Teaching Some Basic Sentences of Bahasa Malaysia Using The Base Rules

Mashudi B.H. Kader,
Unit Pengajian Bahasa,
Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Chang May See,
Pusat Pengajian Matematik,
Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Kertas ini merupakan satu contoh cara mengajarkan struktur-struktur dasar Bahasa Malaysia (B.M.) kepada pelajar-pelajar B.M. sebagai bahasa kedua atau sebagai satu bahasa asing di maktab-maktab perguruan dan di Universiti. Ia menekankan pengajaran ayat-ayat dengan menggunakan rumus dasar. Tiap-tiap kategori dalam rumus dasar itu digunakan sebagai tempat yang boleh digantikan dengan kata atau frasa sehingga kombinasi kata/frasa itu melahirkan ayat-ayat yang senang dipelajari. Jika gantian itu diulang-ulang, struktur yang berupa rumus itu akan dapat dipelajari dengan mudah.

Introduction

The teaching of grammar of any language is an essential part in the study of that language. A grammar can be defined as "..... a mathematical system for defining a language as well as a device for giving the sentence in a language a useful structure." (Aho and Ullman, 1972, p. 82).

A grammar is made up of a given set of rules, one part of which comprises the Phrase Structure (base) rules and the transformational rules.[1] The former provides the structural descriptions of the basic sentences while the latter provides the derived sentences of the language. The base rules together with the transformational rules will produce all the sentences in a natural language.

One of the methods to teach a student a foreign language is by the "basic structural method". Under this method, the teacher needs to teach sentences produced by the base rules first and then the "stylistic variants" of the basic sentences *via* the use of "simplified" transformational rules. However, as this paper is introductory in nature, it will confine its discussion to the teaching of the basic sentences only. The use of the transformational rules in the teaching of the "stylistic variants" will not be presented in this paper.

The paper provides an approach in the teaching of a set of Bahasa Malaysia (B.M.) Phrase Structure rules to second and foreign language learners and ways of using these rules to form basic sentences in a context-free B.M. grammar. The approach is somewhat formal in the sense that the students are taught formal grammatical structures first and then given substitution drills. Considering the formal nature of the instructional approach, it is hoped that it will be especially useful to Bahasa Malaysia instructors in teacher training colleges and universities where the students are mature langauge learners.

Abbreviations and Notations

→	–	is rewritten as
adb	–	adverbial of time
advl	–	sentence adverb
adv2	–	verbal adverb
asp	–	aspectual
AUX	–	auxiliary
cl	–	classifier
det	–	determiner
emph. (prt.)	–	emphatic morpheme
fm.	–	focus morpheme
mod.	–	modal
N	–	noun
NP	–	noun phrase
neg	–	negative or negation
num	–	number
p	–	preposition
PP	–	prepositional phrase
PRED	–	predicate phrase
qant	–	quantifier
S	–	sentence
vb	–	verbal
VP	–	verbal phrase
*	–	a hypothetical string

Base Rules of Basic Sentences

The paper strives to impart the knowledge of a subset of Phrase Structure (base) rules which govern the construction of *simple*[2] basic sentences in B.M. The following subset has been extracted from "The Syntax of Malay Interrogatives" (Mashudi, 1976) and the lessons which will be discussed later make use of these rules.

A. S → (NP) + (advl) + PRED

B. PRED → { VP + (adb) + (adb) / NP }

C. VP → (AUX) + adv2 + vb + (NP) + (PP) + (PP)

D. PP → p + NP

E. NP → (qant) + (num cl) + N + (det)

F. AUX → (neg) + (asp) + (asp) + (mod) + (mod)

The complete set is not made use of because of the complexities of natural language as a whole. However, this subset is selected such that it covers a sufficiently large number of *simple* basic sentences.

