Variation in aspect and modality in some languages of Northeastern Borneo

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In most of the languages of Northeastern Borneo the categories of aspect and modality are almost always expressed lexically and often are optional. This paper discusses the expression of perfective and imperfective aspect as well as mood and negation as conveyed through a wide range of mostly unbound morphemes in four North Sarawak languages. The languages consist of two Kenyah variants, Lebu’ Kulit, and Òma Lóngh as well as two languages spoken by former hunter-gatherers, the Punan Tubu’ and the Penan Benalui. The data used draws from both narratives and elicited material.

The lexemes used are in large part discourse context and verb semantics dependent, and differ in all the languages. The lexical meaning of the form used for the perfective is usually ‘finished’ and for the imperfective it is ‘in the middle’. The exception is in Punan Tubu’ and Penau Benalui where the infix <en> marks the undergoer voice and also bears the meaning of perfectivity. Quotative verbs are generally used to express evidentiality and no bound evidentials are found.

1. Aspect in Borneo and beyond

The rich diversity of languages spoken in Borneo is reflected in the different aspect and modality markers that occur in the various languages. Precise information regarding the TAME markers in most of the languages of Central Borneo is lacking, perhaps due in part to the fact that in general these markers are optional. Aspect and modality are almost always expressed lexically and often seem to be non-obligatory, and in large part, discourse context and verb semantics contribute to the expression of TAME features. After all, as Himmelmann (2005: 60) points out, in many Western Austronesian languages the ‘auxiliaries’ are elements that usually convey notions of tense, aspect, mood, negation, or manner and are phonologically independent. The free and clitic aspectual adverbs used for TAM marking in most of the Western Austronesian languages of Indonesia is also displayed in the World atlas of linguistic structures -WALS (Dryer 2011). Kaufmann (2011) provides an overview of TAM marking in Indonesia, and concludes that while ‘inner aspect’ marked by reduplication and <in> infixation, and ‘outer aspect’ can be reconstructed as PAN *dala and PAN *pa, most of the modern Indonesian TAM markers are un-reconstructable because those that exist are very diverse, while sometimes they are lacking completely. Those that do exist are therefore recent innovations. As Kaufman (2011) points out, in Old Malay, ‘all the inherited aspect markers were abandoned and replaced (functionally) by lexical items meaning ‘want’, desire’, towards, ‘finish’ etc. A general overview of some languages of Borneo confirms this to be the case in Borneo, too, as can be seen in Clayre & Cubit (1963) for Kayan, Clayre (2002) for Lundaye, Tjia (2007) for Mualang, Adelaar (2002) for Salako, Sercombe (2006) for Eastern Penan, and Inagaki (2011) for Kadorih, among others.

This paper describes a wide range of strategies used in a variety of languages from Northeastern Borneo to express TAM and evidentiality. It especially focuses on two Kenyah variants spoken in East Kalimantan: Lebu’ Kulit, and Òma Lóngh and compares the strategies found in these languages to those employed in the neighboring languages of Penan Benalui and Punan Tubu’. This comparison draws on narrative texts (see Soriente, 2006 and Soriente et al, To appear) and elicited material. The Kenyah represented in this study are from the Òma Lóngh group, which constitutes a population of 3000 spread
across six villages in Bulungan Regency of East Kalimantan, and from the Lebu’ Kulit group, which consists of roughly 8000 people living in several villages spread over the Bulungan Regency, Kutai and Berau in East Kalimantan and Sarawak. The Penan Benalui and the Punan Tubu’ are representative of two groups of former hunter gatherers located in the Malinau Regency of East Kalimantan. These languages number 450 and 4000 speakers respectively, and they are closely related to each other or to the Kenyah languages.

The TAM markers of the languages investigated are usually optional, and occur as free lexemes in specific positions in the verbal complex. They interact with modals, negation, main verbs and particles to create a range of aspeccual and modal meanings.

Perfective action is marked in the various languages by different lexemes that generally occur before the verb. They can be omitted in some pragmatic situations or when some adverbs or adverbial phrases like ‘yesterday’, ‘some time ago’, ‘earlier’, ‘later’ etc. indicate the time of the action

On the other hand, for imperfective, spatial expressions like daleu (inside) in Lebu’ Kulit, daó in Óma Lóngh, an tang (in the middle), an luang (inside), an belua’ (in the middle) in Punan Tubu’, and reng (in the middle) in Penan Benalui, are employed, but these markers too, are optional. Data from elicitation sessions indicates that an imperfective action can be unmarked morphologically and when it is expressed it is conveyed through the use of spatial lexemes. Imperfective action is better expressed by the use of the deictic ‘this’, the adverb meaning ‘still’ or often by verbal reduplication when continuous action is being expressed.

Modality and negation are also not expressed morphologically, with the only exception being the polyfunctional prefix or proclitic ke- which occurs with various verbs. What is peculiar is the great number of particles employed across these languages to express modality, and to mark the sources of evidence in the source of information in statements. These particles that are not grammatical often occur in naturalistic data, but are difficult to elicit because they are so discourse dependent.

The first section of this paper discusses Kenyah Lebu’ Kulit. Then follow sections on Kenyah Óma Lóngh, Punan Tubu’ and Penan Benalui.

2. Kenyah Lebu’ Kulit

Lebu’ Kulit is a Kenyah language belonging to the Kayan-Kenyah subgroup of the western branch of Malayo-Polynesian and part of the North Sarawak branch. According to previous work, (Soriente, 2004 and 2008) it belongs to the branch labeled Kayanic, or as Lowland Kenyah in Blust (2007, 2010) or Kenyah Wahau in Ethnologue (Lewis et al, 2013). Other members of this group are Uma’ Timai, Uma’ Pawa’ Uma’ Ujok, Uma’ Kelep and the extinct Nyibun. It counts about 8000 speakers spread in around 15 villages in East Kalimantan and Sarawak. Some documentation is found in Soriente, (2006) who presents some features that set it off the main branch of the Kenyah languages (Soriente, 2004 and 2008).

Like many Austronesian languages Lebu’ Kulit does not express tense, nor is any morphology employed for aspect and mood. Rather, time is expressed by time adjuncts like mena’a da ‘in the past’, o’o re ‘earlier’, o’o ‘later’, menalem da ‘yesterday’, nempam ‘tomorrow’ etc. Aspetual features are marked analitically by free morphemes.
2.1. Perfective

Perfectivity is marked by a number of lexemes that can be optional:

- **lepek** ‘finished’ PFCT preceding verbs
- completed action particle occurring at the end of the utterance
- **no’o** completed action particle occurring at the end of the utterance
- **uvan** ‘trace’ occurring before verbs
- **dité** ‘seen’ also an evidential
- **<en>** infixation on transitive verbs meaning passive and perfective.

*Lepek* is an aspect marker that indicates that an action is complete as in examples (1) through (4). It also often marks resultative aspect as in example (6). Moreover, *lepek* also functions also as a time conjunction in subordinate clauses as can be seen in example (5).

