

A sketch grammar of Seletar

Tan, Zhi Xuan

2022

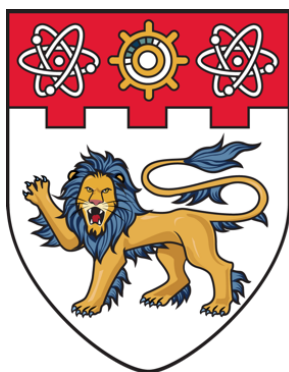
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SINGAPORE

A SKETCH GRAMMAR OF SELETAR

**TAN ZHI XUAN
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES**

2022

A Sketch Grammar of Seletar

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School of Humanities

A thesis submitted to the Nanyang Technological University in partial
fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

2022

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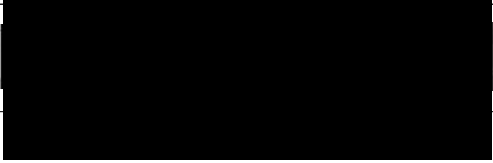
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Summary

The thesis presents a sketch grammar of Seletar, the language of the Orang Seletar. The Orang Seletar are one of the many Orang Asli ('indigenous people') of Malaysia and one of Singapore's indigenous sea peoples (Orang Laut). The language is spoken by approximately 2,000 people in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The research done on the Orang Seletar often lacks technical linguistic analysis based on natural speech, so the thesis hopes to fill this gap. The thesis covers phonology and morphosyntax up to the level of complex sentences.

The analysis of Seletar shows that it is morphologically and syntactically similar to colloquial Malay varieties spoken by ethnic Malays (e.g. bare roots as opposed to affixed forms are preferred, some use of verbal N- prefix, frequent use of reduplication for word formation, various serial verb constructions, use of classifiers, use of *kəna* for the adversative passive, and clauses are juxtaposed without the use of subordinating and/or coordinating markers). Phonologically, the language exhibits more divergent features such as frequent reductions of syllables (e.g. [man] for 'eat' instead of Standard Malay (SM) *makan*, [jan] for 'walk' instead of SM *jalan*), reduction of homorganic nasal and stop clusters (e.g. [tuŋu] 'wait' instead of SM *tunggu*), prevalence of phonetic word final glottal stops (e.g. [kamiʔ] '1PL.EXCL'), retention of Proto-Malayic last syllable schwa (e.g. [dəŋə] from PM **dəŋər*) and velar fricative [ɣ]. Sporadic nasalisation/denasalisation of some bilabial and alveolar stops was observed (e.g. [basə] for *masa* 'time'; [deŋkay] for *neŋkay* 'a term of endearment used by wives when addressing their husbands').

Some frequently used lexical items in Seletar have non-Malay origins, including but not limited to: personal pronouns *am* '1SG' and *ay* '2', demonstratives (*i)ka* 'this' and *jə* 'that', locative deictics *sika* 'here', *gun* 'there' and *junsit* 'far', negator *ncak* 'NEG', body parts *kokot* 'hand' and *jok* 'body', interrogatives *ŋə/ŋa* 'why' and *anak* 'what', and some animal terms *bontuŋ* 'tiger' and *manok* 'chicken'. Some of these words are similar to those seen in Borneo languages and Aslian languages, while others are entirely unique to Seletar. The occurrence of these Borneoan words might indicate a historical presence of speakers of Borneoan languages in the peninsula. Seletar also has its own set of utterance-final discourse particles.

The analysis presented here is primarily based on narrative texts and wordlists from three Orang Seletar that were collected through my own fieldwork in 2019 and recordings shared with me by Nature Classroom, a Malaysian eco-tourism and education enterprise. The appendix contains parsed and glossed Seletar texts and word lists. Apart from presenting a linguistic analysis, the thesis also collates information from various sources to outline a history of the Orang Seletar in the region and their relocation from Singapore to Malaysia. The thesis hopes to shed more light on the Orang Seletar population and their language, as well as to provide a written documentation of their traditional oral narratives.

Abbreviations and conventions

The following are abbreviations and conventions used throughout the thesis.

Phonology conventions and abbreviations

| | |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| / / | phonemic representation |
| [] | phonetic representation |
| ~ | 'in free variation with' |
| ̣ | no audible release |
| V | Vowel |
| C | Consonant |
| N | Nasal |
| IPA | International Phonetic Association |
| σ | syllable |

Morphological conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| = | clitic boundary |
| * | reconstructed proto-form |
| - | affixation |
| ~ | In examples and interlinearised texts, it connects the copied element to the stem in words with reduplication (instead of a hyphen, which represents affixation). |

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| 1 | first person |
| 2 | second person |
| 3 | third person |
| (name) | personal name |
| (HOK) | pronoun borrowed from Hokkien |
| (M) | the pronoun is more commonly used in canonical varieties of Malay |
| ADV | adverbial |
| ABSTR | abstract nominal derived from the action indicated by the root |
| CLF | classifier |
| COMPL | completive |
| CONT | continuative |
| CONTRARY | contrary to expectation |
| DEF | definite |
| EMPH | emphasis |
| ENDEAR | term of endearment |
| EVENT | event focus |
| EXCL | exclusive |
| EXIST | existential marker |
| FIL | filler |
| FOC | focus marker |
| FUT | future marker |
| GEN | generic reference |

| | |
|--------|---|
| IM.FUT | immediate future |
| IMP | imperative |
| INCL | inclusive |
| INDET | indeterminate |
| INDVL | individuality |
| INTRJ | interjection |
| INVOL | involuntary |
| NEG | negation |
| NMLZ | nominaliser |
| PAR | particle |
| PASS | passive |
| PFV | perfective |
| PL | plural |
| POSS | possessive marker |
| POSSN | possession |
| Q | question |
| REL | relativiser |
| REP | repetitive |
| RECIP | reciprocal |
| RSLT | result (derives a nominal that is the result of the action indicated by the root) |
| ROUND | round objects |
| SG | singular |
| STV | stative |
| SUP | superlative degree |
| TRANS | transitiviser |
| JOA | Jabatan Orang Asli ‘Department of Indigenous People’ |
| JAKOA | Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli ‘Department of Orang Asli Development’ |
| JHEOA | Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Orang Asli ‘Department of Orang Asli Affairs’ |
| PAN | Proto-Austronesian |
| PMP | Proto-Malayo-Polynesian |
| PM | Proto-Malayic |
| SM | Standard Malay |

1 Introduction

The thesis presents a sketch grammar of Seletar, the language of the Orang Seletar. The Orang Seletar are one of the many Orang Asli ('indigenous people') of Malaysia and one of Singapore's indigenous sea peoples (Orang Laut). The language is spoken by approximately 2,000 people in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The research done on the Orang Seletar often lacks technical linguistic analysis based on natural speech, so the thesis hopes to fill this gap. The thesis covers phonology and morphosyntax up to the level of complex sentences.

1.1 Outline

The thesis is divided into nine parts. This first chapter provides information regarding the Orang Seletar and their settlement (§1.2), their language and its status (§1.3), their relationship with other Orang Asli and Orang Laut groups (§1.4 and §1.5), and it concludes with an explanation of the etymology of their ethnonym (§1.6). A sketch of the history of the Orang Seletar is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discusses previous literature regarding the study of the Seletar language. The methodology of the study is explained in Chapter 4. The phonetics and phonology of the Seletar language is the focus of Chapter 5. Chapter 6 is on the morphology of the language, followed by a discussion of the syntax in Chapter 7. Some notes regarding the Seletar lexicon are presented in Chapter 8. The thesis concludes with Chapter 9.

The collected word lists can be found in Appendix 1 and transcribed texts in Appendix 2.

1.2 Background

The Orang Seletar currently dwell in 9 villages along the Johor coast (see Figure 2-1 for map): *Kampung Telok Kabung, Kampung Simpang Arang, Kampung Sungai Temon, Kampung Bakar Batu, Kampung Pasir Salam, Kampung Pasir Putih, Kampung Kuala Masai, Kampung Teluk Jawa and Kampung Kong*. The group inhabited the Straits of Johor and Singapore even before the arrival of the British in 1819 (Turnbull, 2009, p. 24). Being one of the groups of *orang laut* ('sea people'), the Orang Seletar are excellent fishermen, and their ancestors were known for their maritime expertise (Andaya, 2008, p. 17). The history of the *orang laut* or sea nomads can be traced back three thousand years (Andaya & Andaya, 2001, p. 14). The Orang Seletar are also one of the groups of *Orang Asli* (Aboriginal People) of the Malay Peninsula. The history of the Orang Seletar is elaborated in Chapter 2 and the group's identity as both *orang laut* and *Orang Asli* will be further elaborated in §§1.5 and 1.4.

Prior to the 1940s, the people lived on boats, and so they were sometimes called boat nomads. The Seletar of today live onshore, but many still build their stilted houses above the sea water. Most of the Seletar people work as fishermen. Other than fish, they also collect crabs, molluscs and mussels in the mangrove forests and riverbanks. The current population is about 1620, according to official sources (Khairul, 2018). An estimate given by the son of the headman of Kampung Sungai Temon in Johor, however, says currently there are about 5,000 Orang Seletar (Nur Adilah, 2019).

1.3 Language and vitality

The Orang Seletar referred to their language as *bahasa asli* ‘aboriginal language’ or *cap kon* [cap kɔn]¹ ‘speak Kon’ during my fieldwork. They do not mind the language going by other appellations such as “Bahasa Seletar” (Juma’at, 2017, p. 146; Ariffin, 1979) or *cap kon muin* [cap kɔn muin], literally ‘speak like the people of before’ (Juma’at, 2017, p. 146). As the term “Seletar” has already been used in previous literature to describe the language variety of the Orang Seletar, such as in Collins (1999) and Ariffin (1979), and that it is usual practise to refer to the variety of a particular sea nomad group using their *suku* (group) names (e.g. Barok for the Orang Barok in Collins, 1999; Anderbeck, 2012), I will do the same in this thesis, and refer to the language of the Orang Seletar as “Seletar”. However, it is noted that the people themselves do not refer to their language as such.

Seletar is part of the Austronesian language family, specifically the Malayo-Chamic branch (Blust, 2013, p. xxxv). The language is Malayic (Blust, 2013, p. 71). An examination of its lexicon shows more than 90 percent similarity to local Malay (e.g. Yusop, 2011; Blissett & Elzinga, 2015; Pok, 2017; Tan, 2020), and thus it can be considered a dialect of Malay. However, preliminary observations show influences from Aslian in terms of phonology, namely a strong word final accent (Pok, 2017) and some sesquisyllables (Tan, 2020).

In Ethnologue, the language’s ISO 639-3 code is [ors].² Ethnologue classifies the language as 6b ‘Threatened’ in Malaysia, due to the disruption of intergenerational transmission (Eberhard, Simons and Fenning, 2021). However, I observed that most children converse with their peers and their elders in Seletar in two of the villages where my data was collected (Kampung Simpang Arang and Sungai Temon), so the classification might not be entirely accurate in terms of intergenerational transmission. In Singapore, the status is 8a ‘Moribund’, which means that the language is not being transmitted intergenerationally, and only the grandparents’ generation can speak the language (Eberhard, Simons and Fenning, 2021). I am in contact with a family of Orang Seletar currently living in Singapore (details see §4.3), but they only recently moved here (around 2010) from Kampong Telok Kabong in Johor, and still regularly (before COVID-19) go back to their village. The children speak the language with no problem. I was not able to locate any descendants of Orang Seletar that stayed in Singapore after the group’s relocation of the 1980s and before. Most likely they have assimilated to the mainstream community, and do not speak the language anymore. I suspect the Orang Seletar variety is extinct in Singapore, aside from the one family mentioned above.

Ethnologue lists the Orang Seletar population in Singapore as 1250 and the number of speakers to be 1200, taking their data from Leclerc & Jean (2019, who do not state exactly how this number was obtained. The number of speakers provided by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA)³ in 1996 in Benjamin (2002, p. 22) is 801 in Malaysia. Blust (2013, p. 71) reports the number of speakers as 880 in 2003. Florey (2005, p. 43) gives the number as 541 in Johor and estimates 500 in Singapore. It is unclear how Blust and Florey obtained their numbers as they did not list their sources. Juma’at (2017) estimates the number of speakers to not exceed 2000 (which is a little over the most recent population

¹ *kon* is how Seletar refer to themselves. The etymology of the word will be clarified in §1.4.1. *c* is written as such following the common practices of Austronesian linguistics. The IPA equivalent is tʃ.

² Anderbeck (2016) suggests that the Orang Seletar variety should be considered a dialect of Malay and grouped together with local Malay [zlm].

³ JHEOA stands for ‘Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Orang Asli’ = Department of Orang Asli Affairs. This is the one of the previous names for the department. Created in 1954, it was first called the Department of Orang Asli (Jabatan Orang Asli, JOA). In 1963, it was renamed the Jabatan Hal-Ehwal Orang Asli (JHEOA). In 2011, the department was renamed as the Department of Orang Asli Development (Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli, JAKOA).

census of 1600 in 2018). JAKOA⁴ in Malaysia does not collect data regarding the number of speakers, only documenting ethnic population. From the data given by various sources mentioned above, the estimated number of speakers can be anywhere from 500 to 2000.

The language does not have a writing system (Eberhard, Simons and Fenning, 2021). The older Orang Seletar I have met are illiterate. The younger members of the community that have gone or are going to school can read and write Malay. As a result, the younger Orang Seletar are writing down their language to some extent. I have observed some short written online posts and/or comments in Seletar, and some through my communications with my Orang Seletar interpreters (for details on the interpreters see §4.3). The short texts are written in Roman alphabet, similar to Malay. More research is required to understand the relationship between the phonemes and graphemes.

The Orang Seletar family that I met in Singapore are literate in English, in addition to Malay. Aside from their own variety, the Orang Seletar are very fluent in the local Malay variety spoken by ethnic Malays (Juma'at, 2017, p. 147; and confirmed by my fieldwork observations). In other words, most Orang Seletar are bidialectal, speaking their aboriginal Malay variety among themselves, and the local Johor variety with outsiders. Some are able to converse in Mandarin (Ariffin, 1979; again confirmed by my fieldwork observations) especially those who are of mixed Seletar-Chinese parentage or have chosen partners who are ethnically Chinese.

As a result of rapid urban development on the coast of Johor Bahru, Malaysia, the traditional lifestyle of the Orang Seletar has been severely impacted. Several Orang Seletar villages have faced or are facing issues regarding land rights and may be evicted from their current settlements by private developers in the near future, should the state require the lands (Nicholas, 2000). The relocation may cause dispersion of the community, and may affect the maintenance of the language, as was the case for the Orang Selat community in Singapore (Benjamin, 2021, p. 114). Aside from the uncertainty of land occupation, development projects on the Johor coast have polluted the area. The sea and the mangrove forests, traditionally inhabited by the Orang Seletar, have been losing ground to concrete jungles. Pollution has caused the daily catch of the Orang Seletar, like fish and crabs, to decrease severely, affecting their livelihood. Some within the community have chosen to take on land jobs and reside in more urban settings. With more exposure to mainstream society, the Orang Seletar are increasing their use of Malay in order to communicate with 'outsiders'. Thus, Seletar is losing ground to Malay, which many consider to be the macrolanguage of Seletar.

1.4 The Orang Asli and the Orang Seletar

The Orang Seletar have a multi-layered identity. They are (i) one of eighteen tribes of Orang Asli (indigenous people) in Peninsular Malaysia, (ii) one of the groups of Orang Laut (sea people) indigenous to Singapore and (iii) part of the numerous Orang Laut tribes in Island Southeast Asia who make their living from the sea.

Peninsular Malaysia has eighteen groups of indigenous peoples:⁵

Kensiw, Kintaq, Jahai, Menriq, Batek, Ceq Wong, Lanoh, Temiar, Semai, Jah Hut, Semaq Beri, Semelai, Mah Meri, Temuan, Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Seletar, Duano.

⁴ See end of footnote 3.

⁵ The labels used by JAKOA sometimes differ from the ethnonyms employed by linguists and anthropologists, e.g. Kensiu is also written as Kensiw in linguistic and anthropological literature, Bateq as Batek, Semoq Beri as Semaq Beri, Ceh Wong as Ceq Wong. I will employ the writing conventions used in linguistic literature.

The 18 are categorised into three “subgroups”: Negrito, Senoi and Aboriginal Malay by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) in Malaysia (JAKOA, 2021). The JHEOA’s classification is not based on linguistic divisions, nor does it concern the societal patterns of these groups. Benjamin (2002) criticises the government’s classification as *kuih lapis* (layer cake) folk-scholarly ethnology (p. 18), which hierarchically ranks the population in terms of its evolutionary ‘advancements’ and gives the misconception that these people are ‘frozen’ in their way of life lived thousands of years ago. I have opted for the term “Aboriginal Malay” instead of “Proto-Malay”, as the latter references the social-evolutionary view just mentioned.

An alternative classification is based on the languages the Orang Asli speak. Benjamin categorises the peoples according to linguistic affiliation and divides the ethnic groups⁶ stated above into speakers of Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer) and Austronesian languages (Benjamin, 2002, p. 22). Aslian is further categorised into Northern,⁷ Central, Jahut (a single language) and Southern varieties (Benjamin, 2012, p. 141). The Austronesian languages spoken by the Orang Asli are Malay (all the various dialects of it) and Duano (also called Kuala) (Benjamin, 2012, p. 137).

Northern Aslian: Kensiw, Kintaq, Jahai, Menriq, Batek, Ceq Wong, Jedek (newly discovered), Maniq (in Southern Thailand)

Jahut (single language)

Central Aslian: Lanoh, Temiar, Semai, Semnam (not listed officially)

Southern Aslian: Semaq Beri, Semelai, Mah Meri, Temoq (not listed officially)

Austronesian (possibly Malayic): Duano

Malay: Temuan, Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Seletar

Figure 1-1 shows the regions where the Orang Asli languages are distributed in the Malay Peninsula.⁸ The boundaries indicate “the maximal known historical distributions of the languages rather than the present-day locations, which are more restricted ... Temuan, Jakun, Orang Kanaq and Orang Seletar are Malayic⁹ dialects spoken by Orang Asli (Benjamin, 2012, p. 144). Duano is considered to be possibly Malayic (Benjamin, 2009, p. 299).

⁶ Benjamin (2002, p. 22) uses the labels given by the JHEOA, but states that these labels actually absorb other smaller groups not officially recognized by the department, namely the Temoq population (under “Semelai”), Mintils, Semnams and Sabüm (under “Lanoh”)

⁷ Note that many of the languages such as Menriq, Kensiw, Jahai, Batek etc. have various dialects

⁸ Not depicted in the map below is a newly discovered Northern Aslian language called Jedek (Yager & Burenhult (2017) spoken in Sungai Rual, near Jeli in Kelantan state.

⁹ The distinction between “Malay” and “Malayic” has not always been clear. Generally, it is recognized that “Malay” is a single language, while “Malayic” is a group of languages closely related to Malay (Adelaar, 1992; Tadmor, 2002). The internal subgrouping of Malayic is controversial. Some classification attempts were done by Adelaar (1985), who suggests Malay, Minangkabau, Banjar Hulu, Seraway and Jakartanese are one branch, while Iban is another, but he withdrew this view in 1992 and currently maintains that the subgrouping of Malayic is still too early to be carried out. The various subgrouping efforts by different linguists are summarised in Adelaar (2004). Anderbeck (2012, p. 285, footnote) says a conservative way of labelling would be to do away with “Malay” entirely and keep everything as “Malayic”.

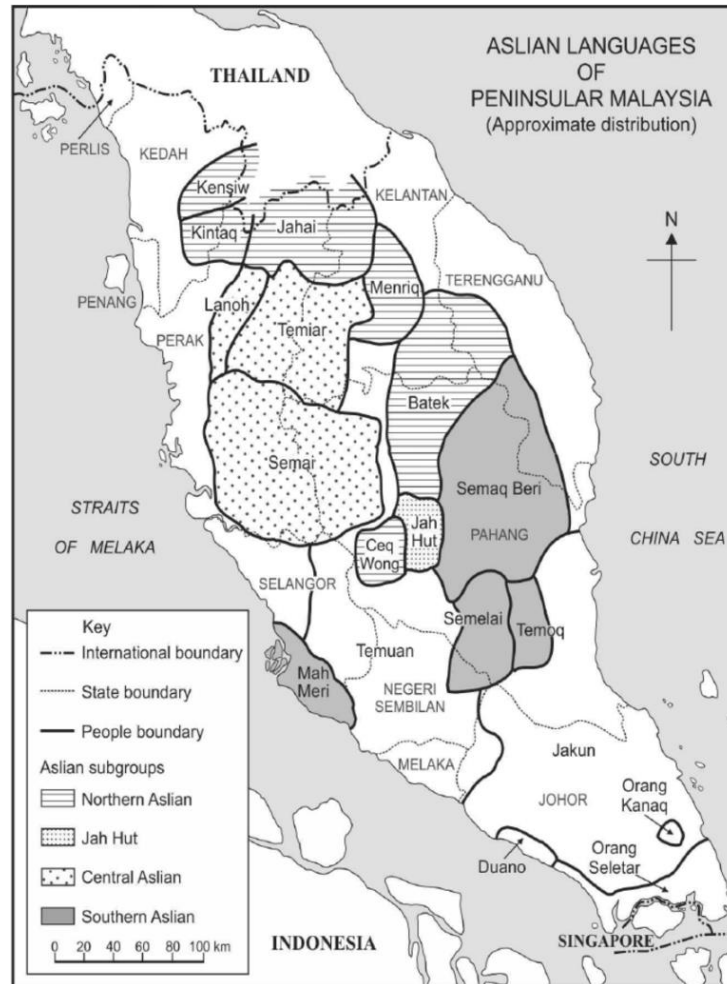


Figure 1-1 Map of the Aslian Languages (from Benjamin, 2012, p. 144)

The Malay(ic)¹⁰ dialects spoken by the four groups Temuan, Jakun, Orang Kanaq and Orang Seletar are grouped together in the literature, and called collectively “Orang Asli Malay”, for example Collins (1999, p. 657) groups the four together with the label *Dialek Melayu Orang Asli* ‘Orang Asli Malay Dialects’. Similarly, Anderbeck (2016) lists Seletar as part of Vernacular Orang Asli Malay, different from Vernacular Canonical Malay (i.e. Malay dialect spoken by ethnic Malays, for example Kedah Malay). The “Orang Asli” aspect of the Orang Seletar’s (and Jakun, Temuan, Orang Kanaq’s) identity contribute to the distinction of their Malay from that of the “modern”, non-tribal (for clarifications of tribal/non-tribal, see Benjamin, 2002, p. 31), canonical Malay community.

Aside from speaking Orang Asli Malay, the four groups are also considered *Orang Melayu Asli* or *Orang Asli Melayu*¹¹ “Aboriginal Malay”. Most Aboriginal Malays and modern Malays share a common origin (Benjamin, 2002, p. 38; Benjamin, 2012, p. 170). In Indonesia, there also exist Aboriginal Malays, in the Riau archipelago, Jambi and Sumatra (Benjamin, 2012, p. 31). The Orang Suku Laut of Riau are also considered *Melayu Asli* (Lenhart, 2002, p. 305; Chou & Wee, 2002, p. 318; Chou, 2003, p. 8). However, legally (and politically) speaking, in Malaysia today, “Malays” and

¹⁰ Although “Malayic” is a more conservative label, Collins (1989, p. 245) suggests that the Malay varieties spoken by aboriginal communities should be classified straightforwardly as Malay dialects, and included in the overall study of Malay dialectology, hence his later (1999) classification of Orang Asli Malay.

¹¹ This term can also be translated to ‘pure Malay’, so it must be used with further clarification that here, it does NOT carry the meaning of ‘pure’, but of ‘aboriginal’

“Aborigines” are distinct in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 160(2). For more in depth discussion of “Malayness”, see Benjamin (2002).

The Orang Seletar also call themselves “Orang Asli Seletar” or “Orang Asli Seletar Laut”, usually in formal events and in interviews with newspaper articles (for example see Devi, 2021; MySeniBudaya, 2016).

1.4.1 Aslian and Seletar

In Blust (2013, p. 73), the term ‘Aboriginal Malays’ is used for the Jakun only, who “speak non-standard Malay dialects ... but may derive from earlier Orang Asli groups (Aslian) that have partly assimilated culturally and linguistically to the dominant Malay population”. This is described in Benjamin (2002, p. 38) where Jakun and Orang Melayu are said to share the same origin, but that the former, in time, became Malayized. Moreover, there seems to have long been a process whereby southern Aslian speakers became Jakun, and those Jakun then became Orang Melayu, involving also the change in language (from an Aslian language to a Malay dialect) (Benjamin, 2002, p. 53).

Would the Orang Seletar, being Aboriginal Malays like the Jakun, have a common origin of formerly being Aslian speakers as well? Were they formerly Aslian speakers who then were Malayized and started speaking a Malay dialect? There are some similarities (non-Malay elements) between the Jakun language and the Seletar language, most notably:

(i) the sesquisyllabicity which was noted in Jakun as early as 1906 by Skeat and Blagden (1906b, p. 773), who also postulated Aslian influences. The phenomenon was observed in some Seletar words (Tan, 2020)

(ii) the use of *kon* in Seletar to mean themselves and their language and compare it to the *-kun* in Jakun¹² (Benjamin, 1997, p. 110; Benjamin, 2001, p. 117). *Kon* originally comes from Mon *kon* ‘child, etc. – person to whom one stands in loco parentis’; also: ‘member of ethnic or other social group’ (Shorto, 1971, p. 53).

(iii) cognates for ‘hand’ /*kokot*/ in Seletar (Tan, 2020) and *kokot* in Jakun¹³ (Skeat and Blagden, 1906b, p. 408), second person pronoun /*ay*/ in Seletar (Tan, 2020) and *ajih* in Jakun (Anderbeck 2012, p. 274), possibly Aslian, according to Anderbeck (2012, p. 274) and Benjamin (1993 [2020], p. 53)

Also, Kähler (1960) noticed a continuity between the language of the Jakun and the Orang Seletar of Singapore and into the Orang Suku Laut of the Riau Islands.

There are certain aspects of the Orang Seletar culture that differ from that of the Orang Suku Laut of Riau, and these may be a consequence of their contact with in-land groups in Peninsular Malaysia. Sopher (1977, p. 85, 107-108) called the Orang Seletar “demoralized, degenerate sea folk, possibly mixed with other primitive groups”. Their habitat and economy were not like the typical Orang Laut, as they resided in secluded mangrove creeks and small islands, collecting crustaceans and shellfish,

¹² *Ja-* possibly means the same as in the *Jah* ‘person’ of an Aslian group called Jah hut (Benjamin, 1997, p. 109-110; Benjamin, 2001, p. 116-117)

¹³ *Kokot* was documented in Jakun by Skeat and Blagden (1906b, p. 408), but a recent study of Jakun (Seidlitz, 2005) gives a Malay word *tangan* for hand. It seems that the Jakun language has been further Malayized since then.

and thus were called by local Malays as *Orang Utan Seletar* ‘forest Seletar’ (Sopher, 1977, p. 107). This seems to support a transformation of ‘forest’ to ‘sea’.

Later, he proposed that the Orang Seletar were just reclusive sea nomads, mostly because they were intimidated by other plundering, piratical groups (such as the Orang Galang of Riau-Lingga Islands). Their lack of collection of *agar-agar*, *trepang* and turtle and their being not part of the larger *suku* (loosely translates to ‘clan’ organisation of the Riau-Lingga Sea Nomads), point to a “not very recent transformation from sea nomads, to long residence in a relict area resulting in complete abandonment of sea-going nomadic voyages and presumably also of seafaring skills, and to a concomitant cultural decline” (Sopher, 1977, p. 107).

If this is the case, then the Aslian elements in Seletar might come from contact with nearby Aslian speakers, and not manifest as a remnant of an Aslian speaking past. The Aslian speakers that were in contact with them could be the Mah Meri (also known as Besisi) on the coast of Selangor. There has been documentation of the Besisi having “relations with the Orang Laut of the Johore coast” (Sopher, 1977, p. 68), though there was no specification of *which* Orang Laut group. The Mah Meri are fishermen of the streams and rivers, but their habitat is the forest, with jungle huts as their home. They have boats, but it is unclear whether they used them or not (Sopher, 1977, p. 67). The contact was established by the Orang Laut of Johor coast sailing to the southwest coast, not the other way around (Sopher, 1977, p. 67). There are also reports of the Orang Seletar intermarrying with Semelai (Lim et al., 2010), and the two have close genetic distance (Md-Zain, 2017, p. 40). More research is required to ascertain the possibility of this contact.

Hopefully, an in-depth analysis of the Seletar language might uncover even more Aslian elements and contribute to an understanding of Aslian speakers and their interactions with surrounding populations speaking different languages.

1.5 Orang Laut and Orang Seletar

The Orang Seletar are part of a larger group of sea nomads, peoples who make their living gathering resources of the sea and the coasts. Sea nomads can be divided into three groups by geographic location, according to Sopher (1977, p. 50-p. 54):

1. The Moken and Moklen live on the islands on the western coast of Thailand and Burma.
2. The Sama-Bajau reside in the northeast of Borneo, in the Sulu archipelago, and the islands of southern Philippines.
3. The Orang Laut inhabit the Malacca Strait and Riau-Lingga Archipelago.

The Orang Laut can be further classified into the Urak Lawoi and the Orang Laut proper (Andaya, 2008). The Urak Lawoi are sea people living along the northern part of the Malacca Straits, in the islands and coasts of Thailand and Malaysia (Andaya 2008). The Orang Laut reside in the Riau-Lingga Archipelago (Chou, 2003).

The Orang Laut are often treated as a homogenous group. There is actually considerable diversity in the culture and social organisation of different Orang Laut groups, or *suku* (division/group, for example the Orang Gallang, Orang Moro, Orang Tambus) (Chou, 2010, p. 9). Some groups of Orang Laut from Riau were found in Singapore in the 19th century, for example the Orang Suku Gelam and the Orang Suku Selat. The Orang Seletar and Orang Biduanda Kallang were groups present in

Singapore but not in the Riau Archipelago. The literature often refers to these different groups collectively as the Orang Laut (Hwang, 2018; Turnbull, 2009, p. 24). The Orang Laut were said to have been present on the island of Singapore since the 16th century, according to Tomé Pirés, a Portuguese apothecary (Cortese, 1944, p. 262). It is hard to tell the groups apart from early records, as the earliest documentation by the Portuguese called them collectively as *Çelates*.¹⁴ Other terms include *Rayat Laut* or *Orang Pesukuan*, which all refer to various sea dwelling groups (Sopher, 1977). Sometimes, the term *Orang Laut* was applied to people who were not sea nomads, but coastal populations (some Malay, some part of other indigenous groups, e.g. Besis/Mah Meri, see Sopher 1977, p. 53, 266, 326-327).

The modern-day Orang Laut who live in the Riau islands go by the name *Orang Suku Laut* “sea tribe people”. They speak a language called Bahasa Orang Laut, which consists of different dialects as spoken by different *sukus* (for example the Mantang, Galang and Barok dialects) (Chou, 2010, p. 6). Today, the *suku* organisation does not exist anymore, and the Orang Laut prefer identification with their current geographical territory (Chou, 2010, p. 25).

Though having similar lifestyles and cultural practices, the Orang Seletar seem not to be part of the hierarchical *suku* organisation of the Orang Laut of Riau prevalent in the region until the 19th century (Sopher, 1977, p. 107; Sather, 1999, p. 10). This leads us to ask several questions: When does the history of the Orang Seletar start? Was it before the formation of the *suku* organisation? How did the Seletar identity emerge from this larger group of sea nomads? Were the Orang Seletar part of the Orang Laut at all? These questions have no answers, due to the lack of historical sources documenting the Orang Seletar’s existence. However, it is undeniable that the Orang Laut and Orang Seletar are related, and their relationship is complicatedly intertwined.

For more information regarding the languages of the Orang Laut and its relationship to the Orang Seletar language, see §1.5.2.

1.5.1 Orang Selat and Orang Seletar

The Orang Selat inhabited the southern coast of Singapore, including Singapore’s southern islands,¹⁵ the Strait of Batam and along the Tebrau Strait as early as the sixteenth century (Chou, 2010, p. 24). Archaeological findings date one of the islands, Pulau Seking, as being inhabited since the 14th century (Wee & Benjamin, 2001). The Orang Selat were part of the traditional *suku* organisation of the sea nomads of Riau-Lingga, albeit at the bottom of the hierarchy (Chou, 2010, p. 22). The Orang Selat gathered edible seaweed for their Malay rulers in the sixteenth century, but with the tide of modernisation in the coming centuries, they had changed their occupations to trading fish and occasional pillaging (Chou, 2010, p. 24). Though the Orang Selat no longer live in the Riau archipelago, before their removal from the southern islands of Singapore, the people maintained contacts with groups in the Riau islands (Sather, 1999, p. 8).

¹⁴ *Çelates* derives from the Malay word for ‘strait’ *selat*, which is also the namesake of the Orang Selat and the Orang Seletar (Sopher, 1977, p. 337).

¹⁵ Inhabitants of the Southern Islands of Singapore are not homogenous, and there existed much sub-ethnic diversity. For example, on Pulau Seking, aside from descendants of Orang Selat, there are those who had ancestry of Orang Suku Gelam in the Riau archipelago (Wee & Benjamin, 2001, p. 207).

The Orang Selat and Orang Seletar have the same etymology for their ethnonym, that is *selat* “strait” in Malay.¹⁶ Translated to English, both groups can be called “people of the Straits”. That is why, in reports and news articles of today, the two seem to be conflated together (for example, Asmah & Samsur, 2018, p. 459). It may also be the case that one group was named after the other. In addition to having the same naming origin, intermarriages between the two Orang Laut subgroups are reported.

Many Orang Seletar have Orang Selat ancestry (for example see Sather, 1999, p. 8; Juma’at 2017, p. 45, 69; Mariam, 2002, p. 277). The Selat roots are not ancient, as some Orang Seletar today have Orang Selat parents and grandparents (for example Juma’at, 2017, p. 75, 146). The intermarriages between the two groups happened because some descendants of the Orang Selat once lived in the southern coast of Johor, in close proximity to the Orang Seletar. These Selat descendants who lived in Johor were called the *Orang Johor* (Mariam, 2002, p. 276). It is unclear when they started living there. They eventually moved from Johor to Punggol and the southern islands of Singapore in 1948, and “reunited” with their kin (Mariam, 2002, p. 276). These Johor inhabitants also had relatives in the Kallang Basin (Mariam, 2002, p. 276), a known Orang Selat settlement (Benjamin, 2021).

The languages of the Orang Seletar and Orang Selat are also similar, as noted by Thomson (1847), who points out that the Seletar language is the same as the Orang Laut of Telok Blangah but spoken with a “more guttural accent”. Juma’at (2017, p. 10) also describes the Orang Selat language as being “softer” than Seletar, and points out some lexical differences between the two languages. In current times, the Selat variety does not exist anymore in Singapore (Benjamin, 2021).

Despite sharing similar languages and kin, there are some differences between the Orang Selat and Orang Seletar, historically and in modern times. For example, the Orang Selat were part of the traditional *suku* organisation (Chou, 2010, p. 22), while the Orang Seletar were not. The descendants of the Orang Selat maintained close ties with the sea nomads of the Riau-archipelago until the 1980s (e.g. in Wee & Benjamin, 2001), while the Orang Seletar do not have any memories of their fellow sea nomads in Indonesia (they never mentioned it). In the late 20th century, most Orang Selat descendants of the southern islands began observing Islam as their religion (Wee & Benjamin, 2001, p. 201), while the Orang Seletar, at the time, remained pagans¹⁷ (Mariam, 2002, p. 275).

Another difference between the two groups is that, today, the Orang Selat no longer have their own settlements, while the Orang Seletar still do across the strait in Johor Bahru. The Orang Selat villages on Pulau Seking, Pulau Sudong and other southern islands are no longer. The islands were “repurposed” to landfills and military training grounds (Cornelius-Takahama 2016, 2019). The former islanders are not fishermen anymore and took on urban jobs (Ariffin 1979, p. 16-17; Wee & Benjamin, 2001, p. 199; Siti Nur Aisha, 2020, p. 30). The Orang Seletar, on the other hand, are still mostly fishermen.

Having been acculturated into the wider Malay community, the Selat identity and their language cease to exist, living on merely in memories and recollections (for some examples, see Siti Nur Aisha, 2020 and Benjamin, 2021). The Orang Seletar, on the other hand, still actively distinguish themselves from the majority population, proudly calling themselves the *Orang Asli Seletar*, and the community still speaks their own variety of Malay.

¹⁶ On a related note, the cardinal noun *selatan* ‘south’ in Malay not only refers to the southern direction but more specifically ‘the direction in which the straits lie’ (Wilkinson, 1932, p. 409; Blust, 1986, p. 79). The straits being referred to are the Straits of Malacca (Blust, 1986, p. 79).

¹⁷ Today, the Orang Seletar follow various religions such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and their own animistic beliefs (Hasan et al., 2009, p. 63; Juma’at, 2017; Green & Ibrahim, 2019)

The two groups may have shared a distant past as sea nomads of the region, but their modern histories are quite different, and conflating them together diminishes each group’s stories and identities.

1.5.2 The languages of the Sea Nomads

There are 3 clusters of sea nomads in Southeast Asia. They are the Moken, the Sama-Bajau, and the Orang Laut (Sopher, 1977, p. 50, 176-183). Each cluster consists of many heterogeneous groups of people.¹⁸ On top of summarizing the geographical distribution of the sea nomads, Sopher also categorised their language into groups: Moken, Bajau and Malayic. The languages of the Moken and Sama-Bajau are Malayo-Polynesian, but non-Malayic (Anderbeck, 2012, p. 267). The Malayic language speakers in Sopher’s categorisation were mainly from Singapore, the south coast of Johor, the Riau-Lingga Archipelago, the east coast of Sumatra, the islands Bangka and Belitung and other scattered islands in the area.

Anderbeck (2012, p. 267) adds to the Malayic group a further division into Kedah, Riau Islands, Duano¹⁹ and Sekak. In the Kedah group is Urak Lawoi’. The Urak Lawoi’ varieties are found from southern Thailand to Kedah in Malaysia. The speakers of the Riau Islands varieties are clustered in the Riau-Lingga Archipelago, between Sumatra, Singapore, and west Kalimantan. Duano is spoken by the Orang Duano (also Orang Kuala) on the west coast of Johor, Riau, and Jambi of the Sumatra. Sekak is spoken by Sea Tribes in the islands of Bangka and Belitung.

Lenhart (2001, p. 84) further divides the Riau Island sea nomad groups into four types: Mantang, Mapor, Barok and Galang. However, linguistic or not, the distinctions are seen as problematic as they do not take into account various other groups of sea nomads (e.g., Seletar, Tambus, Moro etc.) (Anderbeck, 2012, p. 269) and also do not consider that group affiliation is fluid for many in the Riau Islands (Chou, 2003, p. 25). Moreover, many groups nowadays do not use the names of the *suku* organisation anymore but identify themselves by the places they reside in (e.g., Orang Pulau Nanga; Chou 2010, p. 25). Figure 1-2 shows the classification made by Sopher (1977) and Anderbeck (2012). Lenhart’s (2011) classification is presented in Figure 1-3.

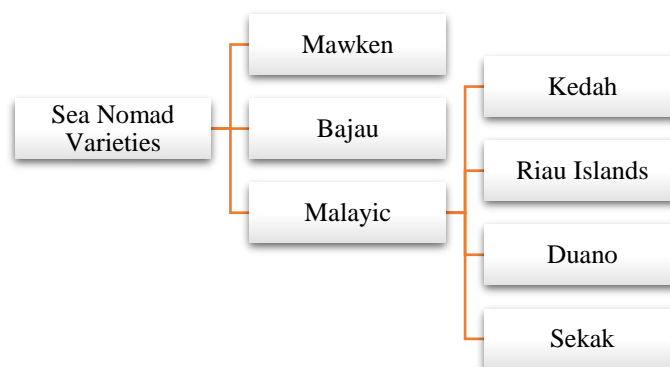


Figure 1-2 Sea Nomad Varieties classified by Sopher (1977) and Anderbeck (2012).

¹⁸ Wee (2019) uses the terms Moken, Sama-Bajau and Orang Laut to refer to modes of foraging, rather than to people, as each cluster is formed from diverse groups of peoples.

¹⁹ Benjamin (2012, p. 137, 144, 151) leaves Duano as an unclassified Austronesian language

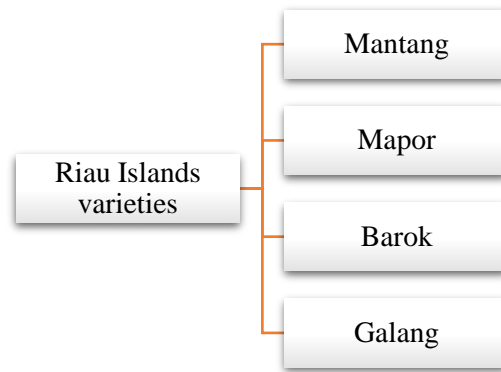


Figure 1-3 Riau Islands Varieties as classified by Lenhart (2011)

Anderbeck (2012, p. 297) observed that the Riau Islands varieties (he calls them the Riau Sea Tribe lects) share the below sound innovations from Proto-Malayic, in addition to being lexically mainstream and possessing the *kian/kiun/kiuh* triplet ('come here / go there / far off'):²⁰

1. *a raising after voiced obstruents in the penultimate or ultimate syllable
2. Frequent *-V closing (usually with ?)
3. (less universal) NC > N: medial nasal-voiced obstruent consonant clusters show a reduction or elimination of the obstruent component, e.g. *tiŋgi* > *tiŋi*
4. *r²¹ devoicing (to h, χ or ∅) in initial, intervocalic, consonant cluster, or final position
5. Loss of initial and final *r
6. Final open *a raised to ə, ə, i

Seletar - a Sea Nomad variety

Tan (2020, p. 37-39) compares Seletar data obtained from wordlists and found that the Seletar had almost all of these features (except 3 and 6 only occasionally), in addition to being lexically mainstream. Seletar has the duplet *jeŋkian/kian* 'come, come here' and *kiuh* 'go there', although *kiuh* is an older form according to the consultants, and has been replaced by *gun*.

Although Seletar seems to fit the Riau Islands dialect group, the language has some features characteristic of Aslian, for example a strong word final accent (Juma'at, 2017, p. 147) and some sesquisyllables (Tan, 2020, p. 23-25), see §1.4.1.

1.6 The etymology of 'Seletar'

According to Sopher (1977, p. 335), the ethnonym *Seletar*²² is said to come from the Dutch form *Saletar*, which in itself comes from Portuguese *Celates*. The Dutch form added the suffix *-er* to mean

²⁰ The Orang Kallang (of Kampung Rokok) variety also have these triplets: *kian* 'come, come here', *kiun* 'go away', *kiyoh* 'far off' (Skeat & Ridley, 1900, p. 248). The Temuan variety has *chan* 'come here' and *chun* 'go away' (Skeat & Ridley, 1900, p. 248), and more recently *ciun* 'over there', *cuan* 'there, far off' (Looi, Baer & Jalil, 2018, p. 30). Jakun (the Benua Dialect) has *kian io nonong deked* 'come here', *kiun* 'to depart' (*ken* in Jakun of Johor and *chiun* in Mantra dialect) (Noone, 1939, p. 143)

²¹ Proto-Malayic *r was a velar or uvular fricative (Adelaar, 1992, p. 86). In the reconstructed Proto-Malayic phoneme inventory, Adelaar (1992, p. 102) puts *r in the velar place of articulation. I have retained the *r and not written it as *ɣ or ʀ.

²² Many variations of *Seletar* have been documented throughout centuries, presented as *Saletar* (as a place name, Franklin & Jackson, 1828 - Plan of Singapore), *Sletar* / *S'letar* (as a people, Thomson, 1847; Logan, 1847; Lapicque, 1848; Skeat &

“the people of”, like in *Nederlander* ‘Dutch people’. Both *Saletter* and *Celates* both derive from the Malay word *selat* ‘strait’. *Saletter* and *Celates* were used to refer to the Orang Laut people in general, and not yet referencing the group which we call Orang Seletar today (how that came to be later in history, please refer to the later part of this section titled ‘*Saletter to Seletar*’ on p. 14). Andaya (2018), by referring to historical usage of the word, found that *selat* does not mean any type of strait, but most importantly, the *negara selat* ‘the realm of the straits’ or ‘sea of islands’, which is the area just to the south of the Straits of Malacca, where the Orang Laut of Southeast Asia dwelled. This area is not seen by the Orang Laut as containing different islands, seas, and straits, but conceptualised as one body of water, and the islands all interconnected. With this interpretation, the ethnonym Orang Seletar which derives from *selat* can mean “People of the Realm of the Straits”, at least in the time when the Orang Laut were at the height of their glory, prior to the 17th century.

Another possible source for *Seletar* is a place/river of the same name. The earliest usage of *Seletar* was toponymic, in the Malay Annals in the 15th century. The place *Seletar* was mentioned as a part of the escape route the Singapura’s last king took from Singapore to Muar. The Malay Annals does not mention the “Orang Seletar”, however. It is unclear whether there were people living in the area at the time, and whether they are the ancestors of the Orang Seletar today. There exists also a river of the same name (Seletar River). Both Logan (1847, p. 302) and Thomson (1847, p. 343) are of the view that the river gave its name to the Orang Seletar.

One other less persuasive theory regarding the meaning of the term *Seletar* comes from a newspaper article (‘Folklore tells of life’, 12 Dec 1981²³). The writer believed that the ethnonym Seletar is connected to the Malay word *litar* ‘surrounding’, and referenced Wilkinson’s dictionary entry: *selitar*, *salitar* or *saletar* ‘all around’ comes from Malay *litar* (with synonym *keliling*) ‘surrounding’ prefixed with *sa-* or *se-* (Wilkinson, 1932, p. 399). I did not think much about this interpretation and regarded it as folk etymology when I first came upon it. However, a recent publication also presented a similar interpretation to Seletar. Imran (2020, p. 119) presented *litar* as the root of Seletar with the meaning ‘circuit’, and the ‘circuit’ here was referencing the Orang Seletar and Orang Biduanda Kallang’s roles as messengers of the court, as the areas where they reside cover the south and the north of ancient Temasek, and hence the Orang Seletar were “part of a circuit of messengers”. The prefix *sa-/sa-/se-* is actually an important element in the names of islands inhabited traditionally by Orang Laut throughout the Riau islands and Singapore’s Southern Islands (e.g. Pulau Seking, Pulau Semakau, Pulau Sekijang), and in itself is an individuating, humanising prefix, and can be paraphrased to mean ‘the one who/with’ (Wee & Benjamin, 2001, p. 208). Hence, the river/area/island of Seletar could mean ‘the one that surrounds’ or ‘the one that forms a circuit’.

Probably, the first time *Seletar* was written as an ethnonym for a *specific* Orang Laut group was in the 1819 Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the East India Company and Singapore, which listed the population of the Orang Seletar as 200 (Horton, 1997; Turnbull, 2009, p. 25).

Blagden, 1906a, p. 88), *Selita* (as a place name, Cameron, 1865, p. 86-88), *Selitar* (as a people, Skeat & Ridley, 1900; Carey, 1976) and *Slitar* (as a people, Hidayah, 2017). Nowadays, the common spelling is *Seletar*.

The Orang Seletar were sometimes called *Orang Guduk* or *Orang Guduk Laut* by local Malay residents of Seletar and Punggol in the 1980s (Zainal 1981; Mohd Yussoff, 1985).

²³ The article mentions Richard Winstedt, which is believed to be an error. The elaborations stated in the article matches those of Richard Wilkinson’s dictionary

Celates and Saletter

Before *Seletar* was used to refer to the Orang Seletar specifically, the colonial forms of the word *Seletar* (if one accepts Sopher's view) were used to refer to different referents, and their descriptions do not at all fit the modern Orang Seletar.

Sopher (1977) includes a section of analysing terms used by the Europeans to describe the sea nomads of Southeast Asia. From his compilation, he listed those from the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, who used the terms *Celates*, *Saletter* and *Saleeters/Salleiters* respectively.

Portuguese *Celates* first appears in 1553, used by de Barros, an official in Malacca, in his book *Décadas da Ásia* (Sopher, 1977, p. 315). The following is an excerpt describing the said *Celates*:

“... a people called Cellates, persons who live on the sea, whose occupation is robbing and fishing, with the [ruler's] favour...” (Sopher, 1977, p. 316, 334)

Most early references to *Celates* describe them as vicious and piratical people, unpopular among the commoners. Consider the following passage:

“The Celates, although their habitation is more on the sea than on land, for there their children are born and there they are brought up without making any establishment on shore. However, because they were hated by the people of Singapore and all the islands in its territory, did not dare to return to those parts” (Sopher, 1977, p. 316, 334).

Sopher (1977, p. 318) points out that the Portuguese always stressed the piratical nature of the *Celates*, as they were sometimes victims to them, and as a result would refer to the sea nomads, even those who are not actually pirates, as *Celates*. Thus, the Portuguese *Celates* (sometimes written as *Saletes*) has been expanded to mean the sea nomads in general, however the term subsequently disappeared from use in the middle of the 1600s (Sopher, 1977, p. 326).

The Dutch transliteration of this word comes in the form of *Saletter*. Its first appearance was in 1678 in the writings of Malaccan Governor Balthasar Bort, who said “the Saletters, or pirates, a Malay tribe of very uncivilised people” (Sopher, 1977, p. 335). Apparently, the negative view of *Celates* has been copied over to the Dutch version seemingly without fault.

English sightings of *Saletter* come in similar fashion. For example, Bowrey (1905, p. 237 in Sopher, 1977, p. 336) asserted that “the Saleeters are absolute Piratts” and Hamilton (1930, p. 68) also writes something similar: “... great numbers of freebooters, called Salleiters, who inhabit islands along the sea-coast, and they both rob, and take people for slaves and transport them for Atcheen (Acheh)...”.

It has to be emphasized that not all sea nomads are pirates, and that piracy was an economic activity and a result of interventions from western powers (Wee, 2019). The recognized groups that are piratical were the Orang Galang, Orang Sekanak and Orang Posik (Sopher, 1977, p. 96), at least during the nineteenth century. Sopher (1977, p. 336) proposes that the *Saletter* of the Dutch and the English are the ancestors of the Galang and Malay pirates of the Riau archipelago.

Saletter to Seletar

It is generally agreed upon that the terms *Celates* and *Saletters* used by colonial powers in Southeast Asia refer to the aforementioned Orang Galang and other groups. However, in those times, it

was not clear that the sea nomads were differentiated into distinct groups, and so the term *Saletter* would also be used to refer to other different groups, who may not have been piratical at all. Sopher (1977, p. 337) demonstrates this by analysing Maurice Collis' writings: Collis, who was once Deputy Commissioner at Mergui, Myanmar, wrote about the Moken (sea nomad groups who inhabit the Mergui archipelago) as *Saletters* who lost their "warlike manner of life" and thus "are now a timid, slinking race, very poor ...". Although this contains misidentification on Collis' part, Sopher thinks the *Saletters* described here were actually the victims of the pirating groups (the *Saletters* of the Dutch and English), driven northward to avoid being plundered. A similar case can be said for the Orang Seletar, I believe. Civil war between the pirates and Seletar were recalled in oral history (Chan, Ruslina & Ilya, 2019). Thomson's (1847, p. 342) entry describes the fear the Seletar had of the Galang, "whom they bear a great dread".

It seems that the modern Seletar do not live up to their namesake. Their ancestors could have been the vicious *Saletters* in a distant past. However, when intergroup conflicts became prevalent, some of them might have left the larger group in pursuit of a safer, but secluded life. And so, the descendants of the *Saletters* became the modern *Seletar*, which appears to be a Malay version of the Dutch name (Sopher, 1977, p. 337). It might be that when the Orang Seletar secluded themselves in more inland rivers in the northeast of Singapore, the people who lived there followed the Europeans' usage of *Saletters/Saleeters*, but in their own (presumably Malay) language, and called the boat nomads *Orang Seletar*.

Seletar: an exonym

Seletar is likely an exonym, probably a Malay transliteration of the Dutch *Saletter*, if we accept the Sopher's (1977, p. 337) view. In the Seletar language, the final /r/ of words are usually dropped (Ariffin, 1979; Juma'at, 2017, p.146-149; Tan, 2020, p. 20, 28-29), so if the group really gave themselves this name, *Seleta* [səleta] would be more appropriate. Also, the speakers usually refer to themselves as *Orang Asli Laut* 'original people of the sea' or *kon* ('people' in the Seletar language) and not frequently as *Orang Seletar*. Interviewees of Ruslina et al. (2019) revealed that it is the Johor state which calls them *Orang Seletar*, when originally, they were just *Orang Laut*. They also refer to their language as *Bahasa Kon* or *Bahasa Asli* during my fieldwork and not *Bahasa Seletar*. However, they do not oppose the use of *Seletar* as their ethnonym and their language.

This preliminary chapter has introduced background information regarding the Orang Seletar, their language and its vitality and discussed the population's multi-layered identity as Orang Asli and Orang Laut, as well as the etymology of the ethnonym 'Seletar'. The next chapter presents a summary of the history of the Orang Seletar in the region.

2 History

Sources about the Orang Seletar are very limited. I attempt to sketch a history of the population by utilising information from different sources, including but not limited to oral histories, historical texts, anthropological notes, archival newspapers, and various books and articles mentioning the Orang Seletar. The chapter opens with unwritten sources about the Orang Seletar, comprising mainly of oral histories. Then, it is followed by a section discussing their possible history prior to 1819, the year when the group “Orang Seletar” was first clearly mentioned. The later sections after that detail the history of the Orang Seletar in the 19th and 20th century and explain how the modern population came to reside in only one side of the Johor Strait. A short discussion on the origins of the Orang Seletar is presented at the end of the chapter.

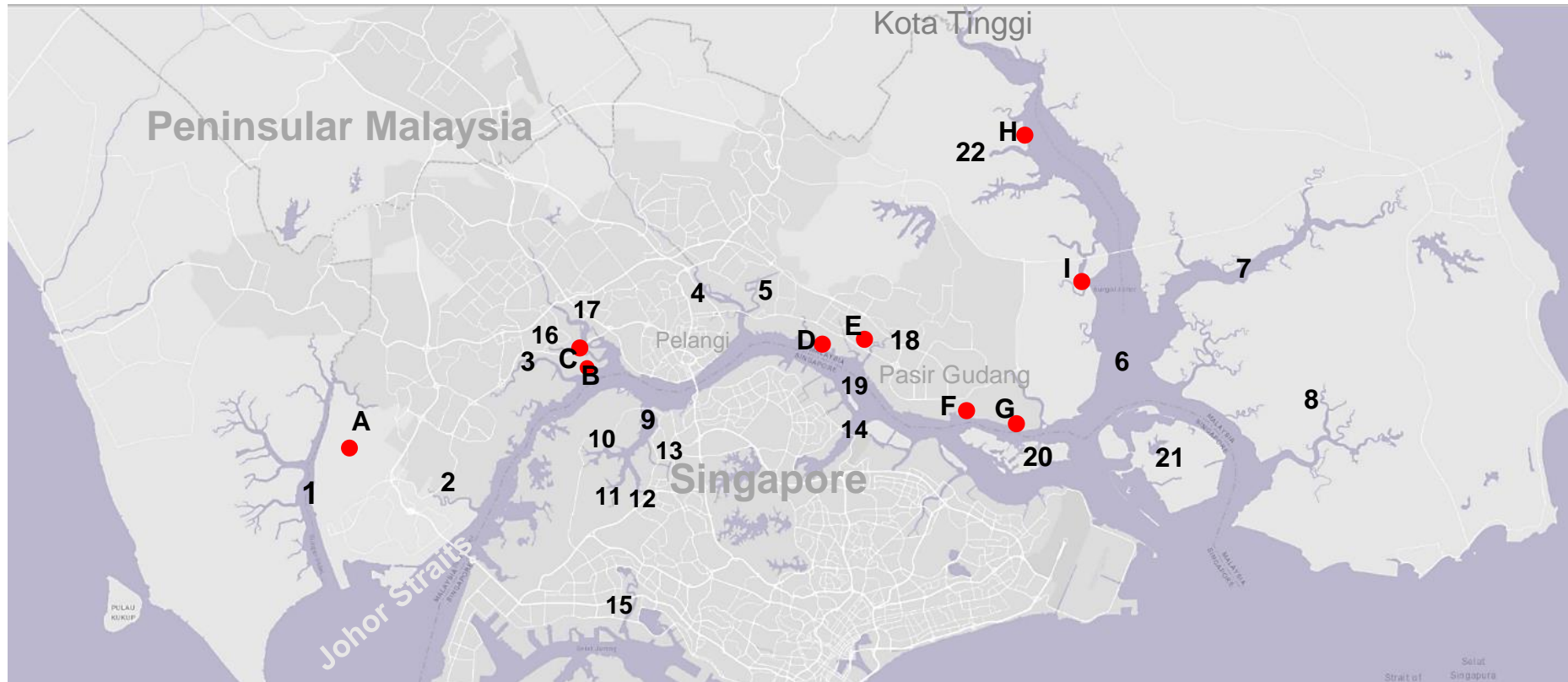
2.1 Time Immemorial

It is impossible to determine when exactly the history of the Orang Seletar began. The earliest source that mentioned the Orang Seletar distinctly dates back to 1819,²⁴ when they were roaming the northern creeks of Singapore with a population of 200 (Turnbull, 1977, p. 5). But what about before that? The people have undeniably been around the southern coast of Malaysia for a very long time. One Orang Seletar family tells of an ancient grave site on an islet near Pulau Golf Resort that dates back to a time “when men had tails” (Chan, Ruslina & Ilya, 2019).

There also exists an Orang Seletar story regarding the naming of Singapore. The oral story tells that the Orang Seletar began with a place called *Singa Pulau* ‘Lion Island’, now known as Singapore: The ancestors of the Orang Seletar lived in various areas of Singapore such as present-day Jurong, Kranji and around the Seletar river, and burial grounds are said to be located in these places according to oral histories (Zaccheus, 2020). The Seletar story telling the etymology of “Singapore” goes like this: The Orang Seletar of long ago encountered a mysterious animal that resembled a lion when they were out hunting for wild boars on Singapore island. When arriving in Singapore, Sang Nila Utama enquired about the name of the island, to which the ancestors of the Orang Seletar replied, “*Singa Pula*” (Chan et al., 2019; Ilya, 2022). This etymology has never been documented prior to oral interviews with the Orang Seletar by Chan et al. (2019). The widely recognized origin of Singapore comes from Sanskrit, *simhapura* ‘Lion City’ (Gerini, 1905).

Oral histories aside, written historical sources specifically documenting the Orang Seletar only began in the 19th century. Therefore, we can only make educated guesses about their earlier existence.

²⁴ Asmah and Samsur (2018, p. 459) citing Carey (1976) write that the Orang Seletar arrived in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula 200 years ago. However, a reading of Carey (1976) does not mention the Orang Seletar’s “arrival”. The authors might have been talking about the Orang Kanaq (Carey, 1976, p. 237), who were “moved” from Indonesia to Singapore sometime in the 1800s by the Sultan of Johor, and then to Kota Tinggi in Johor .



| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Sungai = River; Pulau = island | | | ● Kg. = Kampung = Village | |
| 1. Sungai Pulai | 8. Sungai Santi | 16. Sungai Danga | A. Kg. Simpang Arang | H. Kg. Pasir Salam |
| 2. Sungai Pendas | 9. Kranji River | 17. Sungai Sekudai/Skudai | B. Kg. Sungai Temon | I. Kg. Kong |
| 3. Sungai Melayu | 10. Kangkar River | 18. Sungai Masai | C. Kg. Bakar Batu | |
| 4. Sungai Tebrau | 11. Tengah River | 19. Pulau Seletar | D. Kg. Telok Jawa | |
| 5. Sungai Plentong | 12. Peng Siang River | 20. Pulau Ubin | E. Kg. Kuala Masai | |
| 6. Sungai Johor | 13. Former Kadut River (now Pang Sua Canal) | 21. Pulau Tekong | F. Kg. Pasir Putih | |
| 7. Sungai Lebam | 14. Seletar river | 22. Sungai Tiram | G. Kg. Telok Kabong | |
| | 15. Jurong River | | | |

Figure 2-1 Johor Straits, present day Orang Seletar villages, and the rivers, tributaries, and islands relevant to the Orang Seletar

2.2 Prior to 1819

As mentioned previously in §1.5, the relationship between the Orang Laut and the Orang Seletar is deeply intertwined. Differentiation between different Orang Laut groups was not made in earlier literature (e.g., in Tomé Pires writings of the 15th century (Cortesão, 1944)). The history of the former may be part of the latter, which is why I include here a brief history of the Orang Laut in Southeast Asia, which might also be the earlier history of the Orang Seletar as well.²⁵

The Orang Laut have been important players in the history of Southeast Asia for three thousand years (Andaya & Andaya, 2001, p. 14). During the time of the Srivijaya empire (7th -14th century), the Orang Laut helped guide ships to important ports and patrolled the waters around the Malay peninsula and the Riau archipelago (Andaya, 2018). During the time of the Malacca and Johor kingdoms (15th - 19th century), they served as navy troops for Malay rulers and fishermen gathering sea products for trade (Andaya, 1975; Andaya, 2008; Chou, 2003; Anderbeck, 2012, p. 266). Another important detail linking the Orang Laut and Orang Seletar is that the Johor River, which is one of the important resource sites of the present-day Orang Seletar (see Figure 2-1), was the place where the capital of the Johor Kingdom was established in the 16th century (Andaya, 2018). The river was guarded and patrolled by Orang Laut, and it debouches into the Johor Strait and beyond, where various Orang Laut groups traversed and dwelled (Andaya, 2018). They maintained strong patron-client relations with the rulers of Malacca and Johor, but this relationship soured during the end of the 17th century, when the last Malaccan sultan, Sultan Mahmud Shah II, was assassinated in 1699. This brought about a divide within the different tribes of Orang Laut, with some choosing to side with the new ruling families, while others abandoned them (Trocki, 2007, p. 26). The divide also led to the intervention of the Bugis, who started displacing the Orang Laut as important mariners over time.

One of the elements that characterised different Orang Laut groups in the times of the Malay Kingdom was their functions (Chou, 2010, p. 21-24), or in other words, their *corvée* services (*kerahan* in Malay) (Wee, 2019; Sopher, 1977, p. 269). For example, the Suku Galang served as troops and pirates, which allowed them to be placed in a higher stratum (Sopher, 1977; Turnbull, 1977, p. 5) than, for example, the Suku Selat, who collected edible seaweeds for the Malay courts (Chou, 2010, p. 24). According to Chou (2010, p. 21), the functions which groups were assigned were sometimes changed and modified; new groups might be created to fulfil the demands requested by the Malay rulers of the time. The Malay lords might also bring or move a group to a new location for the rendering of some service or needed to exploit the resources of that location (Sopher, 1977, p. 102). The different subgroups characterised by their assignment were ranked hierarchically. The highly ranked groups had frequent access to the ruling elites, for example the Suku Galang and the Suku Gelam, while the lower ranked groups performed services outside the palace, like collecting products and providing entertainment (Wee, 2019).

Though the Suku Seletar were not part of the formal hierarchy of the Orang Laut (as not all groups were organized into this system), it is very likely their distinct identity emerged from the same assignment or adaptation to specific tasks given to them by the Malay rulers. The tasks might include, for example, collecting forest products such as gutta-percha for the Temenggong, as described in Logan (1848), but at a much earlier date. The modern Orang Seletar still engage in maritime foraging,

²⁵ For detailed analysis regarding the history of the Orang Laut and other sea nomad groups, see Sopher (1977). For more recent research, see Lenhart (1995).

combining resources from land, sea, mangrove coasts and rivers for their livelihoods, continuing what they have been doing for centuries, if not millenia. The group could have also provided entertainment to the ruling elites such as dancing. The modern Orang Seletar still have memories of their members singing and dancing and gathering mangrove products for the Johor sultans, as well as accompanying the sultans during their hunting trips (Mariam 2002, p. 280). It is unclear how long this Seletar-sultan relationship had been going on. It might have extended from the long and close relationship between the Orang Laut and their Malay rulers, which itself was centuries old.

One of the earliest documentations of “Seletar”, as a geographical term, not as an ethnonym, is from the *Sulalatus Salatin* (also known as *Sejarah Melayu*) depicting events from the 14–16th century. The source records that Sultan Iskandar Shah²⁶ escaped from Singapore, then to Muar, and eventually to Malacca in the 14th century, when the Majapahit attacked by way of the Seletar river²⁷ (Shellabear, 1896/1967; Brown, 1952, p. 51).

“Sahdan, patah-lah pęrang orang Singapura. Maka Raja Iskandar pun bęrlępas turun dari Sęletar lalu ka-Muar.” (And the men of Singapura were defeated, and Sultan Iskandar Shah fled, going by way of Saletar and thence Muar.)²⁸

More details on the escape route can be found in Savage and Yeoh (2013, p. 337), which states that “in 1377, with the sacking of Tumasik, the king fled via Selegie overland to Seletar”.

It was with the help of the Orang Laut that Sri Tri Buana (also known as Parameswara) founded the new settlement of Temasek (old name for Singapore) (Wolters, 1975, p. 77-78). When his descendants escaped Singapore and founded Malacca, the assistance of the Orang Laut was vital (Cortesão, 1944, p. 233-235; Chou, 2010, p. 44). The region of Seletar and the Seletar River are believed to be the namesake of the Orang Seletar (for other theories regarding the origin of ‘Seletar’, see §1.6). Though not mentioned specifically in the historical text, the Orang Seletar most probably assisted the escape when Iskandar Shah stopped by Seletar before departing for Muar. A recent reconstruction of the possible route by Imran (2020, p. 120-121) supports this:

“From Bukit Larangan to Muar, the route, protected from sea attacks, was through the large mangrove interior of Singapore, which begins, at the back of the Rochore²⁹ and Kallang Rivers in the south and brings one to the upstream section of the Seletar River in the north. Also, both deep rivers were occupied by Orang Laut tribes, who would have rendered help to the fleeing court.”

Imran also mentions that the king would have gone to the Johor River by way of the Seletar River, and from there made his way to Muar via interior jungles and rivers (Imran, 2020, p. 121). The resource zones of the Orang Seletar cover both the north coast of Singapore and the south coast of Johor, including the Johor River. Therefore, it is likely that the king’s guide from Seletar to Johor were the

²⁶ In the *Suma Oriental*, Iskandar Shah is the same person as Parameswara (Cortesão, 1944) who founded and then escaped Singapore. In the Malay Annals, however, the founder of Singapore, Sri Tri Buana, and the king that escaped, Iskandar Shah, are two different persons, separated by five generations (Linehan, 1969, p. 127).

²⁷ This part about Seletar is missing from Leyden’s English translation published in 1821.

²⁸ English Translation by Brown (1952, p. 51).

²⁹ Rochor River is very close to the area of Selegie mentioned above.

Orang Seletar. Once in Johor, the Orang Benua Sayong (forest dwellers around the Johor River) provided assistance to the king for his journey to Muar (Imran, 2020, p. 121).

Alliances between the Orang Laut and the Sultans of Johor-Melaka kingdom fragmented after 1699, following the regicide of the last direct descendant of Parameswara (Barnard, 2007, p. 41-42). Different groups became loyal to different Malay lords and rulers (Chou, 2010, p. 52). An example of this would bring us back to the situation observed in January 1819, when the Suku Gelam, Seletar and Kallang were seen to align themselves with Temenggong Abdul Rahman of Singapore (Chou, 2010, p. 52). Oral history of the Orang Seletar tells of a civil war between them and the pirates (Chan et al., 2019), although the time of the event is unknown. However, the pirates being referred to seem to be the plundering Orang Galang, of whom the Orang Seletar were fearful (Thomson, 1847, p. 341). The Orang Galang were often employed by Malay lords in large scale raids and piracy in the first half of the 19th century (Sopher, 1977). Sopher (1977, p. 290) suggested that the harassment of the pirates contributed to the dispersion of other sea nomad groups. I believe the Orang Seletar were also driven to find safer areas in more inland riverines, as a consequence of other violent groups.

2.3 19th century

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the earliest sources clearly mentioning the Orang Seletar were dated 1819, stating their numbers as 200 (Turnbull, 1977, p. 5). Franklin and Jackson's map of Singapore in 1828 labels the Seletar River, which was one of the rivers the Orang Seletar ventured into, as "R. Saleta". In the 1840s, the Orang Seletar seem to primarily reside in Johor and occasionally in Singapore, as Logan (1847, p. 302) and Thomson (1847, p. 343) both travelled across the Johor Straits to find them. Logan (1847, p. 302) went to look for the Orang Seletar in the Johore River, in a creek called "Trús Báú" (possibly the Tebrau River). The same year Thomson (1847, p. 343) described the area frequented by the Orang Seletar as extending from the "Santee" (*Sungai Santi* 'Santi River', in Johor, at the east side of Johor Straits) to Pandas (*Sungai Pendas* 'Pendas River', in Johor, in the west side of the Johor Straits). Oral history of the Orang Seletar confirms this, and even extends it further west to the Pulai River, and northeast to Kota Tinggi (see *Sejarah Seletar* (Seletar History) in Appendix 2).

The Orang Seletar were still under the influence of their Malay lord, the Temenggong Abdul Rahman at the time, as Logan (1848, p. 529) observed that the Temenggong tasked the Orang Seletar to look for gutta-percha in Johor.

The Orang Seletar were living a nomadic life, travelling from rivers to creeks in the waterways of southern Johor and northern Singapore. When the Johor Straits became more popular in the 1850s, some Orang Seletar went deeper into the mainland of Singapore in search of smaller creeks (for example, the Seletar River)³⁰ while some became assimilated with coastal populations (Turnbull, 1977, p. 37). Around the same decade, it was said that the Temenggong asked the Orang Seletar, who were living scattered around the Straits of Johor to live more permanently in one place (Juma'at, 2017, p.24). However, they remained living in the many rivers along the strait (Skeat & Ridley, 1900). For example, in 1893, French doctor Louis Lopicque (The French, 1893) encountered some families in "Soughei Tebrao (*Sungai Tebrau*) and "Sunghei Pento" (*Sungai Plentong*, Pelentong River (Lopicque, 1892-1894).

³⁰ In Zaccheus's (2020) article, researcher Sarafian Salleh mentions that Sopher (1977) wrote that the Orang Seletar moved from the Singapore River to Seletar River in the 1840s. An inspection of Sopher's writing does not show this. Sarafian may have misunderstood. The population known to have dwelled near Singapore River are the Orang Kallang and Orang Selat.

2.4 20th century and after

The 20th century saw huge changes in the lives of the Orang Seletar, both in Singapore and across the straits in Johor.

In 1923, the Straits Settlement in Singapore required 600 acres of land in the Seletar area for the construction of an airbase, and as a result the Orang Seletar were moved by the then Johor ruler to the Pulau River in Johor³¹ (Shorrick, 1968, p. 11).

During the time of the Japanese Occupation (1942-1945), the Orang Seletar lived a difficult life. The experiences were never documented, only remembered by some Orang Seletar during an interview by Chan et al. (2019): At the time, the Orang Seletar still lived in their boat houses, and in fear of the Japanese, they lived scattered throughout the region. Some went as far as Indonesia, others went into the forest, even as far as Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. They still exchanged fish with nearby residents, in exchange for some root vegetables, sago and rice. They were not allowed to cook during the day, or else they would be found out by the Japanese and killed. Some Chinese families gave their babies to the Orang Seletar for safekeeping from the Japanese soldiers. After the war, some of them were not claimed, and they were raised as Orang Seletar. The Orang Seletar went through the war relatively unscathed. Some of them owe their fortune to the spells they cast for protection (Chan et al., 2019).

Circumstances improved after the Japanese surrendered and the British colonials came back in the late 1940s. The Orang Seletar were able to fish more freely (Chan et al., 2019). However, they could not foresee that the coming events would change their way of life dramatically.

The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) began after the Second World War. This was a crucial period of time for the Orang Seletar, as it marked the beginning of a more sedentary existence. The information here is gathered from Juma'at (2017), unless stated otherwise. During the Emergency, the colonial government made the Orang Seletar live in a fixed place to deter the influence of communists in the region— at Kuala Sungai Redan (Redan River Estuary), where the Redan River (*Sungai Redan*) meets the Pulau River. Some groups primarily living in the east side of the Johor Straits, at the Johor River and its tributaries, were gathered with the others.³² Like the other groups living in the area, a curfew was imposed upon the Orang Seletar, movements by houseboats were banned, and fishing was only permitted within a certain time, for example 6am to 6pm. At night, they were not allowed to go anywhere at all, and their movements were always monitored by the police. Because of these restrictions, some of them started to build wooden houses on land over the mudflats at the edge of the river. In the day they would go to fish in their boats, while returning to their houses at night (Sather, 1999, p. 16). At the time the population was reported to be around 200, led by a headman (*batin*) called Nentah Tegen. Kuala Sungai Redan, which connects immediately to the Pulau River, was abundant with sea creatures and the surrounding mangrove forests were rich in flora and fauna. It was the earliest “settlement” of

³¹ Another group of Orang Laut called the Orang Biduanda Kallang were also moved from Singapore (the Kallang River) to the Pulau River much earlier than this, shortly after the arrival of the British in 1824 (Logan, 1847, p. 300). It is said that the group here most likely was assimilated to mainstream Malay culture at the beginning of the 20th century (Skeat & Ridley, 1900, p. 247). The Orang Biduanda Kallang and the Orang Seletar are(were?) part of the indigenous population of Singapore, and the two are closely related, “branches of one tribe” as described by Skeat & Blagden (1906a, p. 90). The group might also have been involved in helping Iskandar Shah escape Singapore in the 14th century. The variety spoken by the descendants of the Orang Biduanda Kallang, the Orang Kallang is said to be similar to the speech of the Orang Seletar (Mohd Yusoff, 1985)

³² Except for a small group who decided to stay at the mouth of the Lebam River, a tributary of the Johor river (Sather, 1999, p. 16)

the Orang Seletar, who began to live a more sedentary lifestyle. The original settlement no longer exists, and part of it was incorporated into the Tanjung Pelepas Port in Gelang Patah.

The Pulai River and many of its tributaries (e.g. Sungai Simpang Arang) became important places where the Orang Seletar were allowed to go during the Emergency. This importance even gave rise to a myth that involves the mountain where the Pulai River originates (see *Sejarah Seletar* (Seletar History) in Appendix 2). They mainly moved about in Tanjung Kupang. Currently Orang Seletar still go there to find their livelihood. As before, they barter their fish and crabs with local residents (e.g. in villages like Kampung Sungai Punai, Kampung Sungai Boh in Pontian) in exchange for other necessities like rice and root vegetables. Other than that, they work jobs like cutting mangrove wood for the local Chinese charcoal merchants.

The abandonment of mobile boat houses, and so their nomadic ways, started with the above-mentioned beginning of (at least partly) sedentary life in Kuala Sungai Redan.³³ Polunin (1953, cited in Sather, 1999, p. 16) believed that the curfew during the Emergency disfavoured the people sleeping in open boats. Furthermore, the difficulties in finding trees large enough to construct the boats pushed them to gradually give up living nomadically. Lastly, the Chinese who they worked with eventually started to own those boats (Polunin, 1953).³⁴

At the end of the Emergency, the Orang Seletar were again resettled. A new settlement at Bakar Batu was established at the end of the 1950s, as some groups wanted to be closer to the Johor town to sell or trade their catch to the people (Sather, 1999, p. 16). The Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) supported the resettlement and helped build houses for those who agreed to move there (Sather, 1999, p. 16). The rest of the population in Kuala Sungai Redan were encouraged to move in the 1960s to Simpang Arang on the opposite side of the Pulai River,³⁵ as the land around Kuala Sungai Redan was gazetted as forest reserves (Sather, 1999, p. 17). It is said that the two-decade long residence in Kuala Sungai Redan created some conflicts between Orang Seletar families (Juma'at, 2017, p. 30; Asiah & Suradi, 1977, p. 31). Towards the end of the Emergency, some groups, one of them being the family of the headman Batin Nentah, left Kuala Sungai Redan and went back to the rivers in the east of the Johor Straits, in Kota Tinggi and in Singapore (Juma'at, 2017, p. 29). The rift between the families may have contributed to the resettlements. Those who neither desired to move to Bakar Batu or Simpang Arang made their own settlements: Pasir Pelangi and Kuala Tiram (Ariffin, 1979, p. 26). Some of them chose to still roam around in places like Stulang Buluh and Air Biru in Pasir Gudang (Juma'at, 2017, p. 34) at the time. The current Orang Seletar villages are established in 8 places: Kampung Simpang Arang, Kampung Sungai Temon, Kampung Bakar Batu, Kampung Telok Jawa, Kampung Kuala Masai, Kampung Pasir Putih, Kampung Telok Kabong, Kampung Pasir Salam.³⁶ All the Orang Seletar settlements are on the coast or by rivers. For more information regarding the Orang Seletar villages, past and present, see Ariffin (1979), Sather (1999, p. 16-18) and Juma'at (2017, p. 34-83).

