

FASS RESEARCH

Newsletter

2025 | December

Highlights of recent and ongoing research activities at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam

SEAM Journal at 25: A Scopus Achievement

Since its launch in 1999 by FASS, the journal *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal* (SEAMJ) has steadily evolved from a regional outlet into a vigorous, high-impact open-access platform that engages scholars across the arts, social sciences, and humanities with Southeast Asia as its focal terrain. Under the stewardship of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and from 2023 on the Emerald publishing platform, the journal has been able to scale the volume of its output - moving from around 30 articles per year to over 170 annual contributions - and gain indexing in major databases including Scopus. In the past year, download figures have crossed the 100,000 mark, which reflects its growing global usage and influence. The transition to the Emerald platform has brought deeper international visibility, rigorous peer-review protocols, and clear indexing credentials. The journal remains committed to regionally grounded but theoretically informed scholarship on topics such as digital development, migration, urbanisation, Languages, security and culture in Southeast Asia. With its growing throughput and increasing impact, SEAMJ is now firmly positioned as a go-to venue for scholars seeking to publish policy-relevant and regionally embedded research on Southeast Asia with global reach.



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“I am deeply proud of SEAMJ’s remarkable journey, from a modest regional journal to a dynamic, globally visible platform for Southeast Asian scholarship. This growth has been made possible by the unwavering dedication of our editorial colleagues, reviewers, and authors, and by the steadfast institutional support of Universiti Brunei Darussalam. In the years ahead, I envision SEAMJ becoming a leading voice in shaping multidisciplinary debates on Southeast Asia, advancing inclusive, decolonial, and globally engaged knowledge from the region to the world.”

Professor Ahsan Ullah, Editor in Chief

FEATURED SCHOLAR

DR IZNI AZREIN NOOR AZALIE

Lecturer. Geography, Environment & Development (GED)

Reaping the fruit of research: A fulfilling year for an urban cultural economic scholar

In April 2025, Dr Izni presented in an online seminar organised by the China Institute for Reform and Development (CIRD) on “The Future Trend of Global Free Trade and RCEP’s Role”. Brunei’s participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) highlights the resilience of ASEAN’s small economies, the importance of industrial upgrading, value capture, and constructed advantage in Global Production Networks (GPNs), as well as advocacy for enhanced human mobility and cross-border expertise exchange within ASEAN-East Asia partnerships. He also shared his opinions on

the potential responses that Brunei would take within ASEAN due to the uncertainties surrounding global trade resulting from the US-China tariff wars. Dr Izni was also invited by Xiamen University’s Fujian Institute of Sustainable Ocean (FISO), with which he was affiliated, for a “Training the Trainers” program on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) together with other ASEAN University counterparts. Organised jointly with Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), the training was part of a capacity-building initiative aimed at coastal development towards sustainable and effective planning, implementation, and governance of coastal communities and resources. Participants also visit some of the successful MSPs and Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) sites as part of field visits. In addition, Dr Izni and Dr Maria Carinness Alejandria of



invited by Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Indonesia, to present an online lecture on Flooding and BIMP-EAGA in April 2025. In this lecture, Dr Izni presented the Blue Governmentality framework as a means to govern flood-related risks effectively, while Dr Carinness presented some of the findings from her faculty-funded research on flood risk management of the Tutong communities of Brunei. Both of their works fall within the realm of riverine and coastal zone governance. Dr Izni also presented in May for Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) online “CommChat University” a topic on ‘Halal governmentalities and sustainability’ that focused on the effects of Brunei’s halal certification governing the Brunei business community. He was joined by Associate Professor Dr Zalina Zakaria of Universiti Malaya (UM), who also delivered a talk on halal governance in Malaysia.



In June 2025, Dr Izni was involved in the presentation of three papers, two of which were presented in the 3rd Borneo Studies Network (BSN) Conferences on blue governmentalities as part of Bornean coastal development as well as on sustainable water transportation development in Bandar Seri Begawan (BSB). Dr Izni also presented a paper on frictional coupling and urban industrial anxiety among the food industrial producers of Brunei. This work stems from the insights of his other research on Brunei’s Global Production Networks (GPN) on halal and the coffee sector. All three papers are currently under review and slated for publication in the second half of 2026.

FEATURED SCHOLAR

Dr Izni was invited to be a speaker and panelist in the China-ASEAN Cultural Heritage Dialogue in Tianshui City, Gansu Province of The People's Republic of China, jointly organised by China's International Communication Group (CICG), CCICD, and Gansu Provincial Cultural Heritage Bureau. Dr Izni shared his views and input on charting new pathways for culture and heritage conservation through investment in the new digital economy. With insight based on some of his studies on Brunei's culture and creative sectoral development, the dialogue resulted in acknowledging the potential that digitalisation and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have for conservation. The trip also includes visits to some of the heritage sites of both the Neolithic and Ancient China, as well as critical industrial activities that helped support conservation.

In the second half of October 2025, Dr Izni presented at two conferences and in a guest lecture series organised by UBD's School of Business, International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), as well as

University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). In the 5th International Conference on Business, Economy and Finance (ICBEF), UBD, Dr. Izni introduced a comparative analysis of halal governance regimes, grounded in Foucault's governmentality and Islamic jurisprudence. The paper compared Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, and GCC halal systems, integrating moral economy theory and Islamic ethics of governance with policy recommendations for ASEAN-GCC cooperation and Maqasid-SDG alignment. Similarly, in the 2nd State Transformation and Development Conference (STCDCW) organised by IIUM, Dr Izni gave insight on halal food production and sustainability where he linked the need to industrially govern halal production activities by integrating the Maqasid Al-Sharia principles, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the adoption of the ecological footprints as part of halal development. He introduced the Integrated Islamic Halal Governmentality (IIHG) Model, which he developed during his PhD as part of this initiative.