1. \(\text{ié lepek na’at aki’}, \text{ mpei a na’at iku’}\)
   \(3\text{SG PFCT AV-see 1SG NEG 3SG AV-see 2SG}\)
   ‘he has seen me but he has not seen you’

2. lepek na releu menia’ o di’ sulu ketai releu
   lepek na releu meN-tia’ o di’ sulu ke-tai releu
   PFCT DIR 3PAU INTR-shout CMPL EMPH then IRR-go 3PAU
   ‘they shouted and then they went’

   *ketei lepek ketena’*
   ke-tei lepek ketena’
   IRR-go PFCT story
   ‘so this is how the story of Usung Bayung went’

3. lepek na sinen a da kemé di’,
   lepek na sinen a da kemé di’,
   PFCT DIR mother 3SG PRTCL say EMPH
   ‘anak mo’ uva’ ketai’
   ‘anak mo’ uva’ ke-tai
   child don’t want IRR-go
   ‘the mother had warned him, “son, don’t go” (but he went and was killed’

4. \(\text{tiga ta pa keny a o na lepek na ledo}\)
   tiga ta pa ken-ya o na lepek na ledo
   good DIR PRTCL say-3SG CMPL DIR PFCT DIR woman

   *ti ngetem lo ti aseu ti o di’*
   ti N-tem lo ti aseu ti o di’
   that AV-stuck needle that dog that CMPL EMPH
   ‘well, she said, after that the woman stuck a needle on the dog’s hair’

5. sé baleu a uvan a mena’a’ na lakei a
   one widow 3SG because 3SG in.the.past DIR male 3SG
   lepek matai
   PFCT dead
   ‘she is a widow because long time before her husband had died’
Lepek is an optional marker. It is often omitted when other elements expressing perfective aspect are used. These include the lexemes *uvan* ‘trace’ and the marker of agentive in undergoer sentences, or *dité* ‘seen’ (which is also used as an evidential). These all have the function of indicating that the action is completed. The particles *o* and *no’o* in final position also have the function of marking a completed event. The following example (7) shows that perfective event is marked by the lexeme *uvan*. This can also be interpreted as an agentive, though the verb has a fossilized form with the <en> infix on the verb *uyan* ‘make, do’. Infexion is used in other languages in Borneo to mark undergoer past action (see Soriente, 2013) and is not productive in the Kenyah languages. It is not clear whether this is a relic or a form borrowed from adjacent languages. In (8) the lexemes *dité* and *uvan* have a resultative function. The same holds for example (9) where *uvan* is employed as a perfective marker before the verb and as preposition before the 3rd person of the personal pronoun *a*. In sentence (10) the aspect of perfectivity is emphasised by both *dité* and *lepek*. This is an excerpt from a political speech where some sentences needed some pragmatic stress. Example (11) displays the use of the particle *no’o* at the end of the utterance with the function of indicating that the action is completed.

(7) un lu kelunan ya’ uvan Tuhan Ngenuyan
    un lu kelunan ya’ uvan Tuhan N-ke<en>u
    ‘we are human beings created by God’

(8) Pejulung ra ni nai ilan dulu kini ni na
    Pejulung ra ni nai ilan dulu ke-ini ni na
    Pejulung 3PL this come bring people LOC-here this DIR
    njinyé dité Lebu Kulit ni uvan nai pasei da
    N-injé dité Lebu Kulit this trace go because come spread PRTCL
    ‘Pejulung and the others have taken the people here, this is how the Lebu’ Kulit people have moved and spread all over the place’

(9) buké nakini uvan tai pesaliu na
    buké na-ka-ini uvan tai pe-saliu na
    if DIR-LOC-this trace go INTR-change DIR
    kimet lu uvan a
    kimet lu uvan a
    pikir 1PL.INC because 3SG
    ‘but now our thoughts have changed because of that’

(10) ikam teleu pegayeng ketu’ dité ineu ya’ lepek nempeleu atur
    ikam teleu pe-gayeng ketu’ dité ineu ya’ lepek nem-peleu atur
    2PL PL INTR-work all seen what REL PFCT PL-2PL arrange
    ‘you work out what you have planned to do’

(11) tai takut na kelunan ra’ ini no’o
    go afraid DIR person REL-PL this CMPL
    nga tai na balai tai bulak Na
    so go DIR part go move DIR
    ‘they had become afraid, therefore a part of them moved’
2.2 Imperfective

As with the perfective, marking of imperfective aspect is optional and can be expressed through the following ways:

- *daleu* ‘inside/in the middle’
- *ini/*iti ‘this/that’
- reduplication

It can be expressed using the locative preposition *daleu* ‘in the middle’ as in example (12), (which can also mean ‘when’ – see example (13)) or with use of the deictics *(i)ni ‘this’ and *(i)ti but without any other marker as in example (14).

(12) no. *daleu* ra *uman-uman* mengiti *di’
no *daleu* ra RED-*uman* meN-iti *di’
EXCLM in.the.middle 3PL ITER-eat AV-that.way EMPH

‘well, they were eating, that’s it’

(13) *nai* ngendani *niya* pa
*nai* N-*dani* na-*ia* pa
come AV-close DIR-3SG PRTCL

daleu *iré* *uman* *(i)ti* no’o *di’
in.the.middle 3PL eat that CMPL EMPH

‘then he got closer when they were eating’

(14) *ni* *mpei* un *dité* liung *ineu-ineu* un *di’
*(i)ni* *mpei* un *dité* liung RED-*ineu* un *di’
this NEG exist seen movement PL-what exist EMPH
sedi’ pekajep *pira*
sedi’ pe-*kajep* pe-*ira*

‘nothing was seen moving, hopefully there wasn’t anybody peeping at them’

2. 3 Mood and modality

The markers for mood and modality are:

- *ke-* as a prefix or a free lexeme located before verbs
- *uva’ ‘want’
- *senteng ‘can’
- *harus ‘have to’

There is no dedicated morpheme for the expression of future tense or irrealis mood; however, the prefix or proclitic *ke- or ka- that in some cases occurs as a free lexeme, can convey an intention, an approaching event, a hypothesis, a refusal, a possibility, or an expectation. In (15) below the free lexeme *ke marks an hypothesis whereas the proclitic ke- in *kenai and kebara’ in example (16) convey the idea of an approaching event and an intention. Very often the proclitic *ke- in its function of marking an intention, combines with the modal verb *uva’ ‘want’ (see example (17) below).

(15) *buké* *ileu* *ncé* ke *nebawa’* keentai
*buké* *ileu* *ncé* ke N-*tebawa’* ke-tai
1PLINCL NEG IRR AV-make.effort IRR-go
'if we do not make an effort we’ll be left behind'

(16) mbei teleu kebara’ teleu makang un
mbei teleu ke-bar’a teleu makang un
NEG three IRR-let.know PAU strength exist
‘we’ll not let them know what our strengths are’

The modals uva’ ‘want’ also marks a future action, (see examples (17) through (20)). The form senteng ‘can’ indicates possibility and permission (example (21)). No special lexeme for obligation is employed except for the Indonesian borrowing harus ‘must’. The lexeme sap indicates its negation and can be translated as ‘no need to’.