Lessons

The ten lessons that have been planned for this paper teach students the Phrase Structure rules for forming simple basic sentences in B.M. These are arranged as follows:

A. Lessons 1 to 4 cover the construction of sentences stipulated by the following rewrite rule

$$S \rightarrow (NP) + (advl) + PRED$$

B. Lessons 5 and 6 cover Predicate Phrases, i.e.

$$PRED \rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} VP + (adb) + (adb) \\ NP \end{Bmatrix}$$

C. Lesson 7 covers Noun Phrases, i.e.

$$NP \rightarrow (qant) + (num + cl) + N + (det)$$

D. Lesson 8 covers Verbal Phrases, i.e.

$$VP \rightarrow (AUX) + (adv2) + vb + (NP) + (NP) + (PP) + (PP)$$

E. Lesson 9 covers Prepositional Phrases, i.e.

$$PP \rightarrow p + NP$$

F. Lesson 10 covers Auxiliary Phrases, i.e.

$$AUX \rightarrow (neg) + (asp) + (asp) + (mod) + (mod)$$

The general format of these lessons is as follows:

(i) The lesson first introduces the rule, defining in turn each component of the rule.

(ii) It then gives examples of words or phrases which belong to these components.

(iii) Examples of phrases and sentences formed using this rule are also given.

Below is an example of one of these lessons, i.e. Lesson 1. Samples of the other lessons are given at the end of this paper.

Lesson 1

This lesson deals with sentences that may be "generated" by the following Phrase Structure rule:

1.1 $S \rightarrow (NP) + (advl) + PRED$

Where S = sentence, advl = sentence adverb, PRED = predicate phrase and the brackets ( ) indicate optionality of the element within them.

Since the brackets indicate optionality of the elements within them, the Phrase Structure rule in (1.1) contains the following rules:

1.2 $S \rightarrow NP + advl + PRED$

1.3 $S \rightarrow NP + PRED$

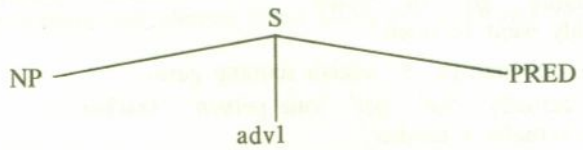
1.4 $S \rightarrow advl + PRED$

1.5 $S \rightarrow PRED$

The rule in (1.2) will now be introduced:

Rule 1.2: $S \rightarrow NP + advl + PRED$

The "tree" configuration (eliminating details) of Rule 1.2 is:



Phrases which can occur in the NP category include:

Taiping = 'name of town'	pasar = 'market'
Ahmad = 'name of person'	guru = 'teacher'
sebuah bandar = 'a town'	kopi = 'coffee'
guru itu = 'the/that teacher'	dia = 'he/she, it'

etc.

Words which can occur in the adv1 category include:

mungkin = 'probably'	sebenarnya = 'actually'
sesungguhnya = 'actually'	selalu = 'always'

etc.

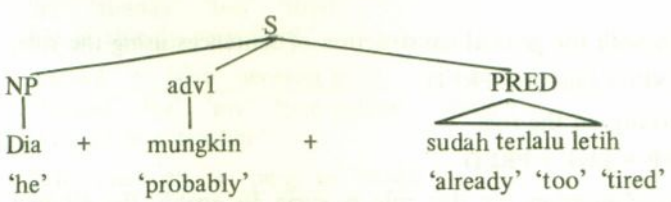
Phrases which can occur in the PRED category include:

(a) sudah terlalu letih
'already' 'very' 'tired'
'already very tired'

(b) minum kopi
'drink' 'coffee'
'drink coffee'

(c) pergi ke bandar
'go' 'to' 'town'
'go to town'

Any Predicate Phrase above may fill the PRED position; for example, taking 'dia' as NP, 'mungkin' as adv1 and 'sudah terlalu letih' as PRED, the structure for the sentence Dia mungkin sudah terlalu letih is:



'He is probably already too tired.'

Note that the triangle △ indicates that PRED consists of a number of grammatical categories (see Lesson 5). In the same way, one can obtain the following correct sentences by filling the nodes such as NP, adv1 or PRED of the tree with appropriate words and phrases.

Other examples presented in a linear concatenation:

(a) Dia + selalu + minum kopi.
'he' 'always' 'drinks' 'coffee'.
'He always drinks coffee'.

(b) Dia + mungkin + pergi ke bandar.
'he' 'probably' 'go' 'to' 'town'
'He probably went to town.'

(c) Ahmad + sebenarnya + adalah seorang guru.
'Ahmad' 'actually' 'be' 'prt' 'one person' 'teacher'
'Ahmad is actually a teacher.'