³³ Pace Carey (1976, p. 277) who claimed that they were purely nomadic in the 1970s.

³⁴ Sather (1999, p. 16) writes that according to Ariffin (1979, p. 24) Chinese traders would commission the Orang Seletar to build their boats, paying them cash. When the boat was done, the trader would in-turn rent the boat to an Orang Seletar family, with the Orang Seletar paying in catch. The dugout boats were also phased out when bigger, more stable plank-built boats were purchased from the Malay boat builders.

³⁵ One of the reasons the Seletar moved to Simpang Arang was because there was a persistent drought that almost dried up the Redan River in the years 1961–1962 (Jamilah, 2014, p. 146)

³⁶ An additional 9th village is stated in Wikipedia page: Kampung Kong Kong

Back to Singapore

As mentioned above, some groups of Orang Seletar moved to Singapore after the Malayan Emergency ended. A former resident who lived in Singapore recalled about 30 people living on Seletar Island (*Pulau Seletar*) in the north coast, which served as a temporary village they called *bente* or *bendel* (Mariam, 2002, p. 279; Chan et al., 2019; Ilya, 2022).³⁷ Many Orang Seletar today recall living there (see Chan et al., 2019; Salleh, 2004; Salleh, 2014). Some even buried their people there (Chan et al., 2019; Ilya, 2022).³⁸ Villagers from Kampung Sungai Temon in Johor Bahru recalled that there were three families living in Woodlands and another three families living in Sembawang during the 1950s (Zaccheus, 2020). In the 1970s, Carey (1976, p. 279) reported one small group in Singapore. Ariffin (1978, p. 15) reports that around 32 to 38 Orang Seletar had moved into modern flats in Singapore and identified as Malays, though Sather (1999, p. 8) believes that these were not Orang Seletar, but Orang Selat, a different sea nomad group who live in the southern islands of Singapore.

From the 1960s to the end of 1980s, the Orang Seletar could still move freely from Malaysia to Singapore without having to go through immigration (Mariam, 2002, p. 280). The Orang Seletar knew of a secret passageway underneath the Causeway linking Johor and Singapore, which allowed them to travel back and forth. For example, Mariam's informants³⁹ lived in the north coast of Singapore and would frequent places like the Kranji and Kadut rivers in the west, but when industrial developments began in the area, they moved back to *Sungai Melayu* in Johor (Mariam, 2002, p. 279). The Orang Seletar usually came to Seletar during October and November from Johor to avoid strong winds (Mariam, 2002). Aside from Seletar, Kranji and Kadut, other areas in Singapore frequented by the Orang Seletar include Choa Chu Kang, Jurong, Punggol, Pulau Ubin, Pulau Tekong, Yishun, Tuas and Lim Chu Kang (see for example Zainal, 1981; Mariam 2002; Salleh, 2014; Chan et al., 2019; Ilya, 2022; my own fieldwork). They would come to fish, look for crabs, cut mangrove wood to sell to Chinese middlemen, and sell their catch.

In the 1980s, a news article reported that originally the Seletar area had about eight families, but all of them, except two⁴⁰ moved back to Air Biru in Johor (Zainal, 1981). This was confirmed by Mariam's informant, who placed their move back to Johor around 1967 (Mariam, 2002, p. 279-280). The move was largely motivated by the tightening of borders by a newly independent Singapore. Besides that, the catch was becoming less, owing to the increasing traffic in the Singapore waters, as recounted by a former Seletar Island inhabitant (Salleh, 2004). It is also said that some Orang Seletar had assimilated to the local communities in Kampong Irau, Kampong Punggol and Kampong Wak Hassan when the villages still existed (Chan et al., 2019).

Eventually, the remaining groups in the Seletar area in Singapore moved out to make way for the area's development projects in late 1980s (Mariam 2002, p. 280). The descendants of the Orang Seletar in Singapore probably still reside in the area today, but whether or not they recognize their heritage is unknown.⁴¹

³⁷ The temporary "village" was also seen in Kuala Redan (Asiah & Suradi, 1977, p. 11) and consisted only of a few huts, some palm leaf mats for sleeping and a simple firewood stove.

³⁸ Aside from Seletar Island, burial areas of the Orang Seletar can be found in various places in the north of Singapore, such as the areas near the current Seletar Country Club, Kangkar River, Tengah River, Peng Siang River in Lim Chu Kang, Kadut River, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and the Jurong River (Zaccheus, 2020). These places were likely used as burial grounds before the 1950s, according to oral interviews with the Orang Seletar in Kampung Sungai Temon (Zaccheus, 2020).

³⁹ The Orang Seletar woman who Mariam (2002) interviews in 1981 was a relative of the previously mentioned Batin Nentah, who left Kuala Sungai Redan in Johor after the Emergency.

⁴⁰ The first is Temah binte Tok (interviewed by Mariam 2002), and the second is Amah binti Treawang (Zainal, 1981).

⁴¹ I have not been able to locate the descendants of the resettled Orang Seletar in Singapore at the time of writing, although a comment on a recent video regarding the Orang Seletar (OurGrandfatherStory, 2019) says most of them reside in Yishun.

2.5 Theories of Origin

Although Orang Seletar are sometimes referred to as Orang Laut, they lack the usual traits and practices characteristic of Orang Laut, specifically, the Orang Laut groups in the Riau-Lingga archipelago. The Orang Seletar economy lacked the focus on *agar-agar*, trepang and turtle hunting (Sather, 1999, p. 10; Sopher, 1977, p. 249). Also, the Orang Seletar's habitat and economy differ from other Orang Laut groups so much that local Malays called them "Orang Utan Seletar" (Thomson, 1847, p. 341). The Orang Seletar were also not part of the hierarchical *suku* organisation that organized much of the Orang Laut groups in the Riau Archipelago, where different groups provided different services for Malay rulers (although the Orang Seletar did seem to provide the Sultan of Johor with various services such as entertainment and collecting produce) (Chou, 2010, p. 23; Logan, 1848, p. 529).

Because of some of these obvious differences, theories regarding the origin of the Orang Seletar have been proposed. Sopher (1977, p. 107) suggests that the Orang Seletar were originally like other Orang Laut groups, but at some remote point in time, they chose to seclude themselves in the mangrove forests and rivers. As a consequence, they lost their seafaring skills and their culture transformed from sea-going to mainly riverine dwelling. Not all boat dwelling Orang Laut in the past were part of the *pesukuan* organisation, and this is documented in Skeat and Blagden (1906a, p. 88), whom were told there were some "wild tribes" that dwelled in the interior of the larger Riau islands. Sopher (1977, p. 405), after reviewing Pelras's (1972) data, observed that the Seletar transformation from sea nomads is "not very recent". However, the Orang Seletar language has very similar features with those of other Orang Laut groups of the Riau Archipelago (see §1.5.2), and many rituals and spiritual beliefs (such as *penunggu*, *pengeras*, *buang ancak*) that characterise many Orang Laut groups are shared by the Orang Seletar (for example see Siti Nur Aisha, 2020). Culturally and linguistically, the Orang Seletar are characterised as Orang Laut. It might be the case that the Orang Seletar chose to reside in a more secluded area to avoid other violent groups (see §1.6). Skeat and Blagden's (1906a) use of the term *Sea Jakun* to refer to the Orang Seletar and other groups⁴² seem to come from their understanding that these populations were once Jakun who initially dwelled inland (*Land Jakun*) and secondarily adapted to the mangrove swamps and rivers of southern Johor as boat nomads. Support for this theory may be found in the language of the Orang Seletar, which contains words very similar with Jakun (see Tan 2020, p. 45, 46, 48 for some examples), and also from the fact that both groups have the word *kun/kon* relating to their population (e.g. *-kun* in the ethnonym *Jakun*, and the Orang Seletar word *kon* 'people'). Kähler already observed continuity between the languages of Jakun and Seletar in the middle of the 20th century (Benjamin, 2002, p. 27). Additionally, Asiah and Suradi (1977, p. 5) reported that their respondents called themselves "*Jakun Laut*" and deemed that more appropriate than "Orang Seletar".

The *batin* 'headman' structure of the Orang Seletar and Jakun (and the neighbouring Aslian speaking Mah-Meri) (Skeat & Blagden, 1906a, p. 520) may also hint at their common origin. Asiah and Suradi's respondents recalled, though very briefly, that there were stories from elders that they originated from tree barks or from huge giants living in the jungle, which led the two researchers to suspect that they dwelled in the jungle, like the Jakun, in some remote time (Asiah & Suradi, 1977, p. 9). However, the relationship and dynamics between the Orang Seletar and Jakun is still shrouded in mystery, apart from the fact that the two groups speak genetically related tribal/aboriginal Malay dialects.

⁴² These groups include the Orang Sabimba, Orang Muka Kuning who are not "Orang Laut" in the narrow sense of the word meaning the boat dwelling people of Riau-Lingga, for more discussion of the term *orang laut*, see Sopher 1977, p. 51.

Neither of the above-mentioned theories gave a precise time period of origin. Sopher did not clarify what he meant by “not very recent” when he talked about the Seletar’s transformation from sea nomads (Sopher, 1977, p. 405). The time period he had in mind could have been centuries or even millennia before his time of writing. Skeat and Blagden (1906a, p. 91) put forth the view that the Orang Laut (i.e. Sea Jakun) and Jakun inhabited the Peninsula before the arrival of Malays. By the seventh century AD, the Malay language was already well established in southern Sumatra, and it is very likely that at the time, it was already spoken in the Malay Peninsula (Blust, 2006, p. 65). In this view, the Orang Laut (and also probably the Orang Seletar) were already present on the peninsula roughly 2000 years ago.

3 Literature Review

Literature regarding the Seletar language is very limited and also very scattered. The earliest reliable sources about the Orang Seletar date from the 19th century and are mostly anthropological notes with small sections dedicated to linguistic observations (e.g. Thomson, 1847; Logan 1847). The descriptions are not technical but concern the general characteristics of the language. The 1970s and 2010s saw an increase of interest in the Orang Seletar, with several researchers conducting fieldwork studies to gather more information about them (e.g. Pelras, 1972; Carey, 1976), their goals being to assess the similarity of Seletar to local Malay by means of word lists. In the past five years, more research focusing on technical aspects of the Seletar language has been done.

3.1 Previous Literature

I have divided past studies on Seletar into five parts: (i) Impressionistic descriptions (ii) Classification (iii) Word lists and comparison of vocabulary with Malay (iv) Technical linguistic analyses and (v) Others.

3.1.1 Impressionistic descriptions

As mentioned in §1.5.1, Thomson (1847) made detailed notes on the Orang Seletar, including their language. He also included a list of Orang Seletar names, which he found to be similar to the names of heroes in the Malay Annals. Here is an excerpt of how he described the language:

Their language is the Malayan, and considerable pains was [sic] taken to elicit any words foreign to that language, but without effect. Their dialect is the same as that of the Orang Laut of Tulloh Blangah, but spoken with a slightly more guttural accent, and they clip their words as much as the natives of Keddah. As a proof of their possessing the same language as the Malays, I may mention that the children were heard when playing to converse in this language and were perfectly understood by the Malays amongst our crew (p. 343).

As I before stated they speak the language of the Malays with much less a degree of difference in pronunciation, than may be found in stepping from one county in England to another ... We find in their proper names an astonishing degree of similarity to the names of Malayan heroes prior to the conversion of the race as mentioned in the *Sijarah Malayu* and other works (p. 346).

Skeat and Ridley (1900, p. 247) repeat Thomson's findings that the Seletar language is Malay and that neither Logan (1847) nor Thomson (1847) were able to elicit words of their "original language".

Sather (1999) briefly talks about the culture of the Orang Suku Laut of Riau, the Orang Kanaq, the Orang Seletar and the Orang Kuala. He mentions the Orang Seletar speak a dialect of local Johor Malay (Sather 1999, p. 2), and that like the Orang Kanaq, they speak a distinct Malay dialect within their own group while adopting standard Malay when speaking with outsiders (p. 14).

3.1.2 Classification

Collins (1999, p. 657) groups the languages of Seletar, Kanaq, Temuan and Jakun under the label *Dialek Melayu Orang Asli* "Orang Asli Malay Dialects". The four groups speak their own variety of Malay, thus their languages are identified as "Orang Asli Malay" or "Aboriginal Malay". Similarly, Anderbeck (2016) lists Seletar as part of Vernacular Orang Asli Malay, different from Vernacular Canonical Malay (i.e. Malay dialect spoken by ethnic Malays). Also, he suggests that the Orang Seletar variety be listed together with the Malay varieties spoken by other Orang Laut groups of Riau. Seletar indeed shares many features of Malay varieties of the Orang Laut (the Riau Sea Tribe dialects which are mentioned in Anderbeck 2012, see §1.5.2 for more details regarding this grouping). However, Seletar does seem to have some Aslian substratum influences, and so, were we to list the Seletar variety within Riau-Johor Orang Laut Malay, this Aslian influence might not be brought to light.

Benjamin's (2012, p. 144) label "Malayic dialects spoken by Orang Asli" might be more conservative, as he does not directly refer to the languages of these four groups as "Malay". Blust (2013, p. 71) also classifies Orang Seletar as Malayic, and gives the opinion that Duano, Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Seletar, Temuan and Urak Lawoi are probably all dialects of Malay, though some of them possess very different phonology (p. 72).

Mohamad Yusof and Mohamad Nor (2014) illustrate the phonemic inventory of Aboriginal Malay (Proto-Malay) languages, compare them, and tabulate their degree of relatedness with Standard Malay. Seletar was found to be 87.1% cognate with Standard Malay, 87.1% with the language of the Jakun, 84.1% with the Temuan and 73.7% with Duano. Asmah and Samsur (2018, p. 462) report similarly that Seletar is 86% cognate with Malay. The comparisons in both instances were based on 100 Swadesh lexical items. Asmah and Samsur (2018) groups Malay, Temuan, Jakun, Kanaq, Urak Lawoi and Seletar within the same sub-group, and Duano as coming from a different sub-group within Proto-Malayic.

3.1.3 Word lists and Comparison of Vocabulary

Skeat and Blagden (1906a, p. 134, 372) mostly reiterate Thomson's (1847) observations when talking about the Orang Seletar.⁴³ They did list seven words of the Orang Seletar language that were not seen in Thomson's records: *serkap* 'fish spear' (the word in Malay today means a type of fish trap), *parang* 'chopper' (Malay), root plants *p'rioh/peria* (scientific name not listed, possibly *Momordica charantia* from the Malay name *peria*), *k'lana* (listed as *Dioscorea deflexa*, in Malay *ubi kelunoh/kelana*), fruits called *tampoi/tampui* (listed as *Baccaurea Malayana*), *kledang/k'ledang* (listed as *Artocarpus lanceifolius*) and *buroh* (scientific name not listed).

Pelras's (1972) fieldwork of Duano led him to venture briefly into Orang Seletar territory, so that he could compare the similarity between the two languages.⁴⁴ He concluded that the two are not closely related. His view of Seletar is that it is simply a dialect of Malay, but with frequent contractions due to the dropping of intermediary parts of words. According to his data, 85% of the words he collected are Malay, another 5% are Malay words but semantically different, and 10% are non-Malay words. Among this 10%, he notes some similarity with words from languages spoken in Borneo. Seletar words listed in Pelras's study are compiled in Appendix 1.

⁴³ The term used was actually "Sea Jakun". They are assumed to be the Orang Seletar or a group closely related to Orang Seletar from the interpretation of Benjamin (2002, p. 27).

⁴⁴ The original article was written in French. It was translated to English in Pelras, Pernia & Durrell-Khalife (2002).

Carey (1976) collected a word list of two hundred lexical items (not published together with the book, however) and found that the language was “overwhelmingly Malay”, with only six words differing from standard Malay (p. 279). These words were not listed. But he does note the usage of ‘*Kun*’ when the Orang Seletar were referring to themselves, and that it may have connections with the ‘-kun’ of the Jakun of inland Johor and Pahang (Carey, 1976, p. 279).

Ariffin (1979) conducted fieldwork in Kampung Simpang Arang for his anthropological studies. A brief two-page section on language was written. He supports the view of the close relatedness between Seletar and Standard Malay and lists a few words that deviate from this similarity (see Appendix 1). He notes some peculiarities in Seletar, namely the glottal stop ending of words and the dropping of consonants /k/ and /r/. He also observes some multilingualism in the community, with some able to speak fluent Malay and Mandarin.

Collins (1999) writes that research regarding Seletar is lacking and points out that the words found to be different from standard Malay in existing literature are actually just shortened Malay words pronounced differently. For example *bis* in Seletar is *bisa* in Malay, meaning 'sick'. *canke* is *cangkir* 'cup' and *niu* is *nyiur* 'coconut'.

Yusop (2011) might have the largest compiled word list yet for Seletar. He has collected 1590 words from speakers of Kampung Bakar Batu. After examining the list, it is obvious that Malay and Seletar are very closely related. I have listed some words from Yusop in Appendix 1.

Blissett and Elzinga (2015) conducted fieldwork to collect word lists from two endangered languages in Malaysia, Seletar and the Sungai Sugut language in Sabah, and compared them to Standard Malay. They found that many Seletar words are exactly the same as Malay, and others are obviously derived from phonological changes (the dropping of /k/, /r/, /i/). They observe a small group of words unique to the language. They note the missing *meN-* prefix and *-an* suffix of Malay in Seletar, as well as the strategy of negating verbs, which is unique to Seletar, but do not say what that is.

Nazarudin (2015, Table 5 & 7) lists Seletar words associated with seafaring and fruits. The names of the sea products seem to be unique and different from the Malay names, while the terms associated with fishing equipment, the sea and fruits seem to be contracted versions of their Malay counterparts.

Juma’at (2017, p. 146-149) describes some aspects of Seletar. He gives a description on its current status as a home language, which he says is used daily throughout all ages, and highlights the bilingual abilities of the Orang Seletar. He also gives examples of pronunciation differences between Seletar and Malay, namely the glottal stop endings, the dropping of /k/ and /i/ in the middle of words and /r/ at the start, middle and end of words. Some sentences (transcribed using Malay orthography) in Seletar are given to show its ‘contracted’ nature (p. 146-149, 172). A list of words that are different to Malay is given, followed by kinship terms. Though there is a particular section dedicated to language of the Orang Seletar, throughout the book, there are words in parenthesis representing terms relevant to the Orang Seletar. These are mostly names of the sea products, and fishing equipment.

Hidayah (2017) included words from ‘Slitar’ in her guide to Malay languages. But these words were taken from Daud, Yunus and Sitti (1986), who actually studied the Orang Laut ‘dialect’ in general, and thus they may not be representative of Seletar.

The Honours thesis by Siti Nur Aisha (2020) involves the reconstruction of the history of Singapore's Orang Laut. She interviewed descendants of Orang Laut of Singapore's southern islands and the Orang Seletar, collecting historical as well as cultural information. Some observations regarding the Seletar language were made, though they repeat those of Ariffin (1979) and Juma'at (2017) (e.g. the dropping of /k/, /r/, and /i/, numerous word final glottal stops). She also points out some differences between Bahasa Seletar and the language spoken by the southern islanders, namely vocabulary difference such as *aku*, *diko/mike* and *koyok* in Bahasa Orang Laut, while Seletar has *am*, *ai* and *angkok* for meanings '1SG; I', '2; you' and 'dog'.

The above wordlists by various authors show that Seletar is fairly similar to Malay in terms of its lexicon, but with some phonological changes.

3.1.4 Technical Linguistic Analysis

Kähler (1960) studied the Malay dialects spoken by several Orang Laut tribes (Orang Darat of Batam Island, Orang Akit on Rupa Island and Orang Hutan in Tebing Tinggi Island and Orang Laut) in very detailed phonetic descriptions. Though Kähler did not use the name “Orang Seletar”, instead using “Orang Laut”, Benjamin (2002, p. 27) says he demonstrated similarities between the language spoken by the Jakun and the Orang Seletar and other Orang Suku Laut of the Riau Islands. As I cannot read German, I cannot confirm this. Also, Anderbeck (2012, p. 279) says the location of the mentioned “Orang Laut” by Kähler is only given as “the Riau Archipelago”.

Anderbeck (2012) did not work on Seletar specifically as he lacked adequate wordlists, but he provides classifications for the Orang Laut varieties by examining several Orang Laut languages from a multitude of sources. He adds to the existing sources with words collected from the Bintan Orang Laut in the Riau Islands. He presents the sound innovations shared by the Riau Islands variety (see §1.5.2). From comparing the different varieties, he concludes that there is little evidence of a non-Malayic substratum among Orang Laut languages, but there is a ‘*mar-*’ prefix in some languages which may represent an older stage of Malay – Old Malay (p. 294). Aside from his linguistic observations, he mentions Arnaud et al. (1997) having Orang Seletar word lists, but I do not have access to this resource, and neither does he. He guessed that the data may be the same as Pelras (1972) mentioned above.

Pok (2017) provides a linguistic analysis of Bahasa Orang Seletar in terms of phonology, morphology, and syntax. The thesis includes a 210-item word list, responses from man-and-tree stimuli (Levinson et al., 1992), and transcription of a short conversation. She found seventeen consonant phones and 19 vowel phones in Seletar and reports the basic syllable structure as (C)(C)V(C). She demonstrates that Seletar syntax is more appropriately analysed with a Topic-Comment information structure and is considered an Isolating-Monocategorical Associational language. However, this preliminary study does not go into detail regarding contractions usually seen in many Seletar words (as observed by Pelras, 1972 and Blissett & Elzinga, 2015), nor does it discuss the non-Malay words and their possible origins. Nevertheless, the thesis is an important first introduction to technical linguistic analysis of the Seletar language.

Tan (2020) provides a detailed analysis regarding the phonology of Seletar, as well as the lexicon and semantics of Seletar with a 345-item wordlist. Some interesting observations were made, for example neutralisation of bilabials in verbal roots, sesquisyllabic structure, frequent lexical contractions, and uncommon polysemy that are unseen in Standard Malay. A comparison of the Seletar lexicon was done with Aslian languages and some languages of Borneo. It was reported that Seletar has some non-Malay lexical items of probably Aslian and Borneo origins. However, many words can only be found in Seletar. The thesis only focused on wordlists and does not delve into the morphosyntax of the language using natural texts.

At the time of writing my Honours thesis (Tan, 2020), I was unaware what the presence of non-Malay lexical items of Borneo origins might mean. Blust (2006, p. 81) agrees with Skeat and Blagden (1906b, p. 435) that there are Austronesian loanwords in Aslian languages which “cannot have come into the aboriginal dialects through Malay at all”. Blust (2006, p. 82) points out that the possible Austronesian source are languages in Borneo, and that some of these languages might have once been spoken in the Malay Peninsula. Though Seletar is not an Aslian language, the non-Malay lexical items in the language might also be remnants of Austronesian languages once spoken in the Malay Peninsula before the spread of Malay. However, it must be noted that the non-Malay words in Seletar are different from those observed in Skeat and Blagden (the list of words were referenced from Benjamin, Forthcoming). In Tan (2020, p. 42-49), I tried to find some similarities between the non-Malay words in Seletar and non-Malayic languages of Borneo (referenced from Smith, 2017). There were some similarities with words from Kayanic, Barito, and Punan languages. I did not point out what these similarities meant, and how they relate to the linguistic situation of the ancient Malay Peninsula.

3.1.5 Others

Florey (2005) looks at the ethnolinguistic vitality of Austronesian languages of Asia. She briefly mentions the endangered status of Seletar in both Malaysia and Singapore. No Seletar words or data were reported here.

Samsur (2015) did an ethnographic study of the Orang Seletar.⁴⁵ Other than illustrating the lifestyle and cultural traditions of the Orang Seletar, the author also focuses on analysing the Orang Seletar language as an interaction, with a discourse analysis-kind of approach. He includes conversations in Seletar and Malay, which are transcribed using the Malay orthography. The phonological differences were transcribed with non-standard spellings. The texts are not interlinearised. The translations of some sentences were given, especially for those that have more Seletar lexical items, but the majority of the text are readily readable as Colloquial Malay. The conversations he collected include those between the Orang Seletar themselves, between some Orang Seletar and himself, and between an Orang Seletar and a Malay customer. It is not clear whether the Orang Seletar are accommodating the author or influenced by his presence and thus speaking a variety closer to his. Despite this, the texts are valuable in showing how the Orang Seletar converse. He notes some lexical differences between Malay and Seletar, some Seletar terminology related to sea products and fishing throughout the book, and gives a small list of Seletar pronouns at the end (p. 296).

Benjamin’s (2021) main focus was to assess the presence of Austronesian languages in Singapore other than Malay. These include both Malayic languages, like the Orang Seletar language, Orang Selat language and Banjarese, and non-Malayic languages like Javanese and Buginese. He

⁴⁵ Samsur’s 2015 thesis was published as a book in 2019. The 2019 version seems to be an abridged version of the original thesis.

suggests the language of the Orang Seletar possesses pre-Malay lexical items that might give us insight into the ancient migrations of Malayic speakers out of Borneo (Benjamin, 2021b). He also briefly demonstrates the diversity in Malay varieties that were present in Singapore in past decades by mentioning the Orang Seletar language, its similarity to local Malay, and its possible Aslian influences (p. 110).

An internet search for "Orang Seletar Language" will lead one to audio recordings posted by Global Recording Network (GRN, n.d). The recordings here are actually not spoken by Orang Seletar speakers, and the language is not Seletar. The recording was done in Tanjung Pelepas (personal communication with GRN) and is likely a variety spoken in Riau.

3.2 Research Gap

As seen from the review above, an in-depth technical linguistic analysis on the Orang Seletar language is severely lacking, and efforts should be taken not just to document isolated words used by the Orang Seletar, but also natural language use, such as conversations and narrations. The collected texts should be transcribed in IPA (or conventional Austronesian transcription) and interlinearised in detail so as to best understand the language.

This thesis, therefore, aims to present a grammar sketch of Seletar based on natural texts collected in the form of narrations (folklore and individual stories). The most salient points of the grammar of the language will be illustrated.

As mentioned above, my Honour's thesis (Tan, 2020) did not go deeply into interpreting the non-Malay lexical items in Seletar, and their similarity with words from languages of Borneo. I hope to continue this discussion in this sketch grammar, and hopefully analyses of morphosyntactic structures of Seletar may provide new insight to the linguistic situation between the Malay Peninsula and Borneo.

4 Methodology

This section discusses the language consultants of the study, the data collection process and the interpreters that helped translate the data.

4.1 Language Consultants

The speech data used for this study was collected from three Orang Seletar from Johor Bahru (S, L and T). S and L live in Kampung Sungai Temon. S and L are husband and wife. T is a resident from Kampung Bakar Batu but regularly visits family in Kampung Simpang Arang and Sungai Temon. All the consultants are about 60 years old.

All three consultants are native speakers of Seletar. They are bilingual (or bidialectal?) in local Malay. They all speak Seletar among themselves and to their children. To outsiders, they speak local Malay. S and L, together with their children, own a seafood restaurant. T worked as a fisherman in the past, but she has stopped going to sea because of her age. She regularly helps others in the community collect molluscs and fish baits in the mangroves and collects banana leaves to sell to locals.

S and L are Christians, while T is Muslim. Although they do not practice the Seletar form of animism anymore (which they call *adat*, which in Arabic means ‘custom’), they still have memories of members of their community performing rituals, the existence of shamans (*bomoh* or *dukun*), and to some extent, they still hold on to their spiritual beliefs.

All of the consultants were born in boats (*pau* in Seletar), and lived their teenage years in the boathouses, before settling on land in the 1950s.

All the consultants cannot read or write.

4.2 Data Collection

The COVID-19 pandemic has closed borders between Malaysia and Singapore. As a result, I was unable to go to Malaysia to collect new data for this thesis. I am using data that I collected from my previous fieldwork in 2019 and recordings that were shared with me from the founder of Nature Classroom, a Malaysian eco-tourism and education enterprise (more on this below).

The speech data from T was collected in late 2019, as part of my Honours thesis (see Tan, 2020). Due to time constraints, my BA thesis only used the data obtained from word lists, leaving the narration portion of the recordings unanalysed. The current analysis was done using the data from the narration of T. The narration centres around T’s life experiences: her childhood living in boats and following the elders and becoming a fisherman.

The language of elicitation used was Malay. I learned Standard Malay in Malaysia for 12 years as part of Malaysia’s trilingual education system and I regularly use Malay (Standard and some colloquial) when I am in Malaysia. When speaking to outsiders, the speaker uses local Malay as the language of communication. To discourage the speakers from unconsciously switching to local Malay, I asked the speaker to narrate her story to another Orang Seletar, so that she would speak in her native language.

The speech data of S and L were shared with me by the founder of Nature Classroom. Nature Classroom⁴⁶ is a Malaysian eco-tourism and education enterprise, and they have worked with the Orang Seletar since 2014 to develop eco-tourism as one of the means of livelihood for the Orang Seletar, aside from educating the mainstream public on local indigenous history and culture. The group also organizes classes for the children of Kampung Sungai Temon to learn drawing, language, and other skills. The founder, Wong Yun Yun, is a personal friend of mine, and has generously agreed to share recordings Nature Classroom has made about Orang Seletar folklore. The recordings were made in 2018.

In total, there are three folktales. Two of the stories were narrated by L, and one other by S. The first story by L is about a child who was turned into a dragon because he ate a mysterious egg found in the forest. The second story is about a couple who stumbles across a strange baby while in the forest. The third story by S is about a great flood (one not unlike the Christian biblical flood) that was experienced by Orang Seletar of a distant past and the current situation of Orang Seletar today.

All the data mentioned above are in Seletar.

4.3 Interpreters

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, I am not able to travel to Malaysia because of the border restrictions. As a result, I was not able to consult the original narrators of the stories. Instead, I sought the help of an Orang Seletar family who are residing in Singapore. My interpreters are 20 and 21 years old, and they are siblings. They speak to each other in Seletar at home, and when they travel to Johor Bahru to visit their family. They are educated in Singapore's education system, and they can speak English, Malay, and some Mandarin Chinese.⁴⁷ They assisted me in translating the Seletar data.

⁴⁶ More information regarding the eco-tourism of the Orang Seletar villages, see Cai (2021). Nature Classroom is active on Facebook.

⁴⁷ The family has mixed Seletar-Chinese ancestry.

5 Phonetics and Phonology

The sound system of Seletar was previously discussed in Tan (2020, p. 20-34). It included the syllable structure, phonotactics, sesquisyllabicity and the sound inventory of Seletar. As these initial observations were based on elicited lexical items in word lists, the sounds observed might not be those that occur in natural and casual speech. This current chapter serves to revise sound observations made in Tan (2020) by using narrative data instead.

From this chapter onwards, some non-IPA symbols are used, in keeping with the field of Austronesian studies. In writing phonemic representations, *c*, *j* and *y* are used instead of the IPA *tʃ*, *dʒ* and *j*. The same goes for phonetic transcriptions, that [c], [j] and [y] are used instead of IPA [tʃ],[dʒ] and [j]. The shorthand SM is used to refer to Standard Malay, and PM refers to Proto-Malayic.

Seletar has eighteen consonant phonemes and six vowel phonemes. Consonants are discussed in §5.1.1 and vowels in §5.1.2. §5.2 illustrates the syllable structure and observations regarding the reduction of syllables in Seletar. The chapter concludes with §5.3, which provides some examples illustrating the phonology of loanwords.

5.1 Sound inventory

This section serves as a revision to the description I wrote in Tan (2020). Eighteen consonants were identified, one less than Tan (2020), as [ʔ] is considered non-phonemic in this thesis. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, in keeping with Austronesian conventions, I use *c*, *j* and *y* instead of the IPA equivalents [tʃ], [dʒ] and [j].

| | Bilabial | | Alveolar | | Palatal | | Velar | | Glottal |
|---------------------|----------|---|----------|-----|---------|---|-------|---|---------|
| Plosives | p | b | t | d | c | j | k | g | |
| Nasal | | m | | n | | ɲ | | ŋ | |
| Fricative | | | s | (z) | | | r [ɣ] | h | |
| Approximant | | w | | | | y | | | |
| Lateral approximant | | | | l | | | | | |

Figure 5-1 Seletar Consonant phoneme inventory

The plosives are realised as non-aspirated stops. Seletar does not have phonemic prenasalised stops. All eighteen consonants can occur in the onset position. The coda slot is only limited to unvoiced plosives /p/, /t/, /k/ (with [ʔ] as an allophone), nasals /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, lateral /l/, and fricatives /r/ (phonetically velar fricative [ɣ], see §5.1.1.1.4), /s/, /h/. /z/ only appear in loanwords (see §5.3). The glottal stop is not seen as phonemic, but it provides suprasegmental information (see §5.1.1.1.8).

5.1.1 Consonants

Oral stops (i.e. plosives) can be identified as having four places of articulation: bilabial, alveolar, palatal and velar. All the oral stops are unaspirated. Voicing is contrastive for all the plosives mentioned. Only voiceless plosives can occur word finally. Nasal stops are also produced at the same four places of articulation as plosives. Fricatives are present in the alveolar, velar and glottal positions. Approximants occur in alveolar, labio-velar and palatal positions. The list below shows minimal and near-minimal pairs for different phonemes in initial and final positions. Minimal pairs are difficult to locate in the texts (e.g. /mak/ ‘mother’ vs /nak/ ‘want’) and the border restrictions did not allow for additional fieldwork to obtain more data, so most of the examples listed are near-minimal pair. When even near-minimal pairs are unavailable, I try to find words that have similar environments.

| | | <u>Initial Position</u> | | <u>Final position</u> | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Stops | /p/ | /panas/ | ‘hot’ | /linap/ | ‘blink’ | |
| | /b/ | /banan/ | ‘big (in type)’ | | | |
| | /t/ | /təŋa/ | ‘middle’ | /dapət/ | ‘get’ | |
| | /d/ | /dəŋə/ | ‘listen’ | | | |
| Nasals | /c/ | /cayi/ | ‘find’ | | | |
| | /j/ | /jeji/ | ‘finger’ | | | |
| | /k/ | /kon/ | ‘Seletar people’ | /anak/ | ‘child’ | |
| | /g/ | /gun/ | ‘there’ | | | |
| | /m/ | /mak/ | ‘mother’ | /səŋum/ | ‘smile’ | |
| | /n/ | /nak/ | ‘want’ | /səmun/ | ‘all’ | |
| | /ŋ/ | /ŋa/ | ‘3’ | | | |
| | /ŋ/ | /ŋə/ | ‘why’ | /bontuŋ/ | ‘easy’ | |
| | Fricatives | /h/ | /hampe/ | ‘almost’ | /gəndəh/ | ‘short’ |
| | | /s/ | /səmpay/ | ‘reach’ | /gəndəs/ | ‘river.side’ |
| Liquids | /l/ | /lupa/ | ‘forget’ | /jual/ | ‘sell’ | |
| | /r/ | /ruma/ | ‘house’ | /luar/ | ‘outside’ | |
| Approximants | /w/ | /wa/ | ‘INTRJ’ | /lampaw/ | ‘pass’ | |
| | /y/ | /ya/ | ‘PAR’ | /səmpay/ | ‘reach’ | |

5.1.1.1 Phonetic Realisations

5.1.1.1.1 Bilabial stops and nasal:

/b, m/ are realised as [b, m] in intervocalic and word final positions. /p/ is an unaspirated [p] in intervocalic position, and is realised as no audible released [p̚] word finally. In word initial positions, the bilabials have varying realisations.

In Tan (2020, p. 26), I noted that /p/ is realised sometimes as [m] in verbal roots that have initial voiceless bilabials (e.g. /pusiŋ/ ‘turn’ was pronounced as [musiŋ], /pəcit/ can be [məcit] or [pəcit]). As /p/ and /m/ are at the same time contrastive (compare the minimal pair /pak/ ‘father’ and /mak/ ‘mother’), I deemed that the contrast between /p/ and /m/ is neutralised, following the notion of neutralisation where in certain environments, the contrast between different phonemes is suspended.

With natural text data in this thesis, the same phenomenon is observed. The voiceless bilabial stop /p/ is unaspirated [p] most of the time, but in certain words sporadically it is realised as [m], for example the verbal root /pada/ can be [madə] or [padə] ‘say’ and in the focus particle /pun/, which can be [pun] or [mun] ‘PAR’. For verbal roots such as *pada* ‘say’, the nasalisation of the initial consonant probably indicates the presence of a *N-* prefix, see §5.1.1.1.6. However, such a prefix is never seen attached to particles. In the other direction, /m/ is [m] most of the time, but sporadically realised as [p], and sometimes [b], for example /masa/ may be occasionally realised as [pasa] and [basə] ‘time’, /muin/ [muin], occasionally [buin] ‘long ago’. It is also observed that the voiced bilabial stop /b/ (most of the time realised as [b]) will sporadically nasalize as [m], as I noticed my Seletar consultants pronouncing /buŋi/ ‘sound’ as both [buŋi] and [muŋi], and /baŋak/ ‘many’ can be [baŋaʔ] or [maŋaʔ].

Nasalisation and denasalisation of word-initial bilabials are seen in Malay loans of Jahai and Ceq Wong, though the context in which they occur is much more predictable. When Malay words starting with /b/ are borrowed into Jahai and Ceq Wong, the original /b/ becomes nasalised as [m] if the following consonant is a nasal (e.g. Malay *bānda* becomes [mnə] in Ceq Wong) (Burenhult, 2001, p. 5; Kruspe, 2004, p. 677). When Malay words starting with /m/ are borrowed into Ceq Wong, original /m/ becomes denasalized to [b] if it precedes a nasal (e.g. Malay *mingu* becomes [biŋuʔ] in Ceq Wong).

For Seletar, the nasalisation/denasalisation of initial bilabials seems more sporadic. It does not only involve voiced bilabials /b/ and /m/, but also voiceless bilabial /p/. For the cases of /pun/ [mun] ‘PAR’, /buni/ [muɲi] ‘sound’, /bapak/ [maɲaʔ] ‘many’, /muin/ [bu.in] ‘long ago’, the nasalisation/denasalisation process seems to follow the pattern mentioned in the Aslian languages just mentioned: before a nasal consonant. This seems to be a process of regressive assimilation/dissimilation in terms of nasality. However, Seletar also nasalizes/denasalizes bilabials that precede non-nasals, see /masa/ [masa], occasionally [pasa] or [basə] ‘time’.

/p/ is also realised as [b] in word initial positions. This is seen in the same /pun/ particle just mentioned, and pronounced as [bun]. The converse was also observed, where initial /b/ is realised as [p] in /bə-ci.aw/ [pə-cʰaw] ‘CONT-row’, /but/ [put] ‘make’. The voicing/devoicing of bilabial stops is probably a process of assimilating/dissimilating of the bilabials to their environment. This phenomenon might be the feature of the speaker’s isolect, as it is only seen in the speech of one person.

5.1.1.1.2 Alveolar stops and nasal:

/t/ is realised as an unaspirated dental stop [t̚] in most word initial and intervocalic positions, and is unreleased [t̚̚] in word-final positions. Word final /t/ is lost frequently, especially in fast speech: /buat apa/ [bwa apa] ‘do what’. On some (rare) occasions, /t/ is realised as [s] in intervocalic and final position, e.g. /atas/ [ʔasaʔ] ‘top’ and /but/ [bus] ‘make’. Occasionally, initial /t/ is realised as [n], for example /tunggu/ [nuŋo] ‘wait’. This is due to the presence of a *N-* prefix, see §5.1.1.1.6. /d/ is realised as alveolar [d] most of the time in word initial, intervocalic, and final positions, though occasionally it is nasalised to [n] in word initial positions, as seen in /dəŋan/ [nəŋan] ‘with’, most probably in an assimilation to the other nasals present in the word.

The reverse is also sometimes observed. Word initial /n/ is occasionally realised as [d], for example in /neŋkay/ is pronounced [neŋkay] or [deŋkay] ‘a term of endearment used by wives when addressing their husbands’ (glossed as ENDEAR)⁴⁸ and /(\ə)nam/ is [(\ə)nam] but occasionally [dam] ‘six’. This observation echoes a resemblance to what is seen in Malay loans of Temiar. Benjamin (2016, p. 20) noted that the initial consonant of original Malay words with medial nasal will optionally change to a homorganic voiced stop (e.g. Malay *nanjka* ‘jackfruit’ becomes Temiar *daŋkaa*², Malay *Kinta* ‘Kinta River’ becomes Temiar *Genta*²). Aside from the example listed above, /n/ is realised as [n] in word initial, intervocalic, and final positions.

5.1.1.1.3 Palatals

/c, j/ are realised as [c, j] in word initial and intervocalic positions most of the time. They do not occur word finally. Intervocalic /c/ was observed to be realised as [s] in instances of fast speech: /macam/ ‘like’ is usually pronounced [macam], but in fast speech it may appear as [masim] ‘like’. This

⁴⁸ The speakers only said that the word is a term for wives to call their husbands, and the original meaning, if there is one, is unknown. I have translated it to “my dear” in the texts. The term of endearment for husbands to their wives, according to the interpreter, is *dayan* (which means ‘lady-in-waiting’ or a moniker for one’s daughter in Malay (Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat, 2005).

lenition of /c/ to [s] occurs during fast speech, and it is seen again when the same word is truncated to just the ultimate syllable when it forms an expression with /jə/ ‘that’: /macam jə/ [sən jə] ‘like that/ like so’.

Frequently, in fast speech, word initial /j/ is weakened to an approximant [y]. For example, /jə/ ‘that’ is normally [jə], but in fast speech, it is [yə] ‘that’. The reverse is seen rarely, where /y/ is realised as affricate [j], as seen in /yaŋ/ ‘REL’, usually [yaŋ], being strengthened to [jaŋ]. The initial consonant of the word preceding it, /ceyi/ ‘find’, might have triggered assimilation in terms of manner of articulation. Other than that, /y/ is [y] in all positions: word initial, intervocalic and word finally, for example /yaŋ/ [yaŋ] ‘REL’, /supaya/ [supaya] ‘in order to’, /sampay/ [sampay] ‘reach’.

The palatal nasal /ɲ/ is realised as [ɲ] in word initial and intervocalic positions. It does not occur word finally.

5.1.1.1.4 Velars

/k/ is realised as unaspirated [k] in word initial and intervocalic positions. In some words, intervocalic /k/ is lost, see §5.2.1. Word finally, /k/ is consistently realised as [ʔ]. When a word ending in /k/ is suffixed with /-an/ ‘RSLT’,⁴⁹ the voiceless velar is restored, as seen in /kacok/ [kacoʔ] ‘mix’ vs /kacok-an/ [kacok-an] ‘mixture’.

/g/ is realised as [g] in word initial and intervocalic positions. It does not occur word finally.

/ŋ/ is realised as [ŋ] in all positions: word initial, intervocalic and word final.

/r/ is actually a velar fricative [ɣ]. For interests of a practical orthography, this velar fricative is represented as /r/ rather than /ɣ/ in the thesis. Some linguists of Malay calling it ‘velar r’ (e.g. Asmah, 1985). In Standard Malay, the rhotic is usually an alveolar trill or a flap. In Seletar however, [ɣ] is much more common than the alveolar trill or flap. It is similar to many Malay(ic) varieties in this regard in which the velar fricative, instead of alveolar trill or flap, is characteristic (Adelaar, 1992, p. 86-87). The velar fricative, according to Adelaar (1992), is the original sound reconstructed for Proto-Malayic. /r/ is realised as [ɣ] in all positions more commonly, but a trill [r] or flap [ɾ] may occur occasionally. Intervocalic /r/ are frequently lost and this contributes to a reduction of syllables, e.g. PM **diri* is /di/ in Seletar, see §5.2.1 for details. In initial and final positions, are optionally lost, for example /ruma/ ‘house’ can be [uma] or [ruma], /kəluar/ ‘leave’ can be [kəluwaɣ] or [kəluwa]. In the texts, it was observed that when used with affixes such as *-an* or *kə-...-an* (e.g. *ajar-an*, *kə-turun-an*), a flap or trill rhotic is used. This may be due to the influence of a more standard variety of Malay. If the final sound of the preceding word is a velar nasal /ŋ/, the initial /r/ is assimilated to [g], for example in /paliŋ ajin/ [paliŋ gajin] ‘most hardworking’. Infrequently, /r/ is devoiced to [k]: /ruma/ [kuma] ‘house’.

5.1.1.1.5 Fricative /s/ and /h/

/s/ is realised as [s] in most word initial positions, though it is irregularly substituted for a palatal nasal, for example in /susu/ [ɲusu] ‘breast’. The palatal nasal appearing in the verbal function of *ɲusu* ‘breastfeed’ indicates the presence of a *N-* prefix (see §5.1.1.1.6). However, in the text, the nasalised form *ɲusu* is also used nominally to refer to ‘breast’, which is unusual, as the non-nasalised form *susu* is the more common form for ‘milk/breast’. Thus, there seems to be some free variation between [s] and [ɲ], though the context where it is allowed is restricted.

⁴⁹ RSLT= RESULT; *-an* derives a nominal that is the result of the action indicated by the root

/s/ is [s] in intervocalic positions. In word final position, /s/ is frequently lost in fast speech: e.g., /abis jə/ [abi jə] ‘after that’, /napas/ [napa] ‘breath’, /naɲes/ [naɲe] ‘cry’.

/h/ is often lost in word-initial position: /hujin/ [ujin] ‘rain’, /hanta/ [anta] ‘send’. Verbal roots starting with /h/ are nasalised: /həpʊt/ ‘drift’ is nasalised as [həpʊt]. This is due to the presence of a *N*-prefix (see §5.1.1.1.6). Word finally, /h/ is optional in most words, for example /nikah/ ‘marry’ is realized as [nika] or [nikah], /ləmah/ ‘weak’ is realized as [ləma] or [ləmah]. In medial positions, it is lost in some words, see §5.2.1. When it does appear, /h/ is realised as [h], though the frication is noted to be weak.

5.1.1.1.6 *On the Nasalisation of Initial consonants*

The replacement of /s/ by a palatal nasal *ɲ*, along with the replacement of stops /p, b, t, d, h/ by their homorganic nasals mentioned above are actually indicating morphological complexity, specifically the existence of the *N*-prefix common to Malay(ic) languages (and some Austronesian languages, see Adelaar, 2005) attaching to the roots, causing the stops to change into their homorganic nasals (in the case of /s/, the palatal nasal).

The *N*-prefix (in SM, it takes the form *mə(N)-*)⁵⁰ usually marks an ‘active voice’ function in standard varieties (see Adelaar, 1992 for examples of SM and other Malayic varieties). However, in colloquial varieties, the meaning of *N*- may differ depending on the language variety itself (Benjamin, 2009, p. 298). The function of *N*- in Seletar will be discussed more in detail in §6.1.1. Its occurrence in Seletar is worth noting as the Malay varieties spoken by ethnic Malays in the south of Johor are not known to have this affixation. *N*- is more common in Perak Malay and spoken Indonesian, rather than spoken Malay in Malaysia, where the bare stem is preferred (Benjamin, 2009, p. 296). Thus, it is curious why Seletar deviates from the Malay varieties spoken around it by possessing some prevalence of the *N*-prefix.

The verbal roots observed to have nasalised forms in the Seletar texts and word lists are: [madə] ‘say’ from /pada/, [həmpas] from /həmpas/ ‘throw/slam against something’, [nuŋo] ‘wait’ from /tuŋgu/, [həpʊt] ‘float/drift’ from /həpʊt/, [ɲusu?] from /susu/ ‘breastfeed/breast’, [musiŋ] from /pusiŋ/ ‘turn’, [məcit] from /pəcit/ ‘squeeze’. What is curious about Seletar is that some non-verbal roots also exhibit nasal variations and these are used interchangeably with the non-nasalised versions: [bui] [muŋi] ‘sound’, [dəŋan] [nəŋan] ‘with’, [susu] [ɲusu] ‘breast’, [bana?] [maŋa?] ‘many’. It is possible that (1) the nasal which follows the initial consonant is triggering regressive assimilation; or (2) (in the case of *ɲusu/susu* ‘breast’) the initial nasalisation has been reanalysed to apply to non-verbal roots as well, due to the fact that in Malay, the distinction between nouns and verbs is not always clear, in that “word-forms which semantically appear to be verbs easily and without further morphological modification occur in nominal functions and vice versa” (Himmelman, 2005, p. 127). Examples of this will be presented in §(85).

5.1.1.1.7 *Approximant /w/ and lateral /l/*

/w/ is realised as [w] in all positions: word initial /wak/ [wa?] ‘uncle/aunt’, intervocalic /pawaŋ/ [pawaŋ] ‘shaman’ and word finally /kalaw/ [kalaw] ‘if’.

/l/ is realised as an apico-alveolar [l] in word-initial and intervocalic positions: /lagi/ [lagi] ‘again’, /bila/ [bila] ‘when’. Occasionally, initial /l/ is lost: /lopa?/ [ʔopa?] ‘puddle’. Word final /l/ is realised most of the time as alveolar [l], e.g. /kənal/ [kənal] ‘recognize’, but sometimes it possesses a darker quality, appearing closer to a velar lateral [L], as seen in /bəsal/ [bəsaL] ‘big’ and /aəl/ [ʔa.əl]

⁵⁰ *mə-* and *(-)N-* are actually separate components, as explained by Benjamin (2009, p. 296-301).

‘water’. In SM, the form for ‘big’ is *bəsar*, PM **bəsar*, and the form for ‘water’ is *air*, PM **air*. The final consonants of ‘big’ and ‘water’ are rhotics in SM and PM. In Seletar, however, they appear as laterals. [ɹ] in Seletar might be an allophone of /r/, as both are produced in the same place of articulation. This is observed in /bəsal/ appearing (less frequently) with a velar fricative (‘velar r’) ending, as [bəsaɣ]. Something similar was described almost a century ago by Noone (1939) about the Benua Jakun language: that there is a consonant “midway a velar fricative and a lateral which occurs as a final in the Benua pronunciation of the Malay word “akar” (root) and in “bual” (to converse) and in “cheker” (quick)” (p. 156). For now, the words are transcribed as /bəsal/ and /aəl/.

5.1.1.1.8 Glottal stop

A glottal stop may appear non-phonemically in words beginning with a vowel. For example, /am/ ‘1SG’ is phonetically [ʔam]. This is especially obvious when an utterance begins with a underlying vowel initial word. The spectrogram in Figure 5-2 shows that the initial vowel /a/ of /am/ is glottalised by a preceding glottal stop in the utterance [ʔam ləma] ‘I am weak’. Glottalisation is indicated by more irregular and wider spaced glottal pulses in the initial /a/. This utterance was produced after a pause of 0.8 seconds (not pictured).

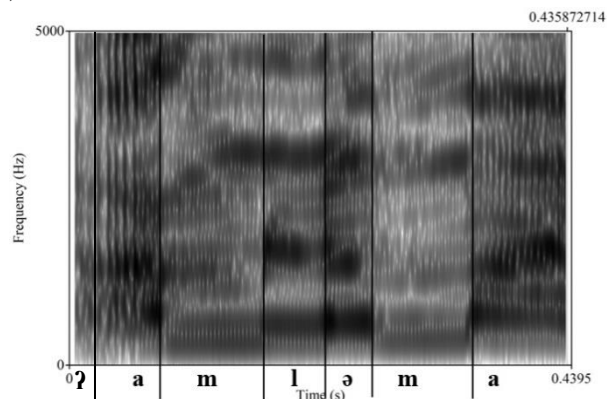


Figure 5-2 Spectrogram of /am ləmah/ [ʔam ləma] ‘I am weak’

However, when an underlying vowel-initial word is not situated at the beginning of an utterance, there may not be a glottal stop between the previous consonant and the vowel initial-word in question.

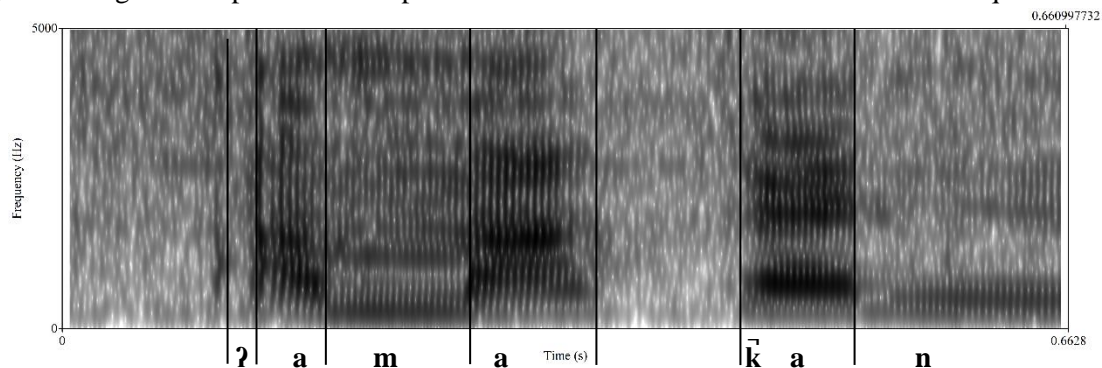


Figure 5-3 Spectrogram of /am akan/ [ʔam akan] ‘I will’

/akan/ in Figure 5-3 is not pronounced phonetically with a glottal onset when it follows the word /am/. There is no glottal stop observed between the [m] of [ʔam] and the [a] of [akan] in the spectrogram. Thus, phonetic glottal onsets in underlying vowel-initial words are optional, and tend to appear when the vowel-initial word is at the first position of an utterance.

The glottal stop also occurs most frequently in word final positions. Often, [ʔ] is the phonetic realisation of /k/ in final positions, e.g. /nak/ [naʔ] ‘want’, /teŋok/ [teŋoʔ] ‘look’. When a nominalising

suffix *-an* (see §6.1.2 for details on this suffix) is attached to a root ending phonetically with a glottal stop, the velar plosive [k] reappears, for example /kacok/ [kacoʔ] ‘mix’, but /kacok-an/ [kacok-an] ‘mixture’. The occurrence of the glottal stop is predictable (frequently in final position), and so far, considered to be non-phonemic.

In Tan (2020), I listed the glottal stop as a phoneme in Seletar’s sound inventory because I observed numerous words that do not end with /k/ closed by a glottal stop, e.g. /kami/ [kamiʔ] ‘1SG’, /mata/ [mataʔ] ‘eye’, /təliŋa/ [təliŋaʔ] ‘ear’. In these cases, the glottal stop does not seem to be an allophonic representation of phoneme /k/. The glottal stop closing of words with final vowels have been noted by scholars, who often describe Seletar having a strong word final accent and represent this glottal closing with orthographic use of *k* and *q* at the ends of words when eliciting word lists (e.g. Ariffin, 1979; Yusop, 2011, Blissett & Elzinga, 2015; Pok, 2017; Juma’at, 2017). However, with the current study, which mainly focuses on natural texts and sentences, this glottal stop closing for words with final vowels is not regular and appears inconsistently. From the analyses of the texts, glottal closing generally tends to occur at the end of an intonational segment that ends with a vowel. For example, the two spectrograms in Figure 5-4 and Figure 5-5 below represent the first two clauses in the the full sentence: *sampay dəkət sun suka, a pukul ənam pagi, da hampe ŋəŋah la*⁵¹ ‘when we reached Sungai Suka, at six in the morning, we were almost already tired’. Note that at the intonational end of the first two clauses (after *suka* and *pagi*), there are glottal stops. In these cases, the glottal stop is seen as marking the end of an intonational phrase, as opposed to a phoneme of the last word in the intonational unit.

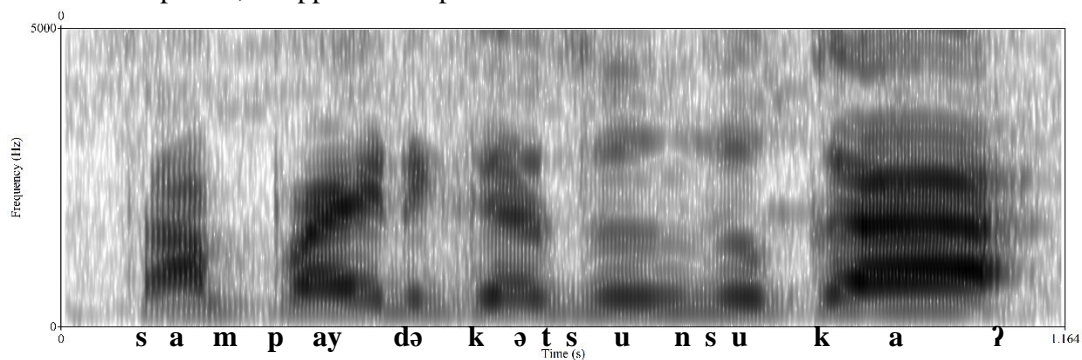


Figure 5-4 Spectrogram of *sampay dəkət sun suka*

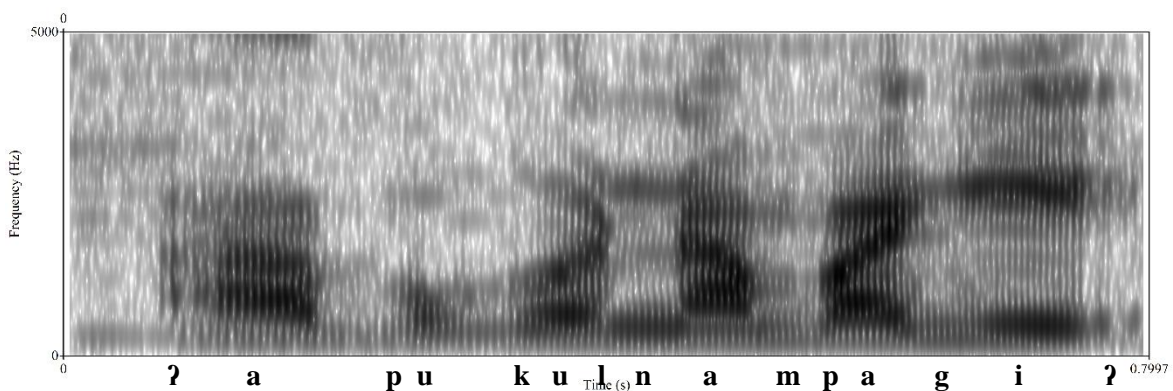


Figure 5-5 Spectrogram of *a pukul (ə)nam pagi*

In the context of word elicitation, each word was pronounced in isolation and is its own intonational unit, which might explain why there is a profusion of glottal stops following final open vowels. In

⁵¹ *la* here is an utterance final discourse particle (see §7.8 for discourse particles). It was not found to be closed by a glottal stop even though it is at the end of a phrase. I believe this is due to the fact that the particle itself already signals the end of an intonational unit.

natural spoken data, the intonational unit is longer, and so one sees the glottal stop closing more at the end of the prosodic phrase. Having said that, there are still instances where a glottal stop closes a final-vowel word that is *not* at the end of an intonational segment, though this is quite irregular and sporadic. The reason for this remains obscure, but I suspect this might have something to do with word stress or prominence, but due to time constraints, the present study will not cover suprasegmental features. As the occurrence of the glottal stop after final-vowel words are irregular in natural speech and non-contrastive (does not change word meaning), I see them, therefore, as non-phonemic. Further research into the prosodic features of Seletar will hopefully provide a clearer description of the glottal stop.

Kinship terms with a phonemic *k* in coda position (e.g. *mak* ‘mother’, *pak* ‘father’, *nek* ‘grandmother’, *kakak* ‘sister’) end phonetically with a glottal stop: e.g. [maʔ] ‘mother’, [paʔ] ‘father’, [neʔ] ‘grandmother. The final glottal stop (phonemically analysed as *k*) in these kinship terms are interpreted as a fossilised vocative suffix from Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *q (Blust, 1979, p. 234-235). One may also find, though less regularly, a phonetic glottal stop closure for kinship terms that do not end with a phonemic *k* (e.g. *laki* [lakiʔ] ‘husband’, *səda* [sədaʔ] ‘relatives’, *ntua* [ntwaʔ] ‘elder’). It might be possible that the glottal stop closing in these terms were influenced by those ending with phonemic *k* (perhaps for unity reasons?), so that all kin terms may have this glottal stop ending.

The glottal stop in Seletar, at the current stage, is viewed as non-phonemic, for reasons stated above. However, its occurrences are quite varied and irregular, and easily influenced by the data collection method. Thus, further investigation is required before one can obtain a clearer understanding of its nature.

5.1.2 Vowels

There are six vowels in Seletar. Vowel length is not phonemically contrastive. Following Clynes’ (1997) explanation of Austronesian (and so including Malay) root final diphthongs, this analysis does not assume that Seletar has phonemic root final diphthongs. Instead, they are treated phonemically as a sequence of a vowel plus a approximants /y/ or /w/ (e.g. /ay/, /aw/, oy/).

| | Front | Central | Back |
|------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Close | i | | u |
| Close-mid | e | ə | o |
| Open-mid | | | |
| Open | | a | |

Table 1 Vowels in Seletar

5.1.2.1 Front Vowels

The front vowels /i/ and /e/ contrast in monosyllabic words and in penultimate syllable positions for disyllabic words. The contrast is shown here below in minimal and near-minimal pairs:

| | | | | |
|-----|-------|-------|-----------|---------|
| /i/ | /kiŋ/ | ‘dry’ | /(h)idoŋ/ | ‘nose’ |
| /e/ | /keŋ/ | ‘now’ | /(h)etoŋ/ | ‘count’ |

/i/ is often reduced to a glide [y] in fast speech when it precedes another vowel in a vowel sequence with hiatus (e.g. /səkian/ [səkyan], see §5.1.2.4.)

/e/ is realised occasionally as [ɛ]: /e/ [ɛ] ‘PAR’, /met/ [mɛt] ‘smooth/rotten’

5.1.2.2 Central vowels

In penultimate syllables, /a/ and /ə/ contrast, as illustrated by the following near-minimal pair:

| | | |
|-----|---------|-------------------|
| /ə/ | /ləmah/ | ‘weak’ |
| /a/ | /lama/ | ‘old/long (time)’ |

/a/ is [a] in penultimate syllables and closed final syllables, for example /panas/ [panas], /akan/ [(?)akan].

In open final syllables, /a/ is often realised as [ə].

| | | |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|
| /lama/ | [lama]~[lamə] | ‘old/long (time)’ |
| /ada/ | [ʔada]~[ʔadə] | ‘EXIST’ |
| /juga/ | [jugə] | ‘also’ |
| /bənda/ | [bəndə] | ‘thing’ |

There are two recognized Standard Malay varieties: the schwa variety and the A variety (Asmah, 1979, p. 9). In the schwa variety, /a/ in final open syllables are realised as [ə], while the A variety maintains /a/ as [a]. The schwa variety is more prevalent on the eastern and southern coast of the Malay Peninsula while the A variety is prevalent in Kedah, Sabah and Sarawak (Asmah, 1979, p. 9). Spoken in the south of the peninsula, Seletar seems to conform to the schwa variety, as final open syllable /a/ is realised as [ə] more frequently than [a] (e.g. /ada/ [adə] ‘EXIST’, /juga/ [jugə] ‘also’). In the texts, the speakers do still pronounce these words with [a] as well, but less commonly. Many words in Seletar ending with a heavy strong accent (which usually appears at the end of an intonational phrase or stressed, see §5.1.1.1.8) are closed phonetically by a glottal stop tend to retained /a/ as [a], for example /baw nampak cina/ [baw nampaʔ cinaʔ] ‘only then (you) see the Chinese’.

/ə/ occurs often in the initial syllable of words, and is realised as [ə]: e.g. /kənal/ [kənal] ‘recognize’, /pəgi/ [pəgi] ‘go’ etc.

In final closed syllables of SM words, /ə/ does not occur (Adelaar, 1992, p. 10). However, in Seletar, schwas are numerous in final closed syllables. There seems to be some vowel harmony pertaining to schwas. Many disyllabic words have schwas in both their syllables (e.g. /dəkət/ ‘near/at’, /bənəm/ ‘immerse in water’). However, having a schwa in the penultimate syllable does not always mean that the vowel in the final syllable would be so too (e.g. /sənəŋ/ ‘easy’, /pənət/ ‘tired’ do not have final syllable schwa despite having schwas in the previous syllable). A non-exhaustive list of words with schwas in their final closed syllables is shown below. The column in the middle are SM forms which have /a/ in their final closed syllables:

| Seletar | SM | Meaning |
|----------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| /dəkət/ | <i>dəkat</i> | ‘near/at’ |
| /dəŋə/ | <i>dəŋar</i> | ‘listen’ |
| /tiŋgəl/ | <i>tiŋgal</i> | ‘leave behind’ |
| /bukən/ | <i>bukan</i> | ‘NEG’ |
| /gələ/ | <i>gəlar</i> | ‘label’ |
| /bəkər/ | <i>bakar</i> | ‘burn’ |
| /bulən/ | <i>bulan</i> | ‘moon/month’ |
| /bənəm/ | <i>bənam</i> | ‘immerse in water’ |
| /taŋgəl/ | <i>taŋgal</i> | ‘unfastened, loosen/take off’ |

The occurrence of /ə/ instead of /a/ in final closed syllables is found sporadically in Malay loans in Ceq Wong and Mah Meri (Kruspe, 2009, p. 677-678) and Jahai (Burenhult, 2001, p. 6). Kruspe (2009, p. 678) suggests that the occurrence of schwas in these borrowed forms is due to one of the following: (1) the words were borrowed from earlier forms of Malay (possibly from neighbouring Malay dialect Temuan and/or Jakun), if one recognizes Adelaar’s Proto-Malayic reconstruction, (2) the words came from a non-Malay western Austronesian language, (3) this is possibly an Aslian innovation. The first explanation seems the most suitable with evidence from research of Malay(ic) varieties. The reconstruction of Proto-Malayic showed that final syllable schwas were common, but they were subsequently lost “in almost all other varieties” of Malayic, with the exception of Jakarta Malay (Adelaar, 2005, p. 205; Adelaar, 1992), Tioman Malay (Collins, 1985, p. 552), Iban and Bangka Malay (Adelaar, 2005, p. 205). I add Seletar to this list as well. The list below shows Seletar words with final closed syllable schwas that are retained from Proto-Malayic.

| Seletar | SM | PM | Meaning |
|---------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| /dəkət/ | <i>dəkət</i> | * <i>dəkət</i> | ‘near/at’ |
| /dəŋə/ | <i>dəŋar</i> | * <i>dəŋər</i> ⁵² | ‘listen’ |
| /bukən/ | <i>bukan</i> | * <i>bukən</i> | ‘NEG’ |
| /bənəm/ | <i>bənam</i> | * <i>bənəm</i> | ‘immerse in water’ |

Other aboriginal Malay dialects of the peninsula may have also retained schwas in final closed syllables, allowing the forms to be borrowed into the Aslian languages, as Kruspe (2009) mentioned. A look at some recent wordlists may show us something: Yusop’s (2011) word lists revealed that the Orang Kanaq variety had such retentions as well.⁵³ Seidlitz’s (2005) Jakun word lists from different villages shows about 5 words with retained closed syllable final schwas.⁵⁴

It has to be noted that some words in Seletar (and other aboriginal Malay dialects, see footnote 53-54) with final closed syllable schwas do not have a corresponding schwa in their reconstructed PM forms, i.e. the schwas in these words are not retentions from an older Malay(ic) form. Examples of these words can be found in the list below. The raising of PM *a to ə in closed final syllables in these Seletar words might be an innovation. Maybe it was done so to correspond to those words which had retained PM *ə or possibly as a result of some form of hypercorrection.

| Seletar | SM | PM | Meaning |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| /gələ/ | <i>gəlar</i> | * <i>gəlar</i> ‘title, surname’ | ‘label/title’ |
| /bəkər/ | <i>bakar</i> | * <i>bakar</i> | ‘burn’ |
| /bulən/ | <i>bulan</i> | * <i>bulan</i> | ‘moon/month’ |

⁵² In many Riau Sea Tribe varieties, final *r is frequently lost (Anderbeck, 2012). The Orang Seletar are Orang Laut (see §1.5), and have had dealings and relationships with other sea tribes of Riau (e.g. the Orang Selat, see §1.5.1). Their languages likely influenced each other, resulting in loss of final *r in some words.

⁵³ Some examples from Orang Kanaq include *tobəl* ‘thick’ (SM *təbal*, PM **təbəl*), *dəndəm* ‘revenge’ (SM *dəndam*, PM **dəndəm*), *bulət* ‘round’ (SM *bulat*, PM **bulət*).

A schwa in closed final syllables is still seen in some words of the Orang Kanaq variety even though the reconstructed Proto Malayic forms do not have final closed schwas, e.g. Orang Kanaq *ujən* ‘rain’ (SM *hujan*, PM **hujan*). Other words which show final closed syllable schwa but without a clear Proto-Malayic reconstructions are listed here: Orang Kanaq *tiŋgəl* ‘leave behind’ (SM *tiŋgal*); Temuan *bəgək* ‘swelling of thyroid gland’ (SM *bəguk*) and *mənəŋ* ‘cloudy’ (SM *mənduŋ*); Jakun *kəŋəŋ* ‘full stomach’ (SM *kəŋəŋ*) and *cəməs* ‘almost’ (SM *cəmas*).

⁵⁴ I list them here: *dəŋər* ‘hear’ (SM *dəŋar*, PM **dəŋər*), *nənəm* ‘six’ (SM *ənəm*, PM **ənəm*), *tikəbm* ‘stab’ (SM *tikam*, PM **tikəm*), *tanəm* ‘(to) plant’ (SM *tanam*, PM **tanəm*), *tajəm* ‘sharp’ (SM *tajam*, PM **tajəm*). Like in footnote 52, there are Jakun words with final closed syllable schwas which do not have corresponding schwas in reconstructed Proto Malayic forms: *taŋən* ‘hand’ (SM *taŋan*, PM **taŋən*), *kanən* ‘right’ (SM *kanan*, PM **ka/nan*), *bərənəŋ* ‘swim’ (SM *bərənəŋ*, PM *(*mb*)*A-rənəŋ*), *panəs* ‘hot’ (SM *panas*, PM **panas*), *mijəŋ?* ‘oil’ (SM *mijəŋ?*, PM **mijək*).

5.1.2.3 Back vowels

The back vowels contrast in penultimate syllable positions, as the near-minimal pair shows:

| | | |
|-----|---------|---------|
| /u/ | /kutu/ | ‘louse’ |
| /o/ | /kotow/ | ‘dirty’ |

/u/ is often reduced to [w] in fast speech when it precedes another vowel in a vowel sequence with hiatus (e.g. /ku.at/ [kwat] ‘strong’), see §5.1.2.4.

/o/ is occasionally realised as [ɔ]: /esok/ [ʔesɔʔ] ‘tomorrow’, /kon/ [kɔn] ‘(Seletar) people’.

On vowel uncertainty and variant pronunciations

It has been observed that some words in Seletar have variant pronunciations involving “unstable” or “uncertain” vowels. The vowels involved in this variation usually are in the penultimate⁵⁵ syllable, which is unstressed. Examples of this include: *ekat* ‘to tie’ is mostly [ekat], but sometimes [ikat]; *ekot* ‘to follow’ is commonly [ekot], but [ikot] also occurs; *jəmpi* ‘to cast spells’ is more often [jəmpi], but also sometimes [jumpi]; *jadi* ‘to become’ can be both [jadi] or [jedi]; *cayi* ‘to find’ can be both [cayi] or [ceyi], and even reduced to [ci]; *jega* is more frequently [jegə], but also occurs as [jagə]; *cabut* ‘to pull out’ is commonly [cabut], but infrequently [cəbut]. Some of these may be a result of vowel raising due to assimilation of place of articulation, e.g. [a] raised to [e] after alveolars, like in [jadi]~[jedi], [cayi]~[ceyi], [jagə]~[jegə]. However, others are harder to explain.

This phenomenon of unstable penultimate vowel is also noted in Maniq (Wnuk, 2016). The unstressed vowels in Maniq display more phonetic variation compared to the stressed final syllable vowel, particularly for [a] and [ə] (Wnuk, 2016, p. 85). [a] and [ə] are default epenthetic vowels in Maniq’s morphological derivations (Wnuk, 2016, p. 67-68, p. 85). It is unclear whether the unstable vowel occurrences in penultimate syllables in Seletar are influenced by the perception of the speakers that the unstressed vowels are “additions” and therefore variable, or some other reasons still unknown to us. Future research may collect more natural data to investigate further this vowel instability.

5.1.2.4 Vowel Sequences

As already mentioned, diphthongs are not phonemic in Seletar. Instead, these sequences are treated phonemically as a vowel plus /y/ or /w/: /kalaw/ ‘if’, /ay/ ‘2’, /anoy/ ‘FIL’.

Vowels sequences can be found occurring across syllable boundaries. The two vowels are separated by a hiatus. Each syllable forms the nucleus of their respective syllable. The hiatus is transcribed using a period between the two vowels. Some examples include the following:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|------------|
| /bia/ | [bi.ə] or [biyə] | ‘neglect’ |
| /meah/ | [me.ah] | ‘red’ |
| /naik/ | [na.eʔ] | ‘rise’ |
| /laut/ | [la.ot] or [lot] | ‘sea’ |
| /muin/ | [mu.in] or [muyin] | ‘long ago’ |
| /səmuə/ | [səmu.ə] or [səmwə] | ‘all’ |

Vowel sequences with hiatus also appear as a result of loss of an intervocalic consonant, for example:

⁵⁵ Although majority of the vowel instability is seen in disyllabic words, some monosyllabic words do also exhibit vowel uncertainty, but to a lesser extent. *uy* ‘people’ is more often [uŋ], but sometimes [oŋ]. [oŋ] occurs usually for ethnonyms with *orang* /oraŋ/, so [oŋ asli] *Orang Asli*, [oŋ seleta] *Orang Seletar*, [oŋ kanaʔ] *Orang Kanaq*, but for *Orang Kalang*, it is [uŋ kalaŋ]. To refer to people or outsiders in general, [uŋ] is used. Other words with variable vowels include: *but* ‘make’, more frequently [but], occasionally [bot]; *am* ‘1SG’ and *dam* ‘inside’ are commonly [am] and [dam], but infrequently [əm] and [dəm].

| | | |
|--------|-------|--|
| /kəat/ | ‘cut’ | SM <i>kərat</i> |
| /meah/ | ‘red’ | SM <i>merah</i> , PM <i>*(ma-)irah</i> |

Phonetically, a glide can be perceived to be between the vowels, e.g. /pa.u/ [pawu?]~[paʷu?] ‘boat’; /bəli.ʉŋ/ [bəliʷŋ] ‘axe’. In rapid speech, /i/ and /u/ preceding another vowel are often reduced to [y] and [w] instead: /səki.an/ [səkjan] ‘that is all’, /ku.at/ [kwat] ‘strong’.

5.2 Syllable Structure

The Seletar syllable is found to have the structure depicted below in Seletar Syllable Structure Figure 5-6. Optional constituents are in parentheses. A syllable is formed from onsets plus a rhyme. Morphemes with underlying initial vowels (e.g. /am/ ‘1SG’) actually begin phonetically with a glottal stop onset (see §5.1.1.8 for glottal stops). However, the glottal stop onset is non-phonemic and so not represented in the syllable structure as a phonemic onset. Phonemic onsets are therefore optional. Complex onsets (CC) only appear in English loans (e.g., /stop/ ‘stop’). The rhyme consists of an obligatory nucleus and an optional coda. The nucleus consists of a vowel. In some syllables, the nucleus contains only a syllabic consonant.

