

Chapter 13

Ka'apor

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Wyrapitā Ka'apor

1 Introduction

This narrative concerns an old woman who farted on a boy, making him ill. The title, a synthesis of the narrative, was proposed by Karairan (Raimundo Tembé) on the 4th of August, 2016:

- (1) *a'i ymanihar ke kurumī pynu ixo*
aʔi iman-har-ke kurumī rehε Ø-pinu i-fɔ
old.woman formerly-NMLZ-AFC boy at 3-fart 3-be
'A long time ago, a woman farted on a boy.'
- (2) *aja me'ẽ ke kurumī u'y sepetu ixapekwar rupi kutuk*
aja-ɛ-ke kurumī uʔi-sepetu i-sape kʷar cupi Ø-kutuk
ANA-NMLZ-AFC boy arrow-spit 3-vagina hole by 3-pierce
'Afterwards, the boy pierced her through the anus with a wood-tipped
arrow.'

The story was narrated by Wyrapitā Ka'apor, who is also known as Jamói, and recorded on the 15th of June 2014 in the village of *Xie pihun rena* (Centro Novo do Maranhão County, in the state of Maranhão). The transcription and analysis of the text were carried out by the storyteller and Gustavo Godoy, while he was conducting field research for his Master's degree in Anthropology (Godoy 2015).



2 The Ka'apor and their languages

The Ka'apor are an eastern Amazonian people who live in the western part of the state of Maranhão. In the 19th century, they lived in the state of Pará and, before 1800, further west in the Tocantins River basin (Balée 1994: 30–32). In 1911, the Brazilian government began the process of pacification of the Ka'apor, who were known for attacking local colonists (Ribeiro 1962); the Ka'apor population in 1928, when so-called pacification was concluded, has been estimated at 5,000 people. The current population in the Upper Turiaçu Indigenous Land is 2,300. Some Ka'apor also live among the Tembé (TUPIAN), in the Alto Guamá Indigenous Land.

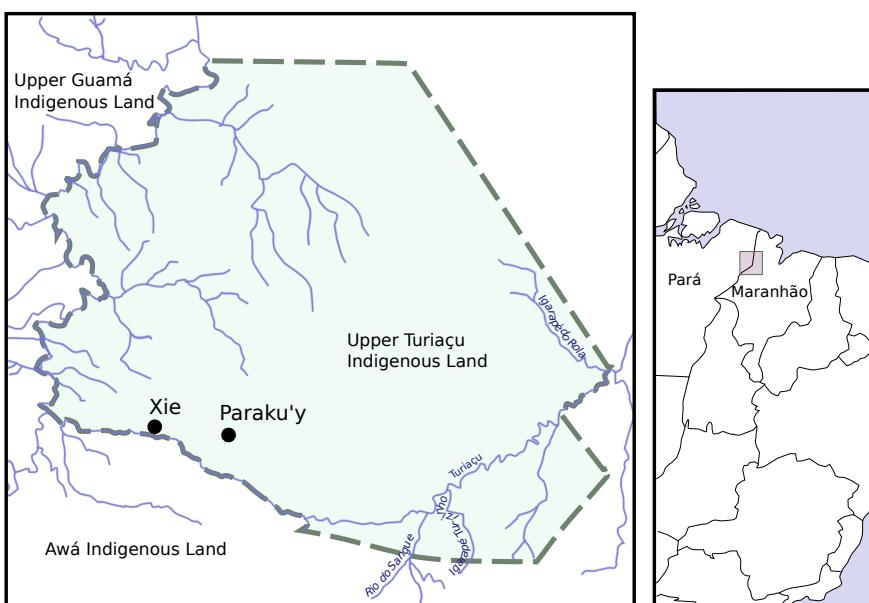


Figure 1: The Upper Turiaçu Indigenous Land and villages mentioned

The Ka'apor language is classified as belonging to the eastern branch of the Tupian family; it is part of the Tupi-Guarani set of the Maweti-Guarani sub-branch. The Ka'apor lexicon (Corrêa-da-Silva 1997; Balée 2006) shows colonial influences through the Língua Geral Amazônica (TUPIAN). Its argument marking is similar to Nheengatu (Corrêa-da-Silva 2002), which descends from Língua Geral.

Spoken Ka'apor is a vital language, actively transmitted between generations. Nonetheless, there has been a decline in the transmission of traditional genres, such as formulaic greetings and some types of songs. The Ka'apor have additionally developed a local sign language for communicating with the deaf, which has been in use since at least the 1940s (Kakumasu & Kakumasu 1988; Ferreira n.d. 1984; 2010).

