

AROUND 1982 - BRANCH ONE

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# SURVEY OFFICE

DIALECT SURVEY

of

THE BIANGAI LANGUAGE

by

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**0. Introduction**

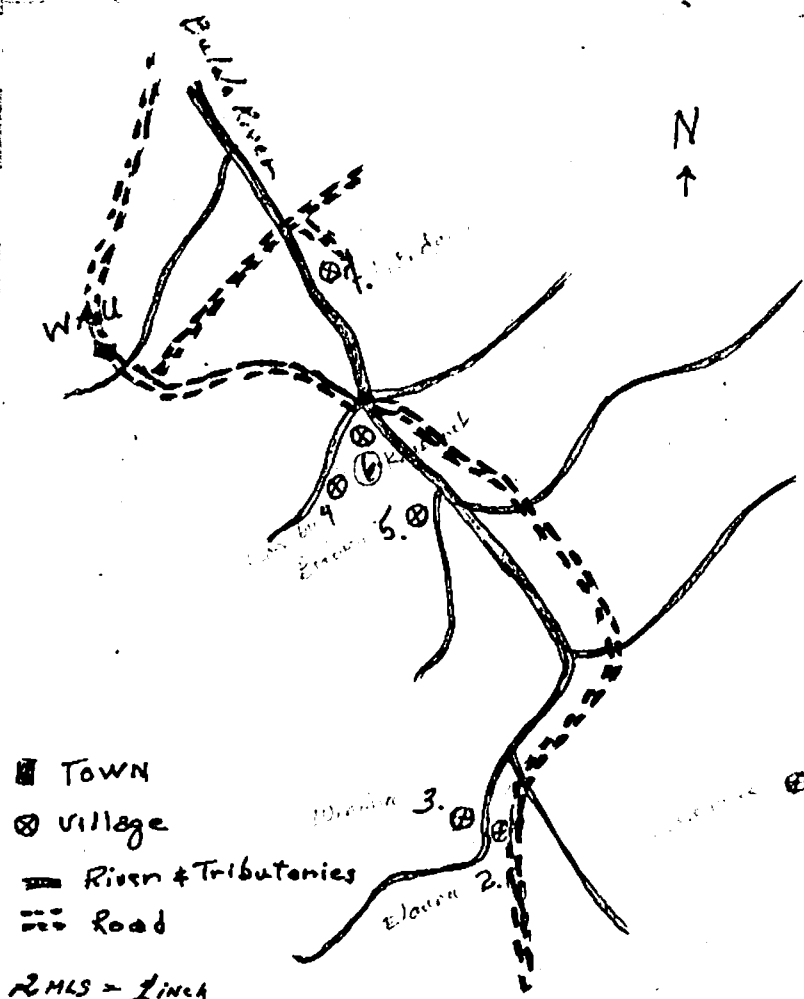
Biangai, pronounced Bee-ang(as in father)-aya, is the government name for the language spoken by approximately 1,000 speakers (this does not include those living and working elsewhere which number from 2-300) living in 7 villages along the Bulolo River Valley, Southeast of Wau, in the Bulolo Census Division of the Morobe Province of Papua New Guinea.

The speakers accept the government name, Biangai, but state that they are the Kolo or Piyololo people which take their name from their names for the Bulolo River.

In this paper, names of rivers and villages are spelt as of government listings. The 7 villages with their population figures according to the 1980 census, kindly supplied by the District Office at Wau, are listed below. The alternate local name or the vernacular spelling of the name is in brackets. The villages are listed in number according to the position of the village on the map.

1. Werewere (Kairu)	156
2. Elauru	146
3. Winima	94
4. Kwembu (Kuwembu)	85
5. Biawen (Kilago)	177
6. Kaisenik (Kobiyak)	140
7. Wandumi	208

### Map of the Biangai Census Division



# 1. Methodology

Material for this paper was collected from a speaker or speakers from each of the seven villages, during a survey in January 1981. Each of the villages can be reached by road except Werewere. To obtain Werewere speakers, we visited their coffee plantation which they have purchased on the outskirts of Wau which is accessible by road.

