

## Chapter 5

# Trumai

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Kumarú Trumai

Tarukuy Trumai

### 1 Introduction

The story of the Smooth-billed Ani (a type of bird in the cuckoo family<sup>1</sup>) is a myth told by the Trumai people of the central region of Brazil. It was video recorded in 2000 by the author (Raquel Guirardello-Damian) and narrated by Kumarú Trumai, a middle-aged woman who has since died. She learned it from her father, Initiari, a great and respected storyteller. The myth was later transcribed and analyzed with the assistance of a young man, Tarukuy, who is bilingual in Trumai and Portuguese. The text is presented in its phonological form with IPA symbols, followed by English glosses and free translation. When necessary, comments are added in the footnotes.

### 2 The Trumai people and their language

The Trumai live in the “Xingu Indigenous Land”, at the northern edge of the Upper Xingu area. The group originally came from another land, located to the southeast of the Upper Xingu (Murphy & Quain 1955), and it is assumed that they moved to the Xingu region in the first half of the 19th century due to attacks by another tribe, possibly the Xavante (Villas Boas & Villas Boas 1970). Their initial

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<sup>1</sup>The smooth-billed ani (*Crotophaga ani*) is a breeding species that lives in several regions across the Americas. It is a black bird, known in Portuguese as *anu* or *anu preto*.



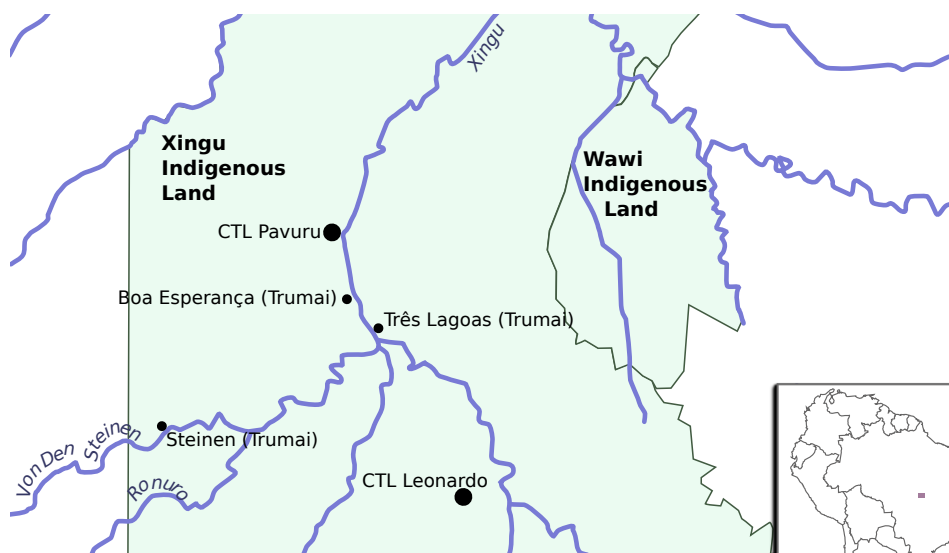


Figure 1: Trumai villages in the Xingu Indigenous Land.

contacts with the local groups were not peaceful and led to some conflicts. When von den Steinen (1940) visited the region, in the second half of the 19th century, the Trumai still did not have good relations with the Upper Xinguan tribes, but eventually became integrated to the new environment.

The Upper Xingu is a multilingual and multi-ethnic regional system. Several groups live in the area, having different languages and historical backgrounds. However, they also share many common cultural features, observed especially in the activities of daily survival, diet, mythology, and inter/intra village rituals (Galvão & Simões 1966). Such cultural homogeneity was developed through the interaction of various factors, such as the isolation of the region, physical proximity of the groups, commerce and intertribal marriages, and groups' influence on each other. The Trumai people are the least integrated into this system. Although they share several of the Upper Xingu cultural practices, they also keep some of their own original traditions – for example, they do not take part in the *Kwarup* ceremony, an important intertribal ritual, and they eat certain kinds of animals that are forbidden to other Upper Xinguan groups (Monod-Becquelin 1975; Monod-Becquelin & Guirardello 2001).

The location of the Trumai villages in the Xingu reserve changed several times after their arrival in the area. Nowadays, their population is concentrated mainly in three villages: *Boa Esperança*, *Três Lagoas* (with inhabitants from the former

village known as *Terra Preta*), and *Steinen*. There are also families living in cities close to the reserve. The community has more than 100 individuals, but the number of Trumai speakers is reduced, being approximately 50. Levels of proficiency vary among individuals, with the older speakers exhibiting broader and deeper linguistic knowledge. Children do not learn the language anymore, speaking Portuguese (the national language of Brazil) or another Xinguan language instead. Various historical factors contributed to its endangerment (cf. Guirardello 1999, preface).

With regard to genetic linguistic affiliations, Trumai is considered an isolate language (Rodrigues 1986; Kaufman 1994). In relation to the Xingu area, Trumai seems to have a unique status, not only in terms of genetic affiliation, but also with regard to typological features. For instance, it has ejective stops, sounds not observed in the other languages of the region (Seki 2000; Fargetti 1992; Dourado 2001; Emmerich 1980). It also employs positional verbs in locative and existential constructions, another fact not attested in other Xinguan languages (Guirardello-Damian 2007). It also has three dative markers, a quite interesting typological characteristic.

