

**THE SABAH MALAY DIALECT OF SEMPORNA:  
PHONOLOGICAL STRUCTURES**

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## CHAPTER I

### SYNOPSIS

Language changes all the time. Thus, it displays varieties as it changes. Due to time and space, a language will diverge in the aspects of pronunciation, phonology, morphology, lexical, grammar and semantic. However, this happens more frequently in the aspects of pronunciation and phonology. Thus, it is not surprising that Malay variant spoken in Sabah displays different structural characteristics especially phonologically. Sabah is a state with heterogeneous ethnic groups and numerous immigrant groups occupying different areas and districts. Because of the range of different inhabited areas by different ethnic groups and immigrant groups and the influences and interferences of their mother tongues, thus, Sabah Malay Dialect (SMD) itself displays varieties although they are mutually intelligible.

As a state border is not coterminous with a dialect border, there is no single uniform and homogeneous dialect of SMD. Almost all districts have their own variants of SMD with different degrees of influenced from different indigenous languages and different languages of the immigrants. For example the variety of SMD in Tawau, Semporna and Lahad Datu districts, is influence by the local languages such as Bajau, Suluk, Cocos Malay and immigrant languages such as Indonesian Malay. Thus, this study will focus on the uniqueness of the Semporna Malay as a variant of Sabah Malay dialect and Malay dialect in general as well as the language use and function.