(17) ileu uva’ ke sekening ngempei daau ketena’ ti
ileu uva’ ke sekening N-mpei daau ketena’ ti
1PLINCL want IRR hear AV-what voice story that
‘we want to the hear how the story goes’

(18) ncé un uva’ teleu tai pura, un kimet ya’ tai kileng
NEG exist want 1PLINCL go separate exist think REL go bent
‘we shall not proceed separate, our thoughts might go wrong’

(19) haa kelunte té ié uva’ té ié ke petira’
haa ke-lunte té ié uva’ té ié ke pe-tira’
EXCLM IRR-sleepy PRTCL 3SG want PRTCL 3SG IRR INTR-talk

ngan mé’ leu ba’am
with 1PLEXCL PL EXCLM
‘haa, he is very sleepy now, but he will talk to us’

(20) nia dué luai ini mpei ra uva’-uva’ kenai a
ni-a dué luai ini mpei ra RED-uva’ ke-nai a
this-3SG two time this NEG 3PL ITER-want IRR-come 3SG

ko’ Nyapa’ un
LOC Nyapa’ exist
‘this is the second time they will not give it to Nyapa’

(21) senteng nilu kuné neng kebelua’ urip nem
senteng ne-ilu kuné neng ke-belua’ urip nem
can ne-1PLINCL towards at NMLZR-middle live 2PL

nini nakini
RED-ni nakini
ITER-this now
‘we can say you are now in the middle of your life’

2.4 Negation and evidentiality

Negation and evidentiality in Lebu’ Kulit are marked by:

- ncé with verb of existence
- mpei with any verb and nouns
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- *nu’un* final particle
- *nyen* prohibition ‘don’t’
- *mo’* prohibition ‘you better don’t’
- *ken* say (with cliticized personal pronouns)
- *ba’an* say (with cliticized personal pronouns)
- *dau* voice
- *dité* seen

Negation is expressed by the negators *ncé* and *mpei*. The first generally negates existence and is usually followed by the verb of existence *un* (see example (18) above). The negator *mpei* (which also means ‘where’) tends to negate actions (see example (20) above). Most negative utterances can have a final particle *nu’un* that further emphasizes negation as in example (22). Prohibitions are marked by the lexemes *nyen* and *mo’*. (See examples (23) and (24)).

(22) na tu adet-adet pu’un lu da mpei lu
    na tu’ RED-adet pu’un lu da mpei lu
    · DIR All PL-customary.law old 1P LINCL PRTCL NEG 1P LINCL
    · ngelan a nu’un o
    · N-lan a nu’un o
    · AV-true 3SG NEG CMPL
    ‘all the old laws have been abandoned, we don’t believe in them any longer’

(23) nyen teleu uva’ suto’ bang ngeli’o’
    nyen teleu uva’ suto’ bang N-li’o’
    · don’t PL want offend only AV-deceit
    ‘we better never offend and deceive people’

(24) nyé teleu ketai ta Usung. mo’ sekening daau sinam na!
    nyé teleu ke-tai ta Usung, mo’ sekening daau sinam na!
    that three IRR-go DIR Usung don’t hear voice mother DIR
    · ‘let’s go, Usung, don’t pay attention to your mother’s words!’

Evidentials are not expressed with bound morphemes but nearly every utterance needs to contain an evidential marker indicating whether the expressed event was seen, felt or reported by someone. All evidential markers in the language are open class lexemes that exhibit an additional evidential function. They include *dité* ‘seen’, *ken* ‘say’ *dau* ‘voice’ *baen* ‘word’, *gen* ‘feel’. These quotation words have the special characteristic of hosting a clitic pronoun. Thus, they appear in utterances as *k(en)=é’* (I say) *ken=ya* (he says) *ke=lu* (we say), *ke=ra* (they say), *dè=é’* (my voice), *ban=ya* (he says), etc. or with the agglutinated form *g(en)=é’* (I feel). Example (25) shows the use of *dité* ‘seen’ where the speaker distances himself somewhat from the utterance. This is also the case in example (26) where the quotative form *kenya* (he says) is employed too. In example (27) the speaker makes clear that he is not directly involved in what is said in the utterance.

(25) ié ti ya’ ileu ke pekimet mengempei ketai
    ié ti ya’ ileu ke pe-kimet mengempei ke-tai
    · 3SG this REL 1PL KE INTR-think how IRR-go
lu ka ngebayà’ dité
lu ka N-bayà’ dité
1PL KA AV-follow seen
‘that’s what we think, how we went along with them (as was seen)’

(26) nai a menesai no’o kenya
come 3SG <en> besai no’o ken=ia

mpeï nia dité kejala’ a da mu’un o
NEG this-3SG dité ke-jala’ a da mu’un o

‘he came rowing (it is said so) after he had lost his net (as was seen)’

(27) alé’ ma’an gen ke pisiu ié ke pisiu Kenya
very difficult feel IRR INTR-word 3SG IRR INTR-word Kenyah

ni ke-dau tamen a da
this IRR-voice father 3SG DA
‘it is very difficult (it is felt) to speak Kenyah with him, says the man’

3. Kenyah Óma Lóngh

Kenyah languages are known to display a very high level of dialectal variation, and Óma Lóngh is among the ones that presents the most striking features that set it off from the main branch. It is spoken by about 3000 people and is perhaps the most divergent and least understood of the Kenyah languages. Indeed, it is the sole member of one of the three main branches of Kenyah languages (see Soriente, 2004, 2008), as evidenced by its highly idiosyncratic phonological (see Blust 2007) and morphological properties (see Soriente, to appear).

Within the Kayan-Kenyah subgroup, it is listed in the upper Pujungan subgroup with the languages of Uma Lasan, Uma Baha and Uma Alim. This language is mainly spoken in Indonesia but there are also a few groups in Sarawak (Soriente, 2004, Soriente 2008 and Lewis et al, 2013). Óma Lóngh is spoken in the Malinau and Bulungan regencies of East Kalimantan, mainly in the villages of Setulang (Malinau Regency) and Pimping (Bulungan Regency), as well as Batu Kajang and in the town of Malinau. Like most Kenyah speakers, the Óma Lóngh are multilingual as they are able to speak other Kenyah languages as well, such as Lepó’ Tau and Uma Lasan. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it is noted that almost all Óma Lóngh speakers are bilingual or multilingual: they learn Indonesian as the official language of the Republic of Indonesia at school, and most of them also speak other Kenyah languages. Since their language itself is very idiosyncratic its speakers tend to switch very easily to other Kenyah variants and exhibit very accentuated linguistic exogamy. On the other hand speakers of other Kenyah variants find it difficult to fully understand and to master Óma Lóngh.

