Kejia possessive pronouns

or how one expresses 'my little brother' and more in Kejia

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1 Introduction

When writing a grammar sketch of Kejia as the final paper for the course Beschrijvende Taalkunde 1 (Descriptive Linguistics 1), I discovered that Kejia features possessive pronouns. This is quite remarkable for a Sinitic language, which tend to use a subordination particle in possessive constructions. Even more interesting is the fact that using the possessive pronoun is not the only possibility of expressing possession with a pronoun as modifier: the common Sinitic construction with a personal pronoun and the subordination particle is also possible, and even combinations of the possessive pronoun and the subordination particle, which look superfluous, exist. What is happening here?

This thesis thus centers around the following two main questions: "How is possession with a pronoun expressed in Kejia?", and: "Which function have possessive pronouns in expressing possession in Kejia?". But before I do so, I first need to know more on the distribution and the origin, which leads to the two secondary questions: "What is the distribution and variation of possessive pronouns throughout the Kejia dialects?", and: "What can be the origin of the Kejia possessive pronouns?". The research that answers these questions consists of a study of the scholarly literature and informant consultations.

This thesis starts with the theoretical background: in chapter 3, I give a broad introduction to Kejia and the scholarly debate around it; in chapter 4, I explain how possessive constructions work in languages around the world and in Sinitic languages more particularly. The research itself starts from chapter 5, which shows the distribution and variation of personal and possessive pronouns throughout the Kejia dialects. Subsequently, chapter 6 covers the possible origin of the possessive pronouns. In chapter 7, the different possibilities of expressing possession are shown per Kejia dialect covered in the literature; chapter 8 shows the different possibilities of expressing possession per Kejia dialect spoken by the informants, and compares these to those found in the literature. Finally, a conclusion as well as recommendations for further research are given in chapter 9.

When writing this thesis, I very much enjoyed the supervision of Rint Sybesma. At any time I could ask him my questions, to which he promptly had an answer, and he gave very useful feedback to the preliminary versions of this thesis. As for the research itself, I am very grateful to my informants, who have helped me a lot and provided many interesting insights. I would also like to thank my fellow students in the course for the discussions on each thesis and especially Linde Vermeulen for the long days with coffee in the University Library. Lastly, I want to thank my family, and especially my mother Mathilde Akse, and my girlfriend Hsieh Yi-Hsien 謝乙仙 for their support and for sharing their research experience with me.

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2 Conventions

In this thesis, I use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with superscript contour tone numbers for transcribing Kejia; the Jyutping system with tone numbers for transcribing Cantonese; and the Hanyu Pinyin system for transcribing Mandarin.. I provide characters in complex and simplified forms following the respective source: data from sources from mainland China have simplified characters; data from Taiwan or Hong Kong have complex characters. Language and dialect names are given in Mandarin for unity. Furthermore, [phonetic realizations] are rendered between square brackets, /phonemic transcriptions/ between slashes, and *language examples* in cursive script. These examples are given in Meixian Kejia pronunciation unless stated otherwise. *CONSTRUCTED PRONUNCIATION* is given in cursive capitals when the original pronunciation could not be determined. Square brackets are also used for denoting [syntactical structures]. All glossed examples are numbered. Lastly, 'translations' are given between single quotation marks. For glossing, I follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. All abbreviations used are explained below.

*	ungrammatical expression
?	expression which grammaticality is not sure
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
CL	classifier
DEM	demonstrative pronoun
EXIS	existential verb
INCL	inclusive person
NEG	negation
PERS	personal pronoun
PFV	perfective aspect particle
PL	plural form
POSS	possessive form
PROG	progressive aspect particle
Q	question particle
SG	singular form
SUBORD	subordination particle

3 The Kejia language

The Kejia language is a smaller language within the Sino-Tibetan language family, with about 45 million speakers worldwide (sources vary in the exact number, see for example *Ethnologue*, "Chinese, Hakka"; Lau 2015, 342). Practically all speakers are of the Hakka people, a Han-Chinese ethnicity. Han-Chinese ethnicities are distinguished on the basis of both the language (or dialect group, called *fāngyán* 方言 'regiolect' in Mandarin) they speak, and the region they live in, which is more or less concurrent with a certain province. For example: the Hokkien people all speak a Min variety (*Mǐn* 閩) and live in Fujian province (Chappell and Lamarre 2005, 3).

Contrary to other Chinese ethnicities, the Hakka people do no have their own province and live scattered throughout southern China, mixed with other ethnicities. The so-called heartland of the Kejia language is the eastern part of Guangdong province and especially Meizhou prefecture (Chappell and Lamarre 2005, 4-5). The Kejia dialect spoken here, Méixiàn 梅縣, as part of the Jiāyìng 嘉應 dialect group, is seen as the standard variety (Lau 2015, 342). Apart from Jiāyìng, Lau further distinguishes between the Běndì 本地, Fújiàn 福建, and Jiāngxī 江西 dialect groups (2015, 346-48). Considerable numbers of Kejia speakers are also found in the neighbouring regions in Guangxi, Jiangxi, and Fujian provinces, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, whereas Hainan, Sichuan and Hunan provinces have a smaller number of Kejia speakers. Kejia is also widely spoken in the diaspora, notable Kejia-speaking communities exist throughout South-East Asia and on the Caribbean coast of Latin America (*Ethnologue*, "Chinese, Hakka").

3.1 Names

The names Kejia and Hakka come from the Cantonese word for 'guest families' (*haak3gaa1* 客家, *Kèjiā* in Mandarin). On the origin of these names two explanations exist. According to the first, more traditional explanation, the Hakka people migrated from the Central Plains around the Yellow River in the north in five waves, starting from the end of the Jin Dynasty (c. 300 – 400 CE). When they arrived in southern China, they were seen as outsiders and therefore named 'guest families'. Ever since then, the Hakka people have lived there and recognized themselves as such. As Lau notes, however, the assumed migration waves of the Hakka people cannot be distinguished from those of other southern Chinese people as Hokkien or Cantonese people.

More plausible can thus be the second explanation, which poses that the derogatory designation 'guest families' stems from the so-called Punti-Hakka Clan Wars, a series of conflicts between the Cantonese *bun2dei6jan4* 本地人 'people from here' and the Hakka *haak3gaa1jan4* 客家人 'guest people', taking place from 1855 to 1868 (Lau 2015, 341-42). However, even then the Cantonese could only wish to name the Hakka people *haak3gaa1jan4* if the latter already were somehow distinguishable from the former.

The origin of the name Hakka, as well as the origin of the people itself, is therefore still unclear and I see ample possibilities of further research here. As for the names used in this thesis, scholarly convention is followed in using Mandarin-based Kejia for the language as well as the Mandarin names for the Kejia dialects, while the people itself are called Hakka to make the distinction clear.

3.2 Gan and Kejia

Another topic questioning the unity of the Hakka people and the Kejia language is the similarity Kejia shows with the Gan language (*Gàn* 贛), spoken in neighbouring Jiangxi province. Lau (2015, 342) writes: "Interestingly, JYS [Jiaying subdialect of Kejia] can even be readily understood in most Gàn dialect areas, raising the question of a possible combination of Hakka-Gàn into a single

dialect group." Combining Gan and Kejia into one group is also done in the traditional view on Chinese languages, which poses that historically all Chinese languages directly come forth out of Middle Chinese (around 600 CE). According to Chiang (2015, 271), this started with the analysis of Li Fang-Kuei in 1937, which was "the first scientific classification of the Chinese dialects". Li built his analysis on the development of syllable-initial phonemes in Middle Chinese. As Kejia and Gan both feature "voiceless aspirated reflexes in all tones for the M[iddle]C[hinese] voiced stop and affricate initials" (Chiang 2015, 271), it is not surprising that Li grouped the two languages together.

