

# A preliminary (Malayic) dialectology of the northwest portion of West Kalimantan province

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## Abstract

The northwest portion of West Kalimantan province hosts a substantial diversity of Malayic speech varieties (lects). Some of these are “canonical Malay” (Collins 1997), a social term which can be defined as lects spoken by those who consider themselves ethnically *Melayu*. Most lects, however, are spoken by those who consider themselves ethnically Dayak, hence the term *Malayic Dayak* (Hudson 1970, better *Dayak Malayic*; see discussion in Collins 1997).

Only one or two of the Malayic lects in this area (defined here as the four western and northern regencies of Sambas, Pontianak, Bengkayang and Landak) have been studied in some detail (i.e. Kendayan/Selako), whereas most have received cursory attention if at all. (The state of description among the ten-odd Land Dayak/Bidayuhic lects is even worse.) Nor has a credible dialectological study been performed; the nature of the relationships of the various lects to each other and to outside lects is unclear. In some cases, even genetic classification, whether a particular lect is Malayic or Bidayuhic, has not been established.

The publication of the volume summarizing a decade of ethnolinguistic research into the Dayak groups of West Kalimantan (Alloy, Albertus & Istiyani 2008) provides a significant step towards a dialectology of this area. Importantly, it enumerates all the ethnolinguistic groups which could be considered Dayak and provides information on their location, population and other details.

This paper, based largely on unpublished linguistic data tied to the ethnolinguistic research mentioned above, attempts to build on the abovementioned work as well as other past research in order to sketch out an initial dialectology of this region and begin to remedy some of the deficiencies mentioned earlier. To accomplish this, we first separate out the Malayic from the Bidayuhic lects. We then statistically compare the words and sounds of the remaining area lects, supplemented by a bit of historical linguistics. In our comparisons, we include significant Malayic lects outside the region like Riau, Brunei, Iban and ‘southern Dayak Malayic’ to give a better relative sense of linguistic distance. Finally, we bring these three analyses together with reports of (mutual) intelligibility to tentatively propose a clustering system that is socially aware and linguistically informative.

## References

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