Waorani Verb Affixes

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Waorani Verbs exhibit a great deal of variation in the occurrence of affixes. This paper presents preliminary findings concerning that variation. The underlying assumption is that some of this variation can be explained in terms of the function (role) which a verb has in an independent clause (Pike and Pike 1977:35–57). I have found, for example, that verbs which fill the nuclear (predicate) slot of an independent declarative clause tolerate more affixes than verbs which fill the nuclear slot of an independent imperative clause. In the former case, the role of the verb is statement whereas in the latter its role is command.

The analysis is based on the following Waorani texts: The Origin of the Rainbow (OR), The Origin of Cassava (OC), and The Origin of the Corn Bees (CB) by Dayuma; The Jaguar and the Turtle (JT), The Alligator and the Bird (AB), The Spider Monkey’s Tail (TL), The Spider Monkey’s Thumbs (TH), and The Tapir (TP) by Giketa; and Bluebird’s Report (BR) by Wiña.

The presentation is organized into three major sections discussing the relationships among affixes for verbs in three types of independent clauses. Belatedly, a fourth type—the independent request clause—was identified. Its analysis has been included as an addendum to the section on verbs in imperative clauses. For each type of clause, two questions are answered: (1) How are the affixes ordered with respect to each other? In particular, how do they group into classes which fill the slot-roles of the verb? (2) What restrictions of occurrence exist between them? At the beginning of the discussion of each type, a tagmemic formula for the verb is given which graphically summarizes the affixal relationship for verbs in that particular slot-role.

The following criteria were used to identify the slot-role for independent verbs used in this analysis. It allowed approximately 40% of all verbs in the text materials to be identified.
(1) All verbs ending with *pa* ‘assertive’ mark independent clauses.

(2) All verbs with *i* ‘command’ and *bā-we (mā-we)* ‘urgent command-remonstrative’ mark independent imperative clauses. Sometimes *dā-māi (nā-māi)* ‘negative-like’ also marks imperatives, as in OR 5.

(3) Interrogative clauses are marked either by an interrogative word in the clause or by interrogative intonation. The interrogative words are *kī-nō-ā-te* ‘why’, *kī-nō* ‘what’, *æ-dō-nō* ‘where’, *æ-dō* ‘when’, *æ-dō-mē* ‘where-speculative’, and *æ-bā-nō* ‘how, what’.

(4) Where none of the above apply, sometimes the context and the free translation make it reasonably clear what slot-role a verb fills. For example, the verb *pō-ŋā* ‘come-3’ in the following example is an independent declarative verb, judging from its position in the sentence and the free translation.

OC 8  *Kī-nō ㄧ a-n(ē)-i-ke  wa-dæ pō-ŋā*
      what be say-perf-infer-limit away  come-3
      Still wondering about it, the Waorani left.

Verbs in declarative, interrogative, and imperative independent clauses were examined. The roles of the verbs occurring in these clauses are statement, question, and command, respectively. In addition, the role of request for permission has been posited for verbs in the independent request clause.

1. Verbs in declarative clauses.

Verbs in the role of statement in the declarative clause show the widest variation in affixes. The tagmemic formula for the verb which fills the nuclear slot in the role of statement in the independent declarative clause is presented below. These findings provide a point of contrast for the discussion of the interrogative and imperative clauses which follow.
**Independent Declarative Verb**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Affixes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuc (V Root)</td>
<td>V Stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pred</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar (Asp)</td>
<td>±</td>
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<tr>
<td>T (1.)</td>
<td>±</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar (Per)</td>
<td>±</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>±</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode (1.)</td>
<td>±</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kæ ‘inceptive’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dê-i ‘perfective’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te-i ‘resultative’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An alternate order: Actor before Time when second or third person and past tense (ta) both occur.

Restrictions of occurrence:

1. Presence of *pa* ‘assertive’ with *ga* ‘far past’ requires either *i* ‘inference’ or *te-i* ‘resultative’; and *pa* with *kî (nî)‘future’ requires *i* ‘inference’.

2. If *kæ* occurs, tagmemes of Aspect, Time, or Actor do not occur.

1.1. Order of affixes. This section attempts to identify the order of affixes in terms of their roles within a verb in a declarative clause. A computer program called Paradigm was utilized to assist in this phase of analysis. The program was developed by J. A. Bickford while a student at the Summer Institute of Linguistics program of the University of Texas at Arlington and is based on an earlier program written by Grimes and procedures devised by Grimes and others (Grimes 1967, 1978, 1979).

