

Some remarks on the duality of the concept of time in the lexicon of Tok Pisin

KRZYSZTOF KOSECKI

*Received 18.12.2021,
accepted 7.10.2022.*

Abstract

The duality of the concept of time in Tok Pisin, an English-lexified creole and one of the official languages of Papua New Guinea, manifests itself in the Melanesian-European elements that make up its temporal lexicon. Expressions that reflect the local semantic-cultural substratum – motivated by astronomical, natural, and religious events – have functioned side by side with their counterparts provided by the English superstratum, which reflect clock measures of time and represent it as a resource and money. The competing impact of indigenous and Western elements is also present in representations of time as space and in forms of temporal succession. The analysed expressions show that the concept of time in Tok Pisin not only reflects partial Anglicization, but also shares cross-linguistically common patterns of time construal with non-contact languages having much longer histories.

Keywords

creole, culture, economy, English, motivation, space, time, Tok Pisin

Kilka uwag o dwoistości pojęcia czasu w Tok Pisin

Abstrakt

Dwoistość pojęcia czasu w Tok Pisin, języku kreolskim i jednym z urzędowych języków w Papui Nowej Gwinei, przejawia się obecnością w nim melanezyjsko-europejskich elementów. Wyrażenia, które mają swe źródła w lokalnym substracie semantyczno-kulturowym, odnoszą się do zjawisk astronomicznych, naturalnych, a także rytuałów religijnych. Funkcjonują one obok ich odpowiedników pochodzących z angielskiego superstratu, które wyrażają zegarowe miary czasu i traktują go jak zasób i pieniądź. Lokalne i europejskie wzorce widoczne są także w sposobach przedstawiania czasu jako przestrzeni i wyrażania następstwa wydarzeń. Omawiane wyrażenia czasowe pokazują, że pojęcie czasu w Tok Pisin nie tylko uległo częściowej anglicyzacji, ale także jest znacząco podobne do pojęć czasu funkcjonujących w różnych, niepowiązanych ze sobą językach nie-kontaktowych o znacznie dłuższej historii niż Tok Pisin.

Słowa kluczowe

czas, ekonomia, język angielski, język kreolski, język Tok Pisin, kultura, motywacja, przestrzeń

1. Languages of Papua New Guinea and Tok Pisin

Papua New Guinea is inhabited by close to 1,000 ethnic groups who speak some 850 indigenous languages. Some of them, for example Tolai nad Motu, belong to the Austronesian family; others, for example Yupno and Koromu, are classified as Papuan languages. Many of the languages have no more than several hundred speakers (Romaine 2000: 2).

Tok Pisin or Melanesian Pidgin developed from pidgin varieties of Pacific Jargon English spoken in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the area. It was learned by Papua New Guineans on plantations at home, in Australian Queensland, Samoa, and Fiji, and then brought to their native villages on the islands

and the mainland of Papua New Guinea (Romaine 1990: 196, Walczyński 2012: 147–179). Because of the extremely complex linguistic situation of the country, Tok Pisin gradually developed into an expanded pidgin and a creole that shares the official status with English and the indigenous pidgin Hiri Motu (Romaine 1990: 196). The number of speakers using it as their native language rose from about 20,000 in 1990 to 122,000 in 2021 (Romaine 1990: 196, SIL 2021). About 4 million Papuans – close to a half of the country’s population – speak it as a second language (Glottolog 2021). The creole has both rural and urban varieties (Mühlhäusler 1984: 140–154).

The lexicon and grammar of Tok Pisin are simplified in comparison with non-contact languages (Mühlhäusler 1986: 171). English is the main lexifier, but indigenous languages, for example Tolai (Mosel 1984), Buang, and Motu, also contribute to its lexicon and grammar. In spite of the strong influence of the lexifier, the grammar and semantic orientation of the language remain non-European (Romaine 2000: 187, 189). According to Sankoff (1977: 119 cit. in Goulden 1990: 2), Tok Pisin draws some of its semantic structure from the Austronesian languages spoken in the area around Rabaul.

2. Time in Papua New Guinea

Close to 85 % percent of Papua New Guinea’s population of about 8 million people live in rural communities (AG / ACIAR 2021). This fact has shaped the temporal concepts dominant in the country, giving rise to a difference between rural and urban perceptions of time. Because of its agrarian basis, “Papua New Guinean village life was timetabled by the sun and this has led to a more relaxed approach in timekeeping”¹ (Diversicare 2021). Various natural phenomena and imported religious rituals also shaped the local temporality. In other words, “intricacies of the clock-time characteristic of industrial labour practices [...] have

¹ Such approach is, for example, common among speakers of Koromu in the Madang Province of Papua New Guinea (Priestley 2014: 147).

not at all been an issue for the rural Papua New Guineans at any one point in their history” (Telban 2017: 183). Such practices “have neither merged with culture nor have they become embodied as self-evident and unquestioned part of people’s daily lives. There was no use, reflection, and management of clock-time either” (Telban 2017: 183–184). Urban parts of the country were different in that “school, work and certain daily practices have become organized according to a time-schedule” (Telban 2015: 186).