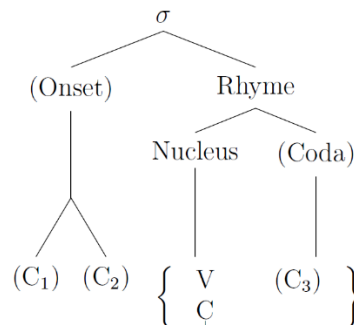


Figure 5-6 Seletar Syllable Structure

Seletar roots may be monosyllabic, disyllabic and trisyllabic. One word was found to be sesquisyllabic (minor-major syllables).

Monosyllabic roots may display the following structures:

| | | |
|--------|--------|-----------------------|
| /V/ | /e/ | ‘PAR’ |
| /VC/ | /am/ | ‘1SG’ |
| /CV/ | /da/ | ‘COMPLETIVE’ |
| /CVC/ | /man/ | ‘eat’ |
| /CCVC/ | /stop/ | ‘stop’ (English loan) |

In Tan (2020), I noticed some words showing a sesquisyllabic structure when eliciting a word list. A sesquisyllable, literally ‘a syllable and a half’ was coined by Matisoff (1973, p. 86). The definition of a sesquisyllable is vague and varies from scholar to scholar (Pittayaporn, 2015, p. 502). Some consider a sesquisyllable to be any disyllabic word with a reduced number of phonemic contrasts in initial syllables, while others insist on only a neutral vowel or syllabic consonant in the initial syllable. Pittayaporn (2015) and Bulter (2015) try to show how varied and complicated sesquisyllables can be. The definition used in this thesis for a sesquisyllable is the one given by Michaud (2012, p. 2), who defines a minor syllable as consisting of “a simple consonant...plus an optional nucleus, V: either a vowel, or a sonorant (nasal or liquid) serving as nucleus. In the Austroasiatic domain, the most frequently encountered situation is one in which there can be no vowel contrast in the presyllable: the nucleus consists simply in a schwa, a noncontrastive, optional vowel.”

With further analysis of Seletar narrative texts, the most noticeable ‘syllable and a half’ structure occurs in one word /ncak/ [ŋcaʔ] ‘NEG’, which has a nasal serving as the nucleus of the first syllable (minor syllable). The stress falls on the second (major) syllable. The spectrogram of the word is shown in Figure 5-8. The minor syllable [n] for [ŋcaʔ] has approximate duration of 0.08s, while the major syllable is 0.3s. A simple onset nasal is about 0.05s, as illustrated in Figure 5-7.

/C.CVC/ /ŋca/ [ŋcaʔ] ‘NEG’

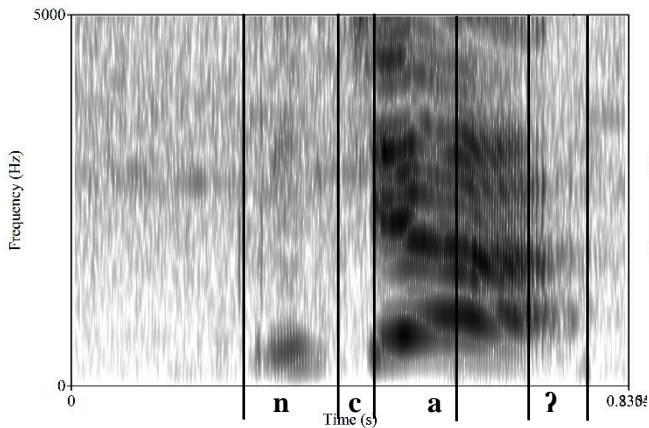


Figure 5-8 Spectrogram of /ncak/ [ŋcaʔ]

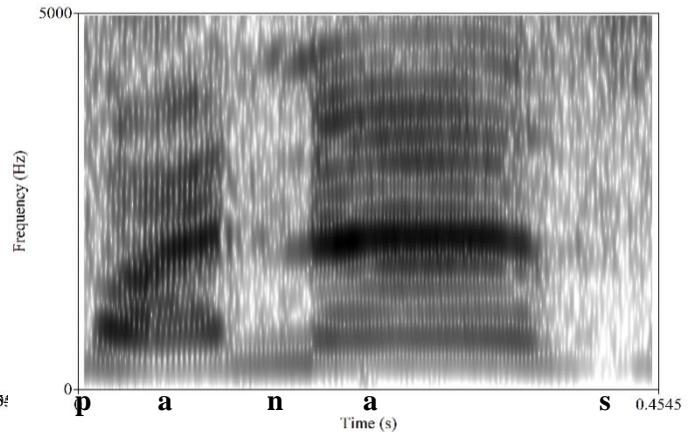


Figure 5-7 Spectrogram of /panas/

Although there seems to be (minimal) sesquisyllabicity, overall Seletar speech lacks a distinct iambic pattern common to languages with prominent sesquisyllables (e.g. Aslian languages) and sesquisyllabicity seems not a pervasive trait of the lexicon.

Disyllabic roots may display the following structures:

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| /V.CV / | /ada/ | ‘EXIST’ |
| /V.CVC/ | /ikat/ | ‘tie’ |
| /VC.CVC/ | /əmpat/ | ‘four’ |
| /CV.VC/ | /meah/ | ‘red’ |
| /CV.CV/ | /satu/ | ‘one’ |
| /CV.CVC/ | /kokot/ | ‘hand’ |
| /CVC.CV/ | /bənda/ | ‘thing’ |
| /CVC.CVC/ | /lindonʔ/ | ‘protect’ |

Trisyllabic roots may have the following structures:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| /CV.CV.CV/ | /masala/ | ‘problem’ |
| /CV.CV.CVC/ | /bənatəŋ/ | ‘animal’ |
| /CV.CVC.CVC/ | /pələnduk/ | ‘mousedeer’ |

Roots do reach four syllables in Seletar, but in fast speech they appear phonetically very close to trisyllables:

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| /CV.CV.CV.CV/ | /siŋapuwa/ | [siŋapuwa] or [siŋapwa] | ‘Singapore’ |
| /CV.CV.VC.CV/ | /kəluargə/ | [kəlu.aɣgə] or [kəlwaygə] | ‘family’ |

Other tetrasyllabic roots include English loans: /orijinəl/ ‘original’.

Consonant Clusters

As mentioned, phonemic initial clusters only occur in English loans (e.g. /stop/ ‘stop’). Phonetically, they can occur when /i/ and /u/ are weakened to glides [y] and [w] in vowel sequences (e.g. [ky] in /səkian/ [səkyan] ‘that is all’, and [kw] in /kuat/ [kwat] ‘strong’), see §5.1.2.4.

Where there is a sequence of consonants at syllable boundaries of a root, e.g. C₂ and C₃ in C₁VC₂.C₃V, the consonants will appear either as (1) a homorganic nasal and a stop respectively (e.g. in /bənda/ ‘thing’, /səmpay/ ‘reach’, /tiŋgi/ ‘tall’), or (2) /ŋ/ and /s/ (e.g. /baŋsa/ ‘race’), or (3) /r/ and another consonant (e.g. /kəluargə/ ‘family’).

Homorganic nasal + stop cluster reduction

It is noted that, sporadically, a homorganic nasal and stop cluster is reduced to only the nasal, losing its voiced stop component in the natural texts collected. This phenomenon is observed in the texts for words listed below. Note that clusters with voiceless stops are not reduced.

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| [tuŋu] | ‘wait’ | (SM <i>tunggu</i>) |
| [tiŋə] | ‘leave behind’ | (SM <i>tinggal</i>) |
| [ʔamiʔ] ⁵⁶ | ‘take’ | (SM <i>ambil</i>) |
| [tanoʔ] | ‘horn’ | (SM <i>tandok</i>) |
| [məni] | ‘bathe’ | (SM <i>mandi</i>) |
| [pəlanuk] | ‘mousedeer’ | (SM <i>pelanduk</i>) |
| [səmpay] | ‘reach’ | (SM <i>sampai</i>) |
| [minta] | ‘request’ | (SM <i>minta</i>) |

This sound change appears also in the Malay loanwords in Temiar, Jahai, Semelai and Ceq Wong. Benjamin (2016, p. 20) noted that medial prenasalised clusters lost their voiced stops in Malay loans in Temiar. This is similarly noted in Malay loans in Jahai (Burenhult, 2001, p. 8-9), Ceq Wong (Kruspe, 2009) and Semelai (Kruspe, 2004, p. 56). However, Kruspe (2004, p. 56; 2009, p. 676) points out that in Malay dialects the reduction of a nasal and homorganic voiced stop cluster to a nasal is commonly observed, so that the occurrence of such cluster reduction in Ceq Wong and Semelai came from the Malay dialects these words belonged to, and was probably not an innovation of the Aslian languages themselves. The reduction of a homorganic nasal and voiced stop cluster to its nasal component is observed in some Malayic varieties like Salako (or Kendayan) and Urak Lawoi’ (Adelaar, 2005, p. 207), Iban (Adelaar, 1992, p. 99), Malay dialects such as Kedah Malay and Patani Malay (Collins, 1986, p. 8), and Jakun (Seidlitz, 2005). Anderbeck (2012, p. 297) puts this reduction as a feature of Riau Sea Tribe varieties. Seletar is similar to these Malay and Malayic varieties in this regard, though the phenomenon does not occur systematically.

Though rare, there are cases where the sound deleted in the cluster is not the stop, but the nasal: [təbus] ‘pierce through’ SM *təmbus*; [sədiri] ‘oneself’ SM *səndiri*. This goes against the general, more widespread reduction mentioned above. With only a few occurrences, the reduction of the nasal portion in the homorganic nasal and stop cluster might just be a mispronunciation.

5.2.1 Reduction of syllables

Many words in Seletar appear to have reduced syllables compared to their corresponding Standard Malay (SM) and Proto-Malayic (PM) forms reconstructed by Adelaar (1992). Some disyllabic forms in

⁵⁶ Often, when this word occurs with 1SG pronoun /am/, metathesis occurs between the first two sounds of [amiʔ], and then a glide is inserted between the two vowels (amiʔ → maiʔ → mayiʔ), and the result is [am mayiʔ] ‘I take’

SM and PM are monosyllabic in Seletar. Some trisyllabic forms in SM and PM become disyllabic in Seletar. Some examples are listed in Table 2:

Table 2 Seletar words with reduced syllables

| Seletar | Gloss | SM | PM |
|---------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| /jan/ | ‘walk’ | <i>jalan</i> | * <i>jalan</i> |
| /dam/ | ‘in’ / ‘inside’ | <i>dalam</i> | * <i>(d-)aləm</i> |
| /di/ | ‘stand’ / ‘self’ | <i>diri</i> | * <i>diri</i> |
| /dat/ | ‘shore’ / ‘land’ | <i>darat</i> | |
| /baw/ | ‘new’ | <i>baru/baharu</i> | * <i>bAharu</i> |
| /buŋ/ | ‘bird’ | <i>burung</i> | * <i>buruŋ</i> |
| /sa/ | ‘sound’ | <i>suara(?)</i> | |
| /dəs/ | ‘fast (flow)’ | <i>dəras</i> | |
| /bi/ | ‘give’ | <i>bəri</i> | |
| /tun/ | ‘descend’ | <i>turun</i> | * <i>turun</i> |
| /put/ | ‘stomach’ | <i>pərut</i> | * <i>pərut</i> |
| /ki/ | ‘left’ | <i>kiri</i> | * <i>kA-iri</i> |
| /dah/ | ‘blood’ | <i>darah</i> | * <i>darah</i> |
| /beŋ/ | ‘lie down’ | <i>bariŋ</i> | |
| /uŋ/ | ‘human/people’/‘Malay’ | <i>oraŋ</i> | * <i>uraŋ</i> |
| /kiŋ/ | ‘dry’ | <i>kəriŋ</i> | * <i>kəriŋ</i> |
| /da/ | ‘virgin’ | <i>dara</i> | |
| /tiak/ | ‘shout’ | <i>təriak</i> | |
| /sut/ | ‘water recede’ | <i>surut</i> | |
| /man/ | ‘eat’ | <i>makan</i> | * <i>ma/kan</i> |
| /sit/ | ‘little bit’ | <i>sikit</i> | |
| /cap/ | ‘speak’ | <i>cakap</i> | |
| /mal/ | ‘expensive’ | <i>mahal</i> | |
| /jow/ | ‘Johor’ | <i>Johor</i> | |
| /pawu/ | ‘boat’ | <i>pərahu/prahu</i> | |
| /səda/ | ‘relative’ | <i>saudara</i> | |
| /siŋa/ | ‘until’ | <i>səhiŋga</i> | |
| /bənaŋ/ | ‘swim’ | <i>bəraŋaŋ</i> | |
| /səni/ | ‘alone’ / ‘by one’s self’ | <i>səndiri</i> | |

It seems to be the case that Seletar has a dispreference for *l*, *r*, *k*, and *h* in intervocalic positions. The context in which the loss occurs differs for each consonant.

Loss of Intervocalic /l/

If in the PM and SM forms there is an /l/ between /a/ and /ə/ or between two /a/ vowels, in Seletar, the /l/ is lost and the vowels are ‘merged’ into one /a/, occurring as a monosyllabic word.

| | | | |
|-------|---------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| /jan/ | compared with | SM <i>jalan</i> , PM <i>*jalan</i> | ‘walk’ |
| /dam/ | compared with | SM <i>dalam</i> , PM <i>*(d-)aləm</i> | ‘in’ / ‘inside’ |

The loss of /l/ is not systematic. On one hand, the lateral is lost in between two /u/ vowels, evidenced by /mot/ ‘mouth’ (SM *mulut*, PM **mulut*). However, in other words such as /dulu/ ‘in the past’, /l/ is retained. If the consonant *l* is between other vowels, it is retained, for example words like /tali/ ‘rope’, /bəli/ ‘buy’, /təlow/ ‘egg’, /ular/ ‘snake’ and /kalaw/ ‘if’ etc. Much more data is needed to pinpoint what governs the loss of intervocalic /l/.

***Loss of Intervocalic /r/*⁵⁷**

For intervocalic /r/, the context in which it is dropped seems quite unrestricted. It has been observed that /r/ can be lost when occurring between vowels of various combinations (e.g. *a_i*, *a_a*, *a_u*, *u_u*, *i_i*, *ə_a*, *ə_i*). The result in Seletar is often a monosyllabic word with a single vowel. The single vowel may have a change in quality. The table below summarises the change. There is not enough data to predict the changes for other vowel combinations other than the ones listed.

| Vowels in the PM/SM form | Resulting vowel in Seletar | Seletar | | SM | PM |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------|---------|
| <i>a_a</i> | /a/ | /dat/ | compared with | darat | |
| <i>i_i</i> | /i/ | /di/ | | diri | *diri |
| <i>u_u</i> | /u/ | /sut/ | | surut | |
| <i>a_i</i> | /e/ | /beŋ/ | | bariŋ | |
| <i>a_u</i> | /aw/ | /baw/ | | baru/baharu | *bAharu |
| <i>ə_a</i> | /ə/ | /dəs/ | | dəras | |
| <i>ə_i</i> | /i/ | /kiŋ/ | | kəriŋ | *kəriŋ |
| <i>ə_u</i> | /u/ | /put/ | | pərut | *pərut |
| <i>u_a</i> | /u/ | /uŋ/ | | oraŋ | *uraŋ |

It is possible when the intervocalic rhotic is dropped, the vowels before and after it do not merge. The resulting form will have either (1) two vowels with hiatus, e.g. /meah/ [me.ah] ‘red’ (SM *merah*, PM **(ma-)irah*), or (2) a glide inserted in place of /r/, e.g. /layi/ ‘run’ (SM *lari*, PM **lari*); /siŋapuwa/ ‘Singapore’ (SM *singapura*). /r/ in Seletar is a velar fricative [ɣ], see §5.1.1.1.4.

Loss of Intervocalic /h/

Some words show loss of intervocalic /h/. As a result, the Seletar forms have monosyllables whereas Standard Malay forms have disyllables. For other words, there is no loss of /h/, e.g. /tahan/ [tahan] ‘endure’.

| | | | |
|-------|---------------|-----------------|---|
| /mal/ | compared with | SM <i>mahal</i> | ‘expensive’(from Sanskrit <i>mahārgha</i>) |
| /jow/ | compared with | SM <i>Johor</i> | ‘Johor’ |

⁵⁷*l* and *y* have been noted to be infixes in western Austronesian languages, with replicative, plural or distributive meanings (Benjamin, 2009, p. 308). It might be that speakers of Seletar (perhaps in a more remote time) viewed the intervocalic liquids in the words listed as infixes and therefore optional, subsequently dropping them. Much research on Seletar (and other Malay(ic) varieties) needs to be done before anything more substantial can be said regarding this theory.

Loss of Intervocalic /k/

At first glance, intervocalic /k/ in Seletar seems to be lost only when the vowels before and after it are the same (e.g. a_a, i_i), as seen in words below,

| | | | |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| /man/ | compared with | SM <i>makan</i> , PM <i>*ma/kan</i> | ‘eat’ |
| /sit/ | compared with | SM <i>sikit</i> | ‘little bit’ |

However, it is not seen in other words like below,

| | | | |
|---------|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| /akan/ | compared with | SM <i>akan</i> , PM <i>*akAn</i> | ‘FUT’ |
| /kakak/ | compared with | SM <i>kakak</i> , PM <i>*kakaʔ</i> | ‘sister’ / older sibling |

/k/ between u_u is not lost either, e.g. /suku/ ‘tribe’ (SM *suku*). Between other combinations of vowels, /k/ is retained, for example /ikan/ ‘fish’, /muka/ ‘face’, /takot/ ‘afraid’. More research is needed to determine what exactly triggers the loss of intervocalic /k/.

As a result of the sound changes mentioned above, there are observably more monosyllables in Seletar as compared to SM.

The transformation of trisyllables to disyllables in Seletar follows the same loss of intervocalic consonants just discussed.⁵⁸ For example, the process below involves the loss of intervocalic /r/.

| | | |
|---------|---------------|--|
| /bənaŋ/ | compared with | SM <i>bəraŋaŋ</i> ‘swim’, PM <i>*(mb)A-rənaŋ</i> |
|---------|---------------|--|

Sometimes, the reduction of homorganic nasal and voiced stop cluster occurs at the same time with the loss of intervocalic consonants. Take for example the word below. The sound changes involved are the loss of intervocalic /r/ plus the loss of /d/ as a result of cluster reduction.

| | | | |
|--------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| /səni/ | compared with | SM <i>səndiri</i> | ‘by oneself’ |
|--------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|

The reduction of syllables is also observed in some reduplicated forms and compounds. /adik-bədik/ [adiʔ-bədiʔ] is the reduplicated form of /adik/ ‘younger sibling’ in Seletar. Compared with canonical Malay or Standard Malay *adik-bəradik* [adeʔ-bəradeʔ], it can be noted that there is a loss of intervocalic /r/ in the second part of the reduplicated form and the vowels before and after the rhotic have merged to become one /ə/.

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------|------------|
| /adik-bədik/ | compared with | SM <i>adik-bəradik</i> | ‘siblings’ |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------|------------|

As for compounds, I observed a reduction in the word /bəmut/ ‘rambutan’, which comes from the combination of /buah/ [bwə(h)] ‘fruit’ + /rambut/ [ɣambut] ‘hair’.

| | | |
|---------|---------------|---|
| /bəmut/ | compared with | SM <i>buah rambut(an)</i> ⁵⁹ |
|---------|---------------|---|

/r/ of /rambut/ ‘hair’ is lost during compounding, resulting in the merging of the vowels from the first part of the compound, /uə/ in /buəh/, with the first syllable of the second part, /a/ from /rambut/, to become a single vowel /ə/. Simultaneously, the reduction of homorganic nasal /m/ + voiced stop /b/ to simple nasal /m/ in /rambut/ also occurs.

It has to be noted that the Seletar speakers may choose to utter words as they are in the SM form (e.g. saying SM [makan] (with the intervocalic /k/ present) instead of the more common /man/ for

⁵⁸ Something similar but not entirely the same is observed in Malay loans in Ceq Wong where there is a reduction of trisyllabic Malay words to disyllables, and it often involves the loss of /l/ or /r/ in the penultimate syllable of the original Malay form: e.g. *selimut* becomes *simūt* ‘blanket’; *berenang* becomes *bnēŋ* ‘swim’; *seratus* becomes *satus* ‘one hundred’ (Kruspe, 2009, p. 676)

⁵⁹ The fruit is most commonly referred to in Malay as *rambutan* or *buah rambutan* ‘rambutan fruit’ with the -an suffix, however people do refer to it simply as *buah rambut* ‘hairy fruit’.

‘eat’), as a result of (maybe unconscious) switching of dialects between the Seletar variety of Malay and local Malay spoken by other populations. Thus, it is not strange to find two pronunciations of the same word in the same text. The texts are, to the best of my abilities, elicited in natural Seletar speech. However, as Seletar speakers are highly bidialectal, some standard or local Malay forms as spoken by ethnic Malays still appear from time to time.

5.3 Loanword Phonology

Apart from loanwords that are common to other Malay varieties (e.g. Arabic, Sanskrit), Seletar has identifiable loanwords from English, Chinese varieties such as Hokkien and Cantonese, and Aslian languages.

Arabic Loans

Loans from Arabic with Arabic phonemes /f, z/ become /p, j/ in Seletar. For example: *nafas* ‘breathe’ and *faham* ‘understand’ in Arabic is /napas/ and /paham/ in Seletar; *zaman* ‘era’ in Arabic becomes /jaman/. Final voiced stops in Arabic are devoiced in Seletar: *səbab* ‘because’ in Arabic becomes /səbap/.

Sanskrit Loans

Malay has many words originating from Sanskrit. As a Malay dialect, Seletar has these words as well, e.g. /mula/ ‘start’, /sama/ ‘same’, but they have the same forms as they do in SM, so I will not be discussing them here. Instead, I only discuss two words that differ from the “expected” forms. *saudara* ‘relative’ and *cərita* ‘story’ are Sanskrit loans and they appear as such in SM. In Seletar, the trisyllables are reduced to disyllables as a result of the loss of the intervocalic rhotic (discussed previously in §5.2.1): *saudara* becomes /səda/ [sədaʔ], and *cərita* becomes /cita/ [cita].

Although the /z/ from Arabic loans become /j/ in Seletar (Arabic *zaman* become Seletar *jaman* ‘era’), Sanskrit loans that has /z/ in SM appear as such in Seletar, e.g. in the word *beza* [bezə] ‘difference’ (both in SM and Seletar), from Sanskrit *bheda* ‘contrast, division’. This seems to be a case of the Seletar speaker choosing to use words of a more formal/standard variety of Malay as opposed to his own colloquial variety, as the /z/ phoneme occurs only in this one instance in the use of the word *beza*.

English Loans

A handful of English loans were found in the texts.

During the Malayan Emergency in the 1950s, some Orang Seletar were living near Gelang Patah, which was known to be “a communist hot bed” (Orang Seletars of Johore, 1954). The area was subjected to curfew and close supervision by the British administration (Curfew, 1951, also see §2.4). It is unclear how much contact existed between the British and the Orang Seletar, and whether the English words were the result of direct contact with English speakers, or whether they entered Seletar via other varieties (local Malay or others) spoken by other ethnic groups such as ethnic Malays, Chinese or Indians.

Complex onsets of English are either kept (e.g. /stop/ ‘stop’), or a schwa is inserted between the two consonants: /gələmə/ ‘famous/center of attention’ (from *glamour*). Complex codas are reduced: /lalas/ ‘in the end’ (reduplication of English *last*), which in itself is a translation of Malay *akhir-akhir* ‘in the end’ (lit. ‘end-end’). English phoneme /f/ becomes /p/ in Seletar: /pesən/ ‘show off’ from *fashion*. Consonants in coda positions of English syllables are often lost in some way: /isisay/ ‘exercise’ (from *exercise*), /gələmə/ ‘famous/center of attention’ (from *glamour*), /konal/ ‘turn’ (from *corner*). Some

change in vowel quality is noted in some words: /kaswey/ ‘Causeway’, but others remain almost identical to the English source: /originəl/ ‘original’, /taym/ ‘time’, /koko/ ‘coconut’.

Chinese Loans

The Orang Seletar have had frequent dealings with the Chinese population of Johor and Singapore, who often employed them as wood cutters or traded with them for sea products (see Chapter 2 for more details). The Chinese varieties present in the region are mainly Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, and Mandarin. The words from these Chinese varieties mostly retained much of their original form, apart from the loss of tone. Tones are not distinctive in Seletar, and so they are not transcribed. The occurrence of the last three words in the examples below are due to codeswitching of the speakers to accommodate my (the researcher) presence, and are not regularly part of Seletar speech spoken among the Orang Seletar themselves.

| | | |
|----------|----------|--|
| /ciaw/ | [cyaw] | ‘row’ (possibly Cantonese? or Mandarin? <i>zhào</i> 權 / 棹 ‘oar’) ⁶⁰ |
| /ke/ | [keʔ] | ‘Hakka people’ |
| /tiociu/ | [tyocyu] | ‘Teochew people’ |
| /okien/ | [ʔokyen] | ‘Hokkien people’ |
| /wa/ | [wa] | ‘1SG’ (Hokkien 我 <i>goá</i>) |
| /tiaw/ | [tyaw] | ‘scold’ (Hokkien 屌 <i>tiáu</i>) |
| /ciaŋ/ | [cyɑŋ] | ‘speak’ (Mandarin Chinese 讲 <i>jiǎng</i>) |

Aslian Loans

It is fairly hard to ascertain exactly which Aslian language(s) Seletar has been in contact with, because none of this has been documented. There are only a few Aslian loans found in the data obtained. From these few words, some sound alternations can be seen. The Aslian loans usually involve a change in vowel quality and/or shortening of long vowels: e.g. /taoh/ ‘gibbon’ from Aslian *tawɔɔh* ‘white-handed gibbon’ (seen in Temiar (Benjamin, 2009b, p. 32) and Semnam (Burenhult & Wegener, 2009)); some loss of consonant: /ay/ ‘2’, likely from Aslian *ajih* ‘that’ (several Aslian languages have this form, see Skeat & Blagden, 1906b, p. 732-733).

This concludes the analysis of the phonetics and phonology of Seletar based on the texts collected. Eighteen consonants and six vowels were identified. The findings of interest include: nasalisation of initial consonants of verbal roots due to the presence of the *N-* prefix (e.g. /pada/ ‘say’ is frequently realised as [padə], but also [madə]); sporadic nasalisation and denasalisation of some initial consonants (e.g. *dəŋan* ‘with’ realised as both [dəŋan] and [nəŋan]; *muin* ‘long ago’ realised as both [mu.in] and [bu.in]); preference for velar fricative instead of an alveolar trill or tap; frequent glottal stop closure to words that historically ended with vowels; prevalence of schwas in final closed syllables; homorganic nasal and stop cluster reduction; as well as frequent reduction of syllables due to the loss of intervocalic /l/, /r/, /h/, k/. The next chapter discusses the morphology of Seletar words.

⁶⁰ This word is also seen in the language of the Orang suku Laut, as *ciau* but it is used nominally to mean an oar/rower (Cynthia, 2010, p. 93).

6 Morphology

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the morphology of Seletar. Seletar is an agglutinative language. The main processes involved in word formation in Seletar are affixation (§6.1), reduplication (§6.2), compounding (§6.3) and clipping (§6.4).

6.1 Affixation

Affixes in Seletar are organized into two main categories: verbal (§6.1.1) and nominal (§6.1.2). In the data collected, there were no adjectival affixes. A brief discussion of clitics can be seen in §6.1.3. One should note that many roots can be used in their bare, unaffixed monomorphemic forms, and their syntactic functions are often determined from context (more in Chapter 7).

6.1.1 Verbal Affixes

Seletar verbs frequently occur in unaffixed forms, just like many colloquial varieties of Malay (Benjamin, 1993; Benjamin, 2009). In these varieties, information such as transitivity, the involvement of the agent, and subject orientation is usually interpreted from the context (Benjamin, 1993, p. 354; Benjamin, 2009, p. 294), and not by affixation as with standard Malay or Indonesian. So when affixes are overtly expressed, they often carry different semantic and/or pragmatic meanings than they do in standard varieties (Benjamin, 1993, p. 363), where transitivity, agency and participant structure are marked overtly and obligatorily (Benjamin, 2009, p. 293). This section, therefore, moves away from analyses concerned with ‘voice’ as seen in standard varieties and follow instead scholars such as Lewis (1968, p. 212-213), Asmah (1975, p. 13) and Benjamin (1993, 2009), who view the use of Malay verbal affixes as “more concerned with marking *aktionsart* and aspect (reflecting the inherent or temporal properties of the process or state referred to by the verb) than with marking the grammatical relations holding between the verb and its subject- or object-complement” (Benjamin, 1993, p. 364).

The verbal affixes seen in Seletar are *N-* / *mə(N)-* ‘EVENT’, *di-* ‘PASS’, *bə-* ‘CONT’ / ‘STV’ / ‘POSSN’, *tə-* ‘PFV’ / ‘INVOL’ and *-kan* ‘TRANS’.

N- / *mə(N)-*

The prefixes here involve morphophonemic alternations. The initial voiceless consonant of a root is substituted by a homorganic nasal when it is prefixed with *N-* (in the case of /s/, the substituting nasal is *n*), for example:

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|----------|
| <i>N-</i> + /pada/ | ‘say’ | → | [madə] |
| <i>N-</i> + /tunɡu/ | ‘wait’ | → | [nunɡu] |
| <i>N-</i> + /susu/ | ‘breastfeed’ | → | [ɲusu] |
| <i>N-</i> + /saot/ | ‘respond’ | → | [ɲaot] |
| <i>N-</i> + /haput/ | ‘drift’ | → | [ɲaput] |
| <i>N-</i> + /həmpas/ | ‘slam.against.surface’ | → | [ɲəmpas] |

The prefix is not seen affixed to roots starting with voiced stops and approximants /l, r/ in the texts, so the morphophonemic alternation in this context, if it exists at all, is unknown.

There is a case of incomplete nasal substitution seen in /n-cayi/ ‘EVENT-find’. This is interesting because /c/ in the root is usually substituted by homorganic [ɲ] when *N-* is attached in other Malayic

varieties: e.g., Iban *ɲampur* from *campur* ‘mix’ (Adelaar, 1992, p. 24). However, in Jakartanese Malay, the sequence *n + c* is attested (Adelaar, 1992 citing Abdul Chaer, 1976, p. xxvi-xxvii). It is unclear why and how Seletar came to retain /c/ like Jakartanese Malay. It could possibly be influenced by SM, in which /c/ is retained when the equivalent *məN-* prefix is attached (Adelaar, 1992, p. 9).

mə(N)- only occurs two times in the data set: once attached to a root with initial /r/ and realised as *mə-*: *mə(N)- + /rasa/* ‘feel’ → [mə-ɣasə], and another with initial /t/, realised as *mən-*: *mə(N)- + /tuŋgu/* ‘wait’ → [mənuŋu] → further reduced to [mənu]. Therefore, data is scant to ascertain whether the prefix patterns entirely the same way it does in SM and other Malayic varieties.⁶¹

N- is glossed as ‘EVENT’ and its function is to emphasize an event or bring the event which the verb represents into focus. The below examples (1-5) show the use of *N-*. It is noted that *N-* has a tendency to be used when there are other verbs in the utterance, and the prefix is attached to the verb that represents the main process or event being depicted. It is somewhat like marking out the ‘big picture’ or overall process.

- (1) *baek la, am nuŋo sika, am dudok tana ka*
 good PAR 1SG EVENT:wait here 1SG sit dirt this
 ‘Alright, I’ll wait here, I sit on the ground here.’ [Mak Pacat 98]
- (2) *masiŋ~masiŋ⁶² səmebok⁶³ ə n-cayi səda~səda aja*
 each~EMPH busy FIL EVENT-find relative~PL only
 ‘Each of them was busy...(They) were looking for their relatives only.’ [Sejarah Seletar 5-6]
- (3) *saŋkot~tə-saŋkot də gunoŋ pulay, ntua n-cayi*
 stick.together~PFV-RECIP near/at mountain pulai elder⁶⁴ EVENT-find
təmpat pə-lindoŋ-an
 place NMLZ-protect-NMLZ
 ‘Stuck to each other at Mount Pulai, the elders found a shelter.’ [Sejarah Seletar-15]
- (4) *kalaw bə-pəca pawu jə bantal əl bəh e, masiŋ ŋaŋut*
 if CONT-break boat that because water fast PAR each EVENT:drift
 ‘If the boat broke because of the current, each of them would drift away.’ [Sejarah Seletar-48]
- (5) *baw kon ɲaot, anak*
 only.then Seletar.people EVENT:respond/answer what
 ‘Only then the people responded, “What?”’ [Mak Pacat 191]

Benjamin observed that *(-)N-* ascribes “an indicative or determinate meaning to the verb, employed when the speaker has a PARTICULAR EVENT OR PROCESS in mind... *(-)N-* affixed phrases are to be understood as being ‘about’ the action or process referred to by the verb, rather than about its consequences or attendant participants” (2009, p. 300). Such an explanation can be seen to fit well with the Seletar examples mentioned above, in which the verb indicating the important ‘big’ event takes the

⁶¹In SM, the root prefixed with *məN-* undergoes the following sound changes: initial /p, t, k, s/ are dropped and substituted by their homorganic nasal N (e.g. *pukul* → *məmkul*); initial /b, d, g, c/ are kept when prefixed with *mə(N)-* (e.g. *jual* → *mənjual*); N becomes velar nasal ŋ when prefixed onto a root starting with a vowel or /h/ (e.g. *aŋkat* → *məŋaŋkat*); before other phonemes it appears as *mə-* (Adelaar, 1992, p. 9).

⁶²a tilde is used to connect the reduplicant to the stem, instead of a hyphen

⁶³*səmebok* [səmeboʔ] ‘busy’ is possibly related to the canonical Malay *sebo* ‘busy’ (*sibuk* in Malay orthography), but with *-(ə)m-* infixation. See *səmebok* entry in §8.3 for more information.

⁶⁴The word /ntua/ [ntwaʔ] ‘elder’ is translated as SM *orang tua* ‘old person/people’ by my interpreters. It is possible that *ntua* is originally a compound *uŋ tua* ‘old person’ (*uŋ* is the Seletar form for ‘people’). Over time, the vowel in *uŋ* might have been reduced and the velar nasal that was left was then assimilated in place of articulation with /t/, becoming /n/.

N- prefix. This may also explain why during elicitation of vocabulary, *N-* forms of some verbs were obtained (e.g. *musij* for ‘turn’, both *məcit* and *pəcit* for ‘squeeze’), as the verbs used in isolation can only be about the action or process, with no focus on participants.

The affixation of *N-* on /pada/ ‘say’ however, is harder to decipher. Both the root and its nasalised form seem to serve the same purpose, often occurring in dialogue tags (6-7) (see §7.6.2 for dialogue tags). However, the root form /pada/ can be seen occurring in other contexts (8), while the nasalised form is found only in dialogue tags. What confuses the matter further is that another verb of speech *jaot* ‘EVENT: respond/answer’ (5) always appears in nasalised form and never in bare form *saot* (SM *sahut*). With the current data, it is unclear when exactly should prefixed forms be used and when they should not. More data and further research are required to discern the differences, albeit subtle, between the affixed and unaffixed forms of verbs.

(6) ntah təlow apa ay man, mak ja mada
 don’t.know egg what 2 eat mother 3 EVENT: say
 ‘“Without knowing what egg (it was), you ate (it),” his mother said.’ [Anak Naga-119]

(7) am jaga laot ja pada
 1SG take.care sea 3 say
 ‘“I (will) take care of the sea,” he said.’ [Anak Naga -174]

(8) nek kami pun ada pada juga
 grandmother 1SG PAR PFV say also
 ‘My grandmother had told this story too.’ [Anak Naga -6]

N- occurs much more frequently in Seletar than *məN-*. This fits with Benjamin’s (2009, p. 296) observation that *N-* is very common in colloquial varieties of Malay. *məN-* is only used twice (9 & 12). It is unclear whether *məN-* is merely a more formal version of *N-* in Seletar or it carries some differences in meaning. It could be that the use of *məN-* serves an emphatic function, as it is very uncommon in colloquial/casual speech. Using this form will, in a way, draw the listener’s attention. Alternatively, *məN-* could mark ‘durative event’, as the two examples below involve events that lasts for some time (e.g. feeling an emotion, waiting). It should be noted that other senses of /rasa/ ‘feel’ (10-11), the prefix *məN-* is not used.

(9) mak ja mə-rasa sədeh
 mother 3 EVENT-feel sad
 ‘His mother was feeling sad.’ [Anak Naga-146]

(10) nok am rasa panas
 body 1SG feel hot
 ‘My body feels hot.’ [Anak Naga-137]

(11) rasa ja laen
 think/feel 3 other
 ‘(I) think/feel he is different.’ [Mak Pacat-117]

(12) pukol lima pagi, pak mənuju am la
 hour five morning father EVENT:wait 1SG PAR
 ‘“(At) five o’clock in the morning, (my) father would be waiting for me.’ [Jadi Nelayan-7]

Another function of *N-* is to derive a verb from a noun. Compare (13) and (14).

(13) bini ja təŋa jusu
 wife 3 middle EVENT: milk
 ‘His wife was in the middle of breastfeeding.’ [Mak Pacat-132]

(14) ay tuŋu jə la, ay bi adik man susu la
 2 wait only PAR 2 give child eat milk PAR
 ‘You just wait. You let the child eat (drink) milk.’ [Mak Pacat-97]

di-

The *di-* prefix functions as a marker of the ‘PASSIVE’ construction. It is very rarely used, seen only once across four different narratives. (15) shows the use of the prefix in the text, with the agent of the act following the verb without the use of a preposition. An adversative passive can be done analytically with the use of /kəna/ [kənə] ‘get’⁶⁵ (16), and the agent is left unexpressed. This *kəna* construction for passives is common for colloquial varieties of Malay in the Malay Peninsular (Adelaar, 2005, p. 217). Other undergoer focusing constructions are discussed in §7.5.2.2. As this *di-* prefix appears so infrequently, at the present time we cannot be certain whether it is regularly used by Seletar speakers among themselves or it appears only when speakers shift dialect (maybe unconsciously, to canonical or more formal Malay) in the presence of outsiders.

(15) upaja dah ay di-sədut pacat
 apparently blood 2 PASS-suck leech
 ‘Apparently your blood was sucked by leech/leeches.’ [Mak Pacat-164]

(16) ay man təlow jə de upaja kəna sumpah
 2 eat egg that PAR apparently get curse
 ‘You ate that egg! Apparently (you) got cursed.’ [Anak Naga-228]

bə-

The rhotic consonant is usually not pronounced in Seletar, so /bə-/ is realised frequently as [bə] in speech. *bər-* with a rhotic coda does appear in the text, but only when the speaker is talking to the researcher and switching dialect. The voiced bilabial occasionally devoices, e.g. /bə-ciaw/ [pə-cyaw] ‘CONT-row’, /bə-gaol/ [pə-gaol] ‘CONT-mingle’. As a verbal prefix, *bə-* has several functions. It marks ‘CONT’ continuative, ‘STV’ stative and ‘POSSN’ possession.

The prefix *bə-* is used to mark events as being ‘CONT’ continuative, non-punctual, or having no specific goal or endpoint. The use of this prefix in Seletar is functionally the same as *bə-* noted in Kedah peasant Malay as analysed by Asmah (1985). The examples (17-20), along with (4) above, show this use of *bə-*. In the examples, there are no clear ends to the actions stated (e.g. disperse, gather, walking, tying).

(17) pawu ja bə-suray, jambak ja
 boat 3 CONT-disperse bunch 3
 ‘Their boats dispersed, the bunch of people (dispersed).’ [Mak Pacat 240]

⁶⁵ According to Nomoto and Soh (2019, p. 496), *kəna* was originally a transitive verb expressing physical contact ‘to hit, touch’ and then it gained abstract meanings ‘to get/incur’, followed by a reanalysis of the verb’s subcategorisation frame. The grammaticalization of ‘to hit’, ‘to touch’ to adversative markers is an aerial feature of languages of Southeast Asia, such as Thai, Vietnamese and Cambodian (Prasithratsint, 2004).

(18) masa jaman ntua muin e, bə-kumpol
 time era elder long.ago PAR CONT-gather
 ‘(In) the era of the ancestors, (the people) gathered.’ [Sejarah Seletar 11]

(19) ntua pakay kilas, rotan, sambon~bə-sambon pawu
 elder use rattan.thong rattan connect~CONT-RECIP boat
 ‘The elders used rattan thongs to tie the boats to each other (in a row).’ [Sejarah Seletar 24]

(20) kuat man, kalaw tak bua bə-jan, kita jadi
 strong eat if NEG as.much.as CONT-walk 1PL become
 susah o
 difficult INTRJ
 ‘(We) eat/one eats vigorously, (but) if we don’t/one doesn’t walk as much, we/one will suffer.’
 [Jadi Nelayan 116]

When the prefix is attached to nouns, a verbal construction that means ‘to be in a state of something’ is formed.

(21) da tiga bulən, tu bə-sisik
 COMPL three month that STV-scale
 ‘(It had) already been three months, he had been (in a state of) scaling.’ [Anak Naga 129-130]

(22) hujan siang malam, tak bə-hənti
 rain day.time night NEG STV-stop
 ‘(It) rained day and night, (and it)didn’t stop (lit. not in a state of stopping).’ [Sejarah Seletar 10]

The prefix can also attach to quantifiers and nouns to indicate that an agent possesses some quantity or thing.

(23) jadi suku banja kita ka bə-banjak banja
 so tribe race 1PL this POSSN-many race
 ‘And so our tribes/races here have many (sub)races.’ [Sejarah Seletar 49]

(24) jadi lapan belas suku, banja un asli tapi
 become eight numbers.11.to.19 tribe race people original but
 bə-beza
 POSSN-different
 ‘(They) became eighteen tribes/races of Orang Asli, but there are differences.’ [Sejarah Seletar 50-51]

(25) bə-wana meah kadañ~kadañ dapat
 POSSN-colour red sometimes get
 ‘(We) would sometimes get the red coloured (snails).’ (lit. (the ones) that have colour red (we) sometimes get) [Jadi Nelayan 68]

(26) tiga bə-anak
 three POSSN-child
 ‘He had three children.’ [Anak Naga-20]

tə-

tə- is realised as [tə-]. It is used to indicate that that the action is involuntary ‘INVOL’, accidental, or not intended by the agent (27).

- (27) jan tə-gaba~gaba, jan ekot gendəs
 walk INVOL-hasty~EMPH walk follow river.side
 ‘(We) walked hastily, following the side of the river.’ [Jadi Nelayan-11]

tə- also marks ‘PFV’ perfective, to indicate that the event has been realised. Examples (28-30), as well as (3) above, show this use of the prefix.

- (28) tə-gentak, əgaŋ tə-cabut mata susu bini
 PFV-stomp.on guess INVOL-pull.out eye breast wife
 ‘(He) had stomped (the child), (that) might have pulled out his wife’s nipple.’ [Mak Pacat 144]

- (29) mata susu bini e tə-cabut
 eye breast wife PAR PFV-pull.out
 ‘The nipple of his wife had been ripped off’ [Mak Pacat 145]

- (30) səbənəŋa baŋsa kita ka, ləbe tə-ekot uŋ luar
 actually race 1PL this more PFV-follow people outside
 ‘Actually, (members of) our race here more often has followed (assimilated to) outsiders’
 [Sejarah Seletar 79]

A variant of the perfective *tə-* marker presents itself in the form of *kə-*, illustrated by the example *kə-lampaw* ‘PFV-pass’ (31-32). *kə-* as a variant of the *tə-* marker is observed in Indonesian (Sneddon, 1996, p. 126), where it was borrowed from Javanese and its usage is seen as less formal or non-standard compared to *tə-* (Sneddon, 1996, p. 126; Poedjosoedarmo, 1982, p. 56). The word *kəlampaw* (and the corresponding peninsular Malay form *təlampaw*, spelled *terlampau* in Malay orthography) expresses the adverbial notion ‘exceedingly/too’. The connection between the perfective meaning of *kə-* / *tə-* and intensatives is explained aptly by Winstedt in his Malay Grammar (1913, p. 87-88): “Denoting completion beyond which one cannot go, *te(r)* derivatives connote the superlative in degree and serve as intensatives.” In this grammar (Winstedt, 1913, p. 88), *tə-* is mentioned as being crystallised in *təlampau*, meaning ‘surpassingly’. It is curious why Seletar has the variant *kə-* when it is seen more common in Indonesian than in the Malay spoken in Peninsular Malaysia. More data is required to ascertain the frequency of this *kə-* variant and whether it is a common occurrence, or a feature of the participant’s isolect.

- (31) masa jə aəl kəlampaw dərəs
 time that water PFV-pass time fast
 ‘(During) that time, the water was exceedingly fast.’ [Sejarah Seletar-16]

- (32) kə-lampaw tiŋgi aəl e
 PFV- pass high water PAR
 ‘The water was exceedingly high.’ (lit. ‘exceedingly high, the water.’) [Sejarah Seletar-17]

-kan

The only verbal suffix used in the text is *-kan*, and it serves as a transitiviser ‘TRANS’, marking the event as having a clear goal. The direct object follows the verb. It is only used once across four texts. According to Benjamin (1993, p. 360-361), *-kan*, with the function of marking direct object, is used more in formal Malay, but rarely in colloquial varieties. It might be the case that the speaker is drawing knowledge from Standard Malay, where *ekotkan...* is a conventionalised way to mean ‘according to (something)’ or ‘based on (something)’. Further research is required to ascertain its prevalence in Seletar. It should be noted that the same meaning can be achieved without *-kan* by another speaker (34). *-kan* functioning as a benefactive marker as observed in canonical Malay is not present in the collected Seletar texts.

- (33) kalaw ekot-kan am muin e, cayi sipot takpaya juh də
 if follow-TRANS 1SG long.ago PAR find sea.snail NEG.need far PAR

‘If according to my past experience, (we) didn’t need to (go) far to find snails.’ (lit. if you follow me in the past, to find snails we didn’t need to go far’ [Jadi Nelayan 65]

- (34) ekot gaya ay man naŋ ka te
 follow behaviour 2 eat REL this PAR
 ‘Based on/from (your) behaviour, you ate this one.’ [Anak Naga 231]

6.1.2 Nominal Affixes

Nominal affixes in Seletar usually carry derivative meanings, and therefore are not as elusive as the verbal affixes presented in the above section. The nominal affixes that occur in Seletar are *pə-* / *pə-an* ‘NMLZ’, *-an* ‘RSLT’ and *kə-* / *kə-an* ‘ABSTR’⁶⁶

pə- in the text is used the same way as *pə-an*. They act as nominalisers ‘NMLZ’ that derive a noun that refers to the process of the action stated by the root. (35-36) shows *pə-lindoŋ* and *pə-lindoŋ-an* ‘protection’ deriving from *lindoŋ* ‘protect’. In SM, *pə-* and *pə-an* are different affixes, where the former derives a human agent of the action stated by the root, and the latter derives the process of the action stated by the root. The affixes only occur in the context of *təmpat pə-lindoŋ(an)* ‘shelter’ in the text.

- (35) a masa jə... ntua cayi təmpat pə-lindoŋ la
 PAR time that elder find place NMLZ-protect PAR
 ‘(During) that time, the elders looked for shelter (lit. protection place).’ [Sejarah Seletar-8]

- (36) saŋkot~tə-saŋkot də gunoŋ pulay, ntua n-cayi
 stick.together~PFV-RECIP near/at mountain pulai elder EVENT-find

təmpat pə-lindoŋ-an
 place NMLZ-protect-NMLZ

‘Stuck to each other at Mount Pulai, the elders found a shelter.’ [Sejarah Seletar-15]

Alternatively, one might consider that the Seletar speaker here does not interpret *pə-lindoŋan* (and variant *pə-lindoŋ*) as morphologically complex, but as one construction meaning ‘protection’ (for the concept of construction and Radical Construction Grammar, see Croft, 2001). This construction is then paired with *təmpat* ‘place’ in front of it to create a relative-clause like construction *təmpat X* ‘place of X’ (see §7.6.1 for relativisation using *təmpat*). Then, in this case, the affixes *pə-* and *pə-an* do not functionally exist in Seletar. The speaker might have known the word *pə-lindoŋ(an)* from his knowledge of a more formal/standard variety of Malay, and taken it in its entirety into his own speech. A wider corpus of Seletar data needs to be collected in order to confirm this tentative view and assess the existence, as well as function, of the *pə-* / *pə-an* affix.

-an is a suffix that derives a noun that is the result of an action stated in the root. (37-38) shows *ajar-an* ‘teaching/lesson’ (a result of *ajar* ‘teach’), *bilang-an* ‘number’ (a result of *bilang* ‘count’), and *kacok-an* ‘mixture’ (a result of *kacok* ‘mix’).

⁶⁶ NMLZ = NOMINALISER, RSLT=RESULT (a nominal that is the result of the action indicated by the root), ABSTR = ABSTRACT (abstract nominal derived from the action indicated by the root)

- (37) (name), satu ajar-an pada kita, ja pada
 (name) one teach-RSLT to IPL 3 say
 ‘“(name of person) is one lesson to us,” he said.’ [Mak Pacat-236]

- (38) keŋ suku səleta ka, bilan-an bole lagi
 now tribe Seletar this count-RSLT able again
 ‘Now (as for) the Seletar tribe here, our numbers are still fine.’ (*bole lagi* = fine) [Sejarah Seletar-74]

kə- in the text is observed to be used the same way as *kə- an* ‘ABSTR’, in which an abstract entity or notion is derived from the root. (39-40) are examples of this derivation. *lama-kələma* is very likely the same as SM *lama-kələmaan*, which is a conventionalised way of saying ‘eventually’, derived from *lama* ‘long (time)’. *kə-turun-an* ‘heritage/ancestry’ is connected to the concept of *turun* ‘descend’.

In an alternative view, one might say that, being a conventionalised saying, *lama-kələma* may not be perceived by the speaker as being inherently morphologically complex, but a single construction to mean ‘eventually’. If that is the case, then *kə-* here does not exist as an affix. However, for *kə-turun-an* ‘heritage/ancestry’, it is not quite clear whether the speaker perceives it as having affixes or as a single construction, owing to lack of other occurrence of other *kə- an* affixes. A larger collection of data needs to be obtained before we can concretely ascertain the functions of *kə-* (if it really exists) and *kə- an* affixes.

- (39) maka banja uŋ lway ka, səleta ka, lama?~kə-lama? akan
 then race people outsider this Seletar this long(time)~ABSTR-ADV FUT

pupos
 disappear

‘Then the race of the outsiders here, the Seletar here, eventually, will disappear.’

[Sejarah Seletar-82]

- (40) ja, malu, nak gələ nama, kə-turun-an ja
 3 ashamed want label name ABSTR-descend-ABSTR 3
 ‘He is ashamed to bear the name of his ancestry’ [Sejarah Seletar-89]

It might be of value to note that aside from (37), the nominal affixes were used by the same speaker, S. S holds a position of power in his village. Because of that, he has the task of speaking with outsiders frequently. I believe, as a result of this, his speech contains features of more formal or foreign varieties of Malay than the other two speakers, who are both women and do not hold positions of influence. These features might include the use of nominal affixes like *pə-/pə- an* and *kə-/kə -an* to derive nouns (e.g. *təmpat pəlindoŋ(an)* instead of just *təmpat lindoŋ* ‘shelter’; *lama-kələma* instead of just *lama-lama* ‘eventually’), the use of a more “Indonesian” perfective *kə-* instead of *tə-* (in the word *kələmpaw* ‘exceedingly’, instead of *tələmpaw*), and perhaps even the use of reduplication with affixes to express reciprocity instead of simple reduplication (e.g. *sambuŋ-bəsambuŋ* ‘connecting to each other’ and *saŋkot-təsaŋkot* ‘hooked to each other’, see §6.2.3). The form *turun* in *kə-turun-an* ‘ancestry’ in (40) is also curious, as one would expect a common truncated form *tun*. All of these strategies in this paragraph here (aside from the “Indonesian” *kə-*) serve, in some ways, to elongate the word forms, and lean more towards an articulated mode of expression prevalent in more standard and formal varieties of Malay, as opposed to a condensed manner like in Colloquial Malay (for a discussion of condensed and articulated modes of expression in Malay, see Benjamin, 1993, p. 354-356). If this is truly the case, some of the verbal and nominal affixes covered (especially the data collected from S) might not be characteristic of everyday Seletar speech. This view is tentative, and only with a collection of a larger

corpus involving more speakers (ideally ones who do not have much interactions with outsiders) can we clearly discern which features actually belong in Seletar speech, and which are influences from a standard variety.

6.1.3 Clitics

There are two clitics seen in Seletar, *sə=* ‘one’ and *=ja* ‘EMPH’ / ‘DEF’.

sə= is a clitic that denotes singularity, or ‘one’. It usually attaches to classifiers (41), numbers (42), or units of measurement (42, 43, 44). *sə=* is reduced to just [s] in allegro speech (42), but also when it attaches to roots beginning with a vowel (44). In one instance, the clitic is attached to a verb, where it denotes an action being done by a group of people as one, or in unison (45).

(41) *tiŋgəl* *anoyo* *sə=botey*
 leave.behind FIL one=CLF:ROUND
 ‘(I) left... one piece (of that egg).’ [Anak Naga 79]

(42) *əm* *sə=kati*⁶⁷ *s=puloh* *sen*
 FIL one=kati one=ten cent
 ‘Um... one kati was ten cents.’ [Jadi Nelayan 60]

(43) *dalam* *sə=mingu,* *ja* *ncak* *balek*
 in one=week 3 NEG return
 ‘In a week’s time, he did not return.’ [Anak Naga 242]

(44) *maken* *s=ayi,* *maken* *kəcit*
 increasingly one=day increasingly small
 ‘Day by day, (he) got smaller and smaller.’ [Anak Naga 176]

(45) *a* *sə-tiak* *iŋat* *o* *ha,* *ja* *pada*
 PAR one=shout remember INTRJ INTRJ 3 say
 ‘(They) all shouted as one, “(We) remember, oh ha,” they said.’ [Anak Naga 239]

=ja is a cliticised form of the third person pronoun *ja*. The *=ja* clitic can occur with adjectives (46), adverbs (47) and verbs (48). In (46-47), the clitic emphasizes the quality expressed by the adjective and adverb. *=ja* in (48) serves as a kind of ‘link’ or anaphoric device that relates back to the previous sentence regarding the existence of different groups of Orang Asli. In (49), *=ja* marks definiteness and serves to specify a particular entity that can be identified by the listener. ‘water’ here is marked as definite as it is understood to be the water near the kiln, which was mentioned in previous utterances. The clitic is also attached to some nominals and used as adverbials that indicate speaker’s attitude: /*upaŋa*/ ‘apparently’ and /*səbənəŋa*/ ‘actually’ in (30) above.

(46) *muka* *ay* *maken* *laen=ja,* *mak* *ja* *mada*
 face 2 increasingly other=EMPH mother 3 EVENT: say
 “‘Your face is increasingly becoming more and more different!’” his mother said.’ [Anak Naga 160]

(47) *memaŋ* *orijinəl,* *memaŋ-ja*
 really original really=EMPH
 ‘(The ancestors) were really ‘original’, naturally!’ [Sejarah Seletar 92]

⁶⁷ *Kati* or catty is a traditional Chinese unit of mass *jin* 斤 that equals to 0.605kg.

- (48) *ada=na* *baŋsa jakun, səmay, uŋ kalaŋ* *pun ada*
 EXIST=DEF race Jakun Semai people Kallang PAR EXIST
 ‘There are: the Jakun race, Semai. There are also the Orang Kallang.’ [Sejarah Seletar 54]
- (49) *aəl=na* *sə=təŋa* *naŋ ka, jumbaŋ a* *pukol lima pagi*
 water=DEF one=half REL this meet PAR hour five morning
- jan*
 walk
 ‘The water level (near the kiln) is half (of) this one, (we) meet (at) five o’clock in the morning, (let’s) go.’ [Jadi Nelayan 9]

6.2 Reduplication

Seletar has mostly full reduplication and rarely partial reduplication, based on the texts collected. The root word is repeated in full reduplication (50), but only a portion of the root is repeated in partial reduplication (51). The partial reduplication of *səsama* comes from reduplicating the first consonant of the root and adding a schwa, and it is an alternate form of *sama-sama*. For some words, there is additional affixation in the reduplicated forms (52). There are no rhythmic reduplication present in the data collected.

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--|------------------------------|
| (50) / <i>kulet</i> / [kulet] | ‘skin’ | /kulet-kulet/ [kulet-kulet] | ‘patches of skin’ |
| /macam/ [macam] | ‘type’ | /macam-macam/ [macam-macam] | ‘various types’ |
| /mula/ [mula] | ‘start’ | /mula-mula/ [mula-mula] | ‘beginning’ |
| (51) / <i>ntua</i> / [ntwaʔ] ⁶⁸ | ‘elder’ | /ntua-tua/ [ntwaʔ-twaʔ] | ‘elders’ |
| /sama/ [sama] | ‘same’/‘with’ | /sə-sama/ [sə-sama] | ‘together’/‘with each other’ |
| (52) / <i>saŋkot</i> / [saŋkot] | ‘to hook’ | /saŋkot-təsəŋkot/ [saŋkot-təsəŋkot] | ‘hooked to each other’ |
| /sambon/ [sambon] | ‘to connect’ | /sambon-bəsambon/ [sambon-bəsambon] | ‘connecting to each other’ |
| /lama/ [lama] | ‘long(time)’ | /lama-kələma/ [lama-kələma] | ‘eventually’ |
| /adik/ [ʔadiʔ] | ‘younger sibling’ | /adik-bədik/ [ʔadiʔ-bədiʔ] ⁶⁹ | ‘siblings’ |

From the data, it is observed that nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs can undergo reduplication. Reduplication in different syntactic categories produce different meanings, and often the interpretations heavily rely on contexts.

6.2.1 Plurality and individuality

The reduplication of nouns often expresses explicit plurality ‘PL’. Nominal root forms in Seletar are not specified in terms of number (i.e. they are number neutral) and may be interpreted as singular or plural depending on the context. Reduplicated forms, however, usually refer to multiple entities (53). That being said, reduplication is seen in (54) to refer to a singular entity. In the context of the story, the protagonist cooks only one egg. As the cooking takes time, it can be understood that the reduplication

⁶⁸ For the possible origin of *ntua*, see footnote 64.

⁶⁹ The Standard Malay word for siblings is *adik-bəradik*. The second part of *adik-bədik* in Seletar has reduced syllable due to loss of intervocalic rhotic, see §5.2.1.

of the noun stem for ‘egg’ is indicating a plurality of instances: one egg is burning/cooking over and over again. The reduplication of the noun stem might also be complimenting the verb which is also reduplicated to form an imagery of a continuous, repetitive process. In the same sentence, *bəkər puŋa bəkər* also has such an effect, as the construction “... *puŋa* ...” in Colloquial Malay, with the same verb repeated before and after *puŋa* indicates a process that goes on and on, thoroughly.

(55) shows another meaning conveyed from the reduplication of noun stems: individuality ‘INDVL’. *səleta-səleta* is interpreted as referencing the various places that bear the Seletar name (e.g. Pulau Seletar, Seletar Reservoir etc.) in Singapore.

A tilde is used to connect the reduplicant to the stem, instead of a hyphen.

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| (53) /anak/ [ʔanaʔ] | ‘child(ren)’ | /anak-anak/ [ʔanaʔ-anaʔ] | ‘children’ |
| /səda/ [sədaʔ] | ‘relative(s)’ | /səda-səda/ [sədaʔ-sədaʔ] | ‘relatives’ |
| /jaman/ [jaman] | ‘era(s)’ | /jaman-jaman/ [jaman-jaman] | ‘eras’ |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|--------------|-------------|------|-------|
| (54) dəkət | duwə | jum, | təlow~ təlow | bəkəŋ~bəkəŋ | puŋə | bəkəŋ |
| near | two | hour | egg~PL | burn~REP | PAR | burn |
| ‘(For) nearly two hours the egg burned on, the egg burned on thoroughly.’ [Anak Naga 88] | | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|---------------|------|---------|
| (55) siŋapwaʔ | e, | səleta~səleta | tu | səjarah |
| Singapore | PAR | Seletar~INDVL | that | history |
| ‘(In) Singapore, those “Seletar” (places) (i.e. places with the name <i>Seletar</i>) are (our) history.’ | | | | |
| [Sejarah Seletar 59] | | | | |

The reduplication of interrogative pronouns (who, what, where) forms indeterminates. However, without reduplication, an indeterminate meaning can also be interpreted (example sentences in 56) (see §7.5.3.2 for discussion of interrogative and indefinite pronouns).

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------|---------------------------|---|
| (56) /sapa/ [sapaʔ] | ‘who’ | /sapa-sapa/ [sapaʔ-sapaʔ] | ‘anybody’ / ‘whoever’ |
| /apa/ [ʔapaʔ] | ‘what’ | /apa-apa/ [ʔapaʔ-ʔapaʔ] | ‘anything’ / ‘whatever’ |
| /mana/ [manaʔ] | ‘where’ | /mana-mana/ [manaʔ-manaʔ] | ‘anywhere’ / ‘whichever’ / ‘everywhere’ |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------|-------|----------------------|-----|------|-----|
| a | len | sipot | mana | saya | pun | ambe | taw |
| PAR | other | sea.snail | where | 1SG(M) ⁷⁰ | PAR | take | PAR |
| ‘Other types of sea snails, whichever kinds, I will also take (them), you know?’ [Jadi Nelayan 50] | | | | | | | |

6.2.2 Emphasis

An emphatic meaning can be achieved by reduplication of roots from various syntactic categories. For adjectival and adverbial roots, reduplication usually means an emphasis of the quality or manner stated by the root (57) (27, renumbered as 58). The reduplication in (57) can also be interpreted as having an individualising effect, saying that the speaker only remembers a little of different parts of the story.

| | | | |
|---|----------|-----|-------------|
| (57) am | ijət | la | sit~sit |
| 1SG | remember | PAR | little~EMPH |
| ‘I remember, a little bit.’ [Anak Naga 7] | | | |

⁷⁰ (M) means that the pronoun is more commonly used in canonical varieties of Malay

- (58) jan tə-gaba~gaba, jan ekot gendəs
 walk INVOL-hasty~EMPH walk follow river.side
 ‘(We) walked hastily, following the side of the river.’ [Jadi Nelayan-11]

Certain noun stems when reduplicated also show emphasis (59-60), and they carry adjunct information regarding manner or time. The reduplication of some verb stems also gives emphatic interpretations (61-62).

- (59) aŋkat peŋ s=oŋ~s=oŋ dəkət piŋi jə, ala bow
 carry water.jug one=person~EMPH at water.well that able bring

balek
 return

‘(I) carried the water jug by myself at that well and (I) was able to bring it back (to the boat).’

[Jadi Nelayan-106]

- (60) oy jumbaŋ dəkət dapor araŋ pagi~pagi
 INTRJ meet at kiln coal morning~EMPH
 ‘Oi, (let’s) meet at the charcoal kiln (in) the early morning.’ [Jadi Nelayan-8]

- (61) tiŋgəl~tiŋgəl asam ya
 leave.behind~EMPH tamarind PAR
 ‘Leave the tamarinds!’ [Mak Pacat-129]

- (62) abis jə, ŋa da ikat, da ikat~ikat
 finish that 3 COMPL tie COMPL tie~EMPH
 ‘After that, they already tied (him) up, tied thoroughly’ [Anak Naga 183]

6.2.3 Repetitiveness and Reciprocity

Commonly, the reduplication of verbs indicates that the action is being done repetitively or continuously, for example (63-64) below. As the repetitiveness is somewhat represented iconically by the reduplication, one can find a verb being repeated more than two times (65). The repetitive act of an event may also give an interpretation of recklessness or aimlessness, as seen in (66-67).

- (63) jəmpi~jəmpi, wak ŋa jəmpi, səmun jəmpi
 cast.spell~REP uncle/aunt 3 cast.spell all cast.spells
 ‘(They started) casting spells... his uncles and aunts cast spells, all of them cast spells.’ [Anak Naga 147]

- (64) baŋak naŋes~naŋes tapi buat apa
 many cry~REP but do what
 ‘(She) cried and cried, but for what?’ [Anak Naga 245]

- (65) kətək~kətək~kətək jəmpi~jəmpi paŋaŋ
 crack.against.surface~REP~REP cast.spell~REP shaman
 ‘The knocking and knocking, casting and casting spells of the shaman.’ [Anak Naga 192]

- (66) bənda yaŋ ncak kita tahu, jaŋan la kita man-man
 thing REL NEG 1PL know do.not PAR 1PL eat~REP
 ‘Things that we do not know of, do not eat recklessly.’ [Anak Naga 251]

- (67) kəna bawa jan~jan
 have.to bring walk~REP
 ‘(You) have to bring (yourself) to walk around.’ [Jadi Nelayan 110]

Affixation on the reduplicant in the reduplicated verbs seem to give a reciprocal meaning in Seletar. Although the affixes involved are not *məN-* as seen in SM (such as Mintz, 1994, p. 275), the interpretation of ‘to each other’ is still relevant. It can be hypothesised that the reciprocal meaning comes from a particular form or form of reduplication (affixation on the reduplicant) rather than a particular affix. In addition to reciprocity, the events can also be seen to be repetitive as a whole, but the referents involved in each instance need not be the same ones (in the context of the examples below, the agents of each event can be a different set of elders each time).

- (68) saŋkot~tə-saŋkot də gunoŋ pulay, ntua n-cayi
 stick.together~PFV-RECIP near/at mountain pulai elder EVENT-find
 təmpat pə-lindoŋ-an
 place NMLZ-protect-NMLZ
 ‘Stuck to each other at Mount Pulai, the elders found a shelter’ [Sejarah Seletar-15]

- (69) ntua pakay kilas, rotan, sambon~bə-sambon pawu
 elder use rattan.thong rattan connect~CONT-RECIP boat
 ‘The elders used rattan thongs to tie the boats to each other (in a row).’ [Sejarah Seletar 24]

6.2.4 Change in word class

Reduplication may result in a change in the word class of the root. An adjunctive meaning can be achieved through reduplication of some verbs for example in (70-71). Borrowed words may also be reduplicated, as evidenced from [lalas] ‘in the end’ mentioned in §5.3. The English word *last* is reduplicated, and the reduplicated form [lalas] is a transliteration of Malay *akhir-akhir* ‘in the end’ (literally “end end”).

- (70) kita mula~mula lagi kəcit
 1PL start~ADV again little
 ‘We, at the beginning, were still young.’ / ‘One, at the beginning, was still young.’ [Jadi Nelayan-1]

- (71) maka baŋsa uŋ luar ka səleta ka, lama~kə-lama akan
 then race people outsider this Seletar this long(time)~ABSTR-ADV FUT
 pupos
 disappear
 ‘Then the race of the outsiders here, the Seletar here, eventually, will disappear.’ [Sejarah Seletar-82]

6.3 Compounding

One of the productive morphological process in Seletar is compounding. Compounds can be formed from elements of different syntactic categories. Noun + noun compounds are commonly observed in the text (72). Other types of compounds exist as well, as shown below (73-75). The second component of the compound [campo gaol] ‘mix around’ is able to take the prefix /bə-/ ‘CONT’.

(72) Noun – Noun compounds:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
| <i>anak da</i> | ‘young woman’ | <i>anak</i> ‘child’ + <i>da</i> ‘virgin’ |
| <i>təmpat pəlindon</i> | ‘shelter’ | <i>təmpat</i> ‘place’ + <i>pə-lindon</i> ‘protection’ |
| <i>təmpat kastam</i> | ‘customs’ | <i>təmpat</i> ‘place’ + <i>kastam</i> ‘customs’ |
| <i>kon laot / uŋ laot</i> | ‘Sea People’ | <i>kon</i> or <i>uŋ</i> ‘people’ + <i>laot</i> ‘sea’ |
| <i>uŋ luar</i> | ‘outsider(s)’ | <i>uŋ</i> ‘people’ + <i>luar</i> ‘outside’ |
| <i>masa budak</i> | ‘childhood’ | <i>masa</i> ‘time’ + <i>budak</i> ‘kid’ |
| <i>mata susu</i> | ‘nipple’ | <i>mata</i> ‘eye’ + <i>susu</i> ‘breast’ |
| <i>ntua muin</i> | ‘ancestor(s)’ | <i>ntua</i> ‘elder(s)’ + <i>muin</i> ‘past’ |

(73) Noun – Adjective compounds:

| | | |
|--------------------|--|---|
| <i>uŋ asli</i> | ‘Orang Asli’ / ‘indigenous people’ | <i>uŋ</i> ‘people’ + <i>asli</i> ‘genuine’ / ‘original’ |
| <i>sipot banan</i> | ‘a kind of snail’ (Cerithidea obtusa) | <i>sipot</i> ‘sea snail’ + <i>banan</i> ‘big’ |

(74) Verb – Verb compounds:

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <i>campo gaol</i> | ‘mix around’ / ‘rub shoulders with’ | <i>campo</i> ‘mix’ + <i>gaol</i> ‘mingle’ |
| <i>tumpang lalu</i> | ‘pass through’ (someone’s property) | <i>tumpang</i> ‘hitch-hike’ + <i>lalu</i> ‘cross’ |

Examples in (72) and (73) are endocentric compounds, where one element of the compound is the head and the other as a modifier. The compound formed is in ‘a type of’ relationship with the head (e.g. *sipot banan* is a kind of *sipot* ‘sea snail’, *kon laot* ‘Sea People’ is a kind of *kon* ‘people’), or in ‘a part of’ relationship with the meaning of the head (e.g. *mata susu* ‘nipple’ is literally ‘the eye of the breast’). Exocentric compounds are compounds without a head, and those are illustrated in (74).

Some words from minor classes (e.g. demonstratives, interrogatives) are also seen to be formed from compounding, but they usually involve truncation of at least one of the elements. As the study of Seletar is only preliminary, some elements of the compounds are guesses, and need to be further studied.

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| (75) <i>macam</i> | ‘how’ | <i>macam</i> ‘like’ + <i>mak</i> (short form of <i>mana</i>) ‘where’ |
| <i>dəmak</i> | ‘at.where’ | <i>dəkət</i> ‘at/near’ + <i>mak</i> (short form of <i>mana</i>) ‘where’ |
| <i>kəmak</i> | ‘go where’ | <i>kə</i> ‘go’ + <i>mak</i> (short form of <i>mana</i>) ‘where’ |
| <i>talada</i> | ‘NEG.able’ | <i>tak</i> ‘NEG’ + <i>ala</i> ‘able’ + <i>ada</i> ‘EXIST’ ?? |
| <i>bitu</i> | ‘at there’ | <i>bəlah</i> ‘side’?? + <i>situ</i> ‘there’ / <i>itu</i> ‘that’ |
| <i>bika</i> | ‘at here’ | <i>bəlah</i> ‘side’?? + <i>sika</i> ‘here’ / <i>ika</i> ‘this’ |

6.4 Clipping

Like most colloquial Malay varieties, Seletar speakers use function words that are shorter and reduced in form compared to Standard/Formal Malay. For example,

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------|
| <u>Seletar</u> | | compared with | <u>SM</u> | |
| <i>tak</i> | [taʔ] | | <i>tidak</i> | ‘NEG’ |
| <i>da</i> | [da] | | <i>sudah</i> | ‘COMPL’, |
| <i>nak</i> | [naʔ] | | <i>hendak</i> | ‘want’ |
| <i>ja</i> | [jə] or <i>aja</i> [ʔajə] | | <i>sahaja/saja</i> | ‘only’ |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------|--|------------------|--------------|
| <i>tu</i> | [tu] | | <i>itu</i> | ‘that’ |
| <i>takda</i> | [taʔdə] | | <i>tidak ada</i> | ‘NEG.EXIST’ |
| <i>takpa</i> | [taʔpə] | | <i>tidak apa</i> | ‘never mind’ |
| <i>kat</i> | [kat] | | <i>dəkat</i> | ‘at/near’ |

This kind of reduction is also seen in function words/phrases particular to Seletar:

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------|------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| <i>ka</i> | [ka] | from | <i>ika</i> | [ʔika] | ‘this’ |
| <i>də</i> | [də] | from | <i>dəkat</i> | [dəkat/dəkət] | ‘at/near’ |
| <i>sən jə</i> | [sən jə] | from | <i>macam jə</i> | [macam jə] | ‘like so’ ⁷¹ |

Many words in Seletar have reduced forms compared to their Standard Malay counterpart and even the Proto-Malayic protoforms as a result from regular sound loss, see §5.2.1.

This paragraph concludes this section on the word formation in Seletar. Affixation occurs in the language but this process does not contribute to a large part of word formation as many words occur in their bare, unaffixed forms. The affixes presented in the thesis include verbal affixes, nominal affixes and clitics. Reduplication and compounding are productive morphological processes in Seletar. Full reduplication is used to express meanings such as plurality and individuality, emphasis, repetitiveness and reciprocity, as well as adjunctives of time. Compounding can be formed from words of different syntactic categories, of which N+N compounds are the most common (e.g. *mata* ‘eye’ + *susu* ‘breast’ = *mata susu* ‘nipple’). Elements from minor classes (e.g. demonstratives, interrogatives) are observed to be able to compound as well and often involve the truncation of one of the components, for example *macam* ‘like’ + *mana* ‘where’ = *macamak* [macamaʔ] ‘how’. Another common word formation process is clipping, where words are reduced without changing their meaning. Some examples are *ja* for *sahaja/saja* ‘only’, *ka* for *ika* ‘this’, *də* for *dəkat* ‘at/near’. The next chapter of the thesis will focus on the syntax of Seletar.

⁷¹ *Macam jə* can also be used to express ‘that’s how it goes’ or ‘that’s how it is’.

7 Syntax

This chapter aims to describe the syntactic information of Seletar speech until the level of complex sentences. To start the chapter, a brief note on word classes in Seletar is given (§7.1). Then, the structure of the noun phrase is described (§7.2.1). The constituents within the noun phrase are discussed individually (e.g. quantifiers (§7.2.1.1), classifiers (§7.2.1.2), possessor (§7.2.1.3), relative clause (§7.2.1.4), prepositional phrase (§7.2.1.5), and determiners (§7.2.1.6)). The section following that introduces the pronouns in Seletar: personal pronouns (§7.2.2.1), possessive pronouns (§7.2.2.2), as well as demonstrative pronouns (§7.2.2.3). Prepositions and prepositional phrases are discussed in §7.2.3, followed by locative deictics in §7.2.4.

Verbal categories such as aspect and modality markers are discussed in §7.3.1, followed by negators in §7.3.2. §7.3.3 involves serial verbs in Seletar. Adverbs are briefly talked about in §7.4 before moving on to a discussion on clause types (§7.5). Both non-verbal (§7.5.1) and verbal clauses (§7.5.2) are illustrated, followed by interrogative (§7.5.3) and imperative clauses (§7.5.4). The thesis then moves on to analysing complex sentences involving relative clauses (§7.6.1), complement clauses (§7.6.2) and adverbial clauses (§7.6.3). Strategies for clause combining such coordination and juxtaposition can be found in §7.6.4 and §7.6.5 respectively.

Discussions on information structure (§7.7), ellipsis (§7.8.1) and discourse particles (§7.8.2) can be found towards the end of the chapter.

7.1 Notes on Word Class

This section discusses some aspects of word class in Seletar, namely the lack of evidence for a syntactic adjective word class and the multifunctionality of lexical items.

7.1.1 Adjectives as a subclass of verbs

Scholars of Malay such as Asmah (1975, p. 172-184), Abdullah (1972, p. 32-36), Cumming (1991, p. 24) regard adjectives as a subclass of verbs (particularly as stative intransitive verbs (e.g. ‘be big’)), based on their similarity in syntactic distribution. For example, property-concept words and verbs can be preceded by the same time/aspect and modal markers (Asmah, 1975, p. 179). This can be seen in Seletar as well: in (76-77) the completive aspect marker *da* can precede both *bəsal* ‘big’ and *jadi* ‘become’; (78-79) the future marker *akan* can precede *susa* ‘difficult’ and *tingal* ‘leave behind’. Property words and verbs can also be preceded by the same adverb *maken* ‘increasingly’ (80-81). Additionally, a clause with an intransitive verb as the predicate (81) has the same structure as that of a clause with an adjectival predicate (80).

