

Introduction to the Laramin language



Resnon se
Vestepen Elaramin

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Foreword

The first idea of the Laramin language came to me in May 2007 from my contact with the language of Malaysia, shortly after discovering mandarin Chinese and Esperanto as well. Throughout these three languages was made clearer to me the possibility to use unmodified bricks of meaning, assembled together like pieces of the construction toys *lego*. The most striking example that helped me to figure out this was the case of *Beritahu*, which means “to tell”. It is composed of *Beri* and *Tahu*, which respectively mean “to give” and “to know”. To tell something means indeed to give a piece of knowledge. I was impressed to realize that such a simple verb like “to tell” could be split into two even simpler concepts. From that point I have been looking for a collection of fundamental concepts from which every word could be derived through similar combinations.

Contact and references

This introduction booklet is to be read together with the Excel workbook illustrating the mechanism of Laramin and containing the thesaurus. It can be found at:

www.notesdevoyage.com

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For any query, please feel free to contact me at:

istanahatan@gmail.com

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Glossary

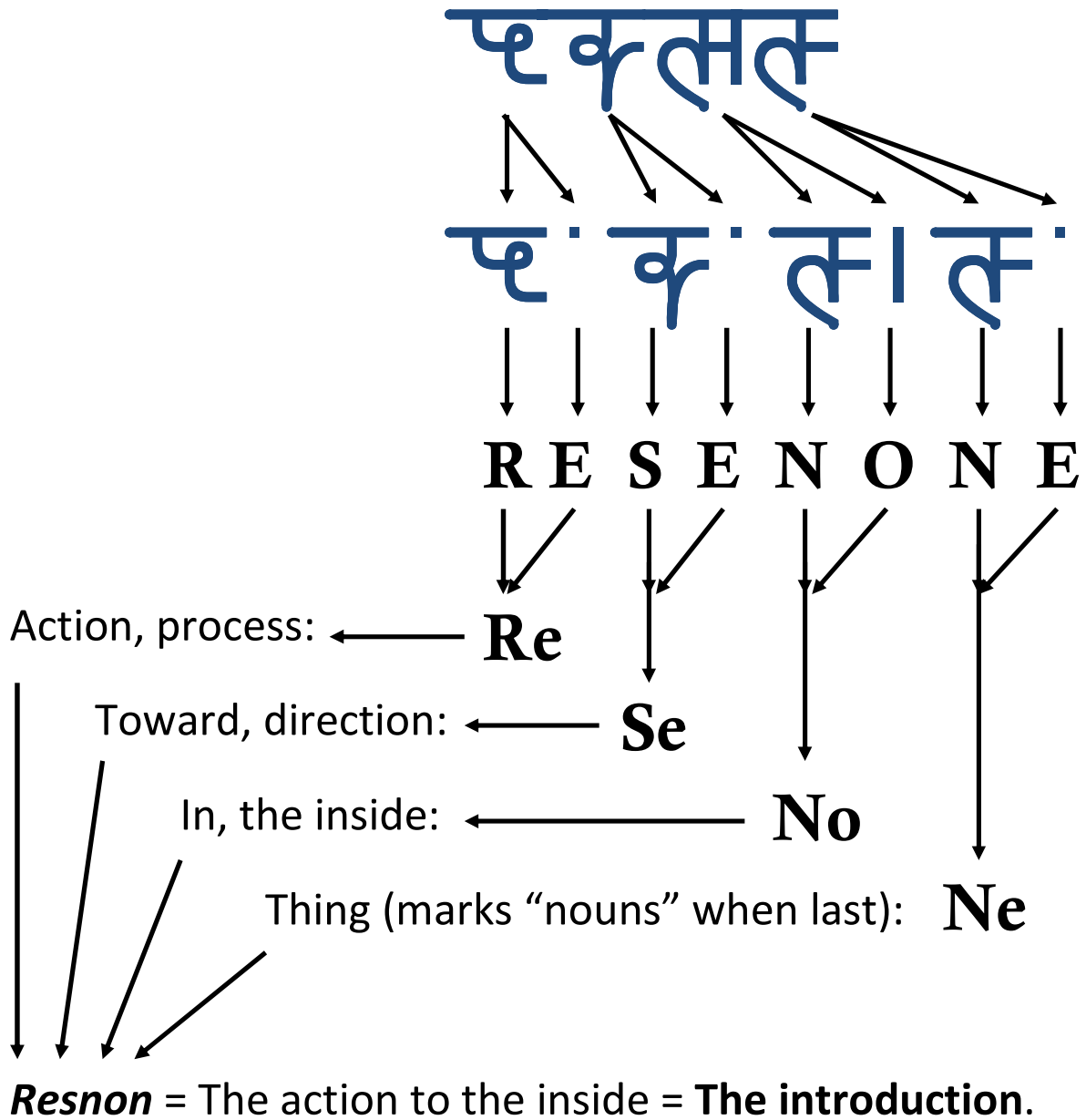
- **Radical:** word component expressing a basic idea.
- **Syllable:** smallest unit of pronounced word. In Laramin, it is a pair of consonant + vowel.
- **Affix: Prefix or Suffix:** element extending a word from its beginning and end respectively.
- **Lexical class:** type of word, either noun, verb, adjective, adverb or preposition.
- **IPA:** the International Phonetic Alphabet.
- **Accusative case:** role (“case”) of a noun which is the receiver of an action. E.g.: “you” in “I love you”.
- **Infinitive mood:** form of the un-conjugated verb such as “to have”.
- **Phonetic:** related to the pronunciation.
- **Grammar:** set of rules of sentence building, including the syntax.
- **Semantic:** related to the meaning.
- **Syntax:** structure of sentence building.
- **Progressive/Regressive:** order of interpretation of the words. A word combination is progressive when the latter words are defining the earlier, regressive when the earlier are defining the later. (see examples on page 9)