3.1. Perfective

Markers of perfectivity in Óma Lóngh are:

- tene PFCT preceding and following the verb
- póne PFCT
- lepe’ finished, PFCT preceding verbs
• hóbó  semelfactive, preceding verbs
• òbèny  ‘trace’ occurring before verbs

Much like Lebu’ Kulit, the perfective in Òma Lóngh is marked by an open class marker, tene that occurs in most of the utterances where a perfective aspect is expressed. The lexemes pône and lepe’ (which closely resembles its cognate lepek in Lebu’ Kulit), both of which can mean ‘finish’, have also been recorded in a number of utterances. For the semelfactive aspect, the marker hóbó is used. As with Lebu’ Kulit uvian, the lexeme òbèny is also used to mark the agent of undergoer action, and it can signal that the action is completed. Very often these lexemes are used together in the same clause.

In examples (28) and (29) the lexeme tene is used to indicate aspectual characteristic of the verbs. In (28) it is stressed that 700 years have passed since people had stayed in Sa’an and that now they are not there any longer, whereas in (29) the verb tèsen ‘know’ is marked for perfective action because today’s knowledge is the result of something that happened in the past. The same holds for (30) where the lexeme lepe’ is also used to accompany the verb kanane ‘use’ therefore to emphasize that it is not used any longer. In (31) lepe’ and tene refer to the implied verb ‘exist’ to stress that somebody is dead, is not there any more. Generally tene is preferred to mark stative verbs like tèsen whereas lepe’ is used with other verbs as in (30) and (34). In (32) the semelfactive marker hóbó marks the verb tèsen because it has to be stressed that nobody ever knew this history before that. In (33) the perfective marker pône, which is used much less commonly, is employed with the verb baca ‘read’.

(28) mase’ tè tene sui tuju atò òmèny éle
maybe go PFCT more seven hundred year IPLINCL
ke Sa’èny te
LOC Sa’an DIR
‘maybe we stayed for more than 700 years in Sa’an’

(29) a’eng tene le tèsen ó’ó lepó Ònya Sè’ò zé he
NEG PFCT IPLINCL know later after Ònya Sè’ò that PRTCL
‘we don’t know anything after Ònya Sè’ò’

(30) a’eng tene ki tèsen je lepe’ ta’eng kanane tene re
a’eng tene ki tèsen je lepe’ ta’eng kanèny-e tene re
NEG PFCT 1SG know because PFCT NEG use-3SG PFCT PFCT PFCT
‘I don’t know because it has not been used any more’

(31) lepe’ ta’eng tene e, matè tene
finished NEG PFCT 3SG dead PFCT
‘he is gone, he is dead’

(32) a’eng hóbó re de’ tèsen de’ tè Ònya Sè’ò ngèny
NEG PFCT 3PL REL know REL go Ònya Sè’ò with
de’ tè Apèny Lempu zé
REL go Apèny Lempu that
‘nobody ever knew who was before Ònya Sè’ò and Apèny Lempu’
3.2. Imperfective

The markers of imperfective aspect are as follows:

- **énó** exist
- **leve’** in the middle
- **daò** inside, in the middle
- **RED** reduplication

Imperfective aspect, when marked, is expressed by various strategies. Progressive aspect can be marked by the verb ‘to be/exist’ but progressive is more typically marked with adverbs such as ‘now’ as in example (37). Examples (35) and (36) show the employment of **énó** ‘exist’ with the function of showing the progressive aspect. In naturalistic data, one also finds instances of imperfective actions being marked by adverbs/prepositions meaning ‘in the middle’ like **leve’** or **daò**. Habitual and iterative aspect, regardless of tense, can be marked by reduplication of the verb.

Example (38) displays the employment of **leve’** ‘middle’ to indicate the progressive action whereas in (39) through (43) the adverb **daò** ‘in the middle’ and its variant **raò** are used to express an action that is in progress.

(35) **énó e nyòrèj dae ku té mëé**

énó e N-sòrèj dae ku té mëé
exist 3SG AV-write voice 2SG there like.that
‘she is recording (and writing) your voice’

(36) **sekali nè e fena’at té lëny énó étó**

sekali nè e feN-ta’at té lëny énó étó
one.time come 3SG INTR-AV-see there really exist seen

ketòza’ bali zë na’at étó zò lutu té
ke-tóza’ bali zë N-ta’at étó zò lutu té
IRR-observe ghost that AV-see aspect 3SG tidur di.situ
‘when he he looked at it, he clearly saw that the ghost was observing him sleeping’

(37) **nyòrèj sòrèj ki me falë ki mii**

N-sòrèj sòrèj ki me falë ki mii
N-write letter 1SG towards friend 1SG now
‘I am writing a letter to my friend’

(38) **sa’ jòte’ leve’ ama’**

cook rice middle mother
‘mum is cooking rice’
(39) *daò le tè ntu Sa’èny nyè* in.the.middle 1PLINCL go bath Sa’an that ’we are having a bath in the Sa’an River’

(40) *je raò éle mane méé le* je raò éle mény=e méé le
because in.the.middle 1PLINCL hold=3SG like.that LE ’because we were holding it’

(41) *daò évó ômény jòte’ pé dó pény-pény* daò évó ômény jòte’ pé dó RED-pény in.the.middle 3DU eat rice father 3PL ITER-throw

*ke lighe’ anune jòte’* ke lighe’ aneng=e jòte’
*at back posses=3SG rice*
’when they were eating rice, the father kept on throwing the rice on his back’

(42) *daò nè évó ngalangh janèny tene zé évó felai-felai* daò nè évó ngalangh janèny tene zé évó RED-felai in.the.middle come 3DU along road PECT that 3DU ITER-talk
’they were coming along the road, they talked and talked’

(43) *daò e talò isi nòcen-nòcen afé zé té* daò e talò isi RED-nòcen afé zé té in.the.middle 3SG absorbed aspect ITER-N-hit.w.head fire that there ‘he was hitting his head against the fire’

(44) *ôbèny ala zó hetem temali e ertzé* ôbèny ala zó fe-tem temali e ertzé trace take 3SG INTR-exact pregnancy 3SG that ‘she was taken when she was pregnant’

Reduplication of various verbs marks habitual action in the following examples (45) through (47) and iterativity as in examples (48) through (53).

(45) *dé tè le kelale’ kelale’ te tepeng dé* dé tè le RED-ke-lale’ te tepeng dé that go 1PLINCL HAB-IRR-confused at ancestor that ’that is what is confusing us about our ancestors’

(46) *tangen kam ôèj keng-keng ngadèny i’ek de’ zi* tangen kam ôèj RED-keng ngadèny i’ek de’ zi happy 2PL MOD HAB-say name small REL this ‘you would always call people by their nick-names’

(47) *aghi Apèny Fè’èj rae-rae re keng aghi* aghi Apèny Fè’èj RED-rae re keng aghi 1SG Apèny Fè’èj HAB-voice people say 1SG ‘I am Apèny Fè’èj, this is how people call me’
Negation of an event is marked by a wide range of strategies.

