

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. Benjamin, "Austro-asiatic 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 /ʔamət/ 'very,' while the verb cannot.

10 *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) /maʔ-/¹
- (ii) /ʔu-/
- (iii) /pɪ-/
- (iv) /pə-/
- (v) /-ʔən-/

Affixation in Kentakbong may be simple or complex. Complex affixation is represented by the combination of /maʔ-/ or /ʔu-/ with /pɪ-/, resulting in the complex prefixes /maʔpɪ-/ and /ʔupɪ-/. None of these affixes seem to be characterized by allomorphic variants.

The verb in Kentakbong can be rewritten as follows:

Rule 1:

$$Vb \longrightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} R_{in} + Af_1 + R_x \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} Af_1 \\ (Af_3) \quad (Af_2) \end{array} \right] \quad (R_1) \quad R_2 \end{array} \right\}$$

Condition:

Af_1 = Infix

Af_3 = /ma?-/ or /?u-/
 (Note: The original image has a typo 'u' instead of 'u' in the original text, but based on the context of the document, it is likely intended to be /?u-/.)

Af_2 = All other affixes

R_{in} = Root-initial

R_x = The remaining part of the root

The prefix /pɪ-/ 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) /ye? di? həley/
 I build (a) house

(ii) /ye? jəmu padəy/
 I dry-in-the-sun rice-with-husk
 = I dry rice in the sun.

- (iii) /ʔey kɔs ʔanɛg taʔ/
 father beat child he
 = The father beats his child.
- (iv) /ʔanɛg kɪdɪk manuk/
 child kill chicken
 = The child kills a chicken.
- (v) /hɛmiʔ tɔd hɛley/
 person set-fire house
 = The person (*i.e.* one who is not an aborigine) sets fire to the house.
- (vi) /yɛʔ jɔt bakaw/²
 I smoke a cigarette

Example 2:

- (i) /hɛley gɛd/
 house be-on-fire
 = The house is on fire.
- (ii) /ʔiʔey kɛleh/
 smoke come-out
 = The smoke comes out.
- (iii) /ʔɔpɔy ʔɛyãh/
 roof leak
 = The roof leaks.
- (iv) /mɛkkɔtɔk ɔloy/
 sun rise
 = The sun rises.
- (v) /manuk blɛh kɛlɪŋ hɛley/
 chicken enter in house
 = The chicken enters the house.

.2 Verbs with Prefix /pɪ-/

The prefix /pɪ-/ has a causative function. This prefix occurs only before a verb root and hence is

class-maintaining. As all initial vowels are preceded by /ʔ/, the positioning of /pɪ-/ before /ʔi-/ causes the elision of /ʔ/ and the merging together of /i/ of /pɪ-/ and /i/ of the root (Example 3 (ii)). In the examples below, only example (v) shows the combination of R₁ and R₂ as a complex Root verb.

Example 3:

- (i) /sa/ = descends
/pisa/ = causes to descend
- (ii) /teɣ/ = sleeps
/pɪteɣ/ = causes to sleep, puts to sleep
- (iii) /ʔilay/ = takes a bath
/pɪlay/ = bathes (someone)
- (iv) /ciʔ/ = eats
/pɪciʔ/ = feeds
- (v) /yinʔam/ = is weaned (from /yin/, *not*,
and /ʔam/, *sucks-the-breast*)
- (vi) /piyinʔam/ = weans (a baby)

Verbs with /pɪ-/ 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 /pɪ-/ + (R₁) R₂ (*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) /cəp/ = goes

/ma?cəp/ = wants to go

(iii) /pə?ah/ = warms oneself before the fire

/ma?pə?ah/ = wishes to warm oneself
before the fire

(iv) /dəg/ = runs

/ma?dəg/ = wishes to run

(v) /dun/ = buries

/ma?dun/ = wishes to bury

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

Example 5:

(i) /ma?pīsa/ = wants to cause to descend

(ii) /ma?pīteg/ = wants to put to sleep

(iii) /ma?pīlay/ = wants to bathe (someone)

(iv) /ma?pīci?/ = wants to feed

(v) /ma?pīyīn?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 pī + (R₁) R₂ (cf. Example 7), and is class-maintaining.

Example 6:

(i) /?uci?/ = has eaten

(ii) /?ugəd/ = has been on fire

(iii) /?ucəp/ = has gone

(iv) /?udi?/ = has built

(v) /?ukəs/ = has beaten

Example 7:

(i) /?upīsa/ = has caused to descend

(ii) /?upīteg/ = has put to sleep

- (iii) /ʔupɫlay/ = has bathed (someone)
 (iv) /ʔupɫciʔ/ = has fed
 (v) /ʔuyɪnʔam/ = has weaned (a baby)

1.5 *Verb with Prefix /pa-/*

Only one example indicates the existence of a prefix /pə-/. This is /pəɪɪg/, which means "(of fire) extinguishes by itself" and contrasts with /pɪɪg/, 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) /ʔɔs ʔɔn pəɪɪg/
 fire that extinguish
 = The fire extinguishes by itself.

