

# *Itu,* a curious Bunun word

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# A journey of discovery

- *Itu* [ʔitu] as a enigmatic Biblical expression
- What other people say
- Central Bunun demonstrative paradigms
- **Eureka!**
- The larger picture



# Background

- Five Bunun dialects
  - Northern dialects: Takibakha, Takituduh
  - Central dialects: **Takbanuaz, Takivatan**
  - Southern dialect: Isbukun



# *Itu* in Christian texts

(7) Pitilu mas Iuhani hai isaindzia ta-tahu  
Peter and John TPC thereREP-talk  
mas itu sasbin?að tu halija ...  
OBL ??? lord ATTR word

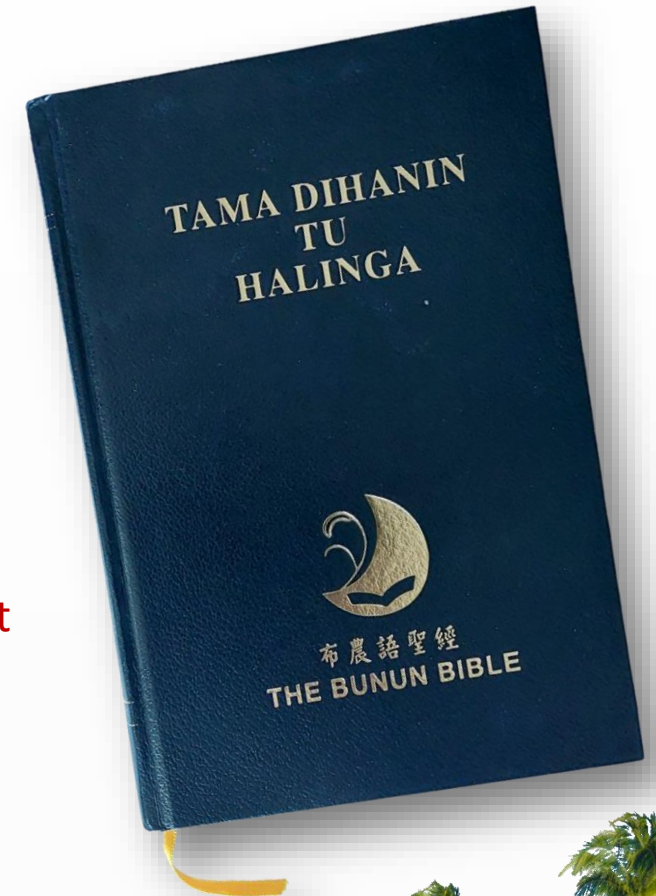
‘When Peter and John had preached the words of the Lord, [they went back to Jerusalem.]’ (Acts 8:25)



# *Itu* in Christian texts

- Some typical expressions

- |                         |                      |   |                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------|
| • Itu Tama Dihanin      | ‘Father in Heaven’   | } | God              |
| • Itu Sasbinað Dihanin  | ‘the Lord in Heaven’ |   |                  |
| • Itu Sasbinað          | ‘the Lord’           | } | Jesus            |
| • Itu Iesu              | ‘Jesus’              |   |                  |
| • Itu Simun             | ‘Simon’              | } | Important people |
| • Itu Paliskadan daiṇað | ‘the King’           |   |                  |



# Occurrences of (?)*itu*

Deictic quality not clear  
Appears again to indicate  
reverence or politeness

- Takivatan:

(1) talbinauʔaǝ simaq su itu Bunun ŋan  
lady who 2S.N ~~this.here~~ Bunun name  
'Miss, what is your bunun name?'

(2) itu tama diqanin tu isʔaŋ-a  
~~this.here~~ father sky ATTR belief-LNK  
'the belief in the Father in Heaven (i.e. the Christian God)'



# Occurrences of *(ʔ)itu*

- Isbukun: *ʔitu*- ‘belong to’ as a variation of *(ʔ)is*- (Li 2018, p. 389-291)

<b>ʔit-la-liva</b>	saia	ta'aza	<b>ʔitu-bunun</b>	tu	halinga.
listen-get-wrong	NOM.3SG.DIST	hear[AV]	belong.to-person	LNK	words

Lit., ‘S/he mistakenly listened to others’ words.’ (= ‘S/he misunderstood others’ words.’)

(Li 2018, ex. 3.23 p. 80)



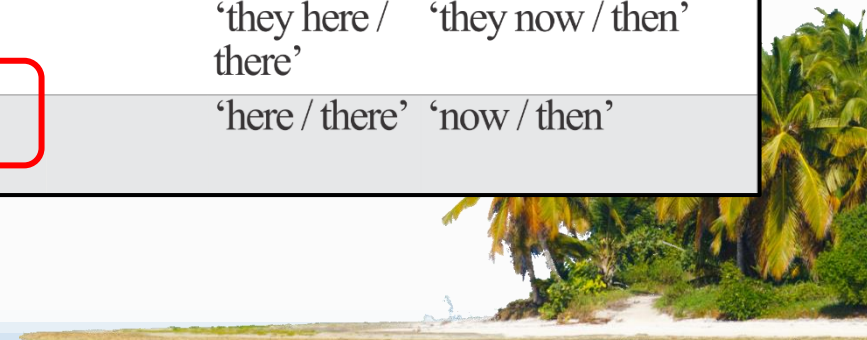
# Central Bunun deixis

## Takivatan Bunun

(De Busser 2017, p. 93)