- **aeng** to negate verbs
- **ta’eg** to negate verb of existence and nouns
- **au** prohibition
- **è’el** prohibition
- **òèj** modal

*Aeng* tends to negate verbs and *ta’eng* nouns, whereas *au* or *è’el* are employed to prohibit. These are often accompanied by *òèj*, a marker of modality, used mostly in prohibitions, but also to express intention, an approaching event, a hypothesis, a refusal, a possibility, or an expectation. The prefix/proclitic *ke-* only occurs with *tè ‘go’* and *né ‘come’* and marks irrealis mood (see examples (60) and (61)). Example (54) shows the use of the negator *a’eng* with a verb whereas in (55) the negator *ta’eng* negates a noun. Prohibitions
are displayed in example sentences (56) and (57) where also the modality particle ôēj occurs. This modality particle is also exemplified in (58) and (59).

(54) fèmet bate Òzò I’ek jé a’eng tene ncam ketè
think stone Òzò I’ek that NEG PFCT can IRR-go

fabèj jó ta’ény
chase 3SG see
‘he thinks of the Òzò I’ek rock, that it won’t be able to chase him again’

(55) avane engne kam de’ nè ôbe’ kenè ala
then=3SG exist-DIR 2PL REL come want IRR-come take

teghene’ fu’eng dé, ta’eng de’ madiengh
‘so you came to get our old stories, not the new ones’

(56) au ôēj mengkangh nyó Òzò c’ ta
don’t MOD AV-carry 3SG orphan order go

ngèny ne me-asèj
with people INTR-road
‘don’t carry him, let him walk with other people’

(57) léfe kavó ke kòma ne, è’elles kavó
let 2PL.DU LOC LOC-home DIR don’t-PRTCL 2PL.DU

ôēj nè fempek
MOD come go.out
‘you two stay just at home, don’t go out!’

(58) je re ôēj jere’ étó aghi ke ce te re
because people MOD laugh seen 1SG LOC far DIR PRTCL
‘(I don’t like) that people make fun of me’

(59) je ôēj ala ngadény tó’ó
because MOD take name parent
‘because they would take the name of their parents’

(60) ketè tele ke Irian có tò, òményn có tè
IRR-go 1PLINCL LOC Irian one day year one go

ke Irian bòlènî bòlènî tele
to Irian month month three
‘we will go to Irian one day, next year, to Irian, in the month of March’
Evidentiality, as in Lebu’ Kulit, is not grammatical but the language employs a range of lexemes and evidential verbs to mark the source of information expressed in a sentence.

- disi aspect, appearance
- étó seen
- baen utter (with cliticized personal pronouns)
- dæ voice (with cliticized personal pronouns)
- ken say (with cliticized personal pronouns)
- len feel (with cliticized personal pronouns)

These are disi ‘aspect’, étó ‘seen’, quotative verbs like baen, dæ, ken ‘say, utter’ with the clitic pronouns in forms like: ba=ci (I say) ba=cu (you say) ban=e (he says) ba=cam (youPL say) ba=do (they say) ba=nyo (he says), da=re/ra=re (they say, ke=ct (I say), ke=cu (you say) ko=do (they say) kório (he says) kório (he says) kório=am (we say) len (feel) len=ci/le=ci (I feel) le=ku (you feel), le=le (we feel). Below, from (62) through (64), are some example sentences where the evidentials étó ‘seen’ and disi ‘aspect’ are employed. In (65), the evidence of a statement is marked by a quotative verb kório (he says) and by a verb of feeling len=ci ‘I feel’ in (66).

(61) nè Bòngëny kenè mesè’ famen, a’eng e maghangh
nè Bòngëny ke-nè N-fesè’ famen a’eng e me-aghanh
come Bòngëny IRR-come AV-open door NEG 3SG INTR-brave
‘Bòngëny was going open the door but he did not have the courage’

Bòngëny was going open the door but he did not have the courage.

(62) ki meli safè de’ té’a étó ó’ó
ki N-beli safè de’ té’a étó ó’ó
1SG AV-buy dress REL nice seen later
‘I will buy you a nice dress’

(63) méé étó bevèj-bevèj tasa le ke Sa’ëny ne
méé étó RED-bevèj tasa le ke Sa’ëny ne
like this seen PL-feature time IPLINCL at Sa’an DIR
‘apparently our habits in Sa’an in the past where exactly like these’

(64) bangh étó zó ngetòmen-ngetòmen ngempangen anake
bangh étó zó RED-N-ketòmen N-bangen an’a=e
only seen 3SG ITER-AV-embrace AV-happy child=3SG
‘he was embracing (it was seen) his child’

(65) té mana sòngè ntu zó ó’ó je
té N-fana sòngè ntu zó ó’ó je
go AV-heat water bathe 3SG later because

a’eng té’a udi=ej kório
a’eng té’a udij=e keng=nyó
NEG nice life=3SG word=3SG
‘heat the water, bathe him because he is not feeling well, he said’

(66) bangen len=ci je té’a isi e re
bangen len=ci je té’a isi e re
happy feel=1SG because nice aspect 3SG PRTCL
‘I am happy (I feel) because of his kindness’
4. Punan Tubu’

The Punan Tubu’-Malinau-Mentarang are the largest community of hunter-gatherers living in a one area in Borneo, the Malinau Regency in East Kalimantan. They possibly number as many as 4000 speakers and include the Punan Tubu’, Punan Malinau, Punan Mentarang and Punan Sekatak or Punan Berusu’. Most live in a resettlement camp (Respen Sembuak, now called Respen Tubu’ next to the capital town of Malinau), while some inhabit the upper part of the Tubu’ river in the Malinau Regency. Data for this paper were collected with the Punan Tubu’ community in Respen Tubu’, Malinau. Punan Tubu’ is a branch of the North Sarawak subgroup. Morphologically this language behaves like most of the other languages of the Kayan-Kenyah subgroup with prefixes and no suffixes. Aspect is mostly marked analytically. Nevertheless this language employs the \(<en>\) infixation to express undergoer voice (see Sorieinte 2013) and this infix can also have a perfective meaning.

4.1. Perfective

Perfectivity is marked by the following markers:

- **belum** PFCT/finished
- **<en>** passive and perfective of transitive verbs
- **tubit** semelfactive

Perfectivity is mostly marked by the optional word **belum**, which expresses perfect of experience, of result and of a persistent situation. It seems that this word only appears in isolation when no other devices are employed to indicate the aspect of the event (see examples (67) and (68)). Undergoer sentences morphologically expressed by the infixation of **<en>** often have the perfect interpretation, thus, undergoer sentences are usually not marked by **belum** as in example (73). Furthermore, **belum** can also function as a time conjunction in subordinate clauses. **Tubit** marks semelfactive aspect (see example (74)). The time of an event is only expressed through the time adjuncts **lou’ah** ‘that day’, **tovun** ‘tomorrow’, **bënîh** ‘now’, **maléh** ‘yesterday’, **uron** ‘in the past’, **unîh, unéî** ‘earlier’, **ano’ ‘later’ as in examples (69) through (72) below.

