

# The language of well-being multidisciplinary symposium

## Discussion sessions

(Examples in Doromu-Koki [putative TNG, Southeast, Manubaran] unless noted otherwise)

### 1. Traditional ideas concerning origins of diseases

**Doromu-Koki:** Many see sicknesses and other natural disasters, such as a drought or poor harvest, children doing poorly in school, or lack in success in whatever they are doing, as signs of having done something wrong. Frequent deaths in the family or clan are often interpreted as having been caused by some members' bad action.

Involuntary contact with any animal-human evil spirits results in sickness or other physical problems. Some of the ways that this could happen include: 1) violating the residence of a spirit or other sacred place; 2) breaking a ritual taboo, or through someone who has been in contact with the spirits, who would then be attacked, resulting in illness within the offender's family; 3) making noise in the house especially after the planting of a new garden; 4) through sorcery and magic; 5) through ancestors, who are believed to bring sickness of their own volition. However, this is normally considered to be discipline as a result of disrespect to others, particularly elders within one's own clan or village, or even those outside of the clan or village; and 6) through others – interpersonal relationship problems, such as anger, gossip, argument or fighting – these can sometimes cause sickness.

Dirtiness has to do with a person's bedding, eating utensils, or the house not being properly clean (inside and out). A person can also become ill while taking care of a sick person. After having sexual relations with his wife, if a man does not wash first thing in the morning, and starts using his hands to eat food he will start coughing, which may lead to difficulty in breathing and weight loss. In order to get well, the wife must spit into a bottle, boil some water, add the boiled water to the bottle, along with some special leaves, and the sick husband must take a steam bath with it. While the woman is the cause of the illness, she also provides the cure. A woman cannot get sick in this same way that a man can, because it is the woman who is causing the illness. (From Bradshaw, 2007a)

**Fuyug** [TNG, Southeast, Goilalan]: A bad person is expected to continually get sick, only getting better when he/she is not behaving badly. If the bad person continues his/her evil then he/she will eventually die from sickness.

People get sick in the following ways: 1) carrying wood, 2) fence building, 3) planting crops, 4) winds, 5) cutting bush, 6) eating bad or rotten food 7) spirits inhabiting a person, 8) a

stone getting inside the body, 9) stealing food, or lying, and 10) sorcery. (From Bradshaw, 1989)

## 2. Choice of schemata

Motion	Acquisition of disease or condition, mainly through <i>hele</i> ‘become’ (Fuyug).
Comitative	Subject of copula clause; TOP as copula
Acquisition with ‘agentive’ sufferer	Sufferer as agent, disease as object, through <i>ate-</i> ‘get’, <i>baku re-</i> ‘find, encounter’, <i>ni-</i> ‘say’ or <i>re-</i> ‘do’
Acquisition with ‘agentive’ disease	Sickness as agent, sufferer as patient <i>moi-</i> ‘get’ (in sense of taking control over)
Container	A descriptive NP for a specific illness; TOP as copula
Stative verb-body part	Body part object of illness

- (1) ...*veyl-i*            *na=ni*            *hus-e-ma*            *mu ge*            *va-seb*            *an*  
 like.so-VBR<sup>1</sup>    1S=EMPH    think-1/2IND-DS    3P    TOP    that-DEM    one

*hu=l*            *sal*            *hel-ele.*  
 3S=GEN            sickness            become-IMPF

‘...so I think that they got that sickness because of this.’ (Bradshaw, 2007b:128)

- (2) *Na bi gauka de.*  
 1S    TOP    sickness    NEG  
 ‘I am not sick.’

- (3) *R.A. dia beika gauka ago siau dudu ate rei varesa.*  
 name    NEG    what    sickness    word    power    INST    receive    do    you.sleep  
 ‘R.A., it is not with some sickness’ powerful words that you got and are sleeping.’

- (4) *Magdalene bi kekomuta baku re-yo.*  
 person’s.name    TOP    sickness    find    do-3S.PST  
 ‘Magdalene has contracted an illness.’

