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BOOK REVIEW

Andy Chi-on Chin. *Cantonese GIVE and Double-Object Construction*. Studies in Chinese Language and Discourse vol. 15. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2022. XIV + 262 pp. ISBN 9789027211040 (hb) / 9789027257802 (e-book)

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This book is a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation (Chin, 2009). There are two parts to this book. Part I (Chapters 1 to 4), titled "Grammaticalization of GIVE in Cantonese", discusses issues surrounding the synchrony and diachrony of [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' in Hong Kong Cantonese.[1] Part II (Chapters 5 to 8), titled "Word order change in Cantonese double-object constructions", discusses issues surrounding the order of direct object [DO] and indirect object [IO] in double-object clauses in Cantonese and other Chinese dialects.

[1] Conventions used in this review mostly follow those found in the book: a) Standard and Běijīng Mandarin are transcribed using Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, while Cantonese and other Sinitic varieties are transcribed using IPA. Some Sinologist phonetic symbols used in the book are transformed into standard IPA here: [ʼ] > [^{h}] for aspiration, [ɪ] > [ɪ] for lax high front unrounded vowel. Tone markings are often left out in the book; this is avoided here as much as possible; b) "Chinese dialects" refers to the speech varieties of the Sinitic language family, i.e. descendants of Old Chinese. "Chinese dialects" is a common translation of *Hànyǔ fāngyán* 漢語方言; nonetheless, one has to note that the Western concept of *dialect* versus *language* and the Chinese concept of *fāngyán* 方言 versus *yǔyán* 語言 are quite different from each other (see, e.g., DeFrancis, 1984; Mair, 1991).

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Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter which lays out a number of fundamental concepts. GIVE is a prominent three-participant verb which is probably found in all languages; its semantics involves an entity being transferred from a GIVER to a RECIPIENT. Other than the basic GIVE verb like [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' in Cantonese and *gěi* 給 'give' in Mandarin, there are also less-typical three-participant verbs like [kau^{33}] / *jiāo* 教 'teach'. These are the [+GIVE] verbs: the GIVER is in some sense viewed as the initiator of the transfer. (In contrast to the [+DEPRIVE] verbs, like [tʰɐu^{55}] / *tōu* 偷 'steal', of which the transfer is initiated by the RECIPIENT.) The author then examines a number of terms used by different linguists to describe GIVE constructions. The most important point for us here is that the author considers *double-object construction* a ditransitive construction which involves the semantic roles of THING and RECIPIENT.[2] *Ditransitive construction* is a wider concept; it includes three-place predicates with semantic roles other than THING and RECIPIENT, for instance [kiu^{33}] 叫 'call' in [ŋɔ^{13} kiu^{33} kʰɵy^{13} wɔŋ^{11} kɪŋ^{55}lei^{13}] 我叫佢黃經理 (I call s/he Wong manager) 'I call him/her Manager Wong' (e.g. in a work setting, versus another name in a private setting).

Also in Chapter 1, the author briefly discusses the DO IO versus IO DO orders: the DO IO order is the dominant order in most Southern Chinese dialects (e.g. Cantonese [ŋɔ^{13} pei^{35} tsʰin^{35} kʰɵy^{13}] 我畀錢佢 (I give money s/he)), whereas the IO DO order is the dominant order in most Northern Chinese dialects (e.g. Mandarin *wǒ gěi tā qián* 我給他

[2] The *double-object construction* in this book is different from the *double-object construction* in, e.g., Haspelmath (2013), where the two ditransitive objects are marked alike, and that this marking is the same as that of a monotransitive object. The objects in a *double-object construction* in this book do not need to be marked alike.

錢 (I give s/he money)). IOs can be zero-marked, or preceded by an overt marker (DOs are always zero-marked). The IO marker in Chinese dialects is considered a preposition (e.g. Tang, 1998), a co-verb (e.g. Li and Thompson, 1981), or a verb in a serial-verb construction (e.g. Huang and Ahrens, 1999). The last remarks in this introductory chapter are on the various functions that GIVE has grammaticalized into. Examples are given from Hong Kong Cantonese, where GIVE can function as an IO marker, a passive marker, a verb indicating permission, or a verb introducing an instrument. (The instrumental use of [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' is commented further below.)