Five roles are posited, which normally occur in the order aspect, time, actor, inference, and mode, respectively. Some variation in the order of time and actor, as mentioned above, is predictable.

Affixes which fill the role of aspect generally indicate the shape of an event. For verbs in declarative clauses, these affixes are *kæ* ‘inceptive’, and *dê (nê)‘perfective’. The suffix *kæ* generally indicates that an action is about to begin.
TP 57  Wāpo wē-kē-kā-i-pa  
father  die-incep-3-infer-asser  
Your father is about to die.

The suffix dē (nē) ‘perfective’ generally indicates that an event is completed.

TL 19  Deye  ōnō-no  wa-dānī  ī-nāni  wēmōka  bedō-nē  ēmāwo.  
monkey  river-out  other-3p  be-3p  secretly  drown-perf  last.time  
Never again did the spider monkeys grab and drown others at the river.

The tense suffixes fill the role of time. They are ta ‘past’, ga (ŋa) ‘far past’, and ki (ŋi) ‘future’. The ordering of kē ‘inceptive’ and ta ‘past’ in the following example suggests that aspect suffixes precede tense suffixes.

JT 49  Babē  ā-pa  babē  ā-pa  ā  ī-kē-ta-mō-pa.  
wild  say-asser  wild  say-asser  say  be-incep-pst-1p-excl-asser  
We kept saying, “You are talking wild. You are talking wild.”

Person-gender-number suffixes (from now on referred to as person suffixes) fill the role of actor. In some instances, the person suffix precedes the tense suffix; in others, it follows the tense suffix. However, this variation is predictable. Second- and third-person suffixes precede the past-tense suffix ta. Otherwise, the person suffixes follow the tense suffixes (Peeke 1973:120).

The following examples illustrate this ordering, first with the suffix dānī (nāni) ‘3p’ and then with kā (ŋā) ‘3’.

OC 37  æē-nāni-ta-pa  
take-3p-pst-asser  
they took

JT 37  go-kā-ta-pa  
go-3-pst-asser  
he went

OC 1  apē-ne-ga-dānī-i-pa  
speak-mouth-far.past-3p-infer-asser  
they spoke long long ago

OC 17  go-ñ̃a-kā-i-pa  
go-perf-far.past-3-infer-asser  
it spilled and spread out all over the place
While there were no occurrences of ga (ŋa) with the second-person suffixes in the texts, the following example of mi ‘2’ and ta ‘past’ suggests that they have the same order as third-person suffixes.

BR 25 ā-mi-ta-?
  say-2-pst-?
  did you say . . . ?

As implied above, the first-person suffixes follow the tense suffixes. The following examples show this with ta ‘past’, kī (ŋī) ‘future’, and bo (mo) ‘first-person singular’.

OC 36 ñē-ta-bo-pa
  take-pst-1-asser
  I took (the tapir’s cassava)

BR 1 apā-ne-kī-ī-mo-?
  speak-mouth.id-fut-infer-1-?
  Shall I speak?

(The preceding verbs from BR 25 and BR 1 occur in independent interrogative clauses.)

The suffix ī ‘inference’ fills the role of inference. Peeke (1973:51) says that it marks a lack of authentication because the speaker did not (or does not yet) observe the action. This is the case when something is reported to have been said by the ancestors.

OC 1 Wēē-nē  doo-dānī  apā-ne-gā-dān(i)-ī-pa.
  long.ago-in ancient-3p speak-mouth.id-far.past-3p-infer-asser
  Long long ago the ancestors told this story.

Another suffix which also fills this role is kāī (ŋāī) ‘certain’. The speaker refers to an event which he has not yet observed but which he feels certain will take place. The following example is typical of the use of kāī.

BR 25 nānogē  wā-ŋāī-pa
  wife  die-certain-asser
  His wife will surely die.

The suffix pa ‘assertive’ fills the role of mode. It indicates the speaker’s attitude toward an action or event and typically marks declarative clauses like OC 1 which is cited above.
1.2. **Verb stems.** The nuclear slot of a verb is filled by either a verb root or a verb stem. A verb stem is composed of a verb root plus a verb root or a verb root plus a verb-modifying morpheme, or a verb root plus a noun-classifier, as Peeke (1973:38) calls it. A simple verb root is illustrated in the following example.

