

The Dialects of Biatah

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1. Overview

The name “Biatah” is currently used as a cover term for the Land Dayak groups living in the Siburan and Padawan sub-districts, directly to the south of Kuching.¹ This language area actually includes a dozen or so distinct named subgroups, each with their own particular way of speaking. These subgroups share a fairly large core of common vocabulary, and speakers from any one of these subgroups are generally able to communicate fairly effectively with members of other subgroups in face-to-face situations. But whether this ability is due to the innate similarity of the dialects, or to wide-spread learning of other dialects (“bidialectalism”), has yet to be investigated.

The Biatah language area can be divided into four major dialect areas, based on differences of vocabulary and pronunciation: (1) Siburan (or “Biatah proper”); (2) Penrissen; (3) Lower Padawan; (4) Upper Padawan.

The Siburan dialect is widely regarded as the “standard” dialect of Biatah; most publications in the Biatah language (including the New Testament, other religious materials, the folk-tale book and primer by Fr. Howes, and the dictionary by Datuk William Nais) are based on this dialect. The Penrissen dialect differs from the Siburan dialect primarily in terms of pronunciation (phonological features), although there are differences in vocabulary as well. The Upper Padawan dialect is more similar to Siburan in terms of pronunciation, but is set apart by a relatively large number of distinct vocabulary items. The Lower Padawan dialect shares the phonological features of the Penrissen dialect, as well as some but not all of the characteristic Padawan vocabulary items (the exact proportion varying from one subgroup to the next). However, several of the subdialects within the Lower Padawan area are quite different from any of the others, and could actually be considered distinct dialects in their own right.

I have included two dialects in this study which I do not believe to be dialects of Biatah, namely Mbaan and Tringgus (or Runggus, as these people call themselves). These are included because their traditional home is within the Padawan area, and because Mbaan at least is generally assumed to be a Biatah dialect.² While it is true that these two dialects share a high percentage of vocabulary items with Biatah, in particular with the Padawan dialect, I believe they represent descendents of some older, distinct language which, over a prolonged period of contact with Biatah speakers, have borrowed a number of Biatah words. These dialects will be discussed in detail in section 5.

Each Biatah subgroup is generally identified in terms of a common asar, ‘origin place’ or ‘ancestor village’, from which all the modern villages in that subgroup are said to be descended. (In many cases, the subgroup is named for the asar, by adding the prefix bi-. This prefix has a multitude of uses, but in this context is often translated as ‘from’.) The typical story involves a retreat from head-hunting enemies to mountain-top, fortress-like long-houses (or, in the case of Būnūk, into hiding in caves). When conditions became sufficiently peaceful, in many cases within the last 150 years or less, people began to move down from these villages and establish new daughter villages. A list of the subgroups in each major dialect area is given in Table 1. (The list of daughter villages within each subgroup is not necessarily complete. A two-letter code is assigned to each subdialect for later reference).

¹Within this language area, the term “Biatah” is normally used to refer specifically to the Siburan dialect.

²The Tringgus are sometimes referred to as a distinct language group.

Table 1: List of dialects and villages

<u>Dialect</u>	<u>Abbrev.</u>	<u>Origin Village</u>	<u>Other Villages</u>
1 Siburan			
a. Siburan (= “Biatah proper”)	SB	Siburan (= Səntah)	Kuab (Quop), Duras, Tijirak, Siratau, Siga, Sa’an (Masa’an), Sungai Dū’ūh, Sidanu, Pərmās
2 Penrissen			
a. Bisitaang	ST	Sitaang	Mambong, Sikog, Simbuh, Bangau, Pətag, Tabuan Rabak, Pətung, Mənjau, Krumboi
b. Bipūrūh	PR	Rabak Mikabuh (Kg. Səmadang)	Karu, Giam, Garung, Jambu, Git, Grait (= Nyiru’?)
c. Bibūnūk	BK	Būnūk (Səgu)	Bratan, Punau
3 Lower Padawan			
a. Bibəngoh	BH	Bəngoh	Danu
b. Bra’ang	BR	Bung Sibagak (near Bayur)	Bra’ang Pəyang, Bra’ang Wa’, Bayur, Tibise’ (Sibisia’), Sigandar, Bidak, Pisuh, Timuran Baru, Grumbing (Brəmin)
c. Pinyawa	PW	Gayu	Supak, Subang, Praya, Krian, Sikuduk, Ma’ang, Sira’, Stabut, Pəsang, Bəgu’, Sg. Riset
d. Bisəpug	SP	Gunung Brungu (=Gunung Səpug)	Səpug Pruman (Simpok), Mundai, Sarig
4 Upper Padawan			
Bianah	AN	Anah Ra’is	Sadir, Simuti, Sibuang, Dunuk, Simaru, Teng, Marakep, Rayang, Rudan, Bisira’
Tibia’	TB	Kiding	Abang, Kakas, Parang, Asom, Sapit, Taba’ Sait, Taba’ Pain, Bojong, Maras (?)
Gun	GN	Gun (Indon.)	Sidūt (Indon.)
5 Tringgus-Mbaan			
Mbaan	MA	Səmbaan	Réjoi
Tringgus	TR	Bung Rəja’ (= Tringgus Raya)	Kg. Raba’ Rutan, Bau (incl. Kg. Bung and Kg. Rutan)

2. The scope of the study

It has become standard practice to divide the Sarawak Land Dayak groups into three major linguistic divisions: Bau-Jagoi, Bukar-Sadong, and Biatah.³ Prof. Topping (1990) found that Biatah shares roughly 50-52% cognate (i.e., historically related) vocabulary

³I will not touch on the other two groups often included under the label “Bidəyūh”, namely Selako and Lara’. Professors Hudson (1970), Adelaar (1990) and others have clearly shown that, at least linguistically, Selako belongs to the Malayic Dayak family. Lara’ is reportedly a dialect of the Bakati’ language of Kalimantan (Bryant, 1990).

with the Sadong dialect, and about 60-66% with Bau-Jagoi (including Singgai). To give a sense of what this measurement means, these figures indicate that Biatah is about as similar to Bau-Jagoi as Iban is to Malay; and that the degree of similarity between Biatah and Bukar-Sadong is about the same as that between Iban and Selako (Blust, 1988).

Within the Biatah language area, Prof. Topping found the vocabulary of the Siburan dialect to be 78-81% cognate with the other Biatah dialects. Other percentages were slightly lower, Pinyawa (for example) sharing 71-75% cognates with other Biatah dialects (apart from Siburan).

I have not attempted to replicate Topping's study. Instead of calculating cognate percentages, I have attempted to isolate characteristic vocabulary items and features of pronunciation which serve to distinguish or unite the various subdialects. The question of how we identify a "Biatah" dialect (that is, what features do these dialects have in common which mark them as being Biatah rather than Bau-Jagoi or Bukar-Sadong) is addressed briefly in section 6. However, the primary data for this study was collected exclusively within the Biatah language area; I rely on secondary sources for information about Bau-Jagoi and Bukar-Sadong.