3 Notes on the narrative

The theme of the narrative presented here is also found among other indigenous peoples. The Bororo (MACRO-JÉ) version tells of the origin of disease and begins with a grandmother farting on her grandson's face after he refused to submit to male initiation. The Kísêdjé (JÉ) version deploys a flatulent mother-in-law (Nonato 2016: 1–2). The Kuikuro (UPPER XINGUAN CARIBAN) version is very similar to that of the Kísêdjé (Franchetto, recordings and field notes from 1981).

While the Ka'apor and Bororo versions should be considered “serious” narratives, for the Kísêdjé and the Kuikuro, the theme of the flatulent mother-in-law is a feature of short and funny (“ugly”) narratives. It is interesting to note the structural correspondences of the relations between the protagonists: a grandmother and grandson for the Bororo; an older woman and young boy for the Ka'apor; a mother-in-law and son-in-law in the Upper Xingu.

In the Ka'apor narrative, the eschatological event is intimately tied to the description of the behaviour of ancient killers, who were submitted to post-homicide seclusion. When the seclusion was over, the killers had to come out during the beer drinking ceremony (a drink made from the fermentation of cashews or manioc flat bread).

The plot involves four characters: a young boy (the protagonist), an elder woman (the antagonist), the youth's brother (co-protagonist) and the war chief (auxiliary). The boy grows increasingly pale (*tawa* ‘yellow’), as the days go by, because of the intestinal gasses (*pmu*) that an old woman discharged on him. His brother grows suspicious and makes a small wooden-tipped arrow (*u?i sepetu*) for the sick boy to kill the old woman. Feigning sleep, the boy stabs the arrow into the old woman's anus as she tries to fart on him once again. The malevolent woman soon falls ill and dies. The young boy confesses the homicide to the war chief (*tufa*), who advises him to go into post-homicide seclusion, lying down in his room (*kapi*). Finally, the young killer comes out during the beer drinking ceremony.

The narrative is, in fact, a reminder of this now defunct part of the beer ritual: the coming out of the killer. Furthermore, one of the four characters, the war chief, is a figure of the past.

The beer-drinking ceremony brings to an end the restrictions that fall on those who find themselves in states of susceptibility, such as the killer; its central moment is the naming ritual. In the narrative, the war chief tells the boy that he should come out after the “lifting of the children” (line 34) when the sponsors present the name of a baby. The beverage ritual is here called *akaju rikwer ñã ũu*, “the cashew beer drinking moment” (line 37).



Figure 2: The storyteller Jamói, at the moment when the men ask about the name of his goddaughter (*tajir-aya*). Her name, *Nanã akir* ‘unripe pineapple’, is then announced.

The killer would appear in the beer drinking ceremony carrying a pack of arrows. He remained at the place of the ceremony, looking east, immobile and impassive. An old man would go towards him with words of reprobation and revenge: “Hu-Hu-Hu! You attacked your comrade! Now it is you who will be (attacked)! Now I will draw your blood!”

The old man carried a tooth (from a trahira - a fish with a big mouth and sharp teeth - or from a Brazilian squirrel) which he used to scar the killer’s legs (line 42), so as to expel the morbid blood in his body (line 43). This blood contained part of the dead person. Failure to extract it would cause the killer to go mad, affected by the murdered enemy. After scarification, the killer’s vulnerability would come to an end, and he could then leave his room and wander the outside world without any danger (line 45) *pe sørka rehe wata atu i-fɔ t̄i*.

4 Notes on transcription and annotation

The first line of the transcription is orthographic. The Ka'apor system of alphabetic writing is based on the phonemic analysis carried out by Kakumasu (1964); Kakumasu & Kakumasu (1988). Ka'apor has 15 phonemic consonants /p, t, k, kʷ, m, n, ɲ, ɲʷ, s, ʃ, j, r, w, h, ?/; six phonemic oral vowels /i, ɪ, ε, a, ɔ, u/ and five nasal vowels /ĩ, ë, ã, õ, ũ/. In the orthography, the graphemes <ng, ', x, y, e, o> represent IPA /ŋ, ?, ʃ, i, ε, ɔ/. The <ái, úi> sequence represent /aj, uj/.