Language profile¹

Concept:	Declination and conjugation done through agglutination. Agglutination and flexion done through radicals. Minimized number and length of radicals.
Rhythm:	Syllabic CV...CV
Morphology:	Agglutinative invariable. Fusion index: lowest, all words can be split back to individual radicals. Synthesis index: high, from 1 to 6 or more radicals per word. Accusative case only. Word lexical classes are marked by suffixes.
Lexicon:	A priori, no word or radical from already existing languages
Syntax:	S V O Progressive

¹ NB: This table purposely uses advanced technical terms to serve as quick summary for specialists.

Example of word building



Key features

In line with the example of Bahasa and Chinese languages, all lexicons are built from an initial collection of unmodified bricks of basic ideas called *radicals*. The name “Laramin” is the acronym of the French phrase “Langue à Radicaux Minimisés”, which translates “Language with minimized radicals”.

1. Only radicals

A novelty of Laramin is to build everything only from radicals. This means that every element, even grammatical aspects, is marked with a radical that hence give them a semantic value. For example in English, plural are generally marked with letter “s”, but this letter alone has no meaning, which shows that it is not a radical but simply a grammatical marker in a form of suffix. In Laramin, plurals are marked with the radical meaning “group”, and the accusative case is indicated with the radical meaning “object”.

2. Minimized number of radicals

A fundamental principle is to have as few radicals as possible. 100 radical is taken as a first goal.

3. Minimized size of radicals

In Bahasa, radicals are mostly formed of 2 syllables. As a consequence, words can barely accumulate more than 3 radicals in order to keep an acceptable word length and preserve the density of the message. Given the small amount of radical, it is possible to reduce their size to a single syllable: consonant + vowel. Words can therefore gather more radicals and give more nuances whilst remaining short, and then featuring interesting language efficiency.

4. Invariable agglutination of radicals

Complex ideas are expressed as a combination of basic ideas (radicals), which is noted by a string of syllables attached together to form a word. The equivalence between radicals and syllables is unique and invariable. It is always possible to split a word back to its list of radicals and hence obtain its definition.

5. Progressive word structures and syntax

Each radical is a syllable adding meaning to the whole, and these pieces of meaning are to be interpreted with a progressive reading: radicals that follow are complementing the meaning of those that precede. In

the same way, words that come later are complementing the meaning of the sentence.

Examples of progressive word structure:

Unclear = un-clear = not-clear = “that is not clear”

Examples of regressive word structure:

Visible = vis-ible = see-can = “that can be seen”

Examples of progressive word group:

Enfant terrible = “child who causes trouble”

Examples of regressive word group:

Cabbage soup = “soup of cabbage”

6. Ambivalent grammatical markers

Each word of Laramin bears the mark of its lexical class (noun, adjective, verb, adverb, number, etc.) and also other grammatical indications, such as the plural, accusative case, verb time and mood, etc. This grammatical mark is placed at the end of the word. Then each word is formed of two parts: a string of radicals forming the semantic body, and a word ending marking the lexical class or other grammatical aspects:

[Semantic body] + [Grammatical markers]

The radicals used as grammatical markers can be used also in the semantic body; they can play both roles depending on their location. For example, when placed in final position, the radical meaning “action” becomes a marker indicating a verb. This ambivalence contributes to keep a small number of radicals.