(76) *bila am da bəsal, am iŋat cita ka*
when 1SG COMPL big 1SG remember story this
‘When I had already grown up, I remembered this story.’ [Mak Pacat 8]

(77) *da jadi tandok*
COMPL become horn
‘The horns had formed.’ (lit. ‘already formed, the horns.’) [Anak Naga 143]

(78) a masa jə tak **kan susah** lagi la
 PAR time that NEG FUT difficult more PAR
 ‘(At) that time, (life) will not be difficult anymore.’ [Jadi Nelayan 8]

(79) kami **akan tingəl** ay, ja pada
 1SG FUT leave.behind 2 3 say⁷²
 ‘‘I will leave you behind,’’ she said.’ [Mak Pacat 215]

(80) kokot pun **maken kəcit**
 hand PAR increasingly small
 ‘The hands also got smaller and smaller.’ [Anak Naga 151]

(81) adik **maken səpun**
 child increasingly smile
 ‘The child is smiling more and more.’ [Mak Pacat 120]

Property-concept words and verbs are also negated the same way (82-83). It would appear that the two have very similar syntactic distribution. However, only lexical items describing property concepts can be modified by adverbs of intensity such as *paliŋ* ‘most’, *amat* ‘very’, thus making them a subclass different from normal (action type) transitive or intransitive verbs. I will use the term ‘adjective’ to refer to this subclass of verbs that can be modified by intensifying adverbs (e.g. *paliŋ* ‘most’, *agak* ‘quite’, *amat* ‘very’).

(82) **tak tahu** la mak
 NEG know PAR mother
 ‘I don’t know, Mother.’ [Anak Naga 157]

(83) masa tu, **tak sala**, umo saya lima tahun-
 time that NEG wrong age 1SG(M) five year
 ‘(At) that time, (if I’m) not wrong, I was five years old.’ [Jadi Nelayan 6]

(84) taŋan ka **paliŋ rajin** o
 hand this most hardworking PAR
 ‘These hands were the most hardworking!’ [Jadi Nelayan 98]

(85) kəcit... **amat kəcit**, macam ni kəcit, tak bole jual
 small very small like this small NEG able sell
 ‘(The crab) was small, very small, like this small, (we) couldn’t sell (it).’ [Jadi Nelayan 41]

7.1.2 Multifunctional lexical roots

Similarly to Colloquial Malay spoken by ethnic Malays,⁷³ a lot of Seletar words occur in their unaffixed root forms. Therefore, one cannot frequently rely on affixation as an identifier of the syntactic category of the word. Words which semantically appear as verbs can be used in nominal function without any overt morphological changes, and vice versa for words which are semantically nominal. Thus, the

⁷² The second and third person pronouns in Seletar do not specify number, but the first person pronouns do, see §7.2.2.1 for more details.

⁷³ Colloquial Malay varieties are those spoken by ethnic Malays among themselves in daily unmarked, informal speech situations. Some important features of Colloquial Malay are the employment of unaffixed, bare root forms of nouns and verbs, the elision of all but most necessary participants, and prevalent topic-comment information structures (Benjamin, 1985, p. 354).

syntactic category of all words which appear semantically nominal or verbal are best identified in context and inferred from their syntagmatic relations with other words in the clause. For example, the same root *cita* can be used nominally as ‘story’ (86) or verbally as ‘to tell story’ (87) without any morphological change. The same word *man* in (88) means ‘food’ and in (89) it means ‘to eat’. Because there is no change in form, it is possible that some sentences can have ambiguous interpretations. In (90), the first *sumpah* is clearly in verbal function ‘to curse’, because it is preceded by an adversative passive marker *kəna*, while the *sumpah* in the following utterance can be interpreted as verbal still (‘cursed by the animal’), or in nominal function (‘curse of the animal’).

(86) am dəŋə **cita** nek am muin
 1SG listen story grandmother 1SG long.ago
 ‘I listened to my grandmother’s stories in the past.’ [Anak Naga 2]

(87) mak am yaŋ **cita** pada kami
 mother 1SG REL tell.story to 1SG
 ‘It was my mother who told this story to me.’ [Anak Naga 5]

(88) kalaw kita da bəsa, da da, tahu cayi **man** səni
 if 1PL COMPL big COMPL virgin know find eat oneself
 ‘When we are/one is already older, already of age, and know (how to) find food on our own,’
 [Jadi Nelayan 86]

(89) ay nak **man** tidak
 2 want eat NEG
 ‘You want to eat (it) or not?’ [Anak Naga 94]

(90) ay man təlow jə de upaja kəna **sumpah** ...
 2 eat egg that PAR apparently get curse
 ‘You ate that egg! Apparently (you) got cursed...’

sumpah bənataŋ jə
 curse animal that
 ‘The curse of the animal’ / ‘Cursed by the animal’ [Anak Naga 229]

One of the ways to distinguish nouns and verbs in Malay is by the distribution of negators *tidak* and *bukan*: Nominals cannot be negated by *tidak*, and *bukan* when negating verbs gives an emphatic or contrastive meaning to the negation (Himmelmann, 2005, p. 127). Seletar has both *tidak* and *bukan* (in the form *bukən*) negators, and so they can be used to distinguish between nouns and verbs. However, in Seletar, there is an additional, frequently used negator *ncak* that can negate both nominals and verbal words (see §7.3.2), thus the negators are not always the best tools to distinguish syntactic categories.

7.2 Nominal domain

7.2.1 Structure of the Noun Phrase

A noun phrase in Seletar can consist of a noun or a noun with modifiers. The noun can be a common noun, a proper noun or a pronoun. Case, gender or number are not overtly marked on nouns. The nouns used more often than not in their monomorphemic bare forms. However, those that are derived from other word classes via affixation (see §6.1.2) do occur occasionally. In a noun phrase, the head noun is followed by its modifiers, which can be other nouns (91), adjectives (92), possessors (93), relative

clauses (94), prepositional phrases (95) or demonstrative determiners (91,94). The modifiers usually appear in this order. Quantifiers (including numerals) usually precede their heads (96), but they can also follow the head in a classifier phrase (97). The classifiers in the texts are seen to come after the head when there is one (97).

(91) o **bataŋ asam** jə dəkət
 INTRJ tree tamarind that near
 ‘Oh, the tamarind tree is near.’ [Mak Pacat 106]

(92) təlow anak ? **təlow bəsar**
 egg what egg big
 ‘‘What (kind of) eggs?’’ ‘‘Big eggs.’’ [Anak Naga 49-50]

(93) **nek** **kami** pun ada pada juga
 grandmother 1SG PAR PFV say also
 ‘My grandmother had told this story too.’ [Anak Naga 6]

(94) **apa~apa** **la** **buah** **yaŋ** **oŋ** **tanam** jə, cəmpədə?, bəmut
 what~INDET PAR REL people plant that cempedak rambutan
 ‘whatever (it was) that people planted, (be it) cempedak or rambutan,’ [Jadi Nelayan 76]

(95) a **masa dam aəl...** masa da dəkət ŋa pada
 COMPL time in water time COMPL near 3 say
 ‘‘Already the time in the water... the time is already near,’’ he said.’ [Anak Naga 195]

(96) bila bə-kumpol e, ntua cayi **satu** **təmpat**
 when CONT-gather PAR elder find one place
 ‘When (they) gathered, the elders looked for a place.’ [Sejarah Seletar 12]

(97) dapat **kətam satu** **eko** saja
 get crab one CLF:animal only
 ‘(We) got one crab only.’ [Jadi Nelayan 26]

7.2.1.1 Quantifiers

Quantifiers here include numerals and non-numerals. The numerals in Seletar are listed here:

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 1 | satu | [satu] | 8 | lapan | [(l)apan] |
| 2 | dua | [dua] or [duə] | 9 | səmbilan | [səmbilan] |
| 3 | tiga | [tiga] or [tigə] | 10 | səpuloŋ | [səpulo(h)] |
| 4 | əmpat | [(ə)mpat] | 11 | səbəlas | [səbəlas] |
| 5 | lima | [lima] or [limə] | 12 | dua bəlas | [dua bəlas] or [duə bəlas] |
| 6 | ənam | [(ə)nam] | 100 | səratos | [səratos] |
| 7 | tujo | [tujo] | 1000 | səribu | [səribu] |

In fast speech, some numerals are seen reduced: /tiga geŋet/ [tə geŋet] ‘three ringgit’; /səpuloŋ sen/ [s(ə)pwo(h) sen] / [s(ə)plo(h) sen] ‘ten cents’. The numerals can be used without numeral classifiers (96).

Non-numeral quantifiers in the Seletar texts include *səmun/səmuə* ‘all’ (*səmun* is more common), *sətiap* ‘each’, *baŋak* ‘many’, (*tə*)-*ketet* ‘a little’.⁷⁴ They usually precede the noun they are quantifying (96) and can be used without a head (98-99).

(98) **səmun** nikah suku samə səndiri
 all marry tribe same oneself
 ‘All (the people) married within their own race.’ [Sejarah Seletar 91]

(99) **baŋak** tə-ekot uŋ luar
 many PFV-follow people outside
 ‘Many have followed the outsiders.’ [Sejarah Seletar 81].

7.2.1.2 Classifiers and measure nouns

The numeral classifiers used in the texts are (*b*)*otey* ‘CLF:ROUND’ and *eko* ‘CLF:ANIMAL’. *eko* (SM *ekor*) ‘tail’ is used for animals only. (*b*)*otey* is used for small, round objects (e.g. egg in the text). The form *botey* is used when the clitic *sə=* ‘one’ is attached (100), but *otey* when there is no clitic (101). *botey* very likely is cognate with SM *butir* ‘CLF for small spherical objects’ as it follows the same sound changes as *pasir* ‘sand’, which in Seletar is [pasey] (from word list collected in Tan, 2020). The classifiers are only used with numerals (free forms and clitics).

(100) am ami **sə=botey,** mak
 1SG take one= CLF:ROUND mother
 ‘I took one piece, Mother.’ [Anak Naga 78]

(101) mamak, am jumpa təlow, dua **otey**
 mother 1SG meet egg two CLF:ROUND
 ‘Mother, I encountered eggs, two of them.’ [Anak Naga 77]

The classifiers can be used in the absence of a head (100), and are seen to follow the head when there is one (97). However, one can say that the classifier phrases that occur after the heads in (97) and (101) are postponed afterthoughts, and may not represent the usual order of classifiers and their heads.

The measure nouns used in the texts are that of time: *ayi* [ayi] ‘day’, *miŋgu* [miŋgu] ‘week’, *bulən* [bulən] ‘month’, *jum* [jum] ‘hour’; weight: *kilo* [kilo] kilogram, *kati* [kati] ‘catty’; money: *sen* [sen] ‘cent’ and *geŋet* [geŋet] ‘ringgit’. The ringgit unit is used only once and with the numeral three, pronounced [tə geŋet] ‘three ringgit’. The measure nouns do not co-occur with classifiers. They are preceded by numerals (both free forms and clitics). In the case of ‘one’, the full form and the clitic form brings about different meanings and they are used in different contexts. In (102), *satu* ‘one’ indicates one particular day, while the clitic in (103) is used for counting.

(102) a **satu ayi,** wak ɲa dəŋan anak ɲa pəgi utan
 PAR one day uncle 3 with child 3 go forest
 ‘One day, her uncle and his children went to the forest’ [Anak Naga 15]

⁷⁴ (*tə*)-*ketet* is not cognate with Malay *sədikit/dikit/sikit* ‘a little’. *tə*- might be the adjectival affix *tər-* in Malay that indicates superlative, as I recorded *ketet* ‘little’ as the base form in word lists (Tan, 2020). The form is similar to Minangkabau *sakete?* ‘little bit’ (Adelaar, 1992, p. 181), but its origin requires more research.

- (103) **maken s=ayi, tandok da bəsal**
 increasingly one=day horn COMPL big
 ‘Day by day, the horns had already grown big.’ [Anak Naga 158]

7.2.1.3 Possessor

The possessor follows the head (102, 104). The possessive pronouns in Seletar have the same forms as personal pronouns (see §7.2.2.1 and §7.2.2.2). I do not treat Seletar pronouns that follow the head as clitics like that of some Malay varieties (e.g. *-ku, -mu, -nya* are clitics of first, second and third personal pronouns in SM, Adelaar, 1992, p. 122-123) because they do not seem to be reduced phonetically. Therefore, I have presented them in full form (e.g. 102). Possessors can be stacked (105). A range of semantic relationships can be expressed by this N-possessor construction: for example possessee-possessor (104), kin relationship-person (105), part-whole (106), and object-source (107).

- (104) **bow pancak pak e**
 bring spear father PAR
 ‘Bring my spear.’ (this line is spoken by the father) [Anak Naga 25]

- (105) **adik-bədik nek am ada tujo bəlas kəlwarga**
 sibling~PL grandmother 1SG EXIST seven numbers.11.to.19 family
 ‘My grandmother’s siblings had seventeen families.’ [Anak Naga 12]

- (106) **ntah mak, jok am panas**
 don’t.know mother body 1SG hot
 ‘I don’t know, Mother. My body is hot.’ [Anak Naga 110]

- (107) **jə... sa buŋ jə**
 that sound bird that
 ‘There... the sound of birds.’ [Mak Pacat 40]

The possessor can precede the head in possessive constructions that use the possessive marker *puna*. This type of construction is less frequently used, and seen when the speaker is code-switching to Bazaar Malay when addressing the researcher (evidenced by the use of a borrowed Hokkien pronoun) (108). The head follows the possessive marker *puna*, and the possessor precedes it. This type of construction is also seen in Colloquial Malay spoken by ethnic Malays. Nomoto and Soh (2019, p. 489-490) observed that Colloquial Malay borrowed this structure from Southern Chinese languages which use possessive markers of their own.

- (108) **wa puna pak... kita puna pak bawa apa taw? bəliuŋ**
 1SG(HOKKIEN) POSS father 1PL POSS father bring what PAR axe
 ‘My father ... do you know what my father brought? An axe!’ (*kita*, a 1PL pronoun is used for singular referent here, see §7.2.2.1.2) [Jadi Nelayan 31]

puna is also a discourse particle showing certainty (§7.8.2.2) as well as a particle used for repetition (see §6.2.1).

7.2.1.4 Relative Clause

Relative clauses can modify an NP. Seletar has postnominal relative clauses. A detailed discussion of the relative clause structure can be found in §7.6.1. The examples below show the use of a relative clause to modify their heads. The relative clauses are marked by square brackets. The relativiser *yaŋ* introduces the relative clause (109). There is a variant relativiser *naŋ* in Seletar (110). *naŋ* appears in Jakartanese Malay, as well as Banjarese Malay, but its origins is obscure (Adelaar, 1992, p. 128).

(109) bənda [yaŋ ncaʔ=k kita tahu], jaŋan la kita
 thing REL NEG 1PL know IMP.NEG PAR 1PL

man~man

eat~REP

‘Things that we do not know of, do not eat recklessly.’ [Anak Naga 251]

(110) ikat sumpah [naŋ kita tidaʔ tahu]
 tie curse REL 1PL NEG know

‘(We might get) tied to curses that we do not know about.’ [Anak Naga 252]

7.2.1.5 Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase is used post-nominally to modify the head. The prepositions used in Seletar, the structure of the prepositional phrase and their functions are discussed in §7.2.3.

(111) am minta bənda [kat juh] aja
 1SG ask.for thing at far only

‘I ask for the thing in the distance only.’ [Mak Pacat 24]

7.2.1.6 Demonstrative determiners

Demonstrative determiners are used to specify the definiteness of the NP. They have the same form as demonstrative pronouns (§7.2.2.3). However, they do not replace the NP, but specify it. An NP modified by a demonstrative determiner is identifiable and can be retrieved from the context (either the referent was previously mentioned in discourse, or it is assumed to be understood by the listener because it is a cultural convention). The demonstrative determiners usually follow the head (112-115), but they can precede the head as well (116-117). It is not entirely clear if there are any significant differences in meaning between the two orientations. The Determiner-Head construction seems to be more emphatic, but more data is required for the observation to be definitive.

There are two sets of determiners used in the Seletar texts, each with a proximal-distal distinction. The first set is *ika/ka* [ʔika] / [ka] ‘this’ and *jə* [jə] (in fast speech [yə]) ‘that’. The second set is identifiably canonical Malay *ini/ni* ‘this’ and *itu/tu* ‘that’. The frequency of the first set is higher than the *ini-itu* set. *ka* is a reduced form of *ika*, which in turn is possibly related to *sika* ‘here’ (see §7.2.4 for locative deictics), much like how *ini* ‘this’ and *sini* ‘here’ in canonical Malay are related. *ika* appears also in the Jakun speech of some villages and other Sea Tribe varieties (see §8.2). *jə*, on the other hand, is not present in the Jakun word list. The word I suspect comes from Aslian *ajih/ajeh* ‘that’ (for the Aslian entry, see Skeat & Blagden, 1906b, p. 732-733), which is also possibly the origin for Seletar’s second person singular pronoun (see §7.2.2.1.3). It is unclear what governs the choice between the two sets, or whether there are any nuances in meaning between them. Much more data is required before any informed statements can be made.

(112) bila am da bəsal, am iŋat **cita ka**
 when 1SG COMPL big 1SG remember story this

‘When I had already grown up, I remembered this story’ [Anak Naga 8]

(113) **təlow jə** ay tak tahu bənataŋ mana
 egg that 2 NEG know animal which

‘That egg, you don’t know which animal (it belongs to).’ [Anak Naga 55]

(114) kita ncaK kon ekot **kali** **ini** aja la
 1PL NEG Seletar.people follow time this only PAR
 ‘We don’t need people to follow (us) just this time.’ [Mak Pacat 10]

(115) ntah, teŋok **lopak** **tu**
 don’t.know see puddle that
 ‘I don’t know, look in that puddle.’ [Mak Pacat 75]

(116) **ika** **adik** ka bətol bukən, sayiŋ campak
 this child PAR:Q truly NEG all.at.once throw
 ‘‘Is this child truly bad?’’ All at once, (he) threw (the child away).’ [Mak Pacat 154]

(117) mak ɲa, pak ɲa bole mana buaŋ **jə** **adik** dalam utan
 mother 3 father 3 able where throw that child inside forest PAR
 ‘His mother, his father, how can (they) throw away the child inside the forest?’ [Mak Pacat 83]

The determiners mark deictic elements that are physically near or far (e.g. 112-116), or a definite entity that can be retrieved from context (119: presumably the listener knows where the sea is; 120: see below paragraph) or one that was previously mentioned or established in the discourse (117, 118).

(118) bila bə-kumpul e, ntua cayi satu təmpat
 when CONT-gather PAR elder find one place
 ‘When (they) gathered, the elders looked for a place.’ [Sejarah Seletar 12]

cayi **satu** **təmpat** **jə** e... cayi təmpat ulak
 find one place that PAR find place repeat
 ‘(They) looked for that one place...(they) were looking for the same place.’ [Sejarah Seletar 13-14]

(119) pak ɲa ikat pawu dəkət luar, də **laot** **jə**
 father 3 tie boat at outside at sea that
 ‘His father tied the boat outside, at the sea’ [Anak Naga 106]

The demonstrative determiners can follow proper nouns and pronouns which are inherently identifiable. The determiner marks the entity in (120) as readily retrievable or assumed to be known (the river is historically important to the Orang Seletar).

(120) di **tanjoŋ** **suŋay** **bəsal** **jə**, səjarah a, jə
 at cape river big that history PAR that
 ‘At Tanjong Sungai Besar, (there) is history, there.’ [Sejarah Seletar 62]

(121) eh **ay** **ka** macam anu macam naga
 INTRJ 2 this like FIL like dragon
 ‘Eh, you here are like what-do-you-call-it... like a dragon.’ [Anak Naga 145]

Example (121) shows a Pronoun-Determiner construction that is used frequently in Seletar. The pronouns involved are usually first person pronouns *kami* ‘1SG’, *kita* ‘1PL’ and the second person pronoun *ay* ‘2’. The construction is interpreted as referring to the state of the person in a particular moment. As the most common determiner involved in this construction is the proximal *ka* ‘this’, the translation is something along the lines of ‘as (pronoun) am/are now/here’. The determiners in this construction also seem to serve as focus markers, bringing attention to the main referents involved in the utterance.

(122) nak kənal di **kami ka** (name)
 want recognize self 1SG this name
 ‘I want to introduce myself here (i.e. as I am now) as (name).’ [Anak Naga 1]

(123) bila yaŋ cucu lalu ka anak, jagə **kami ka**,
 whatever.time REL grandchild cross or what take.care 1SG this
 səmun jaga
 all take.care
 ‘Whenever it is (your) grandchildren pass by or something, take care of me as I am, take care of all of us.’ [Anak Naga 35] (This is a prayer made to the spirits of the forest.)

(124) a supaya kami, **bini ka...** lidoŋ kami
 PAR so.that 1SG wife this protect 1PL.EXCL
 ‘(I ask) so I and my wife as we are now... (you will) protect us.’ [Mak Pacat 26]

(125) uŋ iŋat, **kita ka** baŋsa uŋ
 Malay think 1PL this race Malay
 ‘The Malays think we (as we are here) are Malays.’ [Sejarah Seletar 78]

7.2.2 Pronouns: personal and demonstrative

7.2.2.1 Personal Pronouns

The personal pronouns used in the Seletar texts are listed in Figure 7-1. In brackets are pronouns infrequently used. The occurrence of each will be discussed more in detail in the sections below. Case is not marked in pronouns. All pronouns listed (except for *ja* in some functions, discussed in §6.1.3) do not occur as clitics.

| | <u>Singular</u> | <u>Plural</u> |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| First Person | <i>am, kami, (kita)</i> | <i>kita, (kami)</i> |
| Second Person | <i>ay</i> | <i>ay</i> |
| Third Person | <i>ja, (dia), (ji)</i> | <i>ja</i> |

Figure 7-1 Seletar pronouns

When the Seletar speakers address outsiders and switch dialects (to Bazaar Malay in the text), the personal pronouns used are *saya* ‘1SG’, *wa* ‘1SG’ and *awak* ‘2SG’. Each form is elaborated in §7.2.2.1.1 and §7.2.2.1.3 below.

7.2.2.1.1 First Person Singular

am [ʔam] and *kami* [kami] ‘1SG’ are frequently used in Seletar. *am* is more common compared to *kami*.

The origin of *am* is obscure. However, one cannot help but draw similarities with Minangkabau *ambo* ‘1SG’ (Adelaar, 1992, p. 124) and also Orang Kanaq *ambəʔ* ‘1SG’ (Yusop, 2011, p. 53), both of which are cognates with Malay *hamba* ‘servant’ (which is borrowed from Sanskrit *hambhāya* ‘low’). Some Jakun varieties have *kam* and *mm.ma*, as well as *kami* (Seidlitz, 2005, Appendix). Possibly, there existed an original disyllabic first person pronoun in Seletar along the lines of *amba/ama* which overtime was reduced to a monosyllable, maybe due to fast speech, or maybe it was reduced to form a set of monosyllabic pronouns with *ay* ‘2’ and *ja* ‘3’. As the Orang Seletar served the Malay rulers centuries ago (see §2.2 for details), it is very possible that *hamba* ‘servant’, which is a term of self-reference when speaking to people of higher status in Classical Malay, became a regular occurrence in their language.

kami is used both as a first person singular pronoun and a first person plural exclusive pronoun in Seletar. However, the latter usage is less frequent (see §7.2.2.1.2 for the first person plural exclusive use). *kami* for singular reference is common in Colloquial Indonesian (Ewing, 2005, p. 246), and is reported in Jakun spoken in some villages as well (Seidlitz, 2005, Appendix). *kami* is also used by royals to refer to first-person singular in certain speech styles (Donohue & Smith, 1998, p. 71). It might be possible that *kami* as a first-person singular pronoun in Seletar was influenced by (or borrowed from?) this royal plural used by the Malay rulers whom the Orang Seletar served closely (see §2.2 for details on the relationship between the Orang Seletar and Malay rulers).

What governs speakers to choose between *am* and *kami* is unclear. Samsur (2015, p. 296) noted that *am* is a pronoun used by a person of higher status. His observation is so because he only observed the village headman using *am*. However, my data shows that the pronoun is not restricted to a person of higher status (S), but to common people as well (L and T). Although the possible origin of *am* might indicate politeness, data shows that the present use of *am* does not account for politeness. Both pronouns can be used when speaking to elders, for example when a child is speaking to his mother (100, 127). *am* and *kami* are also used with people of the same status, for example when spouses speak to each other (126). In fact, one can find both *am* and *kami* in the same sentence (126). They also occur in the same contexts (127-128). For now, it seems that *am* and *kami* are interchangeable.

(126) *na pada lagi, neŋkay lagi am ləmah, kami ləmah*
 3 say again ENDEAR again 1SG weak 1SG weak
 ‘She said again, “My dear, I am getting weaker, I am weak.”’ [Mak Pacat 169]

(127) *kami jaga laot, mak, ye diə*
 1SG take.care sea mother he/she.say
 ‘“I (will) take care of the sea, Mother,” he said.’ [Anak Naga 198]

(128) *am jaga laot na pada e*
 1SG take.care sea 3 say PAR
 ‘“I (will) take care of the sea,” he said.’ [Anak Naga 174]

saya [saya/sayə] and *wa* [wa] usually only occur when the speakers are switching dialect to Bazaar Malay or when talking to the researcher, who is Chinese. The first line of (129) shows T addressing the researcher directly. The use of *awak* [ʔawaʔ] ‘2SG’, usually seen in Bazaar Malay and other canonical Malay varieties, in the first line signifies the start of the dialect shift. The more common Seletar second person pronoun is *ay* (see §7.2.2.1.3). After this first line with *awak*, the speaker’s speech exhibits a switch in variety, evidenced by the use of more elongated forms (e.g. [makan] instead of [man] ‘eat’), trill rhotic instead of velar fricative, the *puna* construction (see (135)), and also the change to first person pronouns. The more common Seletar forms *am* or *kami* are replaced with *saya* and *wa*, which are more typical of Bazaar Malay (Aye, 2006, p. 72). T then has to be reminded by M to speak Seletar (last line of 129).

(129) T: *awak paŋgel kəlapə kan*
 2SG(M) call coconut PAR:Q
 ‘You call (it) ‘kelapa’, right?’ (speaking to the researcher) [Jadi Nelayan 21]

... *wa balek rumah*
 1SG(HOK) return home
 ‘I return home’ [Jadi Nelayan 43]

... a len sipot mana saya pun ambe taw
 PAR other sea.snail where 1SG(M) PAR take PAR

saya rəbus, **saya** makan juga
 1SG(M) boil 1SG(M) eat also.CONTRARY

M: cap kon, cap kon
 speak Seletar.people speak Seletar.people

T: ‘Other types of sea snails, whichever kinds, I will also take (them), you know? I will still boil and eat (them).

M: Speak in *kon* (Seletar language)!’ [Jadi Nelayan 50-52]

The colloquial Malay form *aku* is also used by a speaker, albeit infrequently (see (177)). The choice of this form is not clearly motivated by the dialect switch just mentioned, as the speaker was not addressing the researcher and no observable phonological or morphological changes to other words such as those mentioned above were observed. The speaker is probably drawing on her knowledge of the local variety spoken by ethnic Malays.

kita, a common first-person plural pronoun (see §7.2.2.1.2) can also be used for first person singular reference (135).

It is also possible to use a kinship term for first person singular reference (e.g. a father is using *pak* ‘father’ to refer to himself in (104)).

7.2.2.1.2 First Person Plural

kami [kami] is infrequently used as a first person plural exclusive pronoun, and only occurred two times in the texts. Both the singular and plural use of *kami* can be seen in the same sentence (130), and the function of each has to be interpreted from the context.

(130) *A man is praying to his god to protect him and his wife while they look for tamarinds in the forest.*

a supaya **kami**, bini ka... lindoŋ **kami**
 PAR so.that 1SG wife this protect 1PL.EXCL

‘(I ask) so I and my wife as we are now... (that you will) protect us.’ [Mak Pacat 26]

kita [kita/ kitə] is commonly used as first person plural inclusive pronoun. This use is often seen in dialogues, like (131) and (132). The plural inclusive can be just the speaker and his/her one interlocutor (131, 132). When the speaker is narrating stories to the researcher, one would expect him to use a first-person exclusive pronoun *kami* when referring to himself and his people, as the hearer (i.e. researcher) is not part of the stories. However, the form *kita* is found throughout the narration, e.g. (125), (133). It seems that there is a loss or a blurring of the distinction between exclusive *kami* and inclusive *kita*, where *kita* now can act as both inclusive and exclusive pronoun. Other non-standard varieties of Malay and Indonesian (e.g. Betawi Malay, Kelantan Malay) have also lost this inclusive/exclusive distinction, with the *kita* form becoming the dominant plural pronoun (Donohue and Smith, 1998). The pronoun *kita* is not restricted only to inclusive/exclusive plural usages, but also for generic referents, i.e. anyone. This usually occurs in hypothetical *kalaw* constructions (134). Since *kita* can indicate both first person exclusive, inclusive and generic referents, I have decided to gloss it as simply 1PL.

(131) *A child is speaking to his father after being told to put an egg he found back to its original place.*

ncak, pak
NEG father

kita jan cayi laju tapi ncak jumpa bənatəŋ
1PL walk find fast but NEG meet animal

‘No, Father. We (=the child who is speaking, and the father who is listening) walked and hunted quickly but we didn’t encounter animals.’ [Anak Naga 67-68]

(132) dəmak **kita** cayi asam e
at.where 1PL find tamarind PAR

(wife speaking to husband): ‘Where are we looking for tamarinds?’ [Mak Pacat 3]

(133) bila da campo pə-gaol siŋa e uŋ iŋat **kita** ka
when COMPL mix CONT-mingle until PAR Malay think 1PL this

baŋsa uŋ
race Malay

‘(We) have already mixed and mingled around, until the Malays think we here are Malays.’

[Sejarah Seletar 78]

(134) kalaw **kita** tak bəlaŋa, mana **kita** tahu
if 1PL NEG learn where 1PL know

‘If we don’t / one doesn’t learn, how are we/is one supposed to know (how to hunt)?’ [Jadi Nelayan 45]

As mentioned in §7.2.2.1.1, *kita* can also be used to refer to a singular referent (135), but this is infrequent.

(135) wa puŋa pak... **kita** puŋa pak bawa apa taw ? bəliuŋ
1SG(HOKKIEN) POSS father 1PL POSS father bring what PAR axe

‘My father ... do you know what my father brought? An axe!’ [Jadi Nelayan 31]

7.2.2.1.3 Second Person

ay [ʔay] is the common second person pronoun in Seletar. It seems cognate with Jakun second person pronoun *ajih/ayih* (see Seidlitz, 2005, Appendix), and also Temuan second person pronoun *ajih* (see Looi, Baer & Jalil, 2018, p. 2; Yusop, 2011, p. 259). Anderbeck (2012, p. 274) suggests the Jakun *ayih* probably came from Aslian *ajih* ‘that, there’. It is likely that all three of Seletar, Jakun and Temuan’s second person pronouns have origins in Aslian *ajih/ajeh* ‘that’ (multiple Aslian languages have (had?) *jih* or *ajih* for ‘that’, see Skeat & Blagden, 1906b, p. 732-733). As Seletar is spoken in the southern end of the Peninsula, the possible Aslian groups that could have interacted with the Orang Seletar are the southern ones—Semelai, Temoq and Mah Meri. Much more research is required to confirm these suspicions.

The second person pronoun is not marked for number. The actual number of the referent has to be interpreted from the context. *ay* in the majority of the text is used to refer to a singular referent (136), but plural referents occur as well (137). In (137), the main character is speaking to all her relatives and family.

(136) *neŋkay*, **ay** *dapat* *anak*, *neŋkay*
 ENDEAR 2 get what ENDEAR
 ‘My dear, what did you get, my dear?’ [Anak Naga 74]

(137) *jaga* **ay**, *pada* *pəsan* *macam* *jə*
 take.care 2 say advice like that
 ‘‘Take care of yourselves,’’ (she) said and advised like that.’ [Anak Naga 228]

awak, which is a common second person pronoun in Malay spoken by ethnic Malays, is rare, and only used when addressing the researcher (i.e. when dialect switching).

7.2.2.1.4 Third Person

The most common third person pronoun used in Seletar is *na* [na/nə]. The form occasionally occurs in cliticised form in Seletar, but not when functioning as a third person personal pronoun or possessive pronoun (see §6.1.3). It is similar to the Iban third person pronoun *na*, in that both use the full forms instead of clitics (Adelaar, 1992, p. 125). *na* is not marked for number, and the actual number of the referent is interpreted based on context. In (138), the female character of the story (referred to by the first *na*) dies, and either her husband or her relatives (ambiguous, referred to by the second *na*) start to cry. An explicit third person plural meaning can be expressed analytically, usually by the construction *jambak* [jamba?] ‘bunch’ plus either *na* or *kon* to form *jambak na/kon*, literally ‘the bunch of people’. Both animate (140) and inanimate referents (141) can be referred to by *na*.

(138) *bila* **na** *abis*, **na** *naŋes*
 when 3 finish 3 cry
 ‘When she had gone, he/they cried.’ [Mak Pacat 230]

(139) *masa* *jə*, **jambak** **na** *iŋat* *la*
 time that bunch 3 remember PAR
 ‘During that time, the bunch/they remember’ [Sejarah Seletar 47]

(140) **na** *pada* *sən* *jə*
 3 say like that
 ‘He said like that.’ [Anak Naga 170]

(141) *keŋ* **na** *da* *masak* *a* *gaŋ*
 now 3 COMPL ripe PAR PAR
 ‘Now they (the tamarinds) are already ripe.’ [Mak Pacat 35]

The common Malay third person singular pronoun *dia* [diə] is used in Seletar as well, but less frequently. It is not motivated by dialect switching, as mentioned in §7.2.2.1.1. Referents referred to by *dia* are singular.

(142) dalam sə=minggu, **dia** tak balek lagi, mak dia tak bole buat
 in one=week 3SG(M) NEG return again mother 3SG(M)NEG able do

apa
 what

‘In a week’s time, he did not return again, his mother could not do anything.’ [Anak Naga 243]

There is one instance where *ji* is used as a third person singular pronoun. It resembles the third person singular pronoun of Achenese *jih*. It is unknown how widespread this use is in Seletar. More research is required. (143) shows that, initially, *ji* is used, but afterwards the speaker reverts to *ja*.

(143) abis jə, **ji** padə
 finish that 3SG say

am akan pəgi, **ja** padə
 1SG FUT go 3 say

‘After that, she said, “I will go,” she said.’ [Anak Naga 220-221]

7.2.2.2 Possessive Pronouns

The possessive pronouns in Seletar have the same form as personal pronouns. I do not treat Seletar pronouns that follow the head as clitics like that of some Malay varieties (e.g. *-ku*, *-mu*, *-nya* are clitics of first, second and third personal pronouns in SM) because they do not seem to be reduced phonetically. They are kept as full forms. The possessive pronouns follow the heads they modify, except for those used in the *puna* construction (see §7.2.1.3) where the possessor precedes the head. All the pronouns mentioned in the above sections, except *aku*, *awak* and *ji*, can be used possessively in the texts.

The first person singular possessives *am* and *kami* seem, again, mostly interchangeable. They can follow the same lexical items (e.g. *nek am*, *nek kami* ‘my grandmother’; *susu am*, *susu kami* ‘my breast’). However, it seems that there is a tendency to use *am* for body parts like *jok* ‘body’, *jantuj* ‘heart’, but then, for *susu* ‘breast’, both *am* and *kami* are used. For kinship terms of mother and father, it seems *am* is preferred as well, but for *nek* ‘grandmother’ both forms can be used, and for *anak* ‘child/children’, only *kami* is used. Much more data is needed before we can discern definitively any difference in distribution and usage between *am* and *kami*, if there are any.

First person singular *saya* and *wa*, as mentioned in §7.2.2.1.1, only appear when the speaker is switching dialects. In (144), speaker S is quoting those Orang Seletar who have married spouses of Chinese descent, and who name their children with Chinese names. Notice the initial use of *saya* but also the subsequent change to a more ‘native’ pronoun *kami*. *wa* used possessively is only seen in the *puna* construction (see §7.2.1.3) and it precedes the head (135). *kami* is used possessively only in its first person singular function, and never in first person plural exclusive function.

(144) wo, anak **saya** a, anak kami ka, nama ja lim ataw tan
 INTRJ child 1SG(M) PAR child 1SG this name 3 Lim or Tan
 ‘Wow, my child... my child here, his name is Lim or Tan.’ [Sejarah Seletar 86]

kita in first person plural usage can be used possessively (145). In first person singular possessive function, *kita* is used only in *puna* construction (135).

(145) jadi suku bangsa **kita** ka bə-baŋak bangsa
 so tribe race 1PL this POSSN-many race
 ‘And so our tribes/races here have many (sub)races’ [Sejarah Seletar 49]

Second person *ay* (146) and third person *ja* (147) can be used possessively as well.

(146) ŋə kulet ŋok **ay** jadi macam kulet~kulet
 why skin body 2 become like skin-PL
 ‘Why is the skin on your body becoming like patches of skin?’ [Anak Naga 133]

(147) ŋok **ja** da bə-sisik
 body 3 COMPL STV-scale
 ‘His body had already been scaling.’ [Anak Naga 131]

7.2.2.3 Demonstratives

7.2.2.3.1 Demonstrative Pronouns

There are three demonstrative pronouns: proximal and distal. Proximal *ka* ‘this’, distal *ja* ‘that’ and distal *tu* ‘that’ can be used pronominally. The demonstrative pronouns can refer to entities in physical space (149) or those that are already established in the discourse (148). They can act as locative pronouns (150). The demonstrative pronouns are commonly used to refer to inanimate referents (e.g. 148-150), but they can be used for human/animate referents as well (151). Propositional content can also be referred to by the demonstrative pronouns (152), or can be introduced by them (153).

(148) sə=pawo **ka...** sə=pawo am man, sə=pawo am ncaŋ man
 one=half this one=half 1SG eat one=half 1SG NEG eat
 ‘Half of this (egg)... Half (of it) I ate, half (of it) I didn’t eat.’ [Anak Naga 97]

(149) **ja,** bataŋ asam dəkət ya
 that tree tamarind near PAR
 ‘That one... the tamarind tree is near.’ [Mak Pacat 95]

(150) **tu,** təmpat kita bute
 that place 1PL that.day
 ‘There, (at) the place (we went) that day.’ [Mak Pacat 4]

(151) da tiga bulən, **tu** bə-sisik
 COMPL three month that STV-scale
 ‘(It had) already been three months, he had been (in a state of) scaling.’ [Anak Naga 130]

(152) kami akan tiŋgəl ay, ja pada
 1SG FUT leave.behind 2 3 say

səbap **ja,** jaga la anak~anak
 because.that take.care PAR child~PL
 ‘‘I will leave you behind,’’ she said, ‘‘Because of that, take care of the children.’’ [Mak Pacat 216]

(153) mak ja bila kə laot, cita **ka,** ja pada ...
 mother 3 when to sea tell.story this 3 say
 ‘His mother, when (she went) to the sea, told this, she said, ...’ [Anak Naga 247-248]

naŋ ka ‘this / this one’ (lit. ‘REL this’) is noted to be used the same way as the demonstrative pronoun *ka*, see (34) and (49). This seems to be a conventionalised usage deriving from a headless relative clause (see §7.6.1 for headless relative clauses).

The distal demonstrative pronouns *jə* and *tu* are used often in expressions such as *macam jə* / reduced form *sən jə* (lit. like that) ‘like that/ like so’, and discourse linkers like *abis jə* [*abi jə* / *abe jə* *abi tu*] (lit. finish that) ‘after that’ (143) and *ləpas tu* (lit. past that) ‘after that’ (154). *macam jə* (reduced form *sən jə*) ‘like so’ is commonly used to refer to the proposition just mentioned (156-157).

(154) **ləpas tu,** pəgi
 past that go
 ‘After that... (we) went (to hunt).’ [Jadi Nelayan 37]

(155) kalaw dəŋan cina a, hanta kətam, **macam jə**
 if with Chinese PAR send crab like that
 ‘When (we traded) with the Chinese, (we) sent crabs. That’s how it went.’ [Jadi Nelayan 80]

(156) ya ka, kakak ay ka, ɲa pada **sən jə**
 PAR here sister 2 this 3 say like that
 ‘“Yes, here, your sister is here,” he said like that.’ [Mak Pacat 194]

7.2.2.3.2 Demonstrative Determiner

The demonstrative determiners have been discussed in §7.2.1.6.

7.2.3 Prepositions and prepositional phrases

Prepositions form the head of prepositional phrases, which can modify a noun phrase (see §7.2.1.5), function as adjuncts (157, 160, 161) or as predicates of a verbless clause (158). Prepositions also mark non-core/oblique arguments, e.g. Benefactive (159) or Goal (87).

(157) **kə dam laot,** am ncak panas
 to inside sea 1SG NEG hot
 ‘Into the sea, I am not hot.’ [Anak Naga 139]

(158) ah bətol, adik **dalam lopak**
 PAR correct child inside puddle
 ‘Ah (you’re) right, the child is in the puddle.’ [Mak Pacat 78]

(159) (name), satu, ajar-an **pada kita,** ɲa pada
 (name) one teach-RSLT to 1PL 3 say
 ‘“(name of person) is one lesson to us,” he said.’ [Mak Pacat 236]

(160) **di jow muin** anu, mana ada uŋ
 at Johor long.ago FIL where EXIST outsider/Malay
 ‘In (the time of) Old Johor, how were there Malays/outside?’ [Sejarah Seletar 61]

(161) mak, am akan dudok **dəkət laot**
 mother 1SG FUT live at sea
 ‘Mother, I will live at sea.’ [Anak Naga 153]

The prepositions in Seletar include stationary locatives *di* ‘at/in’ (160) and *dəkət* (infrequently shortened to *də* or *kat*)⁷⁵ ‘at/near’ (see (161) for ‘at’; (163) for ‘near’), allative *kə* ‘to (place)’ (157), benefactive/goal *pada* [pada/padə] ‘to (human)’ (159), comitative/instrumental *dəjan* ‘with’ (162). *dəkət* in the text is only used for physical locations (e.g. 161). *dəkət* is the preferred stationary locative and used much more frequently than *di*.

(162) pak ja ikat **dəjan tali**
 father 3 tie with rope
 ‘His father tied (him) with rope.’ [Anak Naga 219]

(163) kami akan jaga laot, mungkin kami akan... ncak **dəkət ay di**
 1SG FUT take.care sea maybe 1SG FUT NEG near 2 PAR
 ‘I will take care of the sea, maybe I will... not be near you.’ [Anak Naga 169]

Prepositional phrases are formed by a preposition, followed by an optional relational noun, and a noun phrase. Relational nouns such as *dalam/dam*⁷⁶ ‘inside’ (157-158), *atas* ‘top’ (164), *bow/bowo* ‘bottom’ (165) serve to specify the location and may be preceded by prepositions such as *kə* ‘to’ (e.g. 157) and *di* ‘at/in’. When a relational noun is present, the prepositions mentioned can be elided. This is especially true for the preposition *di* ‘at/in’. It is never seen occurring together with a relational noun. *kə* ‘to’ can be kept to show movement (157), or it can be elided when there is a relational noun (166). It can be said that the relational nouns now carry prepositional meaning, at the same time specifying location.

(164) **atas jə,** ada tanam ju... ju gəndəh
 top that PFV plant coconut coconut short
 ‘Above us, (someone) had planted coconuts ... the short coconut trees.’ [Jadi Nelayan 17]

(165) ada satu pawu, **bowo las jə,** təmpat tidu jə səmua pənoh
 EXIST one boat bottom mat that place sleep that all full
 ‘There was a boat. (At) the bottom of the mat, the sleeping place, was all filled
 (with bananas).’ [Jadi Nelayan 73]

(166) len kali kalaw kita masok **dalam utan,** jumpa apa bənataj...
 other time if 1PL enter inside forest encounter what animal
 ‘Next time, if we enter into the forest and encounter whatever kinds of animal...’ [Mak Pacat 233]

It is also possible to have a prepositional meaning without the occurrence of the prepositions *kə* and *di* or relational nouns mentioned above, such that the oblique argument occurs immediately after the verb (compare 167 with preposition *kə* and 168 without).

(167) a abis... **pəgi kə laot** lagi, dia balek lagi
 PAR finish go to sea again 3SG(M) return again
 ‘Then, (he) went to the sea again, (and) he returned again.’ [Anak Naga 238]

(168) ja **pəgi utan** nak cayi anu la cayi bənataj, csi laok
 3 go forest want find FIL PAR find animal find food
 ‘They went to the forest to look for what-you-call-it... look for animals, for food.’ [Anak Naga 16]

⁷⁵ According to the texts. *kat* is used when the speaker is switching dialects to Bazaar Malay.

⁷⁶ *dalam* ‘inside’ is used more frequently in the texts than its reduced form *dam*.

Seletar also uses prepositions grammaticalised from verbs. *sampay*, originally a verb ‘reach’ (169), can be used prepositionally as ‘until’ (for both temporal and physical goal) (170). *buat* [bwa(t)], originally a verb ‘do, make’ (171), can be used prepositionally to mark purpose ‘for’ (172). Both the lexical and functional meaning of both words can be seen in the texts.

(169) bila jə... adik~bədik ja **sampay** səmun
 when that sibling~PL 3 reach all
 ‘When the... his/her siblings all reached (her),’ [Mak Pacat 224]

(170) **sampay** keŋ pun am iŋat
 reach now PAR 1SG remember
 ‘Until now still I remember.’ [Anak Naga 9]

(171) mak ja tak bole **buat** apa?
 mother 3 NEG able do what
 ‘His mother could not do anything.’ [Anak Naga 210]

(172) banak naŋes~naŋes tapi **buat** apa
 many cry~REP but do what
 ‘(She) cried and cried a lot, but for what?’ [Anak Naga 245]

Prepositions grammaticalised from nouns are also observed. *macam*, a noun meaning ‘type’, is used frequently as a comparative preposition ‘like’ (155). Its lexical meaning is only present in the text when it is reduplicated (see §6.2).

Function words may also gain (somewhat) lexical status. The allative *kə* ‘to’ functions like the verb *pəgi* ‘go’. It can be preceded by modality markers like *nak* ‘want’ (198) and *akan* ‘FUT’ (240), as well as being involved in serial verb constructions (225).

7.2.4 Locative Deictics

Seletar has a three-way distinction for locative deictics: proximal *sika* [sika] ‘here’, medial *gun* [gun] ‘there’, and distal *junsit* [junsit] ‘far’.

sika is also seen in the speech of Orang Laut of Kampung Rokok meaning ‘come here’. It is also seen cognate with *sika/sike* ‘here’ of other Orang Laut groups, see §8.2, and its etymology is postulated to be Javanese *seka* ‘origin’, a variation of *teka* ‘to come’ (Skeat & Blagden, 1906b, p. 565, item 226). Seletar uses *sika* only for ‘here’, not ‘come here’, which is expressed by *jeŋkian* [jeŋkyan/jaŋkyan] (likely formed by combining *jan* ‘walk’ and *kian* ‘here’). Proximal demonstrative (*i*)*ka* ‘this’ mentioned in §7.2.1.6 and §7.2.2.3 could be related to *sika* and have the same origin. *sika* in Seletar can refer to a location that is near to the speaker (173), or a point in a narration (174), or the current time of speaking (175).

(173) kalaw am dəkət **sika**, jək am panas
 if 1SG at here body 1SG hot
 ‘If I am here my body is hot.’ [Anak Naga 138]

(174) səkian, sampay **sika**
 that.is.all reach here
 ‘That is all. Until here (the story ends).’ [Anak Naga 253]

(175) lagipun, am ə mula sampay **sika**, memañ tak ada jaŋun,
 furthermore 1SG FIL start reach here indeed NEG PFV walk.far

tak ada jaŋkyan
 NEG PFV walk/come.here

‘Furthermore, I...from the start until now, indeed do not walk here and there.’ [Jadi Nelayan 114]

gun ‘there’, according to speakers, comes from an archaic form *kiuh* (maybe also *kiun?*) ‘far away’, which is part of a triplet *kian* ‘(come) here’, *kiun* ‘(go) there’, *kiuh* ‘far away’ common to Sea Nomad/Orang Laut groups (Anderbeck, 2012, p. 285), as well as Jakun and Temuan groups.⁷⁷ *gun* only means ‘there’, not ‘go there’, which is expressed analytically with *pəgi* ‘go’ + *gun* ‘there’ (176). *gun* is used to refer to a place in the distance that can still be seen.

(176) neŋkay, am nak pəgi **gun**
 ENDEAR 1SG want go there

‘My dear, I want to go there (where the tamarind tree is).’ [Mak Pacat 94]

junsit ‘far away’ has unknown origins. It could be a compound (*jan* ‘walk’ + *sit* ‘little’ or *juh* ‘far’ + *sit* ‘little’?). Very little is known about this term without further research. It is used to refer to places that are far away and cannot be seen.

(177) a aku səmpot nak jan **junsit** tə
 PAR 1SG(M) breathless want walk far.away PAR

‘I am breathless to walk far distances.’ [Jadi Nelayan 117]

The deictics can be preceded by prepositions (173-175) or without (176-177).

7.3 Verbal domain

7.3.1 Aspect and Modality

Verbs in Seletar are not inflected for person, gender, number or tense. That being said, tense can be deduced either from context, aspect markers (see §7.3.1), or from the use of time adverbials such as *key* ‘now’, *muin* [mu.in] ‘long ago/in the past’, *esok* ‘tomorrow’.

7.3.1.1 Aspect markers

Some aspectual meaning is marked on the verb by the use of affixes (see §6.1.1). However, aspect is frequently expressed by auxiliaries that occur before the predicate (both verbal and non-verbal predicates, see §7.5). The aspectual auxiliaries seen in Seletar are: completive *da/suda* ‘COMPL’, perfective *ada* ‘PFV’, negative completive/perfective *bəlom* ‘not yet’, immediate future marker *nak* ‘IM.FUT’, and progressive *təŋa* ‘PROG / in the middle of’.

The completive aspect marker *da* indicates that an action has been completed or a state has been achieved. It precedes predicates that are verbal (including verbs and adjectives) (178-179) or nominal (181). The contracted form *da* [da/də]⁷⁸ is used more frequently than the full form *suda* [suda/sudə].⁷⁹ *da* usually immediately precedes the predicate, but it may also infrequently appear after the predicate

⁷⁷ See footnote 20

⁷⁸ The realisation of completive marker *da* as [də] is very rare, and occurred only once in the text.

⁷⁹ *suda* can also be used as a cessative marker (see Anak Naga sentence (167)).

(182), or further from the predicate (in the case of 183, it precedes the conditional clause). The completive marker *da/suda* do not end with *h*, unlike canonical Malay (*su*)*dah*.

ada is an existential verb (see §7.5.2.1 for existential clause) that has grammaticalised into an aspect marker. It is a marker of perfective ‘PFV’, indicating that an event has been realised (180). The use of the existential verb to mark perfective aspect is probably influenced by Southern Chinese varieties. The existential verb 有 is commonly used to mark perfective aspect in Southern Min varieties (Liu, 1996 cited in Chawla, 2015, p. 20). The perfective aspect in another Malay variety, Singapore Baba Malay, is similarly marked by the existential verb *ada*, and was analysed as deriving through substrate transfer from Hokkien 有 *ú* (Lee, 2014, p. 367-368, 371-372).

(178) *səmun da jadi*
 all COMPL become
 ‘All (of it) had formed’ [Anak Naga 225]

(179) *a balek, da pənat*
 PAR return COMPL tired
 ‘(When we) return, (we’ll) already (be) tired.’ [Anak Naga 71]

(180) *aruah wak (name) pun ada pada*
 late uncle (name) PAR PFV say
 ‘The late Aunt (name) had said SO TOO.’ [Sejarah Seletar 27]

(181) *umo da nam puloh lebe, macamak bole nak arkat bəat*
 age COMPL six ten more how able want carry weight
 ‘(My) age is already in the sixties. How am I able to carry weights?’ [Jadi Nelayan 108]

(182) *bilə buŋkoh da... buŋkoh muka ay macam ular ye diə*
 when swollen COMPL swollen face 2 like snake he/she say
 ‘When (his face) was already swollen... “Your swollen face is like a snake,” she said’
 [Anak Naga 162]

(183) *da kalaw but kəjə dapat duit, kita kəna but la*
 COMPL if make work get money 1PL have.to make PAR
 ‘If (we/one) already did work and gotten paid, we have to/one has to make (the things we want).’ [Jadi Nelayan 91]

Both *bəlom* [bəlom] ‘not yet’ and *nak* [naʔ] ‘IM.FUT’ indicate that the event has not been completed. *bəlom* indicates that an action has not yet been done or that a state is not yet achieved (184). *nak*, on the other hand, is used to indicate that an action or a state is almost realised or that it will be realised in the immediate future. I have translated it to ‘almost’ or ‘be going to’. (185) shows an example where both *bəlom* and *nak* are used. Both auxiliaries occur right before the predicate.

(184) *masa jə lokam bəlom ada aga*
 time that clam not.yet EXIST price
 ‘(At) that time, clams (Polymesoda) did not yet have a price.’ [Jadi Nelayan 93]

maw ‘want’ is only used during dialect switch (which is mentioned in §7.2.2.1.1), and *nak* ‘want’ is preferred. Other than marking volition/desire, *nak* has other functions, such as expressing immediate future just mentioned (§7.3.1.1), acting as a complementiser (§7.6.2), and as a linking particle between modality marker *bole* and the rest of the predicate (181).

(190) **maw** bəlaʒa teʒok macamana bapak cari kətam
 want learn look how father find crab
 ‘(I) wanted to learn and to see how (my) father found crabs.’ [Jadi Nelayan 30]

(191) keŋ kami? **nak** masok utan
 now 1SG want enter forest
 ‘Right now I want to enter the forest.’ [Anak Naga 33]

akan is a future marker. It can appear in truncated form *kan* (78).

(192) am **akan** but suŋay ʒa pada
 1SG FUT make river 3 say
 ‘‘I will make rivers,’’ he said’ [Anak Naga 175]

The modality markers can be negated. The negators usually precede the modals (193-195), but the negator for *akan* follows the modal (196). The negators *tak*, *bukən* and *ncak* are described in §7.3.2. The current texts show that *bole* ‘able’, *nak* ‘want’ (193-194) and (*a*)*kan* ‘FUT’ (78) can be negated by *tak*, and *nak* can be negated by *bukən* if the negation is contrastive or emphatic (195). Only *akan* ‘FUT’ is negated by *ncak* (196). There is a negator *talada* [taladə/təladə]⁸⁰ that inherently carries the meanings of negative ability/possibility ‘NEG.able/cannot’ (197). It is possibly a morphologically complex form which consists of a negator *tak* ‘NEG’, an auxiliary *ala* ‘able’ and an existential verb *ada* ‘EXIST’(see §6.3), but uttered like a phonological unit. Further investigation is needed to decipher its origin.

(193) jəmpi~jəmpi pun **tak** **bole** buat apa
 cast.spell~REP PAR NEG able do what
 ‘Casting spells also could not do anything.’ [Anak Naga 212]

(194) kami? **tak** **nak** cayi apa
 1SG NEG want find what
 ‘I do not want to look for whatever.’ [Mak Pacat 23]

(195) kita **bukən** **nak** cayi bontuŋ, kita nak cayi man
 1PL NEG want find tiger 1PL want find eat
 ‘We don’t want to look for tigers, we want to look for food.’ [Mak Pacat 43]

(196) am **akan** **ncak** balek... am **akan** **ncak** balek ka de ye diə
 1SG FUT NEG return 1SG FUT NEG return here PAR he/she say
 ‘‘I will not return... I will not return here,’’ he said.’ [Anak Naga 173]

(197) səbap am **talada** dudok dat
 because 1SG NEG.able live land
 ‘Because I cannot live on land.’ [Anak Naga 154]

⁸⁰ *talada* [taladə/təladə] ‘NEG.able/cannot’ has a variant form *nada* [nadə], which I presume is a combination of *ncak*, auxiliary *ala* ‘able’ and existential verb *ada* ‘EXIST’.

Two modals can be used together, usually involving *kəna* ‘have to’ (198-199). In the case of *nak + kəna* ‘want + have to’ in (199), the translation is presented as ‘need to’ as the addition of *nak* ‘want’ to the debitive *kəna* ‘have to’ adds volition, thereby transforming an act that is an obligation (but not a requirement) into something necessary.

(198) *ɲok am panas, talada kəna təpi de, am nak kə laot*
 body 1SG hot NEG.able have.to side PAR 1SG want to sea
 ‘My body is hot, (I) cannot be forced (to stay) on the side, I want to (go) to the sea’ [Anak Naga 218]

(199) *kərana kita nak kəna jəgə ɲok kita...*
 because 1PL want have.to take.care body 1PL

əm bətəl?

FIL correct

‘(We exercise) because we need to take care of our bodies, right?’ [Jadi Nelayan 121]

The aspectual and modality markers can occur together, with the aspect marker usually preceding the modal.

(200) *a da bole ekot kon da cayi man*
 PAR COMPL able follow Seletar.people COMPL find eat
 ‘then (we/one) can already follow the people to look for food.’ [Jadi Nelayan 87]

7.3.2 Negation

Seletar has several types of negators: *tak*, *bukən*, *ncak*. The negator usually immediately precedes the predicate it negates, but it is possible to have a negator further from the predicate (see (109)). If there are aspect or modal markers, the negator usually precedes the modal marker (except *ncak*, which follows the future marker *akan*, see 196), and follows the aspect marker (206).

tak [taʔ] (long form *tidak* [tidaʔ] and variant [tidəʔ]) is used to negate verbal predicates (201-202). Only the elongated form *tidak* can be used utterance finally as a question tag, which transforms a declarative sentence to a yes/no interrogative (see §7.5.3.1). *tidak* is used in the second line of (203) without a verb, as it is understood that the same verb from the first line is being negated. When negated by *tak/tidak*, some words exhibit contractions (e.g. [taʔdə] for *tidak ada* ‘NEG.EXIST’, [taʔpə/taʔpa] for *tidak apa* ‘nevermind’). *tak* is involved in the construction Verb-*tak*-Verb, which is used to express ‘whether ... or not’ (204).

(201) *abis, ay tak jumpa anak e*
 finish 2 NEG meet what PAR
 ‘Then, you didn’t encounter anything?’ [Anak Naga 76]

(202) *tidak layi, tidak pisa pupa*
 NEG run NEG separate PAR
 ‘(The ancestors) did not run away, did not get separated.’ [Sejarah Seletar 93]

(203) *kita jan cayi laju, tapi ncak jumpa bənatəŋ,*
 1PL walk find fast but NEG meet animal
 ‘We walked and hunted quickly but we didn’t encounter animals’

manok pun tidak (jumpa), apa pun tidak (jumpa)
 chicken PAR NEG (meet) what PAR NEG (meet)

‘Didn’t even (encounter) a chicken, didn’t even (encounter) anything.’ [Anak Naga 68-69]

(204) cayi təmpat ulak e,
find place repeat PAR

layi tak layi, dəkət gunoŋ pulay ntua e
run NEG run near/at mountain Pulau elder PAR

‘(They) looked for the same place. (Whether to) escape or not, the elders were at Mount Pulau.’

[Sejarah Seletar 14]

bukən [bukən] (occasionally [bukan]) is used to negate verbal predicates when a contrast is implied or emphasized (195). It is also used to negate nominal predicates (205). *bukən* is also used lexically to mean ‘bad’ or ‘evil’ (116).

(205) uŋ yaŋ gələ, **bukən** ntua tə
outsider/Malay REL label NEG elder PAR

‘It was the outsiders/Malays who called (it that), not (our) elders.’ [Sejarah Seletar 67]

ncak [nca?] can negate both nominal and verbal predicates. *ncak* is used the same way as *tak* to negate verbal predicates (see 201-203) and occurs in similar frequency as *tak* in the texts. It also functions like *bukən* to negate nominal predicates (206). The form *ncak* is reminiscent of Colloquial Indonesian negative particles like *ndak*, *nggak* (Ewing, 2005, p. 241), but its origin is unknown. *ncak* is also seen to express additional negative meanings like ‘do not have’ (207), ‘cannot’ (208), ‘do not need’ (209) that in SM or other varieties require a negative particle plus another word (e.g. *t(id)ak ada* ‘do not have’, *t(id)ak boleh* ‘cannot’, *t(id)ak paya* ‘do not need’). Thus, it seems that *ncak* has a wider functional use than *tak*, and can be used in more varied contexts.

(206) lama~lama, teŋok baŋak, da... muka maken... da **ncak** muka di
long(time)~ADVsee many COMPL face increasingly COMPL NEG face PAR
‘After a while, (you would) see a lot (of the times)... that the face is already increasingly... already not a face.’ [Anak Naga 206]

(207) kalaw **ncak** laok macamak
if NEG food how

‘If there is no food, what are (we) going to do?’

(208) nak ikat, ŋa **ncak** tahan
want tie 3 NEG endure

‘(They) wanted to tie (him), he could not endure (it).’ [Anak Naga 180]

(209) kita **ncak** kon ekot kali ini aja la
1PL NEG Seletar.people follow time this only PAR

‘We do not need people to follow us just this time.’ [Mak Pacat 10]

ncak and *bukən* are used as clause initial interjection ‘no’, expressing denial of a proposition previously stated. *ncak* occurs with verbal predicates (210) while *bukən* occurs with nominal predicates (211). In this preliminary analysis, *msak* [msa?] is a form that is used to negatively answer a rhetorical question (212) (see §7.5.3.3 for Rhetorical Questions).

(210) Father: bow balek a
bring return PAR
'Bring (it) back (to its original place).'

Child: **nca**k, pak
NEG father
'No (I will not), Father.' [Anak Naga 66-67]

(211) Husband: sa anu a, sa buŋ ka apa
sound FIL PAR sound bird or what
'(It was probably) the sound of don't-know-what... sound of the bird or something.'

Wife: **bukən**, ay dəŋə ya
NEG 2 hear PAR
'No (it is not), you listen.' [Mak Pacat 63-64]

(212) bila əL naek mana ada muka uŋ, **msak**
when water rise where EXIST face outsider/Malay NEG
'When the water rose, how were there faces of the Malays? There weren't (any).'

[Sejarah Seletar 45]

ntah [ntah] 'don't know' is a negative particle expressing uncertainty. It is usually used as an interjection 'I don't know' in response to a question (213). It is possible to use *ntah* not as an interjection, but simply as the alternative form to *tak tahu* 'NEG know' (214).

(213) Mother: təlow jə təlow ana?
egg that egg what
'What egg is that?' (lit. 'that egg, what egg')

Child: **ntah**... təlow ular gaŋ
don't.know egg snake PAR
'I don't know, (it) might be a snake's egg' [Anak Naga 81]

(214) ay nak man, tapi təlow jə, **ntah** təlow anak
2 want eat but egg that don't.know egg what
'You want to eat (it) but that egg, (you) don't know what (type of) egg (it is).' [Anak Naga 95]

There are two imperative negators or prohibitive particles used in Seletar: *jaŋan*, and *usa* [ʔusa]. Both translate to 'do not (do something)' and precede the verbal predicate (including adjectives, see 216). The difference between these two has not yet been determined, but preliminary observation is that *jaŋan* is used more prohibitively or more urgently as the act that is being prohibited might cause harm. In the case of (215), the speaker is advising to members of her community not to mess around with things that they do not know, lest it brings harm or something unpleasant happens. *usa* in comparison is less prohibitive, and acts more like a suggestion (216-217). Imperative clauses are discussed in §7.5.4.

(215) **jaŋan** ami, minta dia
IMP.NEG take ask 3SG(M)
'"Do not take (them)," he asked.' [Mak Pacat 238]

(216) ay jan **usa** laju amat di
 2 walk IMP.NEG fast very PAR
 ‘Don’t you walk so fast!’ (lit. Your walk, don’t be so fast) [Mak Pacat 46]

(217) kalaw bole, kita ada apa~apa la,
 if able 1PL EXIST what~INDET PAR

 kita **usa** ingat e
 1PL IMP.NEG remember PAR
 ‘If (we) can, if we have anything (wrong), don’t hold on to it.’ [Jadi Nelayan 122]

7.3.3 Serial Verbs

A sequence of verbs which expresses a single predicate is defined as a serial verb construction (SVC) (Aikhenvald, 2006, p.1). SVCs have the following features: (a) they are monoclausal; (b) their components are not marked for syntactic dependency; (c) they describe single events; (d) the components share the same tense, aspect and polarity; (e) they may share core and other arguments (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 1-21). In this thesis, ‘serial verb’ and ‘serial verb construction’ (SVC) are used interchangeably.

The serial verbs in Seletar are not affixed, nor are they linked by any syntactic markers. The serial verbs can appear consecutively (218), and may share the same argument (218, 220). An SVC can also appear with an argument between its components (219), which functions as the direct object of the first verb but the subject of the second verb. Most serial verb constructions in Seletar consist of two verbs, but those with three verbs do occur (220).

(218) bila **hanta** **jual** tempat cina tanam duku a
 when send sell place Chinese plant langsar PAR
 ‘When (we) went to sell (things) at the place where the Chinese planted *duku langsar* fruit’
 [Jadi Nelayan 82]

(219) ay **bi** adik **man** susu la
 2 give child eat milk PAR
 ‘You let the child eat (drink) milk.’ [Mak Pacat 97]

(220) am **ami** **bow** **balek**
 1SG take bring return
 ‘I (will) take and bring (the eggs) back’ [Anak Naga 53]

The serial verbs can be symmetrical or asymmetrical based on their composition. The components of symmetrical SVCs are from semantically open, unrestricted classes, and are of equal standing (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 21-22). The order of the components may reflect temporal sequence of the subevents, cause-effect, or manner (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 28-30). Examples of symmetrical SVCs are illustrated in (221-222). (221) shows the character helping by the manner of *jəm̃pi* ‘cast spells’. In (222), the serial verbs are ordered according to their temporal sequence.

On the other hand, in asymmetrical serial verbs, one verb comes from a semantically open class, while the other verb is from a closed class. The event is described by the verb from the open class. Specific information about the event such as direction, motion is expressed by the verb from the closed class. (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 21-22). For example, *balek* ‘return’ in (220) describes the direction of the act, while *hanta* ‘send’ in (218) and *jan* ‘walk’ in (223) indicate motion. Asymmetrical SVCs are also

often used to increase valency (Aikhenvald, 2006, p. 25-26) An example can be seen in the use of *bi* ‘give’ in (219, 224), which forms a causative construction.

(221) bila naŋes, pak ɲa toloŋ jəm̐pi
 when cry father 3 help cast.spell
 ‘When (she) cried, his father helped to cast spells (on him).’ [Anak Naga 190]

(222) takpaya tunjok bəlaja dəŋan kon tu, takpaya
 NEG.need point/show learn with Seletar.people that NEG.need
 ‘We don’t need be guided and learn with the (other) people. No need’ [Jadi Nelayan 89]

(223) a jan ekot pak masok utan
 PAR walk follow father enter forest
 ‘Follow me into the forest.’ (this line is spoken by the father) [Anak Naga 21]

(224) bi mata ay jan jə
 give eye 2 function/work that
 ‘Let/make your eyes work.’ [Mak Pacat 52]

Common verbs that express motion in the first verb of an asymmetrical SVC are *pəgi* ‘go’ and *jan* ‘walk’. Verbs that indicate direction are, for example, *balek* ‘return’ for ‘back’ and *turun/tun* ‘descend’ for ‘down’ and they occur as the second verb in the asymmetrical SVC (e.g. *bow balek* ‘bring back’ in 220). *bi* ‘give’ (SM *bəri*) is a common verb for causative or permissive usage in an SVC (224-225). In (225), the verb *pəgi* ‘go’ has been omitted as it is understood from the use of allative *kə* ‘to’. In turn, the preposition *kə* functions more like a verb in this context.

(225) bi kami kə laot
 give 1SG to sea
 ‘Let me (go) to the sea.’ [Anak Naga 216]

7.4 Adverbs

Adverbial meanings can be expressed by lexical adverbs, nominal adjuncts, reduplicated forms of nouns or verbs, and also adjectives used adverbially without any morphological change in form.

Adverbs of intensity used in the Seletar texts include:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| <i>kəlampaw</i> | ‘too, extremely’ |
| <i>paliŋ</i> | ‘most’ |
| <i>agak</i> | ‘quite’ |
| <i>amat</i> | ‘very’ |
| <i>bətol</i> | ‘truly’ |
| <i>lagi</i> | ‘more’ |

maken ‘increasingly’ is an adverb used to mark an increase in intensity. All of these usually precede adjectives, except *amat*, which can also occur after the adjective it is modifying (see 216), as well as before it. *maken* can precede verbs as well to express that an action is done more and more (see 206).

Temporal adverbs in Seletar include:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------|
| <i>keŋ</i> | ‘now’ | <i>esok</i> [ʔesoʔ] | ‘tomorrow’ |
| <i>muin</i> [mu.in] | ‘long ago/past’ | <i>bute</i> | ‘that day’ |
| <i>dulu</i> | ‘in the past’ | <i>tadi</i> | ‘just now’ |

These frequently occur clause initially, but some of them can occur in other junctures as well (e.g. *kej* in (228)). *dulu* has two meanings, ‘in the past’ and ‘first (before doing other things)’. With the first meaning, it occurs clause initially (226); with the second, it occurs after the verbal predicate (227).

(226) **dulu**, masa wa anak dara la
 in.the.past time 1SG(HOK) child virgin PAR
 ‘In the past, (at) the time when I was a young woman.’ [Jadi Nelayan 102]

(227) kita paŋgel bapak cakap bər-enti **dulu**
 1PL call father say STV-stop first
 ‘We called (our) father and said (to) stop first’ [Jadi Nelayan 24]

(228) tapi **kej**... jambak kon **kej** ncaK bapak macam muin e
 but now bunch Seletar.people now NEG many like long.ago PAR
 ‘but now, the Seletar people now are not many like in the past.’ [Sejarah Seletar 32]

Nominal adjuncts expressing time include:

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| <i>satu ayi</i> | ‘one day’ |
| <i>bulən</i> | ‘month’ |
| <i>siaŋ</i> [syaŋ] | ‘day time’ |
| <i>malam</i> | ‘night’ |
| <i>pagi</i> | ‘morning’ |

Some time expressions are formed by the reduplication of words from other parts of speech, like *mula-mula* ‘in the beginning’ (from *mula* ‘begin’) (70) and *lama-lama* ‘after a while’ from adjective meaning ‘long (time)’ (206). The unreduplicated form *lama* can also be used adverbially to mean ‘after a while’. The nominal adjuncts and reduplicated forms frequently occur clause initially.

The positions of the adverb mentioned below differ with each adverb. Table 3 shows their distribution based on the texts collected.

| Adverb | Position | Notes |
|---|--|--|
| <i>lagi, selalu, səni</i> | Follow the verb | |
| <i>tam, kadan-kadan, trus, ləbe</i> | Precede the verb | |
| <i>munjin, kadan, səbənəna, upəna, cuma</i> | Clause initial | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>cuma</i> ‘only’ is a focus marker for the constituent that follows it, and it can co-occur with clause final <i>ja</i> ‘only’ for emphasis (229). |
| <i>saja/aja/ja, juga</i> | Frequently occur clause finally or before final discourse particles, but they are able to occur in other junctures as well (230) (231) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>juga</i> is also used to express something is contrary to expectation (232) |
| <i>meməŋ, sayiŋ</i> | Precedes the predicate (47), (116) | |
| <i>baŋak</i> | Precedes or follows the verb (206) and (233) | <i>baŋak</i> is also a quantifier (see §7.2.1.1) |

Table 3 Adverbs and their positions

Adverbs of frequency are listed here:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>lagi</i> | ‘again’ |
| <i>tam</i> | ‘always’ |
| <i>səlalu</i> | ‘always’ (<i>tam</i> is more common than <i>səlalu</i>) |
| <i>kadan(-kadan)</i> | ‘sometimes’ |
| <i>baŋak</i> | ‘a lot, frequently’ |
| <i>ləbe</i> | ‘more (compared to another thing)’ |

Other adverbs seen in the texts are:

| | |
|--|---------------|
| <i>munjin</i> | ‘maybe’ |
| <i>kadan</i> | ‘maybe’ |
| <i>cuma</i> | ‘only’ |
| <i>saja/aja/ja</i> [sajə]/[ʔaja/ʔajə]/[jə] | ‘only’ |
| <i>juga</i> [juga/jugə] | ‘also’ |
| <i>sayiŋ</i> ⁸¹ | ‘all at once’ |

Adverbs expressing speaker’s attitude include:

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>meməŋ</i> | ‘indeed’ |
| <i>səbənəna</i> | ‘actually’ |
| <i>upəna</i> [ʔupəna/ʔopəŋə] | ‘apparently’ |

Adverbs describing manner in the texts are *səni* [səni] ‘alone/by oneself’ and *trus* ‘straight’. Other than using adverbs, manner is frequently expressed by adjectives. In other words, adjectives can function adverbially without a change in form. For example, *kuat* ‘strong’ is used as an adjective in (85)

⁸¹ The interpreter translated this as the same as SM *səkali*, literally ‘one time’ or ‘once’, and can be used to express ‘all at once’, or ‘suddenly’.

but as an adverb ‘vigorously’ in (20); *bətol* functions as an adjective ‘correct’ in (158), but as an adverb ‘correctly’ in (234).

(229) **cuma** pak masok dalam utan **ja** la
 only father enter inside forest only PAR
 ‘(Can it be) only Father (who) enters into the forest only(?)’ [Anak Naga 41]

(230) satu kapak **saja** bawa
 one axe only bring
 ‘(We) brought only one axe.’ [Jadi Nelayan 33]

(231) sama **juga** dəŋan cina, ada ke, ada tiociu, ada
 same also with Chinese EXIST Hakka EXIST Teochew EXIST
 okien
 Hokkien
 ‘(It) is also the same with the Chinese. There are Hakkas, there are Teochews, there are Hokkiens.’
 [Sejarah Seletar 52]

(232) masa jə man **juga**
 time that eat also.CONTRARY
 ‘(During) that time, (I) would still eat (the sea snails).’ [Jadi Nelayan 53]

(233) dah jə **banak** kəluar
 blood that many come.out
 ‘The blood came out a lot.’ [Mak Pacat 208]

(234) ay dəŋə **bətol** mana ada adik naŋes dalam utan
 2 hear correct where EXIST child cry inside forest
 ‘You listen correctly/carefully. How is there a child crying in the forest?’ [Mak Pacat 59]

7.5 Clause Types

A clause consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject identifies the referent, and the predicate says something about the referent. Predicates can be verbal (§7.5.2) or non-verbal (§7.5.1). As the subject argument is highly identifiable in natural speech and retrievable from context, it is often left unexpressed (see §7.8.1), and the clause may only consist of a predicate. The clauses discussed in §7.5.2 and §7.5.1 are indicative clauses. Interrogative (§7.5.3) and imperative clauses (§7.5.4) are also discussed in this section.

7.5.1 Non-verbal clauses

A non-verbal clause does not have a verb in its predicate. The predicate is usually a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase. If the subject is explicitly expressed, the clause is formed by the juxtaposition of a subject argument and a non-verbal predicate without anything linking the two together. The subject argument usually precedes the predicate, but in cleft constructions, the predicate precedes the subject. Non-verbal clauses are either equative or locative.

7.5.1.1 Equative clause

The subject and predicate of equative clauses are both formed by noun phrases, which are equated without the use of a copula. The NPs are positioned side by side. The information presented by the nominal predicate serves to identify the subject. Nominal predicates can be negated by *bukən* (236) and *ncak* (206).

- (235) pada [ɲa]_{Subject} [uŋ asli]_{Predicate}
 when.in.fact 3 people original
 ‘When in fact he is Orang Asli.’ [Sejarah Seletar 87]

Equative clauses can also be formed by cleft constructions. The predicate is placed clause initially, while the subject follows it (236). The subject is usually a headless relative clause. The adverb *cuma* ‘only’, when used clause initially and preceding an NP, serves as a focus marker, and a cleft construction may be formed (228 reproduced in 237). (237) is a request (discerned from context) in the form of a cleft sentence. The nominal predicate consists of the focus marker and an NP, while the headless relative clause (relativiser not expressed) functions as the subject.⁸²

- (236) [uŋ]_{Predicate} [yaŋ gələ]_{Subject} , bukən ntua tə
 outsider/Malay REL label NEG elder PAR
 ‘It was the outsiders/Malays who called (the place “Causeway”), not (our) elders.’ [Sejarah Seletar 67]

- (237) [cuma pak]_{Predicate} [(yaŋ) masok dalam utan]_{Subject} jə la
 only father (REL) enter inside forest only PAR
 ‘(Can it be) only Father (who) enters into the forest only(?)’ [Anak Naga 41]

7.5.1.2 Locative Clause

Locative clauses have the function of locating an entity. The predicate, expressed as a prepositional phrase (formed by prepositions and/or relational nouns, see §7.2.3), locates the subject in space (238). A comparative prepositional phrase can also function as a predicate (239).