- (ii) /yɛʔ pɪɪg ʔɔs/
 I extinguish (the) fire.

1.6 *Verbs with Infix /-ʔən-/*

The infix /-ʔən-/ occurs only with single root 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, /-ʔən-/ is placed before the root.

Example 9:

- (i) /cās/ = excretion, excretes
 /ʔəncās/ = excretes
- (ii) /co/ = speaks
 /ʔənco/ = 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 /?ənlay/, which conveys the meaning "takes a bath" and which is marked by the perfective aspect, is derived from the combination of the root /?ilay/ and the infix /-?ən-/, in the following manner:

/? + ?ən + ilay/ → ?ənlay

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 a 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) /citch/ = cooks
/cənitch/ = cooks, is cooking
- (ii) /sapoh/ = sweeps
/sənapoh/ = sweeps, is sweeping
- (iii) /tanɛm/ = plants
/tənanɛm/ = plants, is planting
- (iv) /cankol/ = digs
/cənaŋkol/ = digs, is digging
- (v) /kayi?/ = makes
/kənayi?/ = 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 /-ʔən-/ and /ə/ (*i.e.* V_1) of the root. This type of the infixation of /-ʔən-/ is almost similar to Infixation Type B.

Example 11:

- (i) /təbas/ = cuts (grass, bushes)
/tənbas/ = cuts or is cutting (grass, bushes)
- (ii) /təbaŋ/ = cuts down (trees)
/tənbaŋ/ = cuts or is cutting down (trees)
- (iii) /ləgəluk/ = laughs
/ləngəluk/ = laughs, is laughing
- (iv) /kəbɪs/ = dies
/kənɪs/ = 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
/pənəŋguh/ = plays, is playing
- (ii) /jəmu/ = dries (something) in the sun
/jənəmu/ = 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

dition Infixation Type D.

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) /co/ = speaks
/coco/ = continues speaking
- (iii) /ʔɛŋ/ = sleeps
/ʔɛŋʔɛŋ/ = 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, VP_1 and VP_2 . 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: VP_1 is represented by an adjective and VP_2 by a verb.
- type C: VP_1 is represented by a verb and VP_2 by an adjective.

Examples of Type A of the Complex VP occur in the following sentences.

Example 14:

- (i) /balə? məni? dɔh dɛŋ həmi?/
many person come see person
= Many people (aborigines) come to see people (other than aborigines).
- (ii) /ʔu benti jət bakɔ/²
he stop smoke cigarette
= He stops smoking cigarettes.
- (iii) /yɛ? ma?cɛp ga? keta/
I wish-to-go ascend car
= I wish to go by car.
- (iv) /yɛ? ma?sa jɛl həntaw/
I wish-to-descend sell petai-fruit
= I wish to go to sell the petai-fruit.
- (v) /he ma?wek tɔd ʔikɛn/
we wish-to-return roast fish
= We wish to return to roast fish.
- (vi) /yɛ? bah kɔ? kɛbɛ? kɛ?ma/
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) /yɛ? sɛŋɛn ma?cɛp pe? kaɦɛb/
I lazy wish-to-go to jungle
= I am too lazy to go to the jungle.
- (ii) /ʔu kɔŋɛŋ kɛja?/
he strong work
= He is strong in working.

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

Example 16:

- (i) /kawaw kapəŋ mənjə?/
bird fly high
= The bird flies high.
- (ii) /ʔu ləgəluk kapəŋ/
he laugh strong
= He laughs loudly.
- (iii) /taʔ kejaʔ yajən/
he work industrious
= He works industriously.
- (iv) /ʔanəg ʔɔu jɪm pyās/
child that cry pain
= The child cries in pain.
- (v) /məniʔ ʔɔn kəbis kələmot/
person that die hungry
= The person dies of hunger.

As evidenced by the examples above, Type C can be 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 of the phrase, that is the adjective, is marked by the feature [+ manner], and can be said to function as an adverb of manner. In the second subtype, the adjective is marked with the feature [+ reason], and can be said to function as an adverb of reason. The positioning of the appropriate adjectives after the verbs is the only method of conveying the notions of manner 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, /bya?/ or /yɪn/, 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) /ye? bya? kɔs ta?/

I not hit he
= I do not hit him.