However, language similarity is based on more than just similar historical development. Accordingly, Jerry Norman (1988) proposed another classification. He analyzed the Chinese languages on basis of 10 lexical, grammatical, and phonogical features and came thus to a threefold distinction: the Northern Group, comprising Mandarin varieties; the Central group, consisting of the Wu, Gan and Xiang dialect groups; and the Southern Group, to which Yue, Kejia and Min belong (Norman 1988, 181-83). For Norman, the latter three come forth out of the same historical source, which he calls Old Southern Chinese. The difference between Yue, Kejia and Min lies in that they are all in a different way influenced by the Northern and Central groups: Yue the most, Kejia less, while Min has retained the most of Old Southern Chinese (Norman 1988, 210-4).

After Norman's groundbreaking but controversial analysis, the debate went on, based on both the traditional method of phonological developments and more diverse analyses. According to Chiang, the current conclusion is that "it is extremely hard to identify linguistic features that unambiguously distinguish them [i.e. Kejia and Gan]" (2015, 272). It is striking however how most of the analyses of Gan are only focused on the question whether or not Gan and Kejia are the same, while analyses of Gan as a language on its own are very scarce. This unbalance can lead to a bias, and I think that only after more research focused on Gan itself, one can really compare Kejia and Gan. In this thesis, I regard Kejia as a separate language variety.

3.3 Language features

Kejia is a Sinitic language in many respects. It is a contour tone language, with six tones in most Jiāyìng dialects. Following scholarly tradition in representing these tones as a development from Middle Chinese tones, these are of the yīnpíng 陰平, yángpíng 陽平, shǎng 上, qù 去, yīnrù 陰入, and yángrù 陽入 categories. The maximum number of tones in other dialects is seven and the minimal number four. For the Jiāyìng dialects, the realized tone contours are typically close to 44, 11, 31, 53, 3, and 5, respectively (Lau 2015, 344; Lài 2016). Its morphemes are monosyllabic, while the syllable structure is very restricted: a syllable consists of minimally a vowel or another sonorant, often preceded by a consonant, or a combination of consonants in the form of an affricate, and it can be closed off by a limited set of consonants, all nasals or unreleased stops. Words have one or two syllables, while the basic word order is SVO.

Kejia also features some notable differences in comparison with other Sinitic languages. For the onset consonants, most Kejia dialects only have one set of sibilants, namely dental, whereas three sets is common in Mandarin dialects. While voiced onsets, with exception of nasals and liquids, are rare in Sinitic languages, Kejia has the voiced onset [v]. Its unvoiced counterpart [f] occurs more often than in other Sinitic languages, for example where Mandarin dialects use [xu] or [kʰu]. Before front vowels, the onset [ŋ] is palatalized to [ɲ] or even [ɲ], which are allophones. The vowel phonemes of most Kejia dialects are [i], [u], [ɛ], [ɔ], and [a]. Most dialects lack [y], which Yue dialects (*Yuè* 粵) as Cantonese and Mandarin dialects do feature (this paragraph is based on Lau 2015, 343-44).

Kejia features more monosyllabic words than Mandarin dialects, of which many have retained their Middle Chinese meanings. Many of these words are common in Min and Yue as well, such as *vuk³* 屋 'house'. At the same time, many words of which the counterparts in Mandarin are monosyllabic are bisyllabic in Kejia. This is the result of two different suffixing patterns. On the

one hand, the gender suffixes *kuŋ⁴⁴* (masculine) and *ma¹¹* (feminine) can also occur on body parts and inanimate objects where they do not express gender, such as *set⁵ma¹¹* 舌嫲 'tongue'. On the other hand, the diminutive suffix *ɛ³¹* added to many words lost its diminutive function, as in *gɛu³¹vɛ³¹* 狗仔 'dog'. This pattern occurs in Mandarin just as well, for example *kuài-zi* 'chopsticks' or *hái-zi* 'child', where *-zi* is the diminutive suffix that has lost its diminutive function; however, it does not occur on the same words. Remarkable about this process is that the suffix is assimilated to the coda of the first syllable, as in *gɛu³¹vɛ³¹* (this paragraph is based on Lau 2015, 344-45).

Syntactically, Kejia features many similarities with Cantonese: adverbial used *tɔ⁴⁴* 多 'more' and *sau³¹* 少 'less' are placed after the verb, not before as in Mandarin; the passive auxiliary verb is the verb 'to give', *pun⁴⁴* 分 in Méixiàn Kejia, analogous to *bei3* 畀 in Cantonese. When *pun⁴⁴* is used as a ditransitive verb in its original meaning, the direct object is followed by the indirect object, just as in Cantonese and not the other way around as in Mandarin. Negations are expressed with *m¹¹* 唔 (in Taiwan the character 毋 is used); negative potentials follow the structure [*m¹¹* V *tet³* 唔 V 得], similar to Cantonese, where Mandarin has [V-*bùdé* V 不得]. Comparison can be expressed in three ways. The first uses the verb for 'to surpass', *kuɔ⁵³* 過: [A ADJ *kuɔ⁵³* B A ADJ 過 B] 'A is more ADJ than B', which is similar to Cantonese. The second uses the verb for 'to compare to', *pi³¹* 比: [A *pi³¹* B (*kuɔ⁵³*) ADJ A 比 B (過) ADJ] 'A is more ADJ than B', which is similar to Mandarin. The third again uses *kuɔ⁵³*, but in a different position: [A *kuɔ⁵³* ADJ] 'A is more ADJ', which is unique to Kejia (this paragraph is based on Lau 2015, 345-46).

There is one aspect of Kejia however, that both Cantonese and Mandarin, and as far as is known all other Sinitic languages do not feature: most Kejia dialects have possessive pronouns (Lài 2016, 129; Lau 2015, 345; Yán 1998, 50). Their forms, origin and function, the latter in comparison with other possible possessive constructions, are the subject of this thesis. But first, I will give an introduction to possessive constructions in general.

4 Possessive constructions in general

Possessive relations can be expressed in many different ways. In English, either a form of genitive case marking, as in *Mary's car,* or a prepositional construction, as in *the car **of** Mary,* is used. All constructions enable the dependent (*Mary*) to modify the head (*car*): the former is the possessor, the latter the possessed. The head can also be omitted, for instance in comparative expressions, as *this is not Mary's car, it is Pete's*. It is important to note that these so-called possessive relations do not necessarily express judicial possession: *the corner of the street* is linguistically a possessive construction just as well (Nichols and Bickel, "Classification").

The two above-mentioned constructions have little restrictions in usage or differences in meaning: they can be used interchangeably in most cases. Many other languages however distinguish between inalienable and alienable possession. Semantic classes as body parts and kinship terms are typically inalienable, whereas *car* is a typical example of an alienable possessed noun (Nichols and Bickel, "Classification"). Such a distinction is also made in Sinitic languages, however not so clear as in other languages that make the distinction. Possessive constructions in Sinitic languages are formed using a subordination particle following the structure [dependent + SUBORD + head]. When the relation between head and dependent is very close, a structure without subordination particle is possible too. In this way, one can distinguish between alienable and inalienable possession, as is shown in example (1)ab.

