



A four-way distance contrast in Takbanuaz Bunun deixis

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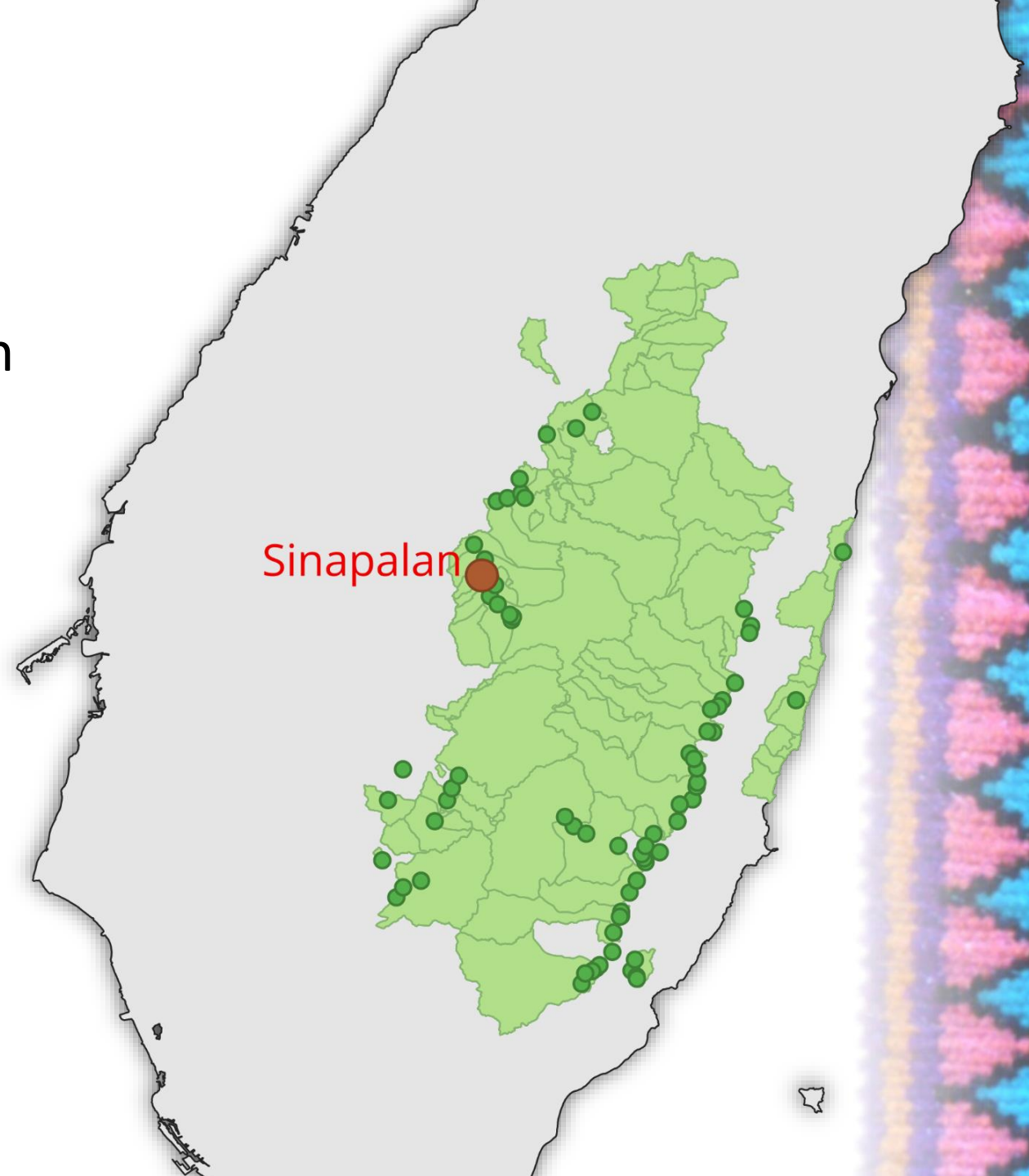
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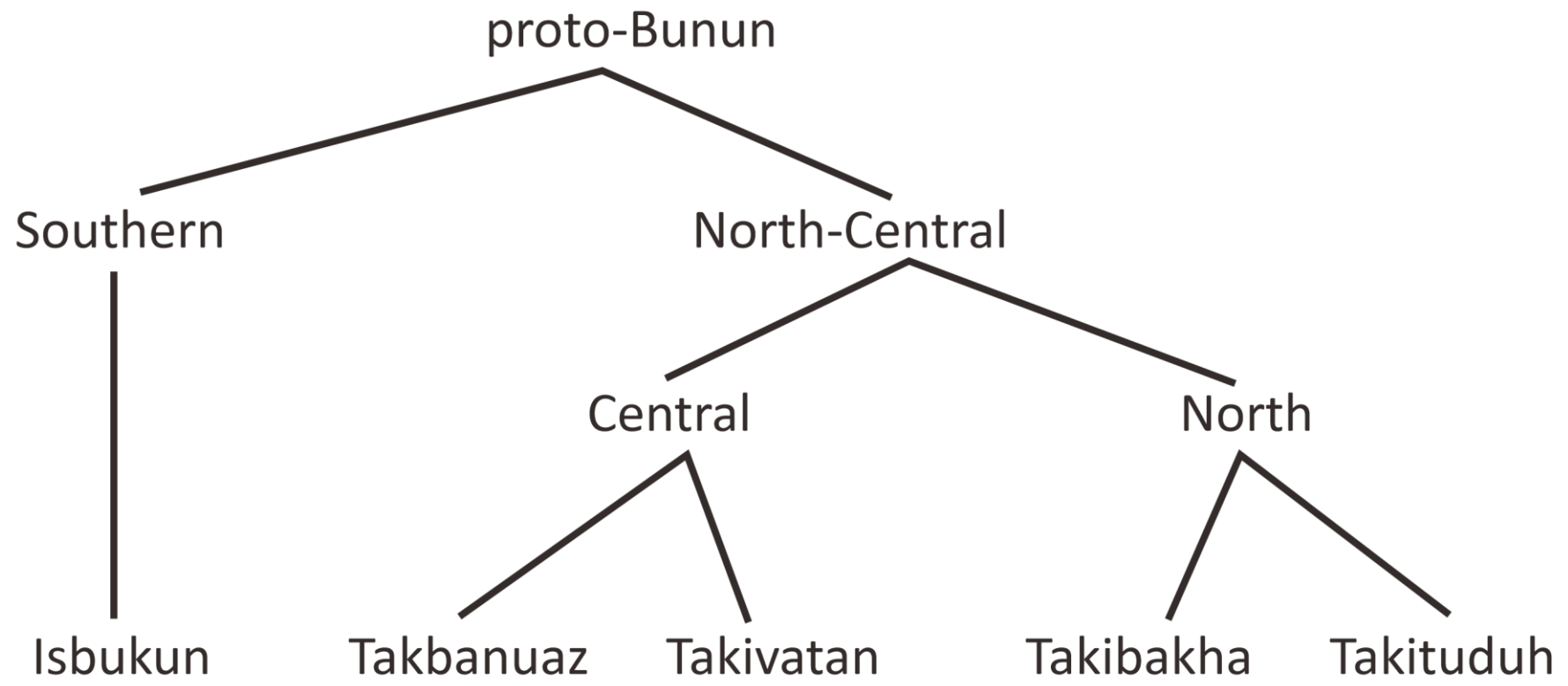