The present study is based on wordlists collected for each subdialect.⁴ Whenever possible, the wordlist was collected in the *asar* (ancestor village) of the subgroup.⁵ If the origin place is now abandoned, as in Bisəpug and Bra'ang, the wordlist was collected in the village identified by people of other subgroups as being the most prominent or oldest. The limitations of a wordlist survey are well-known, and the results presented below must be regarded as preliminary. However, it is hoped that they will provide a useful starting point for more detailed descriptions of these dialects by future investigators, especially by native speakers of these dialects themselves.

The status of the Siburan dialect as the "standard" form of the Biatah language represents a significant obstacle for an outsider trying to gather data about the "non-standard" dialects. At the beginning of an interview, many people will try to reproduce standard Siburan lexical items with standard pronunciation, and (if they can see the transcriptions being taken) insist on "standard" spellings, following the spelling system taught in the early mission schools. Later on, when fatigue and familiarity allow for more relaxed responses, the characteristic features of the local dialect are more likely to emerge. Thus my data is most reliable where I was able to make several visits (as in Siburan and Būnūk), or where I was able to spend at least one night (as in Kiding and Səmbaan). Unfortunately, this proved to be the exception rather than the rule.

3. Features of the major dialect areas

In this section I will discuss some of the distinctive features of pronunciation and vocabulary which serve to unify each of the four major dialect areas, and to distinguish one dialect from another.

3.1 Phonology

The difference between the Penrissen and Siburan dialects which is most often mentioned by Biatah speakers themselves is the substitution of /o/ in Penrissen for the /ū/ sound in Siburan. (In this paper I will use the traditional symbol "ū" for the high back

⁴The data for this study was collected during a series of visits as a guest of the Lord Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Kuching, for the purpose of advising him and the Biatah translation committee concerning the degree of difference among the various Biatah dialects.

⁵The Bib'ngoh list was collected in Kg. Danu.

unrounded vowel usually transcribed as /ʉ/ or /i/.) Since the Upper Padawan dialect preserves the /ũ/, the /o/ pronunciation in forms like the following becomes a salient marker of the Penrissen dialect:

Table 2: /o/ for /ũ/ in the Penrissen dialect			
English	Siburan	Penrissen	Upper Padawan
<i>rubber</i>	pūtūk	potok	pūtūk
<i>five</i>	rimūh	rimoh	rimūh
<i>eye</i>	bətūh	bətoh	bətūh
<i>mountain</i>	dərūd	dərod	dərūd
<i>to sleep</i>	bū'ūs	bo'os	bū'ūs

(As noted above, the Lower Padawan dialect shares most of the phonological features of the Penrissen dialect, and so will not be discussed separately in this section.) Another difference in vowel quality involves the diphthongization of Siburan mid vowels, /e/ and /o/, to /iə/ and /uə/ respectively in the Penrissen dialect. A similar effect is observed in the Bianah subdialect, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 3: Diphthongization of mid vowels			
English	Siburan	Penrissen	Bianah
<i>durian</i>	dee ^d n	diə ^d n	dea ^t n
<i>younger sibling</i>	sude'	sədiə'	sudea'
<i>salty</i>	pide'	pədiə'	pədia'
<i>far</i>	joo'	juə'	joa'
<i>bush-knife</i>	buko'	bəkuə'	bukua'
<i>sheath</i>	siboŋg	buəŋg	səboakŋg
<i>needle</i>	utos	tuəs	toas

However, the other Upper Padawan subdialects, Tibia' and Gun, preserve the mid vowels /e/ and /o/.

Another characteristic of the Penrissen dialect is a tendency to reduce or even delete initial syllables of certain words. This tendency is simply an extension of a general pattern observable to a certain extent in all dialects of the language, resulting from the fact that most words in Biatah are stressed on the final syllable. One manifestation of this tendency is the deletion of initial vowels. The Upper Padawan dialect also exhibits this pattern in the case of initial high vowels (/i,u/), but not when the initial vowel is low (/a/). Some examples are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Loss of initial vowels			
English	Siburan	Penrissen	Upper Padawan
<i>head</i>	ubak	baak	baak
<i>rotan</i>	uwi	wii	wii
<i>fish</i>	ike ^d n	kiə ^d n	kya ^t n/ke ^t n
<i>oil</i>	inyo'	nyuə'	nyoa'
<i>fire</i>	apuy	puy	apuy
<i>to have</i>	əgi'	gi'	agi'

Notice that there is a tendency to compensate for this deletion by lengthening the final vowel, especially if the final syllable is open. It should also be noted that this deletion does not apply to all vowel-initial forms. For example, most dialects retain the initial /u/ in *uri* 'medicine' (an exception is Būnūk, with /rii'/). To date I have not found any rule for predicting when the deletion will fail to occur; but in the Penrissen dialect, deletion of initial vowels seems to be the rule, non-deletion the exception.

Another type of reduction of initial consonants is the deletion of high vowels (/i,u/) and schwa (/ə/) in initial syllables, especially before /r/. When high vowels in this position are not deleted, they are normally reduced to schwa (/ə/). As the following table shows, this feature is restricted to the Penrissen dialect.

Table 5: Loss of high vowels in initial syllables			
English	Siburan	Penrissen	Upper Padawan
<i>skin</i>	kurit	krit	kurit
<i>bamboo</i>	buru'	bru'	buru'
<i>hot</i>	pəras	pras	paras
<i>full (of food)</i>	bisoh	bəsuah	bisoah
<i>red</i>	bireh	brīəh	biriah
<i>knife</i>	sinda'	snda'	sinda'

In a number of the Penrissen and Padawan subdialects, an /-s/ in word-final position tends to be pronounced as /-y/ or /-ih/, e.g. /mutas/ 'cross the river' → [mutaih]. This is especially common when the word ends in /-is/, as in /təris/ 'rope' → [tərih]. However, there is a great deal of variation in the use of this feature. Different speakers within the same village may use it to different degrees. In many dialects it seems to be a normal feature of fast casual speech, but suppressed in more careful or formal speech, as when speaking to outsiders.⁶ For this reason, it is difficult to use this feature as a diagnostic, or to identify it with any particular dialect area.

A final note should be made about the pronunciation of final nasal consonants. As noted by Scott (1964), Court (1967, 1970) and others, final nasal consonants in Land Dayak languages are "pre-ploded" following a non-nasal vowel, which in turn occurs when the preceding consonant is not a nasal. Thus in the Siburan dialect, /barūm/ 'blue' will be pronounced as [barū^bm]; /butan/ 'coconut' will be pronounced as [buta^dn]; and /bandung/ 'tapioca' as [bandu^gng]. However, this pre-plosion is very slight and difficult

⁶Very often in eliciting a long word list, items at the beginning of the list are recorded with more features of a careful, formal speech style while those near the end tend to have more features of the casual or conversational style.

to hear in the speech of some speakers, especially it seems those from Kg. Kuab (Quop). Moreover, when speaking to outsiders (and especially if their speech is being written down), many educated speakers tend to adopt a “spelling pronunciation” (or “foreigner talk”) in which all such pre-plosion is suppressed.

