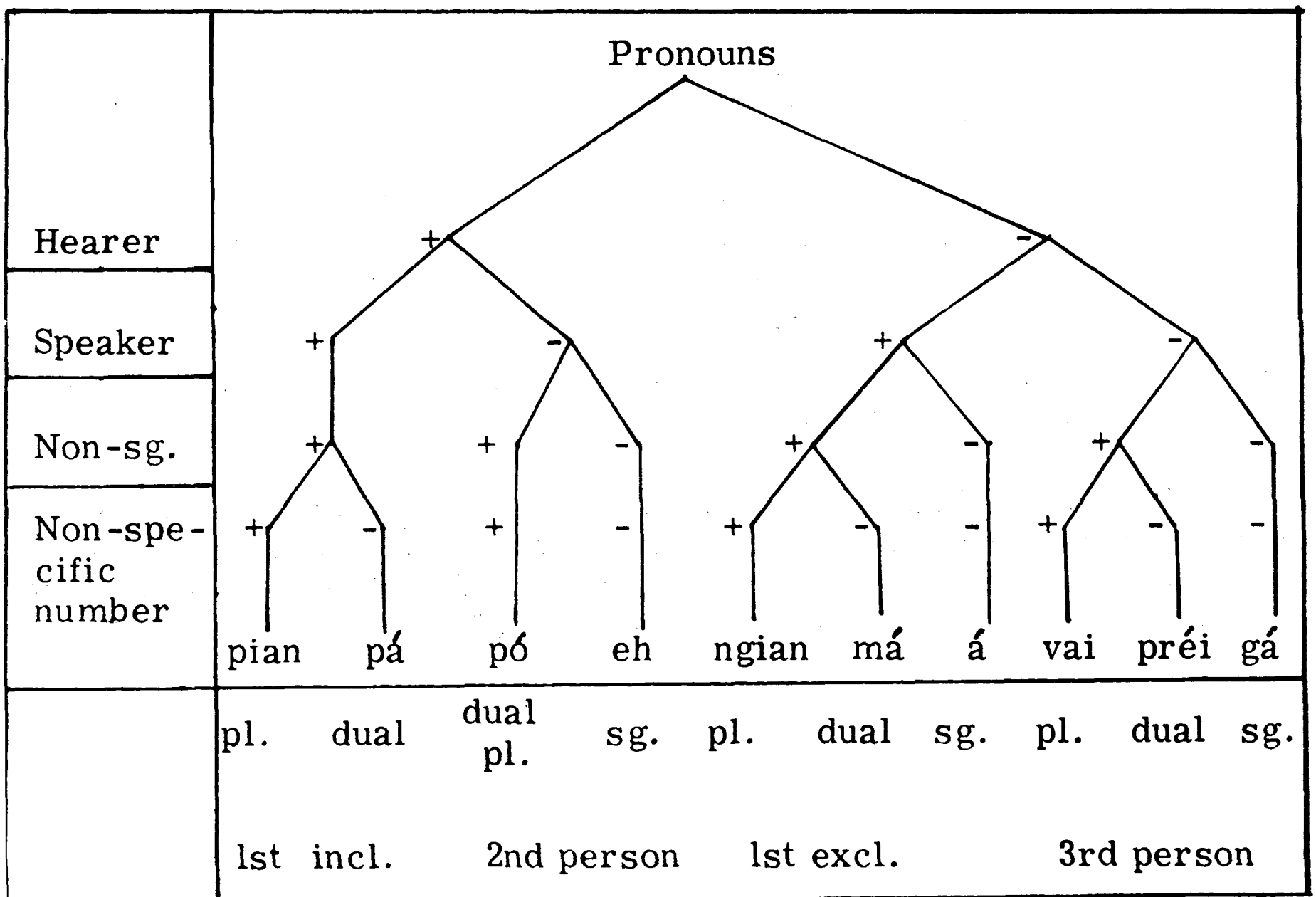


Chart 2. Sedang pronouns: feature analysis

not been described in a pronoun description for any other language of Vietnam; cf. Pacoh pronouns (Watson, 1964), Katu pronouns (Wallace, 1966), Mnong pronouns (Blood and Blood, 1966), Srê pronouns (Manley, 1972. 116f), Vietnamese pronouns (Thompson, 1965. 248ff), Brū pronouns (Miller, 1964. 44).