5 A'i ymanhar ke kurumĩ rehe pynu ixo.

'A long time ago, an old woman farted on a boy'

'Muito tempo atrás, uma velha pedou em um menino'¹

- (1) *ta'yn uker ou 'y pytun rahã pame ame'ẽ a'i ai pynu oho ehe je*
ta?in u-kʷer ɔ²-u ?i pitun rahã pame ame?ẽ a?i ai
child 3-sleep 3-lay.down PFV night SR each DEI old.woman roguish
pynu³ ɔ-hɔ ehe jε⁴
fart 3-go 3.at HSY

'Night after night, while a boy was lying (down), it is said that an old roguish woman came to fart on him.'

'Dizem que, noite após noite, quando um menino estava deitado, uma velha escrota peidava em cima dele.'

¹Recordings of this story are available from <https://zenodo.org/record/997433>

²There is no number distinction in the third person prefix, glossed simply as '3'. The allomorph of this prefix in active verbs is *u-*, when the verbal root is monosyllabic and does not contain the vowel /ɔ/. If the monosyllabic root has the vowel /ɔ/, the allomorph *ɔ-* is used. The third person person prefix *ɔ-* with the auxiliary verb *-u* 'to lay down' is a exception to this rule.

³When the verbal root has more than one syllable, no third person prefix is attached to it. In other words, the person mark is a zero allomorph (Ø).

⁴Ka'apor does not have a system with several morphemes indexing different sources of the information, as in the grammaticalized evidentials used in Kotiria realis statements (cf. chapter 5 in this volume) or the more complex evidentiality systems of other Tupian languages, such as Kamauirá, Tapirapé, and Karo. The reported evidential *je* 'HSY' (hearsay or reportative modality) is the only evidential morpheme in Ka'apor. *je* does not imply disbelief on the part of the speaker in relation to the content of the mythical narrative, and it occurs in almost all sentences. This contrasts with the sparse occurrence of the quotative reported evidential *-yu'ka* and its pragmatic use in the Kotiria narrative (cf. Footnote 10 of the Kotiria narrative, Chapter 5). Indeed, in Ka'apor mythological narratives, the morpheme *je* codes a diffuse source of information, more like the 'diffuse' evidential *-yu'ti* in Kotiria (cf. Stenzel 2008).

- (2) *pe pytun je tī pe pynu oho je tī*
pε pitun je tī pε pīnu ɔ-hɔ je tī
 then night HSY again then fart 3-ho HSY again
 ‘Each night that came, she farted on him again.’
 ‘Outra noite chegava e ela peidava de novo.’
- (3) *ta'yn ukwer ta je tī, ko a'i ihái ke pīrok hū je pe i'ar pe pynu hū*
ta?in u-kʷεr-ta je tī kɔ a?i i-haj-ke pīrok-hū je
 child 3-sleep-FUT HSY again DEI old.woman 3-skirt-AFC strip-INTENS HSY
pε i-?ar-pe pīnu -hū
 then 3-above-LOC fart -INTENS
 ‘When the boy went to sleep again, the old woman took off her skirt, it is said; then (she) farted on him a lot.’
 ‘O menino ia dormir de novo e a tal velha tirava a sua saia; então, peidava um monte nele.’
- (4) *pynupynu ate ehe je*
pīnu~pīnu-ate εhe je
 fart~RED-INTENS 3.at HSY
 ‘She was really farting a lot on him.’
 ‘Ficava peidando muito mesmo nele.’
- (5) *pe oho je tī*
pε ɔ-hɔ je tī
 then 3-go HSY again
 ‘She went again (towards the boy).’
 ‘E ela foi de novo (até o menino).’
- (6) *ta'yn ke itawa imu parahy ahy ipe je*
ta?in-ke i-tawa i-mu parahi-ahy i-pe je
 child-AFC 3-yellow 3-brother angry-INTENS 3-DAT HSY
 ‘The boy was yellowish (sick), his brother was very angry with him.’
 ‘O menino estava amarelado, seu irmão ficou bravo.’
- (7) “*ne tawa te ne ke ā ne jyty'ym te amō 'y*”
nε-tawa-te nε-keā nε-jiti?im-te amō ?i
 2SG-yellow-INTENS 2SG-AFC 2SG-lazy-INTENS another PFV
 ““You are yellowish and very lazy too.””
 ““Você está amarelado e está preguiçoso também.””

