

values for degrees of difference, I have also taken into account correspondences that are common, i.e., that native speakers are conscious of, and assigned degrees of difference lower than the difference in terms of steps where appropriate.

3. A Lexicostatistic Analysis of Pwo Karen in the Northern Provinces of Thailand

In the following sections we will consider the varieties of Pwo Karen spoken in each of the six provinces where research was conducted. A lexicostatistic analysis and other pertinent information will be provided for each province.

3.1 Lamphun Province

In general, the Pwo Karen of Lamphun province have had less contact with Sgaw Karen and Christian missionaries than those living in the other northern provinces. In Chiang Rai, Phrae, Lampang and Chiang Mai there has been contact with missionaries in varying degrees for many years. Christian Pwo Karen can be found in each of these provinces. In contrast, the Pwo Karen of Lamphun seem to have held more closely to their traditional beliefs and have had only limited contact with expatriate researchers and missionaries, or with Thai government workers. While some of the villages located near major roads have adopted Buddhist beliefs the majority remain animists and there is no evidence of Christian influence at all. On the other hand, bilingualism in Northern Thai tends to be fairly high.

The *Tribal Population Summary in Thailand (TPST)* indicates that there are 62 Karen villages in Lamphun province, although the only list of villages available comes from the *DTVNAD*, which lists only 44 Karen villages. Using the 44 villages that could be identified, I supplemented that list through interviews in sixteen villages and discovered a total of 46 villages. Of the 46 villages identified, thirty were discovered to be strictly or mainly Pwo, and sixteen were identified as strictly or mainly Sgaw (contra Dhananjayananda 1983:7 who reports that HUA TOM is the only Sgaw Karen village in

Lamphun).⁹

The *TPST* (1987) reports the total population of Karen in Lamphun at 21,280. Of these approximately 15,000 are Pwo Karen.

Pwo Karen Villages in Lamphun Province

BAAN PONG	MAE KANAAT
DOI WONG	MAE LEK
DONG DAM	MAE LI
HUAI KHUA	MAE POK
HUAI BONG	MAE SA UN
HUAI HIA	MAE SAEM
HUAI HOM NAI	MAI SALI 1
HUAI HOM NOK	MAI SALI 2
HUAI LA	NAKLAANG
HUAI PANG	NONG PHA
HUAI PING	NONG RAK
HUAI PONG	PA KO
HUAI SAI KHAM	PA LAU
HUAI TOK	SAN JAI
KHUN KONG	TIN DOI KHAM

Sgaw Karen Villages in Lamphun Province

DOI CHANG	MAE BON NOOK
HUAI MA DA	MAE SANGAE
HUAI PONG	MAE SAPUAT
HUAI SALE	PHA NAAM
HUAI TOM	PHAA DAAN
HUAI TOM (some Pwo also)	PONG DAENG
HUAI TON NUN	PONG PHAANG
MAE BON NAI	TIN DOI KHAM *

*Mixed Pwo/Sgaw

⁹How the additional 16 villages listed in the *TPST* should be accounted for is unclear. In the interviews, an additional eight Pwo villages were named. The locations of three of these is unclear: LAI DOI, MAE SAENG, and THUNG KHAAW HANG. The other five are apparently located in Chiang Mai province: BAAN MAI and HUAI LAI (Hot District), HUAI MUANG, KO LUANG, and NONG PU (Doi Tao District). Some of the remaining villages counted in the *TPST* are probably located in Li District, while the rest either no longer exist or are now strictly Northern Thai villages.

The interviews indicated that there were clusters of villages that represent variations in dialect. In each of these clusters the variety of language spoken is perceived to be identical by those who live in the villages within the cluster. However, speakers from each cluster perceive the variety of language spoken in the other clusters to be significantly different. The four clusters are shown below:

GROUP 1

HUAI LA
HUAI TOK
HUAI BONG
MAE POK
HUAI SAI KHAM
NAKLAANG
DONG DAM

GROUP 3

HUAI PONG
PA LAU
MAE SA UN (HUAI PHAK NAM)
HUAI PANG
MAE KANAAT
TIN DOI KHAM

GROUP 2

MAI SALI 1
MAI SALI 2
MAE SAEM
MAE LI
NONG RAK
PA KO
HUA KHUA
NONG PHA
DOI WONG
SAN JAI
HUAI PING
HUAI PONG

GROUP 4

MAE LEK
KHUN KONG
HUAI HOM NOK
HUAI HOM NAI
HUAI HIA
BAAN PONG

Although there is perceived variation in dialect among the four groups, speakers of the four groups unanimously reported that they could understand 100% of the speech of speakers from each of the other groups.

