

Clinical Clerking and Examination in Tok Pisin

*A resource for English speaking health care workers in
Papua New Guinea*

Stephen Ward, 2005 **Page 6**

Introduction

Pronunciation and Grammar

History taking

Examination

Medical Vocabulary

Colloquial Phrases

Language Resources

Introduction

Papua New Guinean Pidgin or *tok pisin* is a widely spoken second language throughout Papua New Guinea. It is also a fascinating language to hear spoken with a rhythmical stress pattern and a vocabulary of obvious English influence.

Tok pisin is an official language of Papua New Guinea together with English and *motu*. There are approximately 750 different indigenous languages in Papua New Guinea and *tok pisin* acts as a bridge by which people speaking different tribal languages can communicate. These indigenous or tribal languages are known as *tok ples*, i.e. talk of the place. *Motu* is a *tok ples* from the area around Port Moresby which was subsequently modified for use by the police force and spread by the local constabulary.

Tok pisin is widely spoken especially in northern Papua New Guinea. One of its constraints is a limited vocabulary of around 1500 words. Specific ideas can be communicated by using descriptive language:

e.g. referring to an 'ashtray' as a 'dish for putting ash from cigarettes'
plet bilong putim sit bilong smok

English vocabulary is also being continuously introduced into the *tok pisin* lexicon. This growing trend is resented by some speakers.

Tok pisin is widely spoken amongst hospital workers, patient's family and everyone who can speak English. In general, educated people can speak English very well, but will choose to speak pidgin in informal conversation. In my experience, it was vital to have a grasp of pidgin to speak to patients as many could speak little English. Hospital staff come from far and wide and do not have a common *tok ples*. Patients may come from distant rural villages with their own *tok ples*. *Tok pisin* is therefore a vital lingua franca in Papua New Guinea.

Before arriving to work in Papua New Guinea, it is advisable to learn everyday phrases in *tok pisin*. These phrases, although useful, will not provide a sufficient grasp of the language to begin communicating with patients. I have therefore compiled a list of phrases that are required to take a simple history and carry out a clinical examination in *tok pisin*. My thanks go to all the hospital staff at Wewak general hospital who helped me translate these phrases.

It is my hope that this resource will be useful to any English speaker working in a hospital in Papua New Guinea.

Pronunciation and grammar

Pronunciation

<i>a</i>	<u>man</u>
<i>e</i>	<u>met</u>
<i>i</i>	<u>hit</u>
<i>o</i>	<u>hot</u>
<i>u</i>	<u>put</u>
<i>ai</i>	<u>find</u>
<i>au</i>	<u>about</u>
<i>oi</i>	<u>boy</u>

Consonants are pronounced as in English with the exception of 'f' which is pronounced 'p'.

Some letters are silent or omitted in everyday speech:

'h' is silent at the beginning of words
long is often pronounced *lo*
bilong is often pronounced *bilo*

e.g. *Yu go bek long haus?* meaning 'Are you going back home?',
becomes... *Yu go bek laus?*

Pronouns

Subjective and objective pronouns are the same with the exception of the third personal singular pronoun.

	<i>Subjective</i>	<i>Objective</i>
I	<i>mi</i>	<i>mi</i>
you (singular)	<i>yu</i>	<i>yu</i>
he / she / it	<i>em</i>	<i>en</i>
we (including listener)	<i>yumi</i>	<i>yumi</i>
we (excluding listener)	<i>mipela</i>	<i>mipela</i>
you (plural)	<i>yupela</i>	<i>yupela</i>
they	<i>ol</i>	<i>ol</i>

Possessive pronouns:

my	<i>bilong mi</i>
your	<i>bilong yu</i>
his / her / its	<i>bilong en</i>
our (including listener)	<i>bilong yumi</i>
our (excluding listener)	<i>bilong mipela</i>
your (plural)	<i>bilong yupela</i>
their	<i>bilong ol</i>

The number of people are often referenced when using plural pronouns:

‘we would like to stay here’ said by a person from a group of three, translates as:
‘mi tri-pela laik stap ia’

‘Hello you’ directed at a group of two people, translates as:
‘Gude yu tu-pela’

Verbs

There are no verb endings dependent on the subject of the verb. Pidgin has something called a predicate marker (the one-letter word ‘i’) which is placed between the subject and verb of a sentence. The predicate marker may be adjoined to the verb in the written form so that *i tambu* was written as *itambu*. The predicate marker improves the rhythm of the spoken language, but is omitted if the subject is ‘I’ or ‘you’.