- (8) *pandu 'ym anu ta'yn je tī*
pandu-?im~anu ta?in jε tī
 tell-NEG~RED child HSY again
 ‘The boy didn’t say anything.’
 ‘O menino não contava.’
- (9) *pe pytun je tī, pe a'i [...] pytun pyter pe je*
pe pitun je tī pe a?i [...] pitun piter-pe je
 so night HSY again so old.woman [...] night middle-LOC HSY
 ‘Another night, the old ... [hesitation] in the middle of the night.’
 ‘Então, de noite, novamente, então, a velha ... [hesitação] era no meio da noite.’
- (10) *pe a'i ihon ixo je 'y*
pe a?i i-hon i-fɔ je ?t
 then old.woman 3-go 3-AUX HSY PFV
 ‘Then the old woman went (towards the boy).’
 ‘Então a velha foi (até o menino).’
- (11) *pe ihái ke musyryk je, pe ta'yn ukwer atu je Pūūū! japūi rehe pynu je*
pe i-haj-ke mu-sirik je pe ta?in u-kʷer-atu je pūūū
 then 3-skirt-AFC CAUS-strip HSY then child 3-sleep-INTENS HSY IDEO
i-apūi rehe pynu je
 3-nose LOC fart HSY
 ‘So, (she) she raised her own skirt, the child was sleeping deeply: *Puum!*
 She farted in his nose.’
 ‘Ela levantou a saia, o menino estava dormindo bem: *Puum!* Ela peidou no nariz dele.’
- (12) *pe ... pe wera uwyr tī, pe imu panu ipe “myja ne xoha tī”*
pe pe wera uwyr tī pe i-mu panu i-pe mijā ne-fɔ-ha
 then then light come again then 3-brother tell 3-DAT Q 2SG-be-NMLZ
tī
 again
 ‘So ... so the light (of the morning) came again, and his brother said:
 “What’s wrong with you?”’
 ‘Amanheceu de novo e o irmão perguntou: “O que está errado com você?”’

- (13) “epandu ihē pe rahā”, pe imu pandu, “xe amō a'i ihē rehe pynu ixo tī”
 “pytun rahā pame ihē rehe pynu” je; “a'erehe ihē ke atawa tái”
ε-pandu ihē-pe rahā pe i-mu panu se amō a'i
 2SG.IMP-tell 1SG-DAT HORT so 3-brother tell DEI another old.woman
ihē-rehe pnu i-fj tī pitun rahā pame ihē-rehe pnu je a?e-rehe
 1SG-LOC fart 3-be again night SR each 1SG-LOC fart HSY 3-about
ihē-ke a-tawa taj
 1SG-AFC 1SG-yellow INTENS
 “Talk to me!” and his brother said: “The old woman is farting on me;
 every night she farts on me! That's why I'm turning yellow.”
 “Conte para mim!” e o irmão respondeu: “A velha está peidando em mim;
 todas as noites! Por isso estou amarelando.””
- (14) *pe imu ... u'y ra'yr mujā ipe je, u'y sepetu, yrapar ra'yr*
pe i-mu u?i ra?ir mujā i-pe je u?i sepetu irapar ra?ir
 so 3-brother arrow small make 3-DAT HSY arrow spit bow small
 ‘Then, his brother ... made a small arrow with a tip of wood and a small
 bow for him.’
 ‘Então, o irmão ... fez uma flechinha para ele com ponta de madeira e um
 pequeno arco.’
- (15) *pe ko[me'ē] ... pe “ejingo rahā kī” aja ipe je*
pe kō[me'ē] pe ε-jingō rahā kī aja i-pe je
 so th(is) so 2SG.IMP-shoot HORT Kī⁵ ANA 3-DAT HSY
 ‘So this ... so “Shoot!” he said to him.’
 ‘Então ... “Flecha!” assim disse (o irmão) para ele.’
- (16) *pe ta'yn ukwer uwyr je tī, pytun rahā*
pe ta?m u-kʷer uwir je tī pitun rahā
 so child 3-sleep come HSY again noite SR
 ‘The boy went to sleep again, at night.’
 ‘O menino foi dormir de novo, de noite.’
- (17) *pe a'i ai tur je tī*
pe a'i ai tur je tī
 so old.woman rogue come HSY again
 ‘The old woman came again.’
 ‘A velha chegou novamente.’

⁵Kakumasu & Kakumasu (1988) translate the morpheme *kī* as ‘definitive intention’.