(d) Dia + sesungguhnya + sudah minum kopi.
'he' 'actually' 'already' 'drink' 'coffee'
'He has probably drunk coffee.'

(e) Ali + selalu + pergi ke Taiping.
'Ali' 'always' 'go' 'to' 'Taiping'
'Ali always goes to Taiping.'

Note that not all sentences produced in this way will be grammatical. For example, the following sentences, although structurally correct, are ungrammatical in the sense that they are semantically anomalous.

(a) *Taiping selalu minum kopi.
*'Taiping always drinks coffee.'

(b) *Bandar sebenarnya sudah terlalu letih.
*'Town is probably already too tired.'

Although ungrammatical sentences such as these may be produced by this system, almost automatically they can be seen as not consistent with our knowledge of the real world. Normally such knowledge would enable a person to know which sentences are semantically acceptable and which are not (see Jackendoff, 1972). Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that under normal circumstances, sentences which are semantically not consistent with the knowledge of the real world of the speaker such as (a) and (b) above, would be considered as deviants and hence would be unlikely to occur.

Discussion

Lesson 1 deals with the general construction of sentences using the rule:

$$S \rightarrow (NP) + (adv1) + PRED$$

and concentrates mainly on the rule

$$S \rightarrow NP + adv1 + PRED$$

The "tree" configuration for this rule is given to enable the student to have a clearer "picture" of the structure of the sentence generated using this rule. Lists of words/phrases belonging to the various categories which make up S, namely NP, adv1 and PRED, are given as examples. The students would then know what words/phrases can occur in the respective categories. An example of a sentence formed according to this rule is given as:

Dia mungkin sudah terlalu letih

where Dia is an NP, mungkin is an adv1 and sudah terlalu letih is a PRED. Such an example would enable the student to learn how to use the words/phrases in the lists provided to form correct sentences. The "tree" configuration of the sentence is also given for clarity of the sentence structure. Further examples presented in a linear concatenation are also provided. The number

of sentences that can be produced by the students using the rule: S → NP + advl + PRED actually depends on the lexicon and phrases listed under NP, advl and PRED prepared by the language instructor.

Exercises

One type of exercises has been devised to check the understanding of the lessons given. The exercise is relatively simple in that the student is given lists of words or phrases, from which he then chooses to form sentences. For example, the student can be given a list of words/phrases which can occur as noun phrases (NP) as well as a list of predicate phrases (PRED). The student can then learn how to make sentences according to the rule

S → NP + PRED

by taking any one of the words/phrases in NP and combining with another from PRED. The student learns by repeatedly forming sentences of a specific construct using different combinations of the given phrases. For example, given the following lists of words and phrases,

Noun Phrases (NP)	**Predicate Phrases (PRED)**
Dia 'he/she'	sudah terlalu letih 'already too tired'
Ahmad 'Ahmad'	pergi ke bandar 'go to town'
Bapanya 'his/her father'	suka minum kopi 'like to drink coffee'
Perempuan itu 'that woman'	ialah seorang guru 'is a teacher'

the following sentences can be formed:

(a) Dia + sudah terlalu letih.
'he' 'already' 'too' 'tired'
'He is already very tired.'

(b) Ahmad + ialah seorang guru.
'Ahmad' 'be' 'prt' 'one person' 'teacher'
'Ahmad is a teacher.'

(c) Perempuan itu + pergi ke bandar.
'woman' 'that' 'go' 'to' 'town'
'That woman went to town.'

(d) Bapanya + suka minum kopi.
'father' 'her' 'like' 'drink' 'coffee'
'Her father likes to drink coffee.'

