Kairak Verbs (15 marks)

Kairak is spoken by about 750 people on the New Guinea Islands, off the Papua New Guinea mainland. It is a member of the Baining (Papuan) language family.

The data on the next page (slightly simplified) illustrate how Kairak speakers express the past, present, and future tenses with different types of verbs. Your job is to identify the patterns involved, then answer the questions below.

Notes:
- 1/2/3 indicate 1st, 2nd and 3rd person; 'sg' is singular, 'pl' is plural, 'du' is dual, i.e. when two people are involved (translated here as 'both').
- Kairak distinguishes masculine ('m') and feminine ('f'), and also human vs non-human.

For example, the '1sg present' for a verb meaning 'to smoke' means 'I smoke', and the '3pl future' of the same verb means 'they will smoke'.

- ɐ is a low central vowel sound a bit like the 'u' in (southern British English) 'cup'; ŋ represents the 'ng' in 'sing'; ɲ represents the 'ny' sequence in 'canyon'.

Kairak verbs follow one of three patterns, depending on which verb type they belong to:

Type 1		Type 2		Type 3	
tsup	'to smoke'	yam	'to swing'	tet	'to go'
tsek	'to raise, pull up'	monɐk	'to cook'	tɐn	'to come'
tŋes	'to dig'	samen	'to speak out'	ton	'to go inside'
tvɐstɐmna	'to meet'	vɐlɐŋ	'to kill'	dudɐbɐt	'to set fire to a bush'
tkur	'to show'	mɐnatɐm	'to sleep'		
tsiqut	'to try'	sɐnanbɐt	'to ask'		
tpɐs	to hold				

	present	**future**	**past**
	Type 1: tsup 'to smoke'		
1sg	ŋut sup	ŋu sup	ŋa sup
2sg	ɲit sup	ɲi sup	ɲa sup
3sg m	kɐt sup	kɐ sup	ka sup
3sg f	yit sup	yi sup	ya sup
1du	unit sup	uni sup	un sup
2du/ 3du	anit sup	ani sup	an sup
1pl	urit sup	uri sup	ut sup
2pl	ŋɐnit sup	ŋɐni sup	ŋɐni sup
3pl	rit sup	ri sup	ra sup
3pl non-human	ŋɐrit sup	ŋɐri sup	ŋɐri sup
	Type 2: yam 'to swing'		
1sg	ŋu yam	ŋu yam	ŋa yam
2sg	ɲi yam	ɲi yam	ɲa yam
3sg m	kɐ yam	kɐ yam	ka yam
3sg f	yi yam	yi yam	ya yam
1du	uni yam	uni yam	un yam
2du/ 3du	ani yam	ani yam	an yam
1pl	uri yam	uri yam	ut yam
2pl	ŋɐni yam	ŋɐni yam	ŋɐn yam
3pl	ri yam	ri yam	ra yam
3pl non-human	ŋɐri yam	ŋɐri yam	ŋɐ yam
	Type 3: tet 'to go'		
1sg	ŋa tet	ŋa ret	ŋa met
2sg	ɲa tet	ɲa ret	ɲa met
3sg m	ka tet	ka ret	ka met
3sg f	ya tet	ya ret	ya met
1du	un tet	un ret	un met
2du/ 3du	an tet	an ret	an met
1pl	ut tet	ut ret	ut met
2pl	ŋɐni tet	ŋɐni ret	ŋɐni met
3pl	ra tet	ra ret	ra met
3pl non-human	ŋɐri tet	ŋɐri ret	ŋɐri met

Q6.1. Translate the following into Kairak.
a. I tried
b. They both dig
c. We cooked
d. They [the dogs] will kill
e. You (sg.) sleep
f. He came
g. You (pl.) will go inside
h. She sets fire to a bush

Q6.2. Translate the following into English:
a. rit vɐstɐmna
b. ani kur
c. ra sek
d. ŋɐn sameŋ
e. ra monɐk
f. un ton
g. ɲa rɐn
h. ut mudɐbɐt

Q6.3. Provide the translations as indicated.
a. If *yit sal* means 'she gives birth', what is 'to give birth'?
b. If *ra ru* means 'they will put', translate 'he put'.
c. If *unit nari* means 'we both feel', what does *ani nari* mean?

6.1. a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	
f.	
g.	
h.	
6.2. a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	
f.	
g.	
h.	
6.3. a.	
b.	
c.	

5. Kairak (15 marks, 41 points)

6.1. a.	ŋa siqʊt
b.	anit ŋes
c.	ut monɐk
d.	ŋɐri vɛlɐŋ
e.	ɲi mɐnatɐm
f.	ka mɐn
g.	ŋɐni ron
h.	ya dudɐbɐt
6.2. a.	'they meet'
b.	'the two of you/them [or: you/they both] will show (it)' [or: .... (dual) ...]
c.	'they raised/rose[!] (it)' [or: they pulled (it) up]
d.	'you (pl) spoke out' [or: you all spoke out] [or: .... (plural)]
e.	'They cooked'
f.	'the two of us [or: we both] go inside' [or: .... (dual)]
g.	'you will come'
h.	'we (all) set fire to a bush' [or: We (all) set a bush on fire; not: We both ...; or: ... (past), not: ... (present) or: ... are setting fire ...]
6.3. a.	tsal
b.	ka mu
c.	the two of you/them will feel [or: you/they will both feel. or: you/they both will feel]

Comments

In order to solve the questions, you first need to figure out the general pattern that distinguishes the present, future, and past tenses for each type.

It is always a good strategy to tackle the easiest bits first. Type 3 forms are the most straightforward: the pronouns (*I, you, he*, etc) stay the same, but the initial sound in the verb changes according to tense (*t/r/m* for present/future/past, respectively).

With Type 2 forms, the present and future tenses are identical to each other. Only the past tense is distinguished by the form of its pronouns. (Many languages make only a dual tense distinction, such as between past and non-past, or between future and non-future. However, other information in the text usually provides clues as to when in time an event is occurring.)

Type 1 forms are the trickiest because they use a combination of changes to both the pronoun and the verb to distinguish tenses. In present tense, the verb has an initial *t* sound that drops off in non-present tenses. So when you see a verb form like *sup*, without a *t* attached to the preceding pronoun, you know that it can't be in the present tense. (Don't let the *t* at the end of present tense pronouns fool you into thinking it "belongs to" the pronoun. The *t* is really a part of the verb. But for ease of pronunciation, it attaches to the end of the pronoun.) While the verb distinguishes present from non-present tenses, the pronoun distinguishes the past from the non-past (just like with Type 2 forms). Note, though, that there is no distinction across 3pl non-human or 2pl pronouns.