7. Definite form of noun by default

A noun at definite form is unique and identified, like a unique entity would be given a name. In ancient time, Rome was called “the city”. This show the gradual relationship between names, definite and indefinite nouns:

Indefinite noun	Definite noun	Name
a city	the city	Rome

For this reason, definite nouns will be made similar to names by dropping the article. Then, unlike many languages such as Arabic and Esperanto, nouns with no article will be at the definite form.

Below is an example in Laramin:

Indefinite noun	Definite noun	Name
<i>Di zun</i> : a man	<i>Zun</i> : the man	<i>Ezun</i> : Andrew, “the man”

Comparison with Esperanto

A lot of inspiration was drawn from Esperanto as regards its derivation mechanism, and particularly the fact that affixes used to derive words can be used themselves as radicals.

Example:

<i>Manĝ-i</i>	: to eat
<i>Manĝ-eb-l-a</i>	: eatable
<i>Ebl-a</i>	: possible
<i>Ebl-i</i>	: to be possible
<i>Ebl-e</i>	: possibly

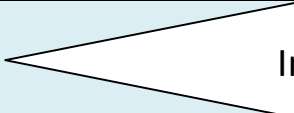
In the example above, the radical “-ebl-” can be used either as suffix or alone to form independent words.

This opens up rich a derivation system without introducing new items, but simply using existing radical to derive words.

The next step has been to have a systematic approach of radicals. Esperanto has taken most of its radicals from Indo-European languages. As a result this collection of radicals is large and heterogeneous. Laramin endeavours to design each radical with a priority to consistency, non-redundancy and harmony.

Overview of language types

Languages can be classified following their word structure, looking at how much the elements of meaning are merged together. The following table illustrates the several typologies by increasing fusion of these components.

 Increasing fusion of the semantic components			
Synthetic			Analytic
Flexional		Agglutinative	
Internal	External		
	<u>French:</u> Manger / Mangeable	<u>English:</u> Eat / Eatable	<u>Vietnamese:</u> ăn / ăn được
<u>English:</u> Foot / Feet	<u>French:</u> Pied / Pieds		<u>Vietnamese:</u> Chân / các chân
	<u>French:</u> Recommencer	<u>Esperanto:</u> Komenci / Rekomenci	<u>English:</u> Start / Start over
<u>German:</u> Buch / Bücher	<u>English:</u> Book / Books		<u>Vietnamese:</u> sách / các sách
<u>English:</u> Make / Made	<u>Esperanto:</u> Fari / Farata		<u>Vietnamese:</u> Làm / được làm

On the right hand side of the table, Analytic languages such as Chinese or Vietnamese are keeping each word/character separate and unmodified. Synthetic languages show a fusion of the components (synthesis). Agglutinative languages derive their words from each other by adding affixes, and these affixes have their own meaning. This is different from external flexional languages for which the word derivation (plural, passive, idea of repetition, etc.) is obtained by affixes called “flexional endings”, which have no meaning in themselves. Internal flexional languages show a change in the inside of the radical itself.

It can be noticed that languages can belong to several typologies at once, like English which features each type depending on the situations!

Laramin is agglutinative because the syllables/radicals are merged together into words.

Writing system

1. Phonetic system

Since only 100 radicals are to be defined, it is possible to do so with a collection of syllables made of easy sounds. Each syllable will combine a consonant with a vowel.

	IPA	Example	Alternate
A	a	Cat	ɑ
I	i	Sea	
U	u	Zoo	y

	IPA	Example	Alternate
E	e	Net	ɛ
O	o	Dog	ɔ

	IPA	Example	Alternate
P	p	Plain	p ^h
T	t	Train	t ^h , t̚
K	k	Key	k ^h , c, c ^h
F	f	Forest	ϕ
S	s	Sky	
C	ʃ	Ship	ç
X	x	Juan	χ
N	n	Night	ŋ
Y	j	Yard	
H	h	Hall	

	IPA	Example	Alternate
B	b	Beach	b ^h
D	d	Day	d ^h , d̚
G	g	Gate	g ^h
V	v	Valley	β
Z	z	Zenith	
J	ʒ	Pleasure	
R	ʁ	River	r, R, ʁ
M	m	Mountain	
W	u	Water	
L	l	Light	

It can be underlined that letters “**C**” and “**X**” are given unusual phonetic values.

