THE VERB IN KENTAKBONG*

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0.0 The Verb

The verb is a subcategory of the Verb Phrase, i.e. the VP of the sentence-structure NP - VP. The other subcategory of the Verb Phrase, insofar as Kentakbong is concerned, is the adjective. The verb is differentiated from the adjective in two

*Kentakbong is an Aslian language spoken in the North Central part of West Malaysia. It is dialectally related to Kensiu; cf. G. Benjamín, "Austroasiatic subgroupings in the Malay Peninsula," in the present collection.
Aspects:

(i) The adjective is not characterized by the presence of any affix while the verb may take any of the 5 verbal affixes present in the language.

(ii) The adjective can immediately be followed by /?am?/ 'very,' while the verb cannot.

1.0 Morphological Characteristics of the Verb

Verbs may consist of single or complex roots. Complex roots are formed by the combination of two non-identical root words or reduplicated roots. Those formed by reduplication of roots do not take any affixes. Phonologically, roots are either monosyllabic or disyllabic. Trisyllabic roots are rare, and are loanwords taken mostly from Malay.

As mentioned earlier, verbs are characterized by affixes, which are five in number. Four of these are prefixes, while the other is an infix. These are:

(i) /ma?-/¹
(ii) /?u-/
(iii) /p?-/
(iv) /pe-/
(v) /?-en-/

Affixation in Kentakbong may be simple or complex. Complex affixation is represented by the combination of /ma?-/ or /?u-/ with /p?-/, resulting in the complex prefixes /ma?p?-/ and /?up?-/. None of these affixes seem to be characterized by allo- morphic variants.

The verb in Kentakbong can be rewritten as follows:
Rule 1:

\[ \text{Vb} \rightarrow \begin{cases} R_{\text{in}} + A\text{f}_1 + R_x \\ \begin{bmatrix} A\text{f}_1 \\ (A\text{f}_3) (A\text{f}_2) \end{bmatrix} \quad (R_1) R_2 \end{cases} \]

Condition:

- \( A\text{f}_1 = \text{Infix} \)
- \( A\text{f}_3 = /\text{maʔ}/ \) or \( /\text{ʔuʔ}/ \)
- \( A\text{f}_2 = \text{All other affixes} \)
- \( R_{\text{in}} = \text{Root-initial} \)
- \( R_x = \text{The remaining part of the root} \)

The prefix \( /p\text{ʔ}/ \) has a causative function, while the remaining affixes indicate various other aspects of the verb. Hence the verb together with its affixes, causative and other, can be said to be "marked", while those verbs which occur in their root forms are "unmarked". The verb in Kentakbong is not marked by tense, person or number. For convenience, all English translations of the examples given in this paper are rendered in the present tense.

1.1 Verbs Occurring in Root Forms

Unmarked by any causative or aspectual function verbs in Kentakbong occur in their root forms. Such verbs may be either transitive (Example 1) or intransitive (Example 2).

Example 1:

(i) /γεʔ dįʔ hεley/  
    I build (a) house  

(ii) /γεʔ jεmu padey/  
    I dry-in-the-sun rice-with-husk  
    = I dry rice in the sun.
(iii) /ʔeːy kʊs ʔanɛɡ taʔ/
father beat child he
= The father beats his child.

(iv) /ʔanɛɡ kɪdɪk manuk/ 
child kill chicken
= The child kills a chicken.

(v) /hømɪʔ tɔd høley/ 
person set-fire house
= The person (i.e. one who is not an aborigine) sets fire to the house.

(vi) /yɛʔ jot bakaw/²
I smoke a cigarette

Example 2:

(i) /høley ɡed/
house be-on-fire
= The house is on fire.

(ii) /ʔiʔeːy kəleḥ/
smoke come-out
= The smoke comes out.

(iii) /ʔɔpɔy ?ɛyəh/
roof leak
= The roof leaks.

(iv) /mɛkketok celoy/
sun rise
= The sun rises.

(v) /manuk ɓleḥ kəlɪŋ høley/
chicken enter in house
= The chicken enters the house.

2 Verbs with Prefix /pi-/ 
The prefix /pi-/ has a causative function. This prefix occurs only before a verb root and hence is
class-maintaining. As all initial vowels are preceded by /?/, the positioning of /pl-/ before /?i-/ causes the elision of /?/ and the merging together of /i/ of /pl-/ and /i/ of the root (Example 3 (ii)). In the examples below, only example (v) shows the combination of \( R_1 \) and \( R_2 \) as a complex Root verb.