JT 3  *mēne pō-ŋā*

jaguar come-3
A jaguar was coming.

A stem based on two verb roots is illustrated in the following example. *Wo* ‘float’ and *ga* ‘roll’ together mean ‘dig up’.

OC 28  *Ayē kā-nā*  *wo-ga-kī-mī-i-pa*

then cassava.root pull-roll-fut-2-infer-asser
Then dig up the cassava root.

In the next example, verb root plus modifying morpheme, the negative morpheme *wi* ‘not’ combines with *mō* ‘sleep’ to form a verb stem meaning ‘dream’.

TP 14  *Titae-baī tānō-te wī-mō-ta-bo-pa.*

tapir-like spear-ing not-sleep-pst-1-asser
I dreamed that I speared a tapir.

Also, the verb stem *a-baī* ‘see-like’ communicates the concept ‘get an idea’, as in JT 21.

JT 21  *a-baī-pa*

see-like-asser
had an idea

The verb modifying morpheme may also indicate the direction of the action like *ŋ*- ‘up’ in OR 1.

OR 1  *daī-mē gō-ŋā-pa*

rainbow stand-up-asser
wherever the rainbow stands

In 2c, concerning noun-classifiers within the verb stem, Peeke (1973:38) says that they “function as incorporated object” in the verb construction. For example, *mi*- ‘tail’ is the object of *taa* ‘cut’ in TL 9.
A noun-classifier also may qualify a stative verb, as po ‘finger identifier’ does for ē ‘exist’ in TH 1.

In these two examples, however, the roles of the noun classifiers differ. In the former the role is embedded object or undergoer, and in the latter the role is embedded specifier or characteristic of subject. To posit a single separate slot-role on an affix level for the noun-classifiers in the verb construction, on a par with those mentioned in section 1.1, for aspect, time, person, and mode would obscure these role differences. For this reason, including them as part of a verb stem is preferred. Different types of verb stems could then be posited, such as transitive verb stem and stative verb stem for the above examples. This would allow the contrast in functions of noun-classifiers to be preserved.

1.3. Complex affixes. Complex affixes are pairs of affixes which fill single marginal slots of the verb. Five complex affixes which occur in the declarative clause verb are (1) kæ-dō ‘inceptive-contingent pst (conjunctural)’, (2) kæ-ta ‘inceptive-pst (habitual pst)’, (3) kēi (γēi) ‘certain’, (4) te-i ‘ing-inferential’, and (5) nē-i (dē-i) ‘perfective-inferential’. The first two have the role of time, and the last three have the role of inference (Wise 1963).

The complex affix kæ-dō functions as Time in that it shifts the event spoken of into hypothetical time. In The Tapir story, for example, Giketa reports that Kenta speared a black panther. But in TH 8, he hypothesizes that if Kenta and Awæñetæ had gone together to hunt, Awæñetæ might have speared the black panther.

The complex affix kæ-ta, on the other hand, functions as time by indicating that a past event occurred habitually or repetitively. For example,
in The Jaguar and the Turtle story, the Waorani admit that they were ‘talking wild’ when they used to accuse the turtle of ‘talking wild’. The following could also be translated as ‘we kept on saying’.

JT 49  ḡ i-kæ-ta-mō-pa
      say be-incep-pst-1p-excl-asser
     We used to say.

Peeke (1973:51) identifies the complex affix te-i ‘ing-inferential’ as ‘resultative’. This may indicate that a condition-result relationship is inferred between one event or state-of-being and a prior or subsequent event or state-of-being. The lack of cassava plants long ago, for example, is the condition which results in cassava becoming food for the Waorani.

OC 2  Ṣe-e-nē  kēwē  dae  ġ-ṇa-te-i-pa
      long.ago-in cassava  none  say-far.past-ing-infer-asser
     Long ago they had no cassava plants.

1.4. Restrictions of occurrence. One significant restriction of occurrence can be observed between tense, inferential, and mode suffixes. The presence of pa ‘assertive’ and either ga (ṇa) ‘far past’, ki ‘future’, or kæ-dō ‘inceptive-toward another (conjectural)’ requires the presence of an inferential suffix. Since the presence of an inference marker implies that the speaker did not see the action, this relationship seems reasonable. One would not expect a speaker to be able to verify an event which happened long ago (far past), or which has yet to happen (future), or which is hypothetical (conjectural).