- (5) *Gauka re-si esiroka ni-gam-aka.*  
 sickness    do-SQSS    cough    say-HAB-1S.PST  
 ‘I was sick and was coughing.’

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations included are: 1 ‘first person’, 2 ‘second person’, 3 third person’, DEM ‘demonstrative’, DM ‘development marker’, DS ‘different subject’, DUR ‘durative’, EMPH ‘emphatic’, FUT ‘future’, GEN ‘genitive’, HAB ‘habitual’, IMPF ‘imperfective’, IND ‘indicative’, INST ‘instrument’, NEG ‘negative’, NP ‘noun phrase’, P ‘plural’, POSS ‘possessive’, PRS ‘present’, PST ‘past’, S ‘singular’, SIMDS ‘simultaneous different subject’, SQSS ‘sequential same subject’, SS ‘same subject’, TOP ‘topic marker’, TNG ‘Trans New Guinea’, VBR ‘verbaliser’.

- (6) *Lagani yokoi=ri gauka tora ya na moi-yo-ma*<sup>2</sup>  
 year one=at sickness big DM 1S get-3S.PST-SQDS

*eyo buoru tora gurau-yaka.*  
 month whole big suffer-1S.PST

‘One year I came down with a great illness and I suffered  
 for an entire month.’ (Magdalene Joseph, 2007)

- (7) *Adina bi ada gauka amiye ma esika-esika tora gade*  
 for TOP head sickness person and pain-pain big very

*moi-do.*

get-3S.PRS

‘For he is an epileptic and he suffers very much.’

- (8) *Nai ada esika re-do.*<sup>3</sup>  
 1S.POSS head pain do-3S.PRS

‘I have a headache.’

- (9) *Ini rovaita vava ni-yo.*  
 3.POSS body hot become-3S.PST

‘His body had a fever.’

### 3. Bodily & emotional states

*vata bae-* ‘be full’ (lit. ‘come ?’)<sup>4</sup>  
*rauna re-* ‘be hungry’ (lit. ‘do hunger’)  
*ne ota re-* ‘feel sleepy, drowsy’<sup>5</sup>  
*duomu ni-* ‘be lazy, waste time’

- (10) *Baketi koru vata.bai-go-ri, ya ura de rausi*  
 bucket water ?.come-3S.FUT-SIMDS 2 want NEG pour

*re-go vonisi.*  
 do-3S.FUT if

‘When a bucket is full of water, you don’t want it to spill.’

- (11) *Amiye beredi duma re-yo adina rauna re-yo.*  
 person bread steal do-3S.PST because hunger do-3S.PST  
 ‘The man stole some bread because he was hungry.’

<sup>2</sup> But, also note in Barai (TNG, Southeast, Koiari, Baraic) *Na adame abe*. ‘I get sick.’ (Ororo et al, 2015:31-2) and Konai (TNG, East Strickland) (Årsjö, 2016:34) ...*dih do mala*... ‘...child got sick...’

<sup>3</sup> Often in PNG one hears in English, “My head is paining.”

<sup>4</sup> Other meanings of *vata* include ‘ute’ and *vata ni-* ‘be born’; so no present identification of *vata* in this construction.

<sup>5</sup> *Ne* ‘eye’ is clear, but *ota* is not; *ota* on its own means ‘earth oven’, or in an adjunct phrase *ota ri-* it means ‘escort’.

- (12) *Ina tau vakoi ne ota.re-si vare-yadi.*  
 3 all together eye ?.do-SQSS sleep-3P.PST  
 ‘They all felt sleepy/were drowsy and slept.’
- (13) *Ka bi duomu ni-si yava yokoi-yokoi=ri egoru*  
 also TOP lazy say-SQSS house one-one=at visit  
  
*di-bi-gedi.*  
 go-DUR-3P.FUT  
 ‘They also waste time visiting from house to house.’

## References

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