Comprehensive Illustrated Pakuni Dictionary

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Foreword - A personal introduction

Pakuni, the language spoken by the “Monkey Men” in Sid and Marty Kroft’s “Land Of The Lost” was created by the late Victoria Fromkin, a linguist from UCLA. I have long enjoyed learning languages (this includes national languages as well as constructed languages). One day I decided to learn Pakuni’s “300 words” (an oft-quoted number). It was going to be a simple undertaking. I’d look up the Pakuni language courses on the internet, make my flash cards, and in a few months I’d have it all down solid.

What I found, however, was that while this language was well known to fans of the show, it was not well documented. The official information about the language (published while the show was still airing or shortly thereafter) was limited and sometime contradictory. A few fans of the show had put together some notes, but the spelling rules were somewhat arbitrary, and there were still many Pakuni words used in the show which did not have documented meanings. An additional point of confusion is that at least one fan had made up her own version of Pakuni with her own words and this dictionary was being referenced by other authors as if this was part of Fromkin’s language.

In 2009 I pulled all the available information together and set out to watch all the episodes to translate all known examples of Pakuni. The result is the accompanying dictionary. It was always my intention to put this information on line, but it was never quite clear to me where I should put it, and I never got around to re-writing it in a way that would make sense to anybody other than myself. Now (2014) thanks to the encouragement of some folks on the CONLANG mailing list and especially the people at Fiat Lingua, I have decided to put my 11 page dictionary on-line as is. I am grateful for this assistance.

I am also indebted to Nels P. Olsen and Clayton Barr for their work in documenting the Pakuni language. Olsen’s dictionary and Barr’s episode summaries (with Pakuni dialog) was of immense value in the preparation of this dictionary.

Note on Method

When I decided to undertake my own study of Pakuni, I watch each episode multiple times. First I would transcribe the Pakuni dialog from one episode and include any
relevant context that would help us understand what was being said. Then I would compare my transcriptions to Barr’s. If there was a disagreement on what was said, I would go back and watch that portion until I was sure that I had transcribed it as best as possible. This formed the corpus on which the dictionary was founded.

I prepared an alphabetical word list and included every known translation from other dictionaries. When several sources agreed with each other (and when the meaning fit what I was seeing on the screen), I simply listed the source. If there was some disagreement or uncertainty, I included an example from the corpus.

Note on Sources

On the first page of the accompanying scans, there is a list of symbols that represent the source for a word. All these sources should be easy enough to find on line.

The first (TV) is the TV Guide article on Pakuni. The second (lg) is a “Pakuni Language Test” from a linguistics class. Next is (ff) which represents the Encyclopedia of Fictional and Fantastic Languages. The symbol (np) is for references to Nels P. Olsen’s dictionary. The paragraph symbol (PP) is used for the Pocket Pakuni Dictionary from the book Puffinstuff and Other Stuff. I also included words from a foreign language dictionary which I believe was in Portuguese. Clayton Barr had sent me an unpublished list of words. I believe this is what I am referring to with (cb). Hal Erickson (HE) is a reference to Sid and Marty Krofft, A Critical Study of Saturday Morning Children’s Television, 1969-1993, by Hal Erickson, which includes a short list of words.

Late in the production of these notes, I received a copy of Fromkin’s own description of the language fro 1995. There are important differences between what is in these notes and what was in the show. References to this document are indicated by (F95).

Finally (10yr) appears to be a reference to “Land of the Lost - Ten Years Gone.” This is a variation of Fromkin’s Pakuni and includes many words that were made up by a person known online as Laurel. In the time since 2009 when I prepared my notes, Laurel has
revised her web page making it easier to see which words are Fromkin’s and which ones are her own. Since she quotes the same sources I list above, it was seldom necessary to quote her dictionary. However, some of these “made up” words did end up in my dictionary mostly via (ff).