As a result, Papuan culture generally places much less value on punctuality than Western cultures – running late is not regarded as offensive and people freely offer their time (The Cultural Atlas 2021). In Hall’s (1973: 140–162) terms, time in Papua New Guinea is polychronic in that it flows freely, allows for interruptions and delays, and takes into account the importance of social relations.

3. Time in Tok Pisin

As a creole dominant in Papua New Guinea, Tok Pisin has developed a dual organization of temporal concepts. They draw both on the indigenous cultures and languages, and on the Western patterns transmitted by the lexifier influence of English.

3.1. Time as astronomical phenomena

Indigenous concepts of time often rely on the motion of the planets as a point of reference. Some Tok Pisin temporal expressions refer to the sun, the moon, and constellations of planets.

3.1.1. The cycle of the sun

The position of the sun over the horizon is directly related to the periods of light and darkness. Some early Tok Pisin expressions for the parts of day and daytime refer to it:

- (1) *tulait* too light 'dawn' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)
- (2) *taim bilong san i kamap* time belong sun PR come up 'day-break' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)
- (3) *taim bilong san i stap namel long heven* time belong sun PR be middle of heaven 'noon' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)
- (4) *taim belong san i go daun* time belong sun PR go down 'dusk, sunset' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)
- (5) *long san* in sun 'during the day, in the daytime' (Michalic 1983: 169)

They also reflect Melanesian grammatical patterns. Examples (2)–(4) are built on the syntactic pattern of noun + *bilong* + modifier, rooted in the Melanesian substratum (Goulden 1990: 65–80) and equivalent to the English prepositional phrase post-modifier. The pattern involves various semantic relationships, for example part-whole, origin, purpose or function, attribute, characteristic trait, benefactive (Woolford 1979: 64–65, Verhaar 1995: 194–197). The expressions represent parts or characteristic traits of the respective periods of time.

Some of the above-mentioned expressions have English-based counterparts. Thus, (2) has a synonym of

- (6) *moningtaim tru* morning time true 'daybreak' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)

Expression (4) is used along

- (7) *belo* bell 'noon, midday, lunch' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)
- (8) *belo bek* bell back [to work] 'afternoon, time to go back to work, generally about 2 o'clock' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)

Example (8) corresponds to the English sense of the time of day (Michalic 1983: 67). Other English-based expressions, such as

- (9) *apinun* afternoon 'evening' (Baing et al. 2020: 3)
- (10) *apinun tru* afternoon true 'dusk' (Baing et al. 2020: 3)

have acquired a new sense, for example in the greeting

- (11) *Gut apinun tru!* good afternoon true ‘A very good evening / afternoon to you!’ (Michalic 1983: 60).

Today, the English concept of

- (12) *ivning* evening ‘evening, afternoon’ (Michalic 1983: 101)

is also in use.

The motion of the sun also determines seasonal cycles and weather phenomena, both of which condition the local agriculture. Expressions

- (13) *taim bilong san* time belong sun ‘the dry season’ (Michalic 1983: 189)
 (14) *taim bilong biksan* time belong big sun ‘drought’ (Michalic 1983: 189)

reflect such conceptualization of time.

3.1.2. The cycle of the moon

The lunar cycle is used to mark periods of time and cultural taboos. The former is the case in expression

- (15) *bihain long tripela mun* behind of three-fellow moon ‘in three months’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 288)

in which the lunar cycle refers the month. The latter is present in expressions related to monthly recurrence of menstruation:

- (16) *sik mun* sick moon / month ‘menstruation’ (Baing et al. 2020: 53)
 (17) *Mun i kilim / lukim meri* moon PR kill / look on woman ‘The girl is menstruating’ (Michalic 1983: 137).

They are rooted in the cultural taboo belief that the moon is responsible for women’s menstruation – it inflicts ‘moon

sickness' upon them (Aikhenvald 2008: 122). That is why menstruating women are often isolated in menstrual huts for fear they should contaminate men and boys, which contributes to their discrimination (Boyd 1984, AG / DFAT 2017).

3.1.3. Constellations of planets

The cyclical motion of planets is also implicit in expression

(18) *yar* year 'native new year' (Michalic 1983: 206)

which refers to the constellation of Pleiades. The constellation appears on the horizon at dusk about 10 June and marks the beginning of the native year. The concept of

(19) *Nuyia* New Year 'New Year's Day' (Michalic 1983: 144)

is of English origin and is not related to astronomical phenomena.

3.2. Time as natural phenomena

Another way to access time in Tok Pisin, also rooted in agrarian way of life, is by reference to various natural phenomena, such as tides, winds, temperature, and crops. Tides motivate expressions

(20) *taim bilong draiwara* time belong dry water 'dry season, at the time of low tide' (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 86)

(21) *taim bilong haiwara* time belong high water 'flood time, rainy season' (Michalic 1983: 92, Dutton, Thomas 1985: 86).

