

Multilingual Education

Salbrina Sharbawi
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Brunei English

A New Variety in a Multilingual Society

Second Edition

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Salbrina Sharbawi • David Deterding
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Preface

This second edition comes more than ten years after publication of its first edition in 2013. Since then, the linguistic environment in Brunei has undergone substantial changes, reflecting the country's evolving culture, society, and economy. The second edition aims to capture these changes and provide readers with a more comprehensive understanding of Brunei English in its contemporary context.

The primary motivation behind this revised edition is to offer a more in-depth descriptive account of Brunei English, incorporating recent research findings, linguistic developments, and societal changes. To achieve this goal, we have gathered new data from various sources, such as audio recordings from different age groups of Bruneians and extracts from online communication. These examples vividly demonstrate how Bruneians use a variety of English with locally and socially influenced linguistic features. By exploring the intricacies of Brunei English, we aim to offer scholars, educators, students, and language enthusiasts a more nuanced and accurate portrayal of this emerging variety of English.

In this edition, readers will find expanded sections on various aspects of Brunei English, including its pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse features. We also emphasise the sociolinguistic dimension, exploring how Brunei English functions within different social contexts and its role in shaping distinct identity and communication patterns in Bruneian society. This includes a more refined focus on how language variation is employed by individuals to mould themselves, their interactions, and the social spheres they inhabit.

We hope this book continues to serve as a valuable resource for anyone interested in delving into the multifaceted manifestations of regional and global English varieties, with a particular emphasis on Brunei English. May it inspire curiosity, spark intellectual discourse, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for Brunei's rich linguistic heritage.

Gadong, Brunei Darussalam

Salbrina Sharbawi
David Deterding
Nur Raihan Mohamad

Conventions in the Transcriptions

Z-F1	The speech of Z-F1
Int	The speech of the interviewer (the second author for the UBDCSBE interviews)
<Z-F1>	Mention of Z-F1's name in the conversation
F22	The speech of F22 from the UBDCSBE interviews
{F22-int:35}	An extract starting 35 s from the start of the interview with F22
50	In the transcript for the lunch conversations, the time in seconds from the start of the file is shown in the left-hand column
((laugh))	Non-linguistic sound
((tsk))	Alveolar click, sometimes transcribed as 'tut-tut'
((hh))	Audible intake of air
<hyb> <i>testuck</i> </hyb>	Hybrid word
(.)	Short pause (less than 0.5 s)
(2.3)	Longer pause (duration in seconds given)
,	Intonational phrase break where there is no pause
s-	Incomplete word
word:	Elongated word
WORD	Unexpected emphasis (Note: use of capital 'I' for the first-person pronoun is adopted to follow normal orthography and does not indicate any extra emphasis on this pronoun.)
xxx	Unintelligible words
<i>makan</i> ('eat')	Non-English words (mostly Malay and occasionally Arabic) are italicised; a gloss is generally provided in brackets. (Note: in extracts from the local newspapers, we always try to present the text accurately, so italics are only used when they occur in the original text. This particularly affects the data in Chap. 6 on lexis, so the presentation in Chap. 6 differs from that in other chapters.)
{explanation}	Textual explanation or elaboration
[The start of overlapping speech
?	Rising intonation

(continued)

U B D	Letters are spelt out
↗	(convention used in Chap. 5 on discourse) rising pitch
↘	(convention used in Chap. 5 on discourse) falling pitch
*	An ill-formed word or sentence

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Abbreviations

AL	Alternating Languages
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam)
BSB	<i>Bandar Seri Begawan</i> (the capital of Brunei)
CfBT	CfBT Education Trust (originally: Centre for British Teachers)
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
COM	Cultural Orientation Model
DBP	<i>Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka</i> ('Language and Literature Bureau')
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ESL	English as a Second Language
HYS	Have Your Say (a BruDirect online discussion forum)
ICE	International Corpus of English
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IRK	Islamic Religious Knowledge
KK	Kota Kinabalu
KB	Kuala Belait
LFC	Lingua Franca Core
LNCP	Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Programme
LSI	Language Index Score
MIB	<i>Melayu Islam Beraja</i> ('Malay Islamic Monarchy')
MoE	Ministry of Education
PASS	Passive
PCL	Discourse particle
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
POSS	Possessive (e.g. 'its')
PRB	<i>Partai Rakyat Brunei</i> ('Brunei People's Party')
RIPAS	<i>Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha</i> (a hospital in BSB)