Trumai has four open classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) and little inflectional morphology, i.e., words usually consist of a single morpheme. For nouns, there are two important subdivisions: (i) alienably possessed versus inalienably possessed nouns, with a further subdivision between body parts and kinship terms; (ii) animate versus inanimate nouns. These distinctions are observed in various points of the grammar. Trumai has five verbal classes and the case system exhibits an ergative-absolutive alignment, manifested through markers on NPs or the use of postpositions. There are also ergative alignments in syntax (Guirardello-Damian 2010). The basic word order is SOV, but variations of order are possible depending on pragmatic factors; the variations observed in negative clauses are particularly noteworthy (Guirardello 1999).

With regard to the phonological system, Trumai has six vowels (/i/, /e/, /i/, /a/, /u/, /o/) and twenty three consonants (/p/, /t̪/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /ʔ/, /t̪ʰ/, /tʰ/, /kʰ/, /ts/, /tsʰ/, /f/, /s/, /ʃ/, /x/, /h/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /ɬ/, /r/, /w/, /j/). The vowels /e/ and /o/ have two allophones in free variation: [e] and [ɛ], [o] and [ɔ] respectively (cf. Guirardello 1999: 1–6).

### 3 The topic of the narrative

The narrative presented here is related to issues of life and death. It explains the origins of the chanted cries and lamentations that the Trumai people perform

when mourning somebody's death. The story happens in mythological times, when animals were like human beings, having their own villages, conducting daily survival activities, and being able to speak. Thus, the main character in the story, the Smooth-billed Ani, has anthropomorphic features. One day he decides to play a trick on his grandmother. While she is in the fields collecting firewood, he stages a big scene in her house, pretending that she has died. He then performs some actions and crying, showing that he is sad for her death. The crying was later imitated by others and became part of the Upper Xinguan traditions for expressing sorrow.<sup>2</sup>

Trumai funeral practices were first documented by the ethnologist Buell Quain, who lived among them in 1938, although his description is brief. Further research conducted by the anthropologist Emmanuel de Vienne obtained many more details and revealed that the practices can be quite elaborate. The next paragraphs give an overview of the information provided by Murphy & Quain (1955) and De Vienne (personal communication).

In the Trumai funerary ceremony, the classic division is between the ones who dig the hole for the grave (*owowas xotkenke wan* 'the hole diggers') and those who perform the crying (*watkanke wan* 'the ones who cry'). Ritual cries and lamentations begin from the moment of death. Close relatives cry by repeating the kinship term that bound them to the deceased person. The other relatives use the same formula, but also provide consolation to the close relatives by saying stereotyped expressions (e.g. "This is how it is, we cannot do anything"; "It is like this for us, humans"; "You have to be strong, because it happens to everyone"). The crying follows a particular melody and consists of the repetition of the vocative used to call the dead person (for example: *atseda* 'grandma', *ajej* 'grandpa', *atsiwe* 'mum', etc.). This vocative can be combined with expressions that convey compassion and sadness. In the myth below, we will see a concrete example of this.<sup>3</sup>

The ritual crying happens before and at the moment of burying the body. There is also the practice of "welcome in tears", which is a crying performed when relatives living far away arrive for the first time after the death, even several months later. The visitors start to cry loudly on their way to the village. The

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<sup>2</sup>In a section about Trumai mythology, Murphy & Quain (1955: 73) apparently make a brief mention of this myth – although they refer to the smooth-billed ani as "crow", another black bird: "crow appeared as a trickster and, although not a creator deity, managed to bring forth new things in the process of his machinations."

<sup>3</sup>The tradition of executing ritual cries is also part of the death ceremonies of other Upper Xinguan tribes. For example, Guerreiro Júnior (2012: 441) describes the crying used in the funerary rituals of the Kalapalo people, which exhibits the same pattern as the Trumai one.

close relatives of the deceased person then come to welcome them in the central square of the village and they go together to the grave in order to cry. There are further ritual cries in secondary funerary rituals, such as the Javari festivity.

Burial takes place in the central area of the village, which has a circular shape. On the day of death, or the next day (if it is necessary to wait for the arrival of relatives), three or four men who are distant relatives from the deceased ask permission to dig the grave. These men must not have children under the age of two, otherwise the spirit of the deceased person may bring diseases to the child. They proceed as the crying and lamentations continue. First, they measure the body with a bamboo in order to determine the size of the grave, which is prepared in the shape of a hole. The bottom widens to form a tunnel where the corpse will be placed. Chiefs, both male and female, are given a special burial treatment, since their grave has a tunnel with two exits. Special funerary treatments for chiefs are observed in other Upper Xingu groups as well, such as the Kuikuro (Heckenberger 2003).

After finishing their job, the diggers return to the dead person's house and start the ceremonial crying, then announce that it is time to bury the body, which is painted and adorned with feathers by a distant relative. They wrap and tie a hammock around the body, starting with the feet. The face is protected by a fiber mat (*tuwawi*) to prevent it from coming into contact with the soil/earth. Personal objects are placed inside the hammock: cooking utensils for women, bows and arrows for men. The remaining possessions are broken and burned or used to "pay" visitors and diggers. Guided by a close relative, the diggers carry the body through the front door, walk around the house several times, and enter through the back door. They do the same action inside, before going to the grave. During this time, cries and demonstrations of deep sadness continue.