2. Verbs in interrogative clauses

As stated earlier, the underlying assumption of this analysis is that some of the difference in verb affixes can be explained in terms of the slot-role which a verb fills in a clause. In the independent interrogative clause, the verb fills the nuclear slot in the role of question. The suffixes and restrictions on occurrence which are unique to these verbs are discussed in this section.
Independent Interrogative Verb =

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuc</th>
<th>V Stem</th>
<th>V Root</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Per</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V Stem</td>
<td>V Root</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Per</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pred</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>1., 2., 3.</td>
<td>±</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>±</td>
<td>Ac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>±</td>
<td>i ‘infer’</td>
<td></td>
<td>±</td>
<td>Mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A does not precede T when second or third person and past tense (ta) occur together.

Restrictions of occurrence:
1. pa ‘assertive’ only occurs when ga (ŋa) ‘far past’ and i ‘inferential’ occur together.
2. wo ‘dubitative’ only occurs with ta ‘past’.
3. ‘v ‘emphatic’ only occurs with kī (ŋi) ‘future’ or no tense marker.

2.1. Order of affixes. While distribution of affixes is more limited for the interrogative verb, the order in which the affixes occur is the same as that for the declarative verb. For example, the variant ordering of the third-person and past-tense suffixes is found in AB 11 where kā ‘third-person singular’ occurs before ta ‘past’.

AB 11 æ-bā-nō biwii kae-kā-ta-wo
how  bird  do-3-pst-dubitive
I wonder how the little bird is doing?

Two mode suffixes are unique to the interrogative verb. They are wo ‘dubitative’ and ’V (vowel) ‘emphasis’. The suffix wo is generally used for mild questions, such as when the Waorani wonder about the little bird in AB 11 (cited above). The vowel suffix indicates a more intense question, such as when the jaguar interrogates the turtle about his mother.

JT 11 Bi-tō badā nawāŋa bi-tō badā æ-dō go-dā-‘lā
2-pn  mother  truly  2-pn  mother  where  go-3h-infer-emphatic
Now tell me the truth little turtle. Where has your mother gone?

2.2. Restrictions of occurrence. It is difficult to determine when the restrictions of occurrence in our limited data are structurally significant
and when they are simply due to lack of data. Two restrictions are noted here although their significance is uncertain. First, inferential suffixes occur only with the mode suffix pa ‘assertive’ in interrogative verbs. No inferential suffixes occur with either of the other two mode suffixes wo and ‘V.

JT 15 Badā æ-dō-mē go-ga-dā-i-pa
mother where-specula go-far.past-3h-infer-asser
Mother! Where in the world did my mother go long, long ago?

Secondly, only certain tense and mode suffixes appear together. They are (1) ga ‘far past’ with pa ‘assertive’, (2) ta ‘past’ with wo ‘dubitive’, and (3) kī (ŋī) ‘future’ with ‘V ‘emphasis’. The first two pairs are illustrated by JT 15 and AB 11, respectively (both cited above); the third is illustrated by TP 10.

TP 10 Tītē bo-to ūpæ-ne-kī-’ī-

tapir 1-pn speak-mouth.id-fut-emph-?
Shall I tell you about the tapir?

3. Verbs in imperative clauses

Verbs which fill the nuclear slot of an independent imperative clause have the role of command. There is some variation in the order of affixes and in their restrictions of occurrence which are unique to these verbs.

\[
\text{Independent Imperative Verb} = \begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{Nuc} & V\text{ Stem} & dā-maï (nā-maï) \text{ ‘neg-like’} \\
\text{V Root} & bā-we (mā-we) \text{ ‘urgent com-remon’} \\
\text{Pred} & \pm \text{ Mode} & i \text{ ‘command’} \\
\text{Mar} & \pm \text{ Ac} & 1.
\end{array}
\]

Restrictions of occurrence:
1. Person suffixes only occur with the mode suffix i ‘command’, or bā-we (mā-we) ‘urgent.command-remonstrative’.