Chapter 2 discusses the forms and functions of GIVE amongst Chinese dialects and some other languages. A survey of the forms of GIVE among Chinese dialects is presented. For instance, most Yuè dialects use 畀 (e.g. Hong Kong Cantonese [pei^{35}]), most Mandarin dialects use 給 (e.g. Standard Mandarin *gěi*), while 把 *bǎ* is very common along the Yangtze (e.g. Jiānghuái Mandarin, many Xiāng and Gàn dialects). Some cases of borrowing are also discussed. For instance, some western Yuè dialects (e.g. Liánzhōu 廉州, i.e. Hépǔ 合浦) and most Pínghuà dialects have forms like [hɐi], which are probably borrowed from Zhuàng varieties (e.g. Standard Zhuàng *hawj*, Proto-Tai **hauj*^{C} (Pittayaporn, 2009, pg. 356)). The GIVE verb grammaticalizes into an IO marker, causative verb, beneficiary marker, and passive marker in Cantonese and many other Southern Chinese dialects. The grammaticalization of GIVE into an IO marker is cross-linguistically very common (Heine and Kuteva, 2002, pg. 153–154). The grammaticalization of GIVE into a causative verb and a beneficiary marker is a trait of the Mainland Southeast Asian linguistic area (Matisoff,

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1991). However, GIVE becoming a passive marker occurs much less frequently in Southeast Asia (Yap and Iwasaki, 2003); it is mostly restricted to Southern Sinitic.

Chapter 3 discusses the synchronic usages of GIVE in Cantonese. Examples were given of GIVE as an IO marker (VERB NP GIVE NP_{RECP}), beneficiary marker (recipient-beneficiary: VERB NP GIVE NP_{BEN}), causative verb (GIVE NP_{CAUSEE} VP), and passive marker (GIVE NP_{AGENT} VP). Also shown is the use of GIVE as an instrumental marker in Hong Kong Cantonese (GIVE NP_{INST} VP); this usage is now rarely encountered, but is frequently found in older documents (see below).

Chapter 4 looks at the diachronic development of the various uses of GIVE. A great number of nineteenth and twentieth century texts of Cantonese were investigated, and the frequencies of the various uses of [pei^{35}] 畀 in these texts are noted in detail.[3] Two uses of [pei^{35}] 畀 did not change throughout this period: as a main verb meaning 'give', and as a permissive causative verb ('permit' or 'let'). In the vast majority of texts, [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' is the most commonly used double-object verb. Changes can be seen with the other uses of [pei^{35}] 畀 'give':

a) before the 1940s, [kʷɔ^{33}] 過 'pass' was the dominant IO marker (V DO PASS IO), while [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' was mainly used as a beneficiary marker (V NP GIVE NP_{BEN}). After the 1940s, [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' became the dominant overt IO marker as well (V DO GIVE IO), while [kʷɔ^{33}] 過 'pass' became rare as an IO marker very rapidly. Another IO marker used throughout the ages is null (V DO IO); this primarily occurs when the main verb is [pei^{35}] 畀 'give'

[3] The pronunciation of [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' was [pi^{35}] till sometime in the early twentieth century. Other than 畀, 俾 was (and still is) another character commonly used for [pi^{35}] / [pei^{35}].

(GIVE DO IO). ([GIVE DO PASS IO] was also common before the 1940s, but [GIVE DO GIVE IO] was near non-existent in all texts);

b) there are two passive constructions: one with the marker [pei^{22}] 被 'cover' ([COVER (AGENT) VP]; optionally agented), and one with the marker [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' ([GIVE AGENT VP]; obligatorily agented). Before the 1930s, the [pei^{22}] 被 'cover' construction dominated; after the 1930s, the [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' construction dominated. (Nowadays the [pei^{22}] 被 'cover' construction is considered literary, and rarely used in colloquial Cantonese);

c) before the 1940s, [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' marks an instrument (GIVE NP_{INST} VP); after the 1940s, this usage gradually disappeared. (Nowadays one has to instead use verbs like [jʊŋ^{22}] 用 'use' for the same function.) In a [GIVE NP VP] construction, GIVE can also mark a causee; since the 1940s, GIVE in a [GIVE NP VP] construction is increasingly also used to mark a passive agent (see point (b) above). This increased level of polysemy has perhaps pushed out the instrumental use of GIVE from the [GIVE NP VP] construction.