The corpse is "interred lying on its back in an extended position" (Murphy & Quain 1955: 90).<sup>4</sup> The feet are placed towards the east, so that the soul of the deceased person faces the direction it should go. A shaman performs a ritual prayer in order to prevent it from coming back. This prayer is performed in the grave and all the places where the deceased person used to go (house, garden plot, etc.). The following day, the diggers go fishing and take the fish to the deceased person's house. A close relative takes them to the grave, where a shaman performs a prayer and blows tobacco smoke on the fish. This food is meant for spirits, which

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<sup>4</sup> According to another text recorded with a Trumai speaker, chiefs would be buried in a different way: male chiefs (*æk*) would be buried in a standing position, while female chiefs (*æk pekts'a*) would be buried in a seated position. However, this information was not confirmed by De Vienne's consultants, thus it is not clear if it refers to a practice currently followed by the Trumai or to some older tradition.

are expected to be present in large numbers around the grave. After this, the fish are shared and distributed to the whole village. A fire is placed on the grave for the next three or four days, the time necessary for the deceased person's soul to go away to the village of the dead.



Figure 2: A Trumai village, with its central area

## 4 General aspects of the narrative

Some of the procedures of the Trumai funerary practices – the ritual crying, the breaking and burning of the deceased's possessions, the wrapping of the body in a hammock – are observed in the narrative presented in the next section. As already mentioned, there are two central characters, the Smooth-billed Ani and his grandmother, with a third character appearing just briefly (his aunt). Events happen in chronological order, with one pause made by the narrator to make a comment about the Upper Xingu death rituals (lines 34-37).

With regard to the linguistic characteristics of the narrative, a visible feature is the use of kinship terms (*ałahne* 'grandmother', *mako* 'aunt (mother's sister)', *doxo* 'grandchild') with their possessive marker (*tsi*- '3POSS'). The text also employs motion verbs and directional auxiliaries, such as *lahmi* 'go uphill'. The occurrence of *k(e)tsi* is particularly interesting. In daily conversations, this auxiliary is employed to describe motion towards the place where the speaker is, often generating the sense of 'come' or 'bring' (Guirardello-Damian 2012), but

in the case of this narrative, *k(e)tsi* is employed when somebody moves towards the place where the main character and key actions are (lines 29-31) – in other words, this auxiliary can also be used for a place that is the focus of the attention of the speaker and listener.

The text has various instances of hearsay particles and ideophones, which is not surprising, since they are often found in narratives. It is worth mentioning that some Trumai ideophones are similar in shape to the ones in Kamayurá, another Xinguan language (Guirardello-Damian 2014). This is the case of the ideophone for “walking” observed in the text (cf. Footnote 22).

There are occurrences of direct speech in the narrative, but they do not configure dialogues properly speaking. The main character (Smooth-billed Ani) does not talk to anyone in particular; rather, he talks in order to be heard by people in the village. The other character (his grandmother) talks to herself, wondering what is happening in her house. In her speech (lines 40 and 45), we find the particle *apa*, which indicates uncertainty by the speaker and can be broadly translated as ‘I wonder’. The aunt is the only character who talks to a specific addressee, and in her speech we can see the 2nd person pronoun (*hi* ‘you’) or the 1st person inclusive (*ka a* ‘we two (inclusive)’), which contrasts with *ha a* ‘we two (exclusive)’, *ka wan* ‘we – more than two (inclusive)’ and *ha wan* ‘we – more than two (exclusive)’).

As a final note, it is interesting to mention that all verbal classes are represented in the text, since it contains several action verbs. For example: **class 1 (intransitives)**: *kaʔfi* ‘walk’; **class 2 (transitives)**: *husa* ‘tie’, *tsisi* ‘burn’; *kiwa* ‘abandon’; **class 3 (ditransitives)**: *tsitsu* ‘put’; **class 4 (intransitives with two positions)**: *kuʔku* ‘break’, *huʔtsa* ‘see’, *faʔtsa* ‘hear’; **class 5 (verbs with varied transitivity)**: *naha* ‘cut/break’ (for more information about the verbal classes, cf. Guirardello-Damian 2010). The text also includes the verbs for crying: *watkan* ‘to weep’ (i.e. to shed tears when one is sad) and *ora* ‘to cry intensely, screaming’ (as small children do when they fall. This term can also be used for the cries of certain animals, such as monkeys). In the narrative, the occurrence of *ora* is much higher than *watkan*, which makes sense, since the main character is trying to get attention and provoke a commotion as part of his trick, thus his crying needs to be intense.