The basic data collected was that which is included on the S.I.L. Standard Word List, a list of 190 vocabulary items, and short sentences. It includes most of the Swadesh 100 word list and many of the S. A. Wurm's Highland Word List. Additional words not included in the Standard Word List were elicited.

A cognate count was made from 100 of these words. We included words as they appeared in the list only eliminating those which were not suitable, i.e., not suitable being, as when a species name was given rather than a generic name (as in fish), or a misunderstanding of what was wanted (as Adams apple or front of the neck rather than the whole neck), or when there was a choice of words for a meaning (as koru, songona 'little').

See chart on page 10.

## 2. Biangai Groupings

In a paper describing Biangai Phonemes (1972), it was stated that Wandumi and Kaisenik compose one dialect, Kwembu, Winima, Elauru, and Werewere another dialect, and Biawen village people have features of both dialects. 1

The Biangai speakers themselves say there are two groups, according to the way they speak. One group is called Yongolege, which means "at the place up above", and the other group is called Ngowiye (meaning unknown). The Ngowiye group consists of Wandumi, Kaisenik, and Biawen villages. The other four villages make up the Yongolege group.

However, one could say there are 3 groups on the basis of rhythm patterns. The Ngowiye speakers have one rhythm pattern, and within the Yongolege there are two rhythm patterns. Elauru and Werewere villagers have a different rhythm pattern from Winima and Kwembu villagers. The people describe these as a different "neck". Each group is familiar with the others rhythm pattern. They can mimic them and understand each other in conversation.

### Examples:

#### Ngowiye

#### Yongolege

Werewere  
Elauru

Kwembu  
Winima

Ni talegi 'where are you going'

Ni tálegi

Ni talegi

Lawikmek 'yam'

Lawikmék

Lawikmek

Lawikmek waliyi 'yam is cooking'

Lawikmek waliyi

Lawikmek waliyi

In 1972 when writing Biangai Phonemes, we considered the rhythm patterns as stress. The Yongolege group was described with the help of two Merewere speakers. Stress was described as being manifested by intensity. "Stress does not significantly effect length of vowels. Primary stress occurs on the last or second last syllable of a stem. A stressless word or morpheme following a stem with no stress, gains stress on the first syllable. Secondary stress is predictable on the first syllable of a word. It occurs on the first and every alternate syllable preceeding stressed syllables, and /or on every alternate syllable following a stressed syllable." 2

Examples:

'lang	'la"wek
"wak	"wa?pek
'pilang	'pilan"dik
"mango	"mango'bek
'pa"nu	'pa"numale
'wabeneng	'wabene"mek

Neither stress nor tone is phonemic and since it varies according to speakers it will not be written.

Both groups have the same number of phonemes, both vowels and consonants.

Orthography

Symbol	Phoneme	Allophone
p	/p/	(p) (b)
t	/t/	(t) (d)
k	/k/	(k) (g) (?) (k)
b	/b/	(b)
g	/g/	(g)
s	/s/	(s)
z	/z/	(z) (d)
m	/m/	(m)
n	/n/	(n)
ng	/ng/	(ng)
l	/l/	(l) (la)
r	/r/	(r)
w	/w/	(w)
y	/y/	(y)
i	/i/	(i) (u) (ê)
ei	/e/	(e) (œ)
ø	/ /	(^) (ε) (o')
a	/a/	(a) (a) (o')
o	/o/	(o)
u	/u/	(u)
au	/au/	(au)
ai	/ai/	(ai)



The following have been observed as differences in the two groups:

1. Fricatives are more lenis in the Yongolege group.
2. The Yongolege speakers tend to say all sounds further back in the mouth.
3. Generally the Yongolege group uses the phoneme /z/ whereas the Ngowiye speakers use the allophone (d). The symbol z is acceptable with all speakers.

All Biangai speakers tend to shorten words which enables them to speak fast. Some speakers shorten words more than others. It has been observed that the speakers from Flauru and Warware use the shortened form of words more extensively than the others. For this reason we plan to write the long forms.