RP	Received Pronunciation (the standard pronunciation of southern England that tends to be shown in textbooks such as Roach 2009 and reference books such as Wells 2008)
SPN21	<i>Sistem Pendidikan Negara—Abad 21</i> ('National System of Education for the 21st century')
UBD	<i>Universiti Brunei Darussalam</i> ('University of Brunei Darussalam')
UBDCSBE	UBD Corpus of Spoken Brunei English
UNISSA	<i>Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali</i> (the Islamic University in Brunei, named after Sharif Ali, the first Sultan to embrace Islam)

Chapter 1

Introduction



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Abstract Brunei is about 5765 km² in size, and it has a population of over 450,000. It is located about 5° north of the equator, on the north coast of the island of Borneo. Its history is usually traced back to the conversion to Islam of the first Sultan in the fourteenth century. From 1888 till 1984, Brunei was a British protectorate, but in 1984 it regained its full independence. The main language spoken in Brunei is Brunei Malay, while Standard Malay is the national language and English is also widely spoken. Various dialects of Chinese are spoken, and there are a number of minority languages such as Kedayan, Tutong and Murut. In addition to providing a background to the geography, history and languages of Brunei, Chap. 1 also introduces the data analysed in this book, which, in the 2013 edition was principally obtained from the UBDCSBE corpus of spoken data, a one-hour interview with an informant named Umi, and from the two English-language newspapers, the *Borneo Bulletin* and *The Brunei Times*. The updated version contains newly procured data in the form of informal free conversations between groups of friends from different generations, recorded academic presentations delivered by UBD students, as well as informal written English found on communication and social media such as WhatsApp and Twitter.

Keywords Brunei history · Brunei geography · Brunei population · Brunei Malay · Kedayan · Tutong · Murut



Fig. 1.1 The location of Brunei in Southeast Asia

Brunei Darussalam is a small country located on the northern coast of the island of Borneo, about 5° north of the equator (see Fig. 1.1). The total land area is 5765 km^2 , and the population, according to the 2021 National Census, was just over 440,000 (Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2022).

Brunei has approximately the same land area as the county of Norfolk in the UK, and it is a little smaller than the state of Delaware in the USA. It is about 10 times the size of the island state of Singapore, but the population is less than one-tenth that of Singapore. In fact, apart from European places such as Monaco and Liechtenstein, Brunei is the smallest non-insular country in the world, both in terms of size and population (Wikipedia, 2023).

Apart from the South China Sea to the north, Brunei is entirely surrounded by the Malaysian state of Sarawak (see Fig. 1.2). The Malaysian town of Miri is just over the western border of Brunei, while Kota Kinabalu (often referred to as KK) is about 5 h drive to the east.

In fact, Brunei is divided into two parts, as the Malaysian town of Limbang and its surrounding region separate the district of Temburong from the other three districts of Brunei: Belait, Tutong, and Brunei-Muara (see Fig. 1.3). This separation into two disconnected parts is a result of the incursion of Rajah Brooke in 1890 (as is discussed in Sect. 1.1 below), and the border with Malaysia is still under dispute.

The majority of the population lives in and around the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan (often abbreviated to BSB), in the district of Brunei-Muara, though there are also medium-sized towns along the coast in the Belait district, primarily engaged in the off-shore oil drilling industry.



Fig. 1.2 The island of Borneo, showing some of the major towns. *BSB* Bandar Seri Begawan (the capital of Brunei), *KK* Kota Kinabalu

1.1 Brief History

There was once an ancient settlement along the Brunei River. However, the Sultanate of Brunei traces its history back to the conversion of the first Sultan to Islam in the middle of the fourteenth century, though there is some debate over this date, and Saunders (1994, p. 44) suggests the true date may be a little later.

In subsequent centuries, Brunei was an important trading post that held sway over most of northern Borneo and also the south of what is now the Philippines. In July 1521, a Spanish expedition visited Brunei, and the chronicler, an Italian called Antonio Pigafetta, was impressed with what he saw, including a substantial palace with hundreds of nobles and soldiers in attendance (Saunders, 1994, p. 49).

