

***SOCIO-CULTURAL HIERARCHY  
IN THE PALACE LANGUAGE OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM***

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**ABSTRACT**

Brunei Darussalam is a tiny Sultanate located on the north-western coast of the island of Borneo, wedged in between the Sarawak state of Malaysia. Brunei's national philosophy, *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB, 'Malay Islamic Monarchy') reconstructs Brunei's history and invokes Islamic values to support the Malay Sultanate and monarchy, creating an inextricable link between Malay ethnic identity, Malay language (the official language), the nation and Islam. The adoption of the Islamic faith by the monarchs of Brunei in the 13<sup>th</sup> century created a superstructure to the institution of kingship, organization of the state and structure of society, on the foundation laid in the previous era by Hindu-Buddhist Bruneian monarchies. The continuity of the Muslim monarchy legitimizes Brunei's social hierarchy. This hierarchical relationship constructs a diglossic relationship between the official language, Malay, and the other indigenous languages of the country. This sociolinguistic hierarchy further manifests itself among the dialects of Malay, viz., *Kampong Ayer*, Brunei Malay, *Kedayan* and Standard Malay and *Bahasa Dalam* (the Palace Language). Although the speakers of all five varieties are unified by their adherence to Islam, these varieties are indexical of the hierarchical social identities in the Malay society. The Palace Language is characterized by its highly metaphorical expressions and a specialized form of address, highly marked by both verbal and non-verbal communicative characteristics. It is primarily associated with the royal family. As the ancient social hierarchical structure still persists, the commoners are also expected to use it as a mark of respect when addressing the Sultan, ranking members of the royal family and high officials. The forms of address in this language are shaped by both Arabic and Sanskrit influences, the former symbolizing more recent history of Islamic socio-cultural roots, and the latter constituting remnants of a distant Hindu socio-cultural history. This paper will focus on the Palace Language in order to describe and explain the socio-cultural and the historical characteristics of Bruneian society.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Sultan of Brunei symbolises the nation-state Brunei Darussalam in the consciousness of the world populace. People remember him as the 'richest man in the world' once. Among the population of Southeast Asian region, the uniqueness of Brunei is inextricably linked to the Brunei Royalty, Brunei's wealth and its majority language, Brunei Malay. In this paper our focus is to show the relationship between the Royalty, *Bahasa Dalam* (the Palace Language – a variety of Brunei Malay) and the Bruneian socio-cultural hierarchy. We will start off by sketching a broad scenario of the Brunei Royal lineage, historical influences of foreign sociolinguistic nature and the Brunei socio-cultural hierarchy. Then we will show how this background is closely tied to the Palace Language.

**BRUNEIAN MONARCHICAL HISTORY**

The present monarch, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, is the Head of State, the Head of Government, the Supreme Executive Authority, the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister, and the Finance Minister of Brunei (Brunei Yearbook, 2004, p. 29).<sup>1)</sup> A direct descendant of a Malay Muslim ruling dynasty stretching back 600 years, the Sultan is the 29th ruler

of Brunei. The perception of this continuity and Brunei's geographical location has had a profound influence on its sociolinguistic history.

For centuries, Brunei was at the center of a busy, seaborne international trade route as a convenient stopover bay for traders. Its capital in Brunei Bay was an important regional trading centre attracting traders from China, India, Arabia and, later, Europe. Many natural products from the interior of Borneo and the South China Sea coast attracted international traders. Regional trading activities were facilitated by the coastal Malay vernaculars which acted as a court language and a *lingua franca* for centuries and later became the official or national languages of Brunei (Bahasa Melayu), Malaysia (Bahasa Malaysia) and Indonesia (Bahasa Indonesia) (Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, 2002).