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Bunun

- Bunun (bnn), Austronesian, Taiwan
- Five extant dialects (Li 1988)
- Philippine-type language
- Symmetrical voice system
- Complex verbal morphology
- Lots of deixis





(based on Shibata 2020)

Distance distinctions in deixis

- Cross-linguistic preference for two-way (proximal-distal) or three-way (proximal-medial-distal) distinction
- Intersection with other categories (visibility, ...)

| Distance contrast | # Lang | % Lang |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| No distance contrast | 7 | 2.99 |
| Two-way contrast | 126 | 53.85 |
| Three-way contrast | 88 | 37.61 |
| Four-way contrast | 9 | 3.85 |
| Five (or more)-way contrast | 4 | 1.71 |
| | 234 | 100.00 |

(WALS; Diessel 2013)

Previous research on Bunun deixis

- Complex deictic paradigms relative to most other Formosan languages
- Isbukun (Southern) and Takivatan (Central) Bunun
 - Considerable differences between dialects
 - Three-way distance distinction
 - Visibility distinction

Takivatan Bunun

(De Busser 2017: 93)

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

Isbukun Bunun

(Li 2018: 147, Table 4.3 & 148, Table 4.4)

| Distance from the speaker | NOM | OBL |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| proximal, visible | =in | =tin |
| medial, visible | =an | =tan |
| distal, invisible | =a | =tia |

| Formal features | | Case | NOM | OBL |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| singular | proximal, visible | | sain | saitin |
| | medial, visible | | saian | saitan |
| | distal, invisible | | saia | saitia |
| plural | proximal, visible | | nain | naitin |
| | medial, visible | | naian | naitan |
| | distal, invisible | | naia | naitia |

General observations

- Transects wordclasses
 - Bound demonstratives (definiteness) 2 series
 - Free demonstratives
 - (Possibly third person pronouns)
 - Locative/directional verbs
- Person and case distinction
- Visibility distinction
 - Takivatan: free demonstratives n- / \emptyset -
 - Isbukun: bound demonstratives (corresponds to distal form)

General observations

- Three-way distal distinction

| | Takivatan | Isbukun |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Proximal | -i | -in |
| Medial | -un | -an |
| Distal | -a | -a |

- Underspecified forms in Takivatan in free singular demonstratives

| | Proximal | Medial | Distal | Underspecified |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Visible | aipi | aipun | aipa | aip |
| Non-visible | naipi | naipun | naipa | naip |