Whereas (20) accesses the dry season by means of its effect, (21) reverses the relation in that high water often causes floods. Expressions

- (22) *taim bilong rai* time belong rai 'May to October, dry season' (Michalic 1983: 189)
 (23) *taim bilong taleo* time belong taleo 'November to April, rainy season' (Michalic 1983: 189)

define the local seasons by reference to winds. *Rai* is the south-east trade winds blowing on the north coast of mainland Papua New Guinea between May and October, hence in the dry season; *taleo* is the north-west monsoon which brings a lot of rain (Baing et al. 2020: 75, 104). Temperature motivates expression

- (24) *taim bilong bikpela kol* time belong big-fellow cold 'winter' (Verhaar 1995: 195)

because low temperatures function as a salient determinant of winter. Finally, expressions

- (25) *taim bilong kamautim* time belong come out 'harvest' (TokPisin.info 2021)
 (26) *taim bilong tekimautim* time belong take him out 'harvest' (TokPisin.info 2021)

are related to the cycle of growth of plants used for food, especially taro. They are complementary in that (25) highlights the appearance of taro, when it is ready to be harvested, and (26) focuses the process of gathering it, which implies that the crop has appeared.²

3.3. Time as religious rituals

Though Christianity was one of the main Western incursions into the indigenous cultural patterns of Papua New Guinea, it did not cause a shift to Western perceptions of time (Telban

² The Ambonwari of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, proficient in Tok Pisin, even adjust their eating habits to the quantity of food available. They regard such practice as the main difference between them (the Blacks) and the white Europeans (Telban 2017: 186).

2017: 184). The Christian calendar “with its focus on annual events and ritualized practices” (Telban 2017: 184) still fit the local patterns of episodic time. As a result, its cyclical rituals soon became points of reference for various aspects of temporality. Expressions

(27) *(K)krismas* Christmas ‘Christmas, any big celebration that includes singing and dancing, a year of one’s age’ (Michalic 1983: 115)

(28) *Yu gat hamas krismas?* you got how much Christmas ‘How old are you?’ (Michalic 1983: 115)

are prime examples of temporal ritualism. The second and third senses of (27) involve a category extension in which a prominent event is used to access other similar events because they all share certain social patterns of behaviour. Expressions

(29) *wanpela de bihain long Krismas de* one-fellow day behind of Christmas day ‘Boxing Day’ (Baing et al. 2020: 54)

(30) *mit tambu taim* meat taboo time ‘Lent’ (Michalic 1983: 189)

convey the senses of their English counterparts in two different ways. Whereas (29) is a succession-based periphrastic construction related to the Christian calendar, (30) focuses on the ritualized food abstinence as a part of the relevant period and backgrounds the aspect of penitence. Finally, the relatively new expression

(31) *taim bilong sios* time belong church ‘church service’ (Michalic 1983: 175, TokPisin.info 2021)

profiles the event as an aspect of the institution that conducts it or the place in which it takes place.

3.4. Time as a clock

Such a concept of temporality goes back to the invention of mechanical clock in the 14th century (North 2006: 171–200), which replaced the measurements of time based on observations of the motion of the sun (Neugebauer 1969: 82). Another factor that shaped it was economic development and urban labour practice. As a result, time determined by episodic events gave way to regular and neatly measured clock-time (Le Goff 1980: 44, 48 cit. in Telban 2017: 183).

Early representations of time in Tok Pisin, mostly tied to the external astronomical and natural phenomena, reflect such form of time quantification only by means of the above-mentioned expressions

- (7) *belo bell* ‘midday, noon, lunch time’³
- (8) *belo bek bell back* ‘afternoon, time to go back to work, generally about 2 o’clock’.

Though both expressions are strictly tied to efficiency-related clock measurements of time taken by the white supervisors of Papuan workers on copra plantations, where bells were used to announce meals at noon (Mühlhäusler 1984: 322), they refer to clock-time only indirectly.

Later representations of time in Tok Pisin include more Western concepts transplanted into the local, especially urban culture (Romaine 1990: 202). Foremost among them is the direct reference to clocks and watches as time-measuring instruments, also reinforced by radio broadcasts delivered at specific clock times (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94). Expressions

- (32) *Klok i tok wanem?* clock PR talk what ‘What time is it?’ (Baing et al. 2020: 37)

³ It is a shortened version of the expression *belo kaikai bell food* ‘midday meal, lunch’ – the second noun gives some property of the first one (Mühlhäusler 1984: 322).

- (33) *Meri i save long klok* Mary PR know of clock ‘The woman can tell the time’⁴ (Baing et al. 2020: 37)
- (34) *Nau em ten klok stret* now it ten clock straight ‘It is 10 o’clock sharp’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94)

fully illustrate the fact that clock or watch have come to refer to measured time in general. Example (34) emphasizes the role of punctuality, which is an effect of introducing “English time-telling habits” into Papua New Guinea (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 94).