Additionally, Dr Izni delivered a talk on “Balancing Economic Growth and Environmental Sustainability: Insights from Brunei's Development Path”, organised by UNIMAS as part of celebrating Malaysia's chairmanship of the ASEAN-Summit of 2025. In this talk, Dr Izni reiterated the importance of adopting both the IIHG model and embracing the blue governmentality as part of the Blue Urbanism way of development. He was joined by colleagues from Indonesian and Malaysian universities who also shared insights on the development of Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN) of Kalimantan, Indonesia, as well as on mental health and well-being.

Throughout 2025, Dr Izni's engagements have not only strengthened Brunei's academic visibility within ASEAN and global fora, but his research has also helped advance theoretical innovations in Islamic governmentality, Blue Urbanism, and sustainable halal governance. These efforts have contributed to dialogues on trade, environment, and culture, positioning UBD as one of the regional leaders in sustainable development research. Within his area of expertise, he has contributed to urban economic development and industrial governance, with case studies on culture, creative and blue economies as the central core areas.

FEATURED SCHOLAR



DR NAJIB NOORASHID

Lecturer. Bahasa, Linguistik & Kesusasteraan Melayu

2025: A Year of Scholarly Growth, Engagement, and Recognition

The year 2025 has marked a significant and formative phase in my academic career. It has been a year characterised by meaningful opportunities for networking, collaboration, and scholarly engagement, alongside sustained efforts to promote my research, teaching, and publications. Collectively, these experiences have contributed to both my professional development and my growing academic identity.

The first half of the year unfolded at a steady pace, allowing me to concentrate primarily on teaching, module facilitation, and the delivery of guest lectures within and beyond the university. Teaching has always been at the core of my academic vocation, and these engagements proved deeply rewarding. Although I am only in the third year of my academic career, I have learned immensely from senior colleagues, peers, students, and equally from moments of trial and error. These experiences have reinforced the importance of resilience and reflective practice in sustaining an academic career.

In 2025, I was also honoured with several invitations to share my research expertise at the national level. On the 8th of July, I delivered a keynote address for *Bahasa Jiwa Bangsa*, organised by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei in conjunction with Language Month 2025. Later that month, as part of the celebrations for His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei's 79th Birthday, I was invited by the Brunei History Centre, in collaboration with PenBorneo, to present my research entitled "*Suara Kedaulatan: Bahasa, Kuasa dan Identiti dalam Titah Hari Kebangsaan Negara Brunei Darussalam (1984–2025)*" at the annual *Bicara Sejarah* forum. These arrange-



FEATURED SCHOLAR

ments were subsequently documented by local media, including *Borneo Bulletin* and *Media Permata*.

September 2025 marked another major milestone when I was awarded the Research Mobility Scheme by Universiti Brunei Darussalam, a competitive initiative aimed at strengthening international research collaboration among early-career academics. I spent 20 days at the National University of Singapore working under the mentorship of Dr Azhar Ibrahim, a respected critical scholar in the Malay world. During this period, I delivered research presentations at the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, conducted guest lectures at NUS, partici-

ipated in closed scholarly sessions with Majlis Ugama Islam (MUIS) Singapore, and shared Brunei's literary heritage through a public lecture on the novelist Muslim Burmat at Wisma Geylang Serai- becoming the first Bruneian invited to this legacy platform. This engagement was also covered by *Berita Harian* Singapore.

The momentum continued in October, when I represented Brunei at the *Seminar Kebahasaan Antarabangsa MABBIM* in Jakarta, presenting on language status, maintenance, and preservation in the Malay world. In November, I was invited to Kuala Lumpur as a keynote speaker for *Sesi Bacaan Serantau*, organised by MASTERA Singapore and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia, where I delivered a talk on the literary legacy of the late Bruneian writer Adi Marhaen. Shortly thereafter, I returned to Brunei to



speak about another national literary figure, Shukri Zain, at the 2nd National Symposium organised by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei.

Perhaps the most humbling achievement of the year came on 27th October 2025, when I was awarded the Research Excellence Award for Early Career Academic (Arts and Social Sciences) by Universiti Brunei Darussalam. I remain deeply grateful to the University Award Committee, the leadership of FASS, my mentors, collaborators, and colleagues whose support has been invaluable.

As 2025 draws to a close, I reflect on a year of growth, trust, and scholarly contribution. With these experiences as a foundation, I look forward to making an even more meaningful impact in 2026.



RESEARCH NEWS

Strengthening Regional Collaboration through the International Conference on Insular Southeast Asian Studies

After ten months of close collaboration among a multi-national core team from Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), the University of the Philippines, Universitas Udayana, and Universiti Brunei Darussalam, the International Conference on Insular Southeast Asian Studies was successfully held online on August 12, 2025. The event brought together scholars, practitioners, and students across the region to examine critical issues and emerging perspectives surrounding Human Security in Insular Southeast Asia.

The conference opened with thought-provoking keynote addresses from Dr. Alistair Cook (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies), Dr. June Rubis (Building Initiatives in Indigenous Heritage), and Dr. Fredolin Tangang (UBD) framed the panel discussions on Human Security in the region. The diverse range of papers presented reflected how

academics and practitioners are engaging with themes of climate resilience, social vulnerability, and sustainable development.