- (18) *pe sa'e a'i ihái, xirur ke pirok hū je ihai ai ke*
pe saʔe aʔi i-haj sirur-ke pirok-hū je i-haj ai je
 so guy old.woman 3-skirt short-AFC strip-INTENS HSY 3-skirt bad HSY
 'So he ... the old woman raised her own old skirt, her pants.'
 'Aí ele ... a velha levantou sua saia, sua calça, levantou alto, a sua saia surrada.'
- (19) *xape ai jumupirar te'e xoty je*
i-sape ai ju-mu-pirar teʔe i-fɔt̚i je
 3-anus bad REFL-CAUS-open free 3-towards HSY
 'Her disgusting asshole opened towards the boy.'
 'Seu cu nojento abriu muito na direção do menino.'
- (20) *pe sa'e u'y ke hykýi je Sōō xape kwar rupi ate jingo mondo je a'i ai ahem*
ate oho je
pe saʔe uʔi-kε hikij je Sōō s̚ape kʷar rupi ate jingɔ mɔnɔ je
 so guy arrow-AFC pull HSY IDEO anus hole in INTENS shoot throw HSY
aʔi ai ahem ate ɔ-hɔ je
 old.woman roguish scream INTENS 3-go HSY
 'So, he took the arrow and *Sōō!* he shot it into her asshole, the arrow was stuck in her asshole. The nasty old woman screamed a lot.'
 'Então, ele armou a flecha *Sōō!* flechou bem no buraco de seu cu e a (velha) ficou com a flecha encravada. A velha foi gritando muito.'
- (21) *pe a'i ai pynu 'ym je 'y amō ku'em rahā sa'e ... amō wera uwyr je 'y*
pe aʔi ai pinu ?im je ?i amō ku?em rahā saʔe
 so old.woman roguish fart NEG HSY PFV another morning SR guy
amō wera uwyr je ?i
 another light come HSY PFV
 'Then, the old woman didn't fart anymore; the next morning ... Another day came.'
 'Então a velha não peidou mais, na outra manhã ... Chegou outro dia.'
- (22) *pe pytun oho tī; a'i ju...ju...juwyr 'ym oho pytun rahā*
pe pitun ɔhɔ tī aʔi ju...ju... juwyr ?im ɔhɔ pitun rahā
 so night 3-go again old.woman [hesitation] return NEG 3-go night SR
 'So, night came again; [hesitation] the old woman didn't return.'

‘Veio a noite novamente; [hesitação] a velha não voltou, quando foi a noite novamente.’

- (23) *pe ... pe atu u'y ipi'a kwar [rupi]⁶ upen u'am 'y*
pe pe atu u?i i-pi?a kʷar [rupi] upen u?am ?i
 so so INTENS arrow 3-vagina hole [by] broke AUX.vertical PFV
 ‘So ... So, the arrow broke in her vagina.’
 ‘Então ... Então, a flecha quebrou no buraco da vagina dela.’
- (24) *amō ukwer rahā a'i ame'ẽ a'i ke ma'e ahy je 'y*
amō u-kʷer rahā a?i ame?ẽ a?i-ke ma?e-ahi je
 another 3-sleep SR old.woman ANA old.woman-AFC sickness HSY
?i
 PFV
 ‘The next day, that old woman got sick.’
 ‘No outro dia, a velha, aquela velha, adoeceu.’
- (25) *pe sawa'e, ame'ẽ ta'ynuhu ukwa je*
pe sawa?e ame?ẽ ta?in-uhu u-kʷa je
 so man ANA child-INTENS 3-know HSY
 ‘That young boy already knew.’
 ‘Aquele homem, aquele menino sabia.’
- (26) “*pe'ẽ a'i ihẽ rehe pynu ixo riki ã, ame'ẽ pytun rahā*”
pe?ẽ a?i ihẽ rehe pynu i-ʃ̃ rikiã ame?ẽ pitun rahā
 DEI old.woman 1SG in fart 3-be emphasis ANA night SR
 ““That old woman was farting on me that night.””
 ““Aquela velha estava peidando em mim aquela noite.””
- (27) *sa'e ke pe túiha ke*
sa?e-ke pe tuj-ha-ke
 guy-AFC DEI stay-NMLZ-AFC
 ‘There was the boy.’
 ‘Ali estava o menino.’

⁶Not performed in speech, but indicated in the analysis.

