

## THE LUNDAYEH LANGUAGE

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### 0. INTRODUCTION

The Lundayeh are relatively recent arrivals in Sabah. They began settlement in the Ulu Padas area of Sipitang District (particularly at Long Pa Sia and Kuala Miau) about 100 years ago. Since then and mostly within the last 60 years they have also settled along the Menalong River. Smaller Lundayeh populations are located in Tenom District at Baru Jumpa, Sapung Estate, Sugiang Estate, and Kuala Tomani, and in Keningau District at Kuala Puntii.

Current Sabah census figures do not indicate the number of Lundayeh living within the state. Crain reckoned that there were 2,165 Lundayeh living in Sabah according to his own personal census in 1968 (Crain 1978:139n2). Based on his figure, and allowing for continued immigration and natural population growth, it is reasonable to estimate the present Lundayeh population in Sabah to be 2,500-3,000.

The Lundayeh of this present study are grouped as part of a larger linguistic and cultural nexus whose heartland has been defined as the Kelabit-Kerayan highland of north central Borneo, particularly the area loosely demarcated by the coordinates 4°15'-3°20'N and 115°20'-116°0'E (LeBar 1972:159). Harrisson suggests this larger group migrated into this area from the south-east, becoming its original settlers sometime in the first centuries of the Christian era. In the 17th century their migrations toward the south and west were halted by the northward advances of Kayan and Kenyah populations. By the early 19th century they had firmly established themselves in the Trusan and Lawas Damit valleys. Migration from interior to coastal regions, including those areas in Sabah where they are now located, took place in the periods following the Second World War, the Indonesian Revolution and the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation (Crain 1978:124-126; LeBar 1972:159). The collection and test points for this present study are shown in Figure 1.

Several investigators have been concerned with linguistic aspects of Lundayeh study. Prentice (1970, 1971) and others argue that the distinction between the Murutic languages of Sabah and Lundayeh - often labelled as Murut - should be more carefully maintained. Lees (1959) presents a phonological description of Lundayeh, from phoneme to word levels. Clayre (1972) presents a comparative phonology of Lundayeh and Sa'ban, a language of Sarawak. In an earlier work Clayre (1970) compares several languages of Sabah and Sarawak, including Lundayeh, as to how they mark participant focus. Garman, Griffiths

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Julie K. King and John Wayne King, eds *Languages of Sabah: a survey report*, 59-65. *Pacific Linguistics*, C-78, 1984.

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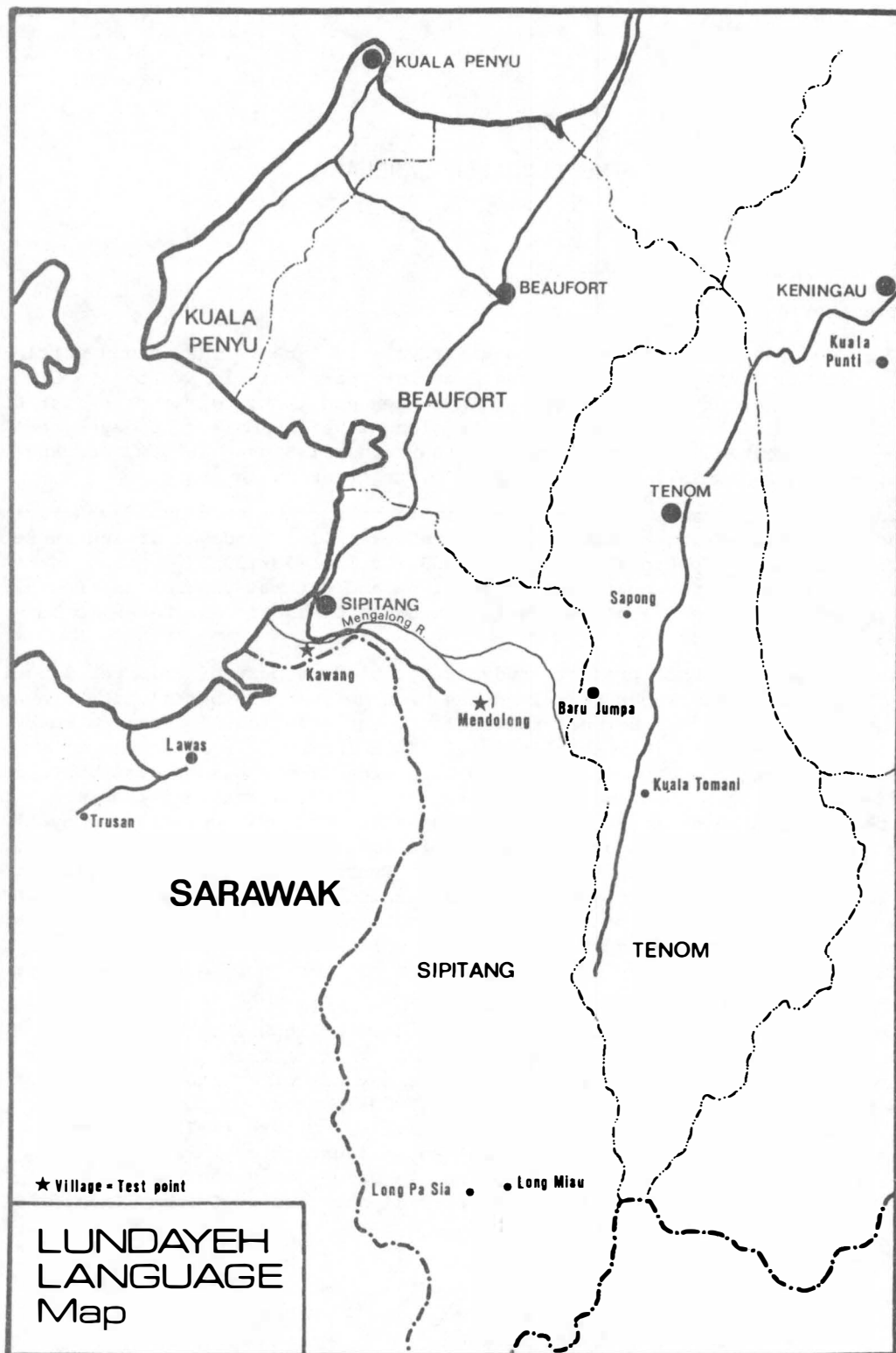