Representing the Sociology and Anthropology Programme, Dr. Maria Carinnes Alejandria, and Dr. Izni Azrein bin Noor Azalie of the Geography, Environment and Development Programme, co-convened the conference in partnership with the regional universities. As a co-organizer, Dr. Alejandria chaired two thematic panels—Flood Preparedness among Urban Communities and Researching Well-being among Communities Experiencing Precariousness—while Dr. Izni chaired the panel on Blue Governance, Urbanism, and Development, exploring new frameworks for managing coastal and urban transformations. Other FASS lecturers involved were Dr. Shariza Wahyuna who presented her paper on the Social Life of Disasters: Exploring Modalities of Flood Resilience in Tutong District and Ms. Khairunnisa who chaired the panel on Gendered Pathways: Women, Migration and Agency in Southeast Asia.

Earlier in the year, on April 28, 2025, as part of this growing regional collaboration, Dr. Izni and Dr. Alejandria also delivered online lectures to members of the International Relations Department of UMY, discussing Flooding and the BIMP-EAGA. These engagements further strengthened academic linkages and deepened the exchange of ideas on disaster preparedness and regional resilience.



Developing the Corpus of Brunei English (CoBE)

Researchers: Dr Salbrina Sharbawi (Principal Investigator), Dk Dr Nur Raihan Pg Mohamad, Zayani Zainal Abidin, Aminuddin Marzuki

The Corpus of Brunei English (CoBE) is the first large-scale collection of contemporary Brunei English, systematically compiled to serve as a comprehensive resource. Serving as a monitor corpus, it includes both spoken and written data from everyday interactions, official communications, digital platforms, and educational settings. Its primary goal is to provide a reliable resource for analysing the actual use of English within Brunei's multilingual society. CoBE addresses a

long-standing gap in World Englishes research by documenting a variety that has often been understudied and represented through limited datasets. As the corpus continues to expand, it provides an increasingly rich foundation for studying linguistic features, identity practices, and ongoing language change in Brunei English. Furthermore, it opens up new opportunities for comparative research with neighbouring Southeast Asian Englishes.

RESEARCH NEWS

Researching Disaster Preparedness Among Urban Communities in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines (BIMP)

Researchers: Dr Maria Carinnes Alejandria (Principal Investigator), Dr Shariza Wahyuna binti Hj Shahrin (Co-PI), Khairunnisa binti Hj Ibrahim (Mapping specialist), Ak Mohd Saiful Bahri bin Pg Hj Metussin (Research Assistant)

External Collaborators: Dr Lena Hanifah (Universitas Lambung Mangkurat), Dr Nur Zaimah Ubaidillah (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak), Dr Rowena Gaspay-Fernandez (Palawan State University), Dr Lorizza Mae Posadas-Gacott (Palawan State University)

The research project investigates the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of urban communities within the BIMP-EAGA subregion regarding disaster preparedness, particularly in relation to flooding. With the growing threat of climate change, the study highlights how urban communities perceive and respond to flood-related risks to identify locally grounded strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

In September 2025, the project convened an international seminar-workshop titled “Regional Collaboration and Policy for Flood Resilience in BIMP-EAGA,” held at the Palawan State University Amphitheater. Supported by SEA Junction, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, and Palawan State University, the event brought together researchers, policymakers and community representatives to

exchange insights and strengthen regional collaboration on disaster preparedness and climate resilience.

In November 2025, the team showcased their applied output, “KitaAlert: Urban Flood Resilience Toolkit for BIMP-EAGA,” at the Innovation Festival (InnovFest), organized alongside the International Higher Education Summit and Exhibition on Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Commercialization (IHEEIC) 2025, held at the Chancellor Hall, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. KitaAlert is an innovative community-based reporting system designed to enhance early warning dissemination and encourage public participation in flood monitoring and response.



RESEARCH NEWS

Developing a Kayan Ethnographic Online Dictionary

Researchers: Dr Marcelo Schellini, Dr Roselind Wan (Curtin University Malaysia), Foad Motalebi (Curtin University Malaysia)

This project aims to develop a Kayan ethnographic online dictionary, providing a comprehensive record of the Kayan language through visual, aural, and written components. Designed from an Indigenous perspective, it will integrate cultural themes and illustrative photography to contextualize the language within its socio-cultural framework. Using corpus data from documentation and elicitation of conversations in Kayan, entries will encompass lexical domains of day-to-day conversations and endangered cultural practices such as farming and agriculture, fishing and hunting, traditional art, and crafts, kinship, as well as lexical terms associated with the Kayan traditional communal living. The ethnographic online dictionary will serve as a repository of Kayan lexical and cultural knowledge, functioning as a pedagogical tool for language revitalization and maintenance.



Language and Social Solidarity of Malay Community in Kampung Melayu Ampenan, Lombok, Indonesia

Researchers: Dr Lalu Nurul Yaqin (Principal Investigator), Dr Norazmie Yusof (Co-PI), Dr Badriyah Yusof, Dr Hasmidar Hassan



The study investigates how the people of Kampung Melayu Ampenan, Lombok, reconstructed interethnic solidarity among people of different socio-cultural backgrounds claim to share similarities and co-membership of social groups, regardless of the social and cultural differences that they perceive to have. The study identifies the following aspects of language and interethnic solidarity: (1) The study explores language selection, linguistic forms, and communication strategies that are involved in the reconstruction of identity and solidarity. Specifically, it aims to answer the questions: (i) how do language and its forms represent ethnicity? and (ii) How are language and its forms used for its construction and negotiation? (2) The study examines how identity and solidarity are constructed and negotiated in face-to-face interactions by people in Kampung Melayu Ampenan, Lombok.