It is the purpose of this paper¹ to define the mechanism of some Sedang pronoun reference--or, given the occurrence of a pronoun in a Sedang text, what rules govern determination of its nominal referent. For first-inclusive and second person pronouns, this is only a matter of identification of speaker and/or hearer; this paper will discuss only two other pronouns: namely, gá 'he, she, it' and má 'we two--exclusive'.² Prior to a discussion of pronoun reference, however, it is necessary to identify the syntactic functions involving pronouns (section 1) and the semantic domain of pronoun referents (section 2).

1. Pronoun Functions. Sedang pronouns occur in the following six syntactic functions (for a fuller syntactic statement see Smith (1975)).

1.1. Subject.

- (1) A xiam gá a kó.
originally he here
'Originally he was here.'
- (2) 'Nai gá ái drei ôh.
know he has knife no
'I don't know whether he has a knife.'
- (3) Gá ái hnua.
he has sheath
'He has a sheath.'
- (4) Gá chai 'trôh a hngei.
he return approach toward house
'He went back home.'
- (5) Me gá cha preó dei pólê.
then he able return to village
'Then he can return to the village.'

1.2 Direct Object.

- (6) Vai tú gá a go tokah.
they kick him toward cliff
'They kicked him over the cliff.'
- (7) Á ko gá ai.
I chop him pti

'I just killed him.'

1.3 Indirect Object.

(8) Vai ám- gá hme.
they give him rice

'They gave him rice.'

(9) Ok gá kóchai hmeng me ai.
pour him vegetables black ptl

'She poured out some more vegetables for him.'

1.4 Object of a Preposition.

(10) Á pro kúan pa 'báng gá tê.
I make son father with him ptl

'I'll have a father-son ceremony with him.'

(11) Vai drôh hã tópuí 'báng gá.
they girls also talk with him

'The young girls also talked with him.'

(12) Ah vai ôh ta rôe ki gá.
future they not buy of him

'Thereafter they didn't buy from him.'

(13) Vai xo ki gá.
they get of him

'They got his.'

1.5 Head of a Noun Phrase.

(14) Gá kó lo hodu hódéa tai môí hơnhô me.
he this out carry all one rice house ptl

'This one is able to carry a whole rice house.'

(15) Gá me rđei.
he that strong

'That one is strong.'

1.6 Possessor.

(16) Tréng ... to kōnei gá kó.
clip ptl fingernail him this

'He clipped this one's fingernails.'

(17) Mông gá kó mông méam.
beak him this beak metal

'This one's beak was a beak of metal.'

(18) Hông gá a kô.
knife him here

'His knife is here.'

(19) Kôdrai gá chai hōda a hngei neó me.
wife him return run to house again ptl

'His wife ran home again.'

(20) Inai gá Krua me.
name him Krua ptl

'His name is Krua.'

(21) Gá me hnoi pōchan dei...vai vá gá me.
he that immediately tell to they in-laws him ptl

'He immediately told it to all his in-laws.'

2. The Content of 3rd-person Singular Pronoun gá Referents.

Sedang 3rd-person singular pronoun gá referents belong to the following categories of nouns (for a sentential referent see 3.3.5 below).

2.1 Animate.

(a) Natural, both humans and animals (all the pronouns used in examples (1) through (21) above are of this type)

(22) Pôitá ái kōnái mot ka ôh bâu me.
don't have rat enter eat no rice that

Gá ôi to kōja tê.
he stay ptl husks only

'Don't have rats enter and eat the rice. They stay outside with husks only.'

(b) Supernatural, i.e. ghosts, spirits

(23) Kia Chai Kliam me gá ái 'nai ôh.
ghost sick liver that he aux know not

'That Sick Liver Ghost, he didn't know it.'