Lessons 2 – 10

The presentation of lesson 2 through 10 is somewhat similar to the presentation of lesson 1 except that each lesson presents a new rule. These sample lessons are provided below:

Lesson 2

Rule 1.3: S → NP + PRED

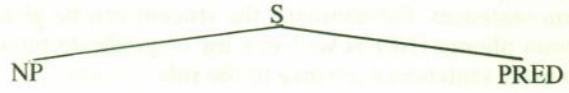
In Lesson 1, the sentence structure of rule

S → (NP) + (adv1) + PRED

was taught. By removing adv1, since it is optional, another rule is obtained, namely:

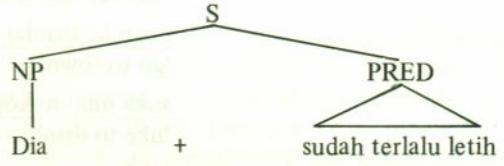
S → NP + PRED

This rule produces a sentence structure of the following form:



The nominals which may fill the NP node include dia 'he/she/it', Ahmad 'name of person', bandar 'town', guru itu 'that/the teacher', mereka 'they', perempuan itu 'that/the woman', Ali 'name of person', sebuah rumah 'a house' etc. Predicate phrases which can fill the PRED node include phrases such as sudah terlalu letih 'already too tired', pergi ke bandar 'go to town', ialah seorang guru 'is a teacher', pergi ke Ipoh 'go to Ipoh' etc.

Thus, taking 'dia' as NP and 'sudah terlalu letih' as PRED, the "tree" configuration for the sentence Dia sudah terlalu letih is



'He/she is already too tired."

Using the above vocabulary items, the following examples of sentences of this structure can be easily obtained:

(a) Guru itu + sudah terlalu letih.
'The/That teacher is already too tired.'

(b) Perempuan ini + pergi ke pasar.
'This woman went to market.'

(c) Ahmad + ialah seorang guru.
'Ahmad is a teacher.'

(d) Dia + minum kopi.
'He drinks coffee.'

(e) Ali + pergi ke Taiping.
'Ali goes to Taiping.'

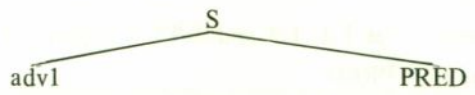
Lesson 3

Rule 1.4: S → adv1 + PRED

In this lesson, we are going to introduce the following rule:

S → adv1 + PRED

The rule indicates that a sentence consists of (or is written) as a sentence-adverbial (advl) and a predicate phrase (PRED). This rule produces sentences whose structure is as follows:



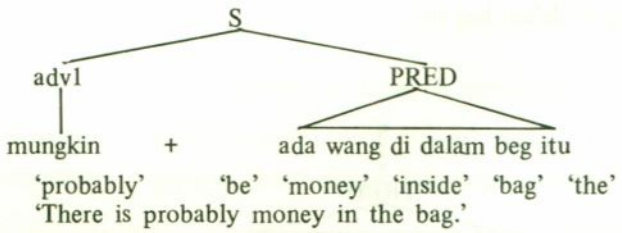
Sentence-adverbials in Bahasa Malaysia include words such as mungkin 'may be/probably sebenarnya 'actually, really', sesungguhnya 'actually, really', selalu 'always', etc. Words/phrases that can occur as predicate phrases in the above structure include:

ada wang di atas beg itu	'there is money in the bag'
ada hujan	'there is rain/it is raining'
ada sebuah rumah di situ	'there is a house there'
ada anjing di bilik itu	'there is a dog in the room'
ada pertunjukan di rumahnya	'there is a show in his house'

Filling any of the words/phrases in advl and PRED will result in grammatical sentences; for example, taking mungkin as advl and ada wang di dalam beg itu as PRED, the following well-formed sentence is obtained:

Mungkin ada wang di dalam beg itu
'There is probably money in the bag.'

The "tree" configuration of this sentence would be:



Other similar sentences containing this structure which can be produced by rule 1.4 include the following examples:

(a) Mungkin + ada hujan
'May be there is rain' or 'May be it is raining.'

(b) Sebenarnya + ada sebuah rumah di situ.
'Actually there is a house there.'

(c) Sesungguhnya + ada anjing di bilik itu.
'Actually there is a dog in the room.

(d) Selalu + ada pertunjukan di rumahnya.
'There is always a show in his house.'

Lesson 4

Rule 1:5 S → PRED

In the previous three lessons, rules 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4

1.2 S → NP + adv1 + PRED

1.3 S → NP + PRED

1.4 S → adv1 + PRED

have been introduced. In these lessons, the PRED is filled by predicate phrases such as sudah terlalu letih 'already too tired', pergi ke bandar 'go to town', minum kopi 'drink coffee', ada wang di dalam beg itu 'there is money in the bag'.