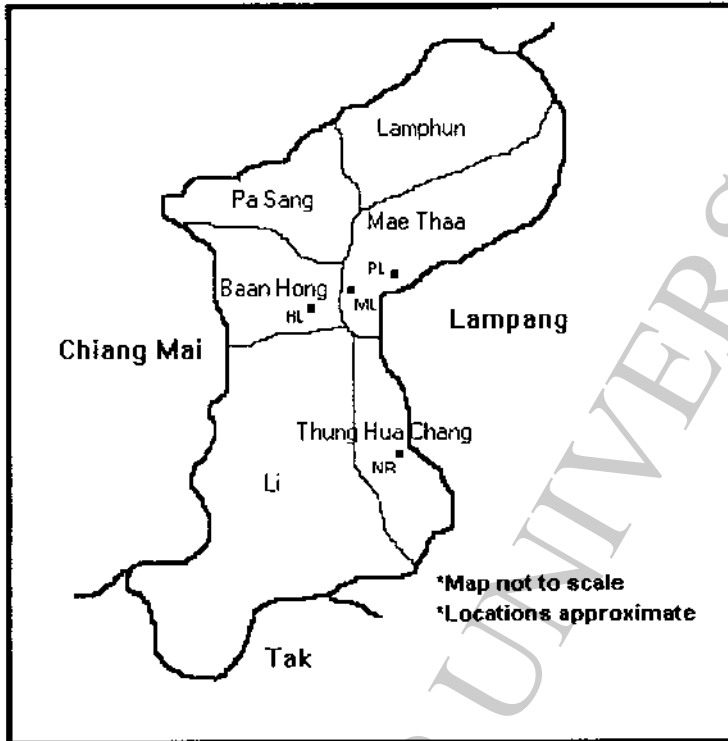
In order to evaluate the perceived dialectal variations, one village from each group was chosen as a location for eliciting a word list. These locations are listed below and shown on Map 1 :

HUAI LA, Baan Hong District (Group 1)

NONG RAK, Thung Hua Chaang Sub-District (Group 2)

PA LAU, Mae Thaa District (Group 3)

MAE LEK, Mae Thaa District (Group 4)



MAP 1 Lamphun Province

The data obtained through these word lists supports the conclusion that had been reached through the interviews, i.e., the Pwo Karen in Lamphun province speak a single language. This language can (preliminarily) be divided into three dialects, here named according to the geographical areas in which they are spoken, namely, Baan Hong dialect (Group 1), Thung Hua Chaang dialect (Group 2), and Mae Thaa dialect (Groups 3 and 4). I have chosen to group the speech varieties found in MAE LEK and PA LAU as a single dialect, here called the Mae Thaa dialect, with two sub-dialects. This

is reflected in the interviews, in that although many villages reported a slight difference, several others reported the two sub-varieties to be identical. It is also reflected in the lexicostatistics where the word lists from MAE LEK and PA LAU showed the highest percentage of lexical similarity (97%).¹⁰

MAE LEK (Mae Thaa sub-dialect)	
97 PA LAU (Mae Thaa sub-dialect)	
95 95 NONG RAK (Thung Hua Chang sub-dialect)	
94 93 93 HUAI LA (Baan Hong sub-dialect)	

TABLE 1 Lexical Similarity Percentages in Lamphun Province

The figures in Table 1 show a relatively high degree of lexical similarity among the Pwo Karen varieties spoken in Lamphun province. It is interesting to note that the Mae Thaa dialect which is spoken in northern Lamphun, is closer to the Thung Hua Chang dialect, which is located in southern Lamphun, than it is to the geographically closer Baan Hong dialect of central Lamphun. This can be attributed to different migration patterns. Whereas, the Mae Thaa and Thung Hua Chang Pwo Karen apparently migrated from Chiang Mai province, the Baan Hong Pwo Karen, at least those from HUAI LA, migrated from the extreme southern part of Mae Hong Son province, an area that appears to be right on the dialect boundary. We will return to this issue below.

3.2 Phrae Province

For Phrae province, the *DTVNAD* lists a total of thirteen Karen villages, while the more recent *TPST* lists fourteen villages. From interviews in Long District and Wang

¹⁰This conclusion is further supported by the phonostatic analysis presented in Section 4.4.