Words attested to only by (ff) will need to be removed from this dictionary. There are other words included that are not attested to elsewhere. These will need to be sorted out and probably removed too.

This symbol , or the initials “twa” indicate that this is a meaning I have determined from context, or that I am expressing a question or doubt about the information being quoted.)

One other source worth mentioning is the dictionary from the DVD set. This turned out to be more or less the same as one of the other sources listed above.

Pakuni Alphabet

A B Ch D E F G I J K M N Ng O P R S Sh T U W Y

These are pronounced more or less as you would expect them to be pronounced from English. A E I O U should be pronounced approximately as

- A - father
- E - hate
- I - heed
- O - boat
- U - hoot

(Examples taken from Fromkin’s 1995 description of the language.)

The letter Z is sometimes included, but is only found in the word “oganza” - which is most credibly “ogansa” based on everything else we know.

Syllables are consonant + vowel + m/n/ng

Quick Notes on Grammar

Nouns begin with a vowel showing what category of object they are. Words in the dictionary are alphabetical by root word. That is, “etimi” (fish) will be listed under T. The prefix vowels were transcribed based on how the actors pronounced the words, which was not always clear. Additional notes have come to my attention, but I have not sorted through them yet.
Word order is SVO, and adjectives follow nouns. Adjectives and nouns take a plural ending (-ni).

The last syllable of a word can be repeated for emphasis. “Bisa” means big. “Bisasa” means very big.

Miscellaneous Notes

The language is generally referred to as “Pakuni” which is the Pakuni plural of “Paku”, then name of the monkey men from the show. Fromkin tended to call the language “Paku.”

Most of the examples of Pakuni that we have were spoken by a child actor wearing false teeth. The dictionary includes variations in pronunciation. The final version of this dictionary will include these as well so that it can be used to translate lines from the show. When the “correct” form of the word can be determined, this will be indicated.
a - and &v
- possibly "po" - chana che dipi a ego turn
- Poss "offer" cb see \[ \text{PEF} \] to follow Bing

ba - come (\text{tr}) see \text{asa for}
\text{obasa} - count \text{top noun} - from \text{ekra for}
bako - bring (\text{tr}) ye bala yamani
bake - bring (\text{tr}) ye bala yamani

\text{bunla} - came? / np (wi where's)

ban / ban - paint / painty.
bev - from color - finish - \text{cb}
bi - prefer - big - / np
be - ye bengin eusachi - to leg team < \text{PQ5 Bing} - to follow

obi - head - / np

\text{bimichi} - to be ok? \rightarrow \text{The musician} \rightarrow \text{Clayton}
\text{bimisha} - man \text{np} \text{np}

\text{bimista} - manish \text{np} 'Bimichi' used to mean brave, Bimichisa as coward

\text{biskiki} - mainly \text{np} - person / social) nicely

\text{bisa / bisasa} - big / very big \text{np} - check say's s.t. like This in Arkan express
\text{bina / bisasa} - pass "very heavy" - check say's s.t. like This in Arkan express

\text{abo} - all isama - / np \rightarrow \text{The} abobo or abobo (see the text.)

\text{abo} - short \text{np}
\text{abo} - np: "fierce?" - twa \text{leader}?

\text{boma} - / np: "leader?" - twa \text{leader}
\text{bowa} - to know (10 gr) - Mara shawa m ban na, sa opani see ne\text{wa}

\text{abu - child} \text{np np}
\text{busa - childish} \text{np np}
\text{abusa - small} \text{np np}

\text{bu - to be able} \text{np np} (\text{w a\text{b}i (it)?)}
\text{ebu - image / portrait} \text{np (w e\text{b}i? eban?)}

\text{abuma - girl} \text{np np}
Che (twsh?) - chase

Chi - open - ta ko chi exam shu ma - Pylon express
  - ye chi toye - see jitoje
  - chase - azomba chi evokam - tag team

Echichi - egg

Ching - pull
c

Chiri - silence
  - see tiri (§)

