

The Bidayuh Krokong Dialect: To Standardize or not Standardize

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Abstract

The intricacies of language require all language scientists to be thorough and methodical in doing their analyses. This need is even more critical for the Bidayuh languages when there is a lot of on-going effort to preserve the language by various groups both from the people as well those from outside. Standardization and the teaching of the language in schools are among the top suggestions being explored. One of the disadvantages of standardizing a language is the danger of making the many different varieties to die out among the speakers. A closer look at one Jagoi sub-dialect commonly referred to as the Krokong dialect in comparison to other sub-dialects and dialects from other clusters illustrate some of the differences in pronunciation that can be found which highlights the need to help preserve if not all but most of the major varieties.

Keywords: Language, Bidayuh, Krokong, Standardization, Dialect, Phonetic, Phonology, Morpheme structure constraints, Consonants, Vowels

1. Introduction

Bidayuh or Land Dayak is one of the many races that make up the multi-racial country of Malaysia. This tribal group and their kin can be found throughout the island of Borneo. However, the Malaysian Bidayuh resides predominantly in the state of Sarawak on the northern portion of the island. The name, Bidayuh, is often used synonymously to refer to the language spoken by the people. “Bi –“ is a prefix when attached to nouns in the language carries the meaning of *the one who is of* and “dayuh” is actually a variation of the word “doyoh” [dɔjɔh] which means *land*. A literal translation of the name Bidayuh is *People of the Land*. As for the name Land Dayak, Dayak (sometimes misspelled as Dyak) which is pronounced with a glottal stop [dajaʔ] in the final consonant by most native speakers of