3.5. Time as a resource and money

A further consequence of the use of time-measuring instruments in Papua New Guinea was importing to its culture a striking characteristic of the West, which treats time as a resource and as money. This means that time can be quantified, used, and has a specific value attached to it (Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 161–166).

Conceptualization of time as a resource is evident in expressions that at the same time reflect its objectification and quantification:

- (35) *Taim i lus* time PR lost ‘Time is consumed / Time is being lost’ (Michalic 1983: 189)
- (36) *Taim i lus nating* time PR lost nothing ‘Time is being wasted’ (Michalic 1983: 189)
- (37) *ten minit i go lusim tri klok* ten minute PR go lose three clock ‘ten minutes past 3’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 95)
- (38) *faiv minit i go painim tu klok* five minute PR go find two clock ‘five minutes to 2’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 95)
- (39) *Taim yu stretim gut samting dispela bai helpim yu na yu no ken Westim taim* time you straighten good thing this-fellow FUT help you and you no can waste time ‘When you arrange something well, it will help you not to waste time = Good

⁴ Example (33) has an English counterpart of *She can tell the time / read the clock*.

personal organization can help you to avoid wasting time' (Glosbe 2021).

They all represent time as an objectively existing and quantifiable resource that can be consumed, lost, and found. The verb in the related example

(40) *Em belo na bos i taimim mi* it bell and boss PR time me 'It is lunch time and the boss is timing me' (Baing et al. 2020: 103)

is a counterpart of the English verb

(41) *to time* 'measure time'.

Derived by using time itself to represent the action of measuring it, both expressions emphasize its resource-related character.

3.5.1. Time as money

The connection between time and work efficiency, of which work contracts are a part, is a relatively new experience for the Papuans (Romaine 1990: 202). In expressions

(42) *mekim taim* make time 'make a contract' (Michalic 1983: 189)

(43) *brukim taim* break time 'break a contract' (Michalic 1983: 189)

(44) *pinistaim* finish time 'finish term of service / work contract' (Michalic 1983: 189)

(45) *potnait* fortnight 'pay week, wage, fortnightly salary' (Baing et al. 2020: 72; TokPisin.info 2021)

time is a resource that has the form of money that one is paid for work. They all reflect the economic relation which involves both the temporal obligation and the profit related to it.

A more direct representation of time as money is present in expressions

- (46) *Yu save olsem taim em i mani* you know that time it PR money
 ‘You know that time is money’ (Romaine 1990: 202)
- (47) *stilim taim* steal time ‘waste time at work’ (Michalic 1983: 184).

Example (46) is an advertisement of the Post and Telecommunication Corporation, which aims “to get people to use the telephone to conduct transactions which would ordinarily be done face-to-face in casual encounters and not by appointment” (Romaine 1990: 202). Example (48) reflects the idea of time theft at work by various forms of not attending to one’s duties properly (Lakoff 1987: 209–210, Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 165–166).

Last but not least, expression

- (48) *wiken* weekend ‘weekend, have a rest’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 380, 397)

illustrates the Western division of the week into working and leisure parts. Because the leisure part is expected to contribute to efficiency / profit, the concept is also grounded in the view of time as a resource and money.

3.6. Time as space

Space provides a fundamental motivation for the objectification of time’s passage in diverse languages (Radden 2003: 226). It also underlies perceptions of time in the indigenous languages of Papua New Guinea (Núñez, Cooperrider, D Doan, Wassman 2012, Priestley 2014). In Tok Pisin it is, for example, present in the grammaticalization of

- (49) *klostu* close to ‘nearby, nearly, soon’

into the spatial adverb and then – thanks to a mapping of space onto time – into the temporal adverb (Romaine 1999: 335–337). The creole also represents duration in terms of spatial length in expressions

- (50) *Ol i stap longtaim moa* they PR stay long-time more 'They stayed for a very long time' (Michalic 1983: 124)
- (51) *Mi no lukim em longpela taim* me no look her long-fellow time 'I haven't seen her for ages' (TokPisin.info 2021).

The spatial-temporal continuum is also common in representations of time orientation and lapse of time.

3.6.1. Time orientation

Time orientation means locating events on an imaginary line which extends in space. English usually uses the horizontal timeline: the future is in front of the observer and the past is behind them (Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 140). Other languages employ the same timeline, but some reverse the orientation. Thus, in Aymara – an Amerindian language of Bolivia and Chile – the future is behind and the past is in front of the observer (Núñez, Sweetser 2006). Asian languages, for example Mandarin, employ a vertical timeline – earlier events are up and later events are down (Boroditsky, Fuhrman, McCormick 2010, Radden 2003: 229).