For this reason, it is somewhat difficult to be precise about the phonetic nature of the pre-plosion in the various dialects, but in general it seems that the pre-plosion gets stronger the farther one gets from Kuching (but see notes on the Būnūk subdialect in section 4.1.2 below). Thus in the Upper Padawan dialect, final nasals are preceded by a voiceless stop, as shown in the following table:

Table 6: Pre-plosion of final nasals			
English	Siburan	Penrissen	Upper Padawan
<i>sick; painful</i>	mənda ^b m	mənda ^b m	mən(d)a ^p m
<i>night</i>	singarū ^b m	ngaro ^b m	ngarū ^p m
<i>coconut</i>	buta ^d n	bəta ^d n	buta ^t n
<i>leaf</i>	dəwū ^d n	dəwo ^d n	dəwū ^t n
<i>woman</i>	dayu ^g ng	dayu ^g ng	dayu ^k ng
<i>star</i>	bita ^g ng	bita ^g ng	bita ^k ng

(See Topping (1990) for a comparison of pre-plosion in Biatah with Bau-Jagoi and Bukar-Sadong.) In the rest of the paper, I will omit transcribing the pre-plosion of final nasals unless the discussion is related directly to details of pronunciation.

Another area of variation is the deletion of voiced stops in nasal-stop clusters; that is, the reduction of /-mb-/ , /-nd-/ , and /-ngg-/ to /-m-/ , /-n-/ , and /-ng-/ respectively (cf. Scott 1964). For example, in the Upper Padawan dialect /bandung/ ‘tapioca’ is pronounced as [banu^kng]. My impression is that this deletion is more frequent in the Upper and Lower Padawan dialects, but it occurs to some extent in all dialects, depending on the individual speaker, style of speech, etc. This factor has led to considerable confusion about the spelling of many common words such as /əndu/ ~ /ənu/ ‘day’; /mbit/ ~ /mit/ ‘take’; etc. Again, in the discussion of vocabulary differences below I will ignore this problem.

3.2 Vocabulary

In discussing differences in vocabulary, I will begin by comparing the Siburan, Penrissen and Upper Padawan areas. The characteristic pattern of the Lower Padawan dialect, i.e. a mixture of Padawan and non-Padawan terms, will be illustrated later.

The dialect which has the greatest number of unique vocabulary items is Upper Padawan. Some of these are listed in the following chart. Note that the Penrissen form in each row is identical to the Siburan form, except for regular sound changes as described above; but the Padawan form is unique:

Table 7: Unique Padawan forms

English	Siburan	Penrissen	Padawan
<i>many</i>	bəgũ'	bəgo'	siyũn
<i>big</i>	baga'	baga'	ayi
<i>good</i>	kəna'	kəna'	məndih
<i>bad</i>	ərap	ərap	arep [†]
<i>dry</i>	bədũh	bədoh	pūsũk
<i>sweet</i>	nyibənyis	bənyis	takũ/nabi'
<i>blue</i>	barũm	barom	mudip
<i>shy</i>	məngũh	məngoh	dasa'
<i>angry</i>	tuwas	tiwas	naang
<i>blanket</i>	putong	pətuəng	(s)tabut
<i>name</i>	dũn	don	dan [†]
<i>bark (of tree)</i>	kurit kəyuh	krit kəyuh	(u)pak
<i>taro; "yam"</i>	kuduk	kuduk	rakud*
<i>ladder/stairs</i>	tungoh	tənguah	tangga'
<i>morning</i>	isan-isān/ səsān	san-san	pagi
<i>not have</i>	məting	(mə)ting	dagi'
<i>don't want</i>	abāh/kakũh	kakoh	māngā'/daria'
<i>seek</i>	sirōh/jirōh	siruah/jiruah	sarik
<i>to call</i>	bəgan	bəgan	məba'
<i>to burn (field)</i>	tungan	tungan	nya(w)u
<i>to fly</i>	mikabur	məkabur/ngkabur	murib/tikurib
<i>descend</i>	muun	muun	munggaa
<i>wash dishes</i>	nguu'	nguu'	ngusu'*
<p>*Tibia' and Gun dialects; not attested in the Bianah list.</p> <p>[†]These forms are clearly similar to the corresponding Siburan form, but distinguished by phonologically irregularity.</p>			

The difference in color terminology is especially interesting. While the Siburan and Penrissen dialects use the same term (barũm/barom) for both 'blue' and 'green', the Padawan dialect employs two distinct terms: mudip for 'blue' and barũm for 'green'.⁷

The term naang appears on several Padawan lists for the gloss 'angry'. However, this term means 'scold' in other dialects, including Siburan. There appears to be some degree of ambiguity in the use of the local Malay term marah, which could convey either of these meanings; so it is not clear whether the Padawan usage of the form is really distinctive.

There are a smaller number of vocabulary items which are unique to the Penrissen dialect; some of these are listed below. Once again, the forms in the first two columns are identical except for regular phonological changes:

⁷This is the usage reflected in the Kiding (Tibia') and Anah Rais (Bianah) lists. Informants from Kg. Sapit and Abang say that the terms are reversed in Tibia', with mudip for 'green' and barũm for 'blue'. But it remains true that there are two terms here where Siburan and Penrissen use only one.

Table 8: Unique Penrissen forms

Dialect	Siburan	Padawan	Penrissen
<i>chicken</i>	siok	siyuək	siyap
<i>earthworm</i>	ritamüh	tamüh	rəgənda'
<i>hit (with fist)</i>	mukut	mukut	mukuang ⁸
<i>person's back</i>	punok	pənuak	dug ⁹
<i>rambutan</i>	sibu	sibu	(ri)mutan
<i>salt</i>	garo'	garuə'	garam
<i>daytime</i>	səndu	səndu/gumiendu ¹⁰	jəwa'
<i>fire-place</i>	apūk	apūk	abuh
<i>ashes</i>	apūk	apūk	abuh
<i>shirt</i>	jipo	jipua	kindang
<i>trousers</i>	sinjang	sinjang	suwar

The Penrissen dialect seems to have been influenced by Malay to a greater extent than the other dialects,¹¹ as illustrated by the terms for 'rambutan', 'salt' and 'trousers' in the table above. The term *jəwa'*, used in the Penrissen dialect for 'daytime' (Malay *siang*), is used in other dialects to mean 'light'. This type of semantic shift between dialects is quite common; further examples will be noted below. Finally, notice that there are two different terms for 'ashes' (*apūk* vs. *abuh*). But in all Biatah dialects the term for 'ashes' is also used for 'fire-box' or 'cooking area'.¹²

Table 9: Unique Siburan forms

Dialect	Siburan	Penrissen	Padawan
<i>companion</i>	jəra/dingan	dingan	dingan
<i>house post</i>	uros	tugu'	tugu'
<i>wild pig</i>	pəngan	daang	daang
<i>animal</i>	daang	(bi)natang	binatang
<i>thread</i>	(ti)buri'	tali bənanang	tali bənanang
<i>bottle</i>	sirəpak	jəbur	jəbur
<i>tomorrow</i>	sipagi	te'/tia' pagii	te'/tia' pagii

Table 9 lists some terms for which the Siburan dialect has a unique form. Several of these examples involve a semantic shift. The Siburan term for 'friend', *jəra*, is used by the other dialects only in the context of an illicit sexual liason. The Siburan term for 'animal', *daang*, is used in the other dialects only to mean 'wild pig'. One suspects that Siburan preserves the original usage here, with the other dialects restricting the meaning of *daang* and borrowing the new generic term *binatang* from Malay. A more obvious example of borrowing from Malay is seen in the Padawan/Penrissen term for 'thread', *tali bənanang* (all dialects have *təris* or *tərih*, and not **tali*, for 'rope'). Since the word *bənanang*

⁸Similar to the Jagoi form *makung* (Hudson, 1970).