Some unusual Takbanuaz forms

- Evidence of a four-way distinction
- *-u*: vague, unimaginable distance

| | DEF set 1 | DEF set 2 | 'be located' | DEM Nom Sg | DEM Nom Pl | DEM Obl Sg | DEM Obl Pl |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| PROX | =ki | =i | ʔiti | aipi | aiŋki | (a)isti | inti |
| MED | =kun | =un | ʔitun | aipun | aiŋkun | (a)istun | intun |
| DIST | =ka | =a | ʔita | aipa | aiŋka | (a)ista | inta |
| VAGUE | =ku | =u | ʔitu | aipu | — | ? | ? |

- No evidence of underspecified forms like Takivatan

Contrastive examples

(5) maʔaq aipi
what DEM.S.PROX.VIS
What is this? (close to me)

(6) maʔaq aipun
what DEM.S.MED.VIS
What is this/that? (in the same area, visible)

(7) maʔaq aipa
what DEM.S.DIST.VIS
What is that? (at a distance, usually non-visible, for instance when hearing a sound in the mountains)

(8) maʔaq aipu
what DEM.S.VAGUE
What is that? (non-visible, distance not imaginable)

Other examples

(9) maʔaq a baqliv-**u** tu / lukis mu-qalqal
what INTER slam-ART.VAGUE INTER tree ALL-fall.down
What is that clanging noise? Wood, it is falling down.

(10) maʔaq a qaliṇa-**ku**
what INTER language-ART.VAGUE
What (strange) sound is that? (unimaginable)

Other examples

- (11) haiða **?itu** tanʔa-un tu palajaʔanan ma-taliskan
exist **there.VAGUE** hear-UV COMPL famous STAT-fast
tu bunun
ATTR person

I've heard that there (at some unknown place) is a famous person who can run very fast.

- (12) maisna-**?itu** aipa min-suma
ABL-**there.VAGUE** DEM.S.DIST.VIS INCH-return
Where did they come from? (the point of origin is unimaginable)

General observations

- Generally a three-way distance distinction

| | Takivatan | Takbanuaz | Isbukun |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Proximal | -i | -i | -in |
| Medial | -un | -un | -an |
| Distal | -a | -a | -a |
| Vague | — | -u | — |

- With relics of a four-fold distinction
 - Partial
 - Relatively rare
 - Consultant indicates mainly used by older speakers (+80y)

General observations

- Differences between Takbanuaz and Takivatan
 - Formal differences
 - Functional shifts
- Underspecified vs Vague
 - Underspecified: no distance value **needs to** be assigned (cf. French *ce*)
 - Vague: no distance value **can** be assigned

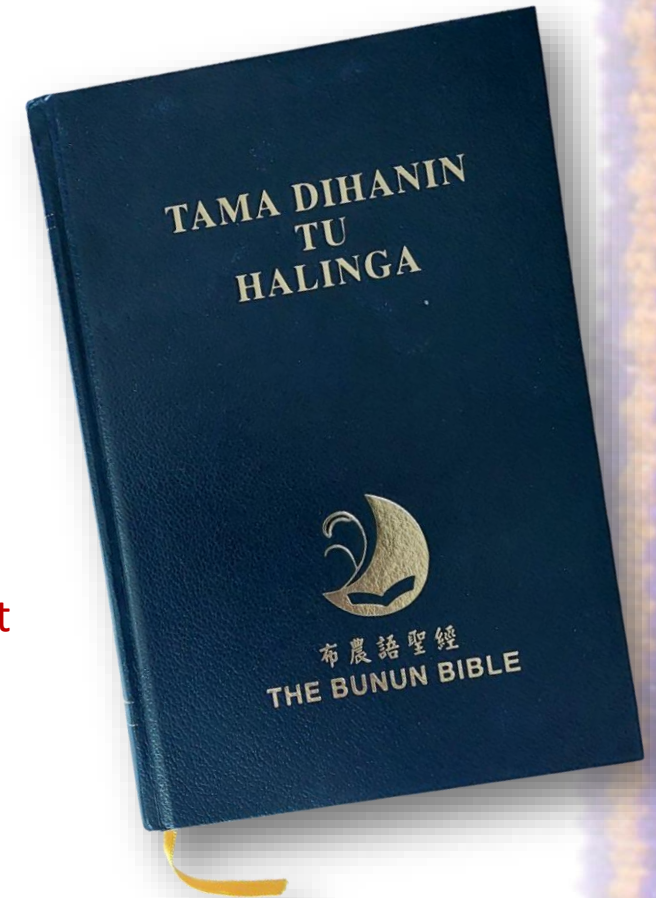
Possible implications

- Diachrony
 - A four-way system that reduced to a three-way system?
 - Takbanuaz introduced any extra distinction?
- Possible relation to the form *itu* in Isbukun and the Bible translation
 - Translated in Li (2018) as 'belong to'
 - Appears to be a marker of politeness or reverence

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 daiņað | 'the King' | |



Conclusion

- An four-way distance distinction in Takbanuaz
- Possible relation to forms in other dialects
- Diachrony?

- Beware of closely related dialects
- Relatively rapid differentiation of demonstrative functions and forms

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Q&A



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