<i>Mi laik kaikai</i>	I want to eat
<i>Yu laik kaikai</i>	You want to eat
<i>Em i laik kaikai</i>	He wants to eat

Transitive verbs, meaning they are used in conjunction with an object, carry the ‘-im’ suffix.

<i>Mi go waswas</i>	I’m going to wash (myself) (intransitive)
<i>Ol i wasim ol klos bilong en</i>	They are washing their clothes (transitive)

Tense is most easily expressed by using time references in the sentence. The word ‘*pinis*’ comes after the verb and indicates past tense, i.e. a completed action. The word ‘*bin*’ comes before the verb, is similar in meaning to the English ‘have been’ and also indicates past tense. The word ‘*bai*’ comes immediately before the subject and indicates future tense.

<i>Em i brukim pinis lek bilong en</i>	He broke his leg
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<p><i>Mi bin lukim piksa bilong het bilong yu</i></p> <p>ray</p> <p><i>Bai em i go long hausik wantaim yu</i></p>	<p>I have been looking at your head X-</p> <p>ray</p> <p>He will go to the hospital with you</p>
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Adjectives

These often carry the suffix *'-pela'* as do numerals when used as an adjective in a sentence. However, not all adjectives end in *'-pela'*, for example *liklik* meaning 'little'. Some adjectives have different meanings depending on whether they carry the *'-pela'* suffix: *drai* means 'dry' but *draipela* means 'huge'. A commonly used adjective *nogut* means 'bad' and is unusual in that it comes after the noun.

Draipela guria i bagarapim planti haus bilong Kariru
 The huge earthquake damaged plenty of houses on Kariru

Yu mas kisim tupela long dispela marasin tripela taim olgeta de
 You must take two tablets three times every day

Mi wari long kisim dispela sik nogut ol i kolim AIDS
 I'm worried about getting this bad disease called AIDS

Adverbs

These do not carry a *'-pela'* suffix and follow the verb.

Em i pulim win strong he breathed in strongly (deeply)

Lapun i tok hariap hariap the old man spoke (very) quickly

Prepositions

The word *'long'* replaces many English prepositions. *'Bilong'* indicates possession in conjunction with a pronoun as already demonstrated or is translated 'of' when indicating possession of a noun:

Mi no save long dispela hap bilong taun
 I don't know this area of town

Other prepositions are listed below with an example:

English	Pidgin	Pidgin example	English
With	<i>wantaim</i>	<i>mi laik go wantaim yu</i>	I want to go with you
On	<i>antap long</i>	<i>mi putim em antap long tebol</i>	I put it on the table
Under	<i>ananit long</i>	<i>man i sindaun ananit long diwai</i>	the man is sitting under the tree
In / into	<i>insait long</i>	<i>yu mas go insait long haus</i>	you must go into the house
Between	<i>namel long</i>	<i>nogut yu kam namel long munde na trinde</i>	you can't come between Monday and Wednesday
Behind	<i>bihain long</i>	<i>go bihain long laplap</i>	go behind the curtain
in front of	<i>ai bilong</i>	<i>Bai mi wetim ai bilong pos opis</i>	I'll wait in front of the post office
Next to	<i>klostu long</i> <i>close to</i>	<i>smolhaus i stap klostu long dispensari</i>	the toilet is next to the pharmacy
Opposite	<i>arasait long</i> <i>otherside</i>	<i>skul i stap arasait long hausik</i>	the school is opposite the hospital
After	<i>Bihain</i> <i>behind</i>	<i>bai mi go bek bihain</i>	I will go back after(wards)
Before	<i>Bipo</i> <i>before</i>	<i>yu kam pinis bipo long belo</i>	you came before lunch
First	<i>Pastaim</i> <i>First time</i>	<i>Yu mas askim mama bilong yu pastaim</i>	You must ask your mother first

Conjunctions

na and, then

mi go long taun na mi baim tupela kulau na mi kam bek
I went to town and bought two coconuts, then I came back

o or

yu laik susu o suga wantaim kopi?
would you like milk or sugar with the coffee?

tasol but, only

Asde mi pundaun pinis tasol, ai bilong mi i raun long wanpela mun.
I fell over yesterday but I have felt dizzy for one month.

mi gat ten kina tasol
I only have ten Kina

sapos if

Bai yu gat bikpela sik, sapos yu no kisim dispela marasin

You will get very ill if you do not take this medicine

Question words

Husat i lukautim yu?

Who looks after you?

Inap yu stretim lek bilong yu?

Can you straighten your legs?

Wanem taim yu bagarapim lek bilong yu?

When did you injure your leg?

Pen i stap we?

