

Boze medical terminology and diseases



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This version: Belmopan, 28 November, 2013

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1. Introduction

The Boze (Buji) language forms part of the ‘Jere cluster’ and is in turn part of the Northern Jos group of the East Kainji languages spoken north of Jos town in Central Nigeria. Very little has been published on this group, with a mimeo by Shimizu (1971) and some short wordlists (Shimizu 1980, 1982). εBoze is the language of the AnaBoze people. The correct name for one Boze person is unaBoze and for the people anaBoze, while the name of the language is εBoze. The Boze are divided into two main dialects, εGorong and εKəkəŋ as well as a third rather divergent speech form, εFiru. The ‘original’ Boze are considered to be the anεKəkəŋ.

Table 1. Nomenclature of the Boze peoples

Language	One person	People	Short form
εBoze	unaBoze	anaBoze	B
εKəkəŋ	unaKəkəŋ	anεKəkəŋ	K
εGorong	unaGoron	anaGorong	G
εFiru	unoFiru	ànoFiru	F

The Boze live east and west of the Jos-Zaria road which runs northwest of Jos, in Bassa Local government area. The number of εBoze speakers is hard to gauge as Hausa has made inroads into many areas. But taking all three groups together, there must be 6-7000, not all of whom will be fully competent.

Very little has been written about the medical systems among the peoples of the Jos Plateau. This paper is an adjunct to my Boze dictionary, prepared in conjunction with the Boze literacy committee. It is intended to help people identify terms in the Boze language with modern medical terms and to lessen misunderstandings in diagnosis when people come to clinics. It must be emphasised this is highly preliminary. Ideally we would work through the whole list with a doctor familiar with tropical medicine, but this isn’t possible at present. The Hausa language is often used as an intermediary language in clinic, but not all Boze words translate easily into Hausa. I have included the Hausa term in the tables below where possible.

Boze people do not always classify disease in European categories. For example, it may seem unusual to have a special word for bleeding when you stub your toe or to give scabies and syphilis the same name. However, this is why medical anthropology can be useful.

2. Boze medical terminology

Table 2 lists Boze medical terminology as presently used, together with the Hausa equivalents, where known. Some of the terms are recent constructions, such as the term for ‘hospital’. In other cases, older terms have been modernised to include ‘doctors’ and other personnel.

Table 2. Boze medical terminology

s.	pl.	Hausa	English	Notes
à-kùrà tuka	tì-kùrà tì-tuka	<i>gidan magani</i>	clinic, hospital	modern term
ánárù		<i>duba</i>	diagnosis from experience	also applied to diagnosis in a hospital
è-keze kikiri	ù-keze	<i>gawa</i>	corpse witchcraft	
màkpene nune rara	màkpenekpene	<i>ciwo</i>	illness, disease sorcerer, someone who performs injurious rituals	note irregular plural
ò-bèrè	à-bèrè	<i>boka</i>	traditional doctor, healer, herbalist	This skill may be inherited or acquired
òńń-kpènè	ànóó kpènè	<i>masu jinya</i>	sick person	

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s.	pl.	Hausa	English	Notes
rèbèrè			diagnosis following a ritual performed by o-bèrè	
rè-kérò	à-kérò	<i>kaho</i>	cupping horn	
rì-gùúrù	sì-gùúrù	<i>guru</i>	amulet holder consisting of a string around the waist	< Hausa
rì-laga	à-laga, si-laga	<i>laya</i>	amulet attached to the upper arm	
tùká		<i>magani</i>	medicine	
tùka tuùrù		<i>maganin gona</i>	charm placed on the farm to prevent theft of crops	
ù-bənzì	à-bənzì	<i>likita</i>	traditional bonesetter who dealt with fractures and also gynaecological problems	now adapted to apply to modern western-trained doctors
ù-kiri	à-kiri	<i>fatalwa</i>	witch	witchcraft is ti-kiri
ù-láw	tì-láw	<i>laya</i>	charm, amulet	? < Hausa. Amulet attached to the ri-guru
ù-vùnù	–	<i>iskoki</i>	evil spirits	
ù-wárè	à-wárè	<i>majin yata</i>	patient	
ù-wónó	ù-wíjù	<i>mutuwa</i>	death	note suppletive plural

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3. Boze terms for diseases and medical conditions

Table 3 lists the Boze terms for diseases and medical conditions. Where I have been given a word by one person, but it hasn't been confirmed in a different village, I have marked it 'not confirmed'.