The identity of Brunei as a trading port and a polity is claimed to go back to as early as the seventh or eighth century AD. Chinese and Arab records point to the existence of a trading kingdom at the mouth of the Brunei River. This kingdom was referred to as *Po-ni* by the Chinese and is interpreted by local historians as the forerunner to the present Brunei Sultanate (Brunei Yearbook, 2004). In the early ninth century, this ancient kingdom was part of the Buddhist Srivijaya Empire of Sumatra (Indonesia). Then, it was subjugated by the Hindu empire of Majapahit based in Java. Later on, it became an Islamic sultanate when Awang Alak Betatar, a Hindu king of Brunei converted to Islam and became known as Sultan Muhammad (1408–1425), the first Sultan of Brunei. Under the fifth ruler, Sultan Bolkiah, Brunei developed as a maritime and commercial power in the eastern part of the Malay world. From the fifteenth to seventeenth century (under the reign of the fifth to ninth Sultans), the sultanate held sway over the entire island of Borneo and north into the Philippines.

After the reign of the ninth Sultan, a period of decline followed, marked by disputes over royal succession and also the rising influences of European colonial powers in the region. This disrupted traditional trading patterns and destroyed the economic base of Brunei (Horton, 1994). In 1839, Sultan Saifuddien II put down a rebellion with the help of an English adventurer, James Brooke. As a reward, Brooke became the governor and later *Rajah* of Sarawak in northwest Borneo and gradually began to appropriate Brunei's territory. To prevent this and the expanding control of the British North Borneo Company over the territory in northeast Borneo, Brunei negotiated a protectorate status with Britain in 1888 and became a British dependency in 1906. The British Residency period lasted until 1959, when the first ever written constitution made Brunei a self-governing state. In 1984 Brunei Darussalam became a fully independent state.

## HISTORICAL FOREIGN INFLUENCES ON BRUNEIAN MONARCHY

Brunei's geography and histories have exposed the people of Brunei to diverse influences over a long period of time. This fact underpins the particular socio-cultural and linguistic ecology that we see in Brunei today and explains the major influences on the politics, culture, languages and identities and their interactions in this context. According to the Brunei Yearbook (2002, p. 33):

Brunei's culture is mainly derived from the Old Malay World.... Based on history, various cultural elements and foreign civilisations have had a hand in influencing the culture of this country... [viz.] animism, Hinduism, Islam and the West. However, it is Islam that has managed to wind its roots deeply into the culture of Brunei. It has hence become a way of life and has since been adopted as the state's ideology and philosophy.

The combined linguistic and cultural influences of the Old Malay world, Hinduism and Islam are embodied in the official name of the country: Negara Brunei Darussalam, a unique identification marker in the system of world nation-states. It is believed that the word *Brunei* is

derived from the term *Barunah*. In classical Malay this expression stands for “excellence of the site for settlement, security, access and richness of the surrounding” (Brunei Yearbook, 2002, p. 58). Later, *Barunah* changed to the word *Baruna*, which is said to have derived from the Sanskrit word *Varuna* and refers to a nation of seafarers and traders in its Malay context.<sup>2)</sup> The word was further changed to its current form *Brunei* by the second sultan, Sultan Ahmad (1408–1425).

The first word *Negara* originates from Sanskrit and in the Malay context means nation. The third word *Darussalam* in Negara Brunei Darussalam is an Arabic term for Abode of Peace. It was added in the fifteenth century by the third Sultan, Sharif Ali (1425–1432) to emphasize Islam as the state religion (Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, 2000).

Although at the ideological level Islam is the guiding force, in practice, the position and action of the ruler appear to be legitimized by the combined elements of three traditions, viz. the indigenous, Hindu and Islam. As noted by Mohd Taib (1996, pp. 473-474):

Although the Sultanate came into being after the conversion to Islam, it has its antecedents in the period of Indian influence in the region... the institution of kingship, was developed during the Hindu period. Until today, some of key words connected with the Sultanate bear Hindu origins like *singgahsana* (throne), *mahkota* (crown), or *semayam* (sitting in state). The ceremonies performed at coronations... and some of the regalia used to symbolize kingship are all inherited from the Hindu period.