3.1. Order of affixes. In contrast to both the declarative and interrogative verbs, two observations can be made regarding the order of
affixes in imperative verbs. First, only person and mode suffixes occur. There is no evidence of aspect, tense, or inference markers in these verbs. Considering the nature of imperatives, this is not surprising. For example, imperatives are not expressed in either past or future tense. Secondly, the person suffixes follow the mode suffix, whereas they precede the mode suffix in other independent-clause verbs. In the following example, the person suffix dāni (nāni) ‘2d’ follows the mode suffix ‘command’.

BR 21 wæ̱-i-dāni
   down-command-2p
   You all come down!

A clarification of the suffixes dāni (nāni) and da (na) is in order here. In the declarative and interrogative verbs, dāni and da designate third person plural and third person dual, respectively. In imperative and request verbs, however, the same suffixes designate second person plural and dual, respectively. In these instances the person suffixes occur with (and follow) a mode suffix—either i ‘command’ or bā-we ‘urgent command-remonstrative’ for the imperative; or e ‘permission’ for the request verb (section 3.3).

The role of mode is filled by dā-maī (nā-maī) ‘negative-like’, i ‘command’, and bā-we (mā-we) ‘urgent command-remonstrative’. Their differences may be in degree of urgency as illustrated by BR 24 (above) and the following examples.

OC 26 wæ̱-nā-maī
   take-neg-like
   Don’t take me yet.

TP 37 Kæ-mā, bADO kēyæ-mōni kæ-bā-we
   Kæmā pay.attention fast-intens do-urgent.com-remon
   Kæmā, hurry. Come quick!

3.2. Restrictions of occurrence. One restriction is easily observed. Only second person suffixes take the role of actor. These include dāni (nāni) ‘2p’, da ‘2d’, and bi (mi) ‘2’. As with the limitation on tense suffixes, one would expect this limitation of person suffixes for imperatives.
Independent Request Verb =

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuc</th>
<th>V Root</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Pred</th>
<th>Ac</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>Granter of permission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>+</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Verbs in request clauses. The request clause was belatedly identified as a fourth type of independent clause. Verbs which fill the nuclear slot of this clause have the role of request for permission.

The imperative verbs and the request verbs are similar in that their mode suffixes occur in the medial position. This is in contrast with both declarative and interrogative verbs, where the mode suffix occurs in the final position.

In contrast with imperative verbs, request verbs have two person-suffix slots. The first of these names the actor role. The fillers for this slot are limited to first-person suffixes. They immediately follow the verb root and identify the actor of the action named by that verb root. The second slot names the granter-of-permission role and is filled only by second-person suffixes. It identifies the person of whom the request is made.

Another contrast with the imperative verb is that the actor suffix for the request verb precedes the mode suffix. In the imperative verb, the actor suffix follows the mode suffix. In the following example, Giketa requests of his two hunting companions that they let him spear a tapir.

TP 56 Ōŋō-i-da, gîta-idi yao Ōŋō-i-da ō-ŋō-mîna-te
hold-com-2d dog-plural grab hold-command-2d hold-2p-ing

tîtæ-ke ba-yô tânø-mo-e-da ā a-pa.
tapir-limit become-when spear-1-permission-2d say see-asser
I said, “You two grab the dogs; let me spear that tapir by itself.”

One occurrence restriction sets the request verb apart from the imperative verb: a person-as-actor suffix is required in every instance of the verb.
Conclusion

I have discussed in this paper some preliminary findings about the system of verb affixes in terms of the different roles a verb may have in an independent clause and the role and position of the affix internal to the verb and the verb stem. In the role of statement in a declarative clause, the verb tolerates five classes of affixes which have the roles of aspect, time, actor, inference, and mode. In the role of question in an interrogative clause, the verb has only four roles for its affixes—time, actor, inference, and mode. In contrast to the declarative verb, a different set of affixes fills the role of mode. In the role of command in an imperative clause, the verb has only the roles of actor and command mode for its affixes. In contrast to both the declarative and interrogative verbs, mode precedes actor. In the role of permission in a request clause, the verb, in addition to the roles of actor and mode, has a second affix for granter of permission. In contrast to the imperative clause, actor precedes the mode, and granter of permission follows the mode affix. Thus, in the Waorani language there is a correlation between the slot-role which a verb fills in an independent clause and the restrictions of occurrence of its affixes.