The horizontal timeline in Tok Pisin is present in expressions

- (52) *bihain* behind 'later on, after, afterwards, in the future' (Michalic 1983: 68)
- (53) *taim bihain* time behind 'future' (Baing et al. 2020: 9)
- (54) *bihain sikis klok* behind six clock 'past 6 o'clock' (TokPisin.info 2021)
- (55) *wik bihain* week behind 'next week' (Glosbe 2021)
- (56) *yia bihain* year behind 'next year' (Glosbe 2021)
- (57) *kaikai bihain* meal behind 'dessert' (Michalic 1983: 101)
- (58) *Yu kam bihain long taim wok i pinis* you come behind of work PR finish 'Come after the end of your workday' (TokPisin.info 2021)
- (59) *Lukim yu bihain* look you behind 'See you later' (TokPisin.com 2021).

With *bihain* having the sense of ‘after’, all expressions represent later periods or events as placed behind or following earlier periods or events on the timeline. They are accordingly accompanied by forward hand gestures (Steven K. Thomas, personal communication, 2019).

However, some varieties of Tok Pisin locate events on the vertical timeline. Expressions

(60) *Mande antap* Monday on top ‘next Monday’ (Glosbe 2021)

(61) *de antap* day on top ‘the next day’ (Glosbe 2021)

(62) *wik antap* week on top ‘the next week’ (Glosbe 2021)

absent in Michalic’s (1983) standard dictionary, but mentioned by Baing et al. (2020: 272) and the electronic sources, all represent later events as placed up on the line. Complementary expressions placing earlier events down on the line have not been found.

There are two competing motivations for such a construal. One is the lexifier impact of English, which in some cases uses the vertical timeline to refer to the future. For example, in expression

(63) *The winter break is coming up on us*

the future is down and moves up towards the observer, whereas in

(64) *These stories have been passed down from generation to generation*

earlier events are up and they move down towards us (Radden 2003: 228–229). Another motivation is the view of time functioning in rural cultures of Papua New Guinea. Some of them, also proficient in Tok Pisin, use the vertical timeline motivated by their collective history. For example, the Yupno people, who speak one of the Finisterre languages of south-western Papua New Guinea (Glottolog 2021), believe that their ancestors

arrived in the lowlands and settled up in the valley. As a result, referring to the past and earlier events, they point down towards the mouth of the local river; referring to the future and later events, they accordingly point up towards the source of the river. The evidence for the orientation comes mainly from the analysis of the gestures, but expression

- (65) *omo-ropmo bilak* down there-year other side ‘a couple years ago’ (Núñez, Cooperrider, D Doan, Wassmann 2012)

also reflects such orientation.

3.6.2. Lapse of time

The dominant way to represent the lapse of time in English is as motion along the horizontal timeline. Two different cognitive models of time’s passage are possible: either the observer located at the present moves towards the future along the temporal landscape and leaves the past behind or the observer is stationary and time moves past them from the future to the past (Evans 2004: 214–221).

In Tok Pisin the moving observer model underlies expression

- (66) *Tispela lapun i sik tumas, em klosap i dai* this-fellow old PR sick too much, he close up PR die ‘This old man is very sick, he will soon die [is close to dying]’ (Romaine 1999: 335).

The moving time model underlies expressions

- (67) *Klostu Maria i laik karim pikinini* close to Maria PR ready carry baby ‘Mary is nearly ready to give birth’ (Glosbe 2021)
 (68) *wik i go pinis* week PR go finish ‘the previous week’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 527)
 (69) *Tupela yia i go pinis* two-fellow year PR go finish ‘Two years have passed’ (Baing 2020: 124)
 (70) *i go pinis* PR go finish ‘ago’ (Baing 2020: 131)

(71) *Yar i kamap* year PR come up ‘The Pleiades have arisen = The native year has come’ (TokPisin.info 2021).

In example (67) the adverb placed in sentence-external position provides a temporal perspective on the whole event that the sentence describes. In spite of obvious syntactic differences from English patterns, the creole represents the passage of time in ways similar to its lexifier.

3.7. Temporal succession

Representations of temporal succession again reflect both local and English influence. Indigenous concepts underlie expressions

(72) *hapasde* half / part yesterday ‘the day before yesterday’ (Michalic 1983: 94)

(73) *haptumora* half / part tomorrow ‘the day after tomorrow’ (Michalic 1983: 94).

Both represent the respective days as being parts of or resulting from the preceding days. In expression

(74) *asde bipo* yesterday before ‘the day before yesterday’ (Michalic 1983: 61)

which is an English-influenced counterpart of (72), such connection has been removed in favour of sequential ordering. The ordering is based on the Complex Temporal Sequence Model, which takes a certain temporal event as the deictic centre “with respect to which the event in question is sequenced” (Evans 2004: 229) and described as being before it or after it.

The earlier-later or before-after relation is also present in expressions referring to days and weeks:

(75) *neks de* next day ‘the next day’ (Baing et al. 2020: 55)

(76) *neks wik* next week ‘the next week’ (Baing et al. 2020: 272)

(77) *bipo long tupela wik* before of two-fellow week ‘two weeks ago’
(Michalic 1983: 72).