In essence, radicals are rather similar to Chinese characters, because they remain unchanged like bricks of meaning. Ideogram could have been used, but an alphabetic system has been chosen for the purpose of transparency in pronunciation and to enable a compatibility with existing text software.

	P	T	K	F	S	C	X	N	Y	H
a	Pa	Ta	Ka	Fa	Sa	Ca	Xa	Na	Ya	Ha
o	Po	To	Ko	Fo	So	Co	Xo	No	Yo	Ho
i	Pi	Ti	Ki	Fi	Si	Ci	Xi	Ni	Yi	Hi
u	Pu	Tu	Ku	Fu	Su	Cu	Xu	Nu	Yu	Hu
e	Pe	Te	Ke	Fe	Se	Ce	Xe	Ne	Ye	He

	B	D	G	V	Z	J	R	M	W	L
a	Ba	Da	Ga	Va	Za	Ja	Ra	Ma	Wa	La
o	Bo	Do	Go	Vo	Zo	Jo	Ro	Mo	Wo	Lo
i	Bi	Di	Gi	Vi	Zi	Ji	Ri	Mi	Wi	Li
u	Bu	Du	Gu	Vu	Zu	Ju	Ru	Mu	Wu	Lu
e	Be	De	Ge	Ve	Ze	Je	Re	Me	We	Le

In the table above, sounds have been organized in logical manner. The 6 plosives (**P T K B D G**) stand on the left, organised by pairs of mute (above) and voiced (below). 8 affricative pairs (**F S C X V Z J R**) stand in the middle, and the right hand side contains 2 nasals (**M N**), 2 approximants (**W Y**), the **L** and the **H**. Following the organization of sounds in this table, allocate similar sound can be allocated to concepts with close connexions.

2. Neutral vowel

In order to reduce the word length and increase a bit the ratio of consonant against vowels, one of the five vowels is defined as “neutral” and can be suppressed as long as it does not introduce ambiguity. Following the example of French and Bahasa Malaysia, letter E is chosen for this purpose.

Example: ***VeSeToPiNe = Vestopin***

In cases where the suppression of the E would put together two plosives (P T K B D G) or a mute sound (P T K F S C X) with a voiced sound (B D G V Z J R), the

suppression is not allowed because it will either be too difficult to pronounce:

Example: **SaKePaNe => Sakpan**

Or lead to a mutation of one of the consonants toward a situation where both consonants are mute or voiced:

Example: **SeDa => Sta or Zda**

3. Larafon syllabary

An ad-hoc syllabic transcription was also prepared in order to reflect the idea that the basic building blocks of the languages are the syllables, not the letters.

Although each syllable refers to an idea, the characters are not ideographic. The phonetic construction rules were preferred:

- Syllables are aggregated horizontally and connected by an upper bar like the Indian Devanagari.
- The vowel is noted by the vertical bar on the right.
- Fricatives have one loop.
- Mute consonants have a sharp edge,
- Voiced consonants have a bent edge instead.

	P	T	K	F	S	C	X	N	Y	H
a	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
o	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
i	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
u	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
e	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ

	B	D	G	V	Z	J	R	M	W	L
a	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
o	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
i	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
u	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
e	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ

This syllabary can be downloaded and installed from the article below:

<http://www.notesdevoyage.com/index.php?2010/10/03/143-laraphon-syllabaire-systematique-pour-le-laramin>

Rules by topics

1. Basic lexical classes

In Laramin all words are marked with their lexical classes: Noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, number, etc. The class markers are located in the word end, with the grammatical markers:

[Semantic body] + [Grammatical markers]

The ending is usually made of one radical, possibly two.

Rule 1a: Nouns not at accusative case end with the radical **NE**, shortened to **N**.

Rule 1b: Adjectives end with the radical **FE**, shortened to **F**.

Rule 1c: Verbs at infinitive form end with the radical **RE**, shortened to **R**.

Rule 1d: Adverbs end with the radical **VE**, shortened to **V**.

Examples taking the radical **CE**, meaning “past”:

Cen: the past

Cer: to be over

Cef: past, over

Cev: already

Examples taking the radical **ZU**, meaning “human”:

Zun: the human

Zur: to be human

Zuf: human

Zuv: humanly

Rule 1e: Propositions end with no class marker.

In the examples below the absence of class marker causes the word to become a preposition.