**Example 3:**

(i) /sa/ = descends  
/pisa/ = causes to descend  

(ii) /tɛɡ/ = sleeps  
/pitɛɡ/ = causes to sleep, puts to sleep  

(iii) /?ilay/ = takes a bath  
/pilay/ = bathes (someone)  

(iv) /ciʔ/ = eats  
/picʔ/ = feeds  

(v) /yinʔam/ = is weaned (from /yin/, not, and /ʔam/, sucks-the-breast)  

(vi) /piyinʔam/ = weans (a baby)

Verbs with /pl-/ can take prefix /maʔ-/ or /ʔu-/ (cf. 1.3 and 1.4).

1.3 Verbs with Prefix /maʔ-/  

The prefix /maʔ-/ is class-maintaining. Its stem can consist of \( R \) or /pl-/- + (\( R_1 \)) \( R_2 \) (cf. 1.0 and 1.2). As mentioned earlier, /maʔ-/ has an aspectual function: it denotes the desiderative aspect.

**Example 4:**

(i) /ciʔ/ = eats  
/maʔciʔ/ = wants to eat  

(ii) /cep/ = goes
/ma?cep/ = wants to go

(iii) /pə?ah/ = warms oneself before the fire
    /ma?pə?ah/ = wishes to warm oneself before the fire

(iv) /deɡ/ = runs
    /ma?deɡ/ = wishes to run

(v) /dun/ = buries
    /ma?dun/ = wishes to bury

Verbs with /pɪ-/ as in Example 3, can form items of verbs with /ma?-/ as below:

Example 5:

(i) /ma?pɪsa/ = wants to cause to descend
(ii) /ma?pɪteɡ/ = wants to put to sleep
(iii) /ma?pɪlay/ = wants to bathe (someone)
(iv) /ma?pɪçi?/ = wants to feed
(v) /ma?pɪyɪn?am/ = wants to wean (a baby)

.4 Verbs with Prefix /?u-/

This prefix denotes the perfective aspect. It occurs before the verb-root R (cf. Example 6) or the stem pɪ + \((R_1 \cdot R_2)\) (cf. Example 7), and is class-maintaining.

Example 6:

(i) /?ucɪ?/ = has eaten
(ii) /?uged/ = has been on fire
(iii) /?ucep/ = has gone
(iv) /?udɪ?/ = has built
(v) /?ukos/ = has beaten

Example 7:

(i) /?upɪsa/ = has caused to descend
(ii) /?upɪteɡ/ = has put to sleep
(iii) /?up\i!lay/ = has bathed (someone)
(iv) /?up\i!ci?/ = has fed
(v) /?uy\i!n?am/ = has weaned (a baby)

1.5 **Verb with Prefix /pa-/**

Only one example indicates the existence of a prefix /pe-/ . This is /peli!g/ , which means "(of fire) extinguishes by itself" and contrasts with /pili!g/ , which means "extinguishes the fire" (cf. 1.2) . The following pair of sentences illustrates the difference in the use of these two words.

**Example 8:**

(i) /?o$ ?on peli!g/
    fire that extinguish
    = The fire extinguishes by itself.

(ii) /!yo? pil!g ?o$/
    I extinguish (the) fire.

1.6 **Verbs with Infix /-?en-/**

The infix /-?en-/ occurs only with single roots and denotes the imperfective aspect. It is class-maintaining and exhibits different types of behaviour determined by the various types of phonological features of the roots with which it occurs.

**A. Infixation Type A**

With a monosyllabic root, /-?en-/ is placed before the root.

**Example 9:**

(i) /c\i!s/ = excretion, excretes
    /?enc\i!s/ = excretes

(ii) /co/ = speaks
    /?enco/ = speaks
B. Infixation Type B

With a disyllabic root which begins with / (as all initial vowels are preceded by /?/), /?/ the infix merges together with /?/ of the root, and the vowel of the root is ellipsed.

Hence, the verb /?ən\lay/, which conveys the meaning "takes a bath" and which is marked by the perfective aspect, is derived from the combination of the root /?i\lay/ and the infix /-?ən-/, in the following manner:

/? + ?ən + i\lay/ → ?ən\lay

C. Infixation Type C

With roots which have the phonological structure \( C_1 V_1 C_2 V_2 (C_3) (X) (X) \), where \( X \) stands for any consonant or vowel, and where \( V_1 \) is filled by vowel other than /ə/ and \( C_1 \) is not /?/, the infix /?ən-/ is placed after the first consonant of the root. In this process /?/ of the infix is ellipsed.