(1)   Mandarin Chinese   (following Wiedenhof 2015, 68)
a.   *Wǒ   de   nǚyǒu* (alienable)
       1SG   SUBORD   girlfriend
       'A girlfriend of mine' (one has more girlfriends, which makes them interchangeable)

b.   *Wǒ   nǚyǒu*   (inalienable)
       1SG   girlfriend
       'My girlfriend'   (one has one girlfriend)

In this construction, the head can still be omitted, but only in a., because of the presence of the subordination particle. Omitting the head in b. is thus only possible when adding the subordination particle.

Possession can also be expressed in another way, apart from the so-called attributive constructions described above. This predicative possession is also possible in English, think of *Mary **has** a car,* which is a sample of the have-possessive, or *the car **is** Mary's,* which is a copula-construction. More predicative constructions are described by Stassen (2013). The predicative possession construction common in Sinitic languages is the construction with an existential verb, which is rendered in example (2).

(2)   Mandarin Chinese (Wiedenhof 2015, 159)
       Wó   yǒu   shū.
       1SG   EXIS   book
       'I have books.'

As is also visible from the examples (1) and (2) above, the possessor or dependent does not need to be a noun, it can also be a pronoun. In English, and in many other languages around the world, a special pronoun exists for expressing possession: the possessive pronoun, as in ***my** car*. When omitting the head, again, these possessive pronouns undergo morphological changes to substantivize it, as in *this is not your car, it is **mine**.*

In most Sinitic languages however, the special, possessive pronoun does not exist. As we just saw, the normal, personal pronoun is used in combination with a subordination particle, or on its own in case of inalienable possession. In Kejia Chinese, these special possessive pronouns do exist. In the next chapter, I will give a broad description of them, after which I will look at their morphological variation, their possible origin and their functions in comparison with other possible possessive constructions.

5 Kejia personal and possessive pronouns

This chapter gives a general introduction to the Kejia personal pronoun system, including the possessive pronouns. The language data in this chapter are extracted from four scholarly articles (Gān 2003; Lǐ 2012; Lín 1996; Xiàng 1992), four grammatical descriptions (Chappell and Lamarre 2005; Hé 1993; Lài 2016; Schaank 1897), and four informant consultations, together providing data for twelve Kejia dialects. Of these dialects, four are spoken in Taiwan, one in Hong Kong, four in Guangdong, one in Guangxi, one in Hainan, one in Fujian, and one in West-Kalimantan, as shown on the map in Figure 1. In this way the different areas where Kejia is spoken are all covered evenly (compare Figure 1 and the map in Lau 2016, 342). Using more sources would go beyond the scope of a BA thesis.

Figure 1: Map of the Kejia dialects in this research[1]

On this map of Southern China, the places where the Kejia dialects covered in this research are spoken are marked with the following numbers:

1:	Meizhou	**5**:	Zhongshan	**9**:	Danzhou
2:	Dabu	**6**:	Sin'on	**10**:	Miaoli
3:	Huizhou	**7**:	Liancheng	**11**:	Hsinchu
4:	Dongguan	**8**:	Longwen	**12**:	Lufeng (spoken in West-Kalimantan but originates from Lufeng)

5.1 Personal pronouns

According to Norman (1988, 277), Kejia pronouns are quite homogeneous, which is also clear from Table 1 on page 12. In this table I list the personal pronouns with their plural suffixes per dialect, while the last row shows the attestation of the data. More generally spoken, the Kejia personal pronouns are ηai^{22} 𠊎 (also written as 我) '1SG', ηi^{22} 你 '2SG', and ki^{22} 佢 (also written as 渠) '3SG'. The plural is formed by suffixing the singular personal pronouns. The suffixes used are

diverse, but these two are the most common throughout all dialects: *teu⁴⁴* 兜, which is also the plural classifier, and to which *ja³¹* 這 'this' and / or *ŋin²²* 人 'person' can be added; and *ten⁴⁴* 等, to which *ŋin²²* can also be added. Some Kejia dialects distinguish between an inclusive and exclusive first person plural. When this is the case, the inclusive personal pronoun is *ɛn⁴⁴* 亻恩 '1PL.INCL', which can be extended by *teu⁴⁴* and other plural suffixes.

5.2 Possessive pronouns

As I stated earlier on, Kejia has, atypically for Sinitic languages, possessive pronouns that are different from the personal pronouns (see also Norman 1988, 277; Lau 2015, 345; Lài 2016, 137). These differences are syntactical, see chapter 7 Function, but also morphological. For a historical explanation of the morphological differences between the personal and the possessive pronouns, see chapter 6 Origin. For now, I compare the singular personal pronouns and the possessive pronouns per dialect in Table 2, on page 13. In this table, I additionally give the subordination particles which can also be used for expressing possession, as explained in chapter 7 Function. The last row again shows the attestation of the data.

The morphological differences between personal and possessive pronouns are also clear from Table 2. As we saw above, the singular personal pronouns are *ŋai²²* '1SG', *ŋi²²* '2SG', and *ki²²* '3SG'. The possessive pronouns on the other hand are *ŋa⁴⁴* 吾 '1SG.POSS', *ŋia⁴⁴* 若 '2SG.POSS' and *kia⁴⁴* 厥 '3SG.POSS'. A pattern becomes visible: the possessive pronouns seem to be constructed out of the personal pronouns with /-a/ instead of /-i/ as coda vowel. This will be worked out in chapter 6 Origin.

No plural possessive pronouns exist. As is shown in example (3), possessive relations with a plural possessor are expressed using a subordination particle.

(3) 佢等人个新房系布置去十分靓。   (Lín 1996, 70)
Ki²²ten⁴⁴ŋin²² ke⁵²   *sin⁴⁴*   *foŋ¹¹*   *he⁵³*   *pu⁵³t͡s⁵³-hi⁵³*   *SHIFEN*
3PL   SUBORD   new   house   to.be   to.decorate-to.go   fully
t͡ɕiaŋ⁴⁴.
beautiful
'Their new house is decorated really beautiful.'

Table 1: Kejia personal pronouns, singular and plural

	Guangdong-Meizhou 广东梅州 (Jiāyìng)	Guangdong-Dabu 广东大埔 (Jiāyìng)	Guangdong-Huizhou 广东惠州 (Běndì)	Guangdong-Zhongshan 广东中山 (Jiāyìng)	Hongkong-Sin'on 香港新安 (Běndì)
1SG	ηai^{22}	ηai^{24}	$\eta ɔi^{213}$	ηai^{21}	ηai^{22}
2SG	$\eta ̩^{22}$	hen^{24}	ni^{213}	ηi^{21}	ηi^{22}
3SG	ki^{22}	ki^{24}	khy^{22}	ki^{21}	ki^{22}
1PL	$\eta ai^{22}\text{-}teu^{44}$ $(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{22})$ $\eta ai^{22}\text{-}ten^{44}$ $(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{22}(\text{-}\varepsilon^{22}))$	$\eta ai^{24}\text{-}teu^{44}$	$\eta ɔi^{35}$	$\eta a^{33}\text{-}ti^{33} \sim$ $\eta a^{33}\text{-}ti^{55}$	$\eta ai^{22}\text{-}teu^{44}$
1PL.INCL	$t\widehat{s^h}\varepsilon^{22}\text{-}ka^{44}$	$\varepsilon n^{44}\text{-}teu^{44}$	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Plural suffix	$teu^{44}(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{22})$ ten^{44} $(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{22}(\text{-}\varepsilon^{22}))$	teu^{44}	tone change	$ti^{33} \sim ti^{55}$	teu^{44}
attestation	Lín (1996, 67-69)	Hé (1993, 14)	Wēn (2017, 24)	Gān (2003, 71-72)	Chappell and Lamarre (2005, 62)