## 5 trumaj wankaṭe daint'a: kowow

'A Trumai narrative: the Smooth-billed Ani'

'Um mito Trumai: o Anu'<sup>5</sup>

- (1) *trumaj wankaṭe daint'a: kowow*

*trumaj wan=kaṭe daint'a: kowow*  
trumai PL=GEN old.times.narrative Smooth-billed.Ani  
'A Trumai narrative: the Smooth-billed Ani'  
'Um mito Trumai: o Anu'<sup>6</sup>

- (2) *inis hen tsile hen, tsiṭahne de kaʔfi lahmi kuṭ'aki de,*

*inis hen tsile hen tsi-aṭahne de*  
DISC.CON then hearsay then 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful  
*kaʔfi lahmi kuṭ'a=ki de*  
walk go.uphill garden.plot=DAT already

'So, people say that his poor grandmother went walking to (her) garden plot,'

'Dizem que a coitada da avó dele foi caminhando para a roça,'<sup>7</sup>

- (3) *kaʔfi ṭ'axer lahmin.*

*kaʔfi ṭ'axer lahmi=n*  
walk poorly go.uphill=3ABS  
'she left.'  
'foi embora.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Recordings of this story are available from <https://zenodo.org/record/997451>

<sup>6</sup>The term *daint'a* refers to both myths and historical narratives (i.e., facts from ancient times).

<sup>7</sup>Two comments with regard to this sentence: (i) *inis* occurs in the first position of a clause and is often followed by the adverb *hen* 'then'. It can be analyzed internally as a combination of two morphemes (the demonstrative pronoun *in* plus the temporal marker *-is*, which would be literally translated as 'in this situation/event'), but its main role is as a discourse connector, with the sense of 'and then'. Sometimes *inis* can be replaced by *ina*, another possible connector; (ii) The adjective *de* indicates pity for the person being mentioned. The speaker talks in a touching and tender way.

<sup>8</sup>When Trumai speakers express motion events, they often use directional auxiliaries to further specify the type of motion: uphill, downhill, upriver, downriver, towards the village, towards the river, and so on (for more detail, cf. Guirardello-Damian 2012).



- (4) *husakwaf t'axerał tsile api piṭan, kaʔfi lahmin hen.*  
*husa=kwaʃ t'axer=a=t tsile api piṭa=n*  
 tie=thing.for modest/poor=EP.VW=DAT hearsay grab go.out=3ABS  
*kaʔfi lahmi=n hen*  
 walk go.uphill=3ABS then  
 'She went out (of her house) taking a rope (to tie firewood), and she left.'  
 'Saiu (da casa) levando uma corda (para amarrar lenha), e foi embora.'
- (5) *kaʔfi t'axer lahmin, kaʔfi den lahmin.*  
*kaʔfi t'axer lahmi=n kaʔfi den lahmi=n*  
 walk poorly go.uphill=3ABS walk AUX? go.uphill=3ABS  
 'She left, she disappeared (in the distance).'  
 'Foi embora andando e sumiu (na distância).'
- (6) *ina hen tsiṭahne de kaʔfi den lahmi hen.*  
*ina hen tsi-aṭahne de kaʔfi den lahmi hen*  
 DISC.CON then 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful walk AUX? go.uphill then  
 'His poor grandmother went walking and disappeared.'  
 'A coitada da avó foi caminhando e sumiu.'
- (7) *ina hen iji lat pef.kiwda=n ale de. kowow ji de.*  
*ina hen iji lat pef.kiwda=n ale de.*  
 DISC.CON then PRAG.IN lie go.running=3ABS hearsay already  
*kowow ji de.*  
 Smooth-billed.Ani PRAG.IN already  
 'Then he went (to her house) and started lying. He, the Smooth-billed Ani.'  
 'Então ele foi (para a casa dela) e começou a mentir. Ele, o Anu.'

<sup>9</sup>Note that the speaker describes the same action several times (the grandmother left, she left). Such repetition is part of a narration strategy, in order to make the description of events more elaborate and interesting to follow.

<sup>10</sup>This sentence contains instances of the morpheme *(i)ji*, which occurs in NPs. This morpheme has a unique nature and its function is not entirely clear, but it seems to be linked to pragmatic information. It presents two forms: *ji*, which occurs in NPs containing an element (i.e., a noun, pronoun or pluralizer), and *iji*, which can occur by itself in a NP (but only Absolutive NPs). We could analyze *iji* as a pronominal form (i.e., a dummy pronoun) and *ji* as some sort of modifier, however this analysis has its own limitations (cf. Guirardello-Damian 2005: 281-285). For the present text, I will use 'PRAG.IN' as the gloss for this morpheme.

- (8) *ina hen tsiłahne dekṭe sopfaṭki daʔtsi.wawan ale, esak faxki de iji tsitsu de.*

*ina hen tsi-ałahne de=kṭe sopfaṭ=ki*  
 DISC.CON then 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful=GEN firewood=DAT  
*daʔtsi.wawa=n ale, esak fax=ki de iji*  
 gather=3ABS hearsay hammock interior=DAT already PRAG.IN  
*tsitsu de*  
 put already

‘He gathered his grandmother’s firewood and put it in a hammock.’  
 ‘Ele juntou a lenha da avó e colocou dentro de uma rede.’<sup>11</sup>

- (9) *deṭ’a deṭ’a pits tsile, jaw pits’ nawan de, esak faxki iji tsitsu le, jaw kuta nawan tsile.*

*deṭ’a deṭ’a pits tsile jaw pits’ nawan de*  
 well well really/very hearsay human.being foot similar already  
*esak fax=ki iji tsitsu le jaw kuta nawan*  
 hammock interior=DAT PRAG.IN put hearsay human.being head similar  
*tsile*  
 hearsay

‘Very perfectly, he put in the hammock a thing imitating a human foot, and (another) thing imitating a human head.’  
 ‘Bem direitinho, colocou na rede uma coisa imitando pé de gente, e (uma outra) coisa imitando uma cabeça.’