Chin District it was determined that there are only nine Karen villages in Phrae province, all of which are Pwo Karen. The additional four listed in the *DTVNAD*, MAE LANG, JAE FAA, NAA HANG and KHANG KHAM PAN, were previously Karen villages but are now occupied strictly by Northern Thai.¹¹

There is a total of 7,720 Karen living in Phrae province according to the *TPST* (1987). However, this figure includes the populations of five additional villages listed in the *DTVNAD* which are now strictly Northern Thai villages. The actual number of Pwo Karen in Phrae province probably does not exceed 6,000.

Pwo Karen Villages in Phrae Province

BAAN PONG	MAE JONG FAI
KHANG JAI	MAE SIN
KHANG PIN JAI	MAE TEUT
KHANG TANA	SALOK
MAE HAET	

Dialectal variation within Phrae province appears to correlate with the districts in which the villages are found. Thus, there are two dialects of Pwo Karen in Phrae, one spoken in Long District and the other in Wang Chin District. These dialects were reported by Pwo Karen in Phrae to be 100% intelligible with very few lexical variants and some phonological differences. Word lists were elicited in one village from each district, namely, MAE JONG FAI (Long District) and SALOK (Wang Chin District). Through a lexicostatic analysis the dialects in these two districts were found to be 96% lexically similar.

¹¹It is likely that the fourteenth village listed in the *TPST* belongs in this same category. However, I was unable to confirm this since the *TPST* does not list village names.

3.3 Lampang Province

For Lampang province, the *DTVNAD* and the *TPST* both list 24 Karen villages. From my research I have identified 23 Karen villages in the province. These are located in three districts and one sub-district: Muang, Ngaw, Jae Hom, and Soem Ngam Sub-District. Only four of these were Pwo Karen villages.

The *TPST* (1987) reports the total population of Karen in Lampang to be 3,158. Based on information provided by villagers, the Pwo Karen population of Lampang can be roughly estimated at about 600.

Pwo Karen Villages in Lampang Province

BAAN KLANG
HUAI TAAT

MAE HANG TAI
MAE SAAN

HUAI TAAT and BAAN KLANG speak essentially the same dialect. In each of these locations it was reported that the people at MAE SAAN and MAE HANG TAI speak "slightly different", or "faster." Many of the inhabitants of HUAI TAAT and BAAN KLANG reportedly migrated from SALOK in Phrae province. Some of the original inhabitants of MAE SAAN migrated from MAE JONG FAI in Phrae Province and others from BAAN KLANG. However, it is not clear whether or not the majority of the original inhabitants came from either of these locations. The majority of the original inhabitants of MAE HANG TAI, on the other hand, reportedly migrated from MAE SAAN and villagers maintain that they speak the same exact dialect as that spoken in MAE SAAN. A check of thirty key words from the word list verified this (the responses were not only lexically identical but phonologically identical as well).

Though there was a slight degree of difference reported, the variety of Pwo Karen spoken in HUAI TAAT and BAAN KLANG was reported to be 100% intelligible with that spoken in MAE SAAN and MAE HANG TAI. A lexicostatistic analysis of data from

BAAN KLANG and MAE SAAN showed the dialect varieties spoken in the two sets of villages to be 97% lexically similar.

Although three of the four Pwo Karen villages in Lampang are geographically quite close (HUAI TAAT, BAAN KLANG, and MAE SAAN are located along a 24 kilometer stretch of road in Muang District), there is some slight dialectal variation stemming from different migration patterns.

In addition to the four Pwo Karen villages, there are nineteen Sgaw Karen villages in Lampang province.

Sgaw Karen Villages in Lampang Province

BAAN KLANG	MAE KHUA
HUAI HIA	MAE KING
HUAI KHAM MI	MAE LEUNG NAI
HUAI KHAT	MAE LEUNG NOK
HUAI MUANG	MAE LIANG PHATANA
HUAI PONG	MAE MI
HUAI TAAT BO	MAE TOM
MAE HANG NUA	PANG PONG
MAE JOK FA	PONG ROON
MAE KADONG	

In addition to the Pwo Karen and Sgaw Karen villages listed above, eight additional Karen villages are listed in the *DTVNAD*: TUNG KAE, MUANG CHUM, MAE LA, HUAI HOK, MAE JEUNG, PA KHA, MAE PAI and MAE TAEK. Sgaw Karen in other villages reported that some of these had been Sgaw Karen villages at one time but were now either occupied solely by Northern Thai, or simply no longer existed.