In this lesson, we learn about sentences which contain only a predicate phrase. The rule is:

S → PRED

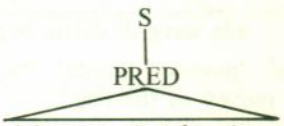
Examples of such predicate phrases containing the word ada 'be' are:

ada wang di dalam beg itu	'there is money in the bag'
ada hujan	'there is rain/it is raining'
ada sebuah rumah di situ	'there is a house there'
ada anjing di bilik itu	'there is a dog in the room'
ada pertunjukan di rumahnya	'there is a show in his house'

For example, the 'tree' configuration for the sentence

Ada wang di dalam beg itu

would be:



Ada wang di dalam beg
be' 'money' 'in' 'bag'
'there is money in the bag'

It must be emphasized here that predicate phrases that can occur as basic sentences always contain the verb ada 'be'. These predicate phrases need not begin with ada. Transformations can be performed on such basic sentences to produce derived sentences. Such derived sentences can be exemplified by the following:

Di dalam beg itu ada wang	'There is money in the bag.'
Di situ ada sebuah rumah	'There is a house there (in that place).'
Di bilik itu ada anjing	'There is a dog in the room.'
Di rumahnya ada pertunjukan	'In his house there is a show.'

Lesson 5

From Lesson 1 to Lesson 4 we learnt that sentences are governed by the following rule:

S → (NP) + (adv1) + PRED

Here, we will learn that predicate phrases contain a number of grammatical categories. A predicate phrase may contain a verbal phrase (VP) and one or more adverbials (adb). The rule for PRED is:

PRED → VP + (adb) + (adb)

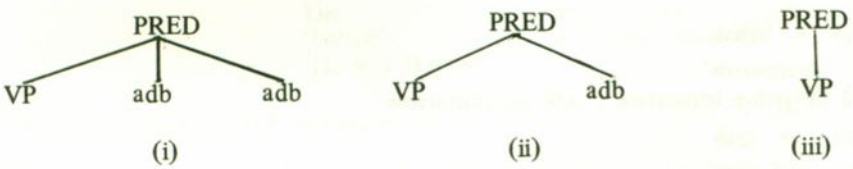
In this lesson, we will first deal with the rule:

PRED → VP + (adb) + (adb)

Since the brackets indicate optionality of the elements within them, this rule implies the following:

5.1 PRED → VP + adb + adb
5.2 PRED → VP + adb
5.3 PRED → VP

The "tree'. configurations of 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 will be (i), (ii) and (iii) respectively:



A simple verbal phrase (VP) is one which contains a verbal. A verbal can be:

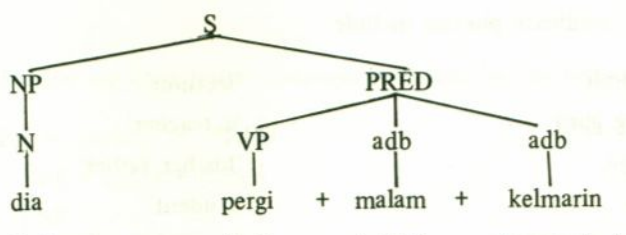
1. A true verb: tidur 'to sleep', pergi 'to go', makan 'to eat' etc.
2. An adjective: panjang 'long', tinggi 'tall, high', cantik 'beautiful'.

The adverbial, adb, is a time adverbial and examples of such time adverbials include tadi 'just now', malam 'night', besok 'tomorrow', kelmarin 'yesterday', pagi 'morning', etc.

For example, the "tree" configuration for the sentence

Dia pergi malam kelmarin

would be:



Examples of PRED (which contains a simple VP) using this rule include:

(a) pergi + pagi + besok
'go' 'morning' 'tomorrow'
'will be going tomorrow morning'

(b) makan + pagi + tadi
'eat' 'morning' 'just now'
'ate this morning'

(c) pergi + malam + tadi
'go' 'night' 'just now'
'went last night'

(d) tidur + malam + kelmarin
'sleep' 'night' 'yesterday'
'slept yesterday night'

The PRED formed using the rule

PRED → VP + adb

includes the following:

(a) pergi + besok
'go' 'tomorrow'
'will be going tomorrow', 'will go tomorrow'