- (10) *ina hen esak ji hen mal husa husa ke ine jik, deṭ’a hen jaw aṭu tsula nawan de.*

*ina hen esak ji hen*  
 DISC.CON then hammock PRAG.IN then  
*mal<sup>12</sup> husa husa ke<sup>13</sup> ine ji=k*  
 edge tie tie DISLOC.ABS 3ANAPH.MASC PRAG.IN=ERG  
*deṭ’a hen jaw aṭu tsula nawan de*  
 well then human.being dead be.lying similar already

<sup>11</sup>There are three variants of the hearsay particle: *ale* (after a verb with the 3ABS enclitic), *le* (after a verb without the 3ABS enclitic), and *tsile* (in other positions).

<sup>12</sup>In this example, the noun *mal* ‘edge/border’ is incorporated in the verb (‘He border-tied the hammock’). Trumai allows noun incorporation (cf. Guirardello-Damian 2005: 225-226).

<sup>13</sup>The particle *ke* appears when the Absolutive NP is not in its typical position, which is right before the verb. This occurs when the Absolutive NP or the verb is fronted in order to be highlighted (as in this example – the word for ‘hammock’ (*esak*) is fronted).

‘Then he tied the hammock, it became very similar to a dead person lying.’  
 ‘Então ele amarrou a rede, ficou igualzinho a uma pessoa morta deitada.’

- (11) *iji late ale de.*

*iji lat=e ale de*  
 PRAG.IN lie=3ABS hearsay already

‘He was pretending (that his grandmother had died).’  
 ‘Ele estava fingindo (que a avó tinha morrido).’

- (12) *inis hen tsile iji ora=n ale:*

*inis hen tsile iji ora=n ale*  
 DISC.CON then hearsay PRAG.IN cry=3ABS hearsay

‘Then he cried:’  
 ‘Então chorou:’

- (13) *”hele deke atseda iṭa fakdits? atseda iṭa ...”*

*hele deke atseda iṭa fakdits atseda iṭa*  
 why EMPH grandmother(VOC) pitiful die grandmother(VOC) pitiful

‘“Why has my poor grandma died? Poor grandma ...”’

‘“Por que a coitada da vovó morreu? Pobre vovó ...”’<sup>14</sup>

- (14) *deṭ’a deṭ’a pits tsile tsiṭahne de faṣṭaki iji ku?kukman: too!*

*deṭ’a deṭ’a pits tsile tsi-aṭahne de*  
 well well really/very hearsay 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful

*faṣṭa=ki iji ku?ku=kma=n too*  
 belongings=DAT PRAG.IN break=PERF=3ABS ID:BREAKING

‘Then he broke all of his grandmother’s things: *too!*’  
 ‘Então ele quebrou todas as coisas da avó: *too!*’

<sup>14</sup>When the interrogative word *hele* is combined with the particle *deke*, the question has a more emphatic tone.

- (15) *ałat pates ku?kun ale, inałkaṭe murukuyu muṭ t'axer, amusadipu muṭ tsile.*

*ałat pat=e=s ku?ku=n ale*  
 clay.pan small=EP.VW=DAT break=3ABS hearsay  
*inał=kaṭe murukuyu muṭ*  
 3ANAPH.FEM=GEN red.paint wrapping/container  
*amusadipu muṭ tsile*  
 resin wrapping/container hearsay

‘He broke little clay pans, the basket with her red body paint, the basket for wax.’

‘Quebrou panelinhas de barro, o urucum dela, a cestinha para cera cheirosa.’<sup>15</sup>

- (16) *deṭ'a deṭ'a pits tsile iji mapa mapa.*

*deṭ'a deṭ'a pits tsile iji mapa mapa*  
 well well really/very hearsay PRAG.IN break break

‘He broke (everything) very well.’

‘Quebrou (tudo) bem direitinho.’<sup>16</sup>

- (17) *i?imaṣame tsile hen.*

*i?imaṣame tsile hen*  
 commotion hearsay then

‘It was a commotion.’

‘Foi uma agitação.’

- (18) *naha nahan ale, deṭ'a deṭ'a pits tsiłahne faṣṭa tsisi tsisikma le.*

*naha naha=n ale deṭ'a deṭ'a pits*  
 cut/break cut/break=3ABS hearsay well well really/very  
*tsi-ałahne faṣṭa tsisi tsisi=kma le*  
 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother belongings burn burn=PERF hearsay

‘He broke and burned all of his grandmother’s things.’

‘Ele quebrou e queimou todas as coisas da avó.’

<sup>15</sup> As previously mentioned, when Trumai individuals die, their possessions are broken.

<sup>16</sup> There are various Trumai verbs that could be translated into English as ‘break’, but they have different nuances of meaning: *mapa* ‘to break’ (in general), *ku?ku* ‘to break by hitting many times’, *naha* ‘cut or break with one single stroke’.

- (19) *ina iji ora muketsin ale hen.*

*ina iji ora muketsi=n ale hen*  
 DISC.CON PRAG.IN cry ASP.AUX=3ABS hearsay then

‘Then, he kept crying.’