⁹Same as Jagoi form; not reported in Bipürüh.

¹⁰The Tibia' form *gumiendu* is morphologically complex, but clearly derived from the same root.

¹¹The Padawan terms for 'morning' and 'ladder' are of course identical to Malay, but they are very possibly true cognates rather than borrowings. The term *pagi* in particular seems likely to be a native Biatah term, since it forms a part of the word for 'tomorrow' in all dialects (*sipagi* or *te' pagi*).

¹²The exceptions, noted below, are Kg. Sarig (Bis'pug) and Mbaan.

means ‘cloth’ in Biatah, the borrowed term for ‘thread’ gives rise to a certain amount of ambiguity, and in many sub-dialects has triggered a further borrowing of the Malay term kain for ‘cloth’.

Table 10 contains items for which each of the three dialects has a distinct term. Other similar examples are found, but often involve further distinctions among the subgroups of each dialect.

Table 10: Three distinctive forms			
Dialect	Siburan	Penrissen	Padawan
<i>hold (in hand)</i>	digŭng/məgŭh	(di)gen	diken/dikyan ¹³
<i>short (object)</i>	purok	biit	rŭbŭ’/rubŭ’

As mentioned above, the Lower Padawan dialect is characterized by a mixture of Padawan and Penrissen vocabulary, with different subdialects exhibiting slightly different combinations of elements. In Table 11, the distribution of some characteristic Padawan lexical items is charted for the four Lower Padawan subgroups. Forms which are identical or cognate with the Penrissen form are replaced by the number “1”; forms cognate with the Padawan form are replaced by “2”; and all other forms are spelled out.

Table 11: Distribution of Padawan forms in Lower Padawan subdialects.						
	Penrissen form	Padawan form	Bisəpug	Pinyawa	Bra’ang	Bibəngoh
<i>to burn</i>	tungan	nya(w)u	1	1	1	2
<i>to fly</i>	məkabur/ ngkabur	murib/ tikurib	1	1	2	1
<i>bad</i>	ərap	arep/ariəp	1	1	2	1
<i>big</i>	baga’	ayi	1	ba’as	1	2
<i>to call</i>	bəgan	məba’	2	2	1	1
<i>cat</i>	busing	singew	2	2	1	1
<i>blanket</i>	pətuəng	(s)tabut	1	1	2	2
<i>shy</i>	məngoh	dasa’	1	bəra’	2	2
<i>not have</i>	(mə)ting	dagi’	1	2	2	2
<i>house post</i>	tugu’	tugu’	1	2	2	2
<i>good</i>	kəna’	məndih	1	2	2	2
<i>morning</i>	san-san	pagi	sisien	2	2	2
<i>short</i>	biit	rubŭ’	2	kən(d)uak	2	2
<i>name</i>	don	dan	2	gənan	2	2
1 = cognate with Penrissen form 2 = cognate with Padawan form						

This table shows that the Bra’ang and Bibəngoh subdialects have the highest ratio of Padawan lexical items, and Bisəpug the least. (For most of the other words in my corpus in which the Penrissen and Padawan forms differ, the Lower Padawan subgroups all

¹³Need to recheck these forms; diken and digŭng both used in many dialects, but with different meanings (hold in closed fist, hold by handle, hold as a stick, etc.).

follow Penrissen.) The table also reflects the fact that the Pinyawa subdialect has the largest number of distinctive vocabulary items. Many of these are cognate with Bau-Jagoi or Bukar-Sadong forms, as discussed in section 4.2.1 below.

4. Unique features of the subdialects

Having described the features which distinguish the four main dialects from each other, I will now briefly discuss some of the unique features of each subdialect.

4.1 Penrissen Dialect Area

4.1.1 Bisitaang

In terms of pronunciation, the Bisitaang subdialect exhibits the typical Penrissen features discussed above. As might be expected from its geographical proximity to the Siburan dialect area, the Bisitaang subdialect contains a number of distinctive Siburan vocabulary items including: ruəs (SB uros) ‘housepost’; prok (SB purok) ‘short’; and tamoh ‘earthworm’.

4.1.2 Bibүнүk

The Bibүнүk subdialect has a quite distinctive style of pronunciation due to a number of unique and interesting phonological features. Final nasals are pre-ploded by the insertion of a glottal stop, rather than a voiced stop as in other Penrissen sub-dialects:

Table 12: Pre-plosion of final nasals		
English	Siburan	Bibүнүk
<i>sick; painful</i>	mənda ^b m	mən(d)a [?] m ¹⁴
<i>salt</i>	garo [?]	gara [?] m
<i>name</i>	dū ^d n	do [?] n
<i>leaf</i>	dəwū ^d n	dəwo [?] n
<i>woman</i>	dayuŋg	dayu [?] ng
<i>dog</i>	kəsoŋg	kəsuə [?] ng

Word-final /-h/ is replaced in Bүнүk by a glottal catch, followed by a voiceless release which echoes the vowel of the final syllable:

¹⁴The symbol /ʔ/ used here is intended to be equivalent to the symbol /ʔ/ used for the glottal stop elsewhere in this paper.

Table 13: Pronunciation of final /-h/		
English	Siburan	Bibүнүk
<i>to hear</i>	dingah	dəŋaʔ ^a
<i>red</i>	bireh	briaʔ ^a
<i>two</i>	duwūh	duwoʔ ^o
<i>husband</i>	bənūh	bənoʔ ^o
<i>to run</i>	bikəduh	kəduʔ ^u
<i>stone</i>	batuh	batuʔ ^u
<i>full (of food)</i>	bisoh	bsuaʔ ^a
<i>to seek</i>	siroh	siruaʔ ^a

As in a number of other dialects, final /-s/ is replaced by /-ih/, and this /-h/ in turn becomes a glottal catch plus echo vowel:¹⁵

Table 14: Pronunciation of final /-s/		
English	Siburan	Bibүнүk
<i>angry</i>	tuwas (Pen: tiwas)	tiwaʔ ⁱ
<i>dead</i>	kabūs	kəboʔ ⁱ
<i>warm</i>	paras	pəraʔ ⁱ
<i>state, village</i>	rə'is	rəʔiʔ ⁱ
<i>sleep</i>	bū'ūs	bəʔoʔ ⁱ
<i>see</i>	kiris	kriʔ ⁱ
<i>rope</i>	təris	təriʔ ⁱ

The Bibүнүk subdialect is perhaps the most radical dialect in shortening or deleting the initial syllable of a word. Often, deletion of an initial syllable results in the lengthening of the new initial consonant:

Table 15: Deletion of initial syllables		
English	Siburan/Padawan	Bibүнүk
<i>lightening</i>	kijat	jat
<i>friend</i>	dingaan	ʔgngan / ngngan
<i>tooth/snake</i>	jipūh	ʔbpoʔ ^o
<i>don't want</i>	kakūh	koʔ ^o
<i>cooked rice</i>	tubi'	ʔbbi'
<i>house-post</i>	tugu' (Pad.)	ʔggu'

Initial /s-/ before a nasal consonant is often replaced by /h-/:

¹⁵A few forms were recorded in which final /-s/ is replaced by /-y/, e.g. *taay* 'ironwood (belian)'; *du'y* 'vegetables'. These were recorded by different speakers, not yet checked with primary informant.