Examples taking the radical **DA**, meaning “origin”:

Dan: the origin

Dar: to begin

Daf: initial

Dav: initially

Da: from

Examples taking the radical **NA**, meaning “inversion”:

Nan: the opposite

Naf: opposite

Na: but

Nar: to be the
opposite

Nav: conversely

The class markers used so far can also be used also as radical inside the semantic body.

Examples taking the radical **RE**, meaning “Action”:

Ren: the action

Ref: active

Rer: to do

Rev: actively

Examples taking the radicals **NE** meaning “Thing”, **FE** meaning “Quality”, **VE** meaning “Manner”:

Nen: the thing

Fen: the quality

Ven: the manner, the
way, the method

Not all combinations of semantic bodies and endings bear a realistic meaning, but the structure is such that the word definition is always explicit.

2. Plural

Rule 2: The plural aspect is marked by the radical **YE**, shorten to **Y**, placed before the class marker.

Examples:

Reyn: the actions

Zuyn: the humans

Dayn: the origins

Feyn: the qualities

3. Pronouns

4. Nouns integrations

“Faiseur de jour”

1. Raselebon word
2. Rasen-lebom compound word (needs Ra- with – m)
 - a. Rasem-lebom
 - b. Raser-lebom “to baby-sit someone” : double object
 - c. Raset-lebom “of day maker”
 - d. ...

3. Rasen Lebot

adjectiv “of”

4. Rasen te Lebon

preposition “of”

5. Verb conjugation and accusative

6. Participles

7. Correlatives

8. Numbers and derivatives

Annex 1: Table of the 100 Radicals

	P	T	K	F	S	C	X	N	Y	H
A					Man	Mind		Self		
I						Heart			Magnitude	
O					Life	Body		Proximity	More	
U		Origin				Material		Inside	Quantity	
E	Info	Belong	Tool	Have	Trend	Past	Will	Thing	Group	JOKER

	B	D	G	V	Z	J	R	M	W	L
A				Liquid			Agent	You		
I	Light						Power	Connect		Electric
O	Good									
U										Space
E				Manner			Action	Object	Element	Time

- *Belong:*

- *trend-belong-* = to give something

When put at ending, it marks a relative Adjective:

- *life-belong* = vital
- *life-have* = alive

- *Have:*

- *trend-have-* = to provide someone

Annex 2: List of word forms

NB: In this table, the radicals are referred to by their name instead of their syllable.

#	Prefix	Sematic body	Suffix 1	Suffix 2	Meaning	Laramin	Translation
11	-	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Thing</i>	Noun	Ren	The act
111	-	<i>Action</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Thing</i>	Noun plural	Reyn	The acts
12	-	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Object</i>	Noun accusative	Rem	The act
13	-	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Action</i>	Verb infinitive	Rer	To do
14	-	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Belong</i>	Adjective (of)	Ret	Of act
141	-	<i>Action</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Belong</i>	Adjective (of)	Reyt	Of acts
15	-	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Have</i>	Adjective (with)	Ref	Active
16	-	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Manner</i>	Adverb	Rev	Actively

2	[voice]		[time]	[class]	participle		
	<i>Self</i>		[time]	[class]	Reflex participle		
	<i>Agent</i>		[time]	[class]	Active participle		
	<i>Object</i>		[time]	[class]	Passive participle		

#	Prefix	Sematic body	Suffix 1	Suffix 2	Meaning	Laramin	Translation
	[voice]		<i>Past</i>	[class]	Past participle		
	[voice]		-	[class]	Present participle		
	[voice]		<i>Trend</i>	[class]	Future participle		
	[voice]		<i>Trend</i>	[class]	Future participle		
2211	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Thing</i>	Verbal noun	Raren	The doer
2212	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Object</i>	Verbal noun accusative	Rarem	The doer
2213	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Action</i>	Continuous verb	Rarer	To be doing
2214	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Belong</i>	Adjective (of)	Raret	Of the doer
2215	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Have</i>	Adjective (with)	Raref	Doing
2216	<i>Agent</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Manner</i>	Gerundive	Rarev	While doing
2311	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Thing</i>	Verbal noun	Merem	The thing being done
2312	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Object</i>	Verbal noun accusative	Merem	The thing being done
2313	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Action</i>	Continuous verb	Merer	To be being done
2314	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Belong</i>	Adjective (of)	Meret	Of the thing being done

#	Prefix	Sematic body	Suffix 1	Suffix 2	Meaning	Laramin	Translation
2315	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Have</i>	Adjective (with)	<i>Meref</i>	Being done
2316	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>	-	<i>Manner</i>	Gerundive	<i>Merev</i>	While being done