RESEARCH NEWS

Community Migrations in and beyond Borneo

Researcher: Dr James McLellan

This project has been developed as a contribution to the recent and growing field of *Migration Linguistics*, convened and coordinated by Dr Ariane Macalinga Borlongan of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS, partner university of UBD).

An initial paper was delivered at the TUFS Institute of Global Studies Winter School on Migration Linguistics: Theory and Methodology, Principles and Processes in February 2021. It bore the title “Community migration as an additional branch of Migration Linguistics: Evidence from Borneo”, and proposed community migration as an important branch additional to those of labour, family, education and forced migration proposed by Borlongan (2021).

This underpins research within the sociolinguistic frameworks of Language Contact and Ecology of Language, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The introduction provides historical background about the migration of Austronesian peoples from Taiwan through the Philippines to Borneo and beyond, and later of peoples of Indian and Arab origins through the Malay Peninsula, Sumatera and Java into Borneo. The main section covers more recent migrations within and around Borneo, of both coastal Malay/Muslim and interior groups collectively termed “Dayak”. A particular focus is on the Iban community’s migration into Brunei, and the linguistic and sociolinguistic consequences of this: Iban are a substantial minority in Brunei who tend to maintain their language through intergenerational transmission to children, whilst also having proficiency in the more dominant standard and Brunei varieties of Malay as well as English. This Language Contact is bidirectional: Iban is influenced by Malay and by English, but may also, in areas of Borneo such as Sarawak (East Malaysia) where Iban are more numerous and dominant, exert influence on the other languages which are in the local linguistic ecosystems.

Variation between 4 Bidayuh languages

In the picture dictionaries developed for use in the Multilingual Education project preschools by the Bidayuh Language Development Project, 2007-2010

(In this table, ¹: preploded nasals no longer evident, ²: preploded nasals retained)

Bukar-Sadong ¹	Biatah ¹	Bau-Jagoi ¹	Salako ²	(English)
buran	buran	buran	buatn	moon
bintang	bitang	bitang	bintakng	star
ambun	abun	abun	apokng	cloud
ujan	ujen	ijan	ujatn	rain

The conclusion critically evaluates the relevance of community migration and of the Language Contact and Ecology of Language frameworks to the study of Migration Linguistics.” The paper is scheduled for publication in the Journal of Modern Languages Special Issue on linguistic diversity and human mobility: Explorations in Migration Linguistics, in late 2025. A revised version was presented at Universiti Sabah Malaysia in January 2025, at the 15th Borneo Research Council conference.

A second paper, Migrations across Borneo of two Indigenous groups, Iban and Bidayuh, was presented at the 2nd International Conference on Migration Linguistics (ICML), December 4-5, 2025 in Manila, Philippines. This focuses in greater detail on the contrast between Iban and Bidayuh migrations and their linguistic consequences. Iban migrations since the late 19th century across western Borneo, from West Kalimantan across modern-day Sarawak and into Brunei have resulted in only minor variations and changes to the Iban language. Bidayuh (Bidoyoh) on the other hand, migrating over much lesser distances from their original homeland of Bung (Gunung) Sungkong, West Kalimantan, into western Sarawak, have diversified to such an extent that varieties are not mutually intelligible.

FASS PhD CANDIDATES

MOJTABA KHATAMI
PhD in Applied Linguistics



Mojtaba is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at FASS, UBD. His doctoral research focuses on the psychological aspects of language learning, especially mindfulness and foreign language anxiety among Bangladeshi EFL university students. Using a mixed-methods approach, his study combines quantitative surveys with qualitative diary entries and interviews to examine how mindfulness practices affect learners' emotional experiences and reading performance. His broader research interests include second language acquisition, affective factors in language learning, complexity and dynamic systems theory, and innovative teaching methods like educational escape rooms. He feels very fortunate to be supervised by Dr. Paul Deyuan He, whose expertise and guidance have been invaluable throughout his academic journey. Dr Paul's support has shaped his methodological approach and deepened his understanding of psychological constructs related to language. His experience at UBD has been

enriching both academically and personally. The university's research-focused environment, diverse community, and strong emphasis on interdisciplinary inquiry have greatly contributed to his growth as an emerging scholar. Participating in seminars and collaborative projects has improved his skills and expanded his professional perspective. Overall, his time at UBD has strengthened his dedication to conducting impactful research that benefits both theory and practice in language education.

Shafinur is a PhD candidate in English Literature at FASS, UBD. Her supervisors are Dr. Hannah Ho and Dr. Katrina Mohd Daud.