(c) Fictitious, i.e. story animals

(24) Drôh ket dro kô a xiam gá a kô.
girl frog this originally she here

'Originally the frog girl, she was here.'

2.2 Inanimate, i.e. things of nature

(25) Ngo Éang gá a kô.
mount Eang it here

'Mount Eang (Ngok Linh), it's here.'

below, technically identifies the referent of gá in the following sentence as chó 'dog', but the intervening five sentences is sufficient span to require repetition of the referent by anticipatory pronominalization.

- (30) Chó...gá...gá... (5 sentences)...Me gá chó...
 dog he he then he dog

3.1.3 Ambiguous Referent. Anticipatory pronominalization is used if application of a following rule would give an incorrect referent. For example, a text may have a major topic identifying each pronoun gá (see section 3.3 below). But if a minor topic has been inserted since the last preceding pronoun of the major topic, then, to avoid ambiguous or mis-identification, anticipatory pronominalization is used to clarify or restate the referent.

- (31) Tea Mih me gá lo pêng PiPho
 river Mih that it out above PiPho
 a tai neó. Gá trôh Tea Mekong. Me
 up more it approach river Mekong that
 vai khên tea toxĩ. Gá tea hiáng
 they call water ocean it river already
 lui me ai.
 finish ptl

'That Mih River flows out above PiPho way up there. It goes into the Mekong River, which they call the ocean. That river (Mih) is all done then.'

3.2 Identical Phrase Pronominalization. If the pronoun is in an attributive position in a noun phrase whose noun head is identical to a previous (but recent) noun phrase, the referent of the pronoun will be the attributive aspect of that previous noun phrase, despite what may have intervened; or

$$R_{gá} = N_2 / \#N_1 N_2 \dots N_1 \underline{\quad}$$

- (32) Xuán kó gá xúa. Vai u ái
 Vietnamese this he clever they still have
tó kang lóang nah... Gá xo péang ki
 branch tree formerly he get side poss
 hlá, péang ki tó kang gá me vai
 leaves side poss branch it then they
 Chiang kô kro kô mớ dróng me.
 become ptl rich ptl rich ptl

'These Vietnamese are clever. They got the branches... They got the end with the leaves, the end with its leaves, so they have become very rich.'

3.3 Topic Pronominalization. Except as either of the two above rules may overrule, the referent of a pronoun in the subject slot will be the topic of the discourse at that point. The topic is determined by one of the following five means, though not necessarily unambiguously.

3.3.1 Immediate Subject. The topic may be the subject of the immediate (present) sentence in which case the pronoun directly follows the subject noun phrase; or

$$R_{gá} = N_1 / \#N_1 \underline{\quad}$$

- (33) Xúan k^ó g^á xúa.
Vietnamese this he clever

'These Vietnamese, they're clever.'

- (34) Ngo Éang g^á a k^ó.
mount Eang it here

'Mount Eang, it is here.'

- (35) Lóang me g^á páng húan xak xoa.
tree that it able grow hair chest

'Those trees--they could grow chest-like hair.'

- (36) Rótéang g^á ái kuat cho.
Sedang it has comm. house certainly

'The Sedang, they of course have a communal house.'

3.3.2 Subject of Previous Sentence. The immediate topic may be the subject of the previous sentence; or

$$R_{gá} = N_1 / \#N_1 \dots \# \underline{\quad}$$

- (37) Konhóng préi t^óch^{uam} ti k^ó. G^á
headwater those two together like this it

péang páng Dúan tá.
side by Duan that

'The headwaters of those two (rivers) come together like this. It's near the Duan people.'

- (38) Gá pa xéang va 'nhie dei kong.
it father spirit want destroy ptl earth

K^ó g^á pro kong i lém néo.
this he make earth ptl good again

'God wanted to destroy the earth. Now he makes the earth good again.'