Table 16: Pronunciation of initial /h-/		
English	Siburan	Bibүнүk
<i>mother</i>	sindū'	hn(d)o'
<i>knife</i>	sinda'	hn(d)a'
<i>ten</i>	simūng	hmoong
<i>sand</i>	sumat	hmaat

However, this change does not affect all such forms, the /s-/ being retained in words like /sama'/ 'father'; and /sindok/ 'near'.

The Bibүнүk subdialect is also distinguished by a number of unique vocabulary items, including those in the following table. The word used for 'tapioca', kribang, is the same as the local Malay term for 'sweet potato'.

Table 17: Unique vocabulary items		
English	Siburan	Bibүнүk
big	baga'	sənduh [hdnuʔ ^u] ¹⁶
tapioca	bandung	kribang
delicious	sidi'	pisia'

4.1.3 Bipүrүh

The Bipүrүh subdialect has the typical Penrissen phonological features described in section 3.1. Unique vocabulary items include duang 'sheath (for bush-knife)'; and məndis 'sweet' (= Padawan 'good').

4.2 Lower Padawan Dialect Area

The Lower Padawan dialect area is characterized by a mixture of Upper Padawan and Penrissen or Siburan vocabulary items. In addition, several of the Lower Padawan subgroups use a significant number of Bukar-Sadong and Bau-Jagoi terms. The exact ratio of these different elements varies from one subgroup to the next.

As pointed out in section 1, the subdialects within this area are more different from each other than are the subdialects within the other three areas. Several of the Lower Padawan subdialects could actually be considered distinct dialects in their own right. The Pinyawa dialect appears to be particularly distinctive. This impression is based not only on the unique vocabulary items listed below, but also on Topping's results (see sec. 2) and anecdotal reports from speakers of other Biatah dialects who find Pinyawa difficult to understand.

4.2.1 Pinyawa

As mentioned above, the Pinyawa dialect contains a relatively large number of unique vocabulary items; some of these are listed below:

¹⁶The form baga' is also used, apparently with little or no difference in meaning.

Table 18: Unique vocabulary items

English	Siburan/Padawan	Pinyawa
<i>short</i>	purok/rübŭ'	kən(d)uak
<i>tapioca</i>	bandung	bate'
<i>all</i>	so' pŭrŭg	səkə'os/səko'oy
<i>to cut (rope)</i>	kapŭg	təkan
<i>foot-bridge (bamboo)</i>	təbayan	(bi)tayan
<i>back (of person)</i>	punok	tunduh ¹⁷
<i>shy</i>	məngŭh/dasa'	bəra'
<i>name</i>	dŭn/dan	gənan
<i>delicious</i>	sidi'/məndis	təkŭ ¹⁸
<i>voice</i>	sirŭ'ŭn/asŭng ¹⁹	angu

The form angu, which means 'voice' in Pinyawa, means 'echo' in Siburan and 'sound' in Bianah. The form kən(d)uak 'short' may be related to the Jagoi form kodo (Hudson, 1970) and similar forms in Bukar-Sadong. Other Bukar-Sadong forms reported in the Pinyawa dialect include: mupu 'wash (clothes)'; gənan 'name'; ratung 'earthworm' (also used in Singgai; Reijffert, 1956); ba'as 'big' (Bukar-Sadong bahas; Jagoi ba'as).²⁰ Other Jagoi forms reported in the Pinyawa dialect include: kire 'left'; makung 'to hit'; bruu or biru 'blue' (Jagoi biru; also in Bukar-Sadong).

4.2.2 Bisəpug

I collected two wordlists for the Bisəpug dialect, one at Kg. Səpug Pruman (Simpok) and the other in Kg. Sarig. This dialect also contains a significant number of unique vocabulary items, including those in Table 19. The form sisien 'morning' is possibly derived from the SB form səsan/isan-isan; but this would be phonologically irregular. (It is the same as the word for 'tomorrow' (sisien) in the Bəgayih language spoken in Sungkung, West Kalimantan.) Similarly, the word for 'hear', dingeh > dingiah, seems to be an irregular cognate of the normal Biatah term dingah.

The word tibara means 'startled; agitated' in Siburan dialect, but is used for 'thunder' in the Bisəpug dialect. The word mbee in most Biatah dialects means 'to wash the hands'. In the Bisəpug dialect the cognate form (m(b)ia) is used not just for hands but also for washing dishes. In Kg. Sarig I recorded two words meaning 'to spit': one of them ruja, which is the regular Siburan term; the other rəyang, which is also used in Tringgus and Kg. Sapit with that meaning, and in Mbaan and Bekati meaning 'saliva'.

¹⁷Topping's Kg. Ma'ang (Pinyawa) list shows tunu'. The term tunduh is specific to the upper back; punuak is used for the lower back.

¹⁸This form, the AN word for 'sweet', was reported in Kg. Gayu. In Kg. B'gu, I was told that the correct form is sidi' (as in Siburan).

¹⁹This word means 'life; breath' in all dialects. I was told that it is also used to mean 'voice' in Bianah. I have not yet found a term which means 'voice' in Tibia'.

²⁰The form baas (no glottal) is also used in other Biatah dialects in a somewhat specialized sense, meaning something like 'great'.

Table 19: Unique vocabulary items

English	Siburan/Padawan	Bisəpug
<i>good</i>	kəna'/məndis	sangon (Kg. Sarig) ²¹
<i>tapioca</i>	bandung	bətawi ²²
<i>knee cap</i>	bak kərüb	bak tuwad
<i>to cut (rope)</i>	kapüg	natok ²³
<i>tired</i>	kəwük	mara' (Kg. Sarig)
<i>ashes</i>	apük	bətop ²⁴
<i>thread</i>	buri'/tali bənanang	ramen
<i>morning</i>	isan-isang/pagi	sisian
<i>mud</i>	tawang	rapak
<i>long-house</i>	rəmin batang	rəmin bitangan

Bukar-Sadong forms reported in the Bisəpug dialect include: kəping 'ear'; kupu 'wash'; nataw 'to laugh'; rətung 'earthworm'; and biis 'black'. Jagoi forms reported in this dialect include: kire 'left'.