Her doctoral research examines the representation of Muslim masculinities in Anglophone fiction from South and Southeast Asia, comparing novels and short stories from Bangladesh and Malaysia. Through this comparative approach, her work highlights the diverse behaviours, psychological dimensions, and cultural specificities that shape Muslim men's identities in these literary contexts. During her PhD, she has published several works, including: Nahar, S., & Ho, H. M. Y. (2025). "Transnational Muslim Identity Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of The Accidental Malay and Seasonal Adjustments," in H. M. Y. Ho & Y. K. Chan (Eds.), *Transnational Southeast Asia* (Springer); Nahar, S., Ho, H. M. Y., & Daud, M. K. (2025). "Muslim Masculinities in Bangladeshi and Malaysian Anglophone Fiction: An Empirical Framework," *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* (Scopus indexed, Q2; Taylor & Francis); and Nahar, S., & Tinni, T. M. (2023). "Rape, Restriction, and Protest: A Critical Analysis of the Bangladeshi Female Student Movement," in N. Sengupta & S. S. Sinha (Eds.), *Female Narratives of Protest* (Routledge).

SHAFINUR NAHAR
PhD in English Literature



FASS PhD CANDIDATES

ZULFADZLEE ZULKIFLEE

PhD in Malay Language and Linguistics

Zulfadzlee is a PhD candidate in the Malay Language, Linguistics, and Literature programme, FASS. His research focuses on the Baram–Tinjar subgroup of Borneo languages, particularly examining their phonological and lexical correspondences to gain a better understanding of their internal classification and genetic relationships. Through this work, he engages in the reconstruction of proto-forms and investigates patterns of migration and inter-community contact, contributing new perspectives to ongoing discussions on Austronesian subgrouping. His research is grounded in extensive fieldwork, including ethnolinguistic engagement in the interior of Sarawak. Additionally, he has participated in a research initiative in Kampung Melayu Ampenan, Lombok, which has deepened his appreciation for linguistic resilience within culturally diverse communities. These experiences have provided him with valuable insights into language endangerment, cultural continuity, and the dynamics of linguistic identity. Looking ahead, Zulfadzlee aims to develop an open-access digital



linguistic archive to assist researchers, educators, and indigenous communities in preserving Borneo's linguistic heritage. Zulfadzlee has presented his research at regional conferences and seminars, and he has published more than ten peer-reviewed research articles, including three Scopus-indexed. This establishes him as a promising emerging scholar in Austronesian linguistics.



AWAIS RUBBANI

PhD in Applied Linguistics

Awais began his PhD journey at FASS, UBD in 2022 and has since then contributed to the Writing Retreat for postgraduate students as a moderator and organizer (May-October 2023). His research fellowship with the TAYO program, funded by Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines) from January to September 2025, focused on inclusivity and peace-making. Additionally, he secured a research grant from Airlangga University, Surabaya (Indonesia) worth 25 million Indonesian Rupiah, for his project on media and gender discourse.

Awais's scholarly output includes the 2025 publication in *The Journal of International Women's Studies* with his PhD supervisor Dr Sharifah Alkaff, exploring female politicians' representation in Pakistani newspapers. He also co-authored a 2024 article in *Cogent Arts and Humanities* on narrative discrepancies in Pakistani news. He has presented in international conferences such as the 10th World Conference on Women's Studies in Colombo (Sri Lanka) in 2024, and various others in Singapore. He has also been invited as a guest lecturer in various courses to talk about Media and Gender Discourse. Awais has completed his PhD thesis this year on "The Representation of Female Politicians in Pakistani English-Language Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis Study."

FASS PhD CANDIDATES

HANA GHANI

PhD Candidate in English Literature



Hana participated in the 20th Singapore Graduate Forum on Southeast Asian Studies (SGFSEA) in June 2025. an annual graduate forum hosted by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (ARI-NUS). The two-week hybrid fellowship programme featured both virtual and in-person masterclasses on methodologies and theories, and concluded with an in-person conference at ARI-NUS that brought together early scholars and senior Southeast Asian studies specialists as mentors. Hana presented a paper titled 'Born and Beyond Digital: Instapoetic Practice and Literary Remediation in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore', which was led in discussion by Prof. Tim Winter of ARI-NUS. The paper examined the production and (re)circulation of born-digital

poems on Instagram. Although brief, SGFSEA proved to be a rewarding experience. This opportunity which are made possible in part through the support of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, has given her fresh perspectives on pursuing literary research and ideas on how to situate her research within wider interdisciplinary and scholarly networks across Southeast Asia. In July 2025, Hana also visited the School of Humanities, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where she participated in a two-day graduate workshop on affect, feeling, and emotion in the social sciences and humanities. The workshop is coordination by Asst. Prof. Peh Li Qi from the Department of English and included keynote speakers Prof. Rob Mitchell of Duke University and Assoc. Prof. Courtney Smith of Wesleyan University. Hana presented a paper titled Relatable Rupī Kaur: The Affective Work of Relatability for Digital Kin-making in Rupī Kaur's Instapoetry, which explored how affective practices on Instagram generate cultural capital for poets within digital literary spaces. Overall, the two academic engagements to Singapore has enriched her understanding of digital literary practices and opened the broader relevance and potential of her doctoral project in Southeast Asia and beyond. This provides the momentum and motivation she needed as she advances toward the final stages of her PhD journey.

Carlo is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics at FASS, UBD. His recent article: *"Sit like princess/ prince": The making of neoliberal subject in communication classrooms in the Philippine classrooms*, marks his scholarly debut in researching the processes of neoliberalism in higher education in the Philippines and Brunei. Carlo's 'becoming' is shaped by his own TESOL experiences, the political-economy conditions in the Philippines, and the 'transformative possibilities' of the English language, which motivate him to reflect on and understand how language policy regulates (socio)linguistic behaviours and is then internalised by teachers and students in and beyond the classroom. His ethnographic methods and critical discourse approach enable him to narrate and offer interpretations of his participants' self-formations, stories, problems, and logics, which may be permeated by neoliberalism. His scholarly milestone is attributed to his ever-supportive and compassionate supervisors, Dr Rommel Curaming and Dr Sharifah Alkaff, whose mentorship is reflective, engaging, and critical. The reference centre, seminar series, lazyboy seats at the library, local and international conference subsidies, travel grants, and scholarly community building were Carlo's memorable and enriching experiences that helped him achieve his full potential.