	Fujian-Liancheng 福建连城 (Fújiàn)	Guangxi-Longwen 广西龙文 (Jiāyìng)	Taiwan-Miaoli 臺灣苗栗 (Jiāyìng)	Taiwan-Hsinchu 臺灣新竹 (Běndì)	Kalimantan-Loeh-foeng 陸豐 (Běndì)
1SG	$\eta uə^{55}$	ηai^{23}	ηai^{11}	ηai^{55}	ηai^{22}
2SG	$\eta ̩^{55}$	ηi^{23}	n^{11}	ηi^{55}	$\eta ̩i^{22}$
3SG	$t.ɻyə^{55}$	ki^{23}	ki^{11}	ki^{55}	ki^{22}
1PL	$\eta uə^{55}\text{-}t\widehat{s^h}i^{55}$	$\eta ai^{23}\text{-}n^0$	$\eta ai^{11}(\text{-}ja^{31})$ $\text{-}teu^{24}(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{11})$	$\eta ai^{55}(\text{-}ja^{24})$ $\text{-}teu^{53}(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{55}) \sim$ $\eta ai^{55}\text{-}li^{53}$	$\eta ai^{22}\text{-}teu^{55}\text{-}\eta ̩in^{22}$
1PL.INCL	$a^{55} \sim$ $a^{55}\text{-}t\widehat{s^h}i^{55}$	n.a.	$en^{24} \sim$ $en^{24}(\text{-}ja^{31})$ $\text{-}teu^{24}(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{11})$	$en^{53} \sim$ $en^{53}(\text{-}ja^{24})$ $\text{-}teu^{53}(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{55}) \sim$ $en^{53}\text{-}li^{53}$	n.a.
Plural suffix	$t\widehat{s^h}i^{55}$	n^0	$(\text{-}ja^{31})\text{-}teu^{24}$ $(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{11})$	$(\text{-}ja^{24})\text{-}teu^{53}$ $(\text{-}\eta ̩in^{55}) \sim$ li^{53}	$teu^{55}\text{-}\eta ̩in^{22}$
attestation	Xiàng (1992, 173)	Lǐ (2012, 21)	Lài (2016, 132)		Schaank (1897, 26)

Table 2: Kejia possessive and personal pronouns

	Guangdong-Meizhou 广东梅州 (Jiāyìng)	**Guangdong-Dabu 广东大埔 (Jiāyìng)**	**Guangdong-Dongguan 广东東莞 (Běndì)**	**Guangdong-Zhongshan 广东中山 (Jiāyìng)**	**Hongkong-Sin'on 香港新安 (Běndì)**
1SG	$ŋai^{22}$	$ŋai^{24}$	$ŋai^{24}$	$ŋai^{21}$	$ŋai^{22}$
2SG	$ŋ̍^{22}$	hen^{24}	$ŋi^{24}$	$ŋ̍i^{21}$	$ŋi^{22}$
3SG	ki^{22}	ki^{24}	ki^{22}	ki^{21}	ki^{22}
1SG.POSS	$ŋa^{44}$	$ŋa^{44}$	$ŋa^{22}$	$ŋa^{33}$	$ŋa^{44}$
2SG.POSS	$ŋia^{44}$ ~ $ŋiɛ^{44}$ ~ $ŋɛ^{44}$	$hɛ^{44}$	$ŋia^{22}$	$ŋ̍ia^{33}$	$ŋ̍ia^{44}$
3SG.POSS	kia^{44} ~ $kiɛ^{44}$ ~ $kɛ^{44}$	$kiɛ^{44}$	kia^{22}	kia^{33}	kia^{44}
SUBORD	$kɛ^{52}$	kei^{55} ~ ei^{55}	e^{53} ~ ai^{53} classifier	ke^{55} ~ e^{55} classifier	kai^{53} classifier
attestation	Lín (1996, 67-69) Lín (1999, 179)	Hé (1993, 15)	Informant consultation (Appendix A)	Gān (2003, 71-72)	Chappell and Lamarre (2005, 63)

	Fujian-Liancheng 福建连城 (Fújiàn)	**Guangxi-Longwen 广西龙文 (Jiāyìng)**	**Hainan-Danzhou 海南儋州 (Běndì)**	**Taiwan-Miaoli 臺灣苗栗 (Jiāyìng)**	**Taiwan-Hsinchu 臺灣新竹 (Běndì)**	**Kalimantan-Loeh-foeng 陸豐 (Běndì)**
1SG	$ŋuə^{55}$	$ŋai^{23}$	$ŋai^{53}$	$ŋai^{11}$	$ŋai^{55}$	$ŋai^{22}$
2SG	$ŋ̍^{55}$	$ŋ̍i^{23}$	$ŋi^{53}$	n^{11}	$ŋi^{55}$	$ŋ̍i^{22}$
3SG	$tɻɥə^{55}$	ki^{23}	ki^{53}	ki^{11}	ki^{55}	ki^{22}
1SG.POSS	n.p.	$ŋa^{34}$	$ŋa^{22}$ $ŋa^{55}$-ai^{53}	$ŋa^{24}$	$ŋai^{55}$	$ŋa^{55}$
2SG.POSS	$ŋ̍ia^{55}$	$ŋa^{34}$	$ŋ̍ia^{22}$ $ŋi^{55}$-ai^{53}	$ŋ̍ia^{24}$	$ŋ̍ia^{55}$	$ŋ̍ia^{55}$
3SG.POSS	$tɻɥa^{55}$	kia^{34}	kia^{22} ki^{53}-ai^{53}	kia^{24}	kia^{55}	kia^{55}
SUBORD	$ə^{35}$	$kɛ^{21}$	kai^{53} classifier	ke^{55} ~ e^{55}	kai^{11}	kai^{53}
attestation	Xiàng (1992, 173)	Lǐ (2012, 21)	Informant consultation (Appendix A)	Lài (2016, 131)		Schaank (1897, 26)

6 Origin

This chapter covers the origin of Kejia possessive pronouns. On this topic much research has been done and the conclusions reached by different researchers are different. By discussing three different views, I will try to give an overview of this research field and its conclusions until today.

6.1 Contraction with *jiā*?

In the first article, Yán Xiūhóng (1998) starts with summarizing three earlier theories on the origin of Kejia possessive pronouns. According to him, these all have their flaws (52). Therefore, Yán takes a step back, stating that to answer the origin question, we should first answer the following two questions:
1. Why is the initial consonant of the personal pronouns and their correspondent possessive pronouns the same, but the coda vowel and the tone not?
2. Why can possession in Kejia be expressed not only by using the possessive pronoun, but also by using the personal pronoun combined with the subordination particle, and even by the possessive pronoun combined with the subordination particle? (for a detailed discussion, see chapter 7 Function)

Yán looks for explanations in other Sinitic languages. He finds that many Mandarin dialects use the morpheme for 'family' *jiā* 家 suffixed to the singular personal pronoun to form the plural forms, instead of the group suffix *-men* 們. Following, Yán notes that in many Sinitic regiolects, the plural personal pronoun is used in possessive constructions with kinship terms as head, regardless of whether the modifier is singular or plural (53). Other than forming plural personal pronouns with *jiā*, this suffixing pattern can also be used for forming honorifics. This is especially common in Southwestern Mandarin. Naturally, this works only for the second and third person: the first person construction still means 'my family'. Very interesting however is that this first person construction is used for expressing possessive relations with kinship terms, such as ηo^{53}-$t\varepsilon i\varepsilon^{44}$ ko^{44} '1SG-family elder.brother' → 'my elder brother' in Kunming Southwestern Mandarin (54).