(b) makan + tadi
'eat' 'just now'
'ate just now'

Lesson 6

Rule: PRED → NP

In Lesson 5, we learnt that predicate phrases contain a verbal phrase (VP) and/or one or two adverbials of time as shown below:

PRED → VP + (adb) + (adb)

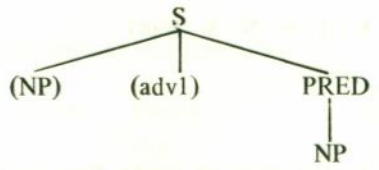
In this lesson, we learn that PRED can also contain a noun phrase, i.e.

PRED → NP

Examples of such predicate phrases include:

pensyarah	'lecturer'
seorang guru	'a teacher'
bapanya	'his/her father'
pelajar	'student'
seorang mahasiswa	'an undergraduate'

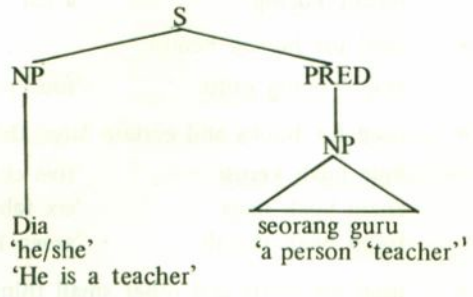
The sentence structure with a noun phrase as PRED would be:



For example, the sentence structure for

Dia seorang guru

would be:



Other examples of such sentences are:

(a) Dia + pensyarah. (NP + PRED)
'He is a lecturer.'

(b) Ahmad + sebenarnya + seorang guru. (NP + adv1 + PRED)
'Ahmad is actually a teacher.'

(c) Kakaknya + seorang mahasiswa. (NP + PRED)
'His/her elder sister is an undergraduate.'

(d) Perempuan ini + emaknya. (NP + PRED)
'This woman is her/his mother.'

(e) Mereka + pelajar (NP + PRED)
'They are students.'

Lesson 7

Noun Phrases (NP)

In the previous lessons, we have learnt sentences produced by the following rules:

$$S \rightarrow (NP) + (adv1) + PRED$$

$$PRED \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} VP + (adb) + (adb) \\ NP \end{array} \right\}$$

In this lesson, we will learn that the rule for constructing simple noun phrases is:

NP → (qant) + (num + cl) + N + (det)

Classifiers (cl)

The classifiers differ according to the type of nouns they occur with. When classifiers occur, only the singular form of the noun may be used.

(i) ekor = used for animate non-human nouns:

dua ekor monyet	'two monkeys'
tiga ekor harimau	'three tigers'
seekor kucing	'a cat'

(ii) orang = used for human beings:

empat orang gadis	'four young girls'

(iii) buah = used for books and certain large things:

lima buah kerusi	'five chairs'
enam buah meja	'six tables'
tujuh buah rumah	'seven houses'

(iv) biji = used for fruits and other small things:

tiga biji durian	'three durians'
dua biji pinggan	'two plates'

(v) batang = used for long or tall things:

sembilan batang pensel	'nine pencils'
dua batang rokok	'two cigarettes'

(vi) keping = used for flat objects with some thickness:

tiga keping roti	'three slices of bread'
enam keping papan	'six planks'

Numerals

Numerals may be divided into numbers and quantifiers. Both may occur as modifiers in noun phrases.

Quantifiers (qant)

Quantifiers are lexicon indicating an "unfixed" amount, for example:

kesemua	'all of'
semua	'all'
ramai	'many'
sedikit	'a bit, a little'

Nouns (N)

This category of words include the following:

(i)	Common nouns:	kereta	'cars'
		roti	'bread'
		bapa	'father'
		etc.	
(ii)	proper noun:	Ahmad	'name of person'
		Taiping	'name of town'
		etc.	
(iii)	pronouns:	dia	'he/she, it'
		mereka	'they'
		awak	'you'
		etc.	
(iv)	abstract nouns:	kecantikan	'beauty'
		kejahatan	'naughtiness'

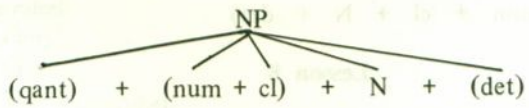
Determiners (det)