Table 3. Boze terms for diseases and medical conditions

s.	pl.	Hausa	English	Notes
à̀nùkùtù		<i>zazzabi</i>	fever	
à̀-̀r̀è̀kp̀è̀ǹè̀	t̀è̀-̀r̀è̀kp̀è̀ǹè̀		sore, wound	
beb̀onye			discharge of blood from a woman	
b̀efetɛ	ɛfetɛ		growth on the jaw of a buried corpse	This is believed to be the cause of a particular type of illness. If the diviner identified the individual, the skull is disinterred and the growth broken, thereby curing the illness.
b̀è̀r̀è̀	è̀r̀è̀		tribal scar	
b̀erɛ̀nk̀è̀ǹè̀		<i>sakuwa</i>	hiccups	
b̀erɛ̀nkɔ̀			cataracts	Not confirmed
b̀icá̀nz̀è̀		<i>hauka</i>	insanity	
b̀idà̀rà̀	idara igana		piles (in the anus)	
b̀igà̀nà̀				
bidara kane			fungus infection on the foot	
bidara			infection of the uvula	
r̀emɛ̀lɔ̀				
b̀i-gaǹò̀			tiredness	
b̀igbaywa	igbaywa		hernia	Not confirmed
b̀igbyà̀w	igbyà̀w		goitre	
b̀igiri gam̀ɔ̀			guinea-worm	
b̀i-gwada	igwada		scab, hard skin covering wound	
b̀i-jìgá̀	igìgá̀	<i>jiga</i>	jigger, <i>Tunga penetrans</i>	
b̀i-nama			convulsions	
b̀i-rá̀mpé̀	irá̀mpé̀	<i>kululuwa</i>	enlarged nodes on groin	
b̀i-tìshém̀ù̀		<i>atishawu</i>	sneezing	
b̀itù̀k̀à̀r̀i		<i>bakondoro</i>	measles	
biwɛ̀nkɛ̀ru			hysteria	
biyó̀			dry skin	

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s.	pl.	Hausa	English	Notes
cínjà		<i>amai</i>	vomiting, nausea	
èperesè		<i>mura</i>	cold	
èrù ùsùrù	tiratù ùsùrù		lymphoma	
gáyàṅ			healthy	min zi gayan I am healthy
ibisi			rheumatism	
ì-cákùmba			mumps	
ìdéra		<i>kazuwa</i>	scabies	
ìdéra			syphilis	women's disease
inaànuri		<i>hauka</i>	madness	lit. 'sickness of the stream'
ipate			tapeworm	
macata			sexual infection	Not confirmed
màdere sùrù			eczema	
madèsè			heartburn	
màlò			recovered	e.g. ra kuna malò I have recovered
mánìma		<i>kululuwa</i>	whitlow	
manyìmùra	—		leprosy	seems to mean 'coughing blood' with the Hausa word incorporated
maraku			dieting for medical purposes	Not confirmed
mashámò			rheumatism	Related to the word for 'health'
matir gishi			hookworm	
màzinà		<i>rashin karfi</i>	fatigue	
òkòtò	àkòtò		leper	
ò-kpènè			general term for chronic disease	
ò-kpèn'òvèrò		<i>fuka</i>	tuberculosis, asthma, lung disease	'sickness of cough'
ò-kpènè òwò		<i>agana</i>	smallpox	
ò-kpènè'ró			sleeping sickness, trypanosomiasis	
ò-kpènè ùsáw		<i>kanjamau</i>	AIDS	lit. 'eight'
òní ná nùrì			madman	'person of madness'
opèpeshè	tìpèpeshè		scar	
òvèrò		<i>tari</i>	cough	
òvèrò mànyì		<i>tari jini</i>	coughing with blood, haemoptysis	

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s.	pl.	Hausa	English	Notes
ògɔ̀ɔ̀nì			abdominal pain	also the name of the herb used to cure it
òbòròtòlò			scrotal swelling, scrotal hernia	
òpèpèrè		<i>farfada</i>	epilepsy	tone?
rè-more	à-more	<i>maruru</i>	boil	
re-woo			sharp pain usually caused by hard work	
rè-bètè	à-bètè		wart, blister e.g. fire blisters	
rɛkɔ̀tò		<i>kurturta</i>	leprosy	
rè-pè	à-pè	<i>kullutu</i>	cyst	
rɛ-wɔ̀			pneumonia	uncertain identification
ricò			bleeding when you stub your toe	
rì-jì		<i>kaban cibi</i>	umbilical hernia	
rimare			growth on throat or tongue of children or animals	Not confirmed
rì-pùrù		<i>sifa</i>	enlarged spleen	
rì-rù		<i>makanta</i>	blindness	
shámò		<i>lafiya</i>	health, peace	a pene di shamo
sukusuku			describes unhealthy condition (frequently person sick)	Not confirmed
tí-rù		<i>ramiwa</i>	weight loss, leanness, emaciation	
ù-bùjì	ì-bùjìjì	<i>kumburi</i>	swelling	
ùcìcù			ringworm	
ùgambasa			peptic ulcer	
ùgbààrè		<i>zawo, kashi jini</i>	diarrhoea, dysentery	
ùjiji apùrù		<i>macijin ciki</i>	intestinal worms	
ù-kala biyà			dizziness in children	sometimes also adults
ù-kullù			gingivitis, bleeding from the gums	
ù-kpènè nǎ		<i>ciwon</i>	gonorrhoea	
rònè		<i>sanyi</i>	gonorrhoea	
ukwenawáy			gonorrhoea	
ù-lèmè	ti-lèmù	<i>miki</i>	scar, scratch, abrasion	distinguished from tribal scar

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s.	pl.	Hausa	English	Notes
umura	—		health	Not confirmed
ùné nùrì			madness	
ùpùù			pain (general term)	
ùpùú rètè		<i>ciwon kai</i>	headache	
upisi			nosebleed	
ùpuù tini			waist pain	
ùrawày			joint pain	
ù-rù	à-rù		blind person	
ùtítírì			rash	
ùwàè kùnù	tìwàè kùnù		gangrenous wound	
uyarɛ		<i>shawara</i>	jaundice, hepatitis	
ùyì m̀ənyì		<i>rashin jini</i>	anaemia	
wámò			recovered	e.g. na wamò
yɛbə ərunjì			piles in the anus in children	
yèwó			pneumonia	