Where is the pain?

Olsem wanem yu katim het bilong yu? How did you manage to cut your head?

Bilong wanem yu no kam long hausik bipotaim?

Why did you not come to the hospital earlier?

Hamas-pela de pen i stap?

How many days have you had the pain?

Em i kostim hamas long baim dispela marasin?

How much does this medicine cost?

Yes and No

Here is some important vocabulary used to give positive and negative responses to such questions.

yes

yes

nogat

no

no (pen) tasol

no (pain) at all

liklik

a little

tumas

a lot / very

e.g. *mi gat pen tumas*

I'm in a lot of pain

nogut tru

very very much

e.g. *em i sik nogut tru*

he is really very very sick

History taking

General enquiry and asking about pain

Yu (pilim / gat) pen?	<i>Are you in pain?</i>
Yu pilim pen we?	<i>Where do you feel pain?</i>
Pen i mov o nogat?	<i>Does the pain move or stay still?</i>
Pen i kirap kwiktaim?	<i>Did the pain come on suddenly?</i>
Hamaspela (de / wik / mun) pen i stap?	<i>How long have you had the pain?</i>
Em i strongpela pen tru o nogat?	<i>Is it very painful or not?</i>
Pen i kamap (mobeta / moa nogut) taim yu wokim sampela samting?	<i>Is there anything you do to make the pain better / worse?</i>
Yu gat traut?	<i>Have you vomited?</i>
Bel bilong yu i tantanim?	<i>Are you nauseated?</i>
Yu tuhat o nogat?	<i>Any sweating?</i>
Skin bilong yu i hat o nogat?	<i>Do you have a temperature / fever?</i>
Skin bilong yu i guria o nogat?	<i>Have you been shivering?</i>
Skin bilong yu i sikarap sikarap?	<i>Is your skin itchy?</i>
Yu pilim skin les (olgeta taim)?	<i>Do you feel tired (all the time)?</i>
Yu silip gut?	<i>Do you sleep well?</i>
Yu tuhat long nait o nogat?	<i>Are you sweaty during the night?</i>
Yu lusim wet?	<i>Have you lost any weight?</i>
Yu gat gutpela apatait?	<i>Do you have a good appetite?</i>

Cardiovascular enquiry

Yu (gat) sot win? ... taim yu silip?	<i>Are you short of breath? ... lying down?</i>
Taim yu kirap long nait yu pilim sot win?	<i>Do you wake up short of breath?</i>
Yu pilim (lewa / kilok) bilong yu wok?	<i>Do you have any palpitations?</i>
Yu gat pen i bros?	<i>Do you have any chest pain?</i>
Yu gat sampela solap?	<i>Do you have any swelling (oedema)?</i>

Respiratory enquiry

Yu gat kus?	<i>Do you have a cough?</i>
Wanem kala bilong spet bilong kus?	<i>What colour is the sputum?</i>
Yu kus wantaim blut?	<i>Have you coughed up any blood?</i>
Yu gat pen taim yu pulim strongpela win?	<i>Does it hurt when you take a deep breath?</i>

Gastrointestinal enquiry

Yu painim hart long daunim spet?
Yu pekpek wara o nogat?
Yu no pekpek longpela taim?
/ Bel bilong yu i pas?
Wanem kala bilong pekpek?
Pekpek i strong o malo malo?
Yu pekpek blut?

*Do you have trouble swallowing?
Do you have diarrhoea?
Are you constipated?

What colour is the stool?
Is the stool hard or soft?
Have you passed any blood in the stool?*

Genitourinary enquiry

Yu pispis orait? ... wankain olsem, yu
lusim pispis taim yu kus?
Yu painim hart long pispis?
Yu pilim pen taim yu pispis?
Yu kirap long nait long pispis?
Yu pispis blut?

*Any trouble urinating? ... For example, do
you pass any water when you cough?
Is it difficult to urinate?
Is it painful to urinate?
Do you need to get up at night to urinate?
Have you passed any blood in the urine?*

Neurological enquiry

Yu pundaun long graun pinis?
Ai bilong yu i raun?
Yu hap i dai?
Yu gat sik maruk? *
Yu sikim guria?
Inap yu wokabout long lek?
Yu gat pen o sampela kain pen?
Lekhan bilong yu i dai o nogat?

*Did you fall to the ground?
Do you feel dizzy?
Did you lose consciousness?
Do you suffer from fits?
Did you convulse / fit?
Are you able to walk?
Do you have any pain or pins and needles?
Any numbness in your limbs?*

* 'Sik maruk' is a term for the disease epilepsy.