They all reflect English influence even if the syntactic pattern of (77) differs from the English pattern.

The same relation also underlies some more inclusive temporal expressions:

(78) *bipo long* before of ‘ago’ (TokPisin.info 2021)

(79) *bilong bipo* of before ‘previous’ (TokPisin.info 2021)

(80) *taim bipo* time before ‘early, the past’ (TokPisin.info; Baing et al. 2020: 103)

(81) *bipotaim* before time ‘early, beforehand’ (Michalic 1983: 72)

(82) *long bipo* of before ‘long ago’ (Baing et al. 2020: 11)

(83) *taim bilong bipo* time belong before ‘in times gone by, in olden times’ (Michalic 1983: 72).

In a way typical of creoles, which are ‘grammatical’ languages with fewer lexical roots (Haiman 1985: 166), the word *bipo* is used instead of more specific English temporal adverbs and adjectives.

Finally, Tok Pisin names of days of the week also reflect both Melanesian and English patterns. Dutton and Thomas (1985: 92) say that whereas expressions for Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday come from English, those for the remaining three days, that is,

(84) *Tunde* two-day ‘Tuesday’

(85) *Trinde* three-day ‘Wednesday’

(86) *Fonde* four-day ‘Thursday’

are only transliterations of English phrases and reflect a regular pattern of derivation. As Mühlhäusler (1985: 425) discusses, a similar system based on regular derivation is used to refer to fingers by speakers of some rural varieties of Tok Pisin, in which – depending on the perspective – different names are used for the same fingers:

- (87) *nambawan pinga* number one finger ‘thumb’
 (88) *nambapaip pinga* number five finger ‘thumb’
 (89) *nambatu pinga* number two finger ‘index finger’
 (90) *nambapo pinga* number four finger ‘index finger’.

This can possibly explain the use of numerals to refer to some days of the week as well. As the Western seven-day week cycle must have been new for the Papuans, it was not central to their cultures and thus was less Anglicized.

3.8. Other concepts of time

Some temporal periods and time itself are used to conceptualize weather:

- (91) *De i gutpela* day PR good-fellow ‘The weather is good’ (Michalic 1983: 81)
 (92) *gutpela taim* good-fellow time ‘good weather’ (Michalic 1983: 189)
 (93) *taim nogut* time no good ‘bad weather’ (Michalic 1983: 189).

Such construal is similar to English and other Western languages – weather is in time and is a part of various time periods.
 Expression

- (94) *kisim taim* get time ‘be / get into trouble, suffer’

is a more complex case – its sense is related to the English expression

- (95) *do time* ‘serve a prison sentence for law breaking’ (Dutton, Thomas 1985: 54).

The creole expression is more inclusive – the originally euphemistic basis of (94) has been extended to refer to any other negative and unpleasant experience.

Poorer lexification of Tok Pisin in comparison with non-contact languages is the reason for the use of periphrastic constructions rooted in Melanesian substratum for periods in the history of Papua New Guinea, as well as some concepts less directly related to time. The word *taim* ‘time’ functions as their head because they all have temporal dimensions.

Thus, various historical periods can be described by expressions

- (96) *taim bilong masta* ‘colonial period’ (Nelson 1982)
- (97) *taim bilong ol waitman* ‘colonial period’ (Issues: Colonial History – ABC 2021)
- (98) *taim bilong pait* time belong fight ‘wartime, especially 1942-1945’ (Michalic 1983: 189)
- (99) *taim bilong mani* time belong money ‘time of commerce’ (Connell 1978).

Examples (96) and (97) access the pre-independence period by reference to white Europeans and masters, who were in power at that time; (98) refers to the relevant period by highlighting its main factor, which was fighting; (99) describes the transformation of subsistence-based agriculture in Solomon Islands into a more commercial venture.

Other expressions following the same pattern but not related to history include, for example,

- (100) *taim bilong karim* time belong carry ‘expected date of delivery’ (Baing et al. 2020: 103)
- (101) *taim bilong lainim ol nupela wok* time belong learn all new-fellow work ‘apprenticeship’ (Baing et al. 2020: 138)
- (102) *taim bilong dring kopi* time belong drink coffee ‘coffee-break’ (Baing et al. 2020: 167)
- (103) *taim bilong prinim buk* time belong print book ‘edition’ (Baing et al. 2020: 193)
- (104) *taim bilong sekan* time belong shake hand ‘peace’ (Baing et al. 2020: 286).

They all access the respective concepts by profiling some of their salient aspects – for example, (102) highlights the consumption of coffee as a part of a socially sanctioned activity.