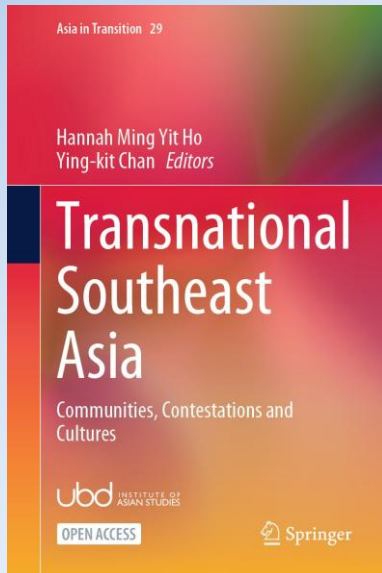
CARLO SOBERANO

PhD in Applied Linguistics



BOOK PUBLICATIONS

Transnational Southeast Asia: Communities, Contestations and Cultures

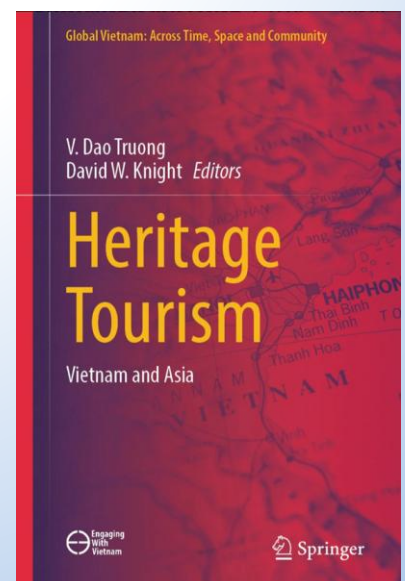


Dr Hannah M. Y. Ho from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, in collaboration with Dr Ying Kit Chan from the National University of Singapore, has co-edited the seminal volume *Transnational Southeast Asia: Communities, Contestations and Cultures* (Springer 2025). This timely publication builds on the conceptual framework of transnationalism, which is increasingly employed across disciplines to analyse global cultural flows, while remaining attentive to the nuances shaped by spatio-temporal dynamics. The volume features research drawn from and across various nations in Southeast Asia, interrogating how the region lends itself to nuanced applications of the transnational paradigm. It further explores the broader cultural and collective implications of

such transnational engagements. Rather than positioning the past and present as oppositional constructs, the volume adopts a temporal continuum that reflects the time-space compression inherent in the transnational condition as it manifests within Southeast Asia. A total of 28 scholars contributed to the volume, including 15 from Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Their multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research foregrounds pressing issues in Brunei Darussalam as well as in other Southeast Asian contexts, offering valuable insights into the region's complex and evolving cultural landscapes. This book project was made possible through an FIC research grant awarded by UBD's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Heritage Tourism: Vietnam and Asia

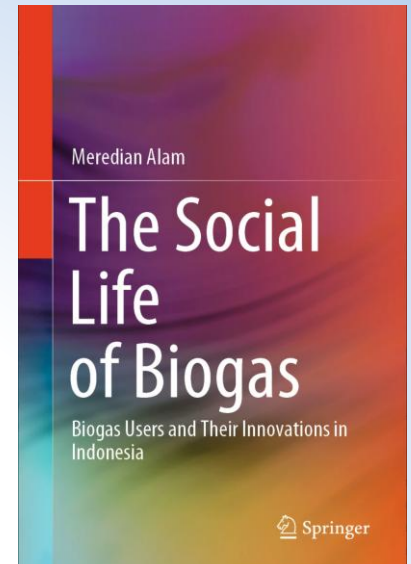
This book provides an overview of research and best practices associated with heritage tourism, with a particular focus on Vietnam, in conversation with heritage tourism in other Asian contexts. These include Iran in the Middle East, Sri Lanka in South Asia, Japan and China in East Asia, Thailand in Southeast Asia, and Brunei and the Philippines in the South Pacific. By delving into crucial questions and challenges relating to cultural innovation, preservation, and authenticity, it offers key lessons for policy-making and theorisation which not only contribute to understanding and improving heritage tourism in Vietnam, specifically, and in Asia more broadly, but also inform efforts to preserve and regenerate both natural and cultural heritage on a global scale. It is relevant to researchers and student communities working within areas of heritage, sustainability, tourism, geography, and in Asian studies.