Musculo-skeletal enquiry

Yu gat pen bilong ol bun bilong yu?
Lekhan bilong yu i tait?
Han antablo bilong yu i solap?

*Are your joints painful?
Are your joints stiff?
Did your hands / wrists swell up?*

Gynaecological enquiry

Wanem taim yu lukim sik mun bilong
yu?
Hamaspela de yu lukim sik mun?
Yu lusim planti o liklik?
Yu gat hamas pikinini? ...
...yu lusim o rausim sampela?
Yu lusim sampela kain wara long bokis

*When was your last period?
How long do your periods last?
Are they heavy or light?
How many children do you have?
Did you lose or miscarry any pregnancies?
Do you have any vaginal discharge?*

bilang yu?
Examination

Firstly some phrases to ask permission to examine a patient:

Inap mi lukim bel bilong yu plis?
Mi laik harim lewa bilong yu wok

*May I look at your abdomen please
I would like to listen to your heart*

Below are the phrases required to examine all the systems apart from the neurological system:

Sindaun stret / Silip
Inap mi lukim han bilong yu?
Yu gat pen long solda bilong yu?
Pulim win / Rausim win
Holim win bilong yu
Tok nainti-nain... gen
Bai mi pilim bel bilong yu... Yu singaut
taim yu pilim pen. Em i orait?

*Sit up / Lie down
Can I see your hands?
Any pain in the shoulder?
Breathe in / Breathe out
Hold your breathe
Say '99'... and again
I'm going to press on your abdomen... You let
me know if you feel any pain, o.k.?*

Neurological examination

This is the most difficult examination to conduct in *tok pisin* due to the need for effective communication of the actions the patient is required to perform. Actions which test muscle strength may be considered pathologically weak unless it is clear to the patient what it is he or she is required to do. Use of the word '*strong*' gives encouragement to pull in or push away as hard as possible. Frequent repetitions of the phrase '*lusim ol mussel bilong yu*' are likely in order to be able to test muscle tone.

Inap yu wokabaut long lek long mi
 Lukluk nus bilong mi na poinim pinga
 bilong mi taim em mov
 Bihainim pen bilong mi. No ken muvim
 het bilong yu
 ... yu lukim samting i tupela?
 Opim mus bilong yu
 Inap yu pilim dispela?
 Pasim ai bilong yu
 Inap yu harim dispela?
 Tok 'aagh'
 Drausim tung bilong yu
 Lusim ol mussel bilong yu
 Stretim lek
 (Upim / Daunim) lek bilong yu
 Hukim skru
 Upim han
 (Foldim / hukim) han bilong yu
 Foldim lek bilong yu
 Subim han / lek bilong yu

 Poinim pinga bilong yu antap
 ("Touch"-im / pilim) pinga bilong mi *
 ..("Touch"-im / pilim) nus bilong yu
 Inap yu wokim dispela?
 Inap yu pilim dispela?

Can you try to walk for me
Look at my nose and point to my finger when
it moves
Follow my pen and don't move your head

... any double vision?
Open your mouth
Can you feel this? (cotton wool, pin etc.)
Close your eyes
Can you hear this?
Say 'aagh'
Stick out your tongue
Just relax – "go all floppy"
Straighten your legs
Lift your leg up / Push your leg down
Bend your knee
Lift your arms up
Bend your elbows -pull in! (encouragement)
Bend your legs (pull in!)
Push me away (by straightening your
hands/legs)
Point your thumb towards the ceiling
Touch my finger
... touch your nose
Can you do this (e.g. dysdiadochokinesia)
Can you feel this?

* "Touch" is pronounced as in English, the -im suffix indicates a transitive verb.

The following three phrases explain the actions necessary to test for heel-knee-shin ataxia:

Lusim lek tambolo long narapela skru
 bilong yu
 Muvim lek bilong yu i go daun long
 narapela lek bilong yu
 Upim na wokim gen
 Wokim wankain long apsait

Put your heel on the knee of your other leg

Move your heel down your shin

Lift up and do it again
Do the same on the other side

Medical Vocabulary

Anatomy

Below are some parts of the body in tok pisin. Note that *sangana* can mean both armpit and groin and that *lewa* can be used to mean almost any internal organ.