4.2.3 Bra'ang

An interesting feature of the Bra'ang dialect is that pre-ploded final velar nasals which follow a low vowel (/ə-ang/) are pronounced as glottalized velar fricatives ([-aʔx]). However, the velar nasal is unchanged following other vowels, or when the nasal is not pre-ploded, as shown in the following chart:

Table 20: Pronunciation of final velar nasals

English	Padawan	Bra'ang
<i>bone</i>	tura ^k ng	[traʔx]
<i>wild pig</i>	daa ^k ng	[daaʔx]
<i>dog</i>	kasua ^k ng	[kasuaʔx]
<i>star</i>	bita ^k ng	[bətaʔx]
<i>tapioca</i>	bandu ^k ng	bandu ^k ng
<i>cat</i>	(busiŋg - SB)	busi ^k ng
<i>visible</i>	(tatũŋg - SB)	tato ^k ng
<i>hand</i>	tangan	təngan
<i>angry, scold</i>	naang	naang

Some unique vocabulary items found in this dialect are listed below:

²¹Listed by Nais (1988) for Siburan dialect as meaning 'shining' or 'haunted'.

²²Also used in Sadong??

²³Topping recorded natak for this gloss in Selako.

²⁴The cognate form b'tüp or bütüp was recorded by Topping in his Siburan, Tibia' and Bianah wordlists; but I did not record it in any dialect other than Bis'pug. Nais (1988) lists it with the meaning 'soot'.

Table 21: Unique vocabulary items		
English	Padawan	Bra'ang
<i>companion</i>	dingan	rijaa'
<i>to run</i>	(tə)kəduh	(bə)gisit
<i>climb up</i>	ma'ad	jəkoh ²⁵
<i>to call</i>	məba'	mataw

4.2.4 Bibəngoh

One of the most interesting features of Bibəngoh pronunciation is that the voiced stops in nasal + stop clusters become devoiced (/mb-/ , /nd-/ , and /ngg-/ pronounced as /-mp-/ , /-nt-/ , and /-ngk-/ respectively). This is especially noticeable because in all other dialects, the clusters /-mp-/ , /-nt-/ , and /-ngk-/ are exceedingly rare, and appear to occur (if at all) only across morpheme boundaries.

Table 22: Nasal + stop clusters		
English	Padawan	Bibəngoh
<i>one</i>	ndi'	nti'
<i>mother</i>	sindū'	sənto'/sinto'
<i>tapioca</i>	bandung	bantung
<i>forget</i>	kəmbūt	kəmpot
<i>long</i>	əmbuu	əmpuu
<i>head-house</i>	panggah	pangkah

Some unique vocabulary items found in this dialect are listed below:

Table 23: Unique vocabulary items		
English	Padawan	Bibəngoh
<i>to call</i>	məba'	pangkir
<i>delicious</i>	məndih	bə'un/bu'un
<i>sweet</i>	takū/nabi'	simirib
<i>cup</i>	sangkir	səmpang

The form for 'call', pangkir, could well be a Malay loan. The unique term burat and the Padawan form rubo' were both given for the gloss 'short'.

²⁵= Sungkung jaūh.

4.3 Upper Padawan Dialect Area

4.3.1 Bianah

The main features of Bianah pronunciation and vocabulary have already been discussed in section 3.

4.3.2 Tibia'

My primary corpus of data about the Tibia' dialect is the wordlist collected at Kg. Kiding, reported to be the asar of this group. I also collected a partial wordlist at Kg. Sait, representing what might be called the Taba' subdialect of Tibia'. According to the people in Sait, their ancestors moved from Kiding to Kg. Jogong and from there to Kg. Taba'. Kg. Taba' split to form two daughter villages, Sait and Pain; and the people from Pain have fairly recently moved to Kg. Bojong. So this subdialect is currently spoken in two villages, Sait and Bojong.

According to my data, Tibia' pronunciation differs from that of Bianah in that there is no diphthongization of mid vowels in the former (see Table 3). Another difference concerns the pronunciation of the /r/ phoneme. Some Tibia' speakers appear to use /l/ in place of /r/, especially in the middle of words. However, this pattern is inconsistent in my wordlist, perhaps indicating a tendency to shift into a more "standard" pronunciation (including /r/) when addressing an outsider. I observed other speakers pronouncing /r/ as a velar fricative, [ɣ], as in Sarawak Malay and some other Malay dialects. However, further investigation will be needed before anything definite can be said about this feature.²⁶ One of the striking features of the Taba' subdialect is the tendency to use a voiced interdental fricative ([ð]) for the /r/ phoneme.²⁷

Some unique vocabulary items from the Kiding wordlist include sambuh 'bad', daka 'child', and tepel 'sheath' (also in Sait). Some unique vocabulary items from the Sait wordlist include tugu 'ladder'; ramut 'spear'; buti 'fish-line'; aññ 'new'; madoo 'rotten'.

4.3.3 Gun

Gun is a Land Dayak village in Kalimantan, reportedly a 30 minute walk from Kg. Sapit, Padawan.²⁸ My information on the Gun dialect was gathered from a man whom I met in Kg. Sapit, and is therefore quite limited. Thus all observations regarding this dialect must be regarded as even more tentative than those in the preceding sections.

The Gun dialect is very similar to Tibia'. Gun pronunciation differs from that of Tibia' chiefly in the substitution of [ch] (i.e., [tʃ]) for /s/ between two vowels, as shown in the table below. However, /s/ at the beginning of a word is always pronounced as [s].

²⁶Preliminary information gathered about some Kalimantan Land Dayak dialects indicates that the /r/ sound in Biatah is consistently replaced by /l/ in the Bagayih Dayak language spoken in Sungkung (or Singkung), and by [ɣ] in the Bədiñdeh Dayak language spoken in Bəntiang, both in West Kalimantan.

²⁷Some speakers in Sait seem to use a lateral fricative instead.

²⁸Some people say that Kg. Sapit speaks a mixture of the Gun and Tibia' dialects; most people in Kg. Sapit seem to identify themselves as Tibia'.

Table 24: Pronunciation of /s/

English	Tibia'	Gun
<i>small</i>	siit	ichit
<i>wash</i>	ngusu'	nguchu'
<i>shy</i>	dasa'	dacha'
<i>full (of food)</i>	bisoh	bichoh
<i>smoke</i>	asuh	achuh

Another difference is the appearance of /h/ between two vowels in a few words in which all other Biatah dialects have a long vowel, e.g. bahay 'betel nut' (all other dialects baay); and bahat 'heavy' (all other dialects baat). This is interesting because no other Biatah dialect appears to allow /h/ to appear in any position except the end of a word. However, as discussed in section 5, medial /h/ is retained in Tringgus-Mbaan, as in Bukar-Sadong and Bekati'.

Some unique vocabulary items in Gun are shown in the following table:

Table 25: Unique vocabulary items

English	Tibia'	Gun
<i>firewood</i>	wang	siru'
<i>short</i>	rubũ'	kidit
<i>eat</i>	maan	meen
<i>to have</i>	əgũ'	bəgũ' ²⁹

The Gun terms for 'firewood' and 'short' are also found in Singkung (Sungkung), Kalimantan.³⁰ Note that the Gun form bəgũ' for 'to have' (most other dialects have əgi') is identical to the Siburan word for 'much'. Without further study, one cannot say whether this similarity is the result of a semantic shift of purely accidental.