For the purpose of this paper, two determiners are provided:

itu	=	'that/the'
ini	=	'this'

Rule: NP → (qant) + (num + cl) + N + (det)

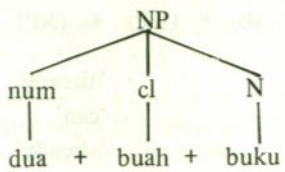
The "tree" configuration for this rule is:



For example, the "tree" configuration for the noun phrase:

dua buah buku

would be:

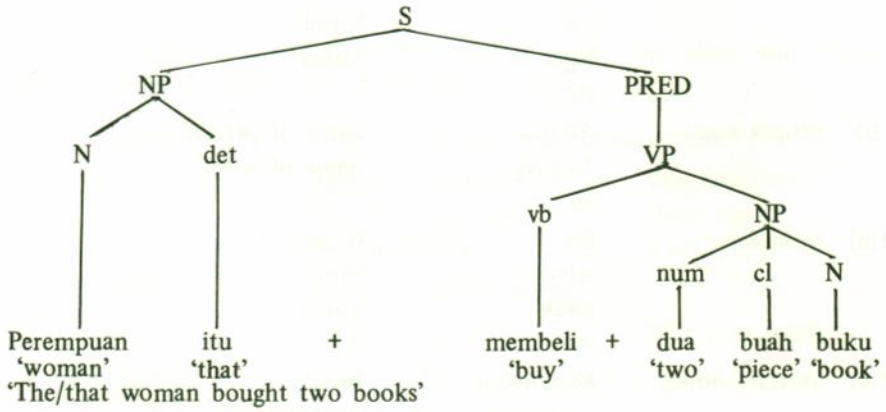


'two books'

Thus, the sentence

Perempuan itu membeli dua buah buku

would have the following "tree" configuration:



Other examples of NP presented in a linear concatenation are:

(a) Ahmad (N)
'Ahmad (name of person)'

(b) kereta + itu (N + det)
'the/that car'

(c) tiga + keping + roti (num + cl + N)
'three slices of bread'

(d) lima + buah + rumah + itu (num + cl + N + det)
'five of the houses'

(e) kesemua + tiga + buah + buku + itu
'all the three books'
(qant + num + cl + N + det)

Lesson 8

In Lesson 5, we have learnt the rule concerning PRED, i.e.

PRED → (VP) + (adb) + (adb)

In this lesson, we are going to learn how to form verbal phrases. Verbal phrase (VP) can be expanded as follows:

VP → (AUX) + (adv2) + vb + (NP) + (NP) + (PP) + (PP)

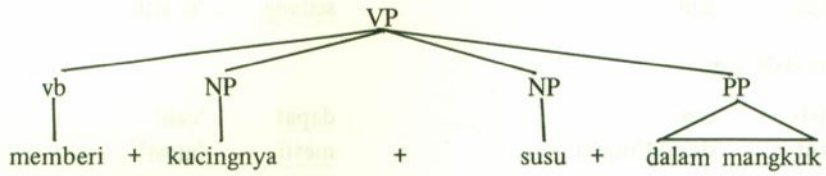
Examples of AUX are:		
	sudah	'already'
	boleh	'can'
	telah	'already'
	(See Lesson 10)	

Examples of adv2 are:	paling	'very'
	sangat	'very'
	amat	'very'
	benar	'true'
Examples of vb are:	pergi	'goes'
	memberi	'to give'
	tidur	'to sleep'
	pandai	'clever'[4]
Examples of NP are:	susu	'milk'
	seorang budak	'a child'
	perempuan itu	'the/that woman'
Examples of PP are:	dalam mangkuk	'in the bowl'
	di Taiping	'in Taiping'
	dalam kolam	'in pond'

For example, the tree structure for the verbal phrase

memberi kucingnya susu dalam mangkuk

would be:



'gives his/her kitten milk in a mug'

Other examples of VP presented in linear concatenation are:

(a) membeli
'to buy'
(vb)

(b) sudah + membeli
'already bought'
(AUX + vb)

(c) sangat + bodoh
'very stupid'
(adv2 + vb)