Example 10:

(i) /cit\əh/ = cooks
/cənit\əh/ = cooks, is cooking

(ii) /sap\əh/ = sweeps
/sənap\əh/ = sweeps, is sweeping

(iii) /tənəm/ = plants
/tənənəm/ = plants, is planting

(iv) /cənkolo/ = digs
/cənaŋkolo/ = digs, is digging

(v) /kəy\ə/? = makes
/kəny\ə/? = makes, is making

D. Infixation Type D

With roots which have the phonological
structure $C_1 \ V_1 \ C_2 \ V_2 \ (C_3) \ (X) \ (X)$, where $X$ stands for any consonant or vowel, and where $V_1$ is filled by $/ə/$ and $C_1$ is not $/ʔ/$, the positioning of the infix after $C_1$ causes the elision of $/ʔ/$ of $/-\text{ʔen}-/$ and $/ə/$ (i.e. $V_1$) of the root. This type of the infixation of $/-\text{ʔen}-/$ is almost similar to Infixation Type B.

Example 11:

(i)  /tebas/ = cuts (grass, bushes)  /tənbas/ = cuts or is cutting (grass, bushes)
(ii) /tebaŋ/ = cuts down (trees)  /tənbaŋ/ = cuts or is cutting down (trees)
(iii) /ləŋəluk/ = laughs  /ləŋəluk/ = laughs, is laughing
(iv) /kəbįs/ = dies  /kənbįs/ = dies, is dying
(v)  /cətɔh/ = coughs  /cəntɔh/ = coughs, is coughing

There are a few exceptions to the rule of Infixation Type D, and these are represented by the examples below:

Example 12:

(i)  /pəŋguh/ = plays  /pəŋŋguh/ = plays, is playing
(ii) /jəmu/ = dries (something) in the sun  /jəŋəmu/ = dries or is drying (something) in the sun

The above examples indicate infixation according to the rule of Infixation Type C, whereas the phonological features of the root would seem to
Reduplication of Root Verbs

Root verbs are reduplicated to give the continuous aspect. Reduplicated verbs do not take any of the verbal affixes. Examples of such verbs are as follows:

Example 13:

(i) /cɪʔ/ = eats
    /cɪʔcɪʔ/ = continues eating

(ii) /ko/ = speaks
    /koko/ = continues speaking

(iii) /ʔεŋ/ = sleeps
     /ʔεŋʔεŋ/ = continues sleeping

As mentioned in 0.0, the verb is a subcategory of VP, and hence occurs in VP in the sentence structure NP - VP. The types of verbs discussed in section 1 consist of single verbs, either with simple roots or with complex roots. In this section consideration is given to the verb in its phrasal and potential contexts.

The Complex Verb Phrase

As used in this paper, the term "complex verb phrase" refers to the combination of two VP's, VP₁ and VP₂. The subcategories that can occur in either the VP's concerned form the basis for the division of the complex VP into 3 different types.

Type A: Both the VP's are represented by non-identical verbs.

Type B: VP₁ is represented by an adjective and VP₂ by a verb.

Type C: VP₁ is represented by a verb and VP₂ by an adjective.
Examples of Type A of the Complex VP occur in the following sentences.

Example 14:

(i) /baɬeʔ məniʔ dəh dən həmiʔ/  
    many person come see person  
    = Many people (aborigines) come to see people (other than aborigines).

(ii) /ʔu bənti jɔt bakoʔ/²  
    he stop smoke cigarette  
    = He stops smoking cigarettes.

(iii) /yeʔ maʔcep gaʔ keʔa/  
    I wish-to-go ascend car  
    = I wish to go by car.

(iv) /yeʔ maʔsa jɛl hentaw/  
    I wish-to-descend sell petai-fruit  
    = I wish to go to sell the petai-fruit.

(v) /he maʔwek tod ?ikən/  
    we wish-to-return roast fish  
    = We wish to return to roast fish.

(vi) /yeʔ bah kəʔ keʔeʔ keʔma/  
    I go search fruit kekma  
    = I go to look for the kekma fruit.

Examples of Type B of the Complex VP are as follows:

Example 15:

(i) /yeʔ søʔən maʔcep peʔ kəhəb/  
    I lazy wish-to-go to jungle  
    = I am too lazy to go to the jungle.

(ii) /ʔu kəʔən keʔaʔ/  
    he strong work  
    = He is strong in working.
Examples of Type C of the Complex VP are as follows:

Example 16:

(i) /kəwəw kɑŋəŋ ɋɛŋɛŋə?
   bird fly high
   = The bird flies high.