An important aspect of the investiture ceremony still held in Brunei is the Malay *chiri* which has its origin in Indian royal court ceremonies. It highlights the sovereignty of the Sultan (Brown, 1970). When the Sultan confers titles to dignitaries and appoints chief officials of the state, religious officials recite *chiri* in introducing the title or as an opening announcement. The linguistic structure of elaborate titles, like *chiri*, is imbued with Sanskrit, Malay and Arabic words (Brown, 1970). The introduction of an elaborate title system, possibly originating from Persia, reinforces and redefines indigenous conceptions of kingship in an Islamic sense (Hooker, 1983).

The traditional Malay literature on the institution of Malay Sultanate appears to combine elements from both indigenous and Hindu mythology (Hooker, 1983). However, the adoption of the Islamic faith by the monarchs of Brunei, like in the rest of the Malay World, created a “superstructure to the institution of kingship, organization of the state and structure of society, on the foundation laid in the previous era” (Mohd Taib, 1996, p. 747). Ideologically, the essential difference between the concept of the Hindu god-king, *devaraja*, and the concept of the Islamic monarch, *sultan*, is that the former focuses on the person and the latter on the institution he represents. In the Hindu belief system *devaraja* is divine; therefore, the person, in the identity of the ruler, derives his authority or power to rule from his godliness. Mohd Taib (1996) believes that this concept in Malay is expressed by the term *daulat*. However, the term has been reinterpreted in terms of Islamic beliefs. The *daulat* of the Malay Sultan in the Malay World corresponds not to his divinity but to his lineage. The notion of a hereditary royal lineage (dating back to the first Muslim monarch in the fourteenth century), rather than impersonal history, therefore, seems to have played a central role in the reconstruction of the history of Brunei in characterizing it as a unique polity.

## MONARCHY & BRUNEIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL HIERARCHY

It has been argued that the perceived notion of continuity of the Muslim monarchy legitimizes Brunei's social hierarchy (Saunders, 1994). In the pre-colonial period, the social hierarchy (based on ethnic, religious and rank distinctions) determined the official order (Brown, 1970). The elite office holders, in order of descending ranks, were: the *Sultan*, *wazir* (“vizier”), *cheteria* (Sanskrit “the warrior caste”), *manteri* (Sanskrit “minister”) and the *manteri darat*. In terms of social and ethnic hierarchy, the first three officials were of noble birth, the fourth *manteri* were non-nobles but

usually ethnic *Brunei Malays*, and the fifth *manteri darat*, the rural elite, were non-*Brunei Malay* indigenous, e.g., Dusun and Belait. Many officials were given inland territory and/or people to administer and tax as the stipend for their office. The appointment of a *manteri darat* facilitated incorporation of inland indigenous groups into the Sultanate's hierarchy. Most of the elements of the nineteenth-century elite structure persist to date.

One noteworthy change in the twentieth century, as a consequence of British economic policies, was the replacement of traditional commercial elites, e.g., *nakhoda* (sea-captain trader), by the Chinese immigrants (Brown, 1994) who still dominate this group of elites. Another important development, as a consequence of the spread of education, was the addition of a new elite group which comprised the English-, Malay- and Muslim-educated elites. By the 1960s, the western educated, particularly those educated in the English medium, were valued in government jobs. The educated elites in the Malay medium formed a sort of "counter-elite" to the westernized elite. During the colonial period, they lobbied government for the Malayanization/Bruneization of Brunei and were "identified with more radical politics, nationalism and a more stringent Islam" (Brown, 1994, p. 676). Consequently, since the 1960s, Bruneians seeking Muslim education have increased. These new groups of elites have been absorbed into Brunei's traditional social hierarchy which upholds the monarchical system.