3.3.3 Subject of Previous Embedded Sentence. The immediate topic may be the subject of an embedded sentence within the previous sentence; or:

$R_{gá} = N_1/\#\dots(N_1\dots\#)\dots\# \underline{\quad}$

(39) Pôi ta ái kônái mot ka ôh bâu
don't have rat enter eat no rice

me. Gá ối to kớja tê.
that he stay ptl husk only

'(We) don't let rats enter and eat the rice.
They stay among the husks only.'

(40) Me pian cha ka rókái... mot. Me ching
and we able permit wild pig enter but if

pian ta pro sớng... gá pak tro ôh.
we not make spike it stab no

'And we can let the wild pigs enter. But if
we haven't made spikes it won't get stabbed.'

3.3.4 Object of Previous Sentence. The immediate topic may be the object noun phrase of the previous sentence; or:

$R_{gá} = N_1/\#\dots N_1\# \underline{\quad}$

(41) Khén vai ko lóang nah, lóang kan
say they chop tree formerly tree big

nah. Kói gá tốngia tê...
formerly top it up

'(They) say they once chopped a tree, a big tree.
Its top (fell) heading up-land...'

(42) ...vai ôh ta khoh ka chó me nah
they not permit eat dog ptl formerly

xúa gá u pro kúan mớngế.
because it ptl made child person

'It was taboo to eat dog, because it has given birth
to a human child.'

3.3.5 Previous (whole) Sentence. The immediate topic may be the entire previous sentence; or:

$R_{gá} = S_1/\#S_1\# \underline{\quad}$

(43) Pôi ta lôi ôh trítang 'di'do. Gá ôh ta lém.
don't leave no straw always it not good

'Don't leave the straw (in the wine) all the time.
It's not good (to do that).'

(44) Pian pei chiak. Gá hiáng kei ki me pôi.
we work field it already fin-like that ptl
ish

'We work in the field. And it's all done just like that.'

3.4 Successive Pronominalization. If none of the above three rules pertain, then the referent of the pronoun gá is, in successive fashion, the same as the referent of the (recently) preceding pronoun, unless that pronoun belongs to an inserted, intervening minor topic in which case that pronoun is used. This may be an iterative process whereby a series of successive pronouns will be extending the pronoun referent through a number of sentences. In one case in text the same pronoun referent is extended with the use of ten gá through 18 sentences; in another case with fourteen gá through 36 sentences. Thus:

$R_{gá} = R_{gá_1} / gá_1 \dots \#(\dots \#) \underline{\quad}$

The actual identification of the referent, of course, ultimately is dependent upon one of the preceding rules and the first pronoun occurring in the series. Determination of pronoun referents by this rule accounts for about two-thirds of all pronoun occurrence, because of the frequent repetitious or successive use of pronouns.

(45) ... gá pak tro ôh. Ti me gá lóhla.
 it stab not like that it die

Gá va lo ka báu me ah. Ti
 it want enter eat rice future like

me. Me gá ka reh.
 that but it eat live

'...It (an animal) doesn't get stabbed.
 That's how it dies. It wants to enter and
 eat rice. It eats to live.'

3.5 Ambiguous Pronominalization. Sometimes application of the above rules does not definitively identify a pronoun referent. There may be multiple or ambiguous choices. In such cases the referent is determinable by deduction from the context.

(46) Me chó me kônôu ?. Môngé me kódrai ?.
 and dog that husband person that wife

Préi pro dei pó. Préi xo ti me
 those make together those get like that
 two two

u páng ái kúan ái vai 'néng kódrai ?.
 pti able have child have baby girl

neó. Me gá thé dei kúan tókreó dei pa.
 more and ? said to child call to father

'And the dog was the husband. The person was the wife. Those two lived together and so had a child, a baby girl. And (he/she/it)? told the child to call its father.'

The above rules would not clarify whether the referent of the pronoun gá is the husband/father, wife, or child. By deduction, however, it cannot be the child who is being addressed nor the father to whom following reference is made; thus it is the wife.

'...and she told the child to call its father.'

3.6 Illustration of Rule Application. The following example illustrates some pronoun referent identification as rule applications interact or overlap within a given context.