- (238) [adik ka]_{Subject} [dəkət kayu]_{Predicate}
 child this near/at tree
 ‘This child is at/in the tree.’ [Mak Pacat 72]

- (239) eh [ay ka]_{Subject} [macam naga]_{Predicate}
 INTRJ 2 this like dragon
 ‘Eh, you here are like a dragon’ [Anak Naga 145]

The verb *pəgi* ‘go’ is frequently omitted when there is an allative preposition *kə* ‘to’ following it, so the clause appears to lack a verb, and the predicate seems to be formed by a prepositional phrase. However, based on the fact that *kə* can be preceded by modality markers like *nak* ‘want’ (198) and *akan* ‘FUT’ (240), and it is involved in serial verb constructions (225), *kə* takes on the functional load of a verb, and hence clauses like (240) are analysable as verbal clauses in which the actual verb has been elided.

- (240) kami akan kə laot
 1SG FUT to sea
 ‘I will (go) to the sea.’ [Anak Naga 197]

⁸²(237) is discerned as a request based on the father’s response “no” in the later lines (see *Anak Naga 41-44* in Appendix 2: Texts). The same sentence if in declarative mood can be translated as ‘It was only Father who went into the forest’.

7.5.2 Verbal clauses

Verbal clauses include existential, transitive, and intransitive clauses.

7.5.2.1 Existential clauses

A referent is introduced by the existential verb *ada* [ʔada/ʔadə] ‘EXIST’. *ada* locates the existence of something, usually in the context of a location. Thus, there is often a prepositional phrase present in the existential clause. In the texts collected, it is more common to put the location as the topic at the front of the clause (241). The subject usually follows the verb *ada* in non-emphatic situations (e.g. 241, first line of 242), but it precedes *ada* when the clause is emphatic (243, second line of 242). The existential clause is negated by *tak* (244) to form *takda* [taʔdə] ‘NEG.EXIST’ (from *tak ada*). When preceded by an interrogative *mana* ‘where’, the expression *mana ada* ‘how is there’ forms a rhetorical question (see §7.5.3.3).

(241) dalam utan **ada** adik
inside forest EXIST child
‘In the forest, there’s a child.’ [Mak Pacat 85]

(242) *The speaker is talking about the many races of Orang Asli in Malaysia.*

ada=na baŋsa jakun, səmay
EXIST=DEF race Jakun Semai

uŋ kalaŋ pun **ada**
people Kallang PAR EXIST

‘There are: the Jakun race, Semai. There are also the Orang Kallang.’ [Sejarah Seletar 54]

(243) *A couple found out that the child they found in the forest is actually a strange leech being.*

o pacat, bukən adik **ada**
INTRJ leech NEG child EXIST

‘Oh leeches! There is not a child!’ [Mak Pacat 161]

(244) **takda** kawat, **takda** bəsi
NEG.EXIST wire NEG.EXIST metal

‘There were no wires, there was no metal.’ [Jadi Nelayan 34]

The existential clause can also function as the predicate ‘to have’: possessor-*ada*-possessed (245).

(245) adik~bədik nek am **ada** tujo bəlas kəluarga
sibling~PL grandmother 1SG EXIST seven numbers.11.to.19 family
‘My grandmother’s siblings had seventeen families.’ [Anak Naga 12]

Aside from an existential verb, *ada* also functions like a copula (246). Grammaticalisation of existential markers to identifiers of a copula are not uncommon and are identified in Semitic languages and pidgins and creoles (Kuteva et al., 2019, p. 163).

Another sense of *ada* is ‘take effect’, seen in (247) (in this example *ada* is negated to mean that something is not able to take effect). In another expression *tak tahu ada*, illustrated in (248), *ada* expresses the meaning of ‘there exists a way/method’, so the expression can be paraphrased to be ‘do not know how’ or ‘do not know if there exists a way’. The construction is followed by a complementizer *nak* (see §7.5.3.2.4 and §7.6.2). *ada* is also marker of perfective aspect (see §7.3.1.1)

(246) adik~bədik nek am nikah **ada** bəpak
 sibling~PL grandmother 1SG marry EXIST many
 ‘My grandmother’s siblings that got married were a lot.’ [Anak Naga 11]

(247) na jəmpi~ jəmpi tak bole **ada**
 3 cast.spell~REP NEG able EXIST
 ‘He/they kept casting spells (but they) do nothing.’ [Mak Pacat 212]

(248) *The speaker is saying that if one does not learn the ways of catching crabs or sea snails from one’s parents, one will never know how.*

kita **tak tahu ada** nak cayi kətam, cayi sipot
 1PL NEG know EXIST COMP find crab find sea.snail
 ‘We/one would not know how to find crabs or find sea snails.’ [Jadi Nelayan 46]

7.5.2.2 Transitive and intransitive clauses

The subject argument of a basic verbal clause in Seletar can be an actor (thus forming an actor focus clause), or an undergoer (thus forming a undergoer focus clause). ‘Actor’ arguments have agent-type roles (e.g. AGENT, EXPERIENCER, INSTRUMENT, FORCE), while the ‘undergoer’ arguments have patient-type roles (e.g. PATIENT, THEME, SOURCE, LOCATION) (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997, p. 139-147).

The affixation of *me-/N-* on the verb is indicative of an actor focus clause (68), although the affixes themselves have additional semantic and aspectual meanings apart from indicating actor focus (see §6.1.1). The affixation of *di-* indicates a undergoer focus clause (15). However, it is more common to have no affixation at all on the verb in Seletar, and so whether a clause is actor or undergoer focus has to be determined from the context.

7.5.2.2.1 Transitive clause

There are two arguments in a transitive clause: a subject argument and a non-subject argument. When the subject argument has an agent-like role, and the non-subject argument has a patient-like role, the transitive clause is an actor focus clause. When the subject is patient-like, and the non-subject agent-like, the transitive clause is an undergoer focus clause.

In actor-focus clauses, the actor argument precedes the verb, and the undergoer follows it. The order is Actor-Verb-Undergoer. The verb may be affixed with *mə-/N-* (68) or a transitiviser *-kan* (33), but it is commonly in bare form. As the subjects in the narrative texts are usually continuous and highly retrievable from context, they are frequently left unexpressed (e.g. second line of (249)). The ellipsis may also happen for the non-subject argument (second line 250), or both arguments when they are also identifiable from context (251). Thus, a transitive clause in natural texts can have one or two explicit arguments present, or none at all.

(249) kalaw masa am da jə, am cayi səntəŋ
 if time 1SG virgin that 1SG find mollusc
 ‘(As for) the time I was of age, I looked for molluscs.’

meməŋ cayi səntəŋ aja
 indeed find mollusc only
 ‘indeed, (I) looked only for molluscs.’ [Jadi Nelayan 95-96]

(250) təlow pak, dua otey
 egg father two CLF:ROUND
 ‘Eggs, Father! Two of them’

am ami bow balek
 1SG take bring return
 ‘I (will) take and bring (them) back’ [Anak Naga 52-53]

(251) bow balek
 bring back
 ‘(He) brought (the egg) back.’ [Anak Naga 60]

The undergoer-focus transitive clauses have the patient-like argument as the subject. There are several types of undergoer focus constructions. In the first type, the undergoer comes before the verb, which is affixed with *di-* ‘PASS’, and the actor follows the verb immediately (252). The order is Undergoer-Verb-Actor. The second undergoer focus construction consists of the undergoer, followed by *kəna* ‘got’ and the verb (253). The order is Undergoer-*kəna*-Verb. In (253), the patient-like subject (‘you’) is not explicitly expressed as it is retrievable from the previous utterance. The third type involves the affix *tə-* ‘PFV’ (254). The verb is preceded by the undergoer and the actor is not expressed.

(252) upəna, dah ay di-sədut pacat
 apparently blood 2 PASS-suck leech
 ‘Apparently, your blood was sucked by leeches’ [Mak Pacat-164]

(253) ay man təlow jə de, upəna, (ay) kəna sumpah
 2 eat egg that PAR apparently (2) get curse
 ‘You ate that egg! Apparently (you) got cursed’ [Anak Naga-228]

(254) mata susu bini e tə-cabut
 eye breast wife PAR PFV-pull.out
 ‘The nipple of his wife had been ripped off.’ [Mak pacat 146]

Topicalisation of the patient-like argument may also be seen as a kind of undergoer focus transitive clause (230) (255). The verb in these constructions are in their bare forms.

(255) sə=botey am tiŋgəl
 one=CLF:ROUND 1SG leave.behind
 ‘(As for the other) one, I leave (it here).’ [Anak Naga 59]

7.5.2.2.2 Intransitive clause

Intransitive clauses only have one subject argument (256). As mentioned in §7.5.2.2.1, argument ellipsis is quite unrestricted. A non-subject argument in a transitive clause may not be explicitly expressed, and so it would resemble an intransitive clause (e.g. second line of 250). Hence in natural texts, the number of arguments explicitly present in the clause is not a good indicator of transitivity, which is best determined from the context. The single argument of an intransitive may also be elided in natural speech, if it is highly identifiable from previous utterances (257). The single argument, if present, precedes the verb.

(256) adik jə ncaŋ naŋes, tapi adik səŋum
 child that NEG cry but child smile
 ‘The child didn’t cry, but the child smiled.’ [Mak pacat 156]

(257) *The husband is cutting up a strange leech being they found in the forest*
 cincan~cincan... ancū
 chop~REP break.into.pieces
 ‘(He) chopped (it) again and again... (it) broke into pieces’ [Mak pacat 167]

7.5.3 Interrogatives

Interrogatives can be divided into polar interrogatives, information interrogatives, and rhetorical interrogatives. Polar interrogatives are essentially yes-no questions. Information interrogatives use interrogative pronouns and adverbs to specify what kind of information is required by the question. Rhetorical interrogatives use certain constructions to imply a response without actually expecting an answer.

7.5.3.1 Polar interrogatives

The responses expected from polar interrogatives are affirmation (yes), negation (no), or uncertainty (I don’t know). Polar interrogatives can be expressed by either a rising intonation over the relevant constituents, or the use of some discourse particles or question tags.

An interrogative can be interpreted from a declarative structure by a rising intonation. In (258), a rising intonation is over the existential verb.

(258) *A husband and wife are looking for a child crying in the forest*
 ada
 EXIST
 ‘Is it there?’ [Mak Pacat 74]

Other than rising intonation, polar interrogatives are more commonly expressed by the use of question tags or utterance final discourse particles. The question tag *tidak* [tidaʔ/tidəʔ] ‘NEG’ is added to the end of a declarative sentence to form a question (259). *bətol* ‘correct’ used clause finally also serves as a question tag ‘right?’, prompting the listener to agree with a statement (261). *ka* [ka/kə] is a particle that occurs at the end of a declarative sentence (before a vocative if there is one), turning it into a question (260). In (260), there is an additional dubitative particle *gaŋ* that expresses doubt about or low confidence in a particular proposition. *a* is a discourse particle with many functions (see §7.8.2.8), and forming a question is one of them. In (262), it is used to express the speaker’s questioning of a particular situation or decision. *ya* in (263) serves the same purpose, though the effect seems softer than *a*. *e* is another multipurpose discourse particle. One of its functions is to form questions. When used clause finally, it expresses a question that the speaker probably knows the answer to, and the manner is assertive (264). The particle *kan* for questions is also used clause-finally in Seletar, but it occurs in the context of dialect shift, as indicated by the use of the uncommon second person pronoun *awak*. It asks a question, seeking verification or agreement from the listener (265).

(259) təlow ular **tidak**
 egg snake NEG
 ‘Is it a snake egg?’ [Anak Naga 63]

(260) təlow ular gaŋ bəsal **ka** mak
 egg snake PAR big PAR:Q mother
 ‘Snake eggs are big, right, Mother?’ [Anak Naga 82]

(261) kərana kita nak kəna jaga nok kita...
 because 1PL want have.to take.care body 1PL

əm **bətol?**
 FIL correct

‘(We exercise) because we need to take care of our bodies, right?’ [Jadi Nelayan 121]

(262) *A husband and wife are entering the forest by themselves. Ordinarily, people go into the forest in bigger groups.*

kon len ncak ekot **a**
 Seletar.people other NEG follow PAR
 ‘The other people are not joining/following (us)?’ [Mak Pacat 8]

(263) ay dəŋə bətol **ya**
 2 hear correct PAR

‘Did you hear it correctly?’ [Mak Pacat 61]

(264) *A husband told his wife that they did not find any animal while hunting in the forest. This is the wife’s (slightly annoyed) response to that.*

abis, ay tak jumpa anak **e**
 finish 2 NEG meet what PAR
 ‘Then, you didn’t encounter anything?’ [Anak Naga 76s]

(265) awak paŋgel kəlapə **kan**
 2SG(M) call coconut PAR:Q

‘You call (it) ‘kelapa’, right?’ (speaking to the researcher) [Jadi Nelayan 21]

7.5.3.2 Information Interrogatives: Interrogative Pronouns and Adverbs

The particular type of information requested by the interrogative is indicated by the type of interrogative pronoun and interrogative adverb used. The interrogative pronouns and adverbs may come clause initially or remain in situ. Most of the forms listed in Table 4 can function as interrogative pronouns and adverbs in interrogative clauses, and indefinite pronouns and adverbs in non-interrogative clauses.

| Interrogative | Forms | Notes |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| ‘who’ | <i>sak</i> [saʔ] / <i>sapa</i> [sapaʔ] | Only used indefinitely in the texts collected |
| ‘what’ | <i>apa</i> [ʔapa/ʔapə] / <i>anak</i> [ʔanaʔ] (variant forms <i>alay</i> , <i>anə</i>) | Both forms can be used as indefinite pronouns as well. |
| ‘where’ | <i>dəmak</i> [dəmaʔ] / <i>kəmak</i> [kəmaʔ] | <i>mana</i> [mana/manə] (which is the interrogative for ‘where’ in SM) is used indefinitely to mean ‘wherever’, ‘anywhere’. It is also used to express adverb of reason ‘why’. |
| ‘how’ | <i>macamak</i> [macamaʔ] / <i>macamana</i> | Same forms are used as an adverb of manner ‘how’ |
| ‘how many’ / ‘how much’ | <i>bua</i> [bwa] | Same form can be used non-interrogatively to mean ‘as much as’ |
| ‘why’ | <i>ŋə</i> [ŋə / ŋa] / <i>ŋayu</i> | <i>ŋayu</i> seems to be an emphatic form |

Table 4 Interrogative pronouns and adverbs

7.5.3.2.1 Who: *sak* / *sapa*

Seletar has an interrogative pronoun to distinguish person: *sak* [saʔ] ‘who’. *sak* is the form elicited in the word list. It is not seen in natural texts. *sapa* appears in the text, occurring in reduplicated form *sapa-sapa* ‘whoever’ (266). More data is needed to know exactly the distribution of each form and their function in interrogative and non-interrogative clauses. *sak* is likely a reduction of *sapa*.

(266) *len kali, sapa~sapa jambak, anak~anak kita pəgi utan, pəgi*
 other time who~INDET bunch child~PL 1PL go forest go

mana
 where

‘Next time, whoever of you bunch... (whichever of) our children go to the forest, go wherever’

[Anak Naga 249]

7.5.3.2.2 What: *apa* / *anak*

apa [ʔapa / ʔapə] and *anak* [ʔanaʔ] (with variant forms *alay*, *anə*) are both used as the interrogative pronouns for inanimate entities ‘what’. They occur *in situ* in the clause, rarely clause-initially. The differences between *apa* and *anak* are not entirely clear. Both can be used as interrogative pronouns (267, 268). They also can occur in the same type of constructions (‘for what’ in 269-270; ‘because of what’ 271-272) and both can be used to ask about the property of something ‘what sort of’ (273-274). That being said, it is noted that for the ‘because of what’ construction like (272), *anak* is preferred over *apa*, as *səbab anak* appears more frequently than *səbab apa*. Additionally, only *anak* can be used as a general response to a summons or someone calling (275).

- (267) Child: cayi **apa**
 find what
 ‘What are (we) looking for?’
 Father: cayi pəlanduk
 find mousedeer
 ‘(We’re) looking for mousedeer.’ [Anak Naga 22-23]
- (268) neŋkay, ay dapat **anak**, neŋkay
 ENDEAR 2 get what ENDEAR
 ‘My dear, what did you get, my dear?’ [Anak Naga 74]
- (269) baŋak naŋes~naŋes, tapi buat **apa**
 many cry~REP but do what
 ‘(She) cried and cried, but for what?’ [Anak Naga 245]
- (270) *A child is begging his father to let him take a mysterious egg they found in the forest. This is the father’s response.*
 bot **alay** nak ami
 do what want take
 ‘For what (reason) (do you) want to take (them)?’ [Anak Naga 54]
- (271) *Spells cast on the main character are not working. The narrator is explaining why.*
 səbap **apa**, dah jə baŋak kəluar
 because what blood that many come.out
 ‘Because of what? The blood came out a lot.’ [Mak Pacat 207-208]
- (272) *The main character is dying and speaking her last words to her family.*
 am akan mati, səbap **anak**, pusu am...
 1SG FUT die because what breast 1SG
 ‘I will die, because of what? My breast...’ [Mak Pacat 175]
- (273) ntah təlow **apa** ay man, mak ja mada
 don’t.know egg what 2 eat mother 3 EVENT: say
 ‘“Without knowing what egg (it was), you ate (it),” his mother said.’ [Anak Naga 119]
- (274) təlow jə təlow **anak**
 egg that egg what
 ‘What egg is that?’ [Anak naga 80] (lit. ‘That egg, what egg?’)
- (275) *The main character has been calling out for his relatives to come and save his wife.*
 baw kon jaot **anak**
 only.then Seletar.people EVENT:respond/answer what
 ‘Only then the people responded, “What?”’ [Mak Pacat 191]

In non-interrogative contexts, *apa* and *anak* are used indefinitely to mean ‘something’ (276), ‘whatever’ (277), ‘anything’ (278), ‘whatever sort of’ (279-280). When describing the property of something, *apa* can follow the nominal it modifies (279) or precede it (280). It is observed that *apa* is the more common for indeterminate use, compared to *anak*, but the indeterminate use of *anak* do occasionally occur (264). Also, only *apa* can be reduplicated to *apa-apa* ‘whatever’ (217).

(276) *A couple heard a child's cry in the forest. The husband thinks they must have misheard.*

sa anu... a sa buŋ ka **apa**
 sound what PAR sound bird or what
 '(It was probably) the sound of don't-know-what... sound of the bird or something.' [Mak Pacat 63]

(277) *The main character went into the forest to look for tamarind specifically. This is part of his prayers to the spirits when he enters the forest.*

a kami ...masok kə anu dalam utan ka, am bukən cayi **apa**
 PAR 1SG enter to FIL inside forest this 1SG NEG find what
 'I enter to... into this forest, I am not here to look for whatever' [Mak Pacat 63]

(278) *The relatives are casting spells to heal the protagonist's wounds.*

toloŋ jəm̄pi, tak bole buat **apa**
 help cast.spell NEG able do what
 '(They) helped to cast spells, (but they) could not do anything.' [Mak Pacat 225]

(279) (jumpa) bənataŋ **apa**
 encounter animal what

'(You) (encounter) whatever kinds of animal,' [Anak Naga 250]

(280) len kali, kalaw kita, masok dalam utan jumpa **apa** bənataŋ...
 other time if 1PL enter inside forest encounter what animal

apa

what

'Next time, if we enter into the forest and encounter whatever kinds of animal... whatever'

[Anak Naga 249]

anu (variant forms: *ano*, *anə*, *anuk*, *anoy*, *anoyo*, *eno*) is an indefinite pronoun in some Malay and Malayic varieties (Adelaar, 1992, p. 127). In Seletar, however, it is not an indefinite pronoun. It is used (a) as a filler or hesitation particle for when the speaker is thinking of what to say (277), and (b) as a noun that refers to something which the speaker has trouble recalling the name of ('whatchamacallit' or 'thingamajig') (276). *anu* and *anak* are probably related, and might share the same origin. That origin might be the Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *a-nu 'what?' which has reflexes in Borneo, Formosan and Philippine languages (Blust & Trussel, 2020).

7.5.3.2.3 Where: *dəmak* and *kəmak*

There are two interrogatives for place in Seletar: *dəmak* [dəmaʔ] '(at) where' and *kəmak* [kəmaʔ] '(go) where'. They occur clause initially. They are likely compounds formed by combining prepositions *dəkət* 'at/near' or *kə* 'to' with *mak* [maʔ], a reduced form of *mana* 'where'. The reduced form *mak* is never seen to appear without the *dəkət* or *kə* addition. *dəmak* asks for stationary location 'where' (281), while *kəmak* asks for a goal 'where are you going' (282). *dəmak* and *kəmak* are only used interrogatively.

(281) **dəmak** sa adi jə
 at.where sound child that

'Where is that sound of the child (coming from)?' [Mak Pacat 66]

(282) *neŋkay,* *neŋkay,* ***kəmak***
ENDEAR ENDEAR go.where
'My dear...my dear, where are (you/we) going?' [Mak Pacat 1]

mana is not used as an interrogative pronoun at all in the texts. Instead, it expresses indefinite meanings such as 'wherever' (266), 'whichever' (129), 'anywhere' (283), which can also be expressed by the reduplicated form *mana-mana* (284). In one occurrence, it is used to express reason 'why' (285). *mana* is also part of the adverb *macamana* 'how' (see §7.5.3.2.4), and a constituent in the expression *mana ada* 'where exist', which is used for rhetorical questions (see §7.5.3.3).

(283) *Orang Seletar believe that one cannot go under a fallen tree, one must cut it, or else one will lose one's way in the forest and not be able to return home.*

usa ***mana*** *masuk* *di*
IMP.NEG where enter PAR
'Don't enter anywhere (under the tree).' [Mak Pacat 18]

(284) *a* *masa* *ja,* *nampak* *bilaŋ-an* *ntua* *muin* *maken*
PAR time that see count-RSLT elder long.ago increasingly
'(During) that time, (you could) see the number of the ancestors growing and growing.'

bapak, *sampay* *di* ***mana~mana***
many reach at where~INDET
'until (they were) anywhere.' [Sejarah Seletar 39-40]

(285) Mother: *ŋə* *ay* *tam* *məni=ŋa*
why 2 always bathe=EMPH
'Why do you keep bathing?'

Child: *ntah* *mak,* *ŋok* *am* *panas*
don't.know mother body 1SG hot
'I don't know, Mother. My body is hot.'

ntah ***mana***
don't.know why
'I don't know why.' [Anak Naga 110-111]

7.5.3.2.4 How: *macamak* / *macamana*

As an interrogative adverb, the form *macamak* [macama?] 'how' / 'do in what manner' is used. It is a combination of *macam* 'like' and *mak* 'where', a reduced form of *mana*. It appears clause initially (286), and enquires about the manner in which something is done. A rhetorical question can also be formed with *macamak* (see §7.5.3.3). The adverb also forms the expression 'what are we going to do' / 'what is there to do' (287). Additionally, *ai macamak* '2 how' is a conventional way of saying 'how are you' (Wong, 2020)

(286) ***macamak*** *ŋa* *sədut* *kuat*
how 3 suck strong
'How is he sucking hard?' [Mak Pacat 113]

(287) *kalaw* *ncak* *laok,* ***macamak***
if NEG food how
'If there is no food, what are we going to do?' [Anak Naga 17]

macamak is also used in non-interrogative contexts to talk about the manner in which an action is performed, viz. ‘how’ (288-289). The meaning of non-interrogative ‘how’ can also be expressed without this adverb, but by the existential verb *ada* ‘EXIST’, usually in a negative context *tak tahu ada* ‘do not know how’ (248) (see §7.5.2.1). *nak*, a complementiser (see §7.6.2), frequently follows *macamak* (and the *ada* construction just mentioned) to express ‘how to (do something)’ (289).

(288) kita kəna bəlaja la, **macamak** ntua cayi kətam
 1PL have.to learn PAR how elders find crab
 ‘We /one had to learn, how our elders looked for crabs.’ [Jadi Nelayan 5]

(289) **macamak** nak cayi sipot, **macamak** nak cayi kətam,
 how want find sea.snail how want find crab

kita kəna bəlaja lagi kəcit, baw kita bəsal kita tahu
 1PL have.to learn more little only.then 1PL big 1PL know
 ‘How to look for snails, how to look for crabs, we have to/one has to learn (those skills) (when) we are/one is still young, only then (when) we are/one is older, we/one will know.’ [Jadi Nelayan 85]

7.5.3.2.5 How much: *bua*

bua [bwa] is used to ask ‘how much/many’ in an interrogative context and occurs clause initially. In the text, it is not followed by a measure noun (e.g. *ringgit*), as it is assumed from the context that the discussion is about money (290).

(290) am cayi sipot, sə=kilo, **bua** emaŋ a
 1SG find sea.snail one=kilogram how.much guess PAR
 ‘I found sea snails, one kilogram. How much was (that) approximately?’ [Jadi Nelayan 58]

The non-interrogative function of *bua* is to express ‘as much as’. It is negated in the text to mean ‘not much’ (291).

(291) kuat man, kalaw tak **bua** bə-jan, kita jadi
 strong eat if NEG as.much.as CONT-walk 1PL become
 susah o
 difficult PAR
 ‘we eat/one eats vigorously, (but) if we don’t /one doesn’t walk as much, we/one will suffer.’
 [Jadi Nelayan 116]

7.5.3.2.6 Why: *ŋə*

ŋə [ŋə] (variant forms *ŋa*, emphatic form *ŋayu*) ‘why’ asks about reason (purpose and cause) and frequently occurs clause-initially (292). Less frequently, it can occur after a topicalised argument (293), clause finally (294), or both clause-initially and -finally, surrounding the proposition (293, 295), which gives an emphatic effect.

(292) **ŋə** kulet ŋok ay jadi macam kulet~kulet
 why skin body 2 become like skin-PL
 ‘Why is the skin on your body becoming like patches of skin?’ [Anak Naga 133]

(293) mata ay ηə biyu ηə
 eye 2 why blue why
 ‘Your eyes, why are (they) blue, why?’ [Anak Naga 134]

(294) nok ay iŋat bə-sisik, ηa
 body 2 think STV -scale why
 ‘Your body, (I) think it is scaling, why (is that)?’ [Anak Naga 132]

(295) ηə kupala e ada tandok ηə
 why head PAR EXIST horn why
 ‘Why does (his) head have horns? Why?’ [Anak Naga 141]

ηə does not occur in non-interrogative contexts. Instead, *mana* is used (285).

7.5.3.3 Rhetorical interrogatives

Rhetorical interrogatives can be expressed by clause final discourse particles *taw* and *e*, and also by constructions *mana ada*, *bole mana*, *macam mana bole* and *mana ___ taw*.

taw comes from the verb *taw* ‘know’. When used clause finally, the verb becomes a question tag, similar to English ‘you know?’. It indicates that what is being said should already be known by the listener. The speaker does not expect a response from the listener and answers the question herself (296). *e* is a particle used for rhetorical questions in an assertive manner (264).

(296) wa puŋa pak... kita puŋa pak bawa apa taw? bəliuŋ
 1SG(HOK) POSS father 1PL POSS father bring what PAR axe
 ‘My father ... do you know what my father brought? An axe!’ (*kita*, a 1PL pronoun is used for singular referent here, see §7.2.2.1.2) [Jadi Nelayan 31]

mana ada is used to express a rhetorical expression ‘how is/are there’ (297). *bole mana*⁸³ and *macam bole* both express ‘how can/could’ (299-300). *mana ___ taw* (the subject fills the blank space) expresses ‘how is (someone) supposed to know’ (301). The implied answers for all these constructions are negative. *mana ada* usually occurs clause initially (297), or after the topicalised argument (298). *bole mana* and *macam bole* both precede the verb phrase (299-300). *mana ___ taw* can form a clause on its own (301).

(297) ay dəŋə bətol.
 2 hear correct
 ‘You listen correctly.’

mana ada adik naŋes dalam utan
 where EXIST child cry inside forest
 ‘How is there a child crying in the forest?’ [Mak Pacat 59]

(298) utan ka, **mana ada** adik
 forest this where EXIST child
 ‘(In) the forest, how is there a child?’ [Mak Pacat 60]

⁸³ In colloquial Malay varieties spoken by ethnic Malays, the form is reversed: *mana boleh*.

(299) mak ja, pak ja, bole mana buang jə adik dalam utan e
 mother 3 father 3 able where throw that child inside forest PAR
 ‘His mother, his father, how can (they) throw away the child in the forest?’ [Mak Pacat 83]

(300) tejok, umo da nam puloh ləbe.
 see age COMPL six ten more

macamak bole nak aŋkət bəat
 how able want carry weight

‘Look, (my) age is already in the sixties. How am I able to carry weights?’ [Jadi Nelayan 108]

(301) kalaw kita tak bəlaja, mana kita tahu
 if 1PL NEG learn where 1PL know

‘If we didn’t/ one doesn’t learn, how are we / how is one supposed to know (how to hunt)?’

[Jadi Nelayan 45]

7.5.4 Imperatives

Positive imperatives are formed by verbs or verb phrases alone (302). Negative imperatives are signalled by the prohibitives *janan* and *usa* (see §7.3.2). The subject of the clause is not usually expressed, as it is understood to be ‘you’. However, they do occur occasionally (305). The verbs in the imperative clauses usually appear clause initially and are then followed by core arguments and other complements (302). They may follow topicalised information if present (304). As mentioned in §7.5, it is common in natural Seletar speech to leave highly accessible arguments unexpressed. Therefore, structurally, a positive imperative clause, which usually does not have an explicit agent or any imperative markers, may look similar to a non-imperative clause (compare 302 and 303), and one must depend on other elements such as discourse particles (for example *di* in (304) is commonly used in negative imperatives, see §7.8.2.15 for elaboration), stress, and intonation to determine whether the clause is imperative or not. There are usually discourse particles either at the beginning (302) or the end of the imperative clauses (304) (see §7.8.2 for discussion), accompanied by a heavy stress at the end of the clause.

(302) Father: a jan ekot... ekot pak masok utan
 PAR walk follow follow father enter forest
 ‘Follow... follow me into the forest’ [Anak Naga 21]

(303) jan masok utan... jan
 walk enter forest walk
 ‘(They) entered the forest... and walked’ [Anak Naga 19]

(304) ay jan usa laju amat di
 2 walk IMP.NEG fast very PAR
 ‘Don’t you walk so fast!’ [Mak Pacat 46] (lit. Your walk, don’t be so fast)

(305) mak ja pada, ay usa pəgi
 mother 3 say 2 IMP.NEG go
 His mother said, “You don’t go!” [Mak Pacat 199]

7.6 Complex Sentences

Sentences comprising of more than one simple clause are discussed in this section. Subordinate clauses such as relative clauses (§7.6.1), complement clauses (§7.6.2) and adverbial clauses (§7.6.3) are examined. This section also includes an overview of how independent clauses are combined, either by coordination with explicit coordinators (§7.6.4) or by simple juxtaposition (§7.6.5).

7.6.1 Relative clause

Relative clauses follow their heads. The relative clause is introduced with a relativiser *yaŋ/naŋ* ‘REL’. *yaŋ* is the more frequent form, compared to *naŋ*. Relative clauses in the texts are restrictive. There are few restrictions as to which arguments can be relativised. Both subject and non-subject arguments of a relative clause are relativisable: (306) shows a relativised (headless) subject, (307) a relativised complement, (308) a relativised direct object, and (309) a relativised adjunct. The grammatical function of the relativised NP in the matrix clause is irrelevant. In the examples below, the external heads are underlined, and the relative clauses are in brackets. The relativised NP in the relative clause whose head is external is represented by a gap.

- (306) [yaŋ kasway e jab]_{REL} jə, uŋ
 REL Causeway PAR say that outsider/Malay
 ‘The ones who call it ‘Causeway’ were the Malays/outsideers.’ [Sejarah Seletar 66]

- (307) ikat sumpah [naŋ kita tidak tahu \emptyset]_{REL}
 tie curse REL 1PL NEG know
 ‘(We might get) tied to curses that we do not know about.’ [Anak Naga 252]

- (308) na? makan ana?, apa~apa la [yaŋ uŋ tanam \emptyset]_{REL} jə
 want eat what, what~INDET PAR REL people plant that
 ‘(When) we wanted to eat whatever, whatever (it was) that people planted.’ [Jadi Nelayan 75-76]

- (309) bila [yaŋ \emptyset cucu lalu]_{REL} kə anak, jaga
 whatever.time REL grandchild cross or what take.care

kami ka
 1SG this

‘Whenever it is that (your) grandchildren pass by, or something, take care of me here.’ [Anak Naga 35] (When praying to the spirits in the forest, the Orang Seletar refer to themselves as *cucu* ‘grandchild(ren)’, and the spirits as ancestors.)

The head of a relative clause may be present externally (307-309), or not at all (i.e. headless) (306). Headless relative clauses are very common in Seletar. They are used often to form NPs (e.g. 306), especially those in equative clauses with cleft constructions (see §7.5.1.1). The headless relative clause can create referents from verbal predicates (306, 310), or non-verbal predicates (311, 312).

- (310) ka [naŋ kami ekot]_{REL} ka, linoŋ kami
 FOC REL 1SG follow this protect 1PL.EXCL
 ‘The one that I follow here/now, protect us.’ [Anak Naga 39]

(311) *ŋə [yaŋ tadi]_{REL} tak masak mak*
 why REL just.now NEG cook mother
 ‘Why did the one just now not cooked (through), Mother?’ [Anak Naga 86]

(312) *ekot gaya ay man [naŋ ka]_{REL} te*
 follow behaviour 2 eat REL this PAR
 ‘Based on/from (your) behaviour, you ate this one.’ [Anak Naga 231]

The clause embedded within the relative clause is structured the same way as a basic, non-embedded clause. For (308), the basic clause before relativisation is *oŋ tanam apa-apa* ‘the people planted whatever’, and when *apa-apa* is relativised, the relative clause is formed: *apa-apa [yaŋ uŋ tanam]*. An embedded clause may also have a topicalised structure. For example (306), the clause before relativisation is *kasway e Ø jab* (subject not explicit) ‘Causeway, Ø calls (it that)’, and when the unmentioned subject is relativised to form a headless relative clause, the topicalised structure remains: *[yaŋ kasway e jab]* ‘Causeway, the one that calls (it that)’.

Another relativising strategy involves not the use of relativiser *yaŋ/naŋ*, but nouns *təmpat* ‘place’ and *masa* ‘time’. They form relative clause-like constructions, with a clause following the head noun *təmpat* or *masa*, modifying a temporal (313) or spatial (314) location respectively. The *təmpat* and *masə* constructions frequently serve as adjuncts of a clause.

(313) *meməŋ s=puloh sen, masa [kami? kəcit]_{REL} la*
 indeed one=ten cent time 1SG little PAR
 ‘Indeed (it was) ten cents, (during) the time when I was little.’ [Jadi Nelayan 61]

(314) *bila hanta jual təmpat [cina tanam duku]_{REL} a*
 when send sell place Chinese plant langsung PAR
 ‘When (we) went to sell (things) at the place where the Chinese planted *duku langsung* fruit’ [Jadi Nelayan 82]

7.6.2 Complement clauses

A complement clause functions as a matrix clause argument of a predicate (Noonan, 1985, p. 42). Complement clauses usually occur with verbs of speech or cognition, or other complement taking verbs such as *nak* ‘want’, *malu* ‘(be) ashamed’ and *sənaŋ* ‘(be) easy’. Aside from *nak* (see below for more details), complementisers are not common in linking complement clauses to the main clause; instead the clauses are juxtaposed without overt linkers.

The complement clauses are simply juxtaposed with the matrix clause without any linking particles for the verb *nak* ‘want’ (315) and verbs of cognition such as *iŋat* ‘think’ (316) and *taw* ‘know’ (317). There is no overt marker signaling subordination. The complements of verbs of speech in the texts mostly occur in the form of direct quotations without complementisers (318).

(315) *am **nak** [tidu dəkət laot]_{COMP}*
 1SG want sleep at sea
 ‘I want to sleep in the sea.’ [Anak Naga 116]

(316) bila da campo pə-gaol siŋa e uŋ iŋat
 when COMPL mix CONT-mingle until PAR Malay think

[kita ka baŋsa uŋ]_{COMP}
 1PL this race Malay

‘(We) have already mixed and mingled around, until the Malays think we here are Malays.’

[Sejarah Seletar 78]

(317) ay tahu [bow balek jə]_{COMP}, bapak ŋa pada
 2 know bring return that father 3 say

‘‘You know to put that back,’’ his father said’ [Anak Naga 65]

(318) mak ŋa pada [ay usa pəgi]_{COMP}
 mother 3 say 2 IMP.NEG go

‘His mother said, ‘‘You don’t go!’’ [Anak Naga 199]

Other complement taking verbs include *malu* ‘(be) ashamed’ (319), *paya* ‘(be) troublesome/difficult’ (320), *sənaŋ* ‘(be) easy’ (321), *səmpot* ‘(be) breathless’ (322). The complement clauses of these verbs are connected to the main clauses by the complementiser *nak*. *nak* occurs as the first element of the complement clause. *nak* [naʔ] is originally a verb meaning ‘want’ (which itself takes a complement, see above paragraph). It also functions as an aspect/modality marker (see §7.3.1) and a marker for purposive adverbial clauses (§7.6.3). The verb of cognition *tahu* ‘know’ may also optionally have *nak* as a complementiser (323-324). In the examples (320) and the second line of (323), the complement clauses are topicalised, and the verbs come later in the clause.

(319) ŋa, malu, [nak gələ namaʔ kə-turun-an ŋa]_{COMP}
 3 ashamed COMP label name ABSTR-descend-ABSTR 3

‘He is.. ashamed.. to bear the name.. of his ancestry.’ [Sejarah Seletar 89]

(320) keŋ, nak lima kilo, [nak aŋkat] pun payah,
 now IM.FUT five kilogram COMP carry PAR difficult

meməŋ payah

indeed difficult

‘nowadays, almost five kilograms, to carry (that) will also be difficult, indeed really difficult.’ [Jadi Nelayan 107]

(321) sənaŋ [nak buat bə-jan ŋok] a, sənaŋ
 easy COMP make CONT-walk body PAR easy

‘(It) will be easy to walk with my body. Easy.’ [Jadi Nelayan 120]

(322) a aku səmpot [nak jan junsit] tə
 PAR 1SG(M) breathless COMP walk far.away PAR

‘I am breathless to walk far distances.’ [Jadi Nelayan 85]

(323) *The speaker is talking about if one does not learn the ways of catching crabs or sea snails from one's parents, one will never know how.*

kita tak tahu ada [nak cayi kətam, cayi sipot]_{COMP}
 1PL NEG know EXIST COMP find crab find sea.snail
 'We/one would not know how to find crabs or find sea snails.' [Jadi Nelayan 46]

macamak [nak cayi sipot], macamak [nak cayi kətam]_{COMP},
 how COMP find sea.snail how COMP find crab

kita kəna bələja lagi kəcit, baw kita bəsal kita
 1PL have.to learn more little only.then 1PL big 1PL

tahu
 know

'How to look for snails, how to look for crabs, we have to/one has to learn (those skills) (when) we are/one is still young, only then (when) we are/one is older, we/one will know.' [Jadi Nelayan 85]

As mentioned earlier in this section, complements of verbs of speech occur as direct quotations without any overt markings by complementisers. The most common verb for speech is *pada* [padə] 'say' (with one (infrequent) variant form *wada* [wadə]). *cakap* 'say' is used only once when the speaker switched dialect to speak to the researcher (227). Another utterance verb is *jaot* 'respond' (275) (the root *saot* (SM *sahut*) is always affixed with N- in the text to become *jaot*). The direct quotations are sometimes preceded by dialogue tags (e.g. he said) (318), but more frequently, the dialogue tags come after what is said (324). The structure of the dialogue tags is always NP-V, and the reverse V-NP (e.g. said she) is not seen. The verb in the dialogue tags may not always be present explicitly (325), but the context (e.g. tone of the speaker, use of 1PL pronouns) indicates that the clause following the dialogue tag is a direct quotation.

There exists another dialogue tag with the form *ye diə* (variant forms *yə die / ye diə*), which means 'he/she say' (334). It always occurs after the direct quotation. *ye diə* seems to closely resemble Tioman Malay *yə diə* '(s)he said' (Adelaar, 1992, p. 104).

(324) am akan but suṅay ṅa pada
 1SG FUT make river 3 say
 "I will make rivers," he said. [Anak Naga 175]

(325) laki ṅa pun, amu, kita bale la, kita balek
 husband 3 PAR INTRJ 1PL return PAR 1PL return
 'Her husband then (said), "Oh no, we go back, we go back."' [Mak Pacat 172]

7.6.3 Adverbial clauses

The adverbial clause serves to provide additional information in terms of temporal sequencing, condition, cause/reason and purpose to the main clause. The adverbial clauses are usually marked by different particles/conjunctions indicating different types of semantic relationships. These include temporal markers like *bila* 'when', *səbəlom* 'before', *baw* 'only then', *siṅa* 'until', conditional particle *kalaw* 'if', markers of reason/cause *səbap* 'because', *pasa* 'because', *bantal* 'because', *kərana* 'because', and purpose markers *nak* 'to'. The adverbial clause may precede or follow the main clause.

7.6.3.1 Temporal clauses

Temporal clauses can provide different time information to the events of the main clause. *bila*⁸⁴ ‘when’ gives a temporal background for the events stated in the main clause (326). *səbəlom* ‘before’ introduces something that occurs after the events of the main clause (327). *siŋa* ‘until’ marks an event which occurs after the incident stated in the main clause has reached a certain level (328). *baw* ‘only then’ introduces a clause which is true only after the conditioning events presented in the previous clause (329). The conditioning clause that precedes the *baw* clause may be introduced by temporal marker *bila* ‘when’. Adverbial clauses marked by *bila* and *səbəlom* precede the main clause, while *siŋa* and *baw* clauses follow the main clause, reflecting the chronological sequence of events. The temporal markers are not obligatory, as clauses may express their time relationship iconically through the juxtaposition of clauses (see §7.6.5 for elaboration).

(326) [bila naŋes]_{ADV,PAK} ɲa toloŋ jəmpi
 when cry father 3 help cast.spell
 ‘When (she) cried, his father helped to cast spells (on him).’ [Anak Naga 190]

(327) [səbəlom jan]_{ADB,} jəmpi tu
 before walk cast.spell that
 ‘Before (they) walked, (they) cast the spells.’ [Anak Naga 30]

(328) bila da campo pə-gaol, [siŋa e uŋ iŋat kita ka
 when COMPL mix CONT-mingle until PAR Malay think 1PL this
 baŋsa uŋ]_{ADV}
 race Malay
 ‘(We) have already mixed and mingled around, until the Malays think we here are Malays’
 [Sejarah Seletar 78]

(329) bila aəl da gədək, [baw nampak pədagaran
 when water COMPL calm only.then see harmony
 ntua]
 elder
 ‘When the water had already calmed down, only then (you) saw the harmony/grouping of the elders’ (*pədagaran* is possibly morphologically complex, but the interpreter did not separate the word into parts) [Sejarah Seletar 41]

7.6.3.2 Conditional clauses

A conditional clause precedes the main clause (i.e. the apodosis). The clause containing the condition is marked by *kalaw* ‘if’ / ‘given’ (variant *kalow*). The condition introduced by *kalaw* may be hypothetical (330) or real (331). *kalaw* is also a topic marker that introduces a topicalised element (332).

(330) [kalaw ada dapat laok], kita bəkər aja la
 If PFV get food 1PL burn only PAR
 ‘If (we) did get food, we/one would just burn/cook (them).’ [Anak Naga 18]

⁸⁴ *bila* is only seen used in adverbial clauses (i.e. non-interrogative contexts) in the texts. It can be used interrogatively (enquiring the time ‘when?’) but it is not present in the data collected.

(331) [kalaw kita da bole jan], cayi kətam ekot mak kita
 if 1PL COMPL can walk find crab follow mother 1PL
 ‘When we were/one was already able to walk, we/one followed our/one’s mother (to) look for crabs.’ [Jadi Nelayan 4]

(332) kalaw masa am da jə, am cayi səntəŋ
 if time 1SG virgin that 1SG find mollusc
 ‘(As for) the time when I was of age, I looked for molluscs.’ [Jadi Nelayan 95]

A conditional relationship between clauses can also be interpreted without the overt use of *kalaw*. The two clauses are simply placed beside one another, and the conditional meaning is determined from context.

(333) masa tu, tak sala, umo saya lima tahun
 time that NEG wrong age 1SG(M) five year
 ‘(At) that time, (if I’m) not wrong, I was five years old.’ [Jadi Nelayan 6]

7.6.3.3 Causal/reason clauses

The causal/reason clauses frequently follow their main clauses and are marked most commonly by *səbap* ‘because’ (334). Other markers for cause include *kə(r)ana* [kə(r)ana] (intervocalic rhotic is frequently lost) (335), *pasa* (SM *pasal* ‘matter’) (336) and *bantal* (337),⁸⁵ which all mean ‘because’.

(334) nak tidu laot [səbap nok am panas] ye diə
 want sleep sea because body 1SG hot he/she say
 ‘“(I) want to sleep (at) sea because my body is hot,” he said’ [Anak Naga 116-117]

(335) pupos [kərana, ja iŋat gələmə, suda nikah uŋ luar nikah
 disappear because 3 think famous COMPL marry people outside marry
 uŋ luar]
 people outside
 ‘(The Seletar tribe) will disappear because they think (the lifestyle is/they are) famous /glamorous/the centre of attention, (having) married outsiders again and again.’ [Sejarah Seletar 83]

(336) jambak kon keŋ ncaŋ baŋak macam muin e
 bunch Seletar.people now NEG many like long.ago PAR
 [pasa anak]
 because what
 ‘The Seletar people now are not many like in the past, because of what?’ [Sejarah Seletar 32-33]

(337) kalaw bə-pəca pawu jə [bantal aəL bəh] e, masiŋ
 if CONT/STV-break boat that because water fast PAR each
 ŋəpət
 EVETN:drift
 ‘If the boat broke because of the current, each of them would drift away.’ [Sejarah Seletar 83]

⁸⁵ *bantal* was given the gloss ‘because’ by the interpreters and occurred only once. More data needs to be collected to ascertain its distribution and frequency.

7.6.3.4 Purpose clause

Purpose clauses are marked by *nak* ‘want’ or *supaya* ‘so that’. The clause introduced by *nak* (338) and *supaya* (339) contains the purpose of the event indicated by the main clause. *nak* [naʔ] is a verb meaning ‘want’. It also functions as an aspect/modality marker (see §7.3.1) and a complementiser (§7.6.2).

(338) *na pəgi utan [nak cayi anu la, cayi bənataŋ, cayi laok]*
 3 go forest want find FIL PAR find animal find food
 ‘They went to the forest to look for what-you-call-it...look for animals, for food.’ [Anak Naga 16]

(339) (am minta) a supaya **kami**, bini ka... londoŋ **kami**
 (1SG ask) PAR so.that 1SG wife this protect 1PL.EXCL
 ‘(I ask) so I and my wife as we are now... (you will) protect us.’ [Mak Pacat 26]

7.6.4 Coordination

Clauses or sentences can be coordinated by the use of coordinators. There are different types of coordinators that indicate different types of semantic relationships between the clauses. Coordinators seen in the texts include markers of contrast like *tapi* ‘but’ (341) and *pada* ‘when in fact’ (from SM *padahal*) (342), markers of alternation *ataw* ‘or’ and *ka* [kə/ka] ‘or’ (343-344), marker of addition *lagipun* ‘furthermore’ (346) and conclusion *jadi* ‘so’ (347). There are no markers for coupling ‘and’ seen in the texts. Clauses are coupled simply by juxtaposition (340), and the subject argument is often shared by the two clauses.

(340) *The narrator is describing the physical changes experienced by the protagonist who is turning into a dragon.*

kaki maken kəcit, panjaŋ
 feet increasingly small long
 ‘The feet got smaller and smaller, and longer.’ [Anak Naga 164]

(341) *kita jan cayi laju, tapi ncaŋ jumpa bənataŋ*
 1PL walk find fast but NEG meet animal
 ‘We walked and hunted quickly but we didn’t encounter animals.’ [Anak Naga 68]

(342) **pada** *na uŋ asli*
 when.in.fact 3 people original
 ‘When in fact he is Orang Asli.’ [Sejarah Seletar 87]

ataw presents one coordinate as the alternative to another, occurring between the two constituents (343). *ka* is also used to express alternation, and usually comes after the first alternative (344-345). *ataw* and *ka* may be used together (345) with a pause between the two coordinators.

(343) *anak kami ka, nama na lim ataw tan*
 child 1SG this name 3 Lim or Tan
 ‘My child here, his name is Lim or Tan.’ [Sejarah Seletar 86]

(344) *A couple heard a child’s cry in the forest. The husband thinks they must have misheard.*

sa anu... a sa buŋ ka apa
 sound FIL PAR sound bird or what
 ‘(It was) the sound of don’t-know-what... sound of the bird or something.’ [Mak Pacat 63]

- (345) bow pancak aja, takot jumpa anu bontuŋ **ka**, **ataw** apa?
 bring spear only afraid meet FIL tiger or or what
 ‘Bring the spear only, in case (we) encounter what-you-call-it... tigers or something.’ [Anak Naga 26]

lagipun ‘furthermore’ is used to coordinate clauses so that the clause may provide additional information to the rest of the utterances (346).

- (346) *The speaker is saying that if one wants to walk around freely at her age (60 something years old), one has to exercise.*

kəna bawa jan~jan, bukən nak pesən jok, ncak...
 have.to bring walk~REP NEG want show.off body NEG

... nak but bətol napas kita
 want make correct breath 1PL

lagipun, am ə mula sampay sika, memaŋ tak ada jaŋun,
 furthermore 1SG FIL start reach here indeed NEG PFV walk.far

tak ada jaŋkian, memaŋ agak səmpot
 NEG PFV come.here indeed quite breathless

‘(You) have to bring (yourself) to walk around... (It is) not that (we) want to show off (our) bodies, no... We want to correct our breathing. Furthermore, I, from the start until now, indeed do not walk here and there. (It) indeed (makes me) quite breathless.’ [Jadi Nelayan 110-115]

jadi ‘so’ introduces a clause as a conclusion to previously uttered statements or events (347).

- (347) bila jaman keŋ pun da kəluar e, bapa? nikah bapa? suku
 when era now PAR COMPL go.out PAR many marry many tribe

baŋsa. **jadi** bilaŋ-an jə kacok-an, bapa? kacok-an
 race so count-RSLT that mix-RSLT many mix-RSLT

‘When in current times, (a lot of people) too had already gone out (of the villages), a lot (of them) married many tribes and races. And so the groups (of Seletar people) are a mixture, (consisting of) many mixtures.’ [Sejarah Seletar 73]

(*bilangan* means ‘number’, but it also has another meaning ‘group’)

7.6.5 Clause Combining by Juxtaposition

Clauses may be combined with each other without the use of overt markers (i.e. parataxis), be it complementisers, subordinate or coordinate markers. Some examples have already been mentioned briefly in the sections discussing complement clauses (§7.6.2), conditional clauses (§7.6.3.2) and coupling (§7.6.4). As there are no overt markers indicating the type of relationship that exists between the clauses, one has to depend on the discourse context to make interpretations. Generally, two clauses are juxtaposed.

Temporal relationships between clauses are frequently expressed by juxtaposition, although they can be indicated by temporal markers as well (§7.6.3.1). The clauses are organised according to the chronological order of their events (348-350). The transition from one event to another can also be interpreted from a slight pause (signalled by the commas in the examples).

(348) aŋkat təmpayan tu, bawa, turun pawu la a
 carry water.jug that bring descend boat PAR PAR
 ‘(I) carried that water jug and brought (it) down to the boat’ [Anak Naga 103]

(349) a balek da pənat
 PAR return COMPL tired
 ‘(When we) return, (we’ll) already (be) tired.’ [Anak Naga 71]

(350) *Spells cast on the dying main character are not working. She then says her last goodbyes.*
 abis jə, jəmpi~ jəmpi, dia cakap
 finish that cast.spell~REP 3SG(M) say
 ‘After that, (after) the casting of spells, she said,’ [Mak Pacat 226]

As mentioned in §7.6.3.2, the conditional clause may occur without the use of *kalaw* ‘if’ (351). It always precedes the apodosis.

(351) ada ikan, bawa ikan
 EXIST fish bring fish
 ‘(If) there was fish, (we) brought fish (to trade).’ [Jadi Nelayan 78]

A purpose clause may also be introduced without using the purpose marker *nak* ‘want’ (352).

(352) cayi kətam, ekot mak kita
 find crab follow mother 1PL
 ‘(To) find crabs, (we/one) followed our/one’s mother.’ [Jadi Nelayan 4]

Contrast between clauses may also be expressed without the use of *tapi* ‘but’ (353).

(353) kuat man, kalow tak bua bə-jan, kita jadi
 strong eat if NEG as.much.as CONT-walk 1PL become

 susah o
 difficult PAR
 ‘(We) eat/one eats vigorously (but) if we don’t/ one doesn’t walk as much, we/one will suffer.’
 [Jadi Nelayan 116]

The lack of explicit markers to indicate the semantic relationship may contribute to some ambiguity. For example, the second part of (354) can be interpreted to be a purposive clause, or as a sequential event.

(354) na kə laot, minta toloŋ
 3 to sea ask help
 ‘He (went) to the sea to ask for help.’ / ‘He (went) to the sea and asked for help.’ [Mak Pacat 185]

7.7 Information Structure

Word order in Seletar is heavily determined by information structure. The topic comes first in a clause, followed by the comment saying something about it. The topic is a pragmatic concept and in a basic clause may be the same as a subject, which is a syntactic concept (see §7.5 for subject and predicate in

clauses). For example, in (356) *am* ‘1SG’ is both topic and subject, but in (357) *am* is the subject and *sə=botey* ‘one (piece)’ is the topic.

The topic may be marked explicitly by a topic marker *kalaw* (355), but this strategy is infrequent in the text. The topicalised argument is fronted to initial position of the clause. For example, the NP *səbotey* ‘one (round) piece’ is not topicalised in (356), so it follows the verb. However, in (357) *səbotey* is topicalised and placed in initial position. The topicalisation of patient-like argument such as (357) can be seen as a undergoer focus construction, as opposed to actor focus (see §7.5.2.2). Topic can also be marked by the particle *e*, see §7.8.2.9.

(355) *kalaw masa am da jə, am cayi səntaŋ*
 if time 1SG virgin that 1SG find mollusc
 ‘(As for) the time I was of age, I looked for molluscs.’ [Jadi Nelayan 95]

(356) *am ami sə=botey bow balek*
 1SG take one=CLF:ROUND bring return
 ‘I (will) take one piece and bring (it) back.’ [Anak Naga 58]

(357) *sə=botey am tiŋgəl*
 one=CLF:ROUND 1SG leave.behind
 ‘(As for the other) one, I leave (it here).’ [Anak Naga 59]

The topicalised argument does not have to be a core argument of a predicate (358). Information about location is observed to be frequently topicalised in the text (359-360). Non-verbal predicates such as *dəkət gunoŋ* in (361) can also be fronted to appear before the subject argument.

(358) *təlow jə, ay tak tahu bənatəŋ mana*
 egg that 2 NEG know animal which
 ‘That egg, you don’t know which animal (it belongs to).’ [Anak Naga 55]

(359) *utan kan susah cayi bənda jə pak*
 forest PAR difficult find thing that father
 ‘(In) the forest, (it is) hard to find that thing, Father’ [Anak Naga 42]

(360) *utan ka, mana ada adik*
 forest this where EXIST child
 ‘(In) this forest, how is there a child?’ [Mak Pacat 60]

(361) *dəkət gunoŋ pulay ntua e*
 near/at mountain Pulau elder PAR
 ‘The elders were at Mount Pulau.’ (lit. ‘at Mount Pulau, the elders were’) [Sejarah Seletar 14]

There seem to be several types of focus markers in Seletar. *ka*, which is a proximate demonstrative determiner ‘this’, may serve as a focus marker when appearing in clause initial position (362). *ka* following a pronoun may also place focus on the pronominal argument at the moment of speaking. *kami ka* in (363) can be translated as ‘I, as I am now’, as opposed to any other time, or any other person. Much research is needed before we can fully understand the pragmatic functions of *ka*.

(362) **ka** naŋ kami ekot ka, lindoŋ kami
 FOC REL 1SG follow this protect 1PL.EXCL
 ‘(This), the one that I follow here/now, protect us.’ [Anak Naga 39]

(363) nak kənal di kami **ka** (name)
 want recognize self 1SG this name
 ‘I want to introduce myself here (i.e. as I am now) as (name).’ [Anak Naga 1]

cuma ‘only’ is considered as a focusing marker that limits the NP that follows it. In (364), it is suggested that only the father, and nobody else, should enter the forest.

(364) *A child does not want to go into the forest with his father, and pleads his father to go alone.*

cuma pak masok dalam utan ja la
 only father enter inside forest only PAR
 ‘(Can it be) just Father (who) enters into the forest only(?)’ [Anak Naga 41]

The discourse particle *la* focuses the constituent which it follows when not used in clause final contexts. As a result, the focused element usually appears in clause-initial position (365, 366). The particle *pun* also seems to function as a focus marker in a similar way, but with an additive meaning, and is commonly translated as ‘also/too/even’ (367, 368). *la* and *pun* have other discourse functions aside from the ones stated, see §7.8.2.

(365) apa~apa **la** yaŋ uŋ tanam jə, cəmpedak, bəmut
 what~INDET PAR REL people plant that cempedak rambutan
 ‘whatever it was that people planted, (be it) cempedak, rambutan.’ [Jadi Nelayan 76]

(366) keŋ **la** da jadi bayaŋ a
 now PAR COMPL become town PAR
 ‘Now, (that place) has already become a town.’ [Jadi Nelayan 12]

(367) *A child is expressing his frustration about an unsuccessful hunt.*

manok **pun** tidak, apa **pun** tidak
 chicken PAR NEG what PAR NEG
 ‘Didn’t even (encounter) a chicken, didn’t even (encounter) anything.’ [Anak Naga 69]

(368) *The narrator is describing the physical changes experienced by the protagonist who is turning into a dragon*

kokot **pun** maken kəcit
 hand PAR increasingly small
 ‘The hands also got smaller and smaller.’ [Anak Naga 151]

7.8 Discourse

This section focuses on the ellipsis of arguments which occur frequently in natural Seletar discourse (§7.8.1), as well as the various types of discourse particles used in the Seletar texts (§7.8.2).

7.8.1 Ellipsis and Anaphora

As previously mentioned in §7.5.2.2.1, highly identifiable and continuous referents of a clause are frequently elided. As a result, a transitive clause may have one to two explicit arguments, or no arguments at all, consisting of only a verb. The elided arguments can be retrieved by referring to previous uttered sentences or from the context of discourse. For example, the first line of (369)

introduces the characters of the folktale: a man and his children. In later parts of the story, the narrator does not explicitly mention the subject arguments (second and third line of (369)). One has to retrieve information from antecedent mentions and discourse context to figure out who the implicit subjects are. The referents of the elided arguments may not be the same, even in continuous sentences. For example, the subject referent for the second line of 369 is the same as the first line: the man and his children (i.e. ‘they’), but the immediate sentence after it (third line of 369) has a different referent, the man (i.e. ‘he’). This was determined by common knowledge that among the characters mentioned, it is the adult man who can possess children.

(369) a satu ayi, wak ja dəŋan anak ja pəgi utan
 PAR one day uncle 3 with child 3 go forest
 ‘One day, her uncle and his children went to the forest.’^[Anak Naga 15]

....

jan masok utan...
 walk enter forest
 ‘(they) entered the forest’^[Anak Naga 19]

tiga bə-anak
 three POSSN-child
 ‘(He) had three children.’^[Anak Naga 20]

Both subject and non-subject arguments can be elided. The second and third line of (369) above did not explicitly express their subject arguments. In the first line of (370), the direct object is elided. The sentence that immediately follows this consists only of verbs, as the referents involved in the events can be easily determined from the previous line. On the other hand, oblique arguments which carry meanings of location (371) or goal (372) are not usually elided. This is because they usually carry new(er) information that have not yet been mentioned previously in discourse.

(370) *A husband carries his injured wife to sea so that he can call out to his relatives who were in their boats in the water.*

ja bow kə laot... juh kə laot
 3 bring to sea far to sea
 ‘He brought (her/them) to the sea... far out to the sea.’

sampay... anu tiak
 reach FIL shout
 ‘(When they) reached (the sea)... (he) shouted.’^[Mak Pacat 189-190]

(371) sampay **dəkət sun suka,** a, pukol ənam pagi, da hampe
 reach at river Suka PAR hour six morning COMPL almost

ŋəŋah la
 tired PAR
 ‘(When we) reached Sungai Suka (Suka River), (at) six in the morning, (we) were almost already tired.’

[Jadi Nelayan 10]

(372) (name) satu ajar-an **pada kita,** ja pada
 (name) one teach-RSLT to 1PL 3 say
 ‘“(name of person) is one lesson to us,” he said.’ [Mak Pacat 236]

The ellipsis of arguments is economical. Arguments need not be explicitly expressed if they have already been previously identified. The frequent retrieval of referents also creates discourse cohesion.

Argument ellipsis in Seletar does not seem to be motivated by politeness or status, as with Javanese where the choice of pronouns inherently reflects one’s social standing compared to another, and so are often omitted (Berman, 1992, 9-10). There does not seem to be a stratified class system in the societal organisation of the Orang Seletar or in their use of pronouns, so speakers do not drop arguments for reasons of social hierarchy. Having said that, the omission of arguments in Seletar do have interactional qualities. Argument ellipsis is seen predominantly in the collected narrative texts, which contain traditional stories known by and familiar to many in the community. The same stories have been told and retold many times, and the speaker assumes this familiarity in his/her audience or interlocutor(s). As a result, arguments have been omitted frequently by the speaker, and the interlocutors are able to retrieve the missing information without fail, owing to their shared cultural knowledge and experiences. In this view, the ellipsis of arguments not only binds discourse utterances together, but it also represents rapport between speaker and interlocutor.

7.8.2 Discourse Particles

Seletar has a variety of discourse particles. Each discourse particle has its own semantic functions and may express information such as the speaker’s emotion, or attitude regarding a particular affair or proposition, or the speaker’s belief about the interlocutor’s attitude regarding an affair. A lot of the discourse particles appear at the end of intonation units (i.e. end of clauses), and so they help break the discourse into many different parts.

Although some of the particles in Seletar are very similar to or derive from particles seen in other colloquial Malay varieties spoken by ethnic Malays (e.g. *pun, kan, puŋa*), many of them seem unique to Seletar and may be unfamiliar to ethnic Malays (e.g. *də* as a particle occurring in sentences of negative polarity, *gaŋ* marking speaker’s doubt or uncertainty regarding a proposition). The subtle meanings of the discourse particles in Seletar are not fully understood at this point of the study, and only a preliminary observation is presented here. A lot more natural data needs to be collected before one can fully grasp and understand the complexity of discourse particles used by the Orang Seletar.

This section will start off with particles that are seen also in other Malay varieties, before moving on to less familiar ones that are unique to Seletar.

7.8.2.1 *kan*

kan is etymologically derived from negator *bukan*. *kan* may appear clause-finally as a question particle to seek verification or agreement from the listener (373). This use of *kan* only appears when the speaker is switching dialects to address the researcher (evidenced by the use of *awak* and not the common Seletar second person pronoun *ay*). It does not seem to be common in interactions between Seletar speakers in this question tag usage.

(373) awak paŋgel kəlapa **kan**
 2SG(M) call coconut PAR:Q
 ‘You call (it) ‘*kəlapa*’, right?’ (speaking to the researcher) [Jadi Nelayan 21]

When *kan* follows an NP, it signifies that the speaker expects the hearer to already know the proposition that is being uttered.

(374) *A child is trying to find excuses not to go with his father into the forest.*

utan **kan** susah cayi bənda jə pak
 forest PAR difficult find thing that father
 ‘(In) the forest, (we both know that) (it is) hard to find that thing, Father.’ [Anak Naga 42]

(375) *A wife is concerned that she and her husband are going too far and deep into the forest. The husband insists that there are tamarind fruits to be found in the deeper parts of the forest. She is trying to reason with him not to go.*

asam pute **kan** muda
 tamarind white PAR young
 ‘(You know that) the white tamarinds are unripe.’ [Mak Pacat 34]

(376) *The speaker is saying that the Orang Laut (Sea People) can be found in a large area in the past, from Pulau to Kota Tinggi. Naturally, there were a lot of them.*

jadi, ban̄sa uŋ lot **kan** ban̄ak... ban̄ak
 so race people sea PAR many many
 ‘And so the Sea People were numerous... numerous, (as you know).’ [Sejarah Seletar 71]

7.8.2.2 *puna*

puna [puna / punə] can function as a possessive marker (§7.2.1.3) or as a marker of iterativity in the construction V-*puna*-V (§6.2.1). As a discourse particle, it occurs in clause-final position. *puna* indicates that the speaker is sure about the truth of what has been uttered. The clause may include other adverbs of certainty, for example *məsti* ‘must’ in (378).

(377) tidak layi, tidak pisa **puna**
 NEG run NEG separate PAR
 ‘(The ancestors) (definitely) did not run away, did not get separated.’ [Sejarah Seletar 93]

(378) sə=tiap sipot a, kalaw ada lida, məsti ada ala man
 one=each sea.snail PAR if EXIST tongue must EXIST able eat

puna

PAR

‘Every sea snail, if (they) have tongues, (then they) must have the ability to eat.’ [Jadi Nelayan 55]

7.8.2.3 *la*

In clause final positions, *la* does not function as focus marker (see §7.7 for the focusing function of *la*). Instead, *la* conveys an array of meanings depending on the context and the tone in which it is uttered. It can soften a request, a plea or a suggestion when pronounced in a softer voice (379-381). Pronounced loudly and slightly sustained, it signifies the speaker’s irritation or confusion (382-384). Following positive words such ‘good’ or ‘can’, *la* indicates reassurance, agreement or approval (385-386). The last function of *la* is one presented by Goddard (2014), that it offers an explanation to “correct, or at least to pre-empt, a misapprehension or misunderstanding of some kind” (p. 154). The proposition ending with *la* gives an explanation to an affair, which is likely contrary to what the listeners were thinking (387-389).

- (379) *A child is trying to find excuses not to go with his father into the forest.*
 cuma pak masok dalam utan ja **la**
 only father enter inside forest only PAR
 ‘(Can it be) just Father (who) enters into the forest only(?)’ [Anak Naga 41]
- (380) *The mother and the child are suspicious about the origins of an egg the child found in the forest.*
 am bəkər **la** mak
 1SG burn PAR mother
 ‘I am (going to) cook (the egg), Mother, (okay?)’ [Anak Naga 84]
- (381) *A woman is dying from her injuries. She is delivering her last words.*
 jaga **la** anak~anak
 take.care PAR child~PL
 ‘(Please) take care of the children’ [Mak Pacat 216]
- (382) *The husband of the main character does not believe his wife’s words.*
 ay e memaŋ tak bətol **la**
 2 PAR indeed NEG correct PAR
 ‘You of course are not right!’ [Mak Pacat 130]
- (383) *The main character keeps telling her husband to come back and check on her. He finally, although unwillingly, obliges.*
 am balek bəlakaŋ la, teŋok ay **la**
 1SG return behind PAR see 2 PAR
 ‘I am coming back! To see you!’ [Mak Pacat 137]
- (384) *A child does not know why he feels at ease in the sea but not on land.*
 tak taw **la** mak
 NEG know PAR mother
 ‘I don’t know, Mother!’ [Anak Naga 157]
- (385) *A wife agrees to go with her husband to go into the forest.*
 a ala **la,** cayi asam
 PAR able PAR find tamarinds
 ‘Sure, (we will) look for tamarinds’ [Mak Pacat 5]
- (386) *A husband asks his wife to wait for him.*
 baik **la,** am nuŋo sika, am dudok tana ka
 good PAR 1SG EVENT:wait here 1SG sit dirt this
 ‘Alright, I’ll wait here, I sit on the ground here.’ [Mak Pacat 98]
- (387) *The speaker is explaining that in the past, her family did not have a house on land, which is what modern people have today. Instead, they had a house on a boat.*
 masa je, bukan ada ruma **la**
 time that NEG EXIST house PAR
 ‘(At) that time, (we) didn’t have a house.’ [Jadi Nelayan 104]

(388) *The speaker is explaining that she still remembers a story told by her mother and grandmother, even though the last time she heard it was very long ago.*

am iġat la , sit~sit
 1SG remember PAR little~EMPH
 ‘I remember (still), a little bit.’ [Anak Naga 7]

(389) *The speaker is explaining that in the past, they did not use wires to catch crab, which is what is done today. The Orang Seletar use a piece of metal wire attached to a wooden handle to probe the mangrove bushes for mud crabs.*

masa tu, memaġ tak ada pakay daway la
 time that indeed NEG PFV use wire PAR
 ‘(At) that time, indeed (we) didn’t use wire.’ [Jadi Nelayan 35]

7.8.2.4 *taw*

taw [taw] is from the verb *tahu* meaning ‘know’. As a discourse particle, it is monosyllabic. When used clause finally, it serves as a question tag. The question is rhetorical. The statement ending with *taw* is conveyed as something that the listener might find hard to believe. The use of *taw* only occurs after a dialect switch (evidenced by the use of borrowed first person pronoun *wa* from Hokkien and the uncommon pronoun *saya* from Standard Malay). Therefore, this use of *taw* may not be representative of Seletar interactions.

(390) wa puġa pak... kita puġa pak bawa apa **taw**, bæliuġ
 1SG(HOK) POSS father 1SG POSS father bring what PAR axe
 ‘My father ... do you know what my father brought? An axe!’ (*kita*, a 1PL pronoun is used for singular referent here, see §7.2.2.1.2) [Jadi Nelayan 31]

(391) bole aġkat naek satu oraġ **taw**, dulu, masa wa
 able carry up one person PAR in.the.past time 1SG(HOK)

anak dara la
 child virgin PAR

‘(I) was able to carry (the water jug) up by myself, you know? in the past, (during) the time when I was a young woman.’ [Jadi Nelayan 102]

(392) a len sipot mana saya pun ambe **taw**
 PAR other sea.snail where 1SG(M) PAR take PAR

‘Other types of sea snails, whichever kinds, I will also take (them), you know?’ [Jadi Nelayan 50]

7.8.2.5 *pun*

pun [pun], occasionally [mun], primarily has an additive meaning, and translated as ‘also’, ‘too’. ‘still’ or ‘even’, depending on the context. It follows the elements that are to be focused and invested with the additive meaning (393-395). *pun* can also have a sequential meaning ‘then’ (396).

(393) sampay keġ **pun** am iġat
 reach now PAR 1SG remember
 ‘Until now also/still I remember.’ [Anak Naga 9]

(394) a wak ġa **pun** toloġ jəm̄pi
 PAR uncle/aunt 3 PAR help cast.spell
 ‘His relatives also helped to cast spells.’ [Anak Naga 191]

(395) am tolak **pun** ja ncak ləpas
 1SG push PAR 3 NEG release
 ‘I even pushed (it), but he does not let go.’ [Mak Pacat 135]

(396) laki ja **pun**, amu, kita balek la, kita balek
 husband 3 PAR INTRJ 1PL return PAR 1PL return
 ‘Her husband then (said), “Oh no, we go back, we go back.”’ [Mak Pacat 172]

7.8.2.6 əm, anu

əm and *anu* are fillers. *əm* is much like English ‘um’ which indicates hesitation and pause (397). *anu* (with variant forms *ano*, *anə*, *anuk*, *anoy*, *anoyo*, *eno*) may serve the same function (398), but depending on context it also serves as a term for an item whose name the speaker cannot recall (*whahcamacallit*) (399).

(397) **əm** sə=kati s=puloh sen
 FIL one=kati one=ten cent
 ‘um... one kati was ten cents.’ [Jadi Nelayan 60]

(398) tiŋgəl **anoyo** sə=botey
 leave.behind FIL one= CLF:ROUND
 ‘(I) left... one piece’ [Anak Naga 79]

(399) eh ay ka macam **anu** macam naga
 INTRJ 2 this like FIL like dragon
 ‘Eh, you here are like what-you-call-it... like a dragon.’ [Anak Naga 144]

7.8.2.7 ya

In initial position, *ya* [ya/yə] is a positive response ‘yes’, which affirms a particular belief or action (400-402). In (400) *ya* co-occurs with *la* which gives a sort of irritated sense: ‘yes, obviously, how could you not know’.

(400) **ya** la, səjarah ntua mu.in sampay kə pulay, kə santi
 PAR PAR history elder long.ago reach to Pulai to Santi
 ‘Yes (obviously), the history of our ancestors extends to Pulaui, to Santi.’ [Sejarah Seletar 69]

(401) ay tolak, **ya**, tola?
 2 push PAR push
 ‘You push, yes, push.’ [Mak Pacat 140]

(402) *The relatives of the main character have responded to his cries for help.*

ya ka, kagak ay ka, ja pada sən jə
 PAR here sister 2 this 3 say like that
 ‘“Yes, here, your sister is here,” he said like that.’ [Mak Pacat 194]

In clause final position, *ya* has various meanings which have to be interpreted along with the tone and context of the utterance. It can convey low confidence over an affair, with an accusatory tone (403). It can be used to seek approval when spoken with a soft tone (404). It is commonly used with a plead, marking the speaker’s desperation for the listener to heed his/her words (405-406).

(403) ay dəŋə bətɔl **ya**
 2 hear correct PAR
 ‘Did you hear it correctly?’ / ‘Are you sure you heard it correctly?’ [Mak Pacat 61]

(404) neŋkay, am nak pəgi gun,
 ENDEAR 1SG want go there
 ‘My dear, I want to go there’

jə... batəŋ asam dəkət **ya**
 that tree tamarind near PAR
 ‘That one...The tamarind tree is near, (I’m going to go, okay?)’ [Mak Pacat 94-95]

(405) ay jeŋkian **ya**
 2 come.here PAR
 ‘You come here!’ [Mak Pacat 128]

(406) tiŋgəl~tiŋgəl asam **ya**
 leave.behind~EMPH tamarind PAR
 ‘Leave the tamarinds!’ [Mak Pacat 129]

7.8.2.8 *a*

The particle *a* has very varied and nuanced meanings. It is used very frequently throughout the texts. In clause final positions, it can be used to form a question when the speaker is in doubt (407). It can express disbelief (408). Clause initially, it can introduce a new topic in discourse (i.e. starting a new part of discourse). In the first line of (409), the speaker is talking about how she remembers a story told to her by her grandmother. The next line after that, she starts talking about where her grandmother used to live. This change in topic is marked by the use of *a* in the beginning of the second line.

(407) kon len ncak ekot **a**
 Seletar.people other NEG follow PAR
 ‘The other people are not joining/following (us)?’ [Mak Pacat 8]

(408) meməŋ ncak sayəŋ adik, mana buaŋ **a**, dalam utan
 really NEG love child, where throw PAR inside forest
 ‘(They) really don’t love the child, abandoning him somewhere in the forest’ [Mak Pacat 87]

(409) ... sampay keŋ pun am iŋat
 reach now PAR 1SG remember
 ‘until now I (still) remember (this story)’

a nek am dudok suŋay papan dəŋan wak ja
 PAR grandmother 1SG live river Papan with uncle/aunt 3

adik~bədik ja
 sibling~PL 3

‘My grandmother lived in Sungai Papan with her relatives and siblings’ [Anak Naga 9-10]

Another function of *a*, which might seem contradictory to the one just mentioned regarding changing topic, is to acknowledge what has been said previously and continue on related utterances. It can be seen as a short pause for the speaker to think of what to say next, or for the listener to process

the information. It is frequently used when the following sentences are very similar in content or are repeated versions of previous sentences (410-411). This is very common in the narrative texts.