(d) telah + membeli + kasut itu + di kedai
'have already bought the shoes in the shop'
(AUX + vb + NP + PP)

(e) telah + membeli + kasut itu + di kedai + di Taiping
'have already bought the shoes in the shop in Taiping'
(AUX + vb + NP + PP + PP)

Other examples of PP include:

(a)	ke + Kuala Lumpur	'to Kuala Lumpur'
(b)	kepada + kakaknya	'to his elder sister'
(c)	di dalam + almari itu	'in the cupboard'
(d)	daripada + mereka	'from them'
(e)	di atas + meja itu	'on the table'

Lesson 10

In this lesson, we are going to learn the last rule in this set of Phrase Structure rules for forming simple basic sentences. This rule is for the formation of auxiliary phrases (AUX), i.e.

AUX → (neg) + (asp) + (asp) + (mod) + (mod)

There are two words which concern us here in the NEG category:

bukan	'not'	tidak	'not'

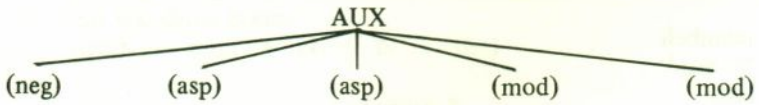
Examples of aspectuals are:

sudah	'already'	pernah	'have'
telah	'already'	akan	'will'
masih	'still'	sedang	'is still'

Examples of models are:

boleh	'can'	dapat	'can'
patut	'should/ought'	mesti	'must'
mahu	'ought'	harus	'must'

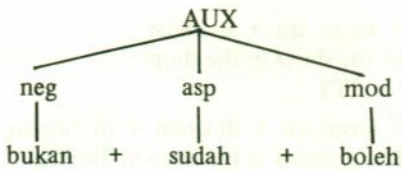
The "tree" configuration for this structure is:



For example, the "tree" configuration for the auxiliary phrase

bukan sudah boleh

would be:



'have not been able'

Other examples of AUX presented in a linear concatenation are:

(a) boleh (abd)
'can'

(b) bukan (neg)
'no'

(c) sedang (asp)
'is still'

(d) sudah boleh (asp + mod)
'have already'

(e) sudah + pernah (asp + asp)
'have already'

(f) boleh + dapat (mod + mod)
'possible'

(g) tidak + pernah (neg + asp)
'never'

(h) tidak + dapat (neg + mod)
'not possible'

(i) bukan + sudah + boleh (neg + asp + mod)
'cannot already'

(j) tidak + akan + dapat (neg + mod + mod)
'not able to'

Summary

This paper provides some basic sentence structures of Bahasa Malaysia and demonstrates how these sentence structures could be taught to second and foreign language learners in the teacher training colleges and universities. The emphasis has been to introduce the base rules according to the degree of complexity and provide substitution drills using each of the categorical abbreviations as a slot for a word or phrase. A practical language instructor of Bahasa Malaysia at the tertiary level would provide added efficiency to his lesson if he were to have prepared a list of substitution words or phrases for each rule (i.e. structure) that he is going to teach. The instructor would also find that the preparation of such list of words and phrases is not a permanent component of his task as the students normally would enjoy trying their own words and phrases in the slots of the sentence structures taught.

Notes

[1]The other parts of the rules, which include semantic rules, phonological rules, morphonological rules do not concern with the issue discussed here.

[2]The word simple is deliberately used to indicate that the discussion in this paper is confined to sentences not containing any embedded sentence.

[3]In this paper, both true verbs such as pukul 'to hit' and adjectives tinggi 'tall, high' and cantik 'beautiful' are classified under a more inclusive grammatical category called verbal (vb). For a more comprehensive discussion of the category verbals in Bahasa Malaysia, the readers are referred to Mashudi (1976).

[4]See note 3.

References

Aho, A.V., and Ullman, J.D. *The Survey of Parsing, Translation and Compiling, Vol. 1: Parsing.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1972.

Asmah H. Omar, and Subbiah, R. *An Introduction to Malay Grammar.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968.

Mashudi, H. Kader. *The Syntax of Malay Interrogatives.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Simon Fraser University, Canada, 1976.

Jackendoff, R.S. *Semantic Interpretation in Generative Grammar.* Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1972.