In this way, Yán arguments that the Kejia possessive pronouns originate from the suffix *-jiā* (pronounced ga^{44} in Kejia), under the influence of Northern Chinese regiolects. This hypothesis can give an answer to the two questions asked in the beginning: the coda vowel is /-a/, whereas the tone shifts from original yángpíng to yīnpíng, both of which can be traced back to *jiā*. Forms as $\eta i\varepsilon^{44}$ '2SG.poss' Yán interprets as the result of fronting triggered by the /i/. As the original construction of [PERS + *jiā*] is restricted to possessive relations with kinship terms as a head, the other constructions with subordination marker are not redundant and all constructions coexist until today (54-55).

Although this theory is constructed very well, is able to answer the two questions, and does not have the flaws of the three theories explained earlier, Yán bases its argumentation entirely on many different Mandarin dialects. It is very hard to maintain that Kejia has undergone all the developments that have taken place in these Mandarin dialects. Furthermore, linking Kejia so closely with Mandarin also touches on the uncertain history of the Kejia language and the Hakka people (see chapter 3 The Kejia language).

6.2 Contraction with *ke^{52}*?

In his reaction on Yán's article, Xiàng Mèngbīng (2002) finds a couple of problems in Yán's argumentation. His counterargumentation is not perfect either, however. First, he states that the development of the Mandarin plural suffixes *-men* and *-jiā* took place after the Song dynasty, when the language of the Hakka people was already separated from the northern Chinese languages (Xiàng 2002, 40-41). This argumentation is however based on the uncertain history of the Hakka people. Second, he questions why Kejia dialects without possessive pronouns do not use *-jiā* as a plural pronoun suffix, following the theory of Yán. Problematic here I find is that he states that these Kejia dialects that lack possessive pronouns form a majority, which is contradicted by my data

and by Lau (2015, 345). Third, he shows that the dialects of Liancheng and Qingliu use the singular form for expressing plural possessive relations, opposite to what Yán describes. Furthermore, the possessive pronouns of the dialect of Liancheng are of the qù tone category, which cannot be related to the píng tones of the personal pronouns and the cognate of *-jiā* (42). However, the dialect of Liancheng is a very peripheral Kejia dialect, with possibly large influence from Gan and Min. Taking this dialect as a measure for the whole Kejia language is at least questionable. A more acceptable counterargument is found on page 42, where Xiàng notes that Kejia possessive pronouns are used for more than only kinship terms. Also, the *-jiā* in this construction is not a possessive marker as Yán falsely states, but just an expression of close relationship, as this construction is only used before kinship terms (Xiàng 2002, 42).

The explanation Xiàng finds more suitable is that of Jerry Norman, who states that Kejia possessive pronouns "may have originated as contractions of the [personal] pronoun plus the suffixes mentioned above [i.e. the subordination particle ke^{52}]" (Norman 1988, 227). Xiàng finds that this theory also suits Kejia dialects that lack possessive pronouns and thus still use the pattern [PERS + SUBORD]: then the contraction simply has not taken place. Furthermore, a couple of Kejia dialects use the possessive pronoun in sentences where the possession is not emphasized and the pattern [PERS + SUBORD] in sentences where the possession is emphasized: this is exactly a circumstance in which contraction can take place. This theory also suits the fact that constructions with a possessive pronoun and with a subordination particle merge to form the pattern [POSS + SUBORD] (Xiàng 2002, 43). When explaining the changes of the coda vowel, this theory works not so well anymore: Xiàng argues that the /-a/ originates from a time when the subordination particle was pronounced as /a/, while the $\eta i\varepsilon^{44} \sim \eta\varepsilon^{44}$ and the $ki\varepsilon^{44} \sim k\varepsilon^{44}$ from the Méixiàn dialect are later developments from a time when the subordination particle was pronounced as /e/.

6.3 Contraction with a^{44}-?

The last theory I will cover in this chapter is proposed by Wēn Chāngyǎn (2019). With earlier research, including the two mentioned above, as a starting point, Wēn concludes that the contraction theory is true, as it is able to explain the differences between dialects. As for the morpheme that has contracted with the personal pronoun to form the possessive pronoun, Wēn states that it is neither *jiā* nor ke^{52}, but the a- common before kinship terms, as was argumented earlier on by Lǐ Zuònán (1965) too. This explains why in many Kejia dialects the possessive pronoun can only be used before kinship terms with an a- in front. When this happens, the a- must be elided: one cannot say *ηa^{44} a$^{44}pa^{44}$, one should either say ?ηai^{22} a$^{44}pa^{44}$ or $\eta a^{44}pa^{44}$ (5). In some dialects, the usage of the possessive pronoun has broadened. As a result of this, it can now also be used before nouns that are not kinship terms and that do not start with a-. In other dialects, this broadening simply has not (yet) taken place (56).

In some dialects, the subordination particle can be used parallel to the subordination particle (56), as will also be clear from chapter 7 Function. This has also lead to contraction. According to Wēn, the Méixiàn varieties $\eta i\varepsilon^{44} \sim \eta\varepsilon^{44}$ '2SG.POSS' and $ki\varepsilon^{44} \sim k\varepsilon^{44}$ '3SG.POSS' are formed through a second or even a third time of contraction, namely of the possessive pronoun with the subordination particle (55-56). Wēn further notes that the initial contraction of personal pronoun and the a- suffix takes place more easy for the second and third person than for the first person. This is proven by the dialect of Luhe, which has ηai^{55} '1SG / 1SG.POSS', ηia^{55} '2SG.POSS', and kia^{55} '3SG.POSS' (56 (compare also the related dialect of Hsinchu in this research).

Finally, Wēn reacts on Xiàng, stating that the dialect of Liancheng, due to its distance to the standard Méixiàn dialect, can not be taken as an example for the whole Kejia language. The dialect of Liancheng belongs to the Fújiàn dialect group, which together with the Fújiàn Kejia dialects feature very little kinship terms starting with a-. Therefore, these dialects have neither developed possessive pronouns, except for that of Liancheng. Wēn (58-59) concludes that the possessive

pronouns of the dialect of Liancheng thus must have been developed through direct contraction of the personal pronoun and the subordination particle, as Xiàng argued too.

In short, Kejia possessive pronouns most likely originate from a contraction between the personal pronoun and another morpheme. Which morpheme although is under discussion. In this context, Wēn's theory can best explain not only the morphological origin of the possessive pronouns but also the current syntactical differences between dialects, but the discussion on the origin of Kejia possessive pronouns might however still not be finished.

7 Function

In this chapter I will analyze the syntactical functions of the possessive personal pronoun in Kejia. More broadly, I will describe the different possibilities of possessive constructions in Kejia, following the earlier analyses I found. Of these analyses, some are focused on one dialect, whereas some try to find a common denominator from a typological standpoint. I will start with the latter.