- (47) (S1) $\frac{Vó}{jar}$ $\frac{kan_1}{big}$ hã. (S2) Ching $\frac{gá_1}{it}$ 'nang kó me ôu
 pún pótám hài xuan ôi lém ti me... (S3) Ching pian
 toh tea me pian tah $\frac{triáng_2}{straw}$. (S4) Pian chôu $\frac{gá_2}{it}$
 (S5) $\frac{Pôi ta lôi ôh triáng}{don't\ leave\ the\ straw\ in\ always}$ $\frac{3}{3}$
 (S6) $\frac{Gá_3}{it}$ ôh ta lém. (S7) Me kóđó $\frac{gá_1}{it}$ cham
 vai xa hlá, hlá xá.

'Big jars₁ also. If it₁ is really big to drink four or five days it stays good. If we add water then we take out the straw₂. We put it₂ away. Don't leave the straw in all the time.₃ That₃ is not good. And it's bottom is stuffed with xá leaves.'

The referent of gá₁ in sentence 2 (S2) is identified as "the big jar", which is the immediate topic as subject of the previous sentence (3.3.2). The referent of gá₂ in S4 is identified as "the straw", which is the immediate topic as object of the previous sentence (3.3.4). The referent of gá₃ in S6 is identified as "don't leave the straw in all the time.", which is the immediate topic as the previous whole sentence (3.3.5). The gá₁ in S7 is in an attributive position with kóđó, "its bottom"; its referent is the jar of S1 which is both (a) the overall topic (skipping over other intervening minor topics) and (b) the closest preceding noun which can be attributive to kóđó 'bottom'.

4. The Determination of 1st-person Exclusive Dual Pronoun má Referents. Half of the referent of the 1st-person exclusive dual pronoun má 'he and I' is the speaker himself. Question here then pertains to the determination of the non-speaker aspect. This depends upon whether the non-speaker referent is actually present with the speaker. In those cases where the non-speaker referent is present with the speaker, the referent of the dual exclusive pronoun is clearly the speaker and his companion.

- (48) 'Bok xôi eng ah khên: "Eh a hôm va ngế ki kô?"
 "Ô, á va. Má u hơdró dei pó nah."
 'The priest then asks: "Do you want this person?"
 "Oh, I do want him. We two were engaged some
 time ago.'"
- (49) Préi cháu khên: "Eh loka má."
 'The two grandchildren said, "You're going to eat
 the two of us.'"

If the non-speaker referent is not present with the speaker, there is in the discourse information given to permit identification of the non-speaker referent. Such information may be given by stating explicitly to whom reference is being made by using a phrase such as:

- má o 'my younger brother/sister and I'
 má nhóng 'my brother-in-law and I'
 má Gua 'Gua and I'
 má mai eh 'your brother-in-law and I'

Or, the non-speaker referent will be identified by and equated to a third-person pronoun reference in the (recently) previous discourse.

- (50) Ôh. Gá óh ta xók 'báng kơđố óh. Gá xo chém
má kleh tung xiam kơlá.
 'No. He wasn't fooling around with anybody. He was
 getting a bird which we two had dropped in the bamboo
 clump.'

FOOTNOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper, first written for a syntax course requirement, was read by Richard Smaby and David Thomas, whose comments are appreciatively acknowledged.
2. The pronouns ngian 'all of us--not you', préi 'those two' and vai 'they' are also eligible for this type of study, but have not yet been included. Their referents include larger groups which usually are not as subject to misunderstanding or question.

The basis of this study is a 27,000-word corpus of Sedang folklore texts obtained from two Sedang informants, Bé and Hmôu, in Kontum, South Vietnam, during May and June, 1969. A word-con-

cordance of the text was compiled by the University of Oklahoma Computer Laboratory with their IBM 1410 Computer by the Linguistic Information Retrieval Project of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Oklahoma Research Institute, and sponsored by Grant CS-934 of the National Science Foundation. This concordance was used for all examples cited in this paper. All occurrences of the pronoun má (51 times) but only about 12% of the 1334 occurrences of gá were studied.

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