During the Residency Period and since then, modern governmental institutions have been introduced (e.g., new governing councils, technical departments, etc.). However, the position of Sultan (and with him the royal family which is part of the nobility) is in many ways stronger than in the nineteenth century (Brown, 1994). Traditional elements have largely been replaced by modern government, but tradition is still important. For example, conferring honorary titles on special occasions provides the Sultan and his government with new ways to validate elite status. The Sultan confers on non-nobles (e.g., *manteri* and commercial elites) the title *Pehin*, the equivalent of a British "life peerage"; and the *Dato*, the equivalent of a British "knighthood". The overall structure of these events (and other formal events) is Islamic as these events are bounded by the recital of a Muslim prayer, the *doa*. The speeches made are in the official language, Malay. Even though their texts (as that of *chiri*) are imbued with Sanskrit lexical items and in modern times, English items too, the overall ambience created seems to reify the national philosophy, *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB, Malay Islamic Monarchy).

In the following sections we look in more detail at how Sanskrit, other languages, and various other influences have shaped the Palace Language.

## THE PALACE LANGUAGE (*BAHASA DALAM*)

In the Malays' socio-cultural worldview, language is more than grammar and means of oral communication, because it is seen as depository and reflection of one's knowledge of etiquette and behaviour. This juxtaposition of the notions 'language' and 'etiquette' is embedded in the following expression:

*Yang cantik itu budi  
Yang indah itu bahasa*

(The most beautiful thing is etiquette,  
The most wonderful thing is language.)

One variety of Malay in Brunei that symbolises and epitomises the belief in the above expression is Bahasa Dalam or the Palace Language. In the independent sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, there are various forms of Malay language: Standard Malay, Brunei Malay, and their regional and social variants. Of these variants, Bahasa Dalam ('Palace Language') is a social register which has served for centuries as the special register of the sultan's inner court, thus, its title Bahasa ('Language') and Dalam ('Palace').

## **DEFINITION OF BAHASA DALAM**

Over a long period of time, scholars have defined Bahasa Dalam. For example, Marsden (1812: xvi) points out that Bahasa Dalam or courtly style takes its name from the word *dalam* signifying ‘a royal palace’ or ‘court’. According to Wilkinson (1959:250) Bahasa Dalam is a ‘palace diction’ Brown (1970:179) says it is a kind of speech form used in the palace or during ceremonial occasions. In a more precise attempt, Hamdan *et al.* (1991:67) define Bahasa Dalam according to its function, type and usage, as follows:

- Function: words or phrases with specific meanings appropriate for use by Bruneian nationals when addressing members of the royal family, other nobles and titled dignitaries
- Type: comprised of words which are polite, gracious, respectful and cultured
- Usage: the meanings and intent of Bahasa Dalam is conveyed through metaphors and innuendos

In general Bahasa Dalam is a refined courteous language invented to demonstrate courtesy, good breeding and the supreme cultural values of the Malays. Since this social register is associated with the royal court, it has become the highest form of courtesy historically inherited in Brunei.

## **THE EXISTENCE OF BAHASA DALAM**

There are three important factors why Bahasa Dalam developed. Brunei came into being as a Malay kingdom around the 6<sup>th</sup> century. This historical evidence is to support the existence of Malay and various forms of Malay together with the establishment of the kingdom. Bahasa Dalam developed because of the presence of the monarchy.

According to Yusuf (1975:43), Brunei was founded on the following social contract:

Raja tidak boleh zalim dan rakyat tidak boleh derhaka kepada raja.	(The ruler may not be tyrannical and the people cannot commit treason against the ruler.)
Raja wakil rakyat yang mutlak.	The ruler is the plenipotentiary of the people.)

One of the ways to demonstrate loyalty was the invention of Bahasa Dalam. The presence of the traditional social stratification stimulated the advent of Bahasa Dalam as a system of communication among the people of different social status levels. By means of Bahasa Dalam the social status among royalty, nobles and commoners is carefully defined.