Figure 1: Lundayeh language map

and Wales (1970) present results from their study of language acquisition among Lundayeh children. A phrase book (Padan 1971) and dictionary (Pur 1961) have also been published.

Study of the Lundayeh has been somewhat confusing because of the many terms which have been employed to designate them and the language they speak. In addition to Lundayeh, the list includes Lun Lod, Lun Bawang, Kemaloh, Kelabitic, Kemaloh-Kelabit, Kelabitic Murut, Sarawak Murut, Southern Murut, Murut, Tagal, Potok and Dayak. Most of these terms are applied either in Sarawak or East Kalimantan. The people of Kemaloh East Kalimantan, refer to themselves as Lundayeh and several researchers indicate their dialect is the most widespread Lundayeh dialect (LeBar 1972:159; Crain 1978:139n2). Kelabit refers to a closely related dialect spoken in Sarawak's Fourth Division. This writer is not certain exactly how the terms Potok and Dayak have application to the Lundayeh; they, too, are used in East Kalimantan. (See Deegan 1970:264; Crain 1979:139n7; LeBar 1972:159.)

The terms which have some use as self-designations among Lundayeh in Sabah are Lun Lod, Lun Bawang and Murut. The use of the term 'Murut' whether by Lundayeh themselves or others is particularly frustrating. 'Murut' in a proper linguistic sense refers to a number of languages belonging to a single language family and spoken primarily in Sabah (→ Murutic). The Murutic family is only distantly related to Lundayeh by common inclusion in the North-western Austronesian superstock (→ Section 1). An Assistant District Officer in Sipitang District explained that many Lundayeh had referred to themselves as 'Murut' in the 1980 census-taking so that they would have a place with a larger minority grouping and would not lose their identity altogether. In reality, however, the Lundayeh do not think of themselves as Murut<sup>1</sup> (see also Prentice 1972:154 and Crain 1978: 123-124, 139n3).

The remaining terms Lundayeh, Lun Lod and Lun Bawang are used as genuine self-referents by Lundayeh in Sabah. In the Lundayeh language *lun* means *people*, *dayeh* means *upriver*, *lod* means *downriver*, and *bawang* means *region*, *area* or *locality*. Thus *lun dayeh* means *the upriver people*, *lun lod* means *the downriver people*, and *lun bawang* means *the people of an/this area* or *the local people*.

Both *lun dayeh* and *lun lod* have a non-technical usage in referring to relative placement of people along a river or stream, and certainly their specialised usage has been introduced only as broadening relations within larger social frameworks have necessitated an established identity (Deegan 1979:72n5). The term Lundayeh has preference as a self-referent in that it most aptly describes their historical background as riverine dwellers in interior areas. The term Lun Bawang has limited use outside Sarawak. In some Sipitang communities it bears ecclesio-political connotations, and there as well as in upland, interior areas indicates longtime residents at a place as opposed to Lundayeh (Crain 1978:139n7).