4. Summary and conclusions

The concept of time in Tok Pisin fully reflects the contact nature of the language. Elements typical of indigenous languages and cultures function side by side with those introduced by the white English-speaking colonizers. The former, which define time in less sophisticated ways, that is, by reference to the motion of planets, various natural phenomena, religious rituals, as well as by means of Melanesian syntactic patterns, are common in expressions for the parts of the 24-hour period, seasons of the year, agricultural events, and social rituals. The latter, which refer to time-measuring instruments, precise quantification of time, as well as the related scheduling of daily and weekly activities, are dominant in expressions related to economy and work relations.

Many of the Western elements are illustrative of Tok Pisin's renewed contact with English (Reed 1943: 283 cit. in Mühlhäusler 1985: 426). It is a process that occurred at various stages in its development, was especially strong in urban varieties of the creole, and continues until today (Zimmermann 2010). Its major effect is partial Anglicization of Tok Pisin's temporal lexicon.

The broad presence of indigenous elements in the temporal lexicon of Tok Pisin likens the creole to other similar contact languages. English-lexified African creoles, for example, have numerous English words in their lexicons. Yet those words frequently reflect the cultural substratum of African languages, even if they fit cross-linguistically common patterns of conceptualization (Corum 2020).

The use of space and motion in it to conceptualize time is one of the elements of Tok Pisin temporal lexicon that likens the creole to fully-fledged languages spoken in various parts of the

world. In this respect, Tok Pisin shares patterns with such European languages as German or Spanish (Haspelmath 1997, Levinson 2003); African languages, for example Sesotho and Wolof (Alverson 1994, Moore 2000); Asian languages, for example Hindi, Japanese, and Mandarin (Alverson 1994, Shinohara 1999, Radden 2003); Amerindian languages, for example Hopi (Malotki 1983) and Aymara (Núñez, Sweetser 2006); Aboriginal languages of Australia, for example Pomurraw (Boroditsky, Gaby 2010). In this way Tok Pisin temporal lexicon reflects an element that such linguists as Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976: 375ff) or Lyons (1977: 718) regard as a semantic universal.

References

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra (2008). *The Manamba Language of East Sepik, Papua New Guinea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alverson, Hoyt (1994). *Semantics and Experience: Universal Metaphors of Time in English, Mandarin, Hindi, and Sesotho*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- AG / ACIAR (Australian Government / Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research) (2021). “Papua New Guinea”. Available at <<https://www.aciar.gov.au › aop2021>>. Accessed 2.12.2021.
- AG / DFAT (Australian Government / Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) (2017). “The last taboo: Research on menstrual hygiene management in the Pacific. Papua New Guinea 2017. Draft report”. Available at <<https://www.dfat.gov.au › sites › default › files › t...>>. Accessed 4.12.2021.
- Baing, Suzanne, Brian Deutrom, Russell Jackson, Craig A. Volker (2020). *Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin English Dictionary*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Boroditsky, Lera, Alice Gaby (2010). “Remembrances of times east: Absolute spatial representations of time in an Australian aboriginal community”. *Psychological Science* 21/11: 1635–1639.
- Boroditsky, Lera, Orly Fuhrman, Kelly McCormick (2010). “Do English and Mandarin speakers think about time differently?” *Cognition* 118/1: 123–129.
- Boyd, David J. (1984). “Awa women in Papua New Guinea”. *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* 8/2 (*Women in a Changing World*).

- Available at <<https://www.culturalsurvival.org> › a...>. Accessed 2.12.2021.
- The Cultural Atlas*. (2021). Available at <<https://www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au> › pap ...>. Accessed 13.12.2021.
- Connell, John (1978). *Taim Bilong Mani: The Evolution of Agriculture in a Solomon Island Society*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Corum, Mikah (2020). "Conceptual construal, convergence, and the creole lexicon". In: Nicolas G. Faraclas, Sally J. Delgado (eds.). *Creoles, Revisited: Language Contact, Language Change, and Postcolonial Linguistics*. London: Routledge, 185–204.
- Diversicare (2012). "Papua New Guinean cultural profile: An initiative of HACC Multicultural Advisory Service". Available at <<http://www.diversicare.com.au> › uploads › 2015/10>. Accessed 11.12.2021.
- Dutton, Thomas E., Dicks Thomas (1985). *A New Course in Tok Pisin (New Guinea Pidgin)*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Evans, Vyvyan (2004). *The Structure of Time: Language, Meaning, and Temporal Cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Glosbe (2021). *Glosbe English-Tok Pisin Dictionary*. Available at <<https://glosbe.com> › Dictionary English>. Accessed 11.12.2021.
- Glottolog (2021). Available at <<https://www.glottolog.org> › glottology>. Accessed 11.12.2021.
- Goulden, Rick J. (1990). *The Melanesian Content in Tok Pisin*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Hall, Edward T. (1973 [1959]). *The Silent Language*. New York: Anchor Press, Doubleday.
- Haiman, John (1985). *Natural Syntax. Iconicity and Erosion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haspelmath, Martin (1997). *From Space to Time: Temporal Adverbials in the World's Languages*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Issues: Colonial History – ABC* (2021). Available at <<https://www.abc.net.au>>. Accessed 12.12.2021.
- Lakoff, George (1987). *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lakoff, George, Mark Johnson (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.