## **REASONS FOR PROMOTING WIDER USE OF BAHASA DALAM**

The following are the main reasons for the promotion of Bahasa Dalam:

- The government believes that the use of this register promotes respect for the sultan.
- Reinforces a national philosophy ‘Malay, Islam, Monarchy’. Promulgated as the guiding principle of the country following independence from Great Britain in 1984.
- Overtly reflects hierarchical organization of interpersonal relationships, reinforces the status relationships which exist among various layers of society in Brunei.
- Reinforce the fundamental concept of absolute loyalty to superiors.

- Reinforce a concept of Bruneian cultural identity and hinder liberal influences.
- Bahasa Dalam is an integral part of Bruneian culture. Lack of knowledge on Bahasa Dalam reflects an ignorance of Brunei's traditions.

## TERMS OF ADDRESS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

There are 51 terms: Pronouns, descriptive phrases, kinship terms or phrases, titles and honorific phrases that are used to substitute 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person when interacting with the royal family, nobles, non-nobles with bestowed titles and also among royalty and nobles. It may occur among non-nobles provided at least one of them has a bestowed title. For example: commoners or non-nobles have to use 'hamba Kebawah Duli Tuan Patik' 'The slave below the dust of my lord' in referring to themselves when speaking to the sultan or the raja isteri (queen). But if a 'pengiran' 'a noble of hereditary title' speaks to the sultan or the queen he has to refer to himself as 'patik' 'I' because he is classified as a noble. Thus we can see the difference between the two terms of reference characterized by social status. Non-nobles have to use a descriptive phrase while nobles only have to use a pronoun. Bahasa Dalam terms of address and terms of reference are well-defined and assigned to particular individuals based on their social, occupational and kinship hierarchy.

Since Bahasa Dalam is a refined court etiquette which conveys courtesy, good breeding and respect, all of the terms of address and references are in polite form although they exhibit a clear distinction between superiors and inferiors.

### First Person.

Term of address/reference	Subcategory	Speaker	Addressee
Patik	Pronoun	Noble	Sultan/Queen
Hamba Kebawah Duli Tuan Patik	Descriptive Phrase	Non-noble	Sultan/Queen
Hamba Duli Tuanku	Descriptive Phrase	Non-noble	PI, GP
Hamba Tuanku	Descriptive Phrase	Non-noble	GPr, NGPViz
Peramba	Pronoun	Sultan RF, Viz, Cet, CoN, Cet, CoN M.Non-noble	RF, Viz, Cet, CN RF, Viz, Cet, CN CN, CoN Cet, CN, CoN
Kaola	Pronoun	Queen RF, Viz, Cet, Non-noble F.Noble F. Non-noble	RF, Viz, Cet, CN PM RF, Viz, Cet, CN, CoN Cet, CN, CoN

The forms shown in the above table allow us to identify the differences in status among particular persons. For example, differences among non-nobles, between *gahara* ('born of a noble wife') and *non-gahara*. As noted earlier, for example the self reference 'patik' is only used by nobles when conversing with the Sultan or his principal consort. But a non-noble has to use the descriptive phrase 'hamba Kebawah Duli Tuan Patik' ('the slave below the dust of my lord') as self reference when talking to the Sultan or the Queen. The great social distance between the non-noble speaker and the royal addressee requires longer terms of address or reference. The status differences between *gahara* and *non-gahara* can be distinguished by the descriptive phrases that have to be used by a commoner to address them. The phrases are 'hamba Duli Tuanku' ('the slave of the dust of my lord') for *gahara* prince and 'hamba Tuanku' ('the slave of my lord') for a *non-gahara* prince or a non-prince vizier. For the male nobles they only have to use 'peramba' as self-reference when speaking to all nobles except to the Sultan and Queen. For female nobles they have to use 'kaola' as self-reference when conversing with all nobles except to the Sultan and Queen. The shorter phrase