The Sabah Lundayeh Association (Persatuan Lundayeh Sabah)<sup>2</sup> was established early in 1979 for the purpose of preserving Lundayeh culture and ensuring that information about it is propagated accurately. The Association has officially taken the one-word spelling of Lundayeh as the preferred self-designation of Lundayeh people in Sabah. They feel this term is most descriptive of Lundayeh origins. The one-word spelling is intended to reflect an ethnic identity as opposed to the relational connotations suggested from two-word spellings (cf. Lun Dayeh, Lun Daya, Lun Dayah, Lun Daye, Lun Dayoh; also Lundaya - Dunn 1980).

## 1. LEXICOSTATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION

According to Smith's tentative lexicostatistical classification (in this volume), Lundayeh represents one of nine linguistic stocks, within the North-western Austronesian superstock, which are found in Sabah. Within this group of nine, Lundayeh has the lowest relations based on percentage of shared cognates (PSC) with any of the other linguistic stocks. Comparing a representative Lundayeh wordlist with representatives of the other eight North-western Austronesian stocks, Smith demonstrated its range of relations with them to be 25-29 PSC. This indicates that Lundayeh is the most distantly related language within the superstock, and by way of corollary, also the most unique linguistically.

In a more direct comparison of 35 Murutic wordlists with four Lundayeh wordlists, the range of relations among them is 28-35 PSC, with an average of 30.8 PSC for the 140 comparisons. If 11 wordlists representative of Murutic languages are compared with a single representative Lundayeh wordlist, the 11 comparisons yield a slightly lower average of 30.3 PSC and a range of 28-33 PSC.<sup>3</sup> These comparisons clearly show the distinctiveness of Lundayeh from any form of Sabah Murut.

Wordlists were collected from four Lundayeh villages in Sabah. The villages are Kuala Punti KU, Baru Jumpa TM, Mendolong SG, and Kawang SG. The Lundayeh in all of these villages except Kawang SG reportedly had come to Sabah within the last 30 years. Kawang SG is more than 50 years old. The person from whom the wordlist was elicited in Kawang SG called his language Lun Lod. Language assistants in the other three villages all spoke of their language as Lundayeh. The PSC relations between the four villages are displayed in Figure 2.



Figure 2: PSC relations between Lundayeh villages

The range of PSC relations among the four wordlists is high, 87-89 PSC, indicating the four represent a single language, and even a single dialect. According to project criteria (→ Introduction) such high internal relations and low external relations as those discussed above would not necessitate intelligibility testing in Lundayeh villages. Nevertheless, it was decided to do intelligibility testing to determine the extent of language learning by Lundayeh speakers since they are living in areas where Murut is the predominant language, and also to test the degree of homogeneity among Lundayeh speakers, especially where different autonyms had been used.

## 2. TESTING PROCEDURE

Testing was done in two Lundayeh villages, Kawang and Mendolong, both in Sipitang District. Kawang SG represented an earlier wave of immigration and the use of the self-referent Lun Lod. Mendolong SG by contrast represented both a more recent wave of immigration and used the autonym Lundayeh.

The test set included Lundayeh stories from each hometown, the other Lundayeh test point, Baru Jumpa TM, and Lubiduan SAR,<sup>4</sup> a village located near Trusan in the Lawas district of Sarawak's Fifth Division. The Mendolong SG story was used with only four test subjects in Kawang SG, and likewise, the Kawang SG story was used with only four subjects in Mendolong SG, since the lexical relation between them was high, they are geographically close, and initial test scores were likewise high. The story from Ansip in Keningau District was chosen to represent Murut, as it is also Tagal, which is geographically the nearest Murutic neighbour to Lundayeh in Sabah. Each of the tapes was judged to be of clear quality. The content of each was good. Kawang SG seemed to be an easier story to understand.

Testing went well in both Kawang SG and Mendolong SG with the exception that in Kawang SG the youngest subject was 36 years old and only nine subjects were tested. These factors did not seem to significantly influence test scores.