Examples of shortening within words:

long form	shortened form
ngowimbek	ngombek 'moon'
mogosi	mo'si 'to sit'
keremunga	keremuge 'many'
koyiya	koya 'are there'
puwili	pili 'they'
kamakema	kememe 'sick'
ingeleilei	ileilei 'tree'
pilipili	pilili 'root'
orogozamek	oroga/orozamek 'nose'
yombanu	yombu 'man'

## Examples of shortening between words:

## long form

## shortened form

wizi mowel

wizime

'sim. cl. connector'

wiza kome

wizame

'pl., you stay'

talik talik

tatalik

'how many'

inge kerera

ingerera/ingkerera

'ball of foot'

yongo keya mo

yongkamo/yongamo

'back and forth'

yaliya wazamiya

yalizamiya

'to rescue'

ulumi wageli wei

ulumageli wei

'to pull and carry'

kai kesi kang pela

kaigesampela

'want to wash'

In fast speech, the coalescing of final and initial word phonemes or the dropping of final phonemes to make a cvc pattern has been observed.

## Examples:

kazing leweng nei

kazi lewe nei

'by way of the road'

korik songono

korizongono

'thin'

Percentage Relationship of Stems in Biangai

Wandumi Kaisenik Biawen Kwambu Winima Elauru Werewere

Wandumi

Kaisenik 99

Biawen 100 99

Kwambu 98 97 98

Winima 95 95 95 97

Elauru 95 96 95 96 95

Werewere 96 96 96 97 98 98

Because of much intermarrying and traveling between villages, the percentages would vary with different speakers. Also the high degree of education could vary this as well.

listed below are the 6 words out of 100 where there were non-cognates

	'bite'	'sleep'	'root'
Wandumi	limiti	iwek	pulili
Kaisenik	limiti	iwek	pulili
Biawen	miti	iwek	pilili
Kwembu	lingkeri	wiyek	pilipili
Winima	ngai mizi	wiyek	kolei
Elauru	uli	wiyek	pilili
Werewere	uli	wiyek	pilili

	'baby'	'wallaby'	'good'
Wandumi	leklingi-	ngaluwale-	wazono
Kaisenik	yebiliga-	ngaluwale-	wazono
Biawen	leklingi-	ngaluwale-	wazono
Kwembu	leklingi-	ngaluwale-	palumu
Winima	mandik songono-	ngaluwale-	palumu
Elauru	yebiliga-	pangaluwelei-	yombiyangai
Werewere	mandik songono-	ngaluwale-	yombiyangai

It is interesting to observe that the word 'sleep' speaks for the 2 group theory, while the word 'good' speaks for the 3 group theory, and the word 'baby' confuses both theories.

Of the 100 words used for the cognate count, there was 15% sound shifting.

Examples are listed below:

Ngowiye	Yongolaga	
korik-	korok-	'skin'
kaing	kang	'to go'
wira-	wiri-	'eye'
inge-	ingi-	'foot'
yengelei-	ingelei-	'tree'
yombanu-	imbanu-	'man'
koza-	kozu/kozo-	'dust'
kobi-	kobo-	'rain'
yewizi-	yewizi/newizi-	'tobacco'

There are no affix variations. Listed below are the few affixes where sound shifts occur.

Ngowiye	Yongolaga	
-meik	-mak	'n. classifier, structure'
-ngaing	-ngang	'n. classifier, ancestral'
-benangai	-benangi	'future definite tense'

### 3. Conclusion

On the basis of percentage relationships of the 7 Biangai villages, we conclude that it is one language with no dialects. The two or three groupings, as described, have features of word shortening, sound shifting, and rhythm patterns.

To take care of the word shortening, the long form of words will be written. Rhythm patterns are speech oriented and are not phonemic so they will not be written. With sound shifting, it is a matter of spelling. In some cases the easier spelling has been chosen. In others, we will put it to a committee.

We have no doubt that one translation is sufficient. There needs to be much tact and diplomacy in teaching to help overcome the feeling that, "My way of speaking is the best way and I can not understand it if it is not written my way".