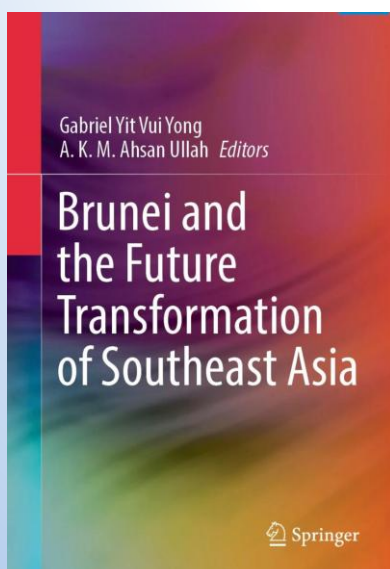
BOOK PUBLICATIONS

The Social Life of Biogas: Biogas Users and Their Innovations in Indonesia

This is the most comprehensive book discussing the impact of renewable energy transition by engaging local narratives, and combining this with the domestication of technology theory. Addressing a specific concern, the discussion considers the development of household biogas from an interdisciplinary sociological perspective and addresses the success factors for the implementation of biogas policy on the household level in Indonesia. Drawing upon extensive ethnographic fieldwork in rural Indonesia, this book explores the interactive process of social and technological innovation from a user perspective. Their social interactions with wider stakeholders such as biogas technology trainers, laborers, construction partner organizations, and fellow users are examined. The author sheds light on emerging evidence around biogas sustainability by engaging a unique interdisciplinary framework that combines aspects of both sociology and engineering. Offering a unique insight, this book is relevant for social scientists, postgraduate students, social workers, environmental activists, communication experts, and engineers working across aspects of renewable energy development. They will gain new interdisciplinary insights and applicable approaches to building household biogas by actively engaging the users.



Brunei and the Future Transformation of Southeast Asia

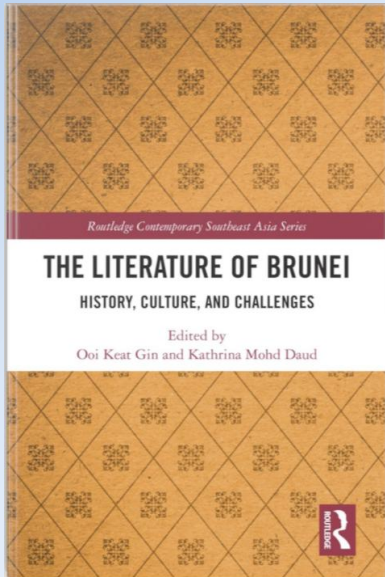


This book adopts an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on contributions from experts in various fields such as geography, environmental and developmental studies, to provide a comprehensive analysis of Brunei's role within Southeast Asia's future trajectory. Brunei has often been overlooked, or given only cursory coverage in regional analyses, and so this book affords significant attention to the Bruneian perspective on regional development. By integrating Brunei's unique historical, geographical and socio-economic context into the broader discussion, the book offers insights into how Brunei's aspirations and challenges contribute to shaping the region's future. By emphasizing local-regional transformation and resilience, the book provides practical insights into how Brunei

and other Southeast Asian nations can navigate uncertainties—adapting to global challenges such as climate change, economic shifts, and geopolitical dynamics—and seize opportunities in the coming decades. It is relevant to social scientists across disciplines focused on Southeast Asia, and in the Muslim world's role in development.

BOOK PUBLICATIONS

The Literature of Brunei: History, Culture, and Challenges

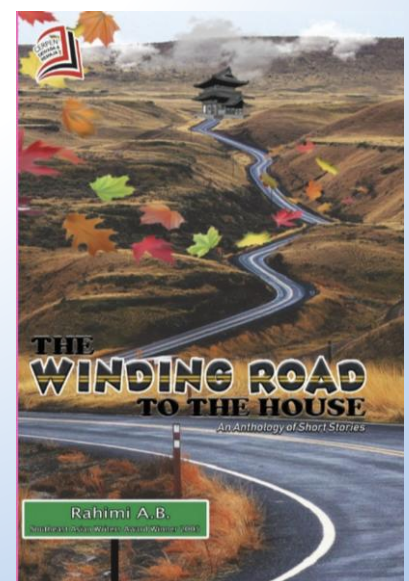


This book presents an overview of the literature of Brunei, surveying literary traditions, innovations, and new approaches as well as historical and contemporary issues and challenges. This book highlights the unique characteristics of Bruneian literature, including its approach to bilingualism - Brunei Malay and English - its historical intertwining with monarchs and myths, and how its emerging developments can be charted in the twenty-first century. Gathering together the work of both established and emerging scholars of Bruneian literature and history, this book brings detailed scholarship to an English-speaking audience, some of

which was originally written in the Malay language, and highlights a Bruneian perspective. In drawing out the peculiar traditions, innovations, and challenges of Bruneian literature, this collection of essays is not only original in concept but also a pioneering endeavour. The Literature of Brunei will be of interest to researchers in World and Asian Literature, in particular Southeast Asian literature.

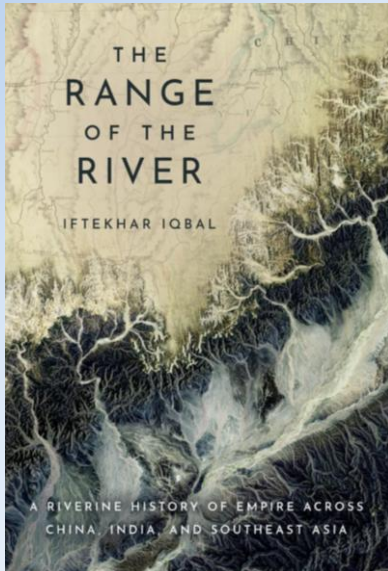
The Winding Road to the House: An Anthology of Short Stories

This book by Ampuan Haji Ibrahim Bin Ampuan Haji Tengah is a compilation of 17 short stories that explore themes of morality, society, education, economy, and religion. Some of these tales are inspired by personal experiences and stylistic experimentation. When an individual engages in malfeasance such as fraud, corruption, or drug use, they are often regarded as unethical or immoral. Several of the stories are presented in an experimental manner, utilizing unique perspectives, language variations, symbolism, and character development. This approach aims to create impacts influenced by themes and style while addressing issues related to education, society, economy, and religion.