7.1 A general distinction

Through comparison of the earlier research of Nán Tái (1957), Lǐ Zuònán (1965), and Xiàng Mèngbīng (1992), as well as his own research on the dialects of Pingyuan and Wuping Pingshe, Yán Xiūhóng (1998, 50-51) comes to four possible possessive constructions in Kejia, which I list here.

1. [POSS + head];
2. [PERS + SUBORD (+ head)];
3. [POSS + SUBORD (+ head)];
4. [PERS + head].

Patterns (1) and (4) can not exist without a head, only pattern (2) and (3) can do so, because of the presence of the subordination particle. The restrictions for each construction he observes I explain below. When the possessor is not emphasized and is not in question, pattern (1) is to be used: see example (4)a. When the possessor is emphasized or is in question, for example in a 'whose is this'-question, pattern (2) or (3) should be used: see example (4)b. When the possessed is a noun or a pronoun expressing a location, only pattern (4) is possible: see example (4)c.

(4)a 若书寻倒哩么? (Yán 1998, 51)

ηia^{44} su^{44} $\widehat{tc}^h im^{11}\text{-}do^{31}$ LI ma^{53}?
2SG.POSS book to.search-to find PFV Q
'Did you find your book?'

(4)b 解本书是么人个? (Yán 1998, 51)

ke^{53} pun^{31} su^{44} he^{53} ma^{53} ηin^{22} $k\varepsilon^{52}$?
that CL book to.be Q person SUBORD
'Whose book is that?'

是佢个唔是若个。

he^{53} ki^{22} $k\varepsilon^{52}$ m^{11} he^{53} ηia^{44} $k\varepsilon^{52}$.
to.be 3SG SUBORD NEG to.be 2SG.POSS SUBORD
'It is his, not yours.'

(4)c 书放下我桌上放哩。 (Yán 1998, 51)

su^{44} $pio\eta^{53}\text{-}ha^{44}$ ηai^{22} $\widehat{tso}k^{\urcorner 3}$ $so\eta^{44}$ $pio\eta^{53}$ LI.
book to.put-to.go.down 1SG table to.go.up to.put PROG
'The book is on my table.'

As for the function of the possessive personal pronoun, Yán states that it can only function as a modifier, i.e. with the head expressed. The one condition under which the possessive personal pronoun can function as a independent phrase, i.e. substantivized, is in comparative sentences as 'mine is bigger than yours' (1998, 51).

7.2 Variations throughout dialects

Following the categorization made by Yán, I will now list the different possibilities of possessive constructions per Kejia dialect. Starting with the standard Méixiàn dialect as described by Lín Lìfāng (1996), he analyzes all the possiblities Yán's analysis also features, i.e.: (1) [POSS + head]; (2) [PERS + SUBORD (+ head)]; (3) [POSS + SUBORD (+ head)]; and (4) [PERS + head]. The restrictions Lín analyzes are different however. For structure (2) and (3), the added subordination particle emphasizes the possessive relation, not so however when the head consists of a monosyllabic noun. Structure (4) is only possible when the head is a kinship term or a pronoun or noun expressing a location.

Staying in Meizhou, the dialect of Dabu as analyzed by Hé Gěngyōng (1993) only has two possible patterns: (1) [POSS (+ head)] and (2) [PERS + SUBORD (+ head)] (15). Hé has found one restriction: when the head is a kinship term, pattern (1) must be used. Interesting is that the possessive pronoun can be used independently. Moving further away to the Pearl River Delta, the dialect of Zhongshan, analyzed by Gān Jiǎcái (2003), features three possible patterns: (1) [POSS + head]; (3) [POSS + SUBORD (+ head)]; (5) [POSS + CL + head] (71-72). Pattern (3) is used when the possessive pronoun is substantivized, pattern (1) when it is used as a modifier. Pattern (5) is an influence from Cantonese, in which possessive constructions with a classifier are common, although with a personal instead of a possessive pronoun (Matthews and Yip 1994, 111). The same three patterns are also found in the dialect of Sin'on in Hong Kong as described in the Basel missionary grammar (Chappell and Lamarre 2005, 63). According to this description, the possessive relation is reinforced using pattern (3), in comparison with pattern (1). Both this description and that on the Zhongshan dialect do not state whether pattern (5) with a personal pronoun exist or not.

More in the periphery of the Kejia realm, the dialect of Longwen analyzed by Lǐ Chéngzōng (2012) has patterns (1) [POSS + head], (2) [PERS + SUBORD + head], and (3) [POSS + SUBORD + head]. Lǐ does not discuss syntactical or semantical differences (2012, 21-22). In the dialect of Liancheng, which Xiàng Mèngbīng (2002) describes, the patterns (1) [POSS + head], (2) [PERS + SUBORD + head], and (4) [PERS + head] are found (173, 175). Pattern (1) is slowly being replaced by pattern (4) (Xiàng 2002, 178). This could be an influence from Min dialects nearby, which lack possessive pronouns, but such is not clear. As mentioned in chapter 6 Origin, the dialect of Liancheng is the only one Kejia dialect in Fujian with possessive pronouns. Xiàng further states that this pattern (4) is especially used when the head consists of a demonstrative clause, i.e [dem + CL + N], when the head is a monosyllabic noun, or expresses location. Compared with pattern (4), pattern (2) reinforces the possessive relation (178-79). The Taiwanese Kejia dialects described by Lài Wényīng (2016) feature patterns (1) [POSS (+ head)], (2) [PERS + SUBORD + head], and (3) [POSS + SUBORD + head]. For kinship terms, body parts and other close relations as with animals, pattern (1) is used, and then the head can be omitted (137-40). Lastly, Schaank (1897) in his description of the Loeh-foeng dialect does not cover the usage of the possessive pronouns, but from the examples given on pages 27-70 can be deducted that the Loeh-foeng dialect feature patterns (1) [POSS + head], (2) [PERS + SUBORD (+ head)] and (3) [POSS + SUBORD (+ head)]. These patterns seem to be used interchangeably, while no usage restrictions can be discovered.

7.3 Discussion

In this paragraph, I take all descriptions together and highlight some questions, as a prelude to the informant consultation in the next chapter, in which I will try to answer these questions. In all descriptions, the expected pattern with the possessive pronoun (1) [POSS + head] is found. This pattern is usually restricted to semantic categories of kinship terms, body parts, and also locations. By adding the subordination particle pattern (1) can be expanded to pattern (2) [POSS + SUBORD + head], which has a reinforcing effect according to most analyses. What this reinforcing effect precisely is, is unclear. Most of the descriptions also feature a construction with the personal pronoun, pattern (3) [PERS + SUBORD + head], whereas some even feature pattern (4) [PERS + head],

both similar to those in Mandarin. Due to language contact with Cantonese, the dialects of Sin'on and Zhongshan additionally feature pattern (5) [POSS + CL + head].

In the dialects of Dabu and those of Taiwan, the possessive pronoun can function independently. This is interesting in the light of a language as English, in which the possessive pronoun undergoes morphological changes functioning independently: from *it is **my** car* to *it is **mine***. In the other Kejia dialects in this research the head can be omitted only when a subordination particle is added.