‘Então, continuou a chorar.’<sup>17</sup>

- (20) *”hele deke atsedak ha kiwa? adi atsedak ...”*

*hele deke atsedak=k ha kiwa*  
 why EMPH grandmother(VOC)=ERG 1 leave.behind/abandon  
*adi atsedak*  
 INTERJ grandmother(VOC)

“‘Why has grandma left me? Oh poor grandma ...”

“‘Por que vovó me deixou? Oh coitada da vovó ...”

- (21) *ora muketsin,*

*ora muketsi=n*  
 cry ASP.AUX=3ABS

‘He kept crying,’

‘Continuou chorando,’

- (22) *aj de tsi-mako fa?tsa mula le de.*

*aj de tsi-mako fa?tsa mula*  
 by.then already 3POSS(KIN)-aunt(mother’s.sister) hear be.indoors  
*le de*  
 hearsay already

‘and his aunt heard him.’

‘e a tia dele ouviu.’

- (23) *”huk’anik, huta.kaf ka a hu?tsa kawa.”*

*huk’anik huta.kaf ka a hu?tsa kawa*  
 EXPR later 1INCL DU see go

“‘Wait, later we are going to see her (i.e., take care of her).”

“‘Espera, depois a gente vai vê-la (isto é, tomar conta dela).”

<sup>17</sup> Apparently, *muketsi* is an aspectual auxiliary, but its meaning is not totally clear. It seems to indicate persistent action.

- (24) “*ka anak t’axet’axer ji hupda hupekawan,*” *kale*.  
*ka ana=k t’axe-t’axer ji hupda.hupekawa=n kale*  
 1INCL DU=ERG RD-poor PRAG.IN ritual.cry=3ABS like.this  
 “‘We will cry for her, poor her,’ his aunt said like this.’  
 “‘A gente vai chorar para ela, coitada,’ a tia disse assim.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup>The morpheme *t’axer* is usually employed with the sense of ‘poor’ or ‘misfortuned’, but it can also be used with an offensive tone (wretched, bastard). When used as an adverb, it has a sense of ‘poorly’ or ‘in a modest way’. The pattern that we see in the sentence above is attested in other examples involving this morpheme: it can occur after a noun (as in (i) below), or it can occur without the noun if the verb receives the 3rd person enclitic *=n/=e* (as in (ii)).

- (i) *hai=ts kasoro t’axer hotaka*.  
 1=ERG dog wretched mislead  
 ‘I misled the wretched dog.’  
 (ii) *hai=ts t’axer hotaka=n*.  
 1=ERG wretched mislead=3ABS  
 ‘I misled it, the wretched one.’

It might be that *t’axer* is not a modifier, but rather a noun with the sense of ‘misfortune, wretched condition’ and the noun that comes before it would be its possessor (something like: the wretched condition of the dog = the wretched dog). In the case of example (ii), *t’axer* would be incorporated into the verb, a pattern attested in the language, as in example (iii.b) below:

- (iii) a. *hai=ts Makarea mut’ tuxa?tsi*.  
 1=ERG Makarea clothing/wrapping pull  
 ‘I pulled Makarea’s shirt.’  
 b. *hai=ts mut’ tuxa?tsi=n*.  
 1=ERG clothing/wrapping pull=3ABS  
 ‘I pulled his shirt (lit: I shirt-pulled him).’

It is possible to propose such an analysis given that other languages exhibit constructions similar to this one. For instance, in Portuguese one can say [*cachorro desgraçado*] or [*a desgraça do cachorro*] with the sense of ‘wretched dog’. The literal translation of [*a desgraça do cachorro*] is ‘the misfortune of the dog’. Thus, it might be that Trumai has a similar pattern.

- (25) “in ka tʰaxetʰaxer ji ora muketsin.”  
 in ka.in tʰaxe-tʰaxer ji ora muketsi=n  
 that(place) FOC/TENS RD-poor PRAG.IN cry ASP.AUX=3ABS  
 “He is there, crying” (his aunt said).  
 “Ele está lá, chorando” (disse a tia).<sup>19</sup>
- (26) “hi tʰaxer ji huʔtsa in?”  
 hi tʰaxer ji huʔtsa in  
 2 poor PRAG.IN see FOC  
 “You see, you poor thing?!”  
 “Tá vendo, seu infeliz?!”
- (27) “hi aʔahneʔ ka ami ami kawala ke hi tʰaxer ji,” kale.  
 hi aʔahne=ʔ ka.in ami ami kawala ke  
 2 grandmother=DAT FOC/TENS talk talk HABIT DISLOC.ABS  
 hi tʰaxer ji kale  
 2 poor PRAG.IN like.this  
 “You always complain about your grandmother (but now she is gone),”  
 his aunt said.  
 “Você fica reclamando da sua avó (mas agora ela se foi),” disse a tia.
- (28) ina hen tsile ...  
 ina hen tsile  
 DISC.CON then hearsay  
 ‘And then ...’  
 ‘E então...’
- (29) aj de... inis de tsiʔahne de wakaʔfi lakoktsi de.  
 aj de inis de tsi-aʔahne de  
 by.then already DISC.CON already 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful  
 wa-kaʔfi lako=tsi de  
 mv-walk go.downhill=go.present.place already  
 ‘His grandmother was already coming back home.’  
 ‘A avó dele já estava voltando para casa.’