The next three chapters explore issues relating to the DO IO versus IO DO orders in Cantonese and other Chinese dialects.[4] Chapter 5 presents some typological discussions on this topic. Northern dialects and Coastal Mǐn dialects primarily use the IO DO order. Other Southern dialects, including Jiānghuái and Southwestern Mandarin, and Inland Mǐn dialects, primarily use the DO IO order, while the IO DO order is not rare (e.g. Cantonese has both). The double object constructions in Běijīng Mandarin are also discussed. There are the IO DO patterns of [V IO DO] (with an unmarked IO), [GIVE IO V DO], and [V GIVE

[4] Unless further qualified, "DO IO" and "IO DO" include cases where IO is marked, i.e. "DO IO" = [DO (MARKER) IO], "IO DO" = [(MARKER) IO DO].

IO DO]. There is also the DO IO pattern of [V DO GIVE IO]. Looking at two different corpora of Běijīng Mandarin, the author concludes that the DO IO pattern is quite rare in Běijīng Mandarin, and that the DO IO pattern is "not native" to Běijīng Mandarin. As for the [GIVE IO V DO] pattern, Zhū (1979) claims that this pre-verbal GIVE marks a beneficiary. The author conducted a survey with six Mandarin native speakers, three from the north and three from the south, asking their interpretation of twenty-seven [GIVE IO V DO] sentences. The conclusion is that there is no significant north–south difference in their interpretation, and the pre-verbal GIVE can be interpreted as marking beneficiary and/or recipient, depending on the following main verb. Lastly, the situation with the Yuè dialects is discussed: the overwhelmingly dominant pattern is DO IO (with or without an IO marker). This is the case looking at modern descriptions of a wide range of Yuè dialects, and also at historical Cantonese texts.

Chapter 6 discusses the relationship between the IO DO and DO IO patterns in languages with both patterns (e.g. English, Cantonese). Three types of approaches are presented. Firstly, there are the transformational approaches, where one pattern is viewed as the underlying pattern, and the other is derived through transformation. Both Peyraube (1981) and Tang (2003) argue that the underlying pattern is DO IO. Peyraube (1981)'s fieldwork shows that the dominant order in Cantonese is DO IO, but the IO DO order also exists. He considers the IO DO order to be a transformation from the underlying DO IO order. In Tang (2003)'s transformational / generativist approach, the underlying order is DO IO for both Cantonese and Mandarin. However, a) the IO DO order has a causative meaning (e.g. causing the recipient to possess something), and b) the Functional Phrase [FP] in Mandarin has a semantic feature which triggers the transformation to the IO DO

order. The same triggering feature is lacking in Cantonese FP, and hence there is no transformation to the IO DO order. The author finds Tang (2003)'s approach implausible, as it is not convincing that only the IO DO order has this causative meaning while the DO IO order does not, and that Tang (2003) fails to explain the non-rare existence of the IO DO order in Cantonese.

Secondly, there are the discourse approaches. There is no transformational relationship between the two patterns (e.g. English *I gave Tom the book* and *I gave the book to Tom* are underlyingly not identical). Matthews and Yip (1994, pg. 137) mention that in Cantonese, the less typical IO DO order is used when the length of the DO phrase is long. Nonetheless, there is also Law (1996) who shows that the acceptability of sentences with short DO phrases in IO DO order is not low.

Thirdly, there are the cognitive approaches. The author presents Newman (1993)'s theory on Mandarin DO IO versus IO DO orders. For Newman, Mandarin [V IO DO] has the recipient (IO) as the primary landmark (a sort of cognitive focus or salient point), whereas [V DO GIVE IO] is the opposite. The two constructions are not derived from each other. The author questions whether Cantonese speakers also have these two different cognitive viewpoints, given the rarity of [V IO DO] structures in Cantonese.