Chitoje / Chi toje - see jitoje - See jitoje

Chiri is used by will in the masi can, & ify and by ta

Not a

See koji
ada - father

dam - with

tu - chaka ko ku dan/gan ye - pigey express

se yu yu, tum - ye ba gan meni - pigey who come 2 din

darun - tu? - ye darun onam - jarraf storm

de - do

mp

dena - need?

iga meni dena ota - ssea sak gud

dena - need

dinda - to eat

du - unknown - chaka: do yoro ari - guiney rock to lost city

so - yoro ari - guiney rock to lost city

dochi - see duchi (dopi, dochi nego tusa-tip)
edobi - door - sa omata edobi ko koji... pigey express

doma - ugly

sawisa taka

se yu yu, tum - pigey who come 2 din

dona - see duma

dora - from kun to throw - see darun, dora, duma

duchi - down

dowumani - energy - pigey express

dusa - boy (from kun's textbook)
dura - throw

(a) meni dinda (a) meni duma

se oman jedora onam ti

zat jotter
Fa - take / accept / hp: cf. *take*

 će - something up / thing pp. pl. / Sa cf. = what?

 - nefi nothy up

 Finga = see nun Finga

 Fo - to Say Gv ⇒ cb = called. ⇒ cb: oju Fu "ta" - the musician

 Efuruami = ceremony / mp. = maybe eperami - To

 Fu - happen / mp. = meaning unknown "Chaka Fu" gives ring - the musician

 Fusa (cfh) = quick (iy) / mp = Poss. = I am hungry

 C - ofu - spilled / it

 āmug - agamba oṣa

 A gamba = dinosaur and/or tyrannosaurus / mp

 Agamba & agamba in episode Chaka

 A gamba = pronounced like the om s tone court

 Iguma = iṣiṣana / mp = see ekanga

 Ogoma = magic

 Ofun s e = it

 Gbogbogbo - accoutant

 Oja - ego agiga - ower there = nice day

 Oja - place = sa ego where it

 Obó - Caelophysis (spot) / it = ogasa

 Obó = Caelophysis (spot) / it = ogasa

 Osa = re: Bond (~) sa ego meni ko ba agoyi? baby sitter

 Agoya = mp: "leader?" ⇒ agoya = opp. opp. (spite soup)

 Gosa = fierce / it

 Asowuba = tyrannosaurus (Bored)

 Agupa = (behind)

 Aguga (ego aguga) here is / here (see text)
Ejiga - ye ma ejiga means stone soup

Ejiga - thunder
Ejiga - egg (also echichi & ejiga - tukutu)
Ejiga - house
Ejiga - others

Ji - beg

Jito = ye - please, unknown - I have this as ye jito ye, Claytons has ye chi to ye = thank you

Jito = thank

Ka - open
Kassa - happy
Kasita - quiet
Kungu - Igama
Chaka e kanga - Baby s16
Kesa - young
Ku - youth

Akuka - there
Okima - cactus
Akingo - grumpy

Koji - open
Cora - some
Komo - stalk?

Ku - go
Ku esiga - that one (gravel/stones)
Kunisa - see nira
m - negative prefix (y) \( \rightarrow \) s, e "em" in (ogo)

Ma - give up
Me - I me mine - a
Mечi - please [up (w) Me ji ye?] \( \rightarrow \) in jyoun express, Holy clearly

Meta - time [up]

Arizona - friend(-ship) (Bunad) \( \rightarrow \) 10 years gone has Amen Da

Mica - algum
Mekiri - age
Mekiri metani - as seen

Mika - want [w] ye mika dinla ego ayuca (jyoun express)

Min - ye bengmin Fusachi - tag team \( \leq \) BingMe = follow me

Misa \( \rightarrow \) possibly adjective from gami (mother) \( \rightarrow \) pass mispron of Bisa or Nisa

Misa \( \rightarrow \) from uin \( \rightarrow \) small

Mo - see koni (sort?)