5. Tringgus-Mbaan

I collected an Mbaan wordlist from Kg. Səmbaan, near the Bəngoh river in Padawan, and a Tringgus wordlist at Kg. Rəbak Rutan, on the Pədi River (?) upstream from Pangkalan Təbang, Bau. According to my Tringgus helpers, both the Mbaan and the Tringgus (or Runggus) originally came from Kg. Bung Gahung. When this village split, some people (the Mbaan) settled near the present site of Kg. Səmbaan, while others (the Tringgus) moved to Kg. Bung Rəja' (shown on some maps as Kg. Tringgus Raya). Most of the Tringgus speakers have now moved down to the Bau district to have easier access to roads, markets etc. Kg. Rəbak Rutan consists of three hamlets: Kg. Bung and Kg. Rutan, mostly Tringgus speakers, consisting of about 30 families each; and Kg. Nguan, mostly people who originated from the Sungkung area in Kalimantan. I collected the Tringgus wordlist in Kg. Bung, the hamlet which is furthest upstream.

Based on the limited data available, it is difficult to classify these dialects with any degree of certainty. However, my hypothesis is that Tringgus and Mbaan are not dialects of Biatah, but rather two dialects of a distinct language. In terms of the diagnostic lexical

²⁹Also recorded in Mbaan.

³⁰The Sungkung term for 'firewood' is silu'; see footnote 26.

items listed in section 6, Tringgus-Mbaan is certainly closer to Biatah (especially to the Padawan dialect) than to either Bau-Jagoi or Bukar-Sadong. However, this could be at least partly due to borrowing, since it would seem that the Tringgus-Mbaan have lived in close contact with Tibia' speakers for many generations. People in Səmbaan gave me some examples of "old Mbaan" words, which are now being replaced by the Tibia' equivalents in the speech of younger people (under 60?). Examples include mlaan for 'hot' (Biatah pəras); gon³¹ for 'give' (Biatah nggen). In brief, I believe that the current degree of lexical similarity between Tringgus-Mbaan and Biatah does not accurately reflect the true time-depth of separation of these groups.

Table 26: Retention of medial /h/ in Tringgus/Mbaan

English	Tringgus/Mbaan	Biatah
<i>long time</i>	tuhuy	tuuy
<i>eight</i>	məhi	mai
<i>ten</i>	(si)məhũng	simũũng
<i>left side</i>	bəhit	bəit
<i>descend</i>	muhun	muun
<i>betel nut</i>	bahay	bay
<i>to wash</i>	kuhu' (Mbaan)	nguu'
<i>juice</i>	juhu'	juu'
<i>itch</i>	tihi'	tii'
<i>pregnant</i>	tahe'/tehe'	bitee'
<i>wild pig</i>	dahang	daang (Padawan)
<i>ironwood</i>	tahas	taas
<i>root</i>	hat (Mbaan)	uwat
<i>durian</i>	dahen/dehen	deen
<i>fence</i>	bahang	buang
<i>flee, depart</i>	buhu	buu
<i>difficult</i>	mahar/mahan	mbaar
<i>heavy</i>	bahat	baat
<i>big</i>	ahi	ayi (Padawan)
<i>to burn</i>	nyahu	nyau
<i>firewood</i>	uhang (Mbaan)	uwang
<i>loincloth</i>	tahũp	taũp
<i>far</i>	jəho'/juho'	joo'
<i>yellow</i>	sihaa' (Mbaan)	siaa'

One interesting feature of Tringgus-Mbaan which sets it apart from Biatah is the retention of /-h-/ in word-medial position. All /h/'s have been lost in this position in Biatah, as well as in Bau-Jagoi and Sungkung; they are retained in cognate forms in Bukar-Sadong and Bəkati'. Some examples are listed in Table 26.

Tringgus and Mbaan also share a number of unique lexical items not found in other Biatah dialects, though some are found in other Land Dayak languages. Some examples are listed in the following table:

³¹Cf. Sadong nyugon 'give'.

Table 27: Unique vocabulary items

English	Tringgus/Mbaan	Biatah	notes
<i>one thing</i>	ka'ah	ndi'	(= Sungkung 'one')
<i>saliva/to spit</i>	layang ³²	ruja	(= Bekati')
<i>hungry</i>	biwan	sibūrūk	(Sadong 'starving')
<i>medicine</i>	ubat	uri'	(= Sungkung)
<i>rapids</i>	ahuy	giam	
<i>jungle</i>	əbūt	tu'aan	
<i>fishing line</i>	pindok	pisiss	
<i>weave basket</i>	ngasig	ngənyam/təjūh	
<i>to tie</i>	mūtūs	mū'ūng	(cf. Jagoi <u>mokos</u>)
<i>crooked</i>	likog	bidikok	(= Sadong)
<i>morning</i>	pagindu	isan-isani/pagi	cf. pagi əndu (Bianah, Gun)

One interesting example of semantic shift was recorded. In Biatah, simbuk means 'grandmother'; but in Tringgus, the meaning has been extended and the term is now used for both 'grandmother' and 'grandfather'. I do not know whether the same is true for Mbaan.

Table 7 above listed a number of lexical items which are characteristic of the Padawan dialect. For these terms, Tringgus and Mbaan almost always exhibit the Padawan form rather than the Siburan form. (This is, of course, what we would expect based on their geographical location.) However, in some cases the two dialects apparently diverge, with one using the Padawan form and the other the Siburan form. Some examples are given in the following table:

Table 28: Padawan forms in Tringgus vs. Mbaan

English	Tringgus	Mbaan
<i>many</i>	bəgū' (= Siburan)	siun (Padawan "siūn")
<i>to have</i>	agi' (= Siburan)	bəgū' (= Gun)
<i>to seek</i>	karik (Padawan "sarik")	siloh (Siburan "siroh")
<i>sheath</i>	tepel (= Tibia')	sibong (= Siburan)
<i>short</i>	bit (= Penrissen)	polok (Siburan "purok")

In other cases, the two dialects differ in that one uses a Biatah term and the other a unique (or at least non-Biatah) form. One interesting example of this is the term for 'headhouse'. The Mbaan, who live in a Biatah-speaking area, use the Bau-Jagoi term baluk; while the Tringgus, who have moved into the Bau district, use the Biatah term panggah. Further examples are given in Table 29. Some other miscellaneous lexical differences between the two dialects are shown in Table 30.

³²Reported for 'saliva' in Mbaan, as in Bekati' of Kalimantan; 'to spit' in Tringgus (also in Kg. Sapit, Tibia').