After discussing the three types of approach, the author concludes that the [V IO DO] construction in Cantonese is simply a construction loaned from Pǔtōnghuà (Standard Mandarin); only the [V DO IO] pattern is native to Cantonese.

This leads to Chapter 7. Chapter 7 starts with outlining the linguistic ecology in Hong Kong, e.g. the level of usage of Cantonese, Mandarin, English, and other languages in Hong Kong. The author then reports on two experiments that he conducted: a production

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task and a perception task. The same 40 participants participated in both tasks. Table 31 in the book lists the age and gender of the participants, and also their self-reported scores of usage and proficiency in "Putonghua / Modern Standard Chinese".

In the production task, the participants were shown presentation slides. Each slide contains a Cantonese verb and three noun phrases in random order.[5] The participant was asked to produce one double-object sentence from each slide. The use of extra words to form the sentence was permitted. There were 121 slides in total. There were 24 different verbs; most verbs appeared in more than one slide. The noun phrases were of various lengths, and of various types, e.g. pronouns, proper names, common nouns. The responses were recorded, and the construction used was noted. Overall, more than 90% of the sentences produced were of the [V DO (GIVE) IO] pattern. Other minor patters were [V IO DO], [OM DO V GIVE IO] (with an [O]bject [M]arker [tsœŋ^{55}] 將), and [V GIVE IO DO], in descending order. The [GIVE IO V DO] pattern, which is relatively frequently used in Mandarin, was absent in the Cantonese data.

Detailed discussions are made by the author on the minor patterns. For instance, the two verbs which predominantly used the rarer IO DO pattern were [kau^{33}] 教 'teach' and [jœŋ^{22}] 讓 'give/yield' (both more than 66.6% of responses). The next verb that triggered most IO DO responses were [pei^{35}] 畀 'give'; for [pei^{35}] 畀 'give', only 17% of the responses were IO DO (the dominant pattern for [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' was [V DO IO], with no IO marker). IO DO patterns are on the whole infrequent; amongst the IO DO responses,

[5] Sometimes one of the noun phrases was followed by a modal word or an adverbial. Cantonese syntax forces this to be placed at the beginning of the sentence, i.e. this noun phrase becomes the subject.

the DO phrase was most usually longer than the IO phrase, or contained new information. Younger participants also produced more IO DO responses. The author attributes this to the influence from Pǔtōnghuà, which the younger participants have a better command of. A breakdown of the professions of the participants and their rate of IO DO responses are also presented. "Programmers" had the highest rate of IO DO responses, while "housewife/retired" participants produced exceedingly few IO DO responses. The author attributes this to the respective amount of contact that they have with the Mandarin-speaking world (i.e. the more contact with Pǔtōnghuà, the higher the rate of IO DO responses).

In the perception task, 54 sentences were presented to the participant. (It is unclear how the sentences were presented.) Some sentences had the same lexical content, but in different grammatical configurations (e.g. [V DO IO], [V IO DO], [V DO GIVE IO], [V GIVE IO DO]). The participants were asked to classify the sentences into one of three categories: a) totally acceptable; b) marginally or moderately acceptable; c) unacceptable. The following are some of the results and analyses. When the main verb was [pei^{35}] 畀 'give', the [V DO IO] pattern was more acceptable (on average a) 54%; b) 39%); c) 7%) than the [V DO GIVE IO] pattern (on average a) 26%; b) 45%; c) 29%). The [V DO GIVE IO] pattern was more acceptable when the DO phrase is long. For other verbs, the [V DO GIVE IO] pattern was dominant (on average a) 98%; b) 2%; c) 0%) while the [V DO IO] pattern had low acceptability (on average a) 2%; b) 13%; c) 85%). For the minor patterns of [V IO DO] and [V GIVE IO DO], when the main verb was [pei^{35}] 畀 'give', the level of acceptability of [V IO DO] sentences was not high (on average a) 19%; b) 38%; c) 43%), but it was more acceptable when the DO phrase is long. ([GIVE GIVE IO DO] is not

grammatical.) For other verbs, both the [V IO DO] pattern (on average a) 2%; b) 29%); c) 69%) and the [V GIVE IO DO] pattern (on average a) 2%; b) 34%; 64%) had low acceptability. The acceptability rate for the "non-native" [V IO DO] and [V GIVE IO DO] patterns were somewhat higher with the younger participants, especially with the 25–36 year-old cohort. The author again attributes this to their higher level of contact with Pǔtōnghuà.