<sup>19</sup>The particle *ka.in* indicates focus, but at the same time also conveys information about the time when the event is taking place (now or in a recent past). In fast speech, it can appear in a reduced form (*ka*), as in the example above. With regard to its internal configuration, cf. Guirardello 1999: 169–178.

- (30) *in ka tsinuk inaʔ t'axerak tsile sift'a ji de etsi lakoktsi ke.*  
*in ka.in tsinuk inaʔ t'axer=a=k tsile*  
 that(place) FOC/TENS then 3ANAPH.FEM poor=EP.VW=ERG hearsay  
*sift'a ji de etsi lako=ktsi ke*  
 firewood PRAG.IN already take go.downhill=go.present.place DISLOC.ABS  
 'There (she was), she was bringing wood.'  
 'Lá (vinha ela), estava trazendo lenha.'
- (31) *kaʔfi t'axer lakoktsin ale hen.*  
*kaʔfi t'axer lako=ktsi=n ale hen.*  
 walk poorly go.downhill=go.present.place=3ABS hearsay then  
 'She was coming back.'  
 'Estava voltando.'
- (32) *faʔtsan ale hen tsidoxo ji watkan faʔt'aki de tsile:*  
*faʔtsa=n ale hen tsi-doxo ji watkan*  
 hear=3ABS hearsay then 3POSS(KIN)-grandchild PRAG.IN weep  
*faʔta=ki de tsile*  
 sound=DAT already hearsay  
 'Then she heard her grandson (the Smooth-billed Ani) weeping.'  
 'Então ela ouviu o neto (o Anu) chorando.'
- (33) *"atseda iʔa, atseda iʔa ..."*  
*atseda iʔa atseda iʔa*  
 grandmother(voc) pitiful grandmother(voc) pitiful  
 "Poor grandma, poor grandma ..."  
 "Pobre vovó, pobre vovó ..." <sup>20</sup>
- (34) *deʔ'a deʔ'a pits tsile, oran ale.*  
*deʔ'a deʔ'a pits tsile ora=n ale*  
 well well really/very hearsay cry=3ABS hearsay  
 'With great attention, he cried (and by doing so, he invented the crying for mourning someone's death).'

<sup>20</sup>The Trumai ritual crying involves the repetition of a vocative (in this case, *atseda*) plus a word that conveys compassion (*iʔa*). Similarly to the adjective *de*, *iʔa* is also used to indicate pity and compassion for the person being mentioned. However, the meaning of *iʔa* is more specific - it is used for a person who is at risk of dying, or for one who has died. The term is employed to express sadness for the situation.



‘Bem direitinho, ele chorou (e ao fazer isso, inventou o choro usado para expressar tristeza pela morte de alguém).’

- (35) *adis wan oraṭkes inṭ’a nawan kadein,*

*adis wan ora=ṭke=s in=ṭ’a nawan ka.de.in*  
Xinguan.Indian PL cry=DES=TEMP that=PST similar FOC/TENS

‘Thus when the Indians of the Upper Xingu want to cry (in a death ritual), it’s like that,’

‘Por isso, quando os povos do Alto Xingu querem chorar (em um ritual funerário), é assim,’

- (36) *ni?de adispa wan ora le de in.*

*ni?de adis-pa wan ora le de in*  
DEM Xinguan.Indian-COLLEC PL cry hearsay already FOC

‘all these Indians cry (like that).’

‘todos esses índios choram (desse jeito).’

- (37) *wan oran, ine oraṭ’ ji letsi de wan oran ale.*

*wan ora=n ine ora=ṭ’ ji letsi de*  
PL cry=3ABS 3ANAPH.MASC cry=result.of PRAG.IN INS already

*wan ora=n ale*

PL cry=3ABS hearsay

‘They cry using his way of crying.’

‘Eles choram usando o choro dele (do Anu).’<sup>21</sup>

- (38) *deṭ’a deṭ’a pits hen tsile.*

*deṭ’a deṭ’a pits hen tsile*  
well well really/very then hearsay

‘(He was doing it) very well.’

‘(Ele estava fazendo) bem direitinho.’

- (39) *kaale hen tsiṭahne de ka?fi lakoktsi le: tik!*

*kaale hen tsi-aṭahne de ka?fi*  
there(far) then 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful walk

<sup>21</sup>The morpheme =ṭ’/=ṭ’a is a nominalizer with slightly different meanings, depending on the type of word it modifies. With nouns, it produces the sense of ‘past X’. With verbs, the sense is ‘the result of an action’.

*lako=ktsi le tik*  
 go.downhill=go.present.place hearsay ID:WALKING  
 ‘His grandmother was already coming: *tik!*’  
 ‘A avó dele já estava vindo: *tik!*’<sup>22</sup>

- (40) “*t’axe-t’axer ji lat’ mulan apa?*”

*t’axe-t’axer ji lat’ mula=n apa*  
 RD-bastard PRAG.IN lie be.indoors PART(I.wonder)  
 ‘“Is this bastard lying?” (she said).’  
 ‘“Esse desgraçado está mentindo?” (disse ela).’