Table 29: Lexical differences (one form equiv. to Biatah)		
English	Tringgus	Mbaan
<i>river</i>	dəhu'	(Biatah)
<i>green</i>	bihis ³³	(Biatah)
<i>tell a lie</i>	noro'	(Biatah)
<i>cloud</i>	atūng dəhu	(Biatah)
<i>to eat</i>	meeng (Gun "meen")	(Biatah)
<i>firewood</i>	siru' (= Gun, Sungkung)	(Biatah)
<i>hear</i>	ngəjit (= Jagoi)	(Biatah)
<i>headhouse</i>	(Biatah)	baluk (=Jagoi, Sungkung)
<i>thirsty</i>	(Biatah)	məgas
<i>rat</i>	(Biatah)	jopoy
<i>banana</i>	(Biatah)	pisang ³⁴ (Malay loan?)
<i>cold</i>	(Biatah)	hngyen

Table 30: Lexical differences, Tringgus vs. Mbaan		
English	Tringgus	Mbaan
<i>tired</i>	pənūd	kədsung
<i>person's back</i>	dug (= Jagoi)	hnok (< Biatah "punok")
<i>beat with stick</i>	məsut	mpu' (Taba' Sait "mupu")
<i>mud</i>	paya'	dənu (= 'lake' in Biatah)
<i>rainbow</i>	aran kamang ³⁵	tutugūt
<i>fence</i>	pagar (Malay)	bahang (Biatah "buwang")

Aside from the lexical differences indicated above, there are also phonological differences between the two dialects. One example is that Mbaan uses /l/ for Biatah /r/, whereas Tringgus retains the flap [r] pronunciation. Second, Mbaan tends to strengthen medial³⁶ voiced stops by inserting a homorganic voiceless stop to form a cluster, as shown in Table 31. Third, Mbaan has a strong tendency to shorten or delete initial syllables (as in the Būnūk sub-dialect), whereas Tringgus (at least in the data I was able to elicit) tends to retain fuller forms. Some examples are shown in Table 32.

³³This is the Sadong word for 'black'.

³⁴In Biatah, *pisang* means 'papaya'.

³⁵This term literally means 'demon's road', and is reminiscent of Sabah Dusun stories about the rainbow.

³⁶The correct generalization may be that voiced stops in the onset of stressed syllables are strengthened. Note the form *dtūh* 'not' (Biatah *dtūh*).

Table 31: Medial cluster formation in Mbaan

English	Tringgus	Mbaan	Biatah
<i>person's chest</i>	sədo'	sidto'	sudo'
<i>to run</i>	kəduh ³⁷	kədtuh	bikəduh
<i>to fall</i>	rəbu'	ləbpu'	rəbu'
<i>sago</i>	sagu'	sagku'	sagu'
<i>medicine</i>	ubat	ubpat	uri'
<i>rice (padi)</i>	pədi	pədti	pədi

Table 32: Initial syllable reduction in Mbaan

English	Tringgus	Mbaan	Biatah
<i>mother</i>	səndü'	hn(d)ü'	sindü'
<i>skin</i>	krit	hlit	kurit
<i>bone</i>	trong	hlang	turang
<i>black</i>	singüt	hngot	singüt
<i>wet</i>	bisa'	sa'	bisa'
<i>full (of food)</i>	bəsoh	soh	bisoh
<i>coconut</i>	butan	tan	butan
<i>younger sibling</i>	side'	dte'	sude'
<i>salty</i>	pəde'	dtee'	pidee'
<i>cooked rice</i>	tubi'	bpi'	tubi'

Another phonological difference between the two dialects is that in Mbaan, high vowels in the final syllable are often copied into the penultimate syllable, especially if the penultimate vowel was originally a schwa. In some forms, this effect also seems to apply to /e/ in a final syllable:

³⁷The gloss 'chase' was given for this form in Tringgus.

Table 33: High-vowel copying in Mbaan

English	Tringgus	Mbaan	Biatah
<i>eight</i>	məhi	mihi	mai
<i>left side</i>	bəhit	bihit	bəit
<i>right side</i>	tə'uh	tu'uh	tə'uh
<i>to burn</i>	nyahu	nyuhu	nyau
<i>big</i>	ahi	ihi	ayi (Padawan)
<i>bad</i>	ərep	erep	ərep
<i>belly</i>	tə'in	ti'in	tə'in
<i>rain</i>	jen	ejen	ujen
<i>bitter</i>	pa'it	pi'it	pə'it

Clearly these two dialects require a great deal more study. One hopes that such studies can be carried out soon, since both dialect groups are small and seem to be assimilating to larger neighboring groups with which they come into ever-increasing contact.

6. Identifying Biatah Dialects

As pointed out in section 2, before undertaking a study of Biatah dialects we must first address the question, How do we identify a “Biatah” dialect? As a first approximation, I have relied on judgements by Biatah speakers themselves as to which villages speak the “same language” and which belong to a different language group. For the most part, these judgements have proved to be quite reliable. However, we also want objective criteria for classifying these speech varieties. Lexical similarity, as measured by cognate percentages in Topping’s study, is perhaps the easiest and one of the most commonly used methods. As noted in section 2, Topping found that all the dialects in the Biatah language area share more than 70% cognate vocabulary.

Table 34: Vocabulary differences among Biatah, Bau-Jagoi and Bukar-Sadong

English	Biatah	Bau-Jagoi	Bukar-Sadong
<i>warm</i>	pəras	bongoh	pəras
<i>cold</i>	mədud	modud	bəbii ³⁸
<i>good</i>	kəna'/məndis	paguh	paguh
<i>bad</i>	ərap	ja'at	bi'ek
<i>black</i>	singūt	songot	bihis
<i>white</i>	buda'	mopu'/buda' ³⁹	mupo'/sigūt
<i>dirty</i>	ka'is	kotol	dəkūs
<i>ear</i>	kəjit	kojit	kəping
<i>foot</i>	kəja'	pu'un/po'on	kəja'/kəjūy
<i>person's back</i>	punok	punuok/dug ⁴⁰	jajuu
<i>left side</i>	bait	kiri'	məhit
<i>cooked rice</i>	tubi'	tubi'	sungkoy
<i>sand</i>	sumat	pasil	kirəsik
<i>water</i>	pi'in	pi'in	umo'/umon
<i>drink</i>	nok	nuak	sihūp
<i>to tie</i>	mū'ūng	mokos	kabūt
<i>head-house</i>	pangguh	baruk	balū'/balay
<i>tapang tree</i>	dū'ūh	dū'ūh/do'oh	sumpon/simpon

Extending the methodology of the present study one might ask, What are the linguistic features which distinguish Biatah from Bau-Jagoi and Bukar-Sadong? As noted in section 2, all of my data was collected in Biatah villages; I am relying on secondary sources for information about Bau-Jagoi and Bukar-Sadong. Therefore a full answer to this question, in particular a discussion of phonological (pronunciation) differences, must wait for more detailed studies of those languages. However, some representative vocabulary differences between Biatah and the other two languages are listed in Table 34.

These items seem to be fairly “diagnostic”, i.e. consistent across dialects within each language and so useful for classifying dialects. Nevertheless, as noted in section 4, several of the Lower Padawan dialects make use of Jagoi and Bukar-Sadong words for various items. Presumably this is the result of borrowing due to contact among these groups after the languages separated.

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³⁸The form sungah appears for ‘cold’ in some secondary sources on Sadong, but actually means ‘fever’ (or perhaps ‘chills’) according to my consultants.

³⁹The term buda' is used in the Singgai dialect, mopu' in Jagoi.

⁴⁰The term dug is specific to the upper back; punuok can refer to the back in general, or can be used to mean ‘behind’, as in Biatah.

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