3.4 Chiang Rai Province

For Chiang Rai province, the *DTVNAD* lists a total of 30 Karen villages located in four districts while the more recent *TPST* lists 32 Karen villages. The two additional

villages listed in the *TPST* are apparently villages that are located in a fifth district (Wiang Chai).

The Karen villages in Mae Suai District and Wiang Pa Pao District are strictly Sgaw Karen. In Muang District, there are three villages that have a significant number of Pwo Karen, in addition to Sgaw Karen and Northern Thai. In Mae Jan District, the villages all appear to be mixed Pwo/Sgaw, while the two villages in Wiang Chai District are strictly Pwo.

The *TPST* (1986) reports the total population of Karen in Chiang Rai to be 5,483. Of this number, roughly 3,000 live in the strictly Sgaw villages of Mae Suai and Wiang Pa Pao districts, 2,000 in the mixed villages found in Muang District and Mae Jan District, and 500 in the two villages (approximately 80 households) in Wiang Chai District. There is a total of nine villages with significant numbers of Pwo Karen. Their total population in Chiang Rai can be roughly estimated to be about 1,500.

Pwo Karen Villages in Chiang Rai

Wiang Chai District	Mae Jan District	Muang District
THUNG KHONG HUAI LUK	BAAN DOI* NONG DAAN* PA SANG NGAM* HUAI SAK*	PONG NAM TOK* NAM LAT* RUAM MIT*

*These villages have significant numbers of Sgaw Karen speakers also.

Sgaw Karen Villages in Chiang Rai

Mae Suai District	Wiang Pa Pao District	Muang District
THUNG PRAAW	MAE PUN LUANG	KHAM NU
YAA NAM	HUAI MO	DOI HANG
SAEN TO	HIN LAAT MAI	YANG KLANG
HUAI SALAK	HIN LAAT NAI	HUAI KHOM
PA MUANG	MAE CHANG KHAAW	PHA KHIAW
MAE YAN MIN TAI	HUAI TONG	PHA MUP
MAE YAN MIN NUA	HUAI TONG KLANG	
	HUAI TONG NAI	
	HUAI RAI	

The village of KHUN BONG, listed in the *DTVWAD* as being located in Mae Jan District, is no longer a Karen village.

The two Pwo Karen villages in Wiang Chai District are largely the result of a migration from Thung Hua Chang Sub-District in Lamphun province some seventy years ago. The original residents came from most of the villages in that area. Those named include: NONG RAK, MAI SALI and PA KO. Many of the Pwo Karen living in the mixed villages in Muang District, on the other hand, migrated from Lampang province approximately thirty years ago.

Lexicostatistically, the variety of Pwo Karen spoken in Wiang Chai District and Mae Jan District are quite close at 97% lexical similarity and should probably be viewed as the same dialect. When these two varieties are compared to the variety spoken in Muang District, however, the lexical-similarity figure is considerably lower (See Table 2).

BAAN DOI

97 THUNG KHONG

93 91 RUAM MIT

TABLE 2 Lexical Similarity Percentages in Chiang Rai Province

Although, based on the interviews intelligibility appears to remain fairly high within Chiang Rai, the RUAM MIT variety of Pwo Karen differs considerably from the other two varieties.

3.5 Chiang Mai Province

Chiang Mai province presents a greater challenge than Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae or Chiang Rai. For this province the *DTVNAD* lists a total of 684 Karen villages located in fifteen districts, while the more recent *TPST* lists 730 Karen villages with a total population of 88,192.¹² Of these, perhaps 30,000 or so are Pwo Karen, although this is a very rough estimate based largely on interviews with expatriates who have worked with the Pwo Karen. Due to the large number of villages found in this province it was not possible to rigidly maintain the methodology outlined above.¹³

Karen villages are located in the following districts of Chiang Mai province:

Districts with Karen villages:

Jom Thong
Doi Tao
Hot
Omkoi

Districts with only Sgaw Karen villages:

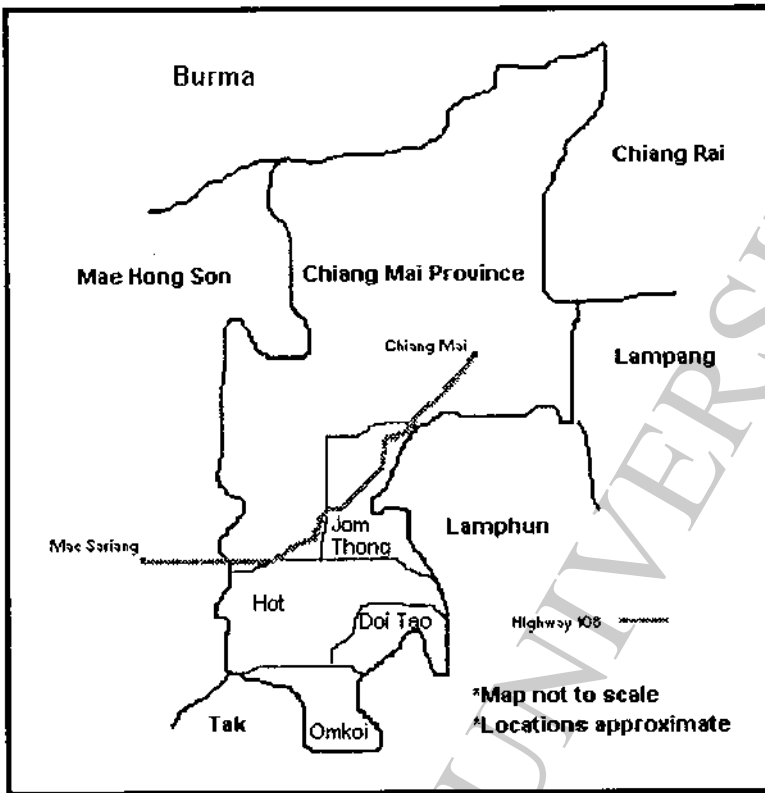
Chiang Dao
Doi Saket
Fang
Mae Ai
Mae Jaem
Mae Rim
Mae Taeng
Phraw
Samoeng
Sankamphaeng
San Pa Tong

The majority of villages found in Jom Thong District are Sgaw Karen, while the

¹²The actual number is probably far greater than this since this represents official figures which only include those Karen who have registered.

¹³Although considerable research was done within Chiang Mai province and the methodology discussed above was used for determining word list locations, I nevertheless suspect that some holes remain. It would be useful to determine exactly which villages speak each of the speech varieties identified. Also, although villagers discussing the speech variety of the Pwo Karen in Hot District always reported it to be uniform, it is possible that there is in fact some variation, with some areas being closer to the dialects spoken in central and southern Thailand while others are closer to the variety spoken in the village of Tian Ang. This would help to explain differences between the data elicited in the course of this research and the dictionary of Morris and Liljestrom (1982), which is based on data from the Hot dialect.

majority of those found in Omkoi District, Hot District and Doi Tao Sub-District are Pwo Karen. Pwo Karen villages are limited to the parts of Chiang Mai province that are located south of Highway 108 (See Map 2 below).



MAP 2 Chiang Mai Province

In Chiang Mai province, the dialect situation among the Pwo Karen becomes a bit more divergent. The Chiang Mai varieties in some districts show more lexical variation than was found in the other four northern provinces considered in this research project, with the exception of RUAM MIT in Chiang Rai province.

WANG LUANG (Doi Tao)

97 TIAN ANG (Hot)

95 96 YANG KHROK (Omkoï)

94 93 91 HUAI MUANG (Jom Thong)

94 94 93 89 MAE KHONG KLANG (Omkoï)

TABLE 3 Lexical Similarity Percentages in Chiang Mai Province

Although we can still note a close relationship between the various varieties of Pwo Karen spoken in southern Chiang Mai province, the differences shown in Table 3 are slightly greater than we have found in the other provinces. The interviews and word lists appear to indicate that the varieties of Pwo Karen spoken in this province become increasingly more divergent as you move south. Because there are also reported dialectal differences in the extreme south of Mae Hong Son province it appears that there is a major dialect boundary that runs from east to west through Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai provinces.

It is interesting to note that the two most divergent members from the Chiang Mai corpus, MAE KHONG KLANG and HUAI MUANG, are very different from one another. We will consider how this can be accounted for below.