### Sample Text:

#### Utterances

#### Time

Ngowineyaunapekke

wokneyaunakke

1.6 sec.

ngowineyaunapekke  
moon 2 and 1-cl-on

wokneyaunakke  
day 2 and 1-on

te teyogiya

1.2

te te yogi Kuya  
we2 we2 masc Kuya

i te iwekmeik

yoweliweki mizi.

1.3

i te iwek-meik  
house we2 sleep-cl

yoweli-weki mizi  
tear down-pur do

Tongerike

wikmeik

ngiziweki.

1.1

togo ngerike wik-meik  
and so again new-cl

ngizi-weki  
build-pur

Text continued:

To:ne yakaworowatabing wawigabi pongologo 1.7

togo ne yaka were wataniyeng wei wiya keva nongo-lo-go  
and so I past first something get put and down-pla-to

koweloro kaimbela. .7

kaweleng orowei kaino pala  
vegies get go go

Togo ne yaka wawiya. 1.4

togo ne yaka wei wiya  
and so I past get put

ngeragi nagirawizeiburagaiworowalek 1.4

ngeragi naoi tawizige pura kaiworowalek  
food eat simil that European

ngagoyek kewiti mabelege pelewa. 1.5

ngago-yeik kewiti na-pe-le-ge-pak lewa  
talk-name to.turn lim-here-pla-at-cl come

Tonuwayengagogalewa. .9

tonuwa-yeqi ngago kai lewa  
we-obj talk say came

Togaindonuwa pakairengagozakke. 1.2

togo kangta tounwa paka yereng-ka ngago-zakke  
and so arrived we up village-at talk-converse

Biawe agolomandik neyau 1.4

Biawen-ga kolomantik neyau  
Biawen-from girl 2

Text continued:

watabing weiweki lewa. .9

watapiyeng wai-waki lewa  
something get-pur came

Tagibiyau watabing wai. .7

tegi piyau watapiyeng wai  
cir they2 something get

Abuwili talik wokki weiya menayeiya, yaka kaiwolekpek 2.2

kaya puwili talik wok king waiyagi mana yaiva yaka kaiworowaleknak  
and they what day money will.get quote said.to.them past European

wowarigai menagai. .7

wai wari kaing mana kai  
get carry go quote say.sg

Togo mabik ibenggeburik 1.0

togo mabik ibangka purik  
and.so now afternoon that

puwiligi weiweki kapiyaleyeng orowei-kaing. 1.6

puwili king wai-waki kapiya-lak-yang orowei kaing  
they money get-pur paper-piece-pl get go

Tobulogozakkela we tebakalabe wiriya 1.6

togo pura kozak kela weik te paka-la-ga pa-la-ga wiriya  
and.so that talk to.feel enough we2 up-pla-from here-pla-at came

ayoguyangoluk watabing wawiyi ono 1.2

kaya yagi Kuva ngoluk watapiyeng wai wiyi ono  
and masc Kuva still something get put not



Text continued:

FREE ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

It is the 3rd day of the 3rd month. Kuya and I are going to tear down the house where we sleep, so we can build a new one. And so first I have removed everything and he took vegetables to the (farmer) down there. I finished removing (my things and) while I was eating, the European who is here turning the language came. (He) came to talk to us. And so (he) arrived (and) we (sat) up in the village conversing. Two girls from Biawen came to buy something (from the store).

They bought it and (someone) said to them, "What day will they get (their) money (for the vegetables)?" "The European (farmer) has gone to bring the money." (one of them) said. And so this afternoon they (will) bring (their) tickets to get (their) pay.

And then after discussing, we two (the European and I) came here from up there.

And Kuya has not yet removed (his) things.

Code:

Spoken Biangai is not underlined

Written Biangai is underlined

Abbreviations:

cir circumstance  
cl classifier  
lim limiter  
masc masculine  
obj object  
pl plural  
pla place  
pur purpose  
seq sequence  
sg singular  
simul simultaneous

Footnotes

1. Biangai Phonemes, Raymond and Marjorie Dubert, 1972, page 5.

2. ibid., page 30