8 Informant consultation

In this chapter I will describe the results of the informant consultation I carried out, which is based on the conclusions of chapter 7 Function. The goal of this consultation is threefold:

1. to look which combinations of modifier constructions and lexical domains for the head are possible in the Kejia dialects spoken by the informants;
2. to look to which extent these combinations match with the ones described in chapter 7 Function;
3. to give an answer to the two questions analysed in paragraph 7.3 Discussion: 'What does reinforcement of possessive relations mean?' and 'Is it really possible to use the possessive pronoun independently and non-substantivized?'

8.1 The consultation process

Table 3 presents the possible possessive constructions as described in chapter 7 Function, and the different possible lexical domains for the head of the possessive construction. Combining them gives possible combinations A1-D5. For domains A-C, another three positions in the sentence a-c are possible per combination:

a. with a head in subject position;
b. without a head, in comparison;
c. with a head in object position.

While doing the research, it became clear that this neat three-fold distinction could not be applied to domain D. I therefore chose to separately name the sentences v, w, x, y, and z. All sentences can be found in Appendix A.

Table 3: Possessive constructions and lexical domains

MODIFIER → HEAD ↓	(1) [POSS]	(2) [PERS + SUBORD]	(3) [POSS + SUBORD] (5) [POSS + CL]	(4) [PERS]
A Kinship: 'little brother'	A1abc	A2abc	A3abc A5abc	A4abc
B Inalienable: 'nose'	B1abc	B2abc	B3abc B5abc	B4abc
C Alienable: 'car'	C1abc	C2abc	C3abc C5abc	C4abc
D Location: 'here', 'there', 'rear side'	D1abc	D2abc	D3abc D5abc	D4abc

I presented the sentences Aa-Dz to my informants, all of which are native speakers, two speaking Hsinchu Kejia, one speaking Dongguan Kejia, and one speaking Danzhou Kejia. Afterwards, I went over all the possible constructions for each sentence and checked whether the participants found the construction used correct or not. When not, I asked them what could be changed to make the sentence correct. When it became clear that for one sentence more constructions are possible, I asked the participants to explain any difference in meaning between the variations. Lastly, I asked the participants which sentence they found the best.

8.2 The consultation results

The consultation results are summarized in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6, for Hsinchu, Dongguan, and Danzhou Kejia, respectively. In the tables, I used bold text for denoting **grammatical expressions**, strikethrough-text for denoting ~~ungrammatical expressions~~, non-formatted text for expressions only grammatical in specific contexts and cursive text for *expressions which the speaker was unable to determine the grammaticality of.*

Table 4: Hsinchu Kejia

MODIFIER → HEAD ↓	(1) [POSS]	(2) [PERS + SUBORD]	(3) [POSS + SUBORD]	(4) [PERS]
A Kinship: **'little brother'**	A1**abc**	A2**abc**	~~A3abc~~	~~A4abc~~
B Inalienable: **'nose'**	~~B1abc~~	B2**abc**	~~B3abc~~	~~B4abc~~
C Alienable: **'car'**	~~C1abc~~	C2**abc**	~~C3abc~~	~~C4abc~~
D Location: **'here', 'there',** **'rear side'**	~~D1vwxyz~~	~~D2vwxyz~~	~~D3vwxyz~~	D4**vwxyz**

I will now describe the possible possessive constructions and some noteworthy features per dialect. These can be checked in the sentences found in Appendix A. To begin with Hsinchu Kejia, this dialect features remarkable little constructions with possessive pronouns. Only in lexical domain A pattern (1) is possible. Pattern (2) is also possible in domain A, but has an emphasized meaning. For B and C, only pattern (2) is possible. For D however, only pattern (4) is grammatical. Interesting is that Hsinchu Kejia differs from other Kejia dialects in that it does not distinguish between inalienable (domain A and B) and alienable possession (domain C); it distinguishes between the lexical domains of home and non-home. On the one hand, home (the word used by the participants is *jíguàn*, 'native place, place of birth') encompasses kinship terms (A) and words referring to one's house (as *vug5* in sentence Dw). Non-home on the other hand comprises both body parts (B) and alienable possession (C). For the comparative sentences Ab, Bb, and Cb, the head of the second possessive phrase can be omitted only when the context is very clear. In that case, the possessive pronoun can function on its own for domain A.

Table 5: Dongguan Kejia

MODIFIER → HEAD ↓	(1) [POSS]	(2) [PERS + SUBORD]	(3) [POSS + SUBORD] (5) [POSS + CL] (6) [POSS + SUBORD + CL]	(4) [PERS]
A Kinship: **'little brother'**	A1**abc**	~~A2abc~~	A3abc A5abc	~~A4abc~~
B Inalienable: **'nose'**	B1**a~~bc~~**	~~B2abc~~	B3a**bc** B5abc	~~B4abc~~
C Alienable: **'car'**	C1**a~~bc~~**	~~C2*abc*~~	C3**abc** C5**abc** C6**abc**	~~C4abc~~
D Location: **'here', 'there',** **'rear side'**	D1**vxyz**	~~D2vxyz~~	D3v~~xyz~~ ~~D5vxyz~~	~~D4vxyz~~

Second is Dongguan Kejia, which uses possessive pronouns much more than Hsinchu Kejia: for all of the four domains A-D, the primary choice is pattern (1). For domains A and B, pattern (3) is also possible when emphasizing. This is also true for pattern (5) in domain B; pattern (5) is also possible in domain A, but only with extreme emphasis, or when one wants to bring close or distance oneself from the one discussed, as for example in jokes. For domain C, both the possessive pronoun with the subordination particle (pattern (3)) and with a classifier (pattern (5)) are possible next to (1). The possessive pronoun can even be combined with both the subordination particle and a classifier. I call this very duplicated looking construction pattern (6), as reflected in Table 5. All four possible patterns for domain C have no differences in meaning and can be used interchangeably, according to the participant. For the comparative sentences Ab, Bb, and Cb, the head of the second possessive phrase can be omitted. In A, the possessive pronoun thus can function on its own, although this usage is considered rude by the participant. In B and C however, the subordiation particle or a classifier should be added. Lastly, for domain D, only in sentence Dv pattern (3) is possible, but this pattern has a clear difference in meaning compared to pattern (1), as shown in example (5)ab. Pattern (4) is not possible in any domain and thus neither in domain D. The participant interpreted the combination D4 as a topic-comment structure and not as possession, as made clear in example (5)c:

(5)a   *ŋa²²*   *hiumen*   *iu*   *vuk.*[2]
        1SG.POSS   rear.side   EXIS   house
        'There are houses behind me.'

(5)b   *ŋa²²*   *e⁵³*   *hiumen*   *iu*   *vuk.*
        1SG.POSS   SUBORD   rear.side   EXIS   house
        'There are houses behind that of mine.'

(5)c   *ŋai²⁴*   *hiumen*   *iu*   *vuk.*
        1SG   rear.side   EXIS   house
        'I own a house back here.'