Chapter 8 contains a summary of the book, and sumptuous sets of data are presented in eight appendices.

This study of Cantonese GIVE is a phenomenal piece of work. It would no doubt become a standard reference not only for the study of Cantonese syntax, but also for Sinitic and Mainland Southeast Asian linguistics in general, as well as for the studies of ditransitive constructions. There are numerous recommendable aspects of this book. For instance, in Chapter 4, the author has consulted a remarkably wide range of historical texts of Cantonese to chart the changes in the use of [pei^{35}] 畀 'give'. The analysis is meticulous, and the results are presented clearly. The (historical) use of [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' as an instrumental marker discussed in Chapter 5 is rarely addressed by other linguists. The types of experiments presented in Chapter 7 – production and perception tasks – are what every syntactician should ideally conduct in order to back up their syntactic claims.

There are a few aspects that this book could improve on. With the experiments in Chapter 7, age is a major factor in the level of production and acceptance of the "non-native" patterns of [V IO DO] and [V GIVE IO DO]. Nonetheless, age is not well controlled for: 16–25 y.o., 18 participants; 26–35 y.o., 13 participants; 36–45 y.o., 2 participants; 46–55 y.o., 3 participants; 56–65 y.o., 4 participants. It is also unfortunate that the participants'

competence in Pǔtōnghuà and Modern Standard Chinese were not controlled for separately. When the participants were asked for information on their language competence, competence in Pǔtōnghuà and in Modern Standard Chinese were conflated into one category. Presumably all participants learnt Modern Standard Chinese at school at least as a written language. ("Modern Standard Chinese" is essentially Written Mandarin.) However, having reading/writing competence in Modern Standard Chinese is different from having oral/aural competence in Pǔtōnghuà, as the majority of people in Hong Kong learn Modern Standard Chinese in Cantonese.[6] It is doubtful that reading/writing competence in Modern Standard Chinese and oral/aural competence in Pǔtōnghuà have the same level of impact on people's syntax of Spoken Cantonese. The author could have asked the participants to self-report on these two competences separately, and also report on, e.g., whether the "Chinese" subject was taught in Cantonese and/or Mandarin when they were at school, how much Cantonese, Mandarin, and/or English were used as a teaching medium for other subjects, how much Mandarin they speak in daily life. Presumably competence in Spoken Pǔtōnghuà would have a larger impact on people's syntax of Spoken Cantonese than competence in Written Modern Standard Chinese.

[6] People compose and read what are essentially Mandarin sentences, but pronounce each morpheme using their Cantonese cognates. Such a difference between Pǔtōnghuà and Modern Standard Chinese is already inferred by the author: "As noted before, some informants were taking Putonghua courses or were working in an environment where Putonghua was frequently used" (p. 159). The inference is that Pǔtōnghuà is extracurricular for these participants, different from the Modern Standard Chinese that they learnt in their normal education.

Other than these experimental design flaws, only some minor problems could be commented on. One trait that is not uncommonly found in English works dealing with Sinology issues is the mistranslation of concepts from Chinese linguistics tradition to English. In other words, a pair of Chinese and English terms that are often considered translational equivalents are in fact understood quite differently by people from the two different linguistics traditions. One example is the mismatch between *fāngyán* 方言 and *dialect* (see footnote 1). Another is the author's use of the term serial verb construction [SVC]. In pg. 12 one finds the following:

> In a serial verb construction, there is no sub-categorization relationship, neither syntactic nor semantic, between the two verb phrases. In other words, it is not ungrammatical for a sentence to have only V1 NP1 but without V2 NP2 or vice versa. For example, *wo mai youpiao ji xin* 我買郵票寄信 'I buy a stamp and then send a letter' is a serial verb construction with two verb phrases *mai youpiao* 買郵票 'buy a stamp' and *ji xin* 寄信 'send a letter'.