(410) kalaw paʔk kita da cayi kətam, kita kəna ekot
 if father 1PL COMPL find crab 1PL have.to follow
 ‘If our/one’s father (went to) look for crabs, we/one had to follow.’

a kəna ekot
 PAR have.to follow
 ‘ah yes, (we/one) had to follow (him).’ [Jadi Nelayan 2-3]

(411) bila naŋes, pak ɲa toloŋ jəmpi
 when cry father 3 help cast.spell
 ‘When (she) cried, his father helped to cast spells (on him)’

a wak ɲa pun toloŋ jəmpi
 PAR uncle/aunt 3 PAR help cast.spell
 ‘His relatives also helped to cast spells.’ [Anak Naga 190-191]

a is also used with imperatives. It may give a hortative meaning (412) or convey irritation (413). Used together with *gaŋ*, it conveys uncertainty (414). It is also used to mark pause or hesitation for a speaker to think what to say next (415).

(412) bow pancak, pak baw pisaw
 bring spear father bring knife
 ‘Bring the spear. I will bring the knife’

jan **a**
 walk PAR
 ‘(Let’s) go’ [Anak Naga 27-28]

(413) *A child is showing his father a mysterious egg he found in the forest. The father urges him to return it to put it back.*

bow balek **a**
 bring return PAR
 ‘Bring (it) back (to its original place).’ [Anak Naga 66]

(414) keŋ ɲə da masak **a** gaŋ
 now 3 COMPL ripe PAR PAR
 ‘Now they are already ripe (I think).’ [Mak Pacat 35]

(415) sipot kəcit, sipot banaŋ **a**, sipot timba
 sea.snail little sea.snail big PAR sea.snail bucket
 ‘The little snail, the *siput banang* (*Cerithidea obtusa*)... the *siput timba* (*Nerita histrio Linnaeus?*)’ [Jadi Nelayan 49]

7.8.2.9 *e*

e is most commonly realised as [e], but occasionally it is realised as [ɛ]. *e* is another multifunctional discourse particle. It can convey irritation (416) or disbelief (417). In an imperative clause, it softens a request (418). *e* may also provide an assertiveness to a rhetorical question (419). When used with a term

of address, it calls for attention (420). Approval can also be sought using *e* (419). *e* is also involved in marking out the topic, as it often occurs at the juncture between topic and comment (420- 421).

(416) ay tiak lagi, tam tiak, ay e
 2 shout again always shout 2 PAR
 ‘You shout again, (you) keep shouting!’ [Mak Pacat 126]

(417) mak na, pak na bole mana buaŋ jə adik dalam utan e
 mother 3 father 3 able where throw that child inside forest PAR
 ‘His mother, his father, how can (they) throw away the child in the forest?’ [Mak Pacat 83]

(418) kalaw bole, kita ada apa~apa la, kita usa
 if able 1PL EXIST what~INDET PAR 1PL IMP.NEG
 ingat e
 remember PAR
 ‘If (we) can, if we have anything (wrong), don’t hold on to it, (okay?)’ [Jadi Nelayan 122]

(419) abis, ay tak jumpa anak e
 finish 2 NEG meet what PAR
 ‘Then, you didn’t encounter anything?!’ [Anak Naga 76]

(420) neŋkay e, am akan mati, na mada
 ENDEAR PAR 1SG FUT die 3 EVENT: say
 ‘“My dear! I will die,” she said.’ [Mak Pacat 174]

(421) am ləpas ay la e
 1SG release 2 PAR PAR
 ‘I release you (okay?)’ [Anak Naga 232]

(422) masa jə e, tak bə-hənti
 time that PAR NEG STV-stop
 ‘(During) that time, (the rain) didn’t stop.’ [Sejarah Seletar 3]

(423) mata susu bini e tə-cabut
 eye breast wife PAR PFV-pull.out
 ‘The nipple of his wife had been ripped off.’ [Mak Pacat 145]

7.8.2.10 *o*

o is a less common final particle seeking approval (424). It can also be used to indicate that something requires effort or is difficult (425).

(424) dəkət jə la, am ami o
 near that PAR 1SG take PAR
 ‘(I’m) near that (tree), I’ll take (the fruits) (okay?)’ [Mak Pacat 109]

(425) kuat man, kalaw tak buah bə-jan, kita jadi
 strong eat if NEG as.much.as CONT-walk 1PL become

susah o

difficult PAR

‘(We) eat/one eats vigorously (but) if we don’t/one doesn’t walk as much, we/one will suffer’ [Jadi Nelayan 116]

7.8.2.11 ayu

According to the interpreter, *ayu* serves the same function as *pun* in clause final position, which is to indicate the affair as something contrary to expectation (Goddard, 2001, p. 41-43).

(426) bila? jəmpi?... tapi nca? ku.əŋ ayu
 when cast.spell but NEG lack PAR

‘When (they) cast spells... but (they) did not lessen (his symptoms/features) (contrary to their expectations).’ [Anak Naga 148]

7.8.2.12 le

There is not enough data to determine concretely the meaning of this particle *le*. Based on this one occurrence below, it seems to convey that an action is done in uncertainty (427).

(427) *The main character notices something off about the mysterious child she is breastfeeding. Her husband insists that there is nothing wrong, and asks her to keep feeding it.*

bi le... maken bi...
 give PAR increasingly give

‘(The wife) still gave (the milk)... the more (she) gives...’ [Mak Pacat 110]

7.8.2.13 gaŋ

gaŋ indicates that the speaker has low confidence about a state of affair, or that he/she is doubtful about what is being said. It is functionally similar to *kot* used by Canonical Malay varieties.

(428) Mother: təlow jə təlow anak
 egg that egg what
 ‘What egg is that?’ (lit. ‘that egg what egg’)

Child: ntah... təlow ular gaŋ
 don’t.know egg snake PAR
 ‘I don’t know, (it) might be a snake’s egg.’ [Anak Naga 80-81]

(429) Wife: asam pute kan muda
 tamarind white PAR young
 ‘The white tamarinds are unripe.’

Husband: keŋ ɲa da masak a gaŋ
 now 3 COMPL ripe PAR PAR
 ‘Now they are already ripe (I think).’ [Mak Pacat 34-35]

7.8.2.14 diə / də / tə

diə [diə], *də* [də] and *tə* [tə] seem to be variants of the same particle. This particle is used when the clause is of negative polarity (430-435). Not every negative sentence has this. When this particle is

present, the negative polarity seems emphasized. Pok's (2017, p. 48) data also included *dəʔ* in a negative sentence, and she interpreted the particle as an assertion. The particle may be present when there is no overt negation in the clause (436-437). Although there is no negator, the overall message or content of the two clauses lean towards the negative. Much more research is needed to understand the use of this particle and its occurrences. It may or may not be related to Mah Meri prohibitive *dəʔ* 'do not' which occurs clause finally (Kruspe, 2010, p. 183)

(430) *ncak dapat anak diə*
 NEG get what PAR
 '(We) didn't get anything.' [Anak Naga 75]

(431) *uŋ ka... kon ka memaŋ ncak sayaŋ adik diə...*
 people this Seletar.people this really NEG love child PAR
 'These people... these Seletar people really do not love the child.' [Mak Pacat 86]

(432) *jan~jan, dua anak nca? bow balaŋ aəl diə*
 walk~REP two child NEG bring container water PAR
 '(As we) were walking, the two children didn't bring their water containers.' [Jadi Nelayan 16]

(433) *bawpo sen dapat ... lima nam puloh sen aja ncak bapak də*
 few cent get ... five six ten cent only NEG many PAR
 '(That would) get (us) a few cents, fifty to sixty cents only, not a lot.' [Jadi Nelayan 69]

(434) *uŋ yaŋ gələ, bukən ntua tə, uŋ*
 outsider/Malay REL label NEG elder PAR outsider/Malay
 'It was the outsiders/Malays who called (it that), not (our) elders. (It was) the Malays/outsideers.'
 [Jadi Nelayan 67]

(435) *ncak ruma da tə, ruma dudok dalam pawu*
 NEG house land PAR house live in boat
 '(We) didn't have a house on land. (Our) house, (we) lived in a boat.' [Jadi Nelayan 105]

(436) *a aku səmpot nak jan junsit tə*
 PAR 1SG(M) breathless want walk far.away PAR
 'I am breathless to walk far distances.' [Jadi Nelayan 117]

(437) *ŋə mata susu ay tə-cabut tə*
 why eye breast 2 PFV-pull.out PAR
 'Why has your nipple been ripped off?' [Mak Pacat 146]

7.8.2.15 *di*

di [di], like *diə/də/tə* above, seems to have a tendency to occur when the polarity of the clause is negative. It is not entirely clear how *di* differs from *die/də/tə* above. It is pronounced with a sustained high tone, whereas *diə/də/tə* are pronounced with a low tone and succinctly. It might be that *di* carries more negative emphasis than *diə/də/tə*, as it can occur in negative imperative clauses (440-441), but more research to gain more understanding of this phenomenon.

(438) *kami akan ncak dudok dəŋan ay di*
 1SG FUT NEG live with 2 PAR
 'I will not live with you.' [Anak Naga 196]

(439) lama~lama, tejok bakak, da... muka maken... da ncak muka di
 long(time)~ADVsee many COMPL face increasingly COMPL NEG face PAR
 ‘After a while, (you would) see a lot (of the times)... that the face is already increasingly...
 already not a face.’ [Anak Naga 206]

(440) usa mana masuk di
 IMP.NEG where enter PAR
 ‘Don’t enter anywhere (under the tree).’ [Mak Pacat 18]

(441) ay jan usa laju amat di
 2 walk IMP.NEG fast very PAR
 ‘Don’t you walk so fast!’ [Mak Pacat 46]

(442) ncak rasa anu di... di ləmah
 NEG feel what PAR PAR weak
 ‘(I) can’t feel what-you-call-it... I’m weak.’ [Mak Pacat 177]

7.8.2.16 *de / te*

It seems that *de* [de] and *te* [te] can occur in clause final position (444, 445), or after a topic (443, 446). Most of the examples convey a sense of helplessness (444, 447), exasperation (445, 449, 451) or anxiety (448, 450) with the exception of (443) and (446). The interpreters point out that in (443), *de* is like *kan* in Malay, which indicates that the speaker and hearer has shared knowledge (§7.8.2.1). For other use of *de*, the interpreters did not give explanations or find it very hard to explain the meanings conveyed by the particles. For the time being, *de/te* is analysed to be used when the speaker is anxious or exasperated.

(443) bila da bəkər de a təlow jə
 when COMPL burn PAR PAR egg that
 ‘When the egg is cooked,’ / ‘When (it) is already cooked, the egg’ [Anak Naga 89]

(444) am akan ncak balek... am akan ncak balek ka de, ye diə
 ISG FUT NEG return ISG FUT NEG return here PAR he/she say
 ‘‘I will not return... I will not return here,’’ he said.’ [Anak Naga 173]

(445) jək am... jək am panas, talada kəna təpi de
 body ISG body ISG hot NEG.able have.to side PAR
 ‘My body... my body is hot, (I) cannot be forced (to stay) on the side.’ [Anak Naga 218]

(446) *A child who ate a mysterious egg has turned into a dragon. The narrator is describing the physical changes.*

muka jə de da abis jadi
 face that PAR COMPL finish become
 ‘The face had finished forming.’ [Anak Naga 224]

(447) mak ja tak bole buat apa de
 mother 3 NEG able do what PAR
 ‘His mother could not do anything.’ [Anak Naga 244]

(448) a dəŋə ja de... dəkət ka, dəkət utan ka
 PAR hear 3 PAR at here at forest this
 ‘Listen to it... Is it here? In this forest?’ [Mak Pacat 68]

(449) *A husband is trying to get to the tamarind trees in the distance but his wife keeps calling him back*

jan lagi sit, bataŋ asam am dəkət te
 walk again little tree tamarind 1SG near PAR
 ‘Just (let me) walk a little more, the tamarind tree, and I’ll be near (it).’ [Mak Pacat 105]

(450) a teŋok adik pəgaŋ susu amat kuat te
 PAR see child hold breast very strong PAR
 ‘Look, the child is holding the breasts very forcefully.’ [Mak Pacat 133]

(451) ekot gaya ay man naŋ ka te
 follow behaviour 2 eat REL this PAR
 ‘Based on/from (your) behaviour, you ate this one.’ [Anak Naga 231]

This paragraph concludes this chapter on the discussion of syntactical elements in Seletar. The main findings are summarised here: Lexical roots in Seletar can be multifunctional, i.e., they can express different syntactic functions without any morphological modification. For example, *man* can mean verbally ‘to eat’ or nominally ‘food’, so its syntactic category is determined in the context of the utterance. Adjectives in Seletar behave syntactically like verbs as they are observed to have the same distribution. However, only property-concept words can be modified by adverbs of intensity, making the putative adjectives a subclass of verbs. The most common pronouns used in the Seletar texts are *am/kami* ‘1SG’, *kita* ‘1PL’, *ai* ‘2’ and *ja* ‘3’. First-person pronouns in Seletar distinguish between singular and plural, while second-person and third-person pronouns do not, and the number has to be interpreted from the context. Both *am* and *kami* are commonly used first-person singular pronouns, and seem to be interchangeable. The possessive pronouns do not occur as cliticised forms. Seletar has demonstratives (*i*)*ka* ‘this’ and *jə* ‘that’ and locative deictics *sika* ‘here’, *gun* ‘there’, *junsit* ‘far away’, which differ significantly from those of Standard Malay. Tense is not inflected on the verb. It can be deduced either from context, aspect markers, or from the use of time adverbials. The negator *ncak* can be used in varied contexts to negate both verbal and nominal predicates, as well as express additional negative meanings of ‘do not have’, ‘cannot’, and ‘do not need’. The relationships between clauses are not frequently overly expressed as the clauses are simply juxtaposed without overt coordinators or conjunctions. Both subject and non-subject arguments are frequently elided when they are highly identifiable from context or previous utterances. Thus, a clause can be formed minimally by only a verb. Topic-Comment type sentences are very common in Seletar speech. Discourse particles seen in the texts include those observed in Colloquial Malay spoken by ethnic Malays (e.g. *kan*, *pun*, *puna*, *la*) and also those peculiar to Seletar (e.g. *gaŋ*, *di*, *də*). The next chapter of the thesis will discuss some aspects of the lexicon.

8 Notes on Lexicon

This chapter discusses the “Malayness” of the Seletar lexicon. First, a brief overview will illustrate how Seletar is lexically similar to mainstream Peninsular Malay (§8.1). Following that, lexical items that are not cognate with canonical Malay varieties spoken by ethnic Malays (§8.2) as well as possibly non-Malay words (§9) will be discussed.

8.1 Lexically mainstream

As previously noted in Tan (2020, p. 39-42), most words in Seletar are Malay. One might not immediately recognise these words as Malay because they often appear in reduced form (e.g. *jan* for ‘walk’ instead of SM *jalan*). Syllables are often reduced owing to the loss of intervocalic consonants stated in §5.2.1. A (non-exhaustive) list of these words is presented in Table 2 in Chapter 5. For ease of reading, I reproduce some words here in Table 5.

| Seletar | Gloss | SM | PM |
|---------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| /buŋ/ | ‘bird’ | <i>burung</i> | * <i>buruŋ</i> |
| /bi/ | ‘give’ | <i>bəri</i> | |
| /tun/ | ‘descend’ | <i>turun</i> | * <i>turun</i> |
| /ki/ | ‘left’ | <i>kiri</i> | * <i>kA-iri</i> |
| /jan/ | ‘walk’ | <i>jalan</i> | * <i>jalan</i> |
| /dam/ | ‘in’ / ‘inside’ | <i>dalam</i> | * <i>(d-)aləm</i> |
| /uŋ/ | ‘human being’ | <i>oraŋ</i> | * <i>uraŋ</i> |
| /man/ | ‘eat’ | <i>makan</i> | * <i>ma/kan</i> |
| /sit/ | ‘little bit’ | <i>sikit</i> | |
| /mal/ | ‘expensive’ | <i>mahal</i> | |

Table 5 Contracted Malay words in Seletar

Aside from the reduction of syllables due to loss of intervocalic consonants l, r, k, and h (elaborated in §5.2.1), some words appear reduced due to an elision a syllable (e.g. *sun*⁸⁶ from *suŋay* ‘river’, *net* from *rəŋit* ‘gnat’, *tina* [tina?] from *bətina*⁸⁷ ‘female’). The loss is sporadic as not every trisyllabic SM word has a corresponding disyllabic word in Seletar.

Most of the lexical items resemble those of Malay varieties of Peninsular Malaysia. Only a few lexical items resemble those of Malay spoken in Sumatra (e.g. *bataŋ* for ‘tree’ instead of *pokok*, *kəat* [kə.at] for ‘cut’ instead of *poton*).

8.2 Non-canonical Malay items

By non-canonical Malay, I mean the Malay varieties spoken by non-ethnic Malays, such as the Orang Seletar, Jakun, Temuan, Orang Kallang, and many Sea Tribes of the Riau Archipelago (e.g. Orang Galang, Orang Barok), who are seen as ethnically different from the *Orang Melayu* (Malay people).

⁸⁶ This is observed in the speech of one speaker. The other speakers refer to ‘river’ as *suŋay*, which is the same form as SM.

⁸⁷ *tina* in Seletar means female (humans and animals), but in SM *bətina* is only used to mean animal female (Blust & Trussel, 2020).

Some lexical items in Seletar are not cognate with those from canonical Malay varieties but with the non-canonical varieties just mentioned. This is especially the case for locative deictics *sika* ‘here’ and *gun* ‘there’, the proximal demonstrative *ika* ‘this’,⁸⁸ as well as the expression *jenkian* ‘come here’ (see Table 6). The similarity of these words in the different non-canonical Malay varieties is possibly part of the continuity that was observed by Kähler (1960) (mentioned by Benjamin, 2002, p. 27) between the languages of the Jakun, the Orang Seletar and the Orang Suku Laut of the Riau Islands.

The sources for each variety mentioned in the table below is listed here:

- Temuan (Belanda dialect) Skeat & Blagden (1906b, p. 565, item 226)
- modern Temuan Looi et al. (2018)
- Jakun (Benua dialect) Noone (1939, p. 143)
- modern Jakun source Seidlitz (2005, Appendix)
- Orang Laut of Kampung Rokok: Skeat and Ridley (1900, p. 248)
- Orang Galang, Orang Barok, Orang Kallang Skeat & Blagden (1906b, p. 407-408 735-736 item 90)
- Jakun (Johor, Malacca, Beduanda Kuala Lemakau)
- modern Orang Galang, Orang Mantang, Orang Barok Mohd. Daud, Yunus & Sitti (1986, p. 62).

Table 6 Non-canonical Malay items

| Seletar | Canonical Malay | Notes |
|---|-----------------|---|
| <i>jenkian</i> ‘come here’ (likely a compound <i>jen</i> from <i>jan</i> ‘walk’ + <i>kian</i> ‘come here’) | <i>datan</i> | - Temuan (Belanda) <i>chan</i> ‘come here’ - Jakun (Benua, Kuala Lemakau) <i>kian</i> ‘come here’ - Jakun (Malacca) <i>kiani</i> ‘come here’ - Jakun (Beduanda) <i>chian</i> ‘come here’ - Jakun (Johor) <i>kiah, kian</i> ‘come here’ - Orang Laut of Kampung Rokok <i>kiyan</i> ‘come, come here’ - Orang Galang <i>ka-kian</i> ‘come here’ - Orang Barok, Orang Kallang <i>kiyan</i> ‘come here’ |
| <i>gun</i> ‘there’ (archaic form is <i>kiuh</i> , according to speakers) | <i>situ</i> | - Temuan <i>chun</i> ‘go away’ - modern Temuan <i>ciun</i> ‘over there’, <i>cuan</i> ‘there, far off’, <i>ehnun/nun/tun</i> ‘there, yonder’ - Jakun (Benua) <i>kiun</i> ‘depart’ - Jakun (Beduanda) <i>chiun / chun</i> ‘go there’ / ‘far off’ - Jakun (Malacca) <i>kiuh</i> ‘go here’ - Jakun (Johor) <i>kiyun</i> ‘go there’ - modern Jakun ⁸⁹ <i>cudn</i> or <i>hudn</i> ‘that’ - Orang Laut (various tribes) <i>kiun</i> ‘(go) there’ / ‘far off’ (Anderbeck, 2012, p. 287-290) |

⁸⁸ The distal demonstrative *jə* ‘that’ in Seletar seems to come from Aslian *ajih/ajeh*, see §0.

⁸⁹ Specifically, the Jakun spoken in villages of Gumum, Belukar Nangka, Tanjung Keruing, Arung, Tasik Mentiga have *cudn* or *hudn* for ‘there’ or ‘far’ (Seidlitz, 2005, Appendix)

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------|--|
| <i>ika / ka</i> ‘this’ | <i>ini</i> | - Orang Galang, <i>ika</i> ‘this’ (SnB, p. 736, item 93) - modern Orang Galang <i>ike</i> ‘this’ - modern Jakun ⁹⁰ <i>ika</i> ‘this’ - modern Orang Barok <i>ken</i> ‘this’ - modern Orang Mantang <i>iken</i> ‘this’ |
| <i>sika</i> ‘here’ | <i>sini</i> | - Orang Laut of Kampung Rokok <i>sika</i> ‘come here’ - modern Orang Galang <i>sikə</i> ‘here’ - modern Orang Mantang <i>sike</i> ‘here’ - modern Orang Barok <i>sike / ken</i> ‘here’ |
| <i>ala</i> ‘able/can’ | <i>boleh</i> | - Orang Kanaq <i>alah</i> |
| | | |

The Seletar language and the other aboriginal Malay dialects of the peninsular (Jakun, Temuan, Orang Kanaq) seem to share some features with the varieties of the Sea Tribes of the Riau Islands. The specifics pertaining to the interactions and contacts between these different groups in the past remain undeciphered. More in-depth research into each of these populations and their varieties may provide some answers.

8.3 Non-Malay items

This section serves as a revision of my previous discussion in Tan (2020, p. 42-49) regarding the non-Malay items observed in Seletar. Some items listed in Tan (2020, p. 43-44) have been reclassified as “Malay” with further investigation (e.g. *kian* ‘come here’, *sika* ‘here’ and *gun* ‘there’ just mentioned in Table 6 are Malay, albeit non-canonical; the word for ‘weave’ *but* is cognate with the SM form *buat* ‘make’ and it covers lots of terms of making, including ‘weave’; the word for ‘basket’ *gagak* [gagəʔ] is cognate with SM *raga* ‘basket made from rattan’⁹¹).

More non-Malay words not seen in Tan (2020) have been observed with the collection of additional natural Seletar data. These, alongside items seen in Tan (2020), are illustrated in Table 7 below. In the Notes column, I have included some possible, but highly tentative cognate forms from other languages such as Aslian languages Mah Meri and Semelai, aboriginal Malay dialects Jakun, Temuan and Orang Kanaq, unclassified Duano language, as well as various Bornean varieties.

Only one item (*manok* [manoʔ] ‘chicken’) from Blagden’s (Skeat & Blagden, 1906b, p. 436) list of non-Malay Austronesian words in Aslian languages is seen in Seletar. Probably, the Austronesian population(s) in contact with the Aslian speakers may not be the same ones that were engaging with the Orang Seletar, explaining the lack of similar borrowed non-Malay items.

A handful of words seem to have Aslian origins. Some of these are clearly from Aslian (e.g. *təh* ‘gibbon’, compare with Proto Aslian **tawəh*) and have been previously mentioned by scholars (e.g. Seletar’s edonym *kon*, from (Austroasiatic/Mon) Aslian *kon* meaning ‘child’ discussed by Benjamin (2021, p. 120, footnote 8)). Other words like *gendes* ‘river side’ (from Mah Meri *do gənde?* ‘river’), *muin* ‘long ago’ (from Mah Meri *təmuɣ* ‘in the past, once; formerly?’), *bontuŋ* (from Semelai

⁹⁰ Specifically, the Jakun of Belukar Nangka, Arung, Chenhan, Tasik Mentiga has *ika* for ‘this’ (Seidlitz, 2005, Appendix)

⁹¹ Rhotics in Seletar are often pronounced in the velar position, making it possible for *ɣ* to be realised as *g* in some environments (see §5.1.1.1.4).

pəɔŋ ‘tiger’?), *kələbak* (Proto Aslian **krkbaak*) are speculated to be Aslian, but much more research is required.

About half a dozen items have similar forms in various Borneo varieties (Malayic and non-Malayic). For example, *pada* [padə] ‘say’ (Iban *madah*, Ketapang *bəpadah*, Badeng *bada?*), *isum* ‘pig’ (Long Gelat *jum*, Modang, Gaai, Kelai *jim*), *kokot* ‘hand’ (Kendayan *kokot*), *manuk* ‘chicken’ (Ngaju *manuk*, Kapuas *manuk*, Kendayan *manok*, widespread in Borneo), *banj* ‘riverbank’ (Data Dian *bəŋhe? huŋay*, Busang *banhe?*), *aŋkok* ‘dog’ (Taboyan *koko?*, Paser *koko?*, Seberuang *ukuy*, Mualang *ukoy*), *met* ‘soft’ (Hovongan *le?emet* ‘soft’), *jok* ‘monitor lizard’ (Ribun *bujowo*, Ngaju *bəjawak*). It is unclear when and how these words entered Seletar. It could be that languages which were related to these Borneoan varieties were once present in Peninsular Malaysia, specifically in the southern coastal areas where the Orang Seletar inhabit, allowing for loans and borrowings. These languages were all levelled by Malay when it spread to the Malay Peninsula (Blust, 2006, p. 80-81). From the aspect of phonology, in many languages of Borneo, it was observed that there is an innovation of final glottal stops to words historically ending with vowels (Adelaar, 1992, p. 149; Smith, 2017, p. 192). The same can be said for Seletar, in which lots of words are closed by a phonetic glottal stops, and exhibit strong final word accent. This connection between the Orang Seletar and Borneo populations likely provides evidence for Blust’s (2010) ‘Greater North Borneo Hypothesis’ which postulates pre-Malay Austronesian (e.g. Bornean) presence on the peninsula, resulting in noticeable Bornean lexical items in Aslian languages.

The comparisons made here are rudimentary and unsophisticated, as the main objective of the thesis is to document the grammar of the Seletar variety. The data presented here are tentative and are open to revisions by more qualified scholars.

The sources for the languages mentioned in Table 7 are listed here, unless otherwise stated in the table itself:

- Proto-Austronesian (PAN) Blust and Trussel (2020)
- Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP)
- Proto-Western-Malayo-Polynesian (PWMP)
- Proto Aslian Philips (2012, p. 259-262)
- Temuan Looi et al.(2018)
- Orang Kanaq Yusop (2011)
- Duano Yusop (2011)
- Jakun Seidlitz (2005)
- Semelai Kruspe (2004)
- Orang Galang Mohd. Daud et al. 1986, p. 31
- Mah Meri Kruspe (2010)
- various Borneo varieties Smith (2017)

Table 7 Non-Malay words in Seletar

| Seletar | Malay | Notes |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <i>gendəs</i> ‘river side’ | <i>təpi suŋay</i> | Mah Meri <i>do gənde?</i> ‘river’? |
| <i>keŋ</i> ‘now’ | <i>səkarəŋ / kini</i> | Reduced from <i>səkarəŋ</i> due to loss of rhotic and first syllable? |
| <i>muin</i> ‘long ago’ | <i>dahulu / dulu</i> | Mah Meri <i>təmuuy</i> ‘in the past, once; formerly’? |
| <i>bute</i> ‘that day’ | <i>hari itu</i> | |
| <i>tam</i> ‘always’ | <i>səlalu</i> | |

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>bontuŋ</i> ‘tiger’ | <i>harimaw</i> | Semelai <i>pɔdɔŋ</i> ‘tiger’? |
| <i>buam</i> ‘thing’ | <i>bəndə</i> | |
| <i>bajə</i> ‘thing’ | <i>bəndə</i> | |
| <i>dayi</i> [dayi] or [daʔi] ‘word’ | <i>kata</i> | |
| <i>neŋkay</i> ‘term of endearment for husband’ | <i>abaŋ</i> | |
| <i>pada</i> [padə] ‘say’ | <i>kata / cakap / tutur</i> | Borneo varieties: ‘say’ Kapuas (Barito) <i>hapander</i> , Bakumpai (Barito) <i>bərpander</i> , Kadorih (Barito) <i>mander</i> Ketapang (Malayic) <i>bəpadah</i> , Iban (Malayic) <i>madah</i> , Mualang (Malayic) <i>madah</i> , Keninjal (Malayic) <i>modah</i> , Badeng (Kenyah) <i>badaʔ</i> |
| <i>səmebok</i> [səmeboʔ] ‘busy’ | <i>sibuk</i> | There could be a –(ə)m- infix in <i>səmebok</i> . This infix is unproductive in modern canonical Malay and only appear in fossilised words like <i>gemuruh</i> ‘thundering’ from <i>guruh</i> ‘thunder’ (Benjamin, 2009, p. 317). <i>səmebok</i> here could be derived from adding an infix to <i>sibuk</i> ‘busy’, giving it an imperfective interpretation. How this infix came to be in Seletar is unclear, it could be retained from an older stage of Malay or it could be a result of contact with Duano, where the –(u)m- infix is (was?) still productive. |
| <i>gədək</i> [gədəʔ] ‘calm’ | <i>tənaŋ</i> | |
| (<i>tə-</i>) <i>ketet</i> ‘a little’ | <i>sədikit/sikit</i> | Minangkabau <i>saketeʔ</i> ‘little bit’ (Adelaar, 1992, p. 181) |
| <i>bajaŋ</i> ‘town’ | <i>bandar</i> | |
| <i>pasam</i> ‘become’ | <i>jadi</i> | used in <i>pasam bajaŋ</i> ‘become village’, related to Malay <i>pasang</i> ‘install/ do up’, and final nasal assimilate to bilabial? |
| <i>emaŋ / egaŋ</i> ‘guess’ | <i>agak</i> | Related to discourse particle <i>gaŋ</i> which marks uncertainty? |
| <i>anak</i> [ʔanaʔ] ‘what’ | <i>apa</i> | Possibly related to <i>anu</i> ‘FIL, whatchamacallit’ PAN *n-anu ‘what’ PMP *apa, *-anu ‘what’ <i>nun, nu, anu, ono, inu</i> are common forms for ‘what’ in languages of Borneo |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>manok</i> [manoʔ] ‘chicken’ | <i>ayam</i> | PMP *manuk <i>manok</i> is a widespread term for ‘chicken’ in Borneo |
| <i>ŋə / ŋa</i> ‘why’ | <i>kənapa</i> <i>meŋapa</i> | Borneo: ‘why’ Kendayan (Malayic) <i>ŋahe</i> Seberuang, Mualang (Malayic) <i>ŋapa</i> Possibly reduced from <i>məŋapa/ŋapa</i> (?) and the penultimate syllable is kept |
| <i>tokoŋ</i> ‘hole’ | <i>lobaŋ</i> | |
| <i>ŋok</i> [ŋoʔ] ‘body’ | <i>badan</i> | <i>badan</i> is Arabic. Possibly related to/reduced from Malay <i>ŋawa</i> ‘life’? |
| <i>lancat</i> ‘weak’ | <i>ləmah</i> | <i>ləmah</i> is more commonly used than <i>lancat</i> |
| <i>jə</i> ‘that’ | <i>itu</i> | Jakun <i>ajih/ayih</i> ‘2SG’ Temuan <i>ajih</i> ‘2SG’ Likely from Aslian <i>ajih/ajeh</i> ‘that’ (Anderbeck, 2012, p. 274). From Semai <i>ajih</i> ‘that’? |
| <i>əmbia</i> ‘red’ | <i>mərah</i> | Used in species name <i>sipot mata əmbia</i> ‘red eyed snail’ (<i>Cerithidea obtusa</i> ?). Elsewhere, ‘red’ is <i>meah</i> |
| <i>baŋ</i> ‘riverbank / shore’ | <i>təbiŋ suŋay</i> | Related to PMP * <i>sabaŋ</i> estuary, shore near the mouth of a river? Borneo: ‘riverbank’ Data Dian (Kayanic) <i>bəŋhe? huŋay</i> Busang (Kayanic) <i>baŋhe?</i> |
| <i>səntaŋ</i> ‘mollusc’ | <i>lokam</i> | |
| <i>peŋ</i> ‘water jar’ | <i>təmpayan</i> | Reduced form of <i>təmpayan</i> , where the penultimate syllable is kept? |
| <i>junsit</i> ‘far away, yonder’ | <i>sana</i> | Compound of Seletar <i>jan</i> ‘walk’ + <i>sit</i> ‘little’ or <i>juh</i> ‘far’ + <i>sit</i> ‘little’? |
| <i>ŋetek</i> [ŋeteʔ] ‘lizard/gecko’ | <i>cicak</i> | One of the PWMP forms for the word is *tektek. |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <i>jok</i> [joʔ] ‘monitor lizard’ | <i>biawak</i> | Orang Kanaq <i>bəjawak</i> Duano <i>bəjəwaʔ</i> (Seidlitz, 2007, p. 12) Temuan <i>jawak</i> (in Yusop 2011, p. 264 and Looi et al. 2018 p. 61) Borneo: ‘monitor lizard’ Benyadu (Land Dayak) <i>pajawak</i> , Ribun (Land Dayak) <i>bujowo</i> Ngaju (Barito) <i>bəjawak</i> Likely <i>jok</i> is a reduced form of <i>bəjawak</i> (or something similar) where the penultimate syllable was kept |
| <i>peŋ</i> ‘monkey’ | <i>moŋet</i> | |
| <i>taoh</i> [tawoh] ‘gibbon’ | <i>uŋka</i> | Proto Aslian *tawəh |
| <i>konsoŋ</i> ‘flying termite’ | <i>kələkatu</i> | |
| <i>bacaw</i> ‘stingless bee’ | <i>kəlulut</i> | |
| <i>oŋgeŋ</i> ‘weaver ant’ | <i>kərəŋga</i> | |
| <i>kələbak</i> [kələbaʔ] ‘butterfly’ | <i>kupu-kupu / rama-rama</i> | Jakun <i>kəlbak</i> (Yusop, 2011, p. 36) Orang Kanaq <i>kələbaq</i> Orang Galang <i>kələmbak</i> Temuan <i>kələbəg</i> (Yusop, 2011) Semelai <i>klkbək</i> Proto Aslian *krkbaak |
| <i>aŋkok</i> [ʔaŋkoʔ] ‘dog’ | <i>aŋjiŋ</i> | Borneo: ‘dog’ Taboyan, Paser, Benuaq, Tunjung (Barito) <i>kokoʔ</i> Seberuang (Malayic) <i>ukuy</i> Mualang (Malayic) <i>ukoy</i> |
| <i>kəlontot</i> ‘insect bat’ | <i>kələwar / kələlawar</i> | Jakun <i>kəlintot</i> (Yusop, 2011, p. 22) |
| <i>isum</i> ‘pig’ | <i>babi</i> | ‘domesticated pig’ Long Gelat (Kayanic) <i>jum</i> Modang, Gaii, Kelai (Kayanic) <i>jim</i> |
| <i>kokot</i> ‘hand’ | <i>taŋan</i> | Duano <i>kukot</i> (Seidlitz, 2005) Jakun - Malacca (Skeat & Blagden, p. 408) <i>kokot</i> Jakun – Benduanda <i>kōkót</i> (Skeat & Blagden, p. 408) Jakun – Johor <i>kuko</i> ’ (Skeat & Blagden, p. 408) Borneo: ‘hand’ Kendayan (Malayic) <i>kokot</i> |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <i>gongoy</i> ‘neck’ | <i>leher</i> | Duano <i>təmoɣoŋ</i> Borneo: ‘neck’ Hliboi Bidayuh (Land Dayak) <i>gaguəkŋ?</i> Reduced from Malay <i>kəroŋkoŋ</i> ‘gullet, uvula’? |
| <i>pəmpak</i> [pəmpaʔ] ‘thigh’ | <i>paha</i> | Duano <i>kərəmpaŋ</i> |
| <i>kon</i> ‘person, people’ | <i>oraŋ</i> | Old Mon, Middle Mon <i>kon</i> ‘child, member of ethnic or other social group’ (Shorto, 1971, p. 53) |
| <i>met</i> ‘soft’ | <i>ləmbut / halus</i> | Temuan <i>met</i> ‘soft, small’ (Yusop, 2011) Borneo: ‘soft’ Hovongan (Müller-Schwaner) <i>leʔemet</i> ‘soft’ |
| <i>bənək</i> [bənəʔ] ‘murky, cloudy’ | <i>kəruh</i> | |
| <i>juloŋ</i> ‘clear, transparent’ | <i>jərnih</i> | |
| <i>səndəp</i> ‘hide’ | <i>səmbuŋi</i> | Orang Kanaq <i>ŋondep</i> |
| <i>təgeŋgoy</i> ‘skinny’ | <i>kurus</i> | <i>tə-</i> is possibly a prefix? |
| <i>baŋsan</i> ‘cold/cool’ | <i>səjuk</i> | |
| <i>am</i> ‘1SG’ | <i>saya / aku</i> | Possibly reduced from <i>hamba</i> ‘servant’? (see §7.2.2.1.1) |
| <i>ay</i> ‘2’ | <i>kamu / awak</i> | Likely from Aslian <i>ajih / ajeh</i> ‘that’ (see §7.2.2.1.3) |
| <i>ji</i> ‘3SG’ | <i>dia</i> | Acehnese has <i>jih</i> ‘he/she’. This is perhaps a direct loan from Chamic? This pronoun is used only once by one speaker. The more common third person pronoun is <i>ja</i> . |

This concludes the discussion of some aspects of the Seletar lexicon. The final chapter presents a conclusion to the thesis and proposes directions for future research.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Review of the thesis

The thesis began with an introductory chapter that provided background information regarding the Orang Seletar, their settlements, the Seletar language, and its endangered status. The chapter also discussed the classification of the Orang Seletar as both Orang Asli and Orang Laut. Some clarification was made to distinguish the Orang Selat from the Orang Seletar, as popular literature commonly refers to the two distinct groups as one. The language classification and features of the Sea Nomads varieties were briefly mentioned. The chapter was closed by a discussion of the etymology of the ethnonym “Seletar”.

Following the background information provided in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 illustrated an overview of the history of the Orang Seletar in the region, which was reconstructed and reorganised from sources such as oral histories, historical texts, anthropological notes, archival newspapers, and various books and articles mentioning the Orang Seletar. The information was arranged in chronological order, starting from a time without writing, until the 20th century and after. After reading the chapter, one will hopefully understand when and how the Orang Seletar came to reside in their current settlements today. The possible origins of the Orang Seletar were briefly touched upon at the chapter’s end.

The third chapter presented a review of previous research involving the Seletar language. The literature was divided into five parts: impressionistic descriptions, classification, word lists and comparison of vocabulary, technical linguistic analysis and others. The fourth chapter covers the methodology of the study. The language consultants, data collection process, data type, as well as the use of interpreters were elaborated upon.

Chapter 5 covered the phonetics and phonology of Seletar. The consonant and vowel sound inventories were presented, and the phonetic realisations were illustrated in detail with examples. Some interesting findings include: nasalisation of initial consonants of verbal roots due to the *N-* prefix, sporadic nasalisation and denasalisation of some initial consonants; frequent glottal stop closure; prevalence of schwas in final closed syllables and frequent reduction of syllables due to the loss of intervocalic /l/, /r/, /h/, /k/. The chapter ends with an overview of loanword phonology.

The morphology of Seletar was the main focus of Chapter 6. Word formation processes such as affixation, reduplication, compounding and clipping were discussed in detail. Affixation was found to be not a major productive process in Seletar, as compared with the other three. Reduplication can express meanings such as plurality, individuality, emphasis, repetitiveness, reciprocity as well as temporal adjuncts. Compounding and clipping are seen frequently to form words in Seletar.

Chapter 7 discussed various syntactical elements. Some discussions regarding word class were presented. Adjectives are considered a subclass of verbs in this thesis, as they exhibit the same distribution as verbs, and are only modifiable by adverbs of intensity. The multifunctionality of lexical roots was also elaborated. Following that, the structure of the noun phrase was broken down and its constituents elucidated. Then, the pronoun system, demonstratives, prepositions and locative deictics were analysed. Before moving on to deliberate clause structure, the chapter looks at aspect, modality and negation markers, as well as serial verbs and adverbs. After that, both verbal and non-verbal clauses were presented. Other than the declarative, interrogative and imperative type sentences were also

considered. The structure of complex sentences was also examined, in particular relative clauses, complement clauses and adverbial clauses. The chapter closed with an inspection of the information structure and discourse strategies such as ellipsis of arguments and discourse particles.

The last chapter of the thesis briefly assessed the lexicon of Seletar. Seletar is found to be lexically mainstream, but some lexical items suggest contact with neighbouring Aslian languages, while others hint at remote connections with non-Malay languages of Borneo.

9.2 Future Research

This study is based on four texts collected from three individuals from Kampung Sungai Temon and Kampung Bakar Batu. Although a good starting point for documentation of Seletar natural speech, the data collected is hardly enough to paint a complete, comprehensive picture regarding the Seletar variety. This section highlights a few areas that deserve further investigation.

Future research may analyse the suprasegmental features of Seletar, such as stress, rhythm and intonation. Past studies have noted that Seletar words have a strong word final accent, but research investigating the stress and rhythmic patterns of longer segments and texts is lacking. One may also investigate on the role of the glottal stop in conveying suprasegmental information (e.g. marking end of intonational units). The stress and rhythmic patterns of Seletar could be very different from Malay spoken by ethnic Malays, thus rendering the variety unintelligible to canonical Malay speakers.

Another area for further studies involves pronouns. It has been observed in this thesis that two different forms of pronouns can perform the same function. For example, there are two common first-person pronouns: *am* and *kami*. The current data suggests that the two are interchangeable. However, there might be some subtle pragmatic differences between the two that the thesis failed to capture. The same can be said for interrogative pronouns *apa* and *anak* ‘what’, proximal demonstratives (*i*)*ka* and (*i*)*ni* and distal demonstratives *jə* and (*i*)*tu*. More in-depth analysis can be carried out by focusing on the pragmatic differences involved when a speaker chooses one form instead of the other.

The orthographic representation of the language should also be explored in more detail. I have observed the younger generation of Orang Seletar writing down their language in the form of social media posts and text messages. Future research can seek to collect these written forms and explore how the graphemes correspond to the phonemes. From there, one might help the Orang Seletar develop a writing system for their language from what is already in use.

Future research should also aim to document the Orang Seletar’s local folktales and traditional narratives, as well as cultural practices, in the form of audio-visual and/or written material for posterity.

9.3 Final remarks

The traditional resource zones of the Orang Seletar are currently under threat from climate change and land reclamation projects. In the next few years, the residents from Kampung Sungai Temon and Kampung Bakar Batu are slated to be resettled to areas near the Johor River and Sungai Tiram (Anbalagan, 2023). The residents will be uprooted from their home and the nature they hold dear. Some important knowledge tied to the land will likely be lost following this relocation. The destiny of other Orang Seletar villages are still undecided. With the south coast of Johor becoming “prime real estate”, developers and government bodies might soon push for the resettlement of other villages as well. The

Orang Seletar's time living on the Johor Strait, a place where they have dwelled for centuries, may soon come to an end. The time is now to document and preserve the unique cultural heritage of the indigenous people of Southern Johor and Singapore before it is too late.

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Appendix 1: Word Lists

This section includes word lists I collected from T and R during my fieldwork in 2019-2020, as well as word lists obtained by other scholars. The utterances are transcribed phonetically.

Word list from fieldwork

| <i>Sources</i> | <i>English Gloss</i> | <i>Malay</i> | <i>T</i> | <i>R</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------|
| | | <i>(elicitation words)</i> | | |
| 1 | hand | tangan | kəkət | kəkət |
| 2 | left | kiri | kiʔ | kiʔ |
| 3 | right | kanan | kanan | kanan |
| 4 | foot/leg | kaki | kakiʔ | kakiʔ |
| 5 | to walk | jalan | jan | jan |
| 6 | road/path | jalan | jan | jan |
| 7 | to come | datang | kian | jeŋkian |
| 8 | to turn | belok | kəna / musij | kənə |
| 9 | to swim | berenang | bunaŋ | bənaŋ |
| 10 | dirty | kotor | kotow | kotow |
| 11 | dust | debu | abəʔ | abəʔ |
| 12 | skin | kulit | kulet | kulet |
| 13 | back | belakang | blakaŋ | blakaŋ |
| 14 | belly | perut | put | put |
| 15 | bone | tulang | tulaŋ | tulaŋ |
| 16 | guts / intestines | usus | bawa pərut | gəmeʔ |
| 17 | liver | hati | ati | ati |
| 18 | breast (female) | susu | dəpan / ɲusuʔ | nusu |
| | breast (male) | | dadə / dadaʔ | |
| 19 | shoulder | bahu | bou | bou |
| 20 | to know | tahu | taw | tawʔ |
| 21 | to think | fikir | kəna iŋat | iŋat |
| 22 | to fear | takut | takət | takət |
| 23 | blood | darah | dah | dah |
| 24 | head | kepala | palaʔ | palaʔ |
| 25 | neck | leher | goŋgoŋ | goŋgoŋ |
| 26 | hair | rambut | ɣambut | rambut |
| 27 | nose | hidung | hidəŋ | hidəŋ |
| 28 | to breathe | nafas | napas | napas |
| 29 | to smell | cium (bau) | cium bow | cium bow |
| 30 | mouth | mulut | mət | mət |
| 31 | tooth | gigi | gigiʔ | gigiʔ |
| 32 | tongue | lidah | lidəh | lidə |
| 33 | to laugh | ketawa | təʔ | təʔ |
| 34 | to cry | nangis | naŋes | naŋes |
| 35 | to vomit | muntah | wəʔ | munta |

| | | | | |
|----|----------------------|-----------|------------------------|-------------|
| 36 | to spit | ludah | ludʌh | ludʌh |
| 37 | to eat | makan | man | man |
| 38 | to chew | kunyah | məŋuŋah | man |
| 39 | to cook | masak | masaʔ | masaʔ |
| 40 | to drink | minum | minom | inum |
| 41 | to bite | gigit | gigit | gigit |
| 42 | to suck | hisap | sədət | isap |
| 43 | ear | telinga | təliŋaʔ | təliŋaʔ |
| 44 | to hear | dengar | dəŋə | dəŋə |
| 45 | eye | mata | mataʔ | mataʔ |
| 46 | to look | lihat | təŋoʔ | təŋoʔ |
| 47 | to yawn | menguap | ŋuap | ŋuap |
| 48 | to sleep | tidur | tidu | tidu |
| 49 | to lie down | baring | bəŋ | ŋandʌ |
| 50 | to dream, dream | mimpi | mimpi | mimpiʔ |
| 51 | to sit | duduk | dudoʔ | dudoʔ |
| 52 | to stand | diri | di təgaʔ | di |
| 53 | person / people | orang | uŋ | kən |
| 54 | male, man | lelaki | jantan | jantan |
| 55 | female, woman | perempuan | tinaʔ | tinaʔ |
| 56 | child | anak | adiʔ | anaʔ |
| 57 | husband | suami | lakiʔ | lakiʔ |
| 58 | wife | isteri | biniʔ | biniʔ |
| 59 | mother | ibu | maʔ | maʔ |
| 60 | father | bapa | paʔ | papaʔ |
| 61 | house | rumah | uma | umah |
| 62 | roof | atap | atap | atap |
| 63 | name | nama | namaʔ | namaʔ |
| 64 | to say / speak | kata | (bə) buʌl / cap / padə | cakap |
| 65 | rope | tali | taliʔ | taliʔ |
| 66 | to tie up | ikat | ikat | ikat |
| 67 | to sew | jahit | jet | ja.et / jet |
| 68 | needle | jarum | jom | jum |
| 69 | to hunt | buru | buru / bubuʔ | mubuʔ |
| 70 | to shoot | tembak | tembaʔ | sənapaŋ |
| 71 | to stab | tikam | tikam / (n)əntaʔ | katoʔ |
| 72 | to hit | pukul | bantai | bantai |
| 73 | to steal | curi | cuyi | cuyi |
| 74 | to kill | bunuh | bunoh | bunoh |
| 75 | to die, dead | mati | mati | mati |
| 76 | to live, alive | hidup | idop | idop |
| 77 | to scratch (an itch) | garuk | gaʊʔ | bəbalal |
| | to scratch (to hurt) | calar | balay | |
| 78 | to cut, hack | potong | kəat | kəat |

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 79 | wood | kayu | batan̄ kaju | batan̄ kaju |
| 80 | to split | belah | bələh | bɤlɤh |
| 81 | sharp | tajam | loncop | loncop |
| 82 | dull | tumpul | tompol | tompol |
| 83 | to work | kerja | kəjə? | kəjə? |
| 84 | to plant | tanam | tanam | tanam |
| 85 | to choose | pilih | pileh | pileh |
| 86 | to grow | tumbuh | tumbo | |
| 87 | to swell | bengkak | bəŋka? | bəŋka? |
| 88 | to squeeze | memeras | maras / məcet | maras / məcet / pəcet |
| 89 | to hold | genggam | gəŋgəm | gəŋgəm |
| 90 | to dig | gali | gəli? | gəli? |
| 91 | to buy | beli | bəli? | |
| 92 | to open | buka | buka? | bugə? |
| 93 | to pound / beat | tumbuk/pukul | tumbə? | tumbə? |
| 94 | to throw | membuang | campa? | buən̄ |
| 95 | to fall | jatuh | (fall front) jatoh təsun̄ko | (fall front) jotoh s/təsun̄ku |
| | | | (fall back) mələpa? | (fall back) jatoh təbən̄ |
| | | | | (fall sideways) jatoh seŋet |
| | | | | (tripped) məlukon̄ |
| 96 | dog | anjing | aŋkə? | aŋkə? |
| 97 | bird | burung | buŋ | buŋ |
| 98 | egg | telur | təlow | təlo |
| 99 | feather | bulu | bulu? | bulu |
| 100 | wing | sayap | kəpa? | kəpa? |
| 101 | to fly | terbang | təban̄ | tərbən̄ |
| 102 | mouse / rat | tikus | tikus | tikus |
| 103 | meat / flesh | daging | isi? | dagen̄ |
| 104 | fat (noun) | lemak | ləma? | ləma? |
| 105 | tail | ekor | əkou | əkor |
| 106 | snake | ular | ulɤ / ulal | ular |
| 107 | worm | ulat | ulat | ulat |
| | earthworm | cacing | caciŋ | |
| 108 | lice | kutu | kutu? | kutu |
| 109 | mosquito | nyamuk | ŋet | ŋet |
| 110 | spider | laba-laba | labə | labə |
| 111 | fish | ikan | ikan | ikan |
| 112 | rotten | keji/busuk | mət | busə? |
| 113 | branch | dahan | dən̄ | dən̄ |
| 114 | leaf | daun | don | dun |
| 115 | root | akar | akɤl | akɤl / akal |
| 116 | flower | bunga | buŋə? | buŋə |

| | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 117 | fruit | buah | buxh | buxh |
| 118 | grass | rumput | umput/ lalaŋ | rumput |
| 119 | earth, soil | tanah | tana | tana |
| 120 | stone | batu | butu? | botu? |
| 121 | sand | pasir | pasey | pasey |
| 122 | water | air | aɽl | aɽl |
| 123 | to flow | alir | aɽ bəjalan | |
| 124 | sea | laut | la.ot | la.ot |
| 125 | salt | garam | gam | gam |
| 126 | lake | tasik / danau | kolam | kolam |
| 127 | forest | hutan | hutan | utan |
| 128 | sky | langit | laŋit | laŋit |
| 129 | moon | bulan | bulən | bulən |
| 130 | star | bintang | bintaŋ | bintaŋ |
| 131 | cloud | awan | awan | awan / laŋit |
| 132 | fog | kabus | bəyasap / gələp | mbun |
| 133 | rain | hujan | ujin | hujin |
| 134 | thunder | guruh | pətei | |
| 135 | lightning | kilat, petir | kilat | pətei |
| 136 | wind | angin | aŋin | aŋin |
| 137 | to blow | bertiup | tiup | |
| 138 | warm / hot | panas | panas | panas |
| 139 | cold | dingin | səjo? | baŋsaŋ = səjo? |
| 140 | dry | kering | kiŋ | kiŋ |
| 141 | wet | basah | basah | basah |
| 142 | heavy | berat | bəyat | bərat |
| 143 | fire | api | api | api? |
| 144 | to burn | bakar | bəkɽy | bəkɽl |
| 145 | smoke | asap | asap | asap |
| 146 | ash | abu | abu | abu |
| 147 | black | hitam | itam | itam |
| 148 | white | putih | puteh | puteh |
| 149 | red | merah | me.ah | me.ah |
| 150 | yellow | kuning | kuneŋ | kuneŋ |
| 151 | green | hijau | ijau | ijau |
| 152 | small | kecil | kəcit | kəcit |
| 153 | big | besar | bəsal | bəsal |
| 154 | short | pendek | pənde? | pənde? |
| 155 | long | panjang | paŋjaŋ | paŋjaŋ |
| 156 | thin | nipis | nəpes | nəpes |
| 157 | thick | tebal | təbal | təbal |
| 158 | narrow | sempit | təkəpet | səmpet |
| 159 | wide | lebar | lebɽ | lebɽ |
| 160 | sick / painful | sakit | saket / bisə | saket |
| 161 | shy | malu | malu | malu? |
| 162 | old | tua | tua? | tua? |

| | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | old | lama | lamaʔ | laməʔ |
| 163 | new | baru | bawuʔ | nam bowuʔ |
| 164 | good (people) | baik | beyʔ / bogus | bogus |
| 165 | bad, evil | jahat | gaŋ / gahaŋ | |
| 166 | correct | benar/betul | bənar / bətol | bətol |
| 167 | night | malam | gələp / gələp | malam (old gen.) / gələp |
| 168 | day | hari | ayiʔ | ai kaʔ (lit. hari ini) |
| 169 | year | tahun | ta.un | tahun |
| 170 | when | bila | bilaʔ | bilaʔ |
| 171 | to hide | sembunyi | səndəp | səndəp |
| 172 | to climb up (stairs) | naik | na.eʔ | na.eʔ |
| | to climb (trees) | panjat | paŋit | paŋit |
| | to climb (mountain) | daki | na.eʔ | na.eʔ |
| 173 | at / in | di | sikaʔ | |
| 174 | in / inside | dalam | dam | dam |
| 175 | up / above | atas | atas | atas |
| 176 | down / below | bawah | bawah | bawa |
| 177 | this DEM. PROX | ini | ikaʔ | ikaʔ |
| 178 | that DEM. DIST | itu | tuʔ / jə | itu |
| 179 | near | dekat | dəkət | dəkət |
| 180 | far | jauh | juh / jəuh | juh |
| 181 | where | mana | dəmaʔ | naʔ kəmaʔ |
| 182 | 1SG | aku | kamiʔ / am | kamiʔ |
| 183 | 2SG | kamu | ai | ai |
| 184 | 3SG | dia | ŋaʔ | ŋaʔ |
| 185 | 1PL (inclusive) | kita | kitaʔ səmuaʔ | kitaʔ |
| | 1PL (exclusive) | kami | kami səmun | |
| 186 | 2PL | sekalian | səjambaʔ | səmuaʔ |
| 188 | what | apa | anaʔ | saʔ |
| 189 | who | siapa | ai saʔ | ai |
| 190 | other | lain | len | laen |
| 191 | all | semua | səmuaʔ | səmuə |
| 192 | with / and | dengan | dəŋan | dəŋən |
| 193 | if | kalau | kadaŋkadaŋ | kadaŋ |
| 194 | how | bagaimana | macamaʔ | macamaʔ |
| 195 | NEG | tidak/bukan | ncaʔ / bukən | ncaʔ |
| 196 | count | hitung | hetəŋ | ki.aʔ |
| 197 | one | satu | satuʔ | satuʔ |
| 198 | two | dua | duəʔ | dua |
| 199 | three | tiga | tigəʔ | tiga |
| 200 | four | empat | mpat | mpat |
| 201 | five | lima | limaʔ | lima |
| 202 | six | enam | (ə)nam | ənam |
| 203 | seven | tujuh | tujo | tujo |

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 204 | eight | lapan | apan | lapan |
| 205 | nine | sembilan | səmbilan | səmbilan |
| 206 | ten | sepuluh | səpulo | səpulo |
| 207 | twenty | dua puluh | duə.pulo | duə.pulo |
| 208 | fifty | lima puluh | limapulo | liməpulo |
| 209 | one hundred | seratus | səratos | səratos |
| 210 | one thousand | seribu | səribu | səribu |
| 211 | body | badan | ɲɔʔ | ɲɔʔ |
| 212 | finger | jari | jeyʔ | jayʔ |
| 213 | friend | kawan | kɔn | kɔn |
| 214 | chicken | ayam | ajam | ajam |
| 215 | tree | pokok | bataŋ | bataŋ / bataŋ kaju |
| 216 | coconut | kelapa | ɲu | ɲu |
| 217 | cassava / tapioca plant | ubi | ŋalaʔ | ŋalaʔ |
| 218 | machete / chopper | parang | pisaw | pisaw |
| 219 | pillow | bantal | | bantal |
| 220 | strong | kuat | kuat | kuat |
| 221 | many | banyak | jampaʔ kitaʔ | baŋaʔ |
| 222 | here | sini | sikaʔ | sikaʔ |
| 223 | there | situ | gun (go there) | di situʔ |
| | yonder | sana | junset | |
| 224 | angry | marah | mah | mah |
| 225 | to run | lari | bəleyiʔ | layiʔ |
| 226 | loincloth | cawat | kəŋjɔt | bojuʔ lamaʔ |
| 227 | to answer | jawab | cap | |
| 228 | pig | babi | isum | isum |
| 229 | monkey | monyet | pɛŋ | pɛŋ |
| 230 | monitor lizard | biawak | jɔʔ | jɔʔ |
| 231 | thigh | paha | pəmpaʔ | pəmpaʔ |
| 232 | 1. yesterday | kelmarin | taŋ duʔ | taŋ |
| | 2. the day before yesterday | | | |
| 233 | happy | riang/gembira | sukaʔ | sukaʔ |
| 234 | to move | gerak | bəgəyaʔ | bəjan |
| 235 | rough | kasar | kasal | kasal |
| 236 | and | dan | dəŋan | dəŋən |
| 237 | because | kerana | kəranaʔ | ma.camaʔ |
| 238 | smooth (process) | lancar | lus | |
| 239 | straight | lurus | lus | lus |
| 240 | warm | hangat | pəciket panas | |
| 241 | bark | kulit kayu | kulet kaju | kulet kajuʔ |
| 242 | earth | bumi | bumiʔ | |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 243 | fat (adj) | gemuk | gəmoʔ | gəmoʔ |
| 244 | heart | jantung | jantoŋ | jantoŋ |
| 245 | ice | ais | a.e batu | axl butuʔ |
| 246 | mountain | gunung | gunoŋ | gunoŋ |
| 247 | river | sungai | suŋay | suŋay |
| 248 | seed | benih | mataʔ | mataʔ |
| 249 | sun | matahari | mata ayiʔ | mata ayiʔ |
| 250 | to fight | gaduh / kelahi | kəlayiʔ | kəlayiʔ |
| 251 | to give | beri | biʔ | biʔ |
| 252 | to play | main | mən | mən |
| 253 | to see | nampak | nampaʔ | |
| 254 | to sing | nyanyi | mələlaʔ / ɲaɲi | ɲaɲi |
| 255 | to wash | cuci / basuh | bəsoh | cu.ciʔ |
| 256 | to wipe | lap / mengelap | mələp | lap |
| 257 | ancestor | moyang / nenek moyang | noyaŋ / moyaŋ | |
| 258 | grandfather | datuk | nɛʔ | |
| 259 | grandmother | nenek | nɛʔ | |
| 260 | uncle | pak cik | waʔ (specified: waʔ jantan) | |
| 261 | aunt | mak cik | waʔ (specified: waʔ tinaʔ) | |
| 262 | step father | bapa tiri | paʔ tiʔiʔ | |
| 263 | step mother | emak tiri | maʔ tiʔiʔ | |
| 264 | mother-in-law | emak mentua | n.tuaʔ biniʔ | |
| 265 | father-in-law | bapa mentua | n.tuaʔ jantan | |
| 266 | in-laws | besan | bəsan | |
| 267 | daughter / son-in-law | menantu | mənantuʔ | |
| 268 | sibling-in-law | ipar | ipə | |
| 269 | wife's sister husband; husband's brother's wife | biras | sədaʔ | |
| 270 | older brother | abang | kakaʔ / akaʔ | kakaʔ |
| 271 | older sister | kakak | kakaʔ / akaʔ | kakaʔ |
| 272 | younger sibling (male and female) | adik | adiʔ | adiʔ |
| 273 | niece/ nephew | anak saudara | adiʔ pupon | |
| 274 | cousin | sepupu | pupon | |
| 275 | grandchild | cucu | cucuʔ | |
| 276 | to weave (plaiting, | anyam | but | |

| | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| | braiding, interweaving) | | (weave mat = but tikə) | |
| 277 | to build | bina | but (build house = but uma) | |
| 278 | basket | bakul | gagə? | |
| 279 | clear (water) | jernih | juloŋ | |
| 280 | neighbour | jiran | kən səbələh / səda? | |
| 281 | to row boat / paddle | kayuh perahu | kayoh / ciaw (but dated speech) | |
| 282 | penis | kemaluan lelaki / butuh | butuh | |
| 283 | vagina | kemaluan perempuan / amput | putəŋ | |
| 284 | murky | keruh | kuh / ku?uh/ bənə? | |
| 285 | chair / bench / stool | kerusi / bangku | bəŋku? (but dated usage) | |
| 286 | now | kini / sekarang | kəŋ / kə?əŋ | |
| 287 | before, past | dahulu | mwin | |
| 288 | to dance | tari | joget | |
| 289 | why | mengapa / kenapa | ŋə? | |
| 290 | estuary | muara | kuala? suŋay | |
| 291 | life | nyawa | ŋə? | |
| 292 | fragrant | harum, wangi | waŋi? | |
| 293 | finger nail | kuku | kuku? | kuku? |
| 294 | knee | lutut | lutut | lutut |
| 295 | skinny | kurus | kə.ci? | təgəŋgoy |
| 296 | horn | tanduk | tando? | tando? |
| 297 | animal | binatang | siboy | binataŋ |
| 298 | bush | semak | səma? | |
| 299 | estuary / mouth of the river | kuala | eley | kuala? / eley |
| 300 | mud | lumpur | tana met | tana met |
| 301 | land, shore | darat | dat | dat |
| 302 | to float | apung / timbul | timbul | timul |
| 303 | to sink | karam / tenggelem | təŋgələm | təŋgələm |
| 304 | high tide, tidal flow | pasang | pasəŋ | |
| 305 | boat (undecked) | perahu | pau? | pau? |
| 306 | spear | lembing | panca? | panca? |
| 307 | to pull | tarik | tey? | ti? |
| 308 | to push | tolak | tula? | tola? |
| 309 | full | penuh | pənoh | pənoh |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| 310 | bad, broken, poor quality | buruk | kaca? | ka.ca? |
| 311 | round | bulat | bulat | bulat |
| 312 | light (weight) | ringan | iŋan | riŋan |
| 313 | morning | pagi | paŋi? | |
| 314 | noon | tengah hari | təŋə ayi? | |
| 315 | evening | petang | pətəŋ | |
| 316 | tomorrow | esok | esə? | esə? |
| 317 | to freeze | beku / membekukan | məŋəŋas | kəas |
| 318 | few | sedikit | kətət | təkətət |
| 319 | some | beberapa | kətət | bərapə |
| 320 | flying termite (alates) | kelekatu | kənsəŋ | |
| 321 | stingless bee <i>Melipona minuta</i> | kelulut | bacaw | |
| 322 | weaver ant <i>Oecophylla smaragdina</i> | kerangga | əŋgəŋ | |
| 323 | butterfly <i>Lepidoptera</i> | kupu-kupu / rama-rama | kələba? | |
| 324 | house lizard | cicak | ŋətə? | ŋətə? |
| 325 | long-tailed macaque <i>Macacus cynomolgus</i> | kera | pəŋ | |
| 326 | gibbon | ungka | ta.oh | |
| 327 | tiger | harimau | bontuŋ | |
| 328 | bat (insect-eating bat; cave-bat) | kelawar / keluang | kələntət | |
| 329 | bed / bedstead | katil | təmpat tidu / paŋkəŋ tidu | |
| 330 | beak / snout | muncung | mun.coŋ | mun.coŋ |
| 331 | upstream | hulu | ulu? | ulu? |
| 332 | downstream | hilir | keley | |
| 333 | ebb, to ebb | surut | sut | sut |
| 334 | cave | gua | guə | |
| 335 | strait | selat | təmpat | |
| 336 | engined boat | boat enjin | pau? adə enjin | |
| 337 | net | jaring | jeyiŋ | mpaŋ |
| 338 | soft | lembut | mət | mət |
| 339 | day time | siang | siaŋ | |
| 340 | yesterday | semalam | taŋ | taŋ |
| 341 | day after tomorrow | lusa | lusa? | lusa? |
| 342 | north | utara | utaha / uta?a | |
| 343 | south | selatan | səlatan | |

| | | | | |
|-----|------|-------|---------------|--|
| 344 | east | timur | timow | |
| 345 | west | barat | barat / bayat | |

Word list from other scholars

| | Malay | Orang Seletar (Pelras, 1972; 2002) | Orang Seletar (Ariffin bin Nopiah, 1979) | Orang Seletar (Yusop, 2011) | Orang Seletar (Blissett & Elzinga, 2015) | Orang Seletar (Juma'at, 2017) | Orang Seletar (Samsur, 2019) |
|--------------------|----------|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| hand | tangan | kokot | | kəkət | kokot | | |
| left | kiri | | | kii? | ki: | | |
| right | kanan | | | kanan | kanan | | |
| foot/leg | kaki | | kaki? | kaki? | kaki | | |
| to walk | jalan | | | jaʔan | dʒan | | |
| road/path | jalan | | | jaʔan | dʒan | | |
| to come | datang | | | kiʔan | kian | | |
| to turn | belok | | | belok | belo? | | |
| to swim | berenang | | | bəyənəŋ | benəŋ | | |
| dirty | kotor | | | kotow | kotoʊ | | |
| dust | debu | | | abu? / dəbu? | | | |
| skin | kulit | | | kulet | kulit | | |
| back | belakang | | | belakaŋ | bəlakaŋ | | |
| belly | perut | | | puʷut | put | | |
| bone | tulang | | | tulaŋ | tulaŋ | | |
| liver | hati | | | ati? | ati? | | |
| breast (female) | susu | | | susu? (tetek) | | | |
| breast (male) | | | | dada? | | | |
| shoulder | bahu | | | boʷu? | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|--|------|--------------------|-----------|--|--|
| to know | tahu | | | ta ^w u? | tau | | |
| to think | fikir | | | pike | pike | | |
| to fear | takut | | | takot | | | |
| blood | darah | | | daʔah | dah | | |
| head | kepala | | | pala? | kəpala? | | |
| neck | leher | | | gongon | gongon | | |
| hair | rambut | | | gambot | gamut | | |
| nose | hidung | | | idoŋ | hidon | | |
| to breathe | napas | | | napas | ti? napas | | |
| to smell | cium (bau) | | | | cium bau | | |
| mouth | mulut | | | moʔot | mat | | |
| tooth | gigi | | | gigi? | gigi? | | |
| tongue | lidah | | | lidəh | lidəh | | |
| to laugh | ketawa | | | to? | to? | | |
| to cry | nangis | | | naŋes | | | |
| to vomit | muntah | | | muntah | muntah | | |
| to spit | ludah | | | ludəh | ludəh | | |
| to eat | makan | | maan | maʔan | man | | |
| to chew | kunyah | | | gonah | | | |
| to cook | masak | | | | masak | | |
| to drink | minum | | | inum | inum | | |
| to bite | gigit | | | gigit | gigit | | |
| to suck | hisap | | | isyap | isap | | |
| ear | telinga | | | təliŋa? | təliŋã | | |
| to hear | dengar | | | | dəŋe | | |
| eye | mata | | | mata? | mata | | |
| to look | lihat | | | təŋo? | | | |
| to sleep | tidur | | tidu | tidu | tidu | | |
| to lie down | baring | | | bɜŋ | beŋ | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|------|-----|--------------------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| to dream, dream | mimpi | | | iguh | | | |
| to sit | duduk | | | dudək | dudo? | | |
| to stand | diri | | | dii? | di? | | |
| person / people | orang | | | uŋ | kon | | ung (outsider) |
| male, man | lelaki | | | jantan | dʒantaŋ | | |
| female, woman | perempuan | téna | | tina? | tina | | |
| child | anak | adi' | | ana? | ana? | anaq | |
| husband | suami | | | laki? | laki? | lakik | |
| wife | isteri | tena | | bini? | bini? | binik | |
| mother | ibu | | | ma? | ma? | maq | |
| father | bapa | | | pa? | pa? | paq | |
| house | rumah | | uma | yumah | | | |
| roof | atap | | | atap | | | |
| name | nama | | | nama? | nama? | | |
| to say / speak | kata | | | kata? | tʃap | | |
| rope | tali | | | tali? | tali? | | |
| to tie up | ikat | | | ikat | ikat | | |
| to sew | jahit | | | jeet | jēt | | |
| to hunt | buru | | | bu ^w u? | bubu? | | |
| to shoot | tembak | | | təmbak / nəmba? | | | |
| to stab | tikam | | | | tikam | | |
| to hit | pukul | | | ŋəto? / bantay | bantai | | |
| to steal | curi | | | cu ^w i? | | | |
| to kill | bunuh | | | bunuh | bunuh | | |
| to die, dead | mati | | | mati? | mati? | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------------------|--------|--|--|
| to live, alive | hidup | | | idəp | idup | | |
| to scratch (an itch) | garuk | | | | tʃalaj | | |
| to cut, hack | potong | | | keat | keæt | | |
| wood | kayu | | | kayuʔ | kajuʔ | | |
| to split | belah | | | bləh | bələh | | |
| sharp | tajam | | | tajəm | tadzum | | |
| dull | tumpul | | | təmpəl | | | |
| to plant | tanam | | | nanam | | | |
| to choose | pilih | | | pileh | | | |
| to grow | tumbuh | | | tumuh | | | |
| to swell | bengkak | | | bəŋkaq | bəŋkaʔ | | |
| to hold | genggam | | | gəŋgəm | pegan | | |
| to dig | gali | | | galiʔ | galiʔ | | |
| to buy | beli | | | bəliʔanaʔ | | | |
| to pound / beat | tumbuk/pukul | | | tumboʔ / tumbəq | | | |
| to throw | membuang | | | bu ^w aŋ | buaŋ | | |
| to fall | jatuh | | | jituh | jetuh | | |
| dog | anjing | engko' | angkuk | aŋkok / kok | | | |
| bird | burung | | | bu ^w oŋ | buŋ | | |
| egg | telur | | | təlow | təlo | | |
| feather | bulu | | | buluʔ | buluʔ | | |
| wing | sayap | | | kəpak | sajəp | | |
| to fly | terbang | | | təbaŋ | təbaŋ | | |
| mouse / rat | tikus | | | tikos | | | |
| meat / flesh | daging | | | isiʔ | dəgiŋ | | |
| tail | ekor | | | ekow | eko | | |
| snake | ular | | | ulay | uləy | | |
| worm | ulat | | | ulat | ulat | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|------|------|---------------|--------|--|------|
| earthworm | cacing | | | caciŋ | | | |
| lice | kutu | | | kutuʔ | utuʔ | | |
| mosquito | nyamuk | nye' | | yət | | | |
| spider | laba-laba | | | labəh | | | |
| fish | ikan | | | ikan | ikan | | |
| rotten | keji/busuk | | | busok | kaʔaʔ | | |
| branch | dahan | | | dəʔan / deen | | | |
| leaf | daun | | | doʔon | dan | | |
| root | akar | | | jengkel | akay | | |
| flower | bunga | | | buŋəʔ | buŋə | | |
| fruit | buah | | dien | buʷəh | bʷəh | | |
| grass | rumpot | | | rumpot | lalaŋ | | |
| earth, soil | tanah | | | tanah | | | |
| stone | batu | | | botuʔ | batuʔ | | |
| sand | pasir | | | pase | pase | | |
| water | air | | | aəh | aɾ | | |
| to flow | alir | | | məŋaley | aleh | | |
| sea | laut | | | laʷot | lot | | laot |
| salt | garam | | | gaʔam | gam | | |
| lake | tasik / danau | | | kulam | kolam | | |
| forest | hutan | | | utan | utan | | |
| sky | langit | | | laŋet | laŋit | | |
| moon | bulan | | | bulən | | | |
| star | bintang | | | bintaŋ | bintaŋ | | |
| cloud | awan | | | awan | | | |
| fog | kabus | | | əmbon | gabus | | |
| rain | hujan | | | ujən | | | |
| thunder | guruh | | | guroh | | | |
| lightning | kilat, petir | | | kilat / pəter | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------|-------|--|--------------------|---------|--|--|
| wind | angin | | | aŋin | aŋin | | |
| to blow | bertiup | | | ti'op | tiup | | |
| warm / hot | panas | | | panas | | | |
| cold | dingin | | | sejɔq | səjɔ? | | |
| dry | kering | | | kiing | kiŋ | | |
| wet | basah | | | basah | basah | | |
| heavy | berat | | | bəyat | bəyat | | |
| fire | api | | | api? | api | | |
| to burn | bakar | | | bəkə | bəkɫ | | |
| smoke | asap | bémé | | asap | asap | | |
| ash | abu | | | abu? | abu | | |
| black | hitam | | | itam | itam | | |
| white | putih | | | putih | puteh | | |
| red | merah | | | mɛ'ah | miəh | | |
| yellow | kuning | | | kunɛŋ | kuniŋ | | |
| green | hijau | | | ijaw | ijau | | |
| small | kecil | | | kəci? | kətʃi? | | |
| big | besar | | | bəsa? | bəsay | | |
| short | pendek | | | pəndɛ? | pəndɛ? | | |
| long | panjang | | | panjang | pandʒaŋ | | |
| thin | nipis | | | nɛpɛs | | | |
| thick | tebal | | | təbal | təbal | | |
| narrow | sempit | | | səmpɛt | səmpɛt | | |
| wide | lebar | tebal | | ləbə | ləbay | | |
| sick / painful | sakit | | | saket | | | |
| shy | malu | | | malu? | | | |
| old | tua | | | tu ^w a? | tua | | |
| old | lama | | | lamak | | | |
| new | baru | | | bo ^w u? | bau | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|--|--|----------------------|-------|--|--|
| good (people) | baik | | | bɛ? | bɛ? | | |
| bad, evil | jahat | | | gaŋ | | | |
| correct | benar/betul | | | bətol | bətul | | |
| night | malam | | | malam | malam | | |
| day | hari | | | həi? | ai? | | |
| year | tahun | | | ta ^w on | taun | | |
| when | bila | | | bila? | bila? | | |
| to hide | sembunyi | | | ŋəndəp | | | |
| to climb up (stairs) | naik | | | naie? | | | |
| to climb (trees) | panjat | | | naiek | | | |
| to climb (mountain) | daki | | | dəki? / nə? bukit | | | |
| at / in | di | | | di | | | |
| in / inside | dalam | | | da?am | | | |
| up / above | atas | | | atas | | | |
| down / below | bawah | | | bəəh | | | |
| this DEM. PROX | ini | | | naŋ ka? | ŋka? | | ika / ka |
| that DEM. DIST | itu | | | tu? | dʒiə | | |
| near | dekat | | | dəkət | dəkət | | |
| far | jauh | | | juuh | dʒuh | | |
| where | mana | | | dəma? | dəma? | | |
| 1SG | aku | | | kami? | | | kami (informal) am (formal) |
| 2SG | kamu | | | aeh | aih | | awak aih (referring to Orang Seletar) ung (referring to outsiders) |
| 3SG | dia | | | aeh | ŋa? | | nyak |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--|--|-------------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| 1PL (inclusive) | kita | | | kita? | kita? (incl) | | kita |
| 1PL (exclusive) | kami | | | | kami? (excl) | | kami kon (refer to Orang Seletar themselves) jampak kon |
| 2PL | sekalian | | | aeh yamay | səjampa? | | kau |
| 3PL | mereka | | | aeh yamay | dʒampa? pa? | | nyak |
| what | apa | | | anak | əna? | | |
| who | siapa | | | sa? | sa? | | |
| other | lain | | | la'en | len | | |
| all | semua | | | səmun | səmun | | |
| with / and | dengan | | | dəŋan | | | |
| if | kalau | | | kalaw | kalau | | |
| how | bagaimana | | | bagaymane? / macana? | matʃam ma? | | |
| NEG | tidak/bukan | | | tidə? | bukən | | ncak |
| count | hitung | | | kia? (kira) | kia? | | |
| one | satu | | | satu? | satu? | | |
| two | dua | | | duwə? | duə | | |
| three | tiga | | | tigə? | tigə? | | |
| four | empat | | | əmpat | əmpat | | |
| five | lima | | | lima? | lima? | | |
| body | badan | | | pa? | | | |
| finger | jari | | | je'i? | | | |
| friend | kawan | | | kəwən | | | |
| chicken | ayam | | | ayam | | | |
| tree | pokok | | | bataŋ kayu? | poko? | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|------------------------|-------|--|--------------------|--|-----|
| coconut | kelapa | | | ni'u | | | |
| cassava / tapioca plant | ubi | | | ŋalaʔ | | | |
| machete / chopper | parang | | | pisaw pa ^w ot | | | |
| pillow | bantal | | | bantal | | | |
| strong | kuat | | | ku ^w at | | | |
| many | banyak | | | ba ⁿ ak | ba ⁿ aʔ | | |
| here LOC DEM. PROX | sini | | | sikaʔ | | | |
| yonder LOC DEM. DIST | sana | | | situʔ | | | |
| angry | marah | | | maah | | | |
| loincloth | cawat | | | cawat | | | |
| to answer | jawab | job | | cap | | | |
| pig | babi | izhum | insun | isum | | | |
| monkey | monyet | péng | peng | peŋ | | | |
| monitor lizard | biawak | jo' | | joʔ | | | jok |
| thigh | paha | pémba' (thigh/ leg) | | paaʔ | | | |
| 1. yesterday 2. the day before yesterday | kelmarin | pereti' | | məy ⁱ n | | | |
| happy | riang/gembira | kedaza' (cheerful) | | gəmbirə (gembira) sukaʔ (riang) | | | |
| to move | gerak | unyit | | bəjaʔan | | | |
| rough | kasar | guzu | | | | | |
| and | dan | | | dəŋan | dan | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------|--|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|--|
| because | kerana | | | kəyana? | ŋak | | |
| smooth (process) | lancar | | | | lantʃay | | |
| straight | lurus | | | | lus | | |
| warm | hangat | | | panas | aŋat | | |
| bark | kulit kayu | | | kulet kayu? | kulit kaiju? | | |
| earth | bumi | | | | bumi | | |
| fat (adj) | gemuk | | | gəmək | gəmo? | | |
| heart | jantung | | | janton | | | |
| ice | ais | | | botu? | aɾ batu? | | |
| mountain | gunung | | | gunon | bukit | | |
| river | sungai | | | suŋay | suŋai | | |
| seed | benih | | | bu ^w əh | bəneh | | |
| sun | matahari | | | matai? | mataai | | |
| to fight | gaduh / kelahi | | | klaɪ? | kələit | | |
| to give | beri | | | bii? | bi? | | |
| to play | main | | | meʔen | mān | | |
| to see | nampak | | | nampa? | nampa? | | |
| to sing | nyanyi | | | ŋepi? | ŋepi? | | |
| to wash | cuci / basuh | kusal | | cuci? / bosuh | cucit | | |
| to wipe | lap / mengelap | | | | kəsət (mengesat as prompt) | | |
| ancestor | moyang / nenek moyang | | | neʔ moyan | | noyang | |
| grandfather | datuk | | | neʔ | | neq | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--|--|----------------------|--|--------------|--|
| grandmother | nenek | | | nɛʔ | | neq | |
| uncle | pak cik | | | waʔ | | waq | |
| aunt | mak cik | | | waʔ | | waq | |
| step father | bapa tiri | | | tiyiʔ (tiri) | | pak tiik | |
| step mother | emak tiri | | | tiyiʔ (tiri) | | mak tiik | |
| mother-in-law | emak mentua | | | məntu ^w a | | mak mentuak | |
| father-in-law | bapa mentua | | | məntu ^w a | | pak mentuak | |
| in-laws | besan | | | bəsan | | besan | |
| daughter / son-in-law | menantu | | | nuntutuk | | menantuk | |
| sibling-in-law | ipar | | | ipey | | ipe | |
| wife's sister husband; husband's brother's wife | biras | | | | | bias | |
| older brother | abang | | | abaŋs | | call by name | |
| older sister | kakak | | | kakaʔ | | call by name | |
| younger sibling (male & female) | adik | | | adeʔ | | call by name | |
| niece/ nephew | anak saudara | | | | | anak seda | |
| cousin | sepupu | | | pupuŋ | | sepupuq | |
| grandchild | cucu | | | cucuk | | cucuq | |
| to weave (plaiting, braiding, interweaving) | anyam | | | but | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|--|----------------------|--|--|------|
| to build | bina | | | but | | | |
| basket | bakul | | | gagek | | | |
| clear (water) | jernih | | | julon | | | |
| neighbour | jiran | | | sədaʔaʔ | | | |
| to row boat / paddle | kayuh perahu | | | ci'aw | | | |
| penis | kemaluan lelaki / butuh | | | butuh | | | |
| vagina | kemaluan perempuan / amput | | | puteŋ | | | |
| murky | keruh | | | bənəʔ | | | |
| chair / bench / stool | kerusi / bangku | | | boŋkuʔ | | | |
| now | kini / sekarang | | | kεʔεŋ | | | keng |
| before, past | dahulu | | | mayin | | | |
| to dance | tari | | | jəget | | | |
| why | mengapa / kenapa | | | ŋeʔ | | | |
| estuary | muara | | | kelə | | | |
| life | nyawa | | | ŋəʔ | | | |
| fragrant | harum, wangi | | | kiyim | | | |
| fingernail | kuku | | | kukuʔ | | | |
| knee | lutut | | | lutot | | | |
| skinny | kurus | | | təgeŋkoy | | | |
| horn | tanduk | | | tandok | | | |
| animal | binatang | | | bənataŋ | | | |
| bush | semak | | | ŋəmak | | | |
| estuary / mouth of the river | kuala | | | ku ^w alaʔ | | | |
| mud | lumpur | tana | | tana met (selut) | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------|--|---------------------|-------|--|-------|
| land, shore | darat | da' | | daʔat | | | da'at |
| to float | apung / timbul | | | timbul / tətəpuŋ | | | |
| to sink | karam / tenggelem | | | kaʔam | | | |
| high tide, tidal flow | pasang | | | aye pasan | | | |
| boat (usually made from wood), undecked native ship | perahu | | | pa ^w uʔ | | | pauk |
| spear | lembing | tikam | | tikam | | | |
| to pull | tarik | | | tiiʔ | tiʔ | | |
| to push | tolak | | | tulak | tolaʔ | | |
| full | penuh | | | pənoh | | | |
| bad, broken, poor in quality | buruk | | | kacak | | | |
| round | bulat | | | bulat | | | |
| light (weight) | ringan | | | iŋan | | | |
| morning | pagi | | | pagiʔ | | | |
| noon | tengah hari | | | təŋah haiʔ | | | |
| evening | petang | | | mataiʔ kəban | | | |
| tomorrow | esok | | | ɛsɔq | | | |
| to freeze | beku / membekukan | | | bəkuʔ | | | |
| few | sedikit | | | teketet | | | |
| some | beberapa | | | bəɔŋ | | | |
| flying termite (alates) | kelekatu | | | kənsəŋ | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|--|----------|--|--|--|
| stingless bee <i>Melipona minuta</i> | kelulut | | | bacaw | | | |
| weaver ant <i>Oecophylla smaragdina</i> | kerengga | | | ᵛᵛᵛᵛ | | | |
| butterfly <i>Lepidoptera</i> | kupu-kupu / rama- rama | | | kələbak | | | |
| house lizard | cicak | | | ᵛᵛᵛᵛ? | | | |
| long-tailed macaque <i>Macacus cynomolgus</i> | kera | | | ᵛᵛᵛ | | | |
| gibbon | ungka | | | tawəh | | | |
| tiger | harimau | | | bontuᵛ | | | |
| bat (insect- eating bat; cave-bat) | kelawar / keluang | | | kələntət | | | |
| bed / bedstead | katil | | | paᵛkeᵛ | | | |
| strait | selat | moncong | | | | | |

Appendix 2: Texts

Four texts were collected as data for the current thesis. The first two are traditional folk tales of the Orang Seletar (*Anak Naga* ‘Dragon Child’ and *Mak Pacat* ‘Mother of Leeches’). The third text, *Sejarah Seletar* (Seletar History), is about a historical great flood experienced by the ancestors of the Orang Seletar, as well as the speaker’s commentary about the current situation of modern Orang Seletar. The last text, *Jadi Nelayan* (Being a fisherwoman), consists of excerpts from a speaker’s narration about her experiences of being a fisherwoman.