(67) **belum kou mom?**
    PFCT 2SG  bathe
    ‘have you bathed yet?’

(68) **déh belum a’ déh tat a’up nah hên pên kê’**
    go PFCT person go from morning exist 3SG take say-1SG

(69) **mirî’ unan hên dorên hên ne rin betaï’**
    N-piri’ unan hên dorên hên ne rin betaï’
    AV-lay-down with 3SG visible 3SG kemudian 3SG hamil

    **pe** **lou’ah**
    pe  lou’ah
    also hari.itu
    ‘she had laid down with him and it was clear later that she had become pregnant that day’
4.2. Imperfective

Imperfective markers in Punan Tubu’ are:

- an tang  between
- an luang  in the middle
- an belua  in the middle
- déh  go
- téi  come
- lela  still
- ledun  while
- reduplication

Imperfective aspect does not have a dedicated marker and is often omitted. In a limited number of cases the spatial expressions an tang (in the middle), an luang (inside), an belua’ (in the middle) in Punan Tubu’, are employed, but these markers are not obligatory. Progressive aspect is expressed with the verbs déh ‘go’ (which precedes the word expressing the action) or téi ‘come’, or via reduplication and the employment of adverbs like lela ‘still’ or ledun ‘while’.

There is a prefix nye- that derives verbs on nominal bases that, among the others, exhibits progressive aspectual properties but this has to be better investigated.

Examples (75) and (76) show instances of progressive aspect expressed through the spatial expression ‘in the middle/between’. Examples (77) to (80) employ the motion verbs déh ‘go’ and téi ‘come’. In (81) and (82), the imperfective action is marked by the
adverbs *lela* ‘still’ and the conjunction *ledun* ‘while’, and in (83) and (84) examples of reduplication where iterativity marks non completed action are displayed. Examples (85) and (86) are instances of imperfectivity marked by deictics whereas (87) and (88) are utterances where no aspect marker is employed.

(75) *nak inah an luang keman kun*
child that at between eat food
‘the child is (in the middle of) eating rice’

(76) *hén an tang menarik*
hén an tang meN-tarik
3SG at between AV-dance
‘she is dancing’

(77) *detou uva’ déh mekéi an aun tukuk*
detou uva’ déh me-kéi an aun tukuk
3PL new go INTR-go.up at over mountain
‘he is climbing the mountain’

(78) *hén déh mena’ tandik rin*
hén déh N-pena’ tandik rin
3SG go AV-do story 3SG
‘he is continuing his storytelling’

(79) *Roman téi nekering an jungat teban*
Roman téi ne-kering an jungat teban
Roman come AV-stand at doorway door
‘Roman is standing on the doorway’

(80) *hén déh ngelekan you wo’ muit tat levu’*
hén déh N-kelekan you wo’ muit tat levu’
3SG go AV-chase chicken REL AV-go.out from house
‘he is chasing the chicken that went out from the house’

(81) *tat kou téi jam yan hok lela lekah, ovi’ maling nun*
from 2SG come hour eight 1SG still work NEG NEG rest

*hok melai lekah*
1SG not.yet work
‘if you come at eight I will be still working’

(82) *maléh ledun inah hén matuk an atang, *
maléh ledun inah hén N-patuk an atang
yesterday in.the.meanwhile that 3SG AV-cook at kitchen

*nak hén puvé’ an atan*
child 3SG INTR-play at yard
‘yesterday while she was cooking in the kitchen, her son was playing in the yard’
(83) **telipan nggap-nggap kiné’ rin déh**
telipan RED-nggap ke-iné’ rin déh
cockroach ITER-peck NMLZR-because 3SG go
‘the cockroach is pecking and pecking so that she can leave’

(84) **péma’-éma’ ne doh lou’ah tubit**
pe-RED-éma’ ne doh lou’ah tubit
INTR-ITER-say then 3PL that.day PFCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>doh</th>
<th>kah</th>
<th>jainah</th>
<th>rin</th>
<th>ke</th>
<th>doh</th>
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<td>doh</td>
<td>kah</td>
<td>jainah</td>
<td>rin</td>
<td>ke</td>
<td>doh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3PL  walk like 3SG to 3PL
‘he had been asking here and there that day, then he went, they say’

(85) **ovi’ ngalung surat, hén turui**
ovi’ N-kalung surat hén turui
NEG AV-carving letter 3SG sleep
‘he is not writing a letter, he is sleeping’

(86) **hén tandik an arin hén**
3SG story at y.sibling 3SG
‘he is telling a story to his brother’

(87) **lekah hok inih**
work 1SG this
‘I am working’

(88) **hén leka bénih, ovi’ ngom téi**
3SG kerja now NEG can come
‘he is working now, he cannot come’

### 4.3 Negation, mood and evidentiality

Negation, mood and evidentiality are marked in Punan tubu’ by the following:

- **ovi’** negates verbs and nouns
- **maling** marks an opposition
- **ke-** irrealis mood
- **it** want
- **ngom** can
- **padai** be able
- **ke-** quotative

Negation, mood and evidentiality are not marked by bound morphemes but rather by free lexemes, with the exception of the prefix **ke-**, which marks modality.

**Ovi’** negates nouns and verbs, **maling** marks opposition or a statement contrary to expectations (see ex. 92-93). **Ovi’** tends to precede the subject in the syntactic structure as can be seen in examples (89) and (90), whereas **maling** occurs before the verb (92-93):

(89) **detou ovi’ detou melai vi’ umoh, ovi’ detou padai**
3PL NEG 3PL not.yet many field NEG 3PL know
Mood or epistemic modality, i.e. the expression of the degree of a speaker’s certainty regarding an utterance, is conveyed using modal verbs. These include *it* (want) (for future actions), *harus* ‘have to’ or simply adverbs like *laung* ‘really’, or strong intonation, for obligation, *ngom*, for the epistemic modality of possibility, and *jam* ‘know’ and *padai* ‘be able’. Following are some examples showing the use of modal verbs.