(ii) / he yɪn kɔs ?ey ta?/

they not hit father he
= They do not hit his father.

(iii) /hɛmɪ? ?əh bya? ma?co/

person this not wish-to-speak
= This person (not an aborigine) does not wish to speak.

(iv) /mabɛ ?ɔn yɪn ma?com ?ɔs/

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 bɔ? bya? ma?cɛp // ye?

if you not wish-to-go I

pon bya?/

too not

= If you won't go, I too won't.

(if) /kalu pedih // 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? below/
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? keteg/
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) /ye? we? byas/
I have husked-rice
- /ye? we? keteg nam kəpiŋ/
(ii) I have rubber six slabs
= I have six slabs of rubber.

As full verbs, /bya?/ and /yin/ 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 ye? 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 /ʔab/.

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

classified as active sentences.

Examples of passive sentences are as follows:

Example 22:

- (i) /ʔanɛg ʔab ʔey taʔ kɔs/
child Pas-word father he beat
= The child is beaten by his father.
- (ii) /manuk ʔab yɛʔ kɪdɪk/
chicken Pas-word I kill
= The chicken is killed by me.
- (iii) /ʔanɛg ʔab mabe ʔɔn pɪciʔ/
child Pas-word woman that feed
= The child is fed by that woman.
- (iv) /padɛy ʔab yɛʔ jɛmu/
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.

Example 23:

- (i) /ʔanɛg ʔab kɔs/
= The child is beaten.
- (ii) /manuk ʔab kɪdɪk/
= The chicken is killed.
- (iii) /ʔanɛg ʔab pɪciʔ/
= The child is fed.
- (iv) /padɛy ʔab jɛmu/
= The rice is dried in the sun.

The word /ʔab/ can also occur as a full transitive verb, as in the examples below:

Example 24:

(i) /ʔujan ʔab yεʔ/
rain fall-on me
= The rain falls on me.

(ii) /yεʔ ʔab ʔujan/
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: $S_{act} \longrightarrow \text{Subj} - \text{Vb} - (\text{Ob}) - (\text{X})$

Rule 3: $S_{pas} \longrightarrow \text{Obj} - \text{ʔab} - (\text{Subj}) - \text{Vb} - (\text{X})$

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 /pɪ/ + (R_1) (R_2) (cf. 1.0).

2.41 The Positive Imperative

The positive imperative sentence is characterized by the presence of the particle /dɛh/ immediately after the verb. The presence of the subject "you" is optional; when it occurs, it is placed after /dɛh/ or after any other phrase. The position of the verb in relation to other elements of the positive imperative sentence is as follows:

4: Imper-Pos \rightarrow Vb - dɛh - (X) - (Subj)

Condition

Vb = R of /pɪ/ + (R₁) (R₂)

X = any phrase

Subj. is filled by the second person pronoun,
/hamoh/ or /bo?/

Example 25:

- (i) /cɛp dɛh pe? baliŋ/
go Imp. to Baling
= (Please) go to Baling.
- (ii) / co dɛh hamoh/
speak Imp. you
= (Please) speak.
- (iii) / piŋig dɛh ?ɔs ?ɔn/
extinguish Imp. fire that
= (Please) extinguish the fire.
- (iv) /ci? dɛh nasi?/
eat Imp. rice
= (Please) eat (some) rice.
- (v) /dɔh dɛh pe? hɛley yɛ?/
come Imp. to house I
= (Please) come to my house.

The particle /dɛh/ is not strictly an impera-
particle. In structures other than the one
defined in Rule 4, /dɛh/ denotes emphasis. This means
that the emphatic /dɛh/ 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
adjectival.

Example 26:

- (i) /ye? ma?cəp dəh/
I wish-to-go Emp.
- (ii) /ye? cəp dəh/
I go Emp.
- (iii) /bya? low dəh/
not what Emp.
= That's all right.
- (iv) /pədih dəh!/
hot Emp.
= It's hot
- (v) /ye? we? tənlayt dəh/
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 /dəh/ may be used to convey emphasis.

Example 27:

- (i) / ket malu dəh/
don't be-shy Emp.
= (Please) don't be shy.
- (ii) / ket ?ajo? ye? dəh/
don't imitate I Emp.
= (Please) don't imitate me.
- (iii) / ket həgu? tənlayt 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 /dəh/.

Example 28:

(i) /kɛt!/
don't

(ii) / kɛt dɛh!/
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 → /kɛt/ - (Vb) - (X) - (dɛh).
X stands for any string.

¹Transcriptions in this paper are all phonemic.

²In free variation with /bəkɔ/, which occurs after.