3.6 Mae Hong Son Province

Although Mae Hong Son province could not be a primary focus in this study, due to travel restrictions, I was able to obtain two word lists with the help of my research assistant, who went to the villages and recorded the data. The data come from the village of THUNG PHRAW in the Mae Sariang area and the village of LEKHO, south of Sop Moei. Speakers of the THUNG PHRAW variety reported that the varieties of Pwo Karen

spoken south of Sop Moei were significantly different from their variety. The lexicostatistic analysis, which showed the two varieties to be 90% lexically similar, further indicates that these two varieties are less similar than most of the other varieties in this study .

Respondents from LEKHO reported that speakers in all the villages in their area spoke exactly the same dialect.

4. A Comparison of the Pwo Karen Dialects of Northern Thailand

In previous sections we have compared various varieties of Pwo Karen within the context of the geographical, i.e., provincial, boundaries in which they are located. While this is useful for assessing differences among the speech types that are found in each province, it nevertheless represents artificial divisions. In this section we will consider how the eighteen varieties investigated in this study interrelate and will mention some conclusions that can be made from a comparison of their lexical and phonological similarities.

4.1 Lexical Similarities

In considering lexical similarities among a fairly large group of speech varieties, the analyst is faced with a number of dimensions along which a comparison can be made. It is difficult to avoid skewing the results when the corpus is so large.

The goal of our study is to identify dialect groupings among the varieties of Pwo Karen spoken in northern Thailand, and to determine which varieties are typical of each grouping. To accomplish this goal we will need to quantify the degree of lexical similarity that each variety displays to all the other varieties in question. In an effort to strengthen the analysis we will look at the data from several perspectives.

In Table 4 below, percentages of lexical similarity for all of the speech varieties in the corpus, pair by pair, are presented in a matrix.

BAAN DOI (Chiang Rai)
 96 WANG LUANG (Chiang Mai)
 96 96 MAE LEK (Lamphun)
 96 96 96 SALOK (Phrae)
 95 95 97 95 PA LAU (Lamphun)
 95 97 95 94 93 TIAN ANG (Chiang Mai)
 97 95 95 95 95 94 NONG RAK (Lamphun)
 94 94 95 96 96 93 94 MAE JONG FAI (Phrae)
 97 95 95 94 94 93 95 93 THUNG KHONG (Chiang Rai)
 94 95 93 93 92 96 92 92 92 YANG KHROK (Chiang Mai)

94 92 93 93 93 92 92 95 91 92 BAAN KLANG (Lampang)
 93 92 91 92 92 92 91 93 91 91 97 RUAM MIT (Chiang Rai)
 93 92 92 92 92 91 92 94 92 90 96 97 MAE SAAN (Lampang)
 93 93 94 92 93 92 93 93 92 91 90 89 90 HUAI LA (Lamphun)
 93 94 93 91 91 93 92 91 92 91 90 89 90 94 HUAI MUANG (Chiang Mai)
 92 94 91 91 90 94 91 91 90 93 91 91 90 90 89 MAE KHONG KLANG (Chiang Mai)
 93 94 93 92 91 96 91 91 91 94 90 90 89 90 91 92 THUNG PHRAW (Mae Hong Son)
 90 91 88 88 88 91 88 87 89 93 86 86 85 88 88 90 90 LEKHO (Mae Hong Son)

TABLE 4 Lexical Similarity Percentages in the Northern Provinces¹⁴

There are a number of observations we can make from Table 4 regarding the relationships among the varieties of Pwo Karen in northern Thailand. The most obvious is that most of the varieties spoken in four of the northern provinces, Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Phrae, are very closely related (See Map 3 below). This fact is illustrated by the relatively high lexical similarity of the first four locations in the matrix: Baan Doi, Wang Luang, Mae Lek and Salok. These four varieties are the four varieties that are lexically most similar to the other members of the corpus (See Table 5 below). I would like to propose that we call the group of dialects to which these varieties belong **NORTHERN PWO KAREN**.

¹⁴In order to allow for a second type of lexical comparison I have divided Table 4 into two sections. This allows us to compare each variety to a smaller corpus (the upper group of ten) in addition to the entire eighteen varieties. The ten varieties in the first section are considered to be more typical of the Pwo Karen varieties in northern Thailand. Although the lexical similarity percentages do not significantly change between Yang Khrok and Baan Klang, the division is not completely arbitrary since Pwo Karen in northern Thailand generally consider Baan Klang, Ruam Mit and Mae Saan to be much more divergent in nature than the varieties in the upper set.