		Proximal	Medial	Distal	Under-specified	Meaning Spatial      Temporal
<b>Bound dem.</b>	Entitative	-ti	-tun	-ta		‘this / that ...’      ‘... now / then’
	Eventive	-ki	-kun	-ka		‘this / that ... here / there’      ‘... now / then’
<b>Free dem.</b>	Sing. Visible	aipi	aipun	aipa	aip	‘this / that / a certain one’      ‘this one now / then’
	Nonvis.	naipi	naipun	naipa	naip	
	Pl. Visible	ainki	ainkun	ainka		‘these / these ones’      ‘the ones now / then’
	Nonvis.	nainki	nainkun	nainka		
	Generic Visible	aiti	aitun	aita		‘the people here / there’      ‘the people now / then’
	Nonvis.	naiti	naitun	naita		
<b>3rd person pronouns</b>	Pauc. Visible	—	—	(ainta)		‘that small group of people there’      ‘that small group of people then’
	Nonvis.	—	naintun	(nainta)		
	Sing.	isti	istun	ista		‘he, she here / there’      ‘he, she now / then’
	Pl.	inti	intun	inta		‘they here / there’      ‘they now / then’
<b>Place words</b>		ʔiti	ʔitun	ʔita		‘here / there’      ‘now / then’

ʔitu ?



# Suspicion

- *(?)itu* looks suspiciously like a form of the locative verb: *?itu* < *?i-tu*

<i>?it-i</i>	<i>?it-un</i>	<i>?it-a</i>	<i>?it-u</i>	'be/go over here/there'
be.at-PROX	be.at-MED	be.at-DIST	be.at-???	

- But...
  - Its distribution is not the same as other locative verbs
  - It often occurs as (what appears like) a nominal modifier
  - There seems to be quite some



# A sudden discovery (in Takbanuaz Bunun)

‘Over there (not clear where it comes from)’

- (3) Q: maʔaq a tuʔiʔia-ku tu?  
what LNK sound-ART.EVT.VAGUE INTER  
‘What is that sound over there?’  
A: babu aipa  
pig DEM.S.DIST.VIS  
‘That is a pig.’

‘Over there (far away)’

- (4) maʔaq a tuʔiʔia-ka tu  
what LNK sound-ART.EVT.DIST INTER  
‘What is that sound over there?’



# Central Bunun deixis

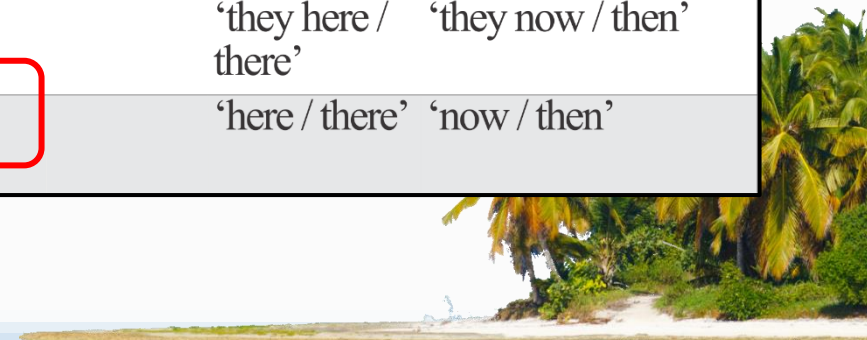
## Takivatan Bunun

(De Busser 2017, p. 93)

-ku ?

?itu ?

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	Pl.	inti	intun	inta		‘they here / there’      ‘they now / then’
		?iti	?itun	?ita		‘here / there’      ‘now / then’



# A sudden discovery (in Takbanuaz Bunun)

- (5) Q: maʔaq aipu tu?  
what DEM.S.VAGUE INTER  
'What is that?'  
A: batu mu-qalqal  
stone ALL-fall.down  
'A stone, it is falling down.'
- (6) Q: maʔaq aipa tu  
what DEM.S.DIST.VIS INTER  
'What is that? '
- 'that one (not clear where it is)'  
'that one (over there, far away)'



# A four-way deictic distinction

	DEF set 1	DEF set 2	'be located'	DEM Sing	DEM Plur
PROX	=ki	=i	?iti	aipi	aiŋki
MED	=kun	=un	?itun	aipun	aiŋkun
DIST	=ka	=a	?ita	aipa	aiŋka
VAGUE	=ku	=u	?itu	aipu	—



# An unusual deictic contrast?

- Originally, Takbanuaz had a general contrast between four submorphemic elements across paradigms

-i	-un	-a	-u
Proximal	Medial	Distal Takivatan: VIS Takbanuaz: NVIS	Vague / Undefined NVIS

- The forms with *-u* indicate an undefineable or vague distance ('somewhere, but it is not known where')
- Only used by older speakers (consulant suggests 80 year and above)
- No attested functional correlates in other dialects or languages
- But there are relics in other dialects



# Conclusion

- Small, isolated words with vague meanings are suspicious
  - Necessity of re-evaluating analyses
  - It can take a while to discover a paradigm
- 
- An unusual deictic contrast in Takbanuaz Bunun
  - Collapse of this paradigm in modern dialects



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