- (28) *yman te pe a'i ke manõ je 'y*
iman-te pε a?i-kε manõ jε
 lately-INTENS SO old.woman-AFC die HSY
 'Later, the old woman died.'
 'Passou um tempo, a velha morreu.'
- (29) *pe ame'ẽ ta'yn tuxa pe pandu je*
pε ame?ẽ ta?in tuſa-pε panu jε
 SO ANA child chief-DAT tell HSY
 'Then, the child talked to the chief:'
 'Então aquele menino falou para o tuxaua:'
- (30) *"ihẽ ame'ẽ a'i ke ajukwa"*
ihẽ ame?ẽ a?i-kε a-jukʷa
 1SG ANA old.woman-AFC 1SG-kill
 "I killed that old woman."
 "Eu matei aquela velha."
- (31) *pe tuxa aja ipe je*
pε tuſa aja i-pε jε
 SO chief DEI 3-DAT HSY
 'So, the warrior chief said to him:'
 'E o tuxaua assim falou para ele:'
- (32) *"kawĩ, ta'ynta jahupir rahã, epandu kŷ hetaha pe"*
kawĩ ta?in-ta ja-hupir rahã ε-panu kĩ hetah-a-pε
 beer child-PL 1PL-lift SR 2SG.IMP-tell kĩ many-NMLZ-DAT
 "Beer, when we will lift the children, talk to the people."
 "Cauim, quando levantamos as crianças, fale para o grupo."
- (33) *"apo kapy pe te'e eju rĩ"*
apo kapri-pε te?ε ε-ju rĩ
 now room-LOC TE?ε 2SG.IMP-lay.down IPFV
 "Now, go off to your room."
 "Agora, vá deitar no teu quarto."

- (34) *pe sa' e kapy pe túi je*

pe sa?e kapi-pe tuj je
so guy room-LOC stay HSY

'He stayed in the room (in seclusion).'
'Ele ficou no quarto (em reclusão).'

- (35) *pe ... akaju rykwer ngã'u je 'y, pe sa' e uhem je 'y*

pe akaju rik^wer ñã⁷-?u jε ɻi pe sa?e u-hem je ɻi
so cashew juice 3PL-ingest HSY PFV so guy 3-exit HSY PFV
'Then ... Later, after they drank cashew beer, he came out.'
'Então ... Depois deles beberem o cauim do caju, ele saiu.'

- (36) *kapy ngi uhem*

kapi i u-hem
room ABL 3-exit

'He left the seclusion room.'
'Ele saiu do quarto de reclusão.'

- (37) *kujã ta ke upa mupinim*

kujã-ta-ke upa mu-pinim
mulher-PL-AFC all CAUS-painted
'All the women were painted.'
'Todas as mulheres foram pintadas.'

- (38) *aja rahã sa' e a'e uhem ta'ynuhu, ta'ynuhu je*

aja rahã sa?e a?e u-hem ta?m-uhu ta?muhu je
ANA SR guy 3 3-exit child-INTENS child-INTENS HSY
'At this moment, the young man left the room.'
'Foi neste o momento que o jovem saiu da reclusão.'

- (39) *ma'e... huwy ke*

ma?e huwi-ke
hesitation blood-AFC
'And ... The blood ... '
'Ee ... Sangue ... '

⁷ Although there is no distinction between plural and singular in the third person prefix, Ka'apor has the free pronoun *ñã* to index third person plural.

- (40) *upa tymā mu'i huwy ke upa muhāj je*
upa timā mu?i huwi-ke upa muhāj je
 all leg scarify blood-AFC all disperse HSY
 ‘The lower part of his legs was scarified; the (bad) blood was totally dispersed.’
 ‘A parte de baixo de suas pernas foram escarificada; todo o sangue (ruim) foi retirado.’
- (41) *huwy ahyha ke, a'i ruwy ke ame'ēja saka je*
huwi ahi-ha-ke a?i ruwi-ke ame?ē-ja saka je
 blood pain-NMLZ-AFC old.woman blood-AFC DEI-ANA like HSY
 ‘The evil and toxic blood, it was as if it were the blood of the old woman.’
 ‘O sangue insalubre e mórbido, era como se fosse o sangue da velha.’
- (42) *pe ... aja rahā katu je tī*
pe aja rahā katu je tī
 so ANA SR good HSY again
 ‘So ... In this way he became well again.’
 ‘Então ... deste jeito o jovem ficou bom.’
- (43) *pe soroka rehe wata atu ixo tī*
pe soroka rehe wata atu i-ʃɔ tī
 so outside by walk good 3-be again
 ‘And he was able to walk outside again.’
 ‘E ele pode andar de novo tranquilamente do lado de fora.’

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Non-standard abbreviations

AFC	affected	HSY	hearsay, reported evidential
ANA	anaphora or cataphora	IDEO	ideophone
DEI	deixis	INTENS	intensifier
HORT	hortative	SR	subordinator

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