(ii) /ʔu ləɡəluk kɑŋəŋ/
    he laugh strong
    = He laughs loudly.

(iii) /təʔ kɛjaʔ yajən/
     he work industrious
     = He works industriously.

(iv) /ʔanəŋ ʔou jɪm pyəs/
     child that cry pain
     = The child cries in pain.

(v) /mənɨʔ ʔon kəbîs kələmət/
    person that die hungry
    = The person dies of hunger.

As evidenced by the examples above, Type C can divided into 2 subtypes: one subtype is represented by examples (i) - (iii) and the other by (iv) and (v). In the first subtype, the second component the phrase, that is the adjective, is marked by the feature [+ manner], and can be said to function an adverb of manner. In the second subtype, the adjective is marked with the feature [+ reason], and n be said to function as an adverb of reason. The sitioning of the appropriate adjectives after the rbs is the only method of conveying the notions inner and reason in Kentakbong.
2.2 Verbs in Negated Verbal Phrases and Negative Verbs

Verbs consisting of single or double roots as discussed in 2.1 can be preceded by either of two negative words, /byaʔ/ or /ɣιʔ/, which are in all respects interchangeable. These two forms are also used to negate adjectives or nouns. The following sentences exemplify the use of the phrase Neg + V.

Example 17:

(i) /γεʔ byaʔ kɔs taʔ/
    I not hit he
    = I do not hit him.

(ii) /he ɣιʔ kɔs ʔey taʔ/
    they not hit father he
    = They do not hit his father.

(iii) /hɛmiʔ ʔɛh byaʔ maʔco/
    person this not wish-to-speak
    = This person (not an aborigine) does not wish to speak.

(iv) /maʔɛ ʔɔn ɣιʔ maʔcom ʔɔs/
    woman that not wish-to-light fire
    = That woman does not want to light the fire.

In complex sentences, the verb following the negative word can be ellipsed on condition that the VP in which it functions is already referred to either in a preceding clause or sentence, as shown in the examples below:

Example 18:

(i) /kalu boʔ byaʔ maʔcəp // γεʔ
    if you not wish-to-go I
pon bya?/
too not
= If you won't go, I too won't.

(ii) /kalu pe:dih // ye? cep kalu ?ujan //
if hot I go if rain

ye? yin/
I not
= If it is fine weather, I will go.
If it rains, I won't.

(iii) /kalu bo? cep // ye? pon ma?cep
if you go, I too wish-to-go

kalu bo? yin // ye? pon yin/
if you not, I too not
= If you go, I too will go. If you are not going, I too am not (going).

The negative words /bya?/ and /yin/ can occur full verbs, with the meaning "does not have".

Example 19:

(i) /ye? bya? belaw/
I not-have bamboo
= I do not have any bamboo.

(ii) /ye? yin byas/
I not-have husked-rice
= I do not have husked-rice.

(iii) /ye? bya? ke:teg/
I not-have rubber.

/bya?/ and /yin/ as used in the sentences above, i.e. with the function of full verbs, have their affirmative counterpart in /we?/. 
Example 20:

(i) /γε? we? byas/
    I have husked-rice

(ii) /γε? we? kefeg nam kepιn/
     I have rubber six slabs
     = I have six slabs of rubber.

As full verbs, /bya?/ and /γιν/ can stand by themselves as predicates of sentences.

Example 21:

(i) / byas bya?/
    husked-rice Neg-verb
    = There is no husked-rice.

(ii) /kasot yin/
    shoe Neg-verb
    = There are no shoes.

(iii) / byas γε? bya?/
    husked-rice I Neg-verb
    = I have no husked-rice.

2.3 Verbs in Active and Passive Sentences

For the purpose of this paper, an active sentence is defined as a sentence with the structure Subject - Verb - Object, while a passive sentence is defined as a sentence with the structure Object Pas-word - Subject - Verb. The passive-word (Pas-word) is filled by /?ab/.

All of the verbs discussed in section 1 can function in active sentences. Verbs with all affixes except /pI-/ occur exclusively in active sentences while those occurring in their root forms and with prefix /pI-/ can occur in passive as well as active sentences. Sentences given in section 1 can be
Examples of passive sentences are as follows:

Sample 22:

(i) /?aŋɛg ?ab ?ɛy ta? kɔs/
    child Pas-word father he beat
    = The child is beaten by his father.

(ii) /manuk ?ab γɛ? kĩdĩk/
     chicken Pas-word I kill
     = The chicken is killed by me.