indicates less social distance between speaker and addressee. Apart from social distinction the first person terms of address or reference also display gender differences. For instance, the pronoun ‘kaola’ (‘I’) is used by female nobles or non-nobles to address ceterias ‘high ranking non-vizier nobles’ and other nobles, while the term ‘peramba’ (‘I’) is used by male speaker. Gender distinction is not only based on the gender of the speaker but also on the gender of the addressee. So that ‘hamba Duli Tuanku’ (‘the slave of the dust of my lord’) is the self-reference when addressing the prince, but ‘hamba Tuanku’ (‘the slave of my lord’) when addressing the princess. The term ‘duli’ (‘dust’) is not applicable to a princess.

### Second Person

Term of Address/Reference	Subcategory	Speaker	Addressee
Awang	Title	RF	NGCN
Awangku	Title	RF	GCN

The table above shows another term which marks a non-noble matrilineal relationship. Here ‘Awang’ which is traditionally an aristocrat’s hereditary title is used by the royal family to address the non-gahara core noble. But the gahara core noble the royal family will apply ‘Awangku’. This is also an indication of social distinction between gahara and non-gahara which reflected the less social distance the longer term of address/title to be used.

### Honorific Phrases

Honorific Phrase	Person
Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda	Sultan/queen
Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri	CP, GP Viz
Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Duli	GP
Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri	GPrincess

The table above shows the higher the status the longer the honorific phrase to be applied. Another interesting sociolinguistic issue here is the position of ‘Duli’. It is placed at beginning of the title if the person is a crown prince or a gahara prince vizier while for the other gahara princes the term ‘Duli’ occurs in the middle of the whole name or at the end of the honorific phrase. The term ‘Paduka Seri’ is only applicable to the Sultan, the Queen and the prince and princess. We do have ‘Dato Paduka Seri’ but it does not preceded by Duli Yang Teramat Mulia or Yang Amat Mulia. For the viziers, ‘Duli’ is only applicable to the gahara prince. Most dignitary titles are longer because they consist of multiple titles.

### **REFERENTIAL TERMS**

The difference between varieties of a language is mostly reflected in the use of different vocabulary and phrases. It is a common feature of court language to be characterized by a highly specialized vocabulary. This also occurs in other court languages in other parts of Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia. All the referential terms in Bahasa Dalam are carefully assigned to particular individuals based on their status in a traditional hierarchy. It is tradition in Malay to have different terms for superiors because of their concern about loyalty to superiors. In Bahasa Dalam some of the terms are used exclusively for the sultan and the queen. There are also several words which are available to the royal family, the viziers and the cheterias

and other terms which are applicable for nobles of all classes. As an illustration here are some of the examples which also reflect social distinction.

BD Term	Status	Commoners Malay	Gloss
Bertitah	Sultan/Queen	Berucap	To speak, to command
Ulu	RF	Kepala	Head
Kamul	RF, Viz, Cet	Kain tidur	A night sarong
Junjung	All Nobles	Sila	Please
Diarak	Viz (Nobles)	Dikurniai gelaran	To bestow a title
Diangkat	Cet (Nobles)	Dikurniai gelaran	To bestow a title
Disampiri	Pehin Manteri (Non-nobles)	Dikurniai gelaran	To bestow a title

## LOANWORDS

Before the arrival of Islam, the Malay language was heavily influenced by Sanskrit (Maxwell 1907:3). This phenomenon led to the expansion of the Malay language vocabulary. Since Bahasa Dalam is one of the social dialects of Malay, this influence also affects the vocabulary of Bahasa Dalam. Most of the loanwords are used for expressing titles and honorifics (Maxwell 1907:27). When Islam penetrated the Malay world, the influence of Arabic reflected in Malay vocabulary. Most of the Arabic loanwords are found in religious connections, but in Bahasa Dalam Arabic loanwords are obviously found in titles. These are added initially or following one's personal name for heightening the effect of the title. In addition to these two languages, Javanese and Tamil loanwords are also found in Bahasa Dalam. A few examples are provided in the following table.