Ami - mother (?)

Emi - small [u] omovesa \( \rightarrow \) sana A Kamomo
diamonds
diamonds
diamonds

Emu - pug [up] \( \rightarrow \) in pakuni who came to dinner "omovesa" sounds like "omovesa"

Muru - to scale [w]

Mundi - Friends (f) \( \rightarrow \) ye ni un mendi - the test

Mufinge - vB - Don't move \( \rightarrow \) mu finge? \( \rightarrow \) to stop

Amura - friend (e)
Pun - understand (10yr)

Puchu - to make? - From Clayton - tanpit 5:28 Me ko ku puchi ban meche
eram - moon
ra - help
apra araka - cannot - toy kam - see Fromkin
arapa araka - 4st
re - unknown - Ima bisa, meni re -Aylen express
ro - 6th, 7th - save - see cora.

To -Ben-undo - welcome

foshi - mark (tw foshi eshisu)

oroka - freak
rokasa - strange
roka - no, ofu roka, misa, ku egiga - gravity shown.

ru steal - see also mum, geni ru onam meni wachi anwachi soup
aruna - hook (nice day)

sa - what
sa pakuni - sa eti what
sa ago-mone

Sa - really asu
Osu - Saku (me Saku) thank you - see jito

Sesu - hear - if - pen eloton - I hear "wind sisu"
Sisu - me um sisu - to hear

Eshisu - fest

Eshisu - see eshisu

Esuka - chaka buku, esuka pukusa - pass: Ejiiri pakusa

Esuka - wacher

Glossed as "comed/kenna fury" in Fonkano.
She - see che - Chaka she dopi - tan pit

ashi

dele ashi mali [jet] ta (knows) jet - yon express

choaka ko shi ta
The musician

shi - it np (not correlated)

Shinu - ask [w] imp

ehisu - test (ta éoshi ehisu - mark of the test.)
Shinu - do form the test sae ye ding shin - see also shin
ota - fine [w] imp q\ (ye ba, ota = chaka)

otam - time? - sa otam gedowa onum ta - Bady soke, - see Omuta

Telo - see ashi

tiba - to bite transcribed fish tiba etushini; Clayton: imu tiba pakuni

etimi - fish (nice day) - fromkin: Ishimi

Tiri - quest \(\uparrow\) see Chiri

Ting - Push \(\uparrow\) up

tobi - great [w] np

toda - Chaka - say this with yon express (when he runs from Sa hold all the cool)

tonga - Cactus [g]

toda - (poss dedari a Dedari) - The First (tan pit)

tonga - etushini - worms (?) - Fish tiba (bite?) etushini (nice day)

Otu - evil [g] np: "tall" bad. A tall  - see also apa tusa

tusa - evil [g] np: "tall" bad. A tall  - see also apa tusa

tum - with [h]
A (see also Wu – Holly's Pyjama express) in - (Pyjama express) u go aguya, who?
wa

wa i - she/ her
wa ni - they
wa m - to run

wa chi - now

we - he/ her
we ni - not listed
we sa - Fragrant? good?
we sa / we sa - good

see boma

W 0

Woye - Hollywood

Woye - Flower

Wocasa - see "Rokasa" (strange)

Oje wokasa - babysitter

Wu - to see
You see Dan
Also ya - Holly: ye mi ku ya meni e? - The musician
You - you, you

agitsa - well - agitsa ku - The wall went - The musician
clay for dem said "ye me ku ku", which I find doubtful.

agyo -> go
agoyo -> go
yom - certesa, sure

agyo - Remember?
Wani? - This day go go. Rick: won't forget his help
Ten year - go go = true.
Clayton: try agree

@wim in Franklin

agya - wind at -> agya fo ta - The musician, not on TV's transcript
A yusa - ? - agyusa meni - Paken came to dinner. Note: Yeba meni in Clayton