(90) *ovi’ déh iro melai ku’ung*
    NEG go 3DU not.yet gather
    ‘they have not gotten together yet’

(91) *ovi’ ne hok ngami kou kenah uron, ovi’ nih*
    NEG then 1SG AV-hope 2SG that in.the past NEG here

    *kén an nak hén nah*
    say3SG at child 3SG exist
    ‘I was not expecting you would be like this, he said to his son’

(92) *hok mu’ nak kah, nak maling kah*
    1SG order child walk child NEG walk
    ‘I made/caused the child to walk, but he didn't walk’

(93) *hok mé’ nak inah keman, nak inah maling yo’ keman*
    1SG give child that eat child that NEG unwilling eat
    ‘I made the child eat, but he didn't want to eat’

(94) *lacét kou, aruk it déh kah*
    quick 2SG boat want go walk
    ‘you must hurry up, the boat is going to leave’

(95) *tovun kou ovi’ kengom leka*
    tomorrow 2SG NEG IRR-can work
    ‘tomorrow you shouldn’t be able to work’

(96) *John it teniran tovun, héi wo’ it téi*
    John it <en>tiran tovun héi wo’ it téi
    John want TER-marry tomorrow who REL want go

    *tat adat ngenong hén*
    tat adat N-genong hén
    from customs N-see 3SG
    ‘John will get married tomorrow, who is going to be the witness?’

(97) *héi wo’ neju tero mangun lakin tero tovun?*
    héi wo’ ne-ju tero mangun lakin tero tovun?
    who REL UV-angkat 1PL.INCL become leader 1PL.INCL tomorrow
who among us will be chosen to become our leader tomorrow?"

(98)  \text{hok kah déh lulung, tat hok uli' ano' tanah mangun} \\
\text{1sg walk go before from 1sg go.back later there become}

\text{pa' ne lekah ketou pa'} \\
\text{also then work 2pl also}

‘I am leaving now, when I come back, all your work has to be finished’

(99)  \text{arin ku tovun ngalung surat} \\
\text{arin ku tovun N-kalung surat}

y.sibling 1sg tomorrow AV-carving letter

‘my brother will be writing letters tomorrow’

(100)  \text{tovun kou ovi' nyatung, ungéi réh seniom} \\
\text{tovun kou ovi' N-satung ungéi réh seniom}

tomorrow 2sg neg AV-swim water that cold

‘tomorrow you won’t be swimming, the water will be cold’

As in other Borneo languages, there is not a dedicated class of evidentials but in most utterances it is necessary to express whether the truth of a statement comes from the fact that it is said, heard, or felt. In Punan Tubu there is a proclitic sometimes occurring as a free morpheme \textit{ke}- that has a quotative meaning. It always becomes the hosts of clitic pronouns: \textit{ke}=rin ‘he says’, \textit{ke}=detou ‘they say’, \textit{ke}=kou ‘you say’ \textit{ke} ‘I say’, \textit{kén} ‘he says’\footnote{It is worth briefly mentioning that clitic pronouns in this language are affixed to inalienable nouns and also to some verbs and lexemes. Moreover, whereas the aspect markers and the negation markers cannot host these clitics, modal verbs and evidential verbs nevertheless can. Only singular pronouns can become clitics (-\textit{k}, -\textit{m}, -\textit{n}), and the position of the arguments is irrelevant for the realis/irrealis distinction.}. Examples (101) through (103) display these quotative verbs with cliticized pronouns. This \textit{ke}- can be also prefixed to any noun to indicate who says what: \textit{keBilung} ‘said Bilung’. The same cliticized pronouns attach also to the lexem \textit{kuén} ‘word, intention’ like \textit{kuok} ‘I say, I mean’ in example (104).

(101)  \text{gemi' kén ngenong rin kun auh aji'} \\
\text{smile say=3sg AV-see 3sg food dog other}

‘she had the most beautiful looking smile, ‘I swear’’

(102)  \text{nyelu va' nyelu nyipén hén jan héi kedoh} \\
\text{nyelu va' nyelu nyipén hén jan héi ke=doh}

till mouth till tooth 3sg good who say=3pl

‘including her mouth, including her teeth, said them’

(103)  \text{hok pelok ké' ji' liwai man hén mekevo' uva'} \\
\text{hok pelok ke-é' ji' liwai man hén me-kevo' uva'}

1sg meet say-1sg one kali father 3sg intr-kill new

‘I met your father once, then he died’
SORIENTE: Aspect and modality in languages of Northeastern Borneo

5. Penan Benalui

The Penan Benalui are a group of former hunter gatherers people originally inhabiting several areas in the highlands of Central Borneo and nowadays living in seven communities of the Malinau district of East Kalimantan and not always in contact with each other: Long Bena (52 people) and Long Belaka (165 people) on the Lurah River, Long Lame (also k.a. Long Lame Baru) (190 people), Long Sungai Taket (population included in Long Lame), on the Bahau River, and other villages of settled Kenyah people in the Pujungan regency like Long Uli (42 people) and Pujungan (2 persons). Data for this paper are mostly from the Long Lame Baru village.

The Penan Benalui language is spoken by almost 450 people and has been considered a member of Western Penan group which also comprises also the Penan Geng, Penan Silat, and Penan Apau in Sarawak between the Baram and the Balui rivers. Eastern Penan languages are spoken in Sarawak and Brunei and are considered slightly different in vocabulary and phonetics. The Penan Benalui is a very small group that has lived for many years separated from groups in Sarawak apparently speaking sister languages.

They are generally bilingual, speaking the language of the settlers they are in contact with, namely the Kenyah, with which they have historical relations. They are claimed to speak the language of any settled neighbor and are always defined by Kenyah as multilingual. Nowadays, with the spread of Indonesian as a national language, Penan Benalui also communicate with non-neighboring Kenyah in Indonesian, and this also is the language used with other Punan as demonstrated during the cross-Punan meetings. Penan Benalui is classified as belonging to the Kayan-Kenyah subgroup sharing with Kayan and Kenyah languages similar morphological behavior with prefixation and no suffixation. On the other hand Penan Benalui displays undergoer voice with the the employment of the <en> infixation (see Soriente 2013). Like the other languages discussed before, Penan Benalui does not express tense, nor is any morphology used for aspect and mood, but rather, time is expressed using time adjuncts such as saau ‘in the past’, nii ‘earlier’, daap or éda ‘later’, malem ‘yesterday’, sagam ‘tomorrow’ etc. and most aspectual features are marked analytically by free lexemes that can be optional. As already mentioned for Punan Tubu the <en> infix can have a perfective reading.

5.1 Perfective

The markers of perfective aspect in Penan Benalui are:

- *pengah* finished, PFCT
- *<en>* passive and perfective of transitive verbs
- *tubit* semelfactive

Perfective aspect is expressed analytically through the lexeme *pengah* which also conveys the meaning of ‘finished’ and can also be used as a temporal adverb ‘after’ in temporal clauses. In examples (105) through (107), *pengah* functions as a perfective

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2 The same lexeme is employed in Kelabit (see Clayre 2002). In Western and Eastern Penan spoken in Sarawak and Brunei, the perfective lexeme is *lepah*, a cognate of Kenyah *lepek*.
marker, whereas in (108) it is a temporal adverb ‘after’ that links two sentences. As already mentioned, the undergoer voice marking infix \(<en>\) also has a perfective meaning. Sentences (109) and (110) demonstrate this. Nevertheless there are cases like example (111) where the free lexeme \(pengah\) is used together with an infixed verb.