### 3. TEST RESULTS

The results of dialect intelligibility testing in Kawang SG and Mendolong SG are shown in Figure 3. It is noteworthy that test subjects in Kawang SG used the self-designations Lun Lod and Lun Bawang as well as Lundayeh. The Lubiduan SAR story-teller also referred to himself as Lun Bawang. All subjects in Mendolong SG used the self-referent Lundayeh. The range for the average score received for each Lundayeh reference tape in each of the two test points was 89-100%. Neither the difference in self-designations nor comparative ages of the settlements proved to be significant. The greatest difference between the average scores received on the same reference tape for the two villages was 4%. The scores confirm that the Lundayeh of Sabah are linguistically homogeneous and speak a single dialect even though different autonyms are in use. Also, the scores suggest that this homogeneity extends across the border into Sarawak. Further investigation should determine the full extent of this linguistic conformity. Of particular interest is the relationship of Sabah Lundayeh to those dialects still spoken within its linguistic heartland in the Kelabit-Kerayan highland of Sarawak and East Kalimantan.

The testing of Lundayeh speakers' understanding of a Murut story indicates that language learning has been minimal. Even though dialect intelligibility testing alone is not an accurate tool for measuring relations between languages outside of the same subfamily, these low scores nevertheless support Smith's conclusion that Lundayeh and the Murutic languages are only distantly related.

REFERENCE TAPE  TEST POINT	Lundayeh				Murut
	Kawang SG	Mendolong SG	Baru Jumpa TM	Lubiduan SAR	Ansip KU
Kawang SG	99 (100)	100* (89)	91 (88)	89	38 (30)
Mendolong SG	95* (89)	98 (100)	95 (87)	91	33 (29)

\* average score for four subjects only

Figure 3: Results of intelligibility testing in the Lundayeh villages of Kawang SG and Mendolong SG. (The reference tapes used in the test set are listed along the top. PSC relations are given in parentheses.)

#### 4. NATIONAL LANGUAGE INTELLIGIBILITY

In both Kawang SG and Mendolong SG subjects were tested for their ability to understand a story told in Bahasa Malaysia. Figure 4 summarises the test scores and some sociological information about the test subjects.

	AVG. SCORE	SEX M/F	AGE		EDUCATION		
			AVG.	RANGE	ED.	A.E.R.	A.E.S.
Kawang SG	82	5/4	45	36-60	3	2.7	0.9
Mendolong SG	80	5/5	34	15-65	8	7.8	6.2

Figure 4: Comprehension of the national language in two Lundayeh villages with sociological data. (AVG. SCORE is given as percentage. RANGE indicates youngest and oldest test subject. EDUCATION figures indicate the number of subjects who had received some formal education (ED.), the average number of years of education those subjects had received (A.E.R.), and the average number of years of education of all subjects (A.E.S.) in the corpus.)

Subjects in both villages understood the national language story well. Though the test corpus at Kawang SG had a higher average age and, per subject, had received significantly less formal education, their average intelligibility score was slightly higher than that for Mendolong SG. This is certainly attributable in part to the proximity of Kawang SG to Malayic-speaking communities with which there is some contact, and its location just off the main road to Sipitang town.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Dialect intelligibility testing in two Lundayeh villages confirms the conclusions made by Smith in his tentative lexicostatistical analysis of Sabah languages. Lundayeh as it is spoken in various communities in Sabah represents a single dialect. Test results further indicate that a similar degree of homogeneity extends as well to Lundayeh communities in Sarawak. Testing also confirms the distant relationship propounded for Lundayeh and the Murutic languages of Sabah. Application of the term Murut to the Lundayeh people only blurs a clear-cut linguistic distinction.

## NOTES

1. The writer wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance received from Dawar bin Sodom, the Assistant District Officer for Rural Affairs in Sipitang District, and from Charles Ayub Tabad, President of the Sabah Lundayeh Association (Persatuan Lundayeh Sabah).
2. Persatuan Lundayeh Sabah is registered as a 'friendly' society in Sabah with the federal registrar of societies (Pendaftar Pertubuhan Malaysia) in accordance with the Society Act of 1966.
3. The 11 Murut villages are: Minansut KU, representing the Gana language; Bukau BT, representing the Beaufort Murut language; Langsat TM, representing the Timugon language; Pensiangan PN, representing the Tagal language; Kadalakan KU, representing the Nabay language; Sook KU, representing the Paluan language; Baru Jumpa TM, representing the Kolod language; Labuk KAL, representing Sembakung Murut; Kalabakan TU, representing Kalabakan Murut; Serudung TU, representing Serudung Murut; and Kokoroton KN, representing the Baukan language (→ Murutic).
4. The Lubiduan SAR story was tape-recorded by Robin Labo, now a teacher in Miri, Sarawak. He also provided a Lundayeh transcription and English translation for the story.