- Le Goff, Jacques (1980). *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. (2003). *Space in Language and Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyons, John (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Malotki, Ekkehart (1983). *Hopi Time*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Michalic, Francis (1983). *The Jacaranda Dictionary and Grammar of Melanesian Pidgin*. Brisbane: Jacaranda Press.
- Miller, George A., Philip N. Johnson-Laird (1976). *Language and Perception*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Moore, Kevin E. (2000). *Spatial Experience of Temporal Metaphors in Wolof: Point of View, Conceptual Mapping and Linguistic Practice*. PhD dissertation. Berkeley: University of California,.
- Mosel, Ulrike (1984). *Tolai and Tok Pisin: The Influence of the Substratum on the Development of New Guinea Pidgin*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter (1984 [1979]). *Growth and Structure of the Lexicon of the New Guinea Pidgin*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter (1985). "The lexical system of Tok Pisin". In: Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Mühlhäusler (eds.). *Handbook of Tok Pisin (New Guinea Pidgin)*. Canberra: Australian National University, 423–440.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter (1986). *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics*. London: University of Westminster Press.
- Nelson, Hank (1982). *Time Bilong Masta: The Australian Involvement with Papua New Guinea*. Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission.
- Neugebauer, Otto (1969). *The Exact Science in Antiquity*. New York: Dover Publications.
- North, John (2006). *God's Clockmaker: Richard of Wallingford and the Invention of Time*. London: Continuum.
- Núñez, Rafael, Kensy Cooperrider, D Doan, Jürg Wassman (2012). "Contours of time: Topographic construals of past, present, and future in the Yupno Valley of Papua New Guinea". *Cognition* 124/1: 25–35.
- Núñez, Rafael, Eve E. Sweetser (2006). "With the future behind them: Convergent evidence from Aymara language and gesture in the

- cross-linguistic comparison of spatial construals of time". *Cognitive Science* 30: 401–450.
- Priestley, Carol (2014). "Koromu temporal expressions. Semantic and cultural primitives". In: Luna Filipović, Kasia M. Jaszczolt (eds.). *Space and Time in Languages and Cultures: Language, Culture, and Cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 143–165.
- Radden, Günter (2003). "The metaphor TIME AS SPACE across languages". *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht / Journal of Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching* 8/2-3: 226–239. Available at <<http://www.ualberta.ca/~german/ejournal/Radden.pdf>>. Accessed 5.12.2021.
- Reed, Stephen W. (1943). *The Making of Modern New Guinea*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, Memoir No. 18.
- Romaine, Suzanne (1990). "Pidgin English advertising". In: Christopher Ricks, Leonard Michaels (eds.). *The State of the Language*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 195–203.
- Romaine, Suzanne (1999). "The grammaticalization of the proximative in Tok Pisin". *Language* 75/2: 322–346.
- Romaine, Suzanne (2000). *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sankoff, Gillian (1977). "Creolization and syntactic change in New Guinea Tok Pisin". In: Ben G. Blount, Mary Sanches (eds.). *Language, Thought, and Culture: Advances in the Study of Cognition*. New York: Academic Press, 119–130.
- Shinohara, Kazuko (1999). *Epistemology of Space and Time*. Kwansei, Japan: Gakuin University Press.
- Summer Institute of Linguistics / SIL (2021). *Ethnologue*. Available at <<http://www.ethnologue.com>>. Accessed 11.12.2021.
- Telban, Borut (2017). "Seeing and holding time: Karawari perceptions of temporalities, calendars and clocks". *Time & Society* 26/2: 182–202.
- TokPisin.info (2021). *Tok Pisin English Dictionary*. Available at <<https://www.tokpisin.info>>. Accessed 11.12.2021.
- Tok-Pisin.com. (2021). *Tok Pisin Translation, Resources, and Discussion*. Available at <<http://www.tok-pisin.com>>. Accessed 15.12.2021.
- Walczyński, Marcin (2012). *A Living Language: Selected Aspects of Tok Pisin in the Press (on the Basis of "Wantok" Newspaper)*. Nysa: Oficyna Wydawnicza PWSZ.

- Woolford, Ellen B. (1979). *Aspects of Tok Pisin Grammar*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Zimmermann, Jana L. (2010). *The Increasing Anglicization of Tok Pisin: An Analysis of the Wantok Corpus*. PhD dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Regensburg, Germany. Available at <https://epub.uni-regensburg.de/Diss_JZ_20.02.2011>. Accessed 11.12.2021.

Abbreviations

- FUT – future
PR – predicate

Krzysztof Kosecki
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-6163-3720
University of Lodz
Pomorska Str. 171 / 173
90-236 Lodz
Poland
krzysztof.kosecki@filologia.uni.lodz.pl