(iii) /?aŋɛg ?ab mabɛ ?ɔn pĩcĩ?/
      child Pas-word woman that feed
      = The child is fed by that woman.

(iv) / padey ?ab γɛ? jemu/
      rice-with-husk Pas-word I dry-in-the-sun
      = The rice is dried in the sun by me.

The subject in the passive sentence can optionally be ellipsed.

Sample 23:

(i) /?aŋɛg ?ab kɔs/
    = The child is beaten.

(ii) /manuk ?ab kĩdĩk/
    = The chicken is killed.

(iii) /?aŋɛg ?ab pĩcĩ?/
    = The child is fed.

(iv) /padey ?ab jemu/
    = The rice is dried in the sun.

The word /?ab/ can also occur as a full transitive verb, as in the examples below:
Example 24:

(i) /?u jan ?a b γεʔ/  
    rain fall-on me  
    = The rain falls on me.

(ii) /γεʔ ?a b ?u jan/  
    I get rain  
    = I get the rain

The position of the verb in relation to the other elements of the active and the passive sentence is as follows:

Rule 2: \( S_{\text{act}} \rightarrow \text{Subj} - \text{Vb} - (\text{Ob}) - (X) \)

Rule 3: \( S_{\text{pas}} \rightarrow \text{Obj} - ?a b - (\text{Subj}) - \text{Vb} - (X) \)

In both the rules above, X stands for any string.

2.4 The Verb in Imperative Sentences

The imperative mood may be manifested in either of two subcategories:

(i) the positive imperative

(ii) the negative imperative

In an imperative sentence, be it positive or negative, the verb may only consist of its root form or have the structure /pi/ + \((R_1)(R_2)\) (cf. 1.0).

2.4.1 The Positive Imperative

The positive imperative sentence is characterized by the presence of the particle /deh/ immediately after the verb. The presence of the subject "you" is optional; when it occurs, it is placed after /deh/ or after any other phrase. The position of the verb in relation to other elements of the positive imperative sentence is as follows:
Rule 4: Imper-Pos $\rightarrow$ Vb $-$ dēh $-$ (X) $-$ (Subj)

**Condition**
Vb = R of /pl/ + (R₁) (R₂)
X = any phrase
Subj. is filled by the second person pronoun, /hamoh/ or /bo?/

**Example 25:**
(i) /cep dēh pe? baliŋ/
    go Imp. to Baling
    = (Please) go to Baling.
(ii) /co dēh hamoh/
    speak Imp. you
    = (Please) speak.
(iii) /pilīg dēh ʔos ʔon/
    extinguish Imp. fire that
    = (Please) extinguish the fire.
(iv) /cī? dēh nasī?/
    eat Imp. rice
    = (Please) eat (some) rice.
(v) /dōh dēh pe? heley yeʔ?/
    come Imp. to house I
    = (Please) come to my house.

The particle /dēh/ is not strictly an imperative particle. In structures other than the one specified in Rule 4, /dēh/ denotes emphasis. This means the emphatic /dēh/ may occur after any verb except one which occurs in the context specified in Rule 4 or after any other category or subcategory word or phrase, be it nominal, adverbial or activial.
Example 26:

(i) /ye? ma?cep deh/
   I wish-to-go Emp.

(ii) /ye? cep deh/
    I go Emp.

(iii) /bya? low deh/
      not what Emp.
      = That's all right.

(iv) /pedih deh!/
     hot Emp.
     = It's hot

(v) /ye? we? tenlayt deh/
    I have resins Emp.

2.42 The Negative Imperative

The negative imperative sentence is characterized by the presence of the negative imperative word /ket/ 'don't,' which immediately precedes the verb. The particle /deh/ may be used to convey emphasis.

Example 27:

(i) /ket malu deh/
    don't be-shy Emp.
    = (Please) don't be shy.

(ii) /ket ?ajo? ye? deh/
    don't imitate I Emp.
    = (Please) don't imitate me.

(iii) /ket hegu? tenlayt ta?/
    don't ask-for resins he
    = (Please) don't ask for his resins.

/ket/ can occur by itself as a minimal sentence, with or without /deh/.
Example 28:

(i) /kət!/ 
    don't

(ii) / kət dəh!/ 
    don't Emp.

The position of the verb in relation to the other elements of an imperative negative sentence is as follows:

5: Imper–Neg → /kət/ - (Vb) - (X) - (dəh). 
    X stands for any string.

1Transcriptions in this paper are all phonemic. 
2In free variation with /bako/, which occurs
  eafter.