From this, it is clear that what the author means by *serial-verb construction* in English is *lián-dòng jiégòu* 連動結構 (link-verb structure) in Chinese. These two terms are indeed often considered translational equivalence of each other;[7] *serial-verb construction* and *lián-dòng jiégòu* 連動結構 (link-verb structure) do indeed sound like they are referring to the same thing. Nonetheless, Western readers might be surprised by this quote, and also that the author uses this to argue that the [V DO GIVE IO] construction in Mandarin is not a

[7] For instance, Haspelmath (2016)'s paper in English on SVCs comes with a Chinese translation of the title and abstract, where SVC is translated as *lién-dòng jiégòu* 連動結構.

SVC. In Chinese linguistics tradition, *lián-dòng jiégòu* 連動結構 is a rather narrow concept; it prototypically refers to a clause with two verbs which are fully lexical and semantically minimally related to each other (see the quote above, and Lǔ, 1999, pg. 37). On the other hand, the SVCs in Anglophone linguistics tradition is a wider concept; it can include what Chinese linguistics consider *lián-dòng jiégòu* 連動結構, but prototypically the Anglophone SVC involves two or more verbs which are semantically more bound to each other, with one of the verbs possibly more grammaticalized and/or coming from a restricted set (cf. Matthews (2006) on Cantonese SVCs; see also, e.g., other chapters in the Aikhenvald and Dixon eds. (2006) volume, Crowley (2002), Haspelmath (2016)). In other words, closer to the prototypical sense of SVC in Anglophone linguistics are constructions like resultatives (e.g. [lɛm^{35} sɐp^{5}] 舔濕 (lick be.wet) 'make (something) wet by licking'; a type of *dòng-bǔ jiégòu* 動補結構 (verb–complement structure) in Chinese linguistics). Probably most Anglophone linguists would consider a [V DO GIVE IO] construction a SVC, if this GIVE is considered to have some verbal properties (i.e. not a preposition / not totally deverbalized).

Lastly, one presentational matter that is inconvenient for readers who lack literacy in Chinese is the frequent lack of tone markings in this book. (Unfortunately, the ignoring of tone markings occurs frequently in English linguistic publications.) As an illustration, section 4.3.4 discusses the passive markers [pei^{35}] 畀 ('give') and [pei^{22}] 被 ('cover') in Cantonese. Unfortunately, most of the time these are presented without tone markings in the book: [pei] 畀 and [pei] 被. These are different markers used in two different passive

constructions.[8] For linguists who have no literacy in Chinese characters (amongst them, many typologists who would want to quote from this book), it is not easy for them to keep track of which passive marker is being talked about when the only distinguishing signs are in an unfamiliar script. Also, since typologists are typically dealing with data from a great number of languages in a single article, (in a non-Sinographic article) one cannot expect them to quote these two passive markers and distinguish them by using Chinese characters.[9] Also, while one could infer from the text in this section that [pei] 畀 is pronounced [pei^{35}], from nowhere in this section could one infer what the tone value of [pei] 被 is, making it very difficult for non-Sinophonic linguists to quote this work. For any tonal language, especially for languages where tones have a high functional load like Cantonese and Mandarin, it is courteous to include tone markings in all instances (even when the point of discussion is not phonology).

Despite these minor imperfections, this book is one of the most valuable references on Cantonese linguistics. Simply looking at the table of contents, the eight (!) appendices, and the bibliography, one could already sense the tremendous amount of work that the author has conducted for this study. The amount of historical Cantonese texts consulted and analyzed is second to none, the range of Chinese dialects consulted is impressive, and the experiment stimuli were cleverly thought out.

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[8] The [pei^{35}] 畀 'give' passive construction is obligatorily agented, where as the [pei^{22}] 被 'cover' passive construction is optionally agented.

[9] As a thought exercise, if you are not familiar with Thai or related scripts, imagine having to quote from an article where the romanization carries no tone markings, and the entire article is on the demonstratives *nii* นี้ and *nii* นี่. Please include tone markings in all instances: *nîi* นี้ and *nîi* นี่.

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