The texts shown here are first transcribed phonemically (first line), then phonetically (second line), followed by the gloss (third line) and finally the free translation. Note that square brackets contain utterances made by the interpreter, and not the narrator. The folk tales contain large amounts of narrated dialogue. For ease of reading and understanding, I have included tags to identify the speaker of particular dialogues when they occur. A tilde is used to indicate reduplication, instead of a normal hyphen, which indicates affixation. Phonetic glottal stops that are transcribed as the coda of a phonemically vowel-final word (except kinship terms) mark either the end of an intonational phrase (e.g. the glottal stop in [kaʔ] in example (3) below), or that the word is being stressed/has prosodic prominence (e.g. the glottal stop in [diʔ] in example (1) below).

Anak Naga ‘Dragon Child’

L tells the story of a child who turns into a dragon because he ate a mysterious egg he found in the forest. The characters of this story are the child, his father and mother. The text consists of both narration and dialogue. The identities of the speaker are tagged as C (child), F (father) and M (mother) for ease of reading, as explicit dialogue tags such as “his mother said” are not always present.

- (1) nak kənal di kami ka (name)
 naʔ kənal diʔ kami ka (name)
 want recognize self 1SG this name
 ‘I want to introduce myself here as (name).’

- (2) am dəŋə cita nek am muin
 ʔam dəŋə cita neʔ ʔam mu.in
 1SG listen story grandmother 1SG long.ago
 ‘I listened to my grandmother’s stories in the past.’

- (3) mak am pun pada ada pada cita ka
 maʔ ʔam mun padə adə padə cita kaʔ
 mother 1SG PAR say PFV say story this
 ‘My mother also had told, had told this story.’

- (4) cita muin anak ntua, ano jadi naga
 citaʔ mu.in anaʔ ntwaʔ, ano jedi nagəʔ
 story long.ago child elder FIL become dragon
 ‘A long ago story about the child of an elder...becoming a dragon.’

- (5) ka cita mak am... mak am yaŋ cita pada kami
 ka citaʔ maʔ ʔam... maʔ ʔam yaŋ cita pada kamiʔ

this story mother 1SG mother 1SG REL tell.story to 1SG
 ‘This story my mother... It was my mother who told this story to me.’

(6) nek kami pun ada pada juga
 ne? kami? pun adə padə jugə?
 grandmother 1SG PAR PFV say also
 ‘My grandmother had told this story too.’

(7) am iŋat la sit~sit
 ?am iŋat la sit~sit
 1SG remember PAR little~EMPH
 ‘I remember, a little bit.’

(8) bila am da bəsal, am iŋat cita ka
 bila ?am da bəsaL, ?am iŋat cita ka?
 when 1SG COMPL big 1SG remember story this
 ‘When I had already grown up, I remembered this story.’

(9) sampay keŋ pun am iŋat
 sampay keŋ pun am iŋat
 reach now PAR 1SG remember
 ‘Until now also/still I remember.’

(10) a... nek am dudok suŋay papan dəŋan wak ja
 ?a ne? ?am dudo? suŋay papan dəŋan wa? ja
 PAR grandmother 1SG live river Papan with uncle/aunt 3

adik~bədik ja
 ?adi?~bədi? ja?
 sibling~PL 3

‘My grandmother lived in Sungai Papan with her relatives and siblings.’

(11) adik~bədik nek am nikah ada baŋak
 ?adi?~bədi? ne? ?am nika adə baŋa?
 sibling~PL grandmother 1SG marry EXIST many
 ‘My grandmother’s siblings that got married were a lot.’

(12) adik~bədik nek am ada tujo bəlas kəluarga
 ?adi?~bədi? ne? ?am adə tujo bəlas kəlwaygə
 sibling~PL grandmother 1SG EXIST seven numbers.11.to.19 family
 ‘My grandmother’s siblings had seventeen families.’

(13) tujo bəlas, adik~bədik ja tujo bəlas
 tujo bəlas, ?adi?~bədi? ja? tujo bəlas
 seven numbers.11.to.19 sibling~PL 3 seven numbers.11.to.19
 ‘Seventeen, (the number of) her siblings were seventeen.’

(14) anak ja pun baŋak
 ?ana? ja pun baŋa?

child 3 PAR many
'Her children were also numerous.'

(15) a satu ayi, wak ja dəŋan anak ja pəgi utan
 ʔa satu ʔayiʔ, waʔ ja nəŋan anaʔ ja pəgi utan
 PAR one day uncle 3 with child 3 go forest
'One day, her uncle and his children went to the forest.'

(16) ja pəgi utan nak cayi anu la cayi bənataŋ, cayi laok
 ja pəgi utan naʔ ceyi anu la ceyi bənataŋ, ceyi la^woʔ
 3 go forest want find FIL PAR find animal find food
'They went to the forest to look for what-you-call-it...look for animals, for food.'

(17) cayi laok la kalaw ncak laok, macamak
 ceyi loʔ la, kalaw ncaʔ loʔ, macamaʔ
 find food PAR if NEG food how
'(they went) to look for food. If there is no food, what are we going to do?'

(18) kalaw ada dapat laok, kita bəkər aja la
 kalaw adə dapat la^woʔ kita bəkəy ajə la
 if PFV get food 1PL burn only PAR
'If (we) did get food, we/one would just burn/cook (them).'

(19) jan masok utan... jan
 jan masoʔ ʔutan... jan
 walk enter forest walk
'(They) entered the forest...and walked'

(20) tiga bə-anak
 tiga bə-anaʔ
 three POSS-child
'He had three children.'

(21) a jan ekot... ekot pak, masok utan
 ʔa jan ekot... ʔekot paʔ, masoʔ ʔutan
 PAR walk follow follow father enter forest
 F – "Follow... follow me into the forest."

(22) cayi apa
 ceyi apaʔ
 find what
 C – "What are (we) looking for?"

(23) cayi pəlanduk
 ceyi pəlanuʔ
 find mousedeer
 F – "(We're) looking for mousedeer."

(24) cayi pəlanduk a... o, jan
 ceyi pəlanuʔ a... ʔo, jan

find mousedeer PAR INTRJ walk
 C – “Looking for mousedeer... Oh (let’s) go”

(25) pancak anu... bow pancak pak e
 panca? ?anu... bow panca? pa? e
 spear FIL bring spear father PAR
 F – “The spear...bring my spear.”

(26) bow pancak aja, takot jumpa anu bontuŋ ka ataw apa
 bow panca? ajə?, takot jumpə anə bontuŋ ka ?ataw apa?
 bring spear only afraid meet FIL tiger or or what
 F – “Bring the spear only, in case (we) encounter what-you-call-it... tigers or something”

(27) bow pancak, pak bow pisaw
 bow panca?, pa? bow pisaw
 bring spear father bring knife
 F – “Bring the spear. I will bring the knife.”

(28) jan a
 jan a
 walk PAR
 F – “(Let’s) go.”

(29) jan jan jan
 jan jan jan
 walk walk walk
 ‘(They) walked and walked.’

(30) səbəlom jan, jəmpi tu
 səbəlom jan, jəmpi? tu
 before walk cast.spell that
 ‘Before (they) walked, (they) cast the spells.’
 (it is a custom for the Orang Seletar to pray or cast spells before entering the forest)

(31) masok utan jəmpi tu
 maso? ?utan jəmpi? tu
 enter forest cast.spell that
 ‘Entering the forest, (they) cast the spells.’

(32) a jəmpi
 ?a jəmpi?
 PAR cast.spells
 ‘Yes, (they) cast spells.’

(33) keŋ kami nak masok utan
 keŋ kami? na? maso? ?utan
 now 1SG want enter forest
 F – “Right now I want to enter the forest.”

(34) a cucu nak tumpaŋ anu... tumpaŋ lalu
 ?a cucu? na? tumpaŋ anu? tumpaŋ lalu?

PAR grandchild want hitch-hike FIL hitch-hike cross

F – “(Your) grandchild wants to pass...pass through.” (*tumpang lalu?* = pass through) (When praying to the spirits in the forest, the Orang Seletar refer to themselves as *cucu* ‘grandchild(ren)’, and the spirits as ancestors.)

- (35) bila yaŋ cucu lalu ka anak, jaga kami ka
 bila yaŋ cucu? lalu? kə ana?, jegə? kami? ka?,
 whatever.time REL grandchild cross or what take.care 1SG this

səmun jaga
 səmun jegə?
 all take.care

F – “Whenever it is that (your) grandchildren pass by or something, take care of me here, take care of all of us”

- (36) masok utan ka, takot bənatəŋ, a bontuŋ ka, ular ka apa
 maso? ?utan ka?, takot bənatəŋ, ?a bontuŋ ka, ?ulay ka apa?
 enter forest this afraid animal PAR tiger or snake or what

F – “(We) enter this forest, in case of animals, (such as) tigers or snakes or something,”

- (37) minta bənda jə juh aja
 minta bəndə jə juh ajə?
 ask thing that far only

F – “(we) ask only for those things to stay far away.”

- (38) ka jaga anak~anak kami ka cucu
 ka jegə? ?ana?~ana? kami? ka cucu?
 FOC take.care child~PL 1SG this grandchild

F – “Take care of my children here, (your) grandchildren.”

- (39) ka naŋ kami ekot ka, linoŋ kami
 ka naŋ kami ekot ka?, linoŋ kami?
 FOC REL 1SG follow this protect 1PL.EXCL

F – “The one that I follow here/now, protect us.”

- (40) jan jan jan
 jan jan jan
 walk walk walk

‘(They) walked and walked and walked.’

- (41) cuma pak... masok dalam utan ja la
 cuma pa?... maso? dalam utan jə la
 only father enter inside forest only PAR

C – “(Can it be) just Father (who) enters into the forest only?”

(42) utan kan susah cayi bənda jə pak
 utan kan susah cayi bəndə jə pa?
 forest PAR difficult find thing that father
 C – “(In) the forest, (it is) hard to find that thing, Father.”

(43) ncak
 nca?
 NEG
 F – “No.”

(44) pancak... bawa pancak
 panca?... bawa panca?
 spear bring spear
 F – “The spear... bring the spear.”

(45) jan jan jan jan jan jan
 jan jan jan jan jan jan
 walk walk walk walk walk walk
 ‘(They) walked and walked and walked’

(46) o pak
 ʔo pa?
 INTRJ father
 C – “Oh, Father!”

(47) anak
 ʔana?
 what
 F – “What?”

(48) am jumpa təlow, o pak
 ʔam jumpə təlow, o pa?
 1SG meet egg INTRJ father
 C – “I encountered an egg, oh, Father”

(49) təlow anak
 təlow ana?
 egg what
 F – “What eggs?”

(50) təlow bəsar
 təlow bəsay
 egg big
 C – “Big eggs”

(51) but anak
 but ana?
 do what
 F – “What do (we) do (with them)?”

- (52) təlow pak, dua otey
 təlow paʔ, du^{wə} otey
 egg father two CLF:ROUND
 C – “Eggs, Father! Two of them.”
- (53) am ami bow balek
 ʔam mayiʔ, bow balek
 1SG take bring return
 C – “I (will) take and bring (them) back.”
- (54) but alay nak ami
 bot alay naʔ ʔamiʔ
 make what want take
 F – “For what (reason) (do you) want to take (them)?”
- (55) təlow jə ay tak tahu bənataŋ mana
 təlow jə ʔay taʔ taw bənataŋ manə
 egg that 2 NEG know animal which
 F – “That egg, you don’t know which animal (it belongs to).”
- (56) ami jə, bəsal o pak
 ʔamiʔ yə, bəsaL o paʔ
 take that big INTRJ father
 C – “Take them. They’re big, oh Father.”
- (57) kəsian
 kəsian
 pitiful
 C – “Such a waste.”
- (58) talada, am ami sə=botey bow balek
 taladə, ʔam mayiʔ sə=botey bow balek
 NEG.able 1SG take one-CLF:ROUNDbring return
 C – “(I) can’t (leave them), I (will) take one piece and bring (it) back.”
- (59) sə=botey am tiŋgəl
 sə=botey am tiŋgəl
 one-CLF:ROUND 1SG leave.behind
 C – “(As for the other) one, I leave (it here).”
- (60) bow balek, bow balek, bow balek
 bow baleʔ, bow baleʔ, bow baleʔ
 bring return bring return bring return
 ‘(He) brought (it) back, brought (it) back, brought (it) back.’
- (61) bila bow balek
 bilə bow baleʔ
 when bring return
 ‘When (he) brought (it) back’

(62) ay but anak təlow jə
 ʔay bus anə təlow jə
 2 make/do what egg that
 F – “What are you doing (with) that egg?”

(63) təlow ular tidak
 təlow ulay tidaʔ
 egg snake NEG
 F – “Is it a snake egg?”

(64) ntah
 ntah
 don't.know
 C – “I don't know”

(65) ay tahu bow balek jə, bapak ʔa pada
 ʔay tau bow baleʔ yə, bapaʔ ʔə padə
 2 know bring return that father 3 say
 F – “You know to put that back” his father said.

(66) bow balek a
 bow baleʔ a
 bring return PAR
 F – “Bring (it) back (to its original place)!”

(67) ncak, pak
 ncaʔ, paʔ
 NEG father
 C – “No, Father.”

(68) kita jan cayi laju, tapi ncak jumpa bənataŋ
 kitə jan cayi laju, tapi ncaʔ jumpə bənataŋ
 1PL walk find fast but NEG meet animal
 C – “We walked and hunted quickly, but we didn't encounter animals.”

(69) manok pun tidək, apa pun tidak
 manoʔ pun tidəʔ, ʔapə pun tidəʔ
 chicken PAR NEG what PAR NEG
 C – “Didn't even (encounter) a chicken, didn't even (encounter) anything.”

(70) kita balek lapa
 kita baleʔ lapaʔ
 1PL return hungry
 C – “We (are going to) return hungry.”

(71) a balek, da pənat
 ʔa baleʔ, da pənat
 PAR return COMPL tired
 C – “(When we) return, (we'll) already (be) tired.”

- (72) balek balek, bawa
 bale? bale?, bawa?
 return return bring
 ‘(They) returned (home), bringing (the egg).’
- (73) bow sə=botey, ay lapa e
 bow sə=botey, ?ay lapa e
 bring one- CLF:ROUND 2 hungry PAR
 F – “Bring one piece, you are hungry right?”
- (74) neŋkay, ay dapat anak, neŋkay
 deŋkay, ?ay dapat ana?, neŋkay
 ENDEAR 2 get what ENDEAR
 M – “My dear, what did you get, my dear?”
- (75) ncak dapat anak diə
 nca? dapat ana? diə?
 NEG get what PAR
 F – “(We) didn’t get anything.”
- (76) abis, ay tak jumpa anak e
 abe, ?ay ta? jumpə ana? e
 finish 2 NEG meet what PAR
 M – “Then, you didn’t encounter anything?”
- (77) mamak, am jumpa təlow, duə otey
 mama?, ?am jumpə təlow, du^{wə} otey
 mother 1SG meet egg two CLF:ROUND
 C – “Mother, I encountered eggs, two of them.”
- (78) am ami sə=botey mak
 ?am mayi? sə=botey ma?
 1SG take one- CLF:ROUND mother
 C – “I took one piece, Mother.”
- (79) tiŋgəl anoyo sə=botey
 tiŋgəl anoyo sə=botey
 leave.behind FIL one- CLF:ROUND
 C – “(I) left... one piece.”
- (80) təlow jə telow anak
 təlow jə təlow ana?
 egg that egg what
 M – “What egg is that?”
- (81) ntah... təlow ular gaŋ
 ntah... təlow ulay gaŋ
 don’t.know egg snake PAR
 C – “I don’t know, (it) might be a snake’s egg.”

- (82) təlow ular gaŋ bəsal ka mak
 təlow ulay gaŋ bəsal ka ma?
 egg snake PAR big PAR:Q mother
 C – “Snake eggs are big, right, Mother?”
- (83) təlow ular
 təlow ulay
 egg snake
 C – “(It’s) a snake egg.”
- (84) am bəkər la mak
 ʔam bəkəy la ma?
 1SG burn PAR mother
 C – “I am (going to) cook it, Mother.”
- (85) bəkər puŋa bəkər... bəkər
 bəkəy puŋə bəkəy... bəkəy
 burn PAR burn burn
 ‘It burned (cooked) and burned’
- (86) ŋə yaŋ tadi tak masak mak
 ŋə yaŋ tadi ta? masa? ma?
 why REL just.now NEG cook mother
 C – “Why did the one just now not cooked (through), Mother?”
- (87) yaŋ tadi ncak masak, yaŋ tadi
 yaŋ tadi ca? masa?, yaŋ tadi
 REL just.now NEG cooked REL just.now
 C – “The one just now is not cooked, the one just now.”
- (88) dəkət duə jum, təlow~təlow bəkər~bəkər puŋa bəkər
 dəkət du^{wə} jum, təlow~ təlow bəkəy~bəkəy puŋə bəkəy
 near two hour egg~PL burn~REP PAR burn
 ‘(For) nearly two hours, the egg burned on, the egg burned on thoroughly.’
- (89) bila da bəkər de a təlow jə
 bila da bəkəy de? a təlow jə?
 when COMPL burn PAR PAR egg that
 ‘When the egg is cooked,’ / (lit. ‘When (it) is already cooked, the egg’)
- (90) rasa, ŋa kətək
 ɣasa, ŋa kətə?
 feel 3 crack.against.surface
 ‘(he) feels (the egg) and he cracks (it).’
- (91) bəlom masak lagi
 bəlom masa? lagi
 not.yet cooked again
 ‘(The egg) is not cooked yet.’

- (92) da masak
da masa?
COMPL cooked
'(When the egg) is cooked,'
- (93) o təlow da masak
o təlow da masa?
INTRJ egg COMPL cooked
C – "Oh, the egg is cooked."
- (94) ay nak man tidak
ʔay naʔ man tidəʔ
2 want eat NEG
M – "You want to eat (it) or not?"
- (95) ay nak man, tapi təlow jə ntah təlow anak
ʔay naʔ man, tapi təlow jə ntah təlow anaʔ
2 want eat but egg that don't.know egg what
M – "You want to eat (it) but that egg, (you) don't know what (type of) egg (it is)."
- (96) bila da makan
bila da makan
when COMPL eat
'When (he is) done eating,'
- (97) sə=pawo ka... sə=pawo am man, sə=pawo am ncak man
sə=pawo kaʔ... sə=pawo ʔam man, sə=pawo ʔam ncaʔ man
one=half this one=half 1SG eat one=half 1SG NEG eat
C – "Half of this... Half (of it) I ate, half (of it) I didn't eat."
- (98) tapi təlow ka am man bənak
tapi təlow ka ʔam man bənaʔ
but egg this 1SG eat many
C – "But this egg, I ate a lot (of it)."
- (99) amat bəsal
ʔamat bəsaL
very big
C – "(This egg) is very big,"
- (100) tapi man mwak
tapi man mwaʔ
but eat quesy
C – "but eating (it makes me) quesy."
- (101) takpa takpa, tiŋgəl la buam jə
taʔpə taʔpə, tiŋgəl la bwam jəʔ
never.mind never.mind leave.behind PAR thing that
M – "Never mind, never mind, leave that thing."

(102) dalam esok
dalam esə?
in tomorrow
'In the next day,'

(103) nok na maken panas, maken panas
no? na? maken panas, maken panas
body 3 increasingly hot increasingly hot
'his body (became) hotter and hotter, hotter and hotter.'

(104) nok na maken panas, nak məni, nak məni
no? na? maken panas, na? məni?, na? məni?
body 3 increasingly hot want bathe want bathe
'His body became hotter and hotter, (he) wanted to bathe (in water), (he) wanted to bathe (in water).'

(105) məni
məni?
bathe
'He bathed'

(106) pak na ikat pawu dəkət luar, də laot jə
pa? na ekat pawu? dəkət lway, də lot jə
father 3 tie boat at outside at sea that
'His father tied the boat outside, at the sea,'

(107) dəkət pancan kayu jə
dəkət pancan kayu yə
at stake wood that
'at the wooden stake.'

(108) abis jə, balek
abi jə, bale?
finish that return
'After that, he returned home'

(109) ηə ay tam məni=na
ηə ?ay tam məni?=na?
why 2 always bathe=EMPH
M – "Why do you keep bathing?"

(110) ntah mak, nok am panas
ntah ma?, no? ?am panas
don't.know mother body 1SG hot
C – "I don't know, Mother. My body is hot."

(111) ntah mana
ntah manə
don't.know why
C – "I don't know why."

(112) məni lagi
 məni? lagi?
 bathe again
 ‘(He went) to bathe again.’

(113) maken sə=bulən, maken sə=bulən
 maken sə=bulən, maken sə=bulən
 increasingly onemonth increasingly one=month
 ‘Month after month,’

(114) da tiga bulən
 da tigə bulən
 COMPL three month
 ‘(it has) already (been) three months (since the incident).’

(115) nok am panas, mak
 no? ?am panas, ma?
 body 1SG hot mother
 C – “My body is hot, Mother.”

(116) am nak tidu dəkət laot, nak tidu laot
 ?am na? tidu dəkət lot, na? tidu lot
 1SG want sleep at sea, want sleep sea
 C – “I want to sleep in the sea. (I) want to sleep (at) sea.”

(117) səbap nok am panas, ye diə
 səbap no? ?am panas, ye diə
 because body 1SG hot he/she say
 C – “because my body is hot,” he said.

(118) ηayu panas, bənak am man anu te, man təlow anu te
 ηayu panas, bəna? ?am man anu te, man təlow anu te
 why hot many 1SG eat FIL PAR eat egg what PAR
 C – “Why (am I) hot? I ate a lot of the... ate the don’t-know-what egg.”

(119) ntah təlow apa ay man, mak ja mada
 ntah təlow apa? ?ay man, ma? ja madə
 don’t.know egg what 2 eat mother 3 EVENT: say
 M – “Without knowing what egg (it was), you ate (it)”, his mother said.

(120) tahu man aja
 taw man ajə?
 know eat only
 M – “(You) only know to eat.” (i.e. ‘you only care about eating’)

(121) abis jə
 abe jə?
 finish that
 ‘After that,’

- (122) *baŋak teŋok ɲa tidu dəkət laot*
mɔnaʔ teŋoʔ ɲaʔ tidu dəkət la^wot
 many see 3 sleep at sea
 ‘a lot (of the times you would) see him sleeping in the sea.’
- (123) *bənəm mənɪ lagi*
bənəm, mənɪʔ lagiʔ
 immerse.in.water bathe again
 ‘(He) was immersed in water, (and) was bathing again.’
- (124) *nak kə dat, bənəm lagi*
naʔ kə dat, bənəm lagiʔ
 want to land immerse.in.water again
 ‘(When he) wanted to (go) on land, (he) would immerse in water again.’
- (125) *tidu kə ruma dəkət bot*
tidu kə uma dəkət bot
 sleep to house near boat
 M – “Go sleep in the house near the boats.”
- (126) *ruma jə baŋsan*
ʔuma jə baŋsan
 house that cold
 M – “The house is cool.”
- (127) *nada la, mak, panas*
nadaʔ la, maʔ, panas
 NEG.able PAR mother hot
 C – “I can’t, Mother, (it is) hot.”
- (128) *tun kə laot lagi*
tun kə la^wot lagi
 descend to sea again
 ‘He descended into the sea again.’
- (129) *da tiga bulən*
da tigə bulən
 COMPL three month
 ‘(It had) already been three months,’
- (130) *tu bə-sisik*
tu bə-sisiʔ
 that STV-scale
 ‘he had been (in a state of) scaling.’
- (131) *ɲok ɲa da bə-sisik*
ɲoʔ ɲa da bə-sisiʔ
 body 3 COMPL STV-scale
 ‘His body had already been scaling.’

- (132) *ɲok ay iŋat bə-sisik, ɲa*
ɲoʔ ʔay iŋat bə-sisiʔ ɲaʔ
 body 2 think STV -scale why
 M – “Your body, (I) think (it is) scaling, why (is that)?”
- (133) *ɲə kulet ɲok ay jadi macam kulet~kulet*
ɲə kulet ɲoʔ ʔay jedi macam kulet~kulet
 why skin body 2 become like skin-PL
 M – “Why is the skin on your body becoming like patches of skin?”
- (134) *ɲə biyu ɲə mata ay ɲə biyu ɲə*
ɲə biyu ɲə, mata ʔay ɲa biyu ɲə
 why blue why eye 2 why blue PAR
 M – “Why are (they) blue, why? Your eyes, why are (they) blue, why?”
- (135) *ntah mak*
ntah maʔ
 don't.know mother
 C – “I don't know, Mother.”
- (136) *am man təlow jə bute*
ʔam man təlow jə buteʔ
 1SG eat egg that that.day
 C – “I ate the egg that day.”
- (137) *ɲok am rasa panas*
ɲoʔ ʔam ʔəsaʔ panas
 body 1SG feel hot
 C – “My body feels hot.”
- (138) *am ncak... kalaw am dəkət sika, ɲok am panas*
ʔam ncaʔ... kalaw ʔam dəkət sikaʔ, ɲoʔ ʔam panas
 1SG NEG if 1SG at here body 1SG hot
 C – “I don't... If I am here my body is hot.”
- (139) *kə dam laot, am ncak panas*
kə dam lot, ʔam ncaʔ panas
 to inside sea 1SG NEG hot
 C – “Into the sea, I am not hot.”
- (140) *maken tiga bulən*
maken tigə bulən
 increasingly three month
 ‘After three more months,’
- (141) *bapak teŋok... ɲə kupala e ada tandok ɲə*
bapaʔ teŋoʔ... ɲə kupala e ʔadə tandoʔ ɲəʔ
 many see why head PAR EXIST horn why
 ‘A lot (of the times you would) see... Why does (his) head have horns? Why?’

- (142) da ada tandok jadi
da adə tano? jadi
COMPL EXIST horn become
‘There were already horns formed.’
- (143) da jadi tandok
da jadi tando?
COMPL become horn
‘The horns had formed.’ (lit: ‘already formed, the horns’)
- (144) eh ay ka macam anu macam naga
eh ʔay ka macam anu macam nagə?
INTRJ 2 this like FIL like dragon
M – “Eh, you here are like what-you-call-it... like a dragon.”
- (145) a jadi naga
ʔa jedi nagə?
PAR become dragon
M – “You became a dragon.”
- (146) mak ja... mak ja mə-rasa sədəh
ma? ja... ma? ja mə-ʔasə sədəh
mother 3 mother 3 EVENT-feel sad
‘His mother... his mother was feeling sad.’
- (147) jəmpi~jəmpi, wak ja jəmpi, səmun jəmpi
jəmpi?~jəmpi?, wa? ja jəmpi?, səmun jəmpi?
cast.spell~REP uncle/aunt 3 cast.spell all cast.spell
‘(They started) casting spells... his uncles and aunts cast spells, all of them cast spells.’
- (148) bila jəmpi... tapi ncak kuaŋ ayu
bila? jəmpi?... tapi nca? ku.aŋ ayu
when cast.spell but NEG lack PAR
‘When (they) cast spells... but (they) did not lessen (his symptoms/features).’
- (149) kulet jə maken tumbu, maken~maken baŋak
kulet jə maken tumbu, maken~maken baŋa?
skin that increasingly grow increasingly~EMPH many
‘The skin (scales) grew and grew, becoming more and more.’
- (150) kaki maken kəcit
kaki maken kəcit
feet increasingly small
‘The feet got smaller and smaller.’
- (151) kokot pun maken kəcit
kokot pun maken kəcit
hand PAR increasingly small
‘The hands also got smaller and smaller.’

- (152) bila kəcit
 bila kəcit
 when small
 ‘When (he) was small (in size),’
- (153) mak, am akan dudok dəkət laot
 maʔ, ʔam akan dudoʔ dəkət la^wot
 mother 1SG FUT live at sea
 C – “Mother, I will live at sea.”
- (154) səbap am talada dudok data
 səbap ʔam təladə dudoʔ dat
 because 1SG NEG.able live land
 C – “Because I cannot live on land.”
- (155) səbap anak
 səbap ʔanaʔ
 because what
 C – “Because of what?”
- (156) jok am kalaw dəkət lot jok am anu... am sənaŋ ye diə
 joʔ ʔam kalaw dəkət lot joʔ ʔam anu... ʔam sənaŋ ye diə
 body 1SG if at sea body 1SG FIL 1SG easy he/she say
 C – “My body, if at sea, my body... I am at ease,” he said.
- (157) tak tahu la mak
 taʔ taw la maʔ
 NEG know PAR mother
 C – “I don’t know, Mother!”
- (158) maken s=ayi, tandok da bəsal
 maken s=ayiʔ, tandoʔ da bəsaL
 increasingly one=day horn COMPL big
 ‘Day by day, the horns had already grown big.’
- (159) maken s=ayi, muka ka
 maken s= ayiʔ, mukə kaʔ...
 increasingly one=day face this
 ‘Day by day, this face...’
- (160) muka ay maken laen=na, mak na mada muka ay
 mukə ʔay maken laen=na, maʔ na madə, mukə ʔay
 face 2 increasingly other=EMPH mother 3 EVENT: say face 2
 M – “Your face is increasingly becoming more and more different,” his mother said. “Your face,”
- (161) maken buŋkoh
 maken buŋkoh
 increasingly swollen
 ‘(His face) became more and more swollen.’

- (162) bila buᅇkoh da... buᅇkoh muka ay macam ular ye diə
 bilə buᅇkoh da... buᅇkoh muka ʔay macam ulay ye diə
 when swollen COMPL swollen face 2 like snake he/she say
 ‘When (it) was already swollen... M - “Your swollen face is like a snake,” she said.’
- (163) maken kəcit
 maken kəcit
 increasingly small
 ‘(He) was getting smaller and smaller.’
- (164) kaki maken kəcit, panjaᅇ
 kakiʔ maken kəcit, panjaᅇ
 feet increasingly small long
 ‘The feet got smaller and smaller, and longer.’
- (165) biyu, ɲok ay biyu
 biyuʔ, ɲoʔ ʔay biyuʔ
 blue body 2 blue
 M – “Blue, your body is blue.”
- (166) ikat... məɲi
 ikat... məɲiʔ
 tie bathe
 ‘(they) tied (him) up... (he) went to bathe (in water).’
- (167) məɲi... suda məɲi, mak ɲa mada
 məɲiʔ... sudə məɲiʔ, maʔ ɲa madə
 bathe enough bathe mother 3 EVENT: say
 ‘He bathed... “Enough bathing,” his mother said.’
- (168) mak, am nak kə laot
 maʔ, ʔam naʔ kə laʷot
 mother 1SG want to sea
 C – “Mother, I want to (go) to the sea.”
- (169) kami akan jaga laot, muᅇkin kami akan... ncaᅇ dəkət ay di
 kamiʔ ʔakan jegəʔ laʷot, muᅇkin kamiʔ ʔakan...ncaʔ dəkət ʔay diʔ
 1SG FUT take.care sea maybe 1SG FUT NEG near 2 PAR
 C – “I will take care of the sea, maybe I will... not be near you.”
- (170) ɲa pada sən jə
 ɲa padə sən jəʔ
 3 say like that
 ‘He said like that.’
- (171) səbap anak
 səbap anaʔ,
 because what
 C – “Because of what?”

(172) nok am... dəkət laot am sənəŋ, pada kami
 no? ?am... dəkət la^wot ?am sənəŋ, padə kami?
 body 1SG at sea 1SG easy for 1SG
 C – “My body... at sea I am at ease, for me.”

(173) am akan ncak balek... am akan ncak balek ka de” ye diə
 ?am akan nca? bale?... ?am akan nca? bale? ka de?” ye diə
 1SG FUT NEG return 1SG FUT NEG return here PAR he/she say
 C – “I will not return... I will not return here,” he said.

(174) am jaga laot ɲa pada
 ?am jegə la^wot ɲa padə
 1SG take.care sea 3 say
 C – “I (will) take care of the sea,” he said.

(175) am akan but suŋay ɲa pada
 ?am akan but suŋay ɲa padə
 1SG FUT make river 3 say
 C – “I will make rivers,” he said.

(176) maken s=ayi, maken kəcit
 maken s=ayi?, maken kəcit
 increasingly one=day increasingly small
 ‘Day by day, (he) got smaller and smaller.’

(177) pak ɲa ikat
 pa? ɲa ikat
 father 3 tie
 ‘His father tied (him) up.’

(178) mak ɲa ikat
 ma? ɲa ikat
 mother 3 tie
 ‘His mother tied (him) up.’

(179) ɲa ncak tahan
 ɲa nca? tahan
 3 NEG endure
 ‘He could not endure it.’

(180) nak ikat, ɲa ncak tahan
 na? ikat, ɲa nca? tahan
 want tie 3 NEG endure
 ‘(They) wanted to tie (him), he could not endure (it).’

(181) abis jə
 abi jə
 finish that
 ‘After that,’

(182) anak na kəsian, anak na nak bənaŋ~bənaŋ na kəsian
 ana? nə kəsian, ana? na na? bənaŋ~bənaŋ, na kəsian
 child 3 pitiful child 3 want swim~REP 3 pitiful
 ‘their child was pitiful. Their child wanted to swim and swim. He was pitiful.’

(183) abis jə, na da ikat, da ikat~ikat
 abe jə, na da ikat, da ikat~ikat
 finish that 3 COMPL tie COMPL tie~EMPH
 ‘After that, they already tied (him) up, tied thoroughly.’

(184) lama, bapak na, mak na kəsian
 lama?, bapa? nə? ma? nə kəsian
 long(time) father 3 mother 3 pitiful
 ‘After a while, his father and mother felt sorry (for him).’

(185) mak na taŋgəl
 ma? na taŋgəl
 mother 3 take.off
 ‘His mother took off (the ropes).’

(186) maken s=ayi maken panjaŋ... panjaŋ
 maken s=ayi? maken panjaŋ... panjaŋ
 increasingly one=day increasingly long long
 ‘Day by day, (he) got longer and longer.’

(187) da masok əmpat bulən
 da maso? mpat bulən
 COMPL enter four month
 ‘(They had) already entered the fourth month (after the incident).’

(188) da... muka da laen
 da... muka? da laen
 COMPL face COMPL other
 ‘Already... his face was already different.’

(189) da laen, mak na naŋes, naŋes~naŋes
 da laen, ma? na naŋes, naŋes~naŋes
 COMPL other mother 3 cry cry~REP
 ‘(His face) was already different. His mother cried, cried and cried.’

(190) bila naŋes, pak na toloŋ jəmpi
 bila naŋe, pa? na toloŋ jəmpi?
 when cry father 3 help cast.spell
 ‘When (she) cried, his father helped to cast spells (on him).’

(191) a wak na pun toloŋ jəmpi
 ?a wa? na pun toloŋ jəmpi?
 PAR uncle/aunt 3 PAR help cast.spell
 ‘His relatives also helped to cast spells.’

(192) kətək~kətək~kətək jəmpi~jəmpi pawaŋ
 kətəʔ~kətəʔ~kətəʔ jəmpi~jəmpiʔ pawaŋ
 crack.against.surface~REP~REP cast.spell~REP shaman
 ‘(with) the knocking and knocking, casting and casting spells of the shaman.’

(193) ncak... tak bole buat apa
 ncaʔ... taʔ bole bwa apaʔ
 NEG NEG able do what
 ‘No... (they) couldn’t do anything.’

(194) abis jə baŋak pun naŋes~naŋes~naŋes
 abi jə baŋaʔ mun naŋes~naŋes~naŋes
 finish that many PAR cry~REP~REP
 ‘After that, many (of them) also cried and cried.’

(195) da masa dam aəl... masa da dəkət ʎa pada
 da masə dam aəl... masə da dəkət ʎa padə
 COMPL time in water time COMPL near 3 say
 C – “Already, the time in the water... the time is already near,” he said.

(196) kami akan ncak dudok dəŋan ay di
 kamiʔ ʔakan ncaʔ dudoʔ dəŋan ʔay diʔ
 1SG FUT NEG live with 2 PAR
 C – “I will not live with you.”

(197) kami akan kə laot
 kamiʔ akan kə la^wot
 1SG FUT to sea
 C – “I will (go) to the sea.”

(198) kami jaga laot, mak ye diə
 kamiʔ jegə la^wot, maʔ ye diə
 1SG take.care sea mother he/she.say
 C – “I (will) take care of the sea, Mother,” he said.

(199) mak ʎa pada ay usa pəgi
 maʔ ʎa padə ay ʔusaʔ pəgi
 mother 3 say 2 IMP.NEG go
 ‘His mother said, “You don’t go!”’

(200) ncak, am tak bole... talada dudok dəŋan ay di
 ncaʔ, ʔam taʔ bole... taladə dudoʔ dəŋan ay diʔ
 NEG 1SG NEG able NEG.able live with 2 PAR
 C – “No. I can’t... cannot live with you.”

(201) səbap anak, ʎok am da laen
 səbap anaʔ, ʎoʔ ʔam da laen
 because what body 1SG COMPL other
 C – “Because of what? My body is already different.”

- (202) da bə-sisik
da bə-sisi?
COMPL STV-scale
C – “(it is) already (in a state of) scaling.”
- (203) nok am da... tejok, maken s=yi, ay bia kami
no? ?am da... tejo?, maken s=ayi?, ?ay biə kami?
body 1SG COMPL see increasingly one=day 2 neglect 1SG
C – “My body is... look, day by day, you neglect me.”
- (204) ay ikat kami
?ay ikat kami?
2 tie 1SG
C – “You tie me up.”
- (205) nok am maken laen ye diə
no? ?am maken laen ye diə
body 1SG increasingly other he/she say
C – “My body is (becoming) more and more different,” he said.
- (206) lama~lama, tejok bajak da... muka maken... da nca? muka di
lama~lama?, tejo? manja? da... muka? maken... da nca? muka di?
long(time)~ADV see many COMPL face increasingly COMPL NEG face PAR
‘After a while, (you would) see a lot (of the times)... that the face is already increasingly... already not a face.’
- (207) ŋə muka ay maken anu ŋə maken panjaŋ...
ŋə mukə ay maken anu ŋə maken panjaŋ...
why face 2 increasingly FIL why increasingly long
M – “Why is your face getting... why is (it) longer and longer?”
- (208) o nok ka pun panjaŋ, ka pun da jadi tandok
o no? ka pun panjaŋ, ka pun da jedi tando?
INTRJ body this PAR long this PAR COMPL become horn
M – “Oh, this body is also getting longer, this (points to head) also has horns formed.”
- (209) mak ja naŋes aja, mak ja
ma? ja naŋes ajə, ma? ja
mother 3 cry only mother 3
‘His mother (could) only cry, his mother.’
- (210) mak ja tak bole buat apa
ma? ja ta? bole bwa apa?
mother 3 NEG able do what
‘His mother could not do anything.’
- (211) wak ja pun tak bole buat apa
wa? ja mun ta? bole bwa apa?
uncle/aunt 3 PAR NEG able do what
‘His relatives also could not do anything.’

(212) jəmpi~jəmpi pun tak bole buat apa
 jəmpi~jəmpi pun taʔ bole bwa apaʔ
 cast.spell~REP PAR NEG able do what
 ‘Casting spells also could not do anything.’

(213) lalas
 lalas
 last.last
 ‘In the end,’

(214) satu ayi, ʒa pada, mak
 satu ayiʔ, ʒa padə, maʔ
 one day 3 say mother
 ‘One day, he said, “Mother,”’

(215) ləpas la kami
 ləpas la kamiʔ
 release PAR 1SG
 C – “Release me.”

(216) bi kami kə laot
 bi kamiʔ kə laʷot
 give 1SG to sea
 C – “Let me (go) to the sea.”

(217) kami da... talada dudok sika, panas ʒa pada
 kamiʔ da... taladə dudoʔ sikaʔ, panas ʒa padə
 1SG COMPL NEG.able live here hot 3 say
 C – “I am already... not able to live here. (It’s) hot,” he said.

(218) ʒok am... ʒok am panas, talada kəna təpi de, am nak
 ʒoʔ ʔam... ʒoʔ ʔam panas, taladə kəna təpi deʔ, ʔam naʔ
 body 1SG body 1SG hot NEG.able have.to side PAR 1SG want

kə laot
 kə laʷot
 to sea

C – “My body... my body is hot, (I) cannot be forced (to stay) on the side, I want to (go) to the sea.”

(219) pak ʒa ikat dəŋan tali... tali
 paʔ ʒa ikat dəŋan taliʔ... taliʔ
 father 3 tie with rope rope
 ‘His father tied (him) with rope... with rope.’

(220) tak bole ada juga
 taʔ bole adə jugə
 NEG able EXIST also
 ‘That didn’t do it too.’ (lit. ‘That couldn’t have/exist also’)

(221) ʒa ʒəmpas~ʒəmpas juga
 ʒa ʒəmpas~ʒəmpas jugə

3 EVENT:throw/slam.against.surface~REP also
 ‘He was still struggling.’

(222) na nak kə laot
 na naʔ kə laʷot
 3 want to sea
 ‘He wanted to (go) to the sea.’

(223) lama~lama
 lamə~lamə
 long(time)~ADV
 ‘After a while,’

(224) muka jə de da abis jadi
 mukaʔ jə deʔ da abis jedi
 face that PAR COMPL finish become
 ‘the face had finished forming.’

(225) səmun da jadi
 səmun da jedi
 all COMPL become
 ‘All (of it) had formed.’

(226) da abis... səmun da jadi
 da abis... səmun da jedi
 COMPL finish all COMPL become
 ‘(It was) finished... all (of it) had formed.’

(227) bila da jadi, da panjaŋ, baw pak na pada baw na
 bila da jedi, da panjaŋ, baw paʔ naʔ padə baw na
 when COMPL become COMPL long only.then father 3 say only.then 3

tahu
 taw
 know

‘When (he) finished changing, already became longer, only then his father said, only then did he know,’

(228) ay man təlow jə de upəna kəna sumpah
 ʔay man təlow jə deʔ upənaʔ kənə sumpah
 2 eat egg that PAR apparently get curse
 F – “You ate that egg! Apparently (you) got cursed.”

(229) Sumpah bənataŋ jə
 sumpah bənataŋ yə
 curse animal that
 F – “The curse of that animal.” / “cursed by the animal.”

(230) abis jə pak na mada
 abi jə paʔ na madə
 finish that father 3 EVENT: say

‘After that, his father said,’

(231) ekot gaya ay man naŋ ka te, upaŋa ay jadi
 ikot gaya ʔay man naŋ ka te, upəŋə ay jedi
 follow behaviour 2 eat REL this PAR apparently 2 become

naga... ay, ɲa padə
 nagəʔ... ʔay, ɲa padə
 dragon 2 3 say

F – “Based on/from (your) behaviour, you ate this one, apparently you became a dragon...you,” he said.

(232) am ləpas ay la e
 ʔam ləpas ʔay la e
 1SG release 2 PAR PAR

F – “I release you.”

(233) pak, ləpas kami, pak
 paʔ, ləpas kamiʔ, paʔ
 father release 1SG father

C – “Father, release me, Father.”

(234) kami akan kə laot, jaga sunjay, but apa, ɲa pada
 kamiʔ ʔakan kə laʷot, jegə sunjay, but apaʔ, ɲa padə
 1SG FUT to sea take.care river make what 3 say

C – “I will (go) to the sea, take care of the rivers, do whatever,” he said.

(235) sən jə, pak ɲa ləpas
 sən jəʔ, paʔ ɲa ləpas
 like that father 3 release

‘Like so his father released (him).’

(236) ləpas ɲa balek
 ləpas ɲə baleʔ...
 release 3 return

‘(They) released him, (he) returned...’

(237) ləpas ɲa, balek... balek lagi
 ləpas ɲə, baleʔ... baleʔ lagi
 release 3 return return again

‘(They) released him, (he) returned... returned again.’

(238) a abis... pəgi kə laot lagi, dia balek lagi
 ʔa ʔabi... pəgi kə laʷot lagi, diə baleʔ lagi
 PAR finish go to sea again 3SG(M) return again

‘Then... (he) went to the sea again, (and) he returned again.’

(239) tiga ayi, ɲa balek
 tigə ayiʔ, ɲa baleʔ
 three day 3 return

‘(For) three days, he returned.’

(240) tiga ayi
 tigə ayi?
 three day
 ‘Three days.’

(241) lalas
 lalas
 last.last
 ‘In the end,’

(242) dalam sə=mingu, ɲa ncak balek
 dalam sə=mingu?, ɲa nca? bale?
 in one=week 3 NEG return
 ‘In a week’s time, he did not return.’

(243) dalam sə=mingu, dia tak balek lagi, mak dia tak bole
 dalam sə=mingu?, diə ta? bale? lagi, ma? diə ta? bole
 in one=week 3SG(M) NEG return again mother 3SG(M) NEG able
 buat apa
 bwa apa?
 do what
 ‘In a week’s time, he did not return again, his mother could not do anything’

(244) mak ɲa tak bole buat apa de
 ma? ɲa ta? bole bwa apa? de?
 mother 3 NEG able do what PAR
 ‘His mother could not do anything.’

(245) bapak naŋes~naŋes tapi buat apa
 bapa? naŋes~naŋes tapi bwa apa?
 many cry~REP but do what
 ‘(She) cried and cried a lot, but for what?’

(246) lama~lama jə, trus kə laot
 lamə~lamə yə, trus kə la^wot
 long(time)~ADV that straight to sea
 ‘After a while (after) that, (she went) straight to the sea.’

(247) mak ɲa bila kə laot, cita ka
 ma? ɲa?, bila kə la^wot, cita? ka?
 mother 3 when to sea tell.story this
 ‘His mother, when (she went) to the sea, told this:’

(248) ɲa pada,
 ɲa? padə,
 3 say
 ‘She said,’

(249) len kali, sapa~sapa jambak... anak~anak kita, pəgi utan,
 len kali, sapa?~sapa? jamba?... ?ana?~ana? kita?, pəgi utan,

other time who~INDET bunch child~PL 1PL go forest

pəgi mana
pəgi mana
go where

M – “Next time, whoever of you bunch... (whichever of) our children go to the forest, go wherever,”

(250) bənatəŋ apa
bənatəŋ apa?
animal what

M – “(encounter) whatever kinds of animal,”

(251) bənda yaŋ ncak kita tahu, jaŋan la kita man-man
bənda? yaŋ nca? kita? tahu, jaŋan la kita? man~man
thing REL NEG 1PL know IMP.NEG PAR 1PL eat~REP

M – “things that we do not know of, do not eat recklessly.”

(252) ikat sumpah naŋ kita tidak tahu, ye diə
ikat sumpah naŋ kita tida? tahu ye diə
tie curse REL 1PL NEG know he/she say

M – “(We might get) tied to curses that we do not know about.”

(253) səkian, sampay sika
səkyan, sampay sika?
that.is.all reach here

‘That is all. Until here (the story ends).’

***Mak Pacat* ‘Mother of Leeches’**

L tells another story about a husband and wife who encountered a baby while looking for tamarinds in the forest. The baby exhibits some strange behaviour while the wife breastfeeds it. Turns out, the baby is a leech being that sucks the blood of humans. The characters of the story are the husband and wife, and their siblings. The story consists of both narration and dialogue. The identities of the speakers are tagged with H (husband), W (wife), and S (siblings).

(1) neŋkay, neŋkay, kəmak
neŋkay, neŋkay, kəma?
ENDEAR ENDEAR go.where

W – “My dear...my dear, where are (you/we) going?”

(2) kita cayi asam
kita ci ?asam
1PL find tamarind

H – “We are going to look for tamarinds.”

(3) dəmak kita cayi asam e
dəma? kita ci? ?asam e
at.where 1PL find tamarind PAR

W – “Where are we looking for tamarinds?”

- (4) tu, təmpat kita bute
 tu, təmpat kita bute
 that place 1PL that.day
 H – “There, (at) that place we (went) that day.”
- (5) a ala la, cayi asam
 ?a ?ala la, ci ?asam
 PAR able PAR find tamarinds
 W – “Sure, (we will) look for tamarinds.”
- (6) kalaw kita cayi asam, kita bow balek
 kalaw kita ci ?asam, kita bow bale?
 if 1PL find tamarinds 1PL bring return
 W – “If we find tamarinds, we’ll bring them back.”
- (7) a jan e
 ?a jan e
 PAR walk PAR
 H – “(Let’s) go.”
- (8) kon len ncak ekot a
 kon len nca? ekot a
 Seletar.people other NEG follow PAR
 W – “The other people are not joining/following (us)?”
- (9) takpaya la
 ta?paya la
 NEG.need PAR
 H – “No need.” (*paya* is ‘troublesome’)
- (10) kita ncak kon ekot kali ini aja la
 kita nca? kon ekot kali ?ini ajə la
 1PL NEG Seletar.people follow time this only PAR
 H – “We don’t need people to follow (us) just this time.”
- (11) jaga anak ja
 jagə ana? jə
 take.care child only
 H – “(They) will just take care of the children”
- (12) a jan
 ?a jan
 PAR walk
 H – “(Let’s) go.”
- (13) jan jan jan jan jan təbus
 jan jan jan jan jan təbus
 walk walk walk walk walk pierce.through
 ‘(They) walked and walked, straight into (the forest).’

(14) ada təbus
 adə təbus
 PFV pierce.through
 ‘(They) managed to go straight (into the forest).’

(15) kayu... juh ada kayu jə
 kayu... juh adə kayu yə
 tree far EXIST free that’
 H – “Tree... in the distance there’s the tree.”

(16) usa laŋkah kayu jə, a
 usa laŋkah kayu yə, ʔa
 IMP.NEG step tree that PAR
 H – “Don’t step on the tree.”
 (Orang Seletar belief tells that one cannot go under a fallen tree, one must cut it, or else one will lose your way in the forest and not be able to return home. Either one cuts the tree or avoids the tree)

(17) kəat kayu jə, kəat
 kəat kayu yə, kəat
 cut tree that cut
 H – “Cut the tree, cut (it).”

(18) usa mana masok di
 usa manə masoʔ diʔ
 IMP.NEG where enter PAR
 H – “Don’t enter anywhere (under the tree).”

(19) kəat
 kəat
 cut
 ‘(They) cut (the tree).’

(20) bila ɲa kəat... da kəat
 bila ɲa kəat... da kəat
 when 3 cut COMPL cut
 ‘When they cut (it)... already cut (it),’

(21) am bukən nak...
 ʔam bukən naʔ...
 1SG NEG want
 H – “I don’t want to...” (he prays to the spirits)

(22) a kami... masok kə anu dalam utan ka, am bukən cayi apa
 ʔa kamiʔ.. masoʔ kə anə dalam utan kaʔ, ʔam bukən ceyi apaʔ
 PAR 1SG enter to FIL inside forest this 1SG NEG find what
 H – “I enter to... into this forest, I am not here to look for whatever.”

(23) kami tak nak cayi apa
 kami taʔ naʔ ceyi apaʔ
 1SG NEG want find what
 H – “I do not want to look for whatever.”

- (24) am minta bənda kat juh aja
 ʔam mintaʔ bəndə kat juh ajə
 1SG ask thing at far only
 H – “I ask for the thing in the distance only.” (i.e. the tamarind)
- (25) elak la
 elaʔ la
 avoid PAR
 H – “Avoid (bad things) (if we can help it).”
- (26) a supaya kami, bini ka... lindoŋ kami
 ʔa supaya kamiʔ, bini kaʔ... lindoŋ kamiʔ
 PAR so.that 1SG wife this protect 1PL.EXCL
 H – “(I ask) so I and my wife here... (you will) protect us.”
- (27) am nak pəgi cayi asam
 ʔam naʔ pəgi ceyi ʔasam
 1SG want go find tamarind
 H – “I want to go look for tamarinds.”
- (28) kita la... maken kə dam maken juh
 kita laʔ... maken kə dam maken juh
 1PL PAR increasingly to inside increasingly far
 W – “We *stumbles*... are (going) deeper and farther (into the forest).”
- (29) takpa la
 taʔpə la
 never.mind PAR
 H – “Never mind.”
- (30) juh, tapi buah asam ʔa bəpak situ, bataŋ asam
 juh, tapi bwah asam ʔaʔ bəpaʔ situʔ, bataŋ ʔasam
 far but fruit tamarind 3 many there tree tamarind
 H – “(It is) far, but the tamarind fruits, they are abundant there, the tamarind trees.”
- (31) juh bəpak buah
 juh bəpaʔ bwəh
 far many fruit
 H – “In the distance (there are) many fruits.”
- (32) a jan
 ʔa jan
 PAR walk
 H – “(Let’s) go.”
- (33) talada
 təladəʔ
 NEG.able
 W – “I cannot.”

- (34) asam pute kan muda
 ʔasam pute kan mudəʔ
 tamarind white PAR young
 W – “The white tamarinds are unripe.”
- (35) keŋ ɲa da masak a gaŋ
 keŋ ɲə da masaʔ ʔa gaŋ
 now 3 COMPL ripe PAR PAR
 H – “Now they are already ripe (I think).”
- (36) a kita pəgi la
 ʔa kita pəgi la
 PAR 1PL go PAR
 H – “We’ll go.”
- (37) jan jan
 jan jan
 walk walk
 ‘(They) walked and walked.’
- (38) masok dalam
 masoʔ dalam
 enter inside
 ‘(They) entered inside (the forest).’
- (39) ɲiap ɲiap
 ɲiap ɲiap
 bird.cries
 ‘(sounds of birds crying)’
- (40) jə... sa buŋ jə
 yə... saʔ buŋ yə
 that sound bird that
 W – “There... the sound of birds.”
- (41) buŋ jə
 buŋ yə
 bird that
 W – “The birds...”
- (42) sa buŋ jə... kadaŋ anu bontuŋ ka apa
 saʔ buŋ yə... kadaŋ ano bontuŋ ka apaʔ
 sound bird that sometimes FIL tiger or what
 W – “The sound of birds...sometimes... (there are) tigers or something.”
- (43) kita bukən nak cayi bontuŋ, kita nak cayi man
 kita bukən naʔ ceyi bontuŋ, kita naʔ ceyi man
 1PL NEG want find tiger 1PL want find eat
 H – “We don’t want to look for tigers, we want to look for food.”

(44) jan jan jan
 jan jan jan
 walk walk walk
 ‘(They) walked and walked.’

(45) jan dəs
 jan dəs
 walk fast
 W – “(You) walk too fast.”

(46) ay jan usa laju amat di
 ?ay jan ?usa laju amat di?
 2 walk IMP.NEG fast very PAR
 W – “Don’t you walk so fast!” (lit. Your walk, don’t be so fast)

(47) a itu bataŋ asam nak dəkət... sampay
 ?a ?itu bataŋ ?asam na? dəkət... sampay
 PAR that tree tamarind IM.FUT near reach
 H – “That tamarind tree, (we are) almost near (it)... reaching (it).”

(48) jan jan jan
 jan jan jan
 walk walk walk
 ‘(They) walked and walked and walked.’

(49) buŋi buŋ baŋak, kiap kiap
 buŋi buŋ baŋa?, kiap kiap
 sound bird many bird.cries
 ‘The sounds of birds were a lot, (going) *kiap kiap*.’

(50) ntah dataŋ ka bontuŋ ka apa
 ntah dataŋ kə bontuŋ kə apa?
 don’t.know come or tiger or what
 ‘(They) don’t know (what was) coming, a tiger or something.’

(51) kita bukən cayi bontuŋ cayi ular
 kita? bukən ceyi bontuŋ ceyi ulay
 1PL NEG find tiger find snake
 H – “We are not looking for tigers or looking for snakes.”

(52) mata ay... bi mata ay jan jə, piŋam linap
 mata ?ay... bi mata ?ay jan yə, piŋam linap
 eye 2 let eye 2 function/work that close.eyes blink
 H – “Your eyes... let your eyes work, close(your) eyes and blink.”

(53) teŋok juh
 teŋo? juh
 see far
 H – “Look in the distance.”

- (54) jan jan
jan jan
walk walk
‘(They) walked and walked.’
- (55) o neŋkay, da dəkət, neŋkay
ʔo neŋkay, da dəkət, neŋkay
INTRJ ENDEAR COMPL near ENDEAR
H – “Oh, my dear, (we) are already near, my dear.”
- (56) a jə, da dəkət, asam jə da dəkət
ʔa jə, da dəkət, ʔasam yə da dəkət
PAR that COMPL near tamarind that COMPL near
H – “There, (we’re) already near. The tamarind is already near.’
- (57) neŋkay, sa adik... sa adik naŋes
deŋkay, saʔ ʔadiʔ... saʔ ʔadiʔ naŋes
ENDEAR sound child sound child cry
W – “My dear, the sound of a child... the sound of a child crying.”
- (58) anak
anaʔ
what
H – “What?”
- (59) ay dəŋə bətəl, mana ada adik naŋes dalam utan
ʔay dəŋə bətəl, mana adə adiʔ naŋes dalam utan
2 hear correct where EXIST child cry inside forest
H – “You listen correctly/carefully. How is there a child crying in the forest?”
- (60) utan ka, mana ada adik
ʔutan ka, mana adə adiʔ
forest this where EXIST child
H – “(In) the forest, how is there a child?”
- (61) ay dəŋə bətəl ya
ʔay dəŋə bətəl ya
2 hear correct PAR
H – “Did you hear it correctly?”
- (62) ay dəŋə sala tidak
ʔay dəŋə sala tidaʔ
2 hear wrong NEG
H – “Did you hear it wrong?”
- (63) sa anu... a sa buŋ ka apa
saʔ ʔanu... ʔa saʔ buŋ ka apaʔ
sound FIL PAR sound bird or what
H – “(It was probably) the sound of don’t-know-what... sound of the bird or something.”

- (64) bukən, ay dəŋə ya
bukən, ʔay dəŋə ya
NEG 2 hear PAR
W – “No, you listen.”
- (65) ah bətɔl, sa adik
ʔah bətɔl, saʔ ʔadiʔ
INTRJ correct sound child
H – “Ah! (You’re) right, (it’s) the sound of a child.”
- (66) dəmak sa adik jə
dəmaʔ saʔ ʔadiʔ jə
at.where sound child that
H – “Where is that sound of the child (coming from)?”
- (67) sa adik jə...
saʔ ʔadiʔ jə...
sound child that
H – “The sound of the child...”
- (68) a dəŋə ɲa de... dəkət ka, dəkət utan ka
ʔa dəŋə ɲə deʔ... dəkət kaʔ, dəkət utan kaʔ
PAR hear 3 PAR at here at forest this
H – “Listen to it. Is it here? In this forest?”
- (69) ay cayi bitu, am cayi bika
ʔay ceyi bituʔ, ʔam ceyi bikaʔ
2 find at.there 1SG find at.here
H – “You will search there, I will search here.”
- (70) a sə~sama cayi
ʔa sə~samaʔ cayiʔ
PAR EMPH~same find
H/W – “(We) look for it together”
- (71) eh maken kuat, sa adik naŋes: e e
ʔeh maken kwat, saʔ ʔadiʔ naŋes: ě ě
INTRJ increasingly strong sound child cry baby.cries baby.cries
H/W – ‘Eh, (it) got louder and louder, the sound of the child crying: *waa...waa*’
- (72) adik ka dəkət kayu
ʔadiʔ ka dəkət kayuʔ
child this at tree
‘This child is at/in the tree.’
- (73) jan jan
jan jan
walk walk
‘(They) walked and walked.’

- (74) ada
 ʔada
 EXIST
 H/W – “Is it there?”
- (75) ntah, teŋok lopak tu
 ntah, teŋoʔ lopaʔ tu
 don't.know see puddle that
 H/W – “I don't know, look in that puddle.”
- (76) teŋok dəkət lopak jə
 teŋoʔ dəkət lopaʔ yə
 see at puddle that
 H/W – “Look in the puddle.”
- (77) kadaŋ adik dəkət lopak
 kadaŋ ʔadiʔ dəkət lopaʔ
 maybe child at puddle
 H/W – “Maybe the child is at/in the puddle.”
- (78) ah, bətol, adik dalam lopak
 ʔah, bətol, ʔadiʔ dalam opaʔ
 INTRJ correct child inside puddle
 H/W – “Ah, (you're) right, the child is in the puddle.”
- (79) bila lopak jə ada adik
 bilə opaʔ yə adə adiʔ
 when puddle that EXIST child
 W – “When is there a child in the puddle?”
- (80) ami, neŋkay
 ʔamiʔ, neŋkay
 take ENDEAR
 W – “Take (it), my dear.”
- (81) a adik... a adik naŋes
 ʔa ʔadiʔ... ʔa ʔadiʔ naŋes
 PAR child PAR child cry
 W – “The child... the child is crying.”
- (82) ow, adik
 ʔow, ʔadiʔ
 INTRJ child
 W – “Oh, a child.”
- (83) mak ŋa, pak ŋa bole mana buaŋ jə adik dalam utan e
 maʔ ŋa, paʔ ŋa bole mana bwaŋ yə ʔadiʔ dalam utan e
 mother 3 father 3 able where throw that child inside forest PAR
 W – “His mother, his father, how can (they) throw away the child in the forest?”

(84) mana adik...
 mana ?adi?
 where child
 W – “Where is the child....?”

(85) dalam utan ada adik
 dalam utan adə adi?
 inside forest EXIST child
 W – “In the forest, there’s a child.”

(86) uŋ ka... kon ka memaŋ ncak sayaŋ adik diə... uŋ e
 ?uŋ ka?... kon ka memaŋ nca? sayaŋ adi? diə... ?uŋ e
 people this Seletar.people this really NEG love child PAR people PAR

ye diə
 ye diə
 he/she say

W – “These people... these Seletar people really do not love the child... (these) people...” she said.

(87) memaŋ ncak sayaŋ adik, mana buaŋ a dalam utan, bini ŋa pada
 memaŋ nca? sayaŋ adi?, mana bwaŋ a dalam utan, bini ŋa padə
 really NEG love child where throw PAR inside forest wife 3 say
 W – “(They) really don’t love the child, abandoning him somewhere in the forest” his wife said.

(88) dam utan mana ada kon
 dəm utan manə adə kon
 inside forest where EXIST Seletar.people
 W – “In the forest how are there people?”

(89) tpaŋ ami adik
 ta-paŋ ami? ?adi?
 INVOL-forced take child
 ‘(They) had to take the child.’

(90) a neŋkay, adik jə... neŋkay, adik jə, cuci ŋok ŋa, tana e,
 ?a neŋkay, ?adi? jə... neŋkay, ?adi? yə, cuci ŋo? ŋa?, tana e,
 PAR ENDEAR child that ENDEAR child that wash body 3 dirt PAR

cuci
 cuci?
 wash

H – “My dear, the child... my dear, the child, wash his body, (there’s) dirt (on him), wash (him)”

(91) kadaŋ ŋa aos neŋkay
 kadaŋ ŋə ?a.os neŋkay
 maybe 3 thirsty ENDEAR
 H – “Maybe he is thirsty, my dear.”

(92) bi ŋa ŋusu, neŋkay, a bi
 bi ŋa ŋusu?, neŋkay, ?a bi?

give 3 EVENT:milk ENDEAR PAR give
 H – “Let him breastfeed, my dear, give (it to him).”

(93) bi susu, bi susu... bi susu
 bi susu?, bi susu?... bi susu?
 give milk give milk give milk
 ‘(They) gave and gave and gave (him) milk.’

(94) neŋkay, am nak pəgi gun
 neŋkay, ?am na? pəgi gun
 ENDEAR 1SG want go there
 H – “My dear, I want to go there.”

(95) jə... batəŋ asam dəkət ya
 jə... batəŋ asam dəkət yə
 that tree tamarind near PAR
 H – “That one...the tamarind tree is near.”

(96) jə asam nak dəkət
 jə asam na? dəkət
 that tamarind IM.FUT near
 H – “That tamarind, (I am) almost nearing (it).”

(97) ay tuŋu ja la, ay bi adik man susu la
 ?ay tuŋu jə la, ?ay bi ?adi? man susu la
 2 wait only PAR 2 give child eat milk PAR
 H – “You just wait. You let the child eat (drink) milk.”

(98) baek la, am nuŋo sika, am dudok tana ka
 bae? la, ?am nuŋo sika?, ?am dudo? tana ka?
 good PAR 1SG EVENT:wait here 1SG sit dirt this
 W – “Alright, I’ll wait here, I sit on the ground here.”

(99) dudok, dudok
 dudo?, dudo?
 sit sit
 ‘(She) sat down (for a while).’

(100) bi susu, bi susu
 bi susu?, bi susu?
 give milk give milk
 ‘She gave and gave the milk.’

(101) adik jə, bi susu... nə am bi susu na, na səŋum, nə
 ?adi? jə, bi susu?...nə? ?am bi susu na?, na? səŋum, na?
 child that give milk why 1SG give milk 3 3 smile why
 W – “The child, (I) gave milk... why (when) I give milk to him, he smiles, why?”

(102) kadaŋ adik jə aos
 kadaŋ adi? jə ?a.os
 maybe child that thirsty

H – “Maybe the child is thirsty.”

(103) ay bi gaŋ
ʔay bi gaŋ
2 give PAR

H – “You just give (him milk).” (starting to be unsure)

(104) am nak tunjok asam jə
ʔam naʔ tunjoʔ ʔasam yə
1SG want show tamarind that

H – “I want to show (you) the tamarind.”

(105) jan lagi sit, bataŋ asam am dəkət te
jan lagi sit, bataŋ asam ʔam dəkət teʔ
walk again little tree tamarind 1SG near PAR

H – “Just (let me) walk a little more, the tamarind tree, I’ll be near (it).”

(106) o bataŋ asam jə dəkət... a
ʔo bataŋ asam yə dəkət ʔa
INTRJ tree tamarind that near PAR

H – “Oh, the tamarind tree is near.”

(107) o buah ʒa bəsal, neŋkay
ʔo buwəh ʒə bəsal, neŋkay
INTRJ fruit 3 big ENDEAR

H – “Oh, its fruits are big, my dear.”

(108) nak masak buah asam e
naʔ masaʔ bwəh asam e
IM.FUT ripe fruit tamarind PAR

H – “(They are) almost ripe, the tamarind fruits.”

(109) a takpa la, a dəkət jə la, am ami o
ʔa taʔpə la, ʔa dəkət jə la, ʔam mayi o
PAR never.mind PAR PAR near that PAR 1SG take PAR

H – “Never mind. (I’m) near that (tree), I’ll take (the fruits).”

(110) bi le... maken bi
bi le... maken biʔ...
give PAR increasingly give

‘(The wife) still gave (the milk)... the more (she) gave...’

(111) neŋkay, neŋkay
neŋkay, neŋkay
ENDEAR ENDEAR

W – “My dear! My dear!”

(112) adik ka sədut kuat susu am
ʔadiʔ ka sədut kwat susu ʔam
child this suck strong milk/breast 1SG

W – “This child is sucking hard on my breasts!”

(113) macamak ja sɔdut kuat
 macamaʔ ja sɔdut kuat
 how 3 suck strong
 H – “How is he sucking hard?”

(114) ja sɔdut kuat, tapi ja ncak lɔpas
 ja sɔdut kuat tapi ja ncaʔ lɔpas
 3 suck hard but 3 NEG release
 W – “He is sucking hard but he does not let go.”