skin	<i>skin</i>	heart	<i>kilok / lewa</i>
head	<i>het</i>	lungs	<i>wetlewa</i>
brain	<i>kru bilong het</i>	intestines / liver	<i>lewa</i>
face	<i>pes</i>	back	<i>bek / beksait</i>
neck	<i>nek</i>	abdomen (tummy)	<i>bel</i>
eyes	<i>ai</i>	navel	<i>hap bel</i>
ears	<i>yau</i>	bottom (buttocks)	<i>as</i>
nose	<i>nus</i>	leg	<i>lek</i>
mouth	<i>mus</i>	ankle	<i>lek tambolo</i>
tongue	<i>tung</i>	foot	<i>lek tambolo / fut</i>
shoulder	<i>solda</i>	knee	<i>skru</i>
arm	<i>han (antap)</i>	toe	<i>pinga bilong lek</i>
forearm / hand	<i>han tambolo</i>	groin	<i>sangana</i>
armpit	<i>sangana</i>	testicles	<i>bol</i>
finger	<i>pinga</i>	penis	<i>kok</i>
finger nail	<i>kapa bilong pinga</i>	female genitalia	<i>bokis</i>
chest	<i>bros</i>		
		feel better ^{vb}	<i>pilim mobeta</i>

Other vocabulary

bandage ^{vb} a wound	<i>pasim sua</i>		
blind	<i>ai pas</i>	feel worse ^{vb}	<i>pilim moa nogut</i>
blood	<i>blut</i>	fracture ⁿ	<i>bun i bruk</i>
blood vessel	<i>mambu bilong blut</i>	hospital	<i>hausik</i>
		immunisation	<i>bebi sut</i>
chew ^{vb} betelnut	<i>kaikai buai</i>	inject ^{vb}	<i>sutim</i>
clean ^{vb} a wound	<i>klinim sua</i>	injection	<i>sut</i>
condom	<i>gumi bilong kok / karamap</i>	injure ^{vb}	<i>bagarapim</i>
		look after ^{vb}	<i>lukautim</i>
cut ⁿ	<i>kat</i>	medicine (drug)	<i>marasin</i>
cut ^{vb}	<i>katim</i>	contraception	<i>samting bilong pasim bel</i>
deaf	<i>yau pas</i>		
doctor	<i>dokta</i>	nurse	<i>nes</i>
drink ^{vb}	<i>dringim</i>	ointment	<i>gris</i>
drink ^{vb} alcohol	<i>dringim bia / wiski</i>	operation	<i>operesin</i>
		patient	<i>sikman / sikmeri</i>
eat ^{vb}	<i>kaikai</i>	pustule	<i>sua i gat susu</i>
fall down ^{vb}	<i>pundaun</i>	saliva	<i>spet</i>

sew up ^{vb}	<i>samapim</i>
sleepy	<i>ai i hevi</i>
smoke ^{vb}	<i>simuk</i>
sore ⁿ	<i>sua</i>
swelling / lump	<i>solap</i>
ward	<i>wot</i>
wash / bathe ^{vb}	<i>waswas</i>
water	<i>wara</i>
X-ray ^{vb}	<i>kisim piksa</i>
X-ray ⁿ	<i>piksa</i>

Colloquial phrases

The following are some colloquial phrases popular around the East Sepik Province:

Abung kanta katch Catch you later / see you
-especially familiar to highlanders

Katch mulai Catch you later / see you
-of Sepik origin

Ab man gang Good night
-of Sepik or New Britain origin

The universal term for 'goodbye' or 'see you later' is *lukim yu* or *lukim yu bihain*.

Language Resources

Lonely Planet Publications publish a pidgin phrasebook which contains everyday phrases and vocabulary in *tok pisin* and also has sections for other pidgin languages of Oceania:

Pidgin Phrasebook: Pidgin Languages of Oceania 2nd edition, Lonely Planet Publications, 1999
ISBN: 0 86442 587 2

A Pidgin-English dictionary, compiled by Terry D. Barhorst and Sylvia O'Dell-Barhorst can be found on the internet at www.june29.com/HLP/lang/pidgin.html. Such dictionaries can also be found in Christian bookshops in Papua New Guinea.

'*Yumi Lainim Tok Pisin*' can be bought in Christian bookshops in Papua New Guinea. This book has a unique way of teaching the reader commonly used clauses and language patterns, enabling complex sentences to be formed. The book is also full of exercises allowing the reader to test their expertise:

Copeland, B. Yumi Lainim Tok Pisin. Oceania Gospel Publishing Mission, 1997
ISBN 9980 85 172 4

The *Wantok* newspaper, which is not available online like the other three Papua New Guinean national newspapers (the Post-Courier, the National and the Independent), is printed entirely in *tok pisin*.

Radio Australia on the internet features news written in *tok pisin* and also live internet broadcasts in *tok pisin* at specific times. Visit www.abc.net.au/ra/tokpinin/.

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