

'do' and 'give': Macrofunctionality in the Cenderawasih Bay Area

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In several languages of the Cenderawasih Bay area, the same word means both 'do' and 'give'. This is evident in (at least) the following four unrelated etyma:

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| (1) | (a) | <i>ve</i> | Roon, Dusner, Waropen (Austronesian) |
| | (b) | <i>ong</i> | Wooi, Pom, Ansus, Wamesa (Austronesian) |
| | (c) | <i>eita</i> | Meyah, Moskona (East Bird's Head) |
| | (d) | <i>yai</i> | Hatam (isolate) |

This paper addresses the following two questions: First, what is the most appropriate synchronic analysis of 'do'/'give' identity: accidental resemblance, polyfunctionality (i.e. a single form with distinct but related meanings), or macrofunctionality (i.e. a single form with a single broad and undifferentiated meaning)? Secondly: What is the diachronic source of 'do'/'give' identity; specifically, is it Austronesian or non-Austronesian?

In order to address the first question, four criteria may be invoked:

- (2) A form may be appropriately analyzed as macrofunctional to the extent that
- the associated functions are plausibly related to each other;
 - the form may occur in utterances in which speakers and hearers do not care which of the functions is being expressed (i.e. it is vague rather than ambiguous);
 - a similar range of functions associated with a single form is attested in a wide range of genealogically and geographically unrelated languages;
 - the form and its entire range of functions are subject, as a single unit, to historical processes such as replacement and borrowing

While application of the first three criteria yields inconclusive results, suggesting that 'do'/'give' identity may constitute a case of polyfunctionality, application of the fourth criterion points strongly in the direction of a macrofunctional analysis. Specifically, the occurrence of 'do'/'give' identity in three unrelated but geographically proximate families, coupled with its scarcity outside the region in question, suggests that 'do'/'give' identity originated once in the region, with a single macrofunctional form subsequently undergoing replacement through contact and borrowing, while being treated as a single unitary entity.

The history of 'do'/'give' identity is difficult to determine for at least the following three reasons: first because it took place a long time ago, secondly because much of it involves a sprachbund of unrelated small families of non-Austronesian languages to which the standard method of historical-comparative reconstruction is not readily applicable, and thirdly because it presumably involves multiple events of language contact playing out over an extended period of time. Still, the following observations can be made. To begin with, the *ve* etymon in (1a) is a direct descendent of proto-Austronesian **beRay* 'give', while its meaning as 'do' represents a later expansion. Secondly, the *ong* etymon in (1b) would seem to be an ancient borrowing from an unattested non-Austronesian language related to Proto-Timor-Alor-Pantar, for which **ong* 'do' has been reconstructed (by Schapper). These and other facts would seem to point towards a non-Austronesian origin for 'do'/'give' identity, suggesting that its occurrence in the Austronesian languages of the Cenderawasih Bay region is one of a number of features that reflect ancient pervasive contact with non-Austronesian languages.