(115) ay bi a... anu bi gaŋ, kadaŋ ja lapa jə
 ʔay bi ʔa... ʔanə bi gaŋ, kadaŋ jaʔ lapə yəʔ
 2 give PAR FIL give PAR maybe 3 hungry that
 H – “You give... give (him milk), maybe he is hungry.” (he is feeling unsure)

(116) tapi ja laen
 tapi ja la.en
 but 3 other
 W – “But he is different.”

(117) rasa ja laen
 ʔasa ja la.en
 feel 3 other
 W – “(I) think/feel he is different.”

(118) nok am e... susu kami e
 noʔ ʔam e... susuʔ kamiʔ e
 body 1SG PAR milk/breast 1SG PAR
 W – “My body... my breast!”

(119) tolak~tolak ja, ja maken sɔnum adik ka, ye diə
 tolaʔ~tolaʔ ja, ja maken sɔnum ʔadiʔ kaʔ, ye die
 push~REP 3 3 increasingly smile child this he/she say
 W – “(I) keep pushing him, he smiles more and more, this child,” she said.

(120) adik maken sɔnum
 ʔadiʔ maken sɔnum
 child increasingly smile
 W – “The child is smiling more and more.”

(121) adik lapa, ye diə
 ʔadiʔ lapə, ye die
 child hungry he/she say
 H – “The child is hungry,” he said.

(122) takpa, am ami
 taʔpə, ʔam mayiʔ
 never.mind 1SG take
 H – “Never mind. I take (the tamarind fruits).”

(123) laki ja, pəgi lagi
 laki jaʔ, pəgi lagiʔ
 husband 3 go again
 ‘Her husband went away again.’

(124) bəlom... nak potoŋ...
 bəlom... naʔ potoŋ...
 not.yet IM.FUT cut
 ‘Not yet... (he) was going to cut the tree...’

(125) nak sampay dəkət asam ka, nak dəkət asam ka... kami ka
 naʔ sampay dəkət asam kə, naʔ dəkət asam kaʔ... kami ka
 IM.FUT reach at tamarind this IM.FUT near tamarind this 1SG this
 H – “(I’m) going to reach near the tamarind here, (I’m) almost near the tamarind here... I am.”

(126) ay tiak lagi tam tiak, ay e
 ʔay tyaʔ lagi tam tyaʔ, ʔay e
 2 shout again always shout 2 PAR
 H – “You shout again, (you) keep shouting, you!”

(127) adik ka meməŋ maken kuat sədut susu kami e
 ʔadiʔ ka meməŋ maken kwat sədut susu kamiʔ ʔe
 child this indeed increasingly strong suck milk/breast 1SG PAR
 W – “This child is indeed getting stronger and stronger at sucking my milk.”

(128) ay jəŋkian ya
 ʔay jəŋkian yaʔ
 2 come.here PAR
 W – “You come here!”

(129) tiŋgəl~tiŋgəl asam ya
 tiŋgəl~tiŋgəl asam yəʔ
 leave.behind~EMPH tamarind PAR
 W – “Leave the tamarinds!”

(130) ay e meməŋ tak bətol la
 ʔay e meməŋ taʔ bətol la
 2 PAR indeed NEG correct PAR
 H – “You of course are not right!”

(131) jəŋkian ya
 jəŋkian yaʔ
 come.here PAR
 W – “Come here!”

(132) bini ja təŋa jusu
 bini jaʔ təŋə jusuʔ
 wife 3 middle EVENT:milk
 ‘His wife was in the middle of breastfeeding.’

(133) a tejok, adik pəgaŋ susu amat kuat te
 ʔa tejoʔ, ʔadiʔ pəgaŋ susuʔ ʔamat kwat te
 PAR see child hold breast very strong PAR
 W – “Look, the child is holding the breasts very forcefully.”

(134) sənum adik e
 sənum adiʔ e
 smile child PAR
 W – “He’s smiling.”

(135) am tolak pun ja ncak ləpas
 ʔam tolaʔ pun ja ncaʔ ləpas
 1SG push PAR 3 NEG release
 W – “I even pushed (it) but he does not let go.”

(136) abis laki ja balek bəlakaŋ
 abe lakiʔ jə bəleʔ bəlakaŋ
 finish husband 3 return behind
 ‘Then her husband returned back (to her).’

(137) am balek bəlakaŋ la tejok ay la
 ʔam baleʔ bəlakaŋ la tejoʔ ʔay la
 1SG return behind PAR see 2 PAR
 H – “I am coming back! To see you.”

(138) o, bətol dayi ay
 ʔo bətol daʔi ʔay
 INTRJ correct word 2
 H – “Oh, (you are) right, what you said.”

(139) tolak...
 tolaʔ...
 push
 ‘(He) pushed...’

(140) ay tolak, ya, tolak
 ʔay tolaʔ, yə, tolaʔ
 2 push PAR push
 H – “You push, yes, push.”

(141) ncak ləpas... tolak
 ncaʔ ləpas... tolaʔ
 NEG release push
 ‘(The child) did not let go... he pushed.’

(142) pəgaŋ adik
 pəgaŋ adiʔ
 hold child
 ‘(He) grabbed the child.’

- (143) gentak... bila gentak...
gentak?... bilə gentak?...
stomp.on when stomp.on
‘Stomped on (it)... when (he) stomped on (it)...’
- (144) tə-gentak, əgaŋ tə-cabut mata susu bini
tə-genta?, ʔəgaŋ tə-cabut mata? susu? bini?
PFV-stomp.on guess INVOL-pull.out eye breast wife
‘(He) had stomped (the child), (that) might have pulled out his wife’s nipple.’
- (145) mata susu bini e tə-cabut
mata? susu? bini e tə-cabut
eye breast wife PAR PFV-pull.out
‘The nipple of his wife had been ripped off.’
- (146) ŋə mata susu ay tə-cabut tə
ŋə? mata? susu ʔay tə-cabut tə?
why eye breast 2 PFV-pull.out PAR
H – “Why has your nipple been ripped off?”
- (147) mata susu ay ilaŋ ye diə
mata susu ʔay ilaŋ ye diə
eye breast 2 disappear he/she say
H – “Your nipple is missing,” he said.
- (148) tokoŋ e, susu ay e
tokoŋ e, susu ʔay e
hole PAR breast 2 PAR
H – “A hole, (on) your breast.”
- (149) dah ay baŋak kəluar, a ye diə
dah ʔay baŋa? kəlway, a ye diə
blood 2 many come.out PAR he/she say
H – “Your blood is coming out a lot,” he said.
- (150) ɲok am ləmah deŋ ɲok am ləmah deŋ
ɲo? ʔam ləma deŋ... ɲo? ʔam ləma deŋ
body 1SG weak ENDEAR body 1SG weak ENDEAR
W – “My body is weak, my dear... My body is weak, my dear.”
- (151) toloŋ kami deŋ... a deŋ
toloŋ kami deŋ... ʔa deŋ
help 1SG ENDEAR INTRJ ENDEAR
W – “Help me, my dear... Ah, my dear.”
- (152) toloŋ kami, ɲok am ləmah
toloŋ kami?, ɲo? ʔam ləma
help 1SG body 1SG weak
W – “Help me, my body is weak.”

(153) cəbut ay anoyo
 cəbut ʔay anoyo
 pull.out 2 FIL
 H – “(It) ripped out your”

(154) ika adik ka bətɔl bukən, sayiŋ campak
 ika ʔadiʔ kə bətɔl bukən, sayiŋ campaʔ
 this child PAR:Q truly NEG all.at.once throw
 H – “Is this child truly bad?” All at once, (he) threw (the child away).

(155) am campak
 ʔam campaʔ
 1SG throw
 “I throw (it) away.”

(156) adik jə ncak naŋes, tapi adik sənum
 ʔadiʔ yə ncaʔ naŋes, tapi ʔadiʔ sənum
 child that NEG cry but child smile
 ‘The child didn’t cry, but the child smiled.’

(157) a ɲa ami, anoyo... bəliuŋ
 ʔa ɲa ʔamiʔ, ʔanoyə... bəliʋuŋ
 PAR 3 take FIL axe
 ‘He took... an axe.’

(158) pəgi ami bəliuŋ
 pəgi ameʔ bəliʋuŋ
 go take axe
 ‘(He) went to take the axe.’

(159) ɲa cincuŋ~cincuŋ~cincuŋ
 ɲaʔ cincuŋ~cincuŋ~cincuŋ
 3 chop chop chop
 ‘He chopped (it) up.’

(160) upaɲa bila ɲa... teŋok
 ʔupəɲə bilən ɲaʔ... teŋoʔ
 apparently when 3 see
 ‘Apparently, when he... looked (at what he did),’

(161) o pacat, bukən adik ada
 ʔo pacat, bukən adiʔ ʔadə
 INTRJ leech NEG child EXIST
 H - “Oh leeches! There is not a child.”

(162) bukən adik tə, neŋkay
 bukən adiʔ təʔ, neŋkay
 NEG child PAR ENDEAR
 H - “(It) is not a child, my dear.”

- (163) pacat... mak pacat, ja pada
pacat... ma? pacat, ja padə
leech mother leech 3 say
H – “Leeches... (it’s) the mother of leeches,” he said.
- (164) upana dah ay di-sədut pacat
ʔupana dah ʔay di-sədut pacat
apparently blood 2 PASS-suck leech
H – “Apparently your blood was sucked by leeches.”
- (165) wa, teŋok dah
wa?, teŋo? dah
INTRJ see blood
H – “Wah! Look at the blood.”
- (166) bənak dah... teŋok pacat kəluar ye diə
bana? dah... teŋo? pacat kəlway ye diə
many blood see leech come.out he/she say
H – “So much blood! Look, the leeches are coming out,” he said.
- (167) cinaŋ~cinaŋ... ancū
cinaŋ~cinaŋ... ancū
chop~REP break.into.pieces
‘He chopped (it) again and again... (The thing) broke into pieces.’
- (168) dah jə... pacat jə kəluar bənak... səmun pacat
dah jə... pacat jə kəlway bana?... səmun pacat
blood that leech that come.out many all leech
‘The blood...the leeches came out a lot...all of it was (made up of) leeches.’
- (169) ja pada lagi, neŋkay lagi am ləmah, kami ləmah
ja padə lagi?, neŋkay, lagi ʔam ləmah, kami ləmah
3 say again ENDEAR again 1SG weak 1SG weak
She said again, “My dear, I am getting weaker, I am weak.”
- (170) am ləmah, ŋok am ləmah
ʔam ləma, ŋo? ʔam ləma
1SG weak body 1SG weak
W – “I am weak, my body is weak.”
- (171) rasa ŋok am, mata am da pitam
yaŋa ŋo? ʔam, mata? ʔam da pitam
feel body 1SG eye 1SG COMPL lose.consciousness
W – “(I) feel my body, my eyes are losing consciousness.”
- (172) laki ja pun, amu, kita balek la, kita balek
laki? ja? pun, ʔamu?, kita bale? la, kita bale?
husband 3 PAR INTRJ 1PL return PAR 1PL return
‘Her husband then (said), “Oh no, we go back, we go back.”’

(173) balek... balek, balek, balek
 bale?... bale?, bale?, bale?
 return return return return
 ‘Back, back, back (they went).’

(174) neŋkay e, am akan mati, na mada
 neŋkay e, ?am akan mati?, na madə
 ENDEAR PAR 1SG FUT die 3 EVENT: say
 W – “My dear, I will die,” she said.

(175) am akan mati, səbap anak, jusu am
 ?am akan mati?, səbap ana?, jusu? ?am...
 1SG FUT die because what breast 1SG
 W – “I will die, because of what? My breast...”

(176) no? am lancat
 nok ?am lancat
 body 1SG weak
 W – “My body is weak.”

(177) ncak rasa anu di di ləmah
 nca? yasa ?anu di... di ləmah
 NEG feel what PAR PAR weak
 W – “(I) can’t feel what-you-call-it... I’m weak.”

(178) dah kami da abis ye diə
 dah kami? da abis ye diə
 blood 1SG COMPL finish he/she say
 W – “My blood has already dried up,” she said.

(179) sampay balek
 sampay bale?
 reach return
 ‘(When they) reached home.’

(180) tiak tiak tiak tiak, o
 tya tya tya tya?, ?o
 shout shout shout shout INTRJ
 ‘he shouted, shouted and shouted, “OH”’

(181) na tiak, o wa wa
 na tya? ?o wa wa
 3 shout INTRJ INTRJ INTRJ
 ‘He shouted out, “OH WA WA”’

(182) kon ncak paot tə
 kon nca? pa.ot tə?
 Seletar.people NEG EVENT:respond/answer PAR
 ‘The people did not respond.’

- (183) kon ncak jaot, jan lagi
kon nca? jaot, jan lagi?
Seletar.people NEG EVENT:respond/answer walk again
‘The people did not respond, (he) walked more.’
- (184) bow kə laot
bow kə lot
bring to sea
‘(He) brought (them) to the sea.’
- (185) sampay naŋes~naŋes, ja kə laot, minta tolon
sampay naŋes~naŋes, ja kə lot, minta tolon
reach cry~REP 3 to sea ask help
‘Until (he) cried and cried, he (went) to the sea, to ask for help.’ / he (went) to the sea and asked for help.’
- (186) tapi kon ncak dəŋə
tapi kon nca? dəŋə
but Seletar.people NEG hear
‘But the people did not hear him.’
- (187) o wa ja tiak adik~bədik ja
ʔo wa ja tya? ʔadi?~bədi? ja?
INTRJ INTRJ 3 shout sibling~PL 3
‘“OH WA,” he shouted for his/her siblings.’
- (188) adik~bədik ja ja ncak dəŋə
ʔadi?~bədi? ja ja nca? dəŋə
sibling~PL 3 3 NEG hear
‘His/her siblings, they didn’t hear him.’
- (189) ja bow kə laot... juh kə laot
ja? bow kə lot... juh kə lot
3 bring to sea far to sea
‘He brought (her/them) to the sea... far out to the sea.’
- (190) sampay... anu, tiak
sampay... ʔanu?, tya?
reach FIL shout
‘(When they) reached (the sea)... (he) shouted.’
- (191) baw kon jaot, anak
baw kon jaot, ana?
only.then Seletar.people EVENT:respond/answer what
‘Only then the people responded, “What?”’
- (192) ay jeŋkian ya
ʔay jeŋkian yə?
2 come.here PAR
H – “You come here!”

(193) ηə
 ηəʔ
 why
 S – “why?”

(194) ya ka kakak ay ka, na padə sən jə
 yə ka kakaʔ ʔay ka, na pada sən jə
 PAR here sister 2 this 3 say like that
 H – “Yes, here, your sister is here,” he said like that

(195) ηə
 ηəʔ
 why
 S – “Why?”

(196) kakak ay ηə, jəŋkian
 kakaʔ ʔay ηa, jəŋkyan
 sister 2 why come.here
 H – “Your sister, (that’s) why! Come here.”

(197) bila kon jə səmun dataŋ a
 bila kon jə səmun dataŋ a
 when Seletar.people that all come PAR
 ‘When the people all came,’

(198) jambak kon səmun wak adik~bədik na, səmun dataŋ,
 jambaʔ kon səmun waʔ ʔadiʔ~bədiʔ naʔ, səmun dataŋ,
 bunch Seletar.people all uncle/aunt sibling~PL 3 all come
 tuju na
 tuju na
 go.to.direction.of 3
 ‘the Seletar people/they, all his/her relatives and siblings, all came to her direction.’

(199) bila tuju na
 bila tuju naʔ
 when go.to.direction.of 3
 ‘When (they) were facing her direction,’

(200) sampay dəkət ujoŋ pawu, ujoŋ pawu
 sampay dəkət ujoŋ pawuʔ, ujoŋ pawuʔ
 reach near end boat end boat
 ‘they reached the ends of their boats.’

(201) bini na pada, am akan mati, jaga la anak~anak kita
 biniʔ naʔ padə, ʔam akan matiʔ, jegə la anaʔ~anaʔ kitaʔ,
 wife 3 say 1SG FUT die take.care PAR child~PL 1PL

na pada
 na padə
 3 say

‘His wife said, “I will die. Take care of our children,” she said.’

(202) anak kita jaga la, mungkin kami nca?

?ana? kita? jegə la, mungkin kami nca?

child 1PL take.care PAR maybe 1SG NEG

W – “Our child(ren), take care of him/them. Maybe I cannot.”

(203) am akan abis

?am akan ?abis,

1SG FUT finish

W – “I will be gone.”

(204) am kej nca? rasa nok, na pada

?am kej nca? yasa no?, na padə

1SG now NEG feel body 3 say

W – “I now can’t feel my body,” she said.

(205) laki na jəmpi~jəmpi pun tak bole apa

laki na? jumpi?~ jumpi? pun ta? bole apa?

husband 3 cast.spell~REP PAR NEG able what

‘Her husband cast and cast spells but (that) also could not (do) anything.’

(206) jəmpi~jəmpi pun tak bole apa

jumpi?~ jumpi? pun ta? bole apa?

cast.spell~REP PAR NEG able what

‘Casting spells also could not (do) anything.’

(207) səbap apa

səbap apa?

because what

‘Because of what?’

(208) dah jə bənak kəluar

dah jə bəna? kəlway

blood that many come.out

‘The blood came out a lot.’

(209) nak stop tak bole, dah jə... dah da kiŋ

na? stəp ta? bole, dah jə... dah da kiŋ

want stop NEG able blood that blood COMPL dry

‘(They) wanted to stop (the blood) but could not, the blood... the blood had already dried up.’

(210) jantəŋ da...

jantəŋ da...

heart COMPL

‘The heart had already...’

(211) kami jantəŋ am da ləmah, na mada

kami?... jantəŋ am da ləma, na madə

1SG heart 1SG COMPL weak 3 EVENT: say

W – “I... My heart is already weak,” she said.

(212) ja jəm̥pi~jəm̥pi tak bole ada
 ja jum̥piʔ~ jum̥piʔ taʔ bole adə
 3 cast.spell~REP NEG able EXIST
 ‘He/they kept casting spells (but they) do nothing.’

(213) jəm̥pi~jəm̥pi talada
 jum̥piʔ~ jum̥piʔ təl̥adə
 cast.spell~REP NEG.able
 ‘Casting spells could not (do anything).’

(214) lama ja pada
 lama ja padə
 long(time) 3 say
 ‘After a while, she said,’

(215) kami akan tiŋgəl ay, ja pada
 kamiʔ ʔakan tiŋgəl ʔay, ja padə
 1SG FUT leave.behind 2 3 say
 W – “I will leave you behind,” she said.’

(216) səbap jə jaga la anak~anak
 səbap jə jegə la anaʔ~anaʔ
 because.that take.care PAR child~PL
 W – “Because of that, take care of the children.”

(217) abis jə,
 ʔabe jəʔ,
 finish that
 ‘After that,’

(218) kakak jan toloŋ jəm̥pi juga
 kakaʔ jan toloŋ jəm̥pi jugə
 sister walk help cast.spell also
 ‘the sister came to help to cast spells too.’

(219) tak bole buat apa
 taʔ bole bwat apaʔ
 NEG able do what
 ‘(It) could not do anything.’

(220) abis jə ji pada
 ʔabe jə ji padə
 finish that 3SG say
 ‘After that, she said,’

(221) am akan pəgi, ja pada
 ʔam akan pəgiʔ, ja padə
 1SG FUT go 3 say
 W – “I will go,” she said.

(222) am akan pəgi, səbap am tak... am akan tingəl ay
 ʔam akan pəgi, səbap ʔam taʔ... ʔam akan tingəl ʔay
 1SG FUT go because 1SG NEG 1SG FUT leave.behind 2
 W – “I will go, because I cannot... I will leave you.”

(223) jaga la anak~anak kita
 jegə la ʔanaʔ~ anaʔ kitaʔ
 take.care PAR child~PL 1PL
 W – “Take care of our children.”

(224) bila jə... adik~bədik ʔa sampay səmun
 bilən jə... ʔadiʔ~bədiʔ ʔə sampay smun
 when that sibling~PL 3 reach all
 ‘When the... his/her siblings all reached (her),’

(225) toloʔ jəm̥pi, tak bole buat apa
 toloʔ jəm̥piʔ, taʔ bole bwa apa
 help cast.spell NEG able do what
 ‘(They) helped to cast spells (but they) could not do anything.’

(226) abis jə jəm̥pi~jəm̥pi, dia cakap
 abe jə jəm̥piʔ~ jəm̥piʔ, diə cakap
 finish that cast.spell~REP 3SG(M) say
 ‘After that, (after) the casting of spells, she said,’

(227) jaga la adik~bədik ay, ʔa pada
 jegə la ʔadiʔ~bədiʔ ʔay, ʔə padə
 take.care PAR sibling~PL 2 3 say
 W – “Take care of your siblings.” she said.

(228) jaga ay, pada pəsan macam jə
 jegə ʔay, padə pəsan macam jə
 take.care 2 say advise like that
 W – “Take care of yourselves,” (she) said and advised like that.

(229) ʔa abis
 ʔaʔ ʔabis
 3 finish
 ‘She was gone.’

(230) bila ʔa abis, ʔa naʔes
 bila ʔaʔ ʔabi, ʔaʔ naʔes
 when 3 finish 3 cry
 ‘When she had gone, he/they cried.’

(231) bila ʔa naʔes, adik~bədik jə, ʔa pəsan
 bila ʔaʔ naʔes, ʔadiʔ~bədiʔ jə, ʔa pəsan
 when 3 cry sibling~PL that 3 advise
 ‘When he/they cried, (to) his siblings he advised,’

(232) na pəsan anak~anak səda na
 na pəsan ʔanaʔ~anaʔ sədaʔ naʔ
 3 advise child~PL relative 3
 ‘He advised the children of his relatives.’

(233) len kali, kalaw kita, masok dalam utan jumpa apa bənatəŋ... apa
 len kaliʔ, kalaw kitaʔ, masoʔ dalam utan jumpə apə bənatəŋ... apaʔ
 other time if 1PL enter inside forest encounter what animal what
 H – “Next time, if we enter into the forest and encounter whatever kinds of animal... whatever,”

(234) jaŋan ami
 jaŋan amiʔ
 IMP.NEG take
 H – “do not take it/them.”

(235) kita tidak tahu bənda anak, na mada
 kita tidaʔ tawu bəndə anaʔ, na madə
 1PL NEG know thing what 3 EVENT: say
 H – “We do not know what those things are,” he said.

(236) (name), satu, ajar-an pada kita, na pada
 (name), satuʔ, ʔaja-an padə kitaʔ, na padə
 (name) one teach-RSLT to 1PL 3 say
 H – “(name of person)... is one...lesson to us,” he said.

(237) len kali, apa~apa... ay masok dalam utan jumpa apa bənatəŋ pun
 len kali, ʔapaʔ~apaʔ... ʔay masoʔ dalam utan jumpə apə bənatəŋ pun
 other time what~INDET 2 enter inside forest encounter what animal PAR
 H – “Next time, whatever... you enter inside the forest and encounter whatever kinds of animal,”

(238) jaŋan la e tak tahu ami bam baje, jaŋan ami,
 jaŋan la ʔe taʔ taw ʔamiʔ bam baje, jaŋan ʔamiʔ,
 IMP.NEG PAR PAR NEG know take thing thing IMP.NEG take

minta dia
 minta diə
 ask 3SG(M)

H - “don’t (do it). (if you) don’t know and take things.. do not take (them)” he asked.

(239) a sə-tiak iŋat o ha, na pada
 ʔa sə-ti.aʔ ʔiŋat ʔo ha, nə padə
 PAR one-shout remember INTRJ INTRJ 3 say
 ‘(They) all shouted as one “(We) remember, oh ha” they said.

(240) pawu na bə-suray, jambak na
 pawuʔ naʔ bə-suray, jambaʔ naʔ
 boat 3 CONT-disperse bunch 3
 ‘Their boats dispersed, the bunch of people (dispersed).’

(241) a na pəgi la kəluar a suŋay
 ʔa naʔ pəgiʔ la kəlway ʔa suŋay

PAR 3 go PAR go.out PAR river
 ‘They... went... out.. to the river.’

Sejarah Seletar (Seletar History)

S first tells a story of a flood that happened in a distant past and how the ancestors of the Orang Seletar survived. He later goes on to comment on the differences between the Orang Seletar of the past and the modern population. The former did not marry other ethnic groups and stuck to their own circles, while the latter now intermingle with many different groups of people, resulting in various mixed-race marriages. Lines in **fuchsia** colour indicate that the speaker is dialect switching.

- (1) jaman ntua muin pada tam ribut
 jaman ntwə? mu.in wadə tam ɣibut
 era elder long.ago say always storm
 ‘(In) the times of the ancestors, (they) said (it) always stormed.’
- (2) siaŋ malam hujin
 syaŋ malam hujin
 day.time night rain
 ‘Day and night (it) rained.’
- (3) masa jə e, tak bə-hənti
 masə jə e, ta? bə-hənti?
 time that PAR NEG STV-stop
 ‘(During) that time, (the rain) didn’t stop.’
- (4) abis, jambak kon ka e səmebok
 ʔabe, jamba? kon kə e səmebo?
 finish bunch Seletar.people this PAR busy
 ‘Then, the bunch of Seletar people/they here were busy.’
- (5) masiŋ~masiŋ səmebok
 masiŋ~masiŋ səmebo?
 each~EMPH busy
 ‘Each of them was busy.’
- (6) ə n-cayi səda~səda aja
 ʔə n-ceyi sədaʔ~sədaʔ aja?
 FIL EVENT-find relative~PL only
 ‘(They) were looking for their relatives only.’
- (7) əl naek
 əL nae?
 water rise
 ‘The water rose.’
- (8) a masa jə... ntua cayi təmpat pə-lindon la
 ʔa masa jə... ntwə? ceyi təmpat pə-lindon la
 PAR time that elder find place NMLZ-protect PAR

‘(During) that time, the elders looked for shelter.’

- (9) jambak kon pun asiŋ pə-ciaw cayi təmpat pə-lindoŋ
 jambaʔ kon pun asiŋ pə-cyaw ceyi təmpat pə-lindoŋ
 bunch Seletar.people PAR separate CONT-row find place NMLZ-protect
 ‘The Seletar people/they then separately rowed to find shelter.’

- (10) hujin siaŋ malam, tak bə-hənti
 ʔujin syaŋ malam, taʔ bə-həntiʔ
 rain day.time night NEG STV-stop
 ‘(It) rained day and night, (and it) didn’t stop.’

- (11) masa jaman ntua muin e, bə-kumpol
 masə jaman ntwəʔ mu.in e, bə-kumpol
 time era elder long.ago PAR CONT-gather
 ‘(In) the era of the ancestors, (the people) gathered.’

- (12) bila bə-kumpol e, ntua cayi satu təmpat
 bilə bə-kumpol e, ntwəʔ cayiʔ satu təmpat
 when CONT-gather PAR elder find one place
 ‘When (they) gathered, the elders looked for a place.’

- (13) cayi satu təmpat jə e... cayi təmpat ulak
 cayi satu təmpat yə e... cayiʔ təmpat ulaʔ
 find one place that PAR find place repeat
 ‘(They) looked for that one place...(they) were looking for the same place.’

- (14) cayi təmpat ulak e, layi tak layi, dəkət gunoŋ pulay ntua e
 cayi təmpat ulaʔ ʔe, layʔ taʔ layʔ, dəkət gunoŋ pulay ntwəʔ ʔe
 find place repeat PAR run NEG run near/at mountain Pulaui elder PAR
 ‘(They) looked for the same place. (Whether to) escape or not, the elders were at Mount Pulaui.’

- (15) saŋkot~tə-saŋkot də gunoŋ pulay, ntua n-cayi təmpat
 saŋkot~tə-saŋkot də gunoŋ pulay, ntwəʔ n-cayiʔ təmpat
 hook/stick.together~PFV-RECIP near/at mountain pulaui elder EVENT-find place

pə-lindoŋ-an

pə-lindoŋ-an

NMLZ-protect-NMLZ

‘Stuck to each other at Mount Pulaui, the elders found a shelter.’

- (16) masa jə aəl kəlampaw dəras
 pasa jə ʔaəl kəlampaw dəyas
 time that water SUP-over.expectation fast
 ‘(During) that time, the water was too fast.’

- (17) kəlampaw tiŋgi aəl e
 kəlampaw tiŋgi ʔaəl e
 SUP-over.expectation high water PAR
 ‘The water was too high.’ (lit. ‘too high, the water’)

- (18) a masa jə, bila aəl jə suda tun
 ʔa pasa jəʔ, bila ʔaəl yə suda tun
 PAR time that when water that COMPL descend
 ‘(During) that time, when the water already receded.’
- (19) bila sut e
 bilə sut e
 when water.recede PAR
 ‘when the water receded.’
- (20) bila... aruah... e... nek pada e
 bilən... ʔaruah... ʔe... neʔ padə e
 when late PAR grandmother say PAR
 ‘when... (my) late... grandmother said.’
- (21) ntua susun e
 ntwaʔ susun e
 elder arrange PAR
 ‘The elders arranged (their boats).’
- (22) bila sut, sampay siŋapuwa
 bilə sut, sampay siŋapwaʔ
 when water.recede reach Singapore
 ‘when the water receded, (the boats) reached Singapore.’
- (23) pawu but susun
 pa^wuʔ put susun
 boat make arrange
 ‘The boats were arranged.’
- (24) ntua pakay kilas, rotan, sambon~bə-sambon pawu
 ntwaʔ pakay kilas, ʔotan, sambon~bə-sambon pa^wuʔ
 elder use rattan.thong rattan connect~CONT-RECIP boat
 ‘The elders used rattan thongs to tie the boats to each other (in a row),’
- (25) sampay baŋ siŋapuwa
 sampay baŋ siŋapwaʔ
 reach shore Singapore
 ‘(they could) reach the shores of Singapore.’
- (26) sampay tiga lapes a
 sampay tiga lapes a
 reach three layer PAR
 ‘until three layers (of boats were formed).’
- (27) aruah wak (name) pun ada pada
 ʔaruah waʔ (name) pun ada padə
 late uncle (name) PAR PFV say
 ‘The late Aunt (name) had said so too.’

- (28) saŋkot sampay siŋapuwa
 saŋkot sampay siŋapwa?
 stick.together reach Singapore
 ‘(The boats) stuck together reached Singapore.’
- (29) masa jaman~jaman ntua muin
 basə jaman~jaman ntwə? mu.in
 time era~PL elder long.ago
 ‘(In) the eras of the ancestors,’
- (30) ntua muin baŋak
 ntwə? mu.in baŋa?
 elder long.ago many
 ‘the ancestors were many.’
- (31) a baŋak, memaŋ baŋak
 ?a baŋa?, memaŋ baŋa?
 PAR many indeed many
 ‘A lot, indeed (there were) a lot (of them).’
- (32) tapi keŋ... jambak kon keŋ ncaŋ baŋak macam muin e
 tapi keŋ... jamba? kon keŋ nca? baŋa? macam mu.in e
 but now bunch Seletar.people now NEG many like long.ago PAR
 ‘but now... the Seletar people now are not many like in the past.’
- (33) pasa anak, ncaŋ baŋak kon macam muin
 pasa na?, nca? baŋa? kon macam buin
 because what NEG many Seletar.people like long.ago
 ‘Because of what? (There are) not many Seletar people like in the past.’
- (34) keŋ da baŋak nikah cina?,
 keŋ da baŋa? nika cina?,
 now COMPL many marry Chinese
 ‘Now, many have married the Chinese,’
- (35) nikah uŋ
 nikah wuŋ
 marry Malay
 ‘married the Malays.’
- (36) nikah kələŋ pun ada
 nika kələŋ pun adə?
 marry Indian PAR EXIST
 ‘There are also (those who) married Indians.’
- (37) muin len, ntua muin nikah baŋsa ja aja
 mwin len, ntwə? mwin nikah baŋsa? ja? ajə
 long.ago other elder long.ago marry race 3 only
 ‘Long ago (it) was different. The ancestors married (within) their own race only.’

- (38) nikah suku ban̄sa uŋ s̄əleta aja
 nika suku ban̄sa ʔoŋ s̄əleta ʔajə
 marry tribe race people Seletar only
 ‘(They) married the tribe/race of Orang Seletar only.’
- (39) a masa jə nampak bilaŋ-an ntua muin maken banak
 ʔa masa jə nampaʔ bilaŋ-an ntwəʔ mu.in maken bənaʔ
 PAR time that see count-RSLT elder long.ago increasingly many
 maken banak
 maken bənaʔ
 increasingly many
 ‘(During) that time, (you could) see the number of the ancestors growing and growing.’
- (40) sampay di mana~mana
 sampay di mana~mana
 reach at where~INDET
 ‘until (they were) anywhere/everywhere.’
- (41) bila aəl da gədək, baw nampak pədagaran ntua
 bilə ʔaəl də gədəʔ, baw nampaʔ pədagaran ntwəʔ
 when water COMPL calm only.then see harmony elder
 ‘When the water had already calmed down, only then (you) saw the harmony/grouping of the elders,’
 (*pədagaran* is possibly morphologically complex, but the interpreter did not separate the word into parts.)
- (42) baw nampak cina, uŋ, bagayna
 baw nampaʔ cinaʔ, ʔuŋ, bagaynaʔ
 only.then see Chinese Malay so.on
 ‘only then (you) saw the Chinese, the Malays and so on.’
- (43) səmun uŋ lagi luar
 səmun ʔuŋ lagi lway
 all outsider/Malay more outside
 ‘All of the outsiders/Malays are more foreign.’
- (44) masa jaman ntua muin
 masa jaman ntwəʔ mu.in
 time era elder long.ago
 ‘(In) the era of the ancestors,’

- (45) bila aəl naek, mana ada muka uŋ, msak
 bila ʔaəl naeʔ manə adə muka ʔuŋ, msaʔ
 when water rise where EXIST face outsider/Malay NEG
 ‘When the water rose, how were there faces of the Malays? There weren’t (any).’
- (46) kon aja
 kon ajə
 Seletar.people only
 ‘(There were) only Seletar people.’
- (47) masa jə, jambak ʔa iŋat la
 masa jəʔ, jambaʔ ʔa iŋat la
 time that bunch 3 remember PAR
 ‘(During) that time, the bunch/they remembered.’
- (48) kalaw bə-pəca pawu jə bantal aəl bəh e, masiŋ ʔaŋut
 kalaw bə-pəca pawuʔ jə bantal ʔaəl bəh e, masiŋ ʔaŋut
 if CONT/STV-break boat that because water fast PAR each EVENT:drift
 ‘If the boat broke because of the current, each of them would drift away.’
- (49) jadi suku baŋsa kita ka bə-baŋak baŋsa
 jadi suku baŋsa kita ka bə-baŋaʔ baŋsaʔ
 so tribe race 1PL this POSS-many race
 ‘And so our tribes/races here have many (sub)races.’
- (50) jadi lapan bəlas suku, baŋsa uŋ asli
 jedi lapan bəlas sukuʔ, baŋsaʔ ʔuŋ asli
 become eight numbers.11.to.19 tribe race people original
 ‘(They) became eighteen tribes/races of Orang Asli (indigenous people).’
- (51) tapi bə-beza
 tapi bə-bezə
 but POSS-difference
 ‘But there are differences.’
- (52) sama juga dəŋan cina, ada ke, ada tiociu, ada okien
 samaʔ jugə dəŋan cinaʔ, ʔadə keʔ, ʔadə tyocyu, ʔadə ʔokien
 same also with Chinese EXIST Hakka EXIST Teochew EXIST Hokkien
 ‘(It) is also the same with the Chinese. There are Hakkas, there are Teochews, there are Hokkiens.’
- (53) baŋsa uŋ asli sama juga, macam jə
 baŋsaʔ ʔuŋ asli samaʔ jugəʔ, masim jəʔ
 race people original same also like that
 ‘The races of the Orang Asli are the same as that as well.’
- (54) ada=ʔa, baŋsa jakun, səmay, uŋ kalaŋ pun ada
 adə=ʔaʔ, baŋsə jakun, səmay, ʔuŋ kalaŋ pun adəʔ
 EXIST=DEF race Jakun Semai people Kallang PAR EXIST
 ‘There are: the Jakun race, Semai. There are also the Orang Kallang.’

- (55) bapak baŋsa
 bapa? baŋsa?
 many race
 ‘(There are) many races.’
- (56) maka jə
 maka jə?,
 then that
 ‘Then...’
- (57) suku uŋ səleta ka səjarah na di siŋapuwa
 suku ʔuŋ səleta ka səjarah na di siŋapwa?
 tribe people Seletar this history 3 at Singapore
 ‘(For) the Orang Seletar tribe here, their history is in Singapore.’
- (58) ada səjarah
 ʔadə səjarah
 EXIST history
 ‘There is history.’
- (59) siŋapuwa e səleta~səleta tu səjarah
 siŋapwa? e səleta~səleta tu səjarah
 Singapore PAR Seletar~INDVL that history
 ‘(In) Singapore, those “Seletar” (places) (i.e. places with the name *Seletar*) are (our) history.’
- (60) kon laot
 kən lot
 people sea
 ‘(The history of) the Sea People (i.e. Orang Laut/Kon Laut).’
- (61) di jow muin anu, mana ada uŋ
 di jow mu.in eno, manə adə wuŋ
 at Johor long.ago FIL where EXIST outsider/Malay
 ‘In (the time of) Old Johor... how were there Malays/outsideers?’
- (62) di tanjoŋ suŋay bəsal jə səjarah a, jə
 di tanjoŋ suŋay bəsal yə səjara a, yə?
 at cape river big that history PAR that
 ‘At Tanjong Sungai Besar, (there) is history, there’
- (63) tanjoŋ suŋay bəsal aja
 tanjoŋ suŋay bəsa ʔajə?
 cape river big only
 ‘(It was) just Tanjong Sungai Besar.’
- (64) ntua muin pada tanjoŋ suŋay bəsal
 ntwa? mu.in padə tanjoŋ suŋay bəsaL
 elder long.ago say cape river big
 ‘The ancestors called (it) Tanjong Sungai Besar.’

- (65) keŋ ntua pada tɔmpat kastam jə, kasway
keŋ ntwaʔ padə tɔmpat kastam jəʔ, kasway
now elder say place customs that Causeway
‘Now the elders call the place of the customs “Causeway”.’
- (66) yaŋ kasway e jab jə, uŋ
yaŋ kasway e jab yəʔ, ʔuŋ
REL Causeway PAR say that outsider/Malay
‘The ones who called it ‘Causeway’ were the Malays/outsideers.’
- (67) uŋ yaŋ gələ, bukən ntua tə, uŋ
ʔuŋ yaŋ gələ, bukən ntwaʔ təʔ, ʔuŋ
outsider/Malay REL label NEG elder PAR outsider/Malay
‘It was the outsiders/Malays who called (it that), not (our) elders. (It was) the Malays/outsideers.’
- (68) ntua muin pada tanjoŋ suŋay bəsal
ntwaʔ mu.in padə tanjoŋ suŋay bəsaL
elder long.ago say cape river big
‘The ancestors called (it) Tanjong Sungai Besar.’
- (69) ya la, səjarah ntua muin, sampay kə pulay, kə santi
yə la, səjarah ntwaʔ mu.in, sampay kə pulay, kə santiʔ
PAR PAR history elder long.ago reach to Pulau to Santi
‘Yes, the history of our ancestors extends to Pulau, to Santi.’
- (70) sampay kota tiŋgi pun ada kon laot
sampay kota tiŋgi bun adə kon lot
reach Kota.Tinggi PAR EXIST people sea
‘Until Kota Tinggi there were also Sea People.’
- (71) jadi baŋsa uŋ laot kan baŋak... baŋak
jadi, baŋsə ʔuŋ lot kan baŋaʔ... baŋaʔ
so race people sea PAR many many
‘And so the tribes/races of Sea People were numerous... numerous.’
- (72) bila jaman keŋ pun da kəluar e, baŋak nikah baŋak suku baŋsa
bilə jaman keŋ bun da kəlwa e, baŋaʔ nikah baŋaʔ suku baŋsaʔ
when era now PAR COMPL go.out PAR many marry many tribe race
‘When in current times, (a lot of people) too had already gone out (of the villages), a lot (of them) married many tribes and races.’
- (73) jadi bilaŋ-an jə kacok-an, baŋak kacok-an
jadi bilaŋ-an yə kacok-an, baŋaʔ kacok-an
so count-RSLT that mix-RSLT many mix-RSLT
‘and so the groups (of Seletar people) are a mixture, (consisting of) many mixtures.’
(*bilaŋan* means ‘number’, but it also has another meaning ‘group’)
- (74) keŋ, suku səleta ka bilaŋ-an, bole lagi
keŋ, suku səleta ka bilaŋ-an, bole lagiʔ
now tribe Seletar this count-RSLT able again

‘Now (as for) the Seletar tribe here, (our) numbers are still fine.’ (bole lagi = fine)

(75) suku uŋ kanak lagi təkətət
 suku ʔoŋ kanaʔ lagi təkətət
 tribe people Kanaq more little
 ‘The Orang Kanaq tribe is even fewer (in number).’

(76) ncak baŋak tə
 ncaʔ baŋaʔ təʔ
 NEG many PAR
 ‘(There are) not many (of them).’

(77) a sampay jə e
 ʔa sampay jə e...
 PAR reach that PAR
 ‘Until...’

(78) bila da campo pə-gaol siŋa e, uŋ iŋat, kita ka
 bila da campo pə-ga.ol siŋa e, ʔuŋ iŋat, kitaʔ ka
 when COMPL mix CONT-mingle until PAR Malay think 1PL. this

baŋsa uŋ
 baŋsa ʔuŋ
 race Malay

‘(We) have already mixed and mingled around, until the Malays think we here are Malays.’

(79) səbənəŋa baŋsa kita ka, ləbe tə-ekot uŋ luar
 səbənəŋa baŋsa kita kaʔ, ləbe tə-ekot ʔuŋ lwəy
 actually race 1PL this more PFV-follow people outside
 ‘Actually, our race here more often has followed outsiders,’

(80) ncak tə-ekot baŋsa səndiri
 ncaʔ tə-ekot baŋsa səndiri
 NEG PFV-follow race oneself
 ‘and has not followed our own race.’

(81) baŋak tə-ekot uŋ luar
 baŋaʔ tə-ekot ʔuŋ lway
 many PFV-follow people outside
 ‘Many have followed the outsiders.’

(82) maka baŋsa uŋ luar ka sələta ka, lama~kə-lama akan
 maka baŋsa ʔuŋ lway ka sələta ka, lamaʔ~kə-lamaʔ ʔakan
 then race people outsider this Seletar this long(time)~ABSTR-ADV FUT

pupos

pupos

disappear

‘Then the race of the outsiders here, the Seletar here, sooner or later, will disappear.’

(lamaʔ-kələmaʔ = sooner or later)

(83) pupos kərana, ʔa iŋat gələma, suda nikah uŋ luar nikah uŋ
 pupo kəranaʔ, ʔaʔ ʔiŋat gələmə, suda nika ʔuŋ lway nika ʔuŋ
 disappear because 3 think famous COMPL marry people outside marry people

luar

lway

outside

‘(The Seletar tribe) will disappear, because they think (the lifestyle is/ they are)

famous/glamorous/the centre of attention, (having) married outsiders again and again.’

(84) bila taja uŋ ʔa suku uŋ asli, ʔa suda malu... malu
 bilə tajaʔ ʔuŋ ʔa suku ʔuŋ asli, ʔa suda maluʔ... maluʔ
 when ask people 3 tribe people original 3 COMPL ashamed ashamed

‘When asked (if) his people are Orang Asli, he already is ashamed... ashamed.’

(85) bila ʔa nikah cina,
 bilə ʔa nikə cinaʔ,
 when 3 marry Chinese

‘When he marries the Chinese,’

(86) wo, anak saya a, anak kami ka, nama ʔa lim, ataw tan
 wo, ʔanaʔ saya a, ʔanaʔ kami kaʔ, nama ʔa lim, ʔataw tan
 INTRJ child 1SG(M) PAR child 1SG this name 3 Lim, or Tan

‘(he will say): “Wow, my child... my child here, his name is Lim or Tan.”’

(87) pada ʔa uŋ asli
 pada ʔa wuŋ asli
 when.in.fact 3 people original

‘When in fact he is Orang Asli.’

(88) a pada ʔa kə-turun-an uŋ asli
 ʔa pada ʔa kə-turun-an ʔoŋ asli
 PAR when.in.fact 3 ABSTR-descend-ABSTR people original

‘When in fact he is a descendant of Orang Asli.’

(89) ʔa, malu, nak gələ nama, kə-turun-an ʔa
 ʔaʔ, maluʔ, naʔ gələ namaʔ, kə-turun-an ʔaʔ
 3 ashamed COMP label name ABSTR-descend-ABSTR 3

‘He is.. ashamed.. to bear the name.. of his ancestry.’

- (90) a tapi muin len
 ?a tapi buin len
 PAR but long.ago other
 ‘But long ago, (it) was different.’
- (91) səmun nikah suku sama səndiri
 səmun nika suku? sama? sədiri
 all marry tribe same oneself
 ‘All (the people) married within their own race.’
- (92) a memaŋ orijinəl, memaŋ-ŋa
 ?a memaŋ orijinəl, memaŋ-ŋə?
 PAR really original really-EMPH
 ‘(They) were really ‘original’, naturally!’
- (93) tidak layi, tidak pisa puŋa
 tida? layi?, tida? pisa puŋə
 NEG run NEG separate PAR
 ‘(They) did not run away, did not get separated.’

Jadi Nelayan (Being a fisherwoman)

T discusses about how she learned to forage for crabs and molluscs from a young age and how she learned from her elders. She reminisces about the past, how the people traded fish for other food items and not with money. She then laments her age but still hopes for the best for the future. Square brackets [] are used to mark the speech of the interpreter. Lines in **fuchsia** colour indicate that the speaker is dialect switching.

- (1) kita mula~mula lagi kəcit
 kita mula~mula? lagi kəcit
 1PL start~ADV again little
 ‘We, at the beginning, were still young.’ / ‘One, at the beginning, was still young.’
- (2) kalaw pak kita da cayi kətam, kita kəna ekot
 kalaw pa? kita da cayi kətam, kita kəna ekot
 if father 1PL COMPL find crab 1PL have.to follow
 ‘If our/one’s father (went to) look for crabs, we /one had to follow.’
- (3) a kəna... ekot
 ?a kəna... ?ekot
 PAR have.to follow
 ‘Ah yes, (we /one) had to follow (him).’
- (4) kalaw kita da bole jan, cayi kətam ekot mak kita
 kalaw kita? da bole jan, cayi? kətam ekot ma? kita?
 if 1PL COMPL can walk find crab follow mother 1PL
 ‘When we were/ one was already able to walk, (we/one) followed our/one’s mother (to) look for crabs.’ (lit. ‘find crab, follow our/one’s mother’)

- (5) kita kəna bələja la, macamak ntua cayi kətam
kita kəna? bələjə la, macama? ntwa? cayi? kətam
IPL have.to learn PAR how elders find crab
‘We/one had to learn, how our elders looked for crabs.’
- (6) masa tu, tak sala, umo saya lima tahun-
masa tu, ta? sala, umo sayə limə tahun
time that NEG wrong age 1SG(M) five year
‘(At) that time, (if I’m) not wrong, I was five years old.’
- (7) pukul lima pagi, pak mənunju am la
pukul limə pagi, pa? mənju am la
hour five morning father EVENT:wait 1SG PAR
‘(At) five o’clock in the morning, (my) father would be waiting for me.’
- (8) oy jumban dəkət dapor aran pagi~pagi
ʔoy jumban dəkət dəpoy ayan pagi~pagi?
INTRJ meet at kiln charcoal morning~EMPH
‘‘Oi, (let’s) meet at the charcoal kiln (in) the early morning.’’
- (9) aəl=na sə=təŋa naŋ ka, jumban a pukul lima pagi jan
aəy=na sə=təŋa naŋ ka?, jumban a pukul limə pagi jan
water-DEF one-half REL this meet PAR hour five morning walk
‘‘The water level (near the kiln) is half (of) this one, (we) meet (at) five o’clock in the morning and go.’’
- (10) sampay dəkət sun suka, a pukul enam pagi, da hampe nənah la
sampay dəkət sun suka?, ʔa pukul enam pagi?, da hampe nənah la
reach at river Suka PAR hour six morning COMPL almost tired PAR
‘(When we) reached Sungai Suka (at) six in the morning, (we) were almost already tired.’
- (11) jan tə-gaba~gaba, jan ekot gendəs
jan tə-gabə~gabə?, jan ekot gendəs
walk INVOL-hasty~EMPH walk follow river.side
‘(We) walked hastily, following the side of the river.’
- (12) keŋ la da jadi bajaran a
keŋ la da jadi bajaran a
now PAR COMPL become town PAR
‘Now (that place) has already become a town.’
- (13) a keŋ da pasam bajaran
ʔa keŋ da pasam bajaran
PAR now COMPL become town
‘Now (the place) has become a town.’
- (14) muin e ekot gendəs, kon pada, jan a
mu.in e ʔekot gendəs, kon padə, jan a
long.ago PAR follow river.side people say walk PAR
‘In the past, (we) followed the side of the river. The people would say, ‘‘(Let’s) go.’’

- (15) sampay sun suka, a dəkət jə ɲəŋah sampay pagi
 sampay sun sukaʔ, ʔa dəkət jə ɲəŋah sampay pagiʔ
 reach river Suka PAR at that tired/rest reach morning
 ‘When (we) reached Sungai Suka, there, (we) rested until morning.’
- (16) jan~jan dua anak, ncak bow balan aəl diə
 jan~jan dwə anaʔ, ncaʔ bow balan aəl diəʔ
 walk~REP two child NEG bring container water PAR
 ‘(As we) were walking, two children did not bring their water containers.’
- (17) atas jə ada tanam ɲu... ɲu gəndəh
 ʔasaʔ jə ʔadə tanam ɲu... ɲu gəndəh
 top that PFV plant coconut coconut short
 ‘Above us, (someone) had planted coconuts ... the short coconut trees.’
- (18) ɲu e koko... jumpa batan koko
 ɲu e kəkə... jumpə batan kəkə
 coconut PAR coconut meet tree coconut
 ‘Coconut...coconut... (we) saw coconut trees.’
- (19) bila aos e, pak am mada bə-hənti dudok baw, minom
 bila ʔaos e, paʔ ʔam madə b-ənti, dudoʔ baw, minom
 when thirsty PAR father 1SG EVENT: say STV-stop sit bottom drink
- aəl ɲu tu
 ʔaəl ɲu tu
 water coconut that
 ‘When (we) were thirsty, my father said, “Stop”, (and we) would sit under the tree and drink the coconut water.’
- (20) aos aos
 ʔa.os ʔa.os
 thirsty thirsty
 ‘(We) were thirsty...’
- (21) a aəl... aəl kələpa, awak paŋgel kələpa kan
 ʔa ʔaəl... ʔaəl kələpaʔ, awaʔ paŋel kələpə kan
 PAR water water coconut 2SG(M) call coconut PAR:Q
 ‘The water... coconut water, you call (it) ‘kelapa’, right?’ (speaking to researcher)
- (22) a kat sana ada kəbun tanam kələpa
 ʔa kat sanə adə kəbun tanam kələpə
 PAR at/near there EXIST plantation plant coconut
 ‘Near there, there were some plantations that planted coconuts.’
- (23) kita balek pənat lapa kan
 kitə baleʔ pənat lapa kan
 1PL return tired hungry PAR:Q
 ‘(When) we came back, (we) were tired and hungry, right?’

- (24) *kita paŋgel bapak cakap bər-henti dulu*
 kitə paŋgel bapa? cakap bər-enti dulu
 1PL call father say STV-stop first
 ‘We called (our) father and said to stop first.’
- (25) *kita minom ae kəlapa, dudok bawa pokok ni, kita makan*
 kitə minom a.e kəlapə, dudo? bawə poko? ni, kitə makan
 1PL drink water coconutsit bottom tree this 1PL eat
 ‘We drank the coconut water, sitting under this tree, (and) we ate.’
- (26) *dapat kətam satu eko saja*
 dapat kətam satu eko saja
 get crab one CLF:animal only
 ‘(We) got one crab only.’
- (27) *pukol lima pagi tolak a, masa tu wa kəcit*
 pukol limə pagi tola? ?a, masə tu wa kəcit
 hour five morning take.off PAR time that 1SG(HOK) little
 ‘(We) took off (at) five in the morning, (at) that time I was little.’
- (28) *lima tahun a, ekot bapak*
 limə tahun a, ikot bapa?
 five year PAR follow father
 ‘(I) was five years old (when I) followed (my) father (to catch crabs).’
- (29) *lima tahun, a kəcit la*
 lima tahun, ?a kəcit la
 five year PAR little PAR
 ‘Five years old! (I was) little.’
- (30) *maw bəlaja tejok macamana bapak cari kətam*
 maw bəlaja tejo? macamana bapa? cari kətam
 want learn look how father find crab
 ‘(I) wanted to learn and to see how (my) father found crabs.’
- (31) *wa puja pak... kita puja pak bawa apa taw? bəliuŋ*
 wa puja pa?... kitə puja pa? bawa apə taw? bəlyuŋ
 1SG(HOK) POSS father 1PL POSS father bring what PAR axe
 ‘My father ... do you know what my father brought? An axe!’
- (32) *oraŋ məlayu paŋgel kapak*
 oyaŋ məlayu paŋgel kapa?
 people Malay call axe
 ‘The Malays call (it) “kapak”.’

- (33) **satu kapak saja bawa**
 satu kapa? sajə bawa?
 one axe only bring
 ‘(We) brought only one axe.’
- (34) **takda kawat, takda bəsi**
 taʔdə kawat, taʔdə bəsi
 NEG.EXIST wire NEG.EXIST metal
 ‘There were no wires, there was no metal.’
 *the tool for catching crab is a piece of metal wire attached to a wooden handle (Asiah & Suradi, 1977, p. 21)
- (35) **masa tu, memaŋ tak ada pakay daway la**
 masə tu, memaŋ ta? də pakay daway la
 time that indeed NEG PFV use wire PAR
 ‘(At) that time, indeed (we) did not use wire.’
- (36) **masa tu pakay kayu**
 masə tu pakay kayu
 time that use wood
 ‘(At) the time, (we) used wood.’
- (37) **ləpas tu pəgi**
 ləpas tu pəgi
 past that go
 ‘After that... (we) went (to hunt).’
- (38) **pəgi juga, tapi tu balek teŋa hari, dapat sə=eko**
 pəgi juga?, tapi tu bale? təŋa hari, dapat sə=eko
 go also. CONTRARY but that return middle day get one-CLF:animal
- kəcit macam ni, tak bole jual**
 kəcit macam ni, ta? bole jwal
 little like this NEG able sell
 ‘(We) went still, but (when we) returned in the afternoon, (we) had gotten one small (crab), like this.
 (We) could not sell (it).’
- (39) **biken laok**
 biken laʷo?
 make dish.eaten.with.rice
 ‘(We) would make it into a dish.’
- (40) **kita da tak bole hanta kəday**
 kita da ta? bole hanta kəday
 1PL COMPL NEG able send shop
 ‘We already could not send (i.e. sell) (it) to the shop.’
- (41) **kəcit... amat kəcit, macam ni kəcit, tak bole jual**
 kəcit... ʔamat kəcit, macam ni kəcit, ta? bole jual
 small very small like this small NEG able sell

‘(The crab) was small, very small, like this small, (we) couldn’t sell (it).’

(42) a but laok

ʔa bo loʔ

PAR make dish.eaten.with.rice

‘(We) would make it into a dish.’

(43) wa balek rumah...

wa baleʔ kumah...

1SG(HOK) return home

‘I return home...’

(44) lagi ntua muin pun kəna bəlaʒa dəŋan ibu bapak ja
lagi ntwaʔ mu.in pun kəna bəlaʒə dəŋan ibu bapaʔ jaʔ
more elder long.ago PAR have.to learn with mother father 3PL
‘Moreover, the ancestors also had to learn with their parents.’

(45) kalaw kita tak bəlaʒa, mana kita tahu

kalaw kitaʔ taʔ bəlaʒə, mana kita taw

if 1PL NEG learn where 1PL know

‘If we don’t / one doesn’t learn, how are we/ is one supposed to know (how to hunt)?’

(46) kita tak tahu ada nak cayi kətam, cayi sipot

kita taʔ taw adə naʔ cayi kətam, cayi sipot

1PL NEG know EXIST COMP find crab find sea.snail

‘We/one would not know how to find crabs or find sea snails.’

(47) a cayi sipot kita tahu la

ʔa cayi sipot kita taw la

PAR find sea.snail 1PL know PAR

‘Finding sea snails, we know (how to do that).’

(48) poŋot sipot macam~macam, ada tiga jənes

poŋot sipot macam~macam, ʔadə tigə jənes

pick.up sea.snail type~PL EXIST three type

‘(We) collect various types of sea snails. There are three types.’

(49) sipot kəcit, sipot banan, a sipot timba

sipot kəcit, sipot banan, ʔa sipot timbə

sea.snail little sea.snail big PAR sea.snail bucket

‘The little snail, the *siput banang* (*Cerithidea obtusa*)... the *siput timba* (*Nerita histrio* Linnaeus?).’

(50) a len sipot mana saya pun ambe taw

ʔa len sipot manə sayə pun ambe taw

PAR other sea.snail where 1SG(M) PAR take PAR

‘Other types of sea snails, whichever kinds, I will also take (them), you know?’

(51) saya rəbus, saya makan juga

sayə rəbus, sayə makan jugaʔ

1SG(M) boil 1SG(M) eat also.CONTRARY

‘I will still boil and eat (them).’

- (52) [cap kon, cap kon]
cap kon, cap kon
speak Seletar.people speak Seletar.people
M: ‘[Speak in kon (Seletar language)]’ (someone else is reminding the speaker to speak in Seletar)

- (53) masa jə man juga
masə jə man jugə?
time that eat also.CONTRARY
‘(During) that time, (I) would still eat (them).’

- (54) sipot mana wa man cuba la
sipot mana wa man cubə la
sea.snail where 1SG(HOK) eat try PAR
‘Whichever (kind of) sea-snail, I would eat and try (it) out.’

- (55) sə=tiap sipot a, kalaw ada lida, məsti ada ala man puja
sə=tiap sipot ?a, kalaw adə lidə, məsti adə ?ala man puja
one-each sea.snail PAR if EXIST tongue must EXIST able eat PAR
‘Every sea snail, if (they) have tongues, (then they) must have the ability to eat.’

- (56) [saya cian məlayu e, ay ka kəna tiaw]
sayə cian məlayu e, ?ay ka? kəna? tiaw
1SG(M) speak Malay PAR 2 this have.to scold
M: ‘[(If) I spoke Melayu, you here would definitely have scolded me.]’

- (57) takpa... takpa
ta?pa... ta?pa?
never.mind never.mind
‘It’s fine... it’s fine.’ / ‘Never mind... never mind.’

- (58) [am cayi sipot, sə=kilo, bua emaŋ a]
?am cayi sipot, sə=kilo, bwa emaŋ a
1SG find sea.snail one-kilogram how.much guess PAR
‘[I found sea snails, one kilogram, how much was (that) approximately?]’

- (59) oy, sipot mata əmbia
?oy, sipot mata ?əmbia
INTRJ sea.snail eye red
‘Oi, the red eye snail.’ (*Cerithidea obtusa?*)

- (60) əm... sə=kati, sə=puloh sen
?əm... sə=kati?, s=pwoh sen
FIL one-kati one-ten cent
‘Um... one kati was ten cents.’

- (61) memaŋ sə=puloh sen, masa kami kəcit la
memaŋ s=pwo sen, masə kami? kəcit la
indeed one-ten cent time 1SG little PAR

‘Indeed (it was) ten cents, (during) the time when I was little.’

(62) am cayi, a masa budak ə, masa kəcit~kəcit la
 ʔam cayi, ʔa masə budaʔ ə, masə kəcit~kəcit la
 1SG find PAR time kids FIL time little~EMPH PAR
 ‘I looked (for snails) (during my) childhood... the time when I was very little.’

(63) ə sə=kati, sə=puloh sen
 ʔə sə=katiʔ, s=plo sen
 FIL one-kati one-ten cent
 ‘One kati was ten cents.’

(64) wo muin sə=puloh sen jə agak mal
 wo mu.in sə=plo sen jə agaʔ mal
 INTRJ long.ago one-ten cent that quite expensive
 ‘Woah, in the past, those ten cents were quite a lot of money.’

(65) kalaw ekot-kan am muin e, cayi sipot takpaya juh də
 kalaw ikot-kan ʔam mu.in ε, cayi sipot taʔpaya juh də
 if follow-TRANS 1SG long.ago PAR find sea.snail NEG.need far PAR
 ‘If according to me (i.e. my experience) in the past, (we) didn’t need to (go) far to find snails.’

(66) dəkət baŋ suŋay jə da ada kətam
 dəkət baŋ suŋə yə da adə kətam
 at river.bank river that COMPL EXIST crab
 ‘At the river bank, there were already crabs.’

(67) da ada... anoy sipot
 da ʔadə... ʔanoy sipot
 COMPL EXIST FIL sea.snail
 ‘There were already... sea snails.’

(68) bə-wana meah kadaŋ~kadaŋ dapat, a, əmpat kati, lima kati,
 bə-wana me.ah kadaŋ~kadaŋ dapat, ʔa, mpat katiʔ, lima katiʔ,
 POSS-colour red sometimes~EMPH get PAR four kati five kati
 ‘(We) would sometimes get the red coloured (snails)’ ... Four katis, five katis of (snails).’

(69) bawpo sen dapat ... lima ənam puloh sen aja, ncaŋ baŋak də
 bawpo sen dapat ... lima ʔənam puo sen ajəʔ ncaʔ baŋaʔ dəʔ
 few cent get five six ten cent only NEG many PAR
 ‘(That would) get (us) a few cents... fifty to sixty cents only, not a lot.’

(70) wa, taym masa jə, pisaŋ, tak sala, tiga sen satu kati
 wa, taym masə jəʔ, pisaŋ, taʔ sala, tigə sen satu katiʔ
 INTRJ time time that banana NEG wrong three cent one kati
 ‘Wah, (at) the time, (for) bananas, (if I’m) not wrong, three cents is (for) one kati.’

(71) a pisaŋ
 ʔa pisaŋ
 PAR banana

‘Yes, bananas.’

- (72) a bəli tigə geŋet
ʔa bəli tə geŋet
PAR buy three ringgit
‘(We) bought three ringgits (of banana).’
- (73) ada satu pawu, bowo las jə, təmpat tidu jə, səmuə pənoh
ʔadə satu pawuʔ, bowo las yə, təmpat tidu yə, səmuə pənoh
EXIST one boat bottom mat that place sleep that all full
‘There was a boat. (At) the bottom of the mat, the sleeping place, was all filled (with bananas).’
- (74) masa jə memaŋ agak sənaŋ la
masə jə memaŋ agaʔ sənaŋ la
time that indeed quite easy PAR
‘(At) that time, indeed (life) was quite easy.’
- (75) nak makan buah, nak makan... anak
naʔ makan buəh, naʔ makan... ʔanaʔ
want eat fruit want eat what
‘(When we) wanted to eat fruit, wanted to eat... whatever.’
- (76) apa~apa la buah yaŋ uŋ tanam jə, cəmpədəʔ, bəmut
ʔapa~apa la buəh yaŋ oŋ tanam yəʔ, cəmpədəʔ, bəmut
what~INDET PAR fruit REL people plant that cempedak rambutan
‘whatever fruits that people planted, (be it) cempedak, rambutan.’
- (77) səmun takpaya pakay bəli, pakay tulak laok aja
səmun taʔpaya pakay bəliʔ, pakay tukul lawəʔ ʔajə
all NEG.need use buy use barter dish.eaten.with.rice only
‘All (of it), (we) didn’t need to buy. (We) just needed to trade with food/dish (for them).’
- (78) ada ika, bawa ikan
ʔadə ikan, bawə ikan
EXIST fish bring fish
‘(If) there was fish, (we) brought fish (to trade).’
- (79) ada kətam, hanta kətam
ʔadə kətam, ʔantə kətam
EXIST crab send crab
‘(If) there were crabs, we sent the crabs (to be traded).’
- (80) kalaw dəŋan cina a, hanta kətam, macam jə
kalaw nəŋan cinaʔ ʔa, ʔanta kətam, macam jəʔ
if with Chinese PAR send crab like that
‘When (we traded) with the Chinese, (we) sent crabs. That’s how it went.’
- (81) ibu
ibu
salt.water.mussel (*ibau* in Malay)

‘(We brought) salt water mussels (too).’

- (82) bila hanta jual tɛmpat cina tanam duku a, kəna bow ibu
 bila hanta jual tɛmpat cina tanam duku a, kəna bow ibu,
 when send sell place Chinese plant langsung PAR have.to bring salt.water.mussel

bow kətam, macam jə
 bow kətam, macam jə?
 bring crab like that

‘When (we) went to sell (things) at the place where the Chinese planted *duku langsung* fruits, we had to bring mussels, bring crabs. That’s how it went.’

- (83) masa kami kəcit la, am iŋat
 masə kami kəcit la, ʔam iŋat
 time 1SG little PAR 1SG remember
 ‘(That was during) the time when I was little. I remember.’

- (84) a masa jə, memaŋ, ekot ntua~tua la
 ʔa masə jə, memaŋ, ekot ntwaʔ~twaʔ la
 PAR time that indeed follow elder~PL PAR
 ‘(During) that time, (I) indeed followed the elders.’

- (85) macamak nak cayi sipot, macamak nak cayi kətam, kita
 macamaʔ naʔ cayi sipot, macamaʔ naʔ cayi kətam, kita
 how COMP find sea.snail how COMP find crab 1PL

kəna bəlaja lagi kəcit, baw kita bəsal, kita tahu,
 kəna bəlajə lagi kəcit, baw kitaʔ bəsa, kitaʔ taw,
 have.to learn more little only.then 1PL big 1PL know

kita paham, baw kita tahu
 kitaʔ paham, baw kitaʔ taw
 1PL understand only.then 1PL know

‘how to look for snails, how to look for crabs, we have to/one has to learn (those skills) (when) we are/one is still young, only then (when) we are/one is older, we/one will know, we/one will understand. Only then we/one will know.’

- (86) takpaya kalaw kita da bəsa, da da, tahu cayi man
 taʔpaya... kalaw kita da bəsa, da daʔ, taw ceyi man
 NEG.need if 1PL COMPL big COMPL virgin know find eat

səni
 səni?
 oneself

‘(We) don’t need to... When we are/one is already older, already of age, and know (how to) find food on our own,’

- (87) a da bole ekot kon da, cayi man
 ʔa da bole ekot kən da, ceyi man
 PAR COMPL able follow Seletar.people COMPL find eat

‘then (we/one) can already follow the people, to look for food.’

- (88) a masa jə tak kan susah lagi la
 ʔa masə jə taʔ kan susa lagi la
 PAR time that NEG FUT difficult more PAR
 ‘(At) that time, (life) will not be difficult anymore.’

- (89) nak caŋkol səntaŋ ka anak a, takpaya tunjok bələjə dəŋan
 naʔ caŋkol səntaŋ kə anaʔ ʔa, tapaya tunjoʔ bələjə dəŋan
 want dig mollusc or what PAR NEG.need point/show learn with

 kon tu, takpaya
 kən tu, tapaya
 Seletar.people that NEG.need
 ‘(When we) want to dig for molluscs or something, (we) do not need be guided and learn with the (other) people. No need.’

- (90) a kəna buat kəjə səni, macam jə
 ʔa kəna bwə kəjə səniʔ, macam jəʔ
 PAR have.to make work oneself like that
 ‘(We) have to do (our own) work by ourselves. That’s how it goes.’

- (91) a apa yaŋ kita... da kalaw but kəjə dapat duit, kita
 ʔa ʔapə yaŋ kitə... da kalaw but kəjə dapat duyit, kitə
 PAR what REL 1PL COMPL if make work get money 1PL
 kəna but la
 kəna but la
 have.to make PAR
 ‘Whatever (things) that we/one... if (we/one) already did work and gotten paid, we have to/one has to make (the things we want).’
 *When the Orang Seletar still lived in boats, for a male to be considered an adult and of marriageable age, he had to build and own his own boat (Juma’at, 2017).

- (92) a macam jə, kəna but
 ʔa macam jəʔ, kəna but
 PAR like that have.to make
 ‘That’s how it goes. (We) have to make (them).’

- (93) masa jə lokam bəlom ada aga
 pasə jə lokam bəlom adə ʔagəʔ
 time that clam not.yet EXIST price
 ‘(At) that time, clams (Polymesoda) did not yet have a price.’

- (94) ada lokam aja, but laok aja
 ʔadə lokam ajə, but ləʔ ʔajə
 EXIST clam only make dish only
 ‘(When) there were clams only, (we) would just make them into dishes.’

- (95) kalaw masa am da jə, am cayi səntaŋ
 kalaw masə am daʔ yə, ʔam cayi səntaŋ
 if time 1SG virgin that 1SG find mollusc

‘(As for) the time when I was of age, I looked for molluscs.’

- (96) *memañ cayı səntañ aja*
memañ ceyi səntañ ajə
 indeed find mollusc only
 ‘Indeed, (I) looked only for molluscs.’

- (97) *kalaw bole dapat səntañ jə, kita teŋok, sampay kita balek*
kalaw bole dapat səntañ yə, kita teŋoʔ, sampay kita baleʔ,
 if able get mollusc that 1PL see reach 1PL return

bəat~bəat yaŋ kita dapat
bə.at~bə.at yaŋ kita dapat
 weight~PL REL 1PL get

‘If (we) were able to get the molluscs, we would look, until we returned, at the weights (of the molluscs) that we had gotten.’

- (98) *taŋan ka paliŋ rajin o*
taŋan kaʔ paliŋ gajin o
 hand this most hardworking PAR
 ‘These hands were the most hardworking!’

- (99) *aŋkat bəat*
ʔaŋkat bə.at
 carry weight
 ‘(at) carrying weights.’

- (100) *aəl satu peŋ=ŋa pənoh*
ʔaəl satu peŋ=ŋə pənoh
 water one water.jar=DEF full
 ‘The water, one jar full (of it)...’

- (101) *təmpayan*
təmpayan
water.jar
 ‘(You call it) ‘*təmpayan*’ (in Malay).’ (speaking to researcher)

- (102) *bole aŋkat naek satu oraŋ taw, dulu, masa wa anak*
bole aŋkat naeʔ satu oraŋ taw, dulu, masə waʔ anaʔ
 able carry up one person PAR in.the.past time 1SG(HOK) child

dara la
darə la
 virgin PAR

‘(I) was able to carry up (the water jug) by myself, you know, in the past, (at) the time when I was a young woman.’

- (103) *aŋkat təmpayan tu, bawa, turun pawu la, a*
ʔaŋkat təmpayan tu, bawaʔ turun pawuʔ la, ʔa
 carry water.jug that bring descend boat PAR PAR

‘(I) carried that water jug and brought (it) down to the boat.’

- (104) masa jə bukan ada ruma la
 masə jə bukan adə ruma la
 time that NEG EXIST house PAR
 ‘(At) that time, (we) didn’t have a house.’

- (105) nca? ruma dat tə, ruma dudok dalam pawu
 nca? ruma dat tə, ruma dudo? dalam pawu?
 NEG house land PAR house live in boat
 ‘(We) didn’t have a house on land. (Our) house, (we) lived in a boat.’

- (106) aŋkat peŋ s=on~son dəkət piŋi jə, ala bow balek
 ?aŋkat peŋ s=on~son dəkət piŋi yə?, ?ala bow bale?
 carry water.jug one-person~EMPH at water.well that able bring return
 ‘(I) carried the water jug by myself at that well and (I) was able to bring it back (to the boat).’

- (107) keŋ, nak lima kilo, nak aŋkat pun payah, memaŋ payah
 keŋ, na? lima kilo, na? aŋkat pun payah, memaŋ payah
 now IM.FUT five kilogram COMP carry PAR difficult indeed difficult
 ‘Nowadays, almost five kilograms, to carry (that) will also be difficult, indeed really difficult.’

- (108) teŋok umo da nam puloh ləbe, macamak bole nak aŋkat bəat
 teŋo? umo da dam puloh ləbe, macama? bole na? aŋkət bə.at
 see age COMPL six ten more how able want carry weight
 ‘Look, (my) age is already in the sixties. How am I able to carry weights?’

- (109) o nak aŋkat badan səni, kəna but jogiŋ səni la, a
 ?o na? aŋkat badan səni?, kəna bot jogiŋ səni? la, ?a
 INTRJ want carry body oneself have.to make jogging oneself PAR PAR
 ‘Oh, (if you) want to carry (your) body(weight) yourself, (you) have to do jogging yourself.’

- (110) kəna bawa jan~jan
 kəna? bawa jan~jan
 have.to bring walk~REP
 ‘(You) have to bring (yourself) to walk around.’

- (111) bukən nak pesən ŋok, nca?
 bukən na? pesən ŋo?, nca?
 NEG want show.off body NEG
 ‘(It is) not that (we) want to show off (our) bodies, no.’

- (112) nak jan napas kita bətol ya
 na? jan napas kita bətol yə
 want road breath 1PL correct PAR
 ‘(We) want our breath flow to be right, yeah?’

- (113) nak but bətol napas kita
 na? but bətol napa kita?
 want make correct breath 1PL

‘We want to correct our breathing.’

- (114) lagipun, am ə mula sampay sika, memañ tak ada jañun
 lagipun, ʔam ə mula sampay sikaʔ, memañ taʔ də jañun,
 furthermore 1SG FIL start reach here indeed NEG PFV walk.far

tak ada jañkyan
 taʔ də jañkyan
 NEG PFV come.here

‘Furthermore, I, from the start until now, indeed do not walk here and there.’

- (115) memañ agak səmpot
 memañ agaʔ səmpot
 indeed quite breathless
 ‘(It) indeed (makes me) quite breathless.’

- (116) kuat man, kalaw tak bua bə-jan, kita jadi susah o
 kwat man, kalow taʔ bwa bə-jan, kita jadi susah o
 strong eat if NEG as.much.as CONT-walk 1PL become difficult PAR
 ‘(We) eat/one eats vigorously, (but) if we don’t/one doesn’t walk as much, we/one will suffer.’

- (117) a aku səmpot nak jan junsit tə
 ʔa ʔaku səmpot naʔ jan junsit təʔ
 PAR 1SG(M) breathless COMP walk far.away PAR
 ‘I am breathless to walk far distances.’

- (118) keñ kalaw isisay səlalulu, a agak sənañ sit
 keñ kalaw isisay səlaluluʔ, ʔa agaʔ sənañ sit
 now if exercise always PAR quite easy little
 ‘Now if (I) exercise frequently, (I will feel) a little more at ease.’

- (119) memañ tak... ncak jadi masala
 memañ taʔ... ncaʔ jedi masala
 indeed NEG NEG become problem
 ‘Indeed, (that) won’t become a problem.’

- (120) sənañ nak buat bə-jan ɲok, a sənañ
 sənañ naʔ bwat bə-jan ɲoʔ, ʔa sənañ
 easy COMP make CONT-walk body PAR easy
 ‘(It) will be easy to walk with my body. Easy.’

- (121) kərana kita nak kəna jaga ɲok kita... əm bətol
 kə.ana kitaʔ naʔ kənaʔ jəgə ɲoʔ kitaʔ... ʔəm bətolʔ
 because 1PL want have.to take.care body 1PL FIL correct
 ‘(We exercise) because we need to take care of our bodies, right?’

- (122) kalaw bole, kita ada apa~apa la, kita usa iñat e
 kalaw bole, kitaʔ ʔadə ʔapa~apa la, kitaʔ ʔusa iñat e
 if able 1PL EXIST what~INDET PAR 1PL IMP.NEG remember PAR
 ‘If (we) can, if we have anything (wrong), don’t hold on to it.’

(123) kita lupa aja
 kita lupa ayəʔ
 1PL forget only
 ‘We just forget (about it).’

(124) kalaw bole, kita nak cayi yaŋ baw
 kalaw bole, kitaʔ naʔ ceyi jaŋ baw
 if able 1PL want find REL new
 ‘If (we) can, we want to look for something that is