(105) \(pengah \ \text{éh naat akeu'} \ iah \ ieng \ \text{éh naat kaau}\)

\(\text{PFCT} \ 3\text{SG see} \ 1\text{SG but} \ \text{NEG} \ 3\text{SG see} \ 2\text{SG}\)

‘he has seen me but he hasn’t seen you’

(106) \(kekat sakai pengah masek bibi\)

all guest \(\text{PFCT}\) go.in whole

‘all the guests have all come in’

(107) \(ineu' \ puun amee pengah ko' \ tei la' \ Jakarta?\)

what be father \(\text{PFCT}\) 2SG go to Jakarta

‘have you ever been to Jakarta?’

(108) \(melu \ apu \ pengah \ melu \ ale \ apu \ melu \ apu\)

drain.water sagu after drain.water take sagu drain.water sagu

‘we drained water, after draining water, we took the sagu’

(109) \(akeu' \ kenala' \ nah\)

akeu’ \(<en>kala' \ nah\)

1SG -en-laughter 3SG

‘I have been laughed at by him’

(110) \(\text{éh mange tu} \ \text{deneban}\)

\(\text{éh mange tu} \ <en>deban\)

3SG cry because \(<\text{UV}>hit\)

‘she is crying because she was hit’

(111) \(balak \ ya' \ pengau \ senua' \ pengah \ kinan\)

banana REL new \(<en>\text{buy}\) \(\text{PFCT} \ <en>\text{eat}\)

‘the bananas that were just bought were eaten up’

5.2 Imperfective

Imperfective aspect has no dedicated marker, but can be marked by the following:

- \(me/meN-\) transitive and intransitive verbs
- \(tei\) go
- \(reng\) in the middle
- RDP reduplication

When non explicitly expressed by a lexeme, the stative or intransitive prefix \(me\)-\(^3\) as in (112) or the active transitive \((me)N-\) in (113) and (114).

(112) \(padi \ ki' \ melakau\)

\(padi \ ki' \ lakau\)

relative 1SG INTR-walk

‘my brother is walking’

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\(^3\) The verbal prefix \(me\)- also has a stative function.
Sometimes the motion verb *tei* ‘go’ followed by another verb indicates imperfectivity as can be seen in examples (115) and (116). Reduplication has the function of expressing imperfective action in (116).

(115) *akeu’ tei melakau-melakau tong ba’*

\[1\text{SG } \text{go } \text{ITER-INTR-walk LOC forest}\]

‘I went walking in the forest’

(116) *ireh kelunan Kenyah tei pejagan dalem sawah*

\[3\text{PL person Kenyah go INTR-work inside paddy}\]

‘the farmer (the Kenyah) went working in the paddy’

More generally, imperfective action can just be unmarked as in (117) where only the context determines the aspect. Alternatively the use of adverbials such as *reng* ‘in the middle’ or *dêneh* ‘now’ can express imperfective action as in (118)

(117) *ireh pula parai*

\[3\text{PL plant rice.plant}\]

‘they’re planting rice’

(118) *reng nen panah ma’*

\[\text{in.the.middle mother hot cooked.rice}\]

‘mom is cooking rice’

5.3 Modals, negators and evidentials

Modals, negators and evidentials in Penan Benalui are:

- *ju’* want, will
- *sukat* can
- *harus* must
- *ieng* negator
- *amai* prohibition
- *pia’/mia’* say

Modals are *ju’* ‘want, will’ *sukat* ‘can’ and the Indonesian borrowed verb *harus* ‘must’.

The modal *ju’* is generally used to mark an approaching event (see example (119)) or to denote an intention as in examples (120) and (121). The modal verb *sukat*, illustrated in (122), marks a possibility and *harus* in (123), a necessity.
(119) iah ya’ ju’ alee akeu’
3SG  REL  want  take  1SG
‘it is going to be taken by me’

(120) akeu’ ju’ moru
akeu’ ju’  N-poru
1SG  want  AV-bathe
‘I will have a bath’

(121) sagam akeu’ ju’ tei la’ kota
tomorrow 1SG  want  go  to  town
‘tomorrow I’ll go to town’

(122) mesep bee gonin bee Baau ireh sukat ireh sep
me-sep bee gonin bee Baau ireh sukat ireh sep
me-drink water  raw  water  Bahau  3PL  can  3PL  drink
‘they drank the raw water of the Bahau, yes they could drink it’

(123) ireh harus posot
3PL  must  rest
‘they must rest’

The negator ieng has a tendency to occur before pronouns as in example (124) and amai is used to prohibit something or to express the desire that something does not happen as in example (125).

(124) ieng ireh puun puto mamah, ieng ireh puto sakit kena’
NEG 3PL  exist  often  feverish  NEG 3PL  often  sick  appear
‘they did not often get feverish, they did not get often sick (it appears)’

(125) amai beleka tuei ugai akeu’
NEG  need  come  naked  1SG
‘I’d better not come, I am naked’

In Penan Benalui the quotative verb mia’ (say) or the noun pia’ (word) occur very frequently in utterances where it is necessary to mark the source of information. When the source of information is vague, then the word used is kena4 ‘appear, resemble’. In example (126) the speaker is repeating somebody else’s words whereas in (127) the source of information is not certain and the invocation to the spirits is felt as vague.

(126) mia’  pia’  ireh kovok één katon apu niin
N-pia’  pia’  ireh kovok één katon apu  <en>miin
N-say  language  3PL  monitor  that  sack  sago  <UV>bring
ireh moli één
ireh N-poli één
3PL  AV-come.home  that
‘it was said, the monitor, the sack of sago was brought by them’

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4 Kena’ is now grammaticalized in the question word ‘how’ and in the conjunction ‘like’.
6. Conclusion

In conclusion, all these languages, which are otherwise unintelligible, make use of TAME markers that are very diverse from each other. Nevertheless, despite the fact that these markers are different lexemes, the strategies to mark TAME show some similarities. The marker of perfectivity in all these languages is a free morpheme except for a few instances. These exceptions are the polyfunctional prefix ke- that occurs as a modality marker in Kenyah and occasionally in Penan Benalui and Punan Tubu’. The infix <en> is also used extensively as a marker of undergoer voice in Punan Tubu’ and Penan Benalui. In all the languages studied, the major marker of perfectivity is a free lexeme with the meaning of ‘finished’. For the imperfective aspect, in the cases it is expressed, the strategy used is to employ adverbial expressions meaning ‘in the middle, between’. All the other TAME markers are non morphological. As I have shown, for the most part these languages express TAME properties using unbound lexical items. These lexical items are optional, and can be omitted if the relevant TAME properties are otherwise clear from discourse of sentential context. It is interesting to note that in all the languages studied, the quotative verbs have an important role in the expression of evidentiality. In particular in Kenyah and in Punan Tubu the quotative verb ken ‘say’ bears the elicit pronouns and in the case of Punan Tubu this epistemic verb is being morphologized as it attaches also to nouns.

Abbreviations

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