- (41) *pookal! t’axer kuhmu patan ale.*

*pookal t’axer kuhmu pata=n ale*  
 ID:THROWING poor throw arrive=3ABS hearsay  
 ‘She arrived throwing (her wood) on the floor: *pookal!*’  
 ‘Ela chegou jogando (a lenha) no chão: *pookal!*’

- (42) *kaale tsi-atahne pumu-t’a, manlopits iji pef piṭan ale.*

*kaale tsi-atahne pumu-t’a manlopits iji*  
 there 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother enter-result.of at.once PRAG.IN  
*pef piṭa=n ale.*  
 run go.out=3ABS hearsay  
 ‘The moment his grandmother entered there (in her house), he immediately left running.’  
 ‘Quando a avó entrou lá (na casa dela), logo ele saiu correndo.’

- (43) *endenfe iṭa iji ora tsuketsin ale.*

*endenfe iṭa iji ora tsuketsi=n ale*  
 island ALL PRAG.IN cry go.directly=3ABS hearsay  
 ‘Crying, he went straight to an island in the river.’  
 ‘Foi chorando direto para uma ilha no rio.’

- (44) “*okaa ... aa ...*”

“*Okaa ... aa ...*” (he stayed there crying).’  
 “*Okaa ... aa ...*” (ficou lá chorando).’

<sup>22</sup>This sentence contains the ideophone used for expressing the action of walking. It is usually repeated several times: *tik, tik, tik*. For further information about Trumai ideophones, cf. Guirardello-Damian 2014.

- (45) *“t’axe t’axer ji lat’ muketsin apa?”*  
*t’axe-t’axer ji lat’ muketsi=n apa?*  
 RD-bastard PRAG.IN lie ASP.AUX=3ABS PART(I.wonder)  
 “‘Will this bastard keep lying?’ (his grandmother said).”  
 “‘Esse desgraçado vai ficar mentindo?’ (disse a avó).”<sup>23</sup>
- (46) *ina hen tsiłahne dek ka?sa t’axer pupen ale,*  
*ina hen tsi-ałahne de=k ka?sa t’axer*  
 DISC.CON then 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful=ERG hammock poor  
*pupe=n ale*  
 untie=3ABS hearsay  
 ‘Then his grandmother untied her poor hammock,’  
 ‘Então a avó desamarrou a pobre rede dela,’
- (47) *inałkaṭe sopfaṭ t’axer paṭa.paṭa le hen.*  
*inał=kaṭe sopfaṭ t’axer paṭa.paṭa le hen*  
 3ANAPH.FEM=GEN firewood poor to.place hearsay then  
 ‘(took) the wood out and placed it (on the floor).’  
 ‘(tirou) a lenha e colocou-a (no chão).’
- (48) *ina hen... aj de iji ku?kuman ale.*  
*ina hen aj de iji ku?ku=kma=n ale*  
 DISC.CON then by.then already PRAG.IN break=PERF=3ABS hearsay  
 ‘He had broken everything.’  
 ‘Ele tinha quebrado tudo.’
- (49) *ina hen tsiłahne de hu?tsa paṭa le faṣṭa t’axer mapa mapat’aṭ, aṭaṭ pat ...*  
*ina hen tsi-ałahne de hu?tsa paṭa le*  
 DISC.CON then 3POSS(KIN)-grandmother pitiful see arrive hearsay  
*faṣṭa t’axer mapa mapa=t’a=ṭ aṭaṭ pat*  
 belongings poor break break=result.of=DAT clay.pan small  
 ‘Then his grandmother went and saw the broken pieces of her things, the little clay pans ...’  
 ‘Então a avó foi e viu as coisas dela quebradas, as panelinhas de barro...’

<sup>23</sup>In another version of this myth obtained by De Vienne (2010: 200), the grandmother tells the Smooth-billed Ani to transform itself into a spirit and stay near the water. And since then, this kind of bird can be heard crying in the low vegetation on the banks of a river.

- (50) *deṭ'a deṭ'a pits t'axeṭ'axer ji ku?kukman ale.*  
*deṭ'a deṭ'a pits t'axe-t'axer ji ku?ku=kma=n ale*  
 well well really/very RD-bastard PRAG.IN break=PERF=3ABS hearsay  
 'The bastard had broken everything.'  
 'O desgraçado tinha quebrado tudo.'
- (51) *ina hen tsile hen tsula t'axere ale.*  
*ina hen tsile hen tsula t'axer=e ale*  
 DISC.CON then hearsay then lie poorly=3ABS hearsay  
 'Then she lay down, sad (thinking about her things).'  
 'Então ela ficou deitada, triste (pensando nas coisas dela).'
- (52) *inande.*  
*inande*  
 PART.DISC  
 'That's it (the story is over).'  
 'É isso (fim).'

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Figure 3: Kumaru, the narrator of the Trumai myth



Figure 4: Kumaru in her village, with relatives

## Non-standard abbreviations

ANAPH	anaphoric
ASP.AUX	aspectual auxiliary
COLLEC	collective
DISC.CON	discursive connector
DISLOC.ABS	dislocated absolutive (i.e., the absolutive is not right before the verb)
EMPH	emphatic (i.e., marker of emphatic speech)
EP.VW	epenthetic vowel
EXPR	expression (i.e., fixed expression)
FOC/TENS	focus + tense
HABIT	habitual
INTERJ	interjection
MV	middle voice
PART	particle
3POSS(KIN)	3rd person possessive marker (for kinship terms)
PRAG.IN	pragmatic information marker
RD	reduplication

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## Part II

# Beginnings