---

2   I transcribed tones only for the possessive pronouns and other language elements relevant in this research.

Table 6: Danzhou Kejia

MODIFIER → HEAD ↓	(1) [POSS]	(2) [PERS + SUBORD] (7) [PERS + CL]	(3) [POSS + SUBORD]	(4) [PERS]
A Kinship: **'little brother'**	A1**abc**	A2**abc** ~~A7abc~~	~~A3abc~~	~~A4abc~~
B Inalienable: **'nose'**	~~B1abc~~	B2**abc** B7**abc**	~~B3abc~~	~~B4abc~~
C Alienable: **'car'**	~~C1abc~~	C2**abc** C7**abc**	~~C3abc~~	~~C4abc~~
D Location: **'here', 'there',** **'rear side'**	D1vxyz	~~D2vxyz~~ ~~D7vxyz~~	~~D3vxyz~~	D4vxyz

Third is Danzhou Kejia, which is more similar to Hsinchu Kejia in that pattern (1) is only possible in domain A. Pattern (2) and (3) are also possible for domain A, then the possessive relation is more distant. Important to notice here is that in Danzhou Kejia pattern (2) and (3) are difficult to distinguish: in both patterns, the pronoun merges with the subordination particle to form $ŋa^{55}$-ai^{53} etc. (see also Table 2). These contracted forms are the standard choice for B and C too. Besides, a pattern (7) using the personal pronoun and a classifier is possible too in B and C, but only in an emphasized context. In the comparative sentences Ab, Bb, and Cb the head of the second possessive phrase can be omitted, as long as the possessive relation is clear. In A, the possessive pronoun thus can function on its own. Domain D features a remarkable opposition between pattern (1) and (4): when expressing 'there at you', (1) has to be used, but when expressing 'here at me', (4) has to be used, indepent of the position in the sentence. Example (6)ab illustrates this phenomenon:

(6)a $ŋai^{53}$ hi $ŋia^{22}$ $(ka)t^hang.$
      1SG   to.go.to   2SG.POSS   there
      'I go to you.'
and
      $ŋia^{22}$ $ŋait^hang$ hou   ŋet.
      2SG.POSS   there   very   hot
      'It is very hot there at you.'

(6)b ki^{53} loi $ŋai^{53}$ $kok^hut.$
      3SG   to.come   1SG   here
      'He comes to me.'
and
      $ŋai^{53}$ $(ki)t^hang$ hou   ŋet.
      1SG   here   very   hot
      'It is very hot here at me.'

(6)c $ŋai^{53}$ hi ki^{53} $ŋaik^hut.$
      1SG   to.go.to   3SG   there
      'I go to him.'

Even more remarkable is that 'there at him' is expressed by the personal pronoun, as shown in example (6)c. This phenomenon thus cannot be caused by a distinction between 'here' and 'there'. I did not discover any other possible causes, unfortunately.

8.3 Discussion

From these research results, we can conclude that the methods of expressing possession feature great variation between dialects. Each of the three dialects above is different in their usage of the possessive pronoun among other methods of expressing possession, and makes other distinctions between lexical domains. Although Hsinchu and Danzhou Kejia have a more limited usage of the possessive pronoun, it is still the natural choice for kinship terms (domain A). In Dongguan Kejia on the other hand the role of the possessive pronoun is much bigger. Locational phrases (domain D) feature the most interesting and diverse constructions, as I have described above. In short, it is hard to make any comparison between these research results and the ones described in chapter 7 Function: each dialect has its own constructions and distinctions, and in describing these much more research can be done.

With the research results above I can answer the two questions posed in paragraph 7.3 Discussion. First, when presented constructions as pattern (3) or (5), i.e. constructions with both a possessive pronoun and another possessive relation marker, the research participants often stated that these can only be used in an emphasized context. The emphasis in question here is an emphasis on the possessor and is therefore often found in comparative sentences or questions on the possessor. This emphasis is most likely the same as what is called reinforcement in chapter 7 Function. Second, in all three dialects in the research the possessive pronoun can function independently and non-substantivized, although there are limitations on this usage. But still, this is remarkable looking from the perspective of Western European languages.

9 Conclusion

Contrary to other Sinitic languages, Kejia has possessive pronouns, which are morphologically clearly different from its personal pronouns. These are widely distributed throughout the Kejia dialects, and feature limited variation: the common forms are ηa^{44} '1SG.POSS', $\eta i a^{44}$ '2SG,POSS', and $k i a^{44}$ '3SG.POSS'. Only singular forms exist. As for their origin, three big theories exist which are all based on contraction of the personal pronoun and a suffix. The difference between the theories lies in the suffix that is thought to have contracted with the personal pronoun: $ji\bar{a}$ 'family', which is used in Mandarin dialects to express possession with kinship terms; the subordination particle ke^{52}; or the prefix common in Kejia kinship terms, a^{44}. The last theory is best able to not only explain the morphological origin but also the grammatical differences between dialects. This is confirmed by my research on the function of the possessive pronouns, which shows that in many Kejia dialects, the possessive pronoun indeed can only be used before kinship terms starting with a^{44}-. In other dialects, the usage of the possessive pronoun has broadened to other lexical domains as inalienable possession, while in some dialects the possessive pronoun is the standard method of expressing possession. In dialects where the possessive pronoun can only be used with kinship terms, the construction common in other Sinitic languages with a personal pronoun and the subordination particle is prevalent. It is remarkable how different the usages of the possessive pronouns are per dialect, also in comparison with other methods of expressing possession with a pronoun, while their morphological form features only little variation throughout dialects.

9.1 Reflection and recommendations for further research

This thesis is an attempt to give a comprehensive picture of all that is relevant to Kejia possessive pronouns, and I think that I have succeeded in doing so: the aspects of distribution and variation, the origin, and the syntactical functions are all covered evenly; they reflect the scholarly debate on this subject and are enhanced by own research. At the same time, the limitations of this research also lie in its broad set-up: giving a comprehensive picture in only 10,000 words limits the scale of research. The informant consultation only featured four participants for three dialects. As the dialects vary heavily, any comparative research is impossible at this scale. Only here additional research is very welcome.

This is even more true for the following three topics. First, as I touched upon in chapter 7 Function, the dialect of Liancheng features the trend of replacement of the possessive pronoun by the personal pronoun, while the initial trend is that of a broadening usage of the possessive pronoun. Second, chapter 8 Informant consultation showed that the dialect of Hsinchu makes a distinction between the lexical domains of home and non-home. This is a completely other approach than in many other languages. Third, the same chapter also shows that locational expressions feature very diverse and interesting possessive constructions. The research possibilities for all these topics are abundant.

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A Appendix

This appendix contains the research materials for the informant consultation, consisting of the sentences I presented the participants and the questions I asked them.

A.1 Sentences

The numbering of the sentences corresponds to Table 3 in chapter 8 Informant consultation.

Aa   'My little brother drives.'
Ab   'My little brother is taller than yours.'
Ac   'I hit my little brother.'

Ba   'My nose hurts.'
Bb   'My nose is smaller than yours.'
Bc   'He hit my nose.'

Ca   'My car is broken.'
Cb   'My car is faster than yours.'
Cc   'He drives my car.'

Dv   'Behind me are houses.'
Dw   'Behind my house are houses.'
Dx   'It is hot here at my place.'
Dy   'Here at my place it is hotter than there at yours.'
Dz   'I come to you.'

A.2 Questions

When starting from the English sentences:
1. How would you say this in Kejia?
2. What do you think of option X0x (cover all options 1-4)?
3. When positive: do you think this option has a different meaning?
4. When negative: what should be changed to make the sentence valid?
5. Which option sounds the best to you?

When starting from the Kejia sentences:
1. Do you consider this a valid sentence?
2. When yes: what do you think of option X0x (cover all options 1-4)?
3. When no: what should be changed to make the sentence valid?
4. When more options are valid: do you think there is a difference in meaning between the sentences?
5. Which option sounds the best to you?