Words/Phrases	Description	Source Language
Cerpu	Shoes/footwear	Tamil
Perisai	Royal Item	Tamil
Singgahsana	Royal throne	Sanskrit
Pataratna	Royal throne	Sanskrit
Dirgahayu	Long live	Sanskrit
Baginda	Pronoun	Sanskrit
Ceteria	Title	Sanskrit
Manteri	Title	Sanskrit
Indera Perkasa	Title	Sanskrit
Maharaja Seri Rama	Title	Sanskrit
Duli	Title	Sanskrit
Daulat	Sovereignty	Arabic
Wazir	Vizier	Arabic
Sahibul Mal	Title	Arabic
Sahibul Himmah Wal Waqar	Title	Arabic
Hamba	Part of self-referent	Arabic
Sultan	Title	Arabic
Mu'izzadin Waddaulah	Title	Arabic
Pengiran	Hereditary title	Javanese
Kamul	A night sarong	Javanese
Kasur	Royal item	Javanese

As mentioned earlier, some of the titles are applied initially or following one's personal name for enhancing the effect of the title. These titles comprised of either Sanskrit or Arabic loanwords which are also connected to the duties, responsibilities, roles and obligations of the persons who bear the titles. One of the examples is, 'Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah', an Arabic phrase, which means a person who brings honor and stability to Islam and the country. It is used by the ruling monarch and this Arabic title immediately follows his personal name Hassanal Bolkiah.

Another example is ‘Seri Maharaja Permaisuara’ which is borrowed from Sanskrit meaning one whose utterances are taken seriously and adhered to. This title is conferred on His Royal Highness Prince Haji Sufri Bolkiah. As pointed out earlier, the notion of kingship and associated hierarchical social system are influenced by Hindu tradition, but with the advent of Islam the significance of them has been shifted to conform to the Islamic faith. This can be seen from some of the Sanskrit loanwords, for example Maharaja Seri Rama. Rama is a Hindu God but in Bahasa Dalam the meaning has been shifted to a bestowed title of one of Pehin Manteri 32. Some of the loanwords are semantically narrowed and having an increased value, which we term as amelioration. For example *kasur* in ordinary Javanese refers to a mattress and is applicable to anyone, but in Bahasa Dalam it is connected to the royal item. *Puteri* a loanword from Sanskrit means the daughter of anyone but in Bahasa Dalam it means the daughter of a sultan.

## CONCLUSION

Bahasa Dalam is a language variety that connects Brunei to its history, tradition, belief system and socio-cultural hierarchy. This variety has an imprint of an unbroken Muslim monarchical tradition going back six hundred years as well as its predecessor Hindu-Buddhist monarchical tradition going further back for centuries that was associated to the Sumatran empire. The imprint is reflected in the influence of the language associated with these traditions, viz. Malay, Indonesian, Sanskrit and Arabic, and the socio-cultural meanings of a unique social structure embedded in them. The continuity of this variety and the associated tradition over centuries presents a unique example of a language for sociolinguists.

## Abbreviations:

CN- Core Noble  
RF- Royal Family  
GP- Gahara Prince  
Cet – Cheteria  
GPr- Gahara Princess  
Non-GP Viz- Non-gahara Prince Vizier  
CoN- Common Noble  
CP- Crown Prince  
GCN- Gahara Core Noble  
NGCN- Non-Gahara Core Noble  
F Noble- Female Noble  
M Noble- Male Noble

## NOTES

- <sup>1)</sup> Brunei Yearbook is an annual publication (available free) that complements and supports the government initiatives.
- <sup>2)</sup> Throughout this paper, translation of the words of Sanskrit and Arabic origins are provided in order to show Hindu and Islamic socio-cultural embedding in the Malay language and culture.

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