BOOK PUBLICATIONS

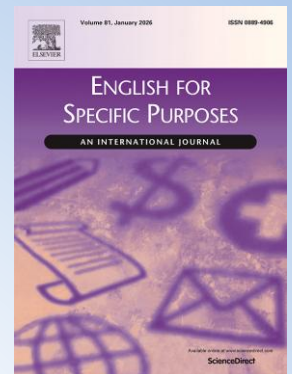
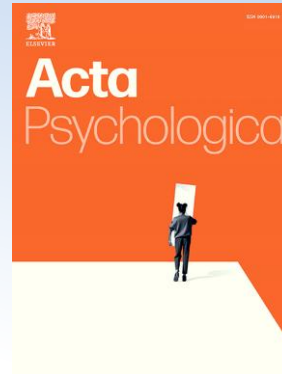
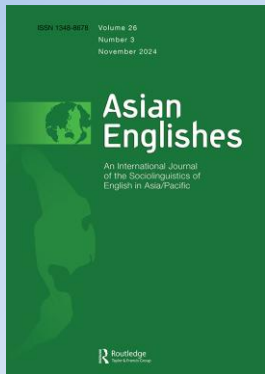
The Range Of The River



Spanning nearly 4 million square kilometers, the Tibetan river system—including the Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Red, and Yangzi—forms the largest contiguous network of rivers on the planet, stretching across eastern South Asia, mainland Southeast Asia, and southern China. The Range of the River uncovers the entwined histories of these vast waterways and the empires, human actors, and other-than-human forces that have shaped Asia since the 1850s. Both ethnodiverse and biodiverse, these rivers were more than contested imperial spaces—they were

also channels of communal and material exchange, linking near and distant contact zones. They fostered connections across Asia, driving commerce, mobility, and cultural encounters that transformed them into shared, living commons bridging societies, political powers, and economic interests. Tracing six major rivers across eight countries, Iftekhhar Iqbal argues that these river systems formed the core of a discursive space where empires, regional political forces, ethnic groups, boaters, peddlers, explorers, merchants, and mules encountered each other in layered meanings and movements. This groundbreaking book reimagines the river not as merely a tool of empire but as a dynamic force in itself, shaping a truly transregional Asia. By weaving together diverse riverine life-worlds, The Range of the River invites us to rethink Asia's spatial history.

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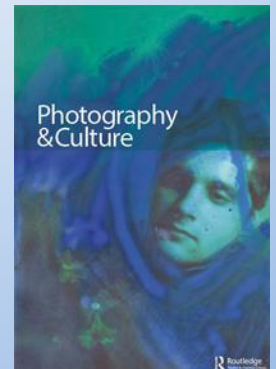
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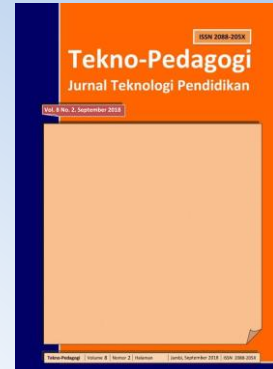
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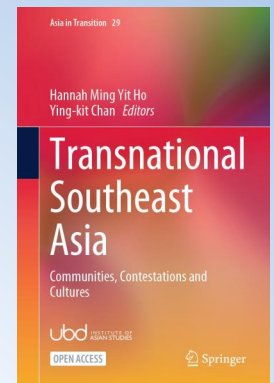
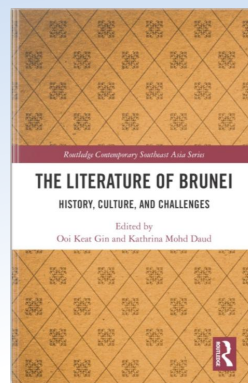
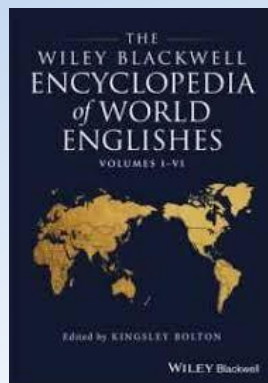
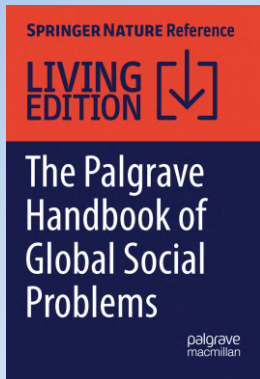
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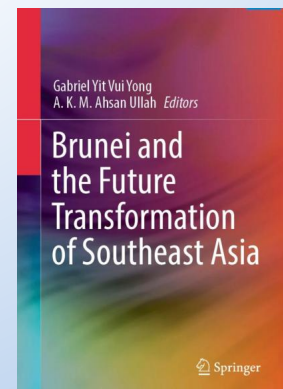
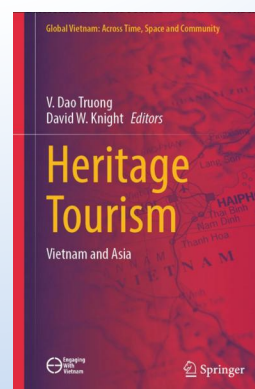
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