However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Brunei empire had become weakened by infighting and corruption. In 1840, when there was a rebellion in the west in the region near the town of Kuching, the Sultan asked the British adventurer James Brooke to help put it down, but after successfully achieving this objective,

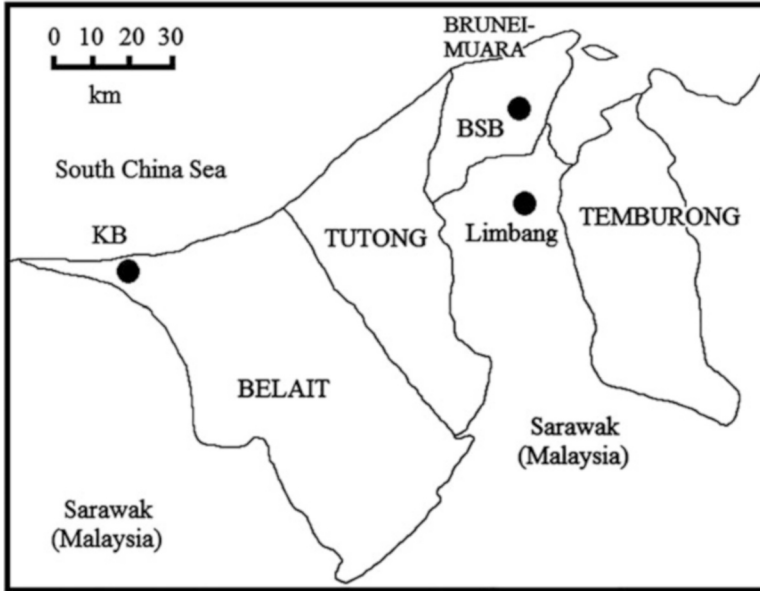


Fig. 1.3 Map showing how the area around the Malaysian town of Limbang separates Temburong from the three other districts of Brunei: Brunei-Muara, Tutong and Belait. Also shown are BSB (Bandar Seri Begawan) and KB (Kuala Belait)

Brooke established himself as the first ‘White Rajah’ in Kuching, and gradually he and his successor, Charles Brooke, extended their influence over more and more of the north coast of Borneo.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the land controlled by Charles Brooke extended to Miri, and the very existence of Brunei as an independent entity was threatened. In 1888, Brunei became a British protectorate, but that did not stop Brooke from continuing with his expansion, grabbing Limbang in 1890 and thereby splitting Brunei into two separate enclaves (Hussainmiya, 2006, p. 22).

In 1904, the British sent Malcolm McArthur to Brunei to evaluate the situation and determine the future of Brunei. When he completed his report in 1905, he unexpectedly proposed that Brunei should continue as an independent sultanate under the guidance of a British Resident (Hussainmiya, 2006). Thus began the British residency, a colonial system under which the Sultan remained the Head of State but was required to listen to the advice of the British colonial representative in all matters except for those pertaining to religion and cultural practices.

In 1929, oil was discovered along the coast of Belait District, and particularly after the Second World War, this produced a massive source of income for the sultanate. Today, this still provides the bulk of the income for the government.

The Japanese army invaded Brunei in 1941 and controlled the country till 1945. One effect of this was the erosion of colonial authority, as the British empire was no longer seen as invincible. When the British returned in 1945, there was increasing

pressure for greater independence, and eventually, a constitution was agreed upon and implemented in 1959 (Hussainmiya, 2001).

One of the provisions of the constitution was for elections. When District Council elections were held in August 1962, all but one of the 55 seats were won by the radical *Partai Rakyat Brunei* (PRB, ‘Brunei People’s Party’) (Hussainmiya, 1995, p. 270). The PRB soon started demanding a more substantial role in running the country, and it launched an insurrection in December 1962. This was quickly put down with the help of British forces, with some loss of life, and the constitution was suspended.

One issue at the time was whether Brunei should join together with Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah to form a unified state. Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III eventually decided that Brunei should retain its independence (Hussainmiya, 1995). The others went ahead without Brunei and created the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, though Singapore left the federation within 2 years.

In 1967, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III abdicated in favour of his eldest son, Hassanal Bolkiah, who was at the time training to be a military officer at Sandhurst in England (Hussainmiya, 1995, p. 362). Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah has continued as Head of State to the present day, celebrating his Golden Jubilee in 2017.

In 1984, Brunei gained full independence from Britain, and it continues today as a small but wealthy independent state, a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) since 1984.

1.2 Population

Of the 2021 population of 440,715, a total of 297,016 (67%) are classified as Malay, 42,132 (10%) are Chinese, and the remaining 101,567 (23%) are labelled as ‘other minor groups’ (Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2022). The final category includes the Iban, some of whom are indigenous to Borneo but not regarded as native Bruneians, as well as Indians and expatriates. Living in the Belait district, there is also a small community of Penan, the traditional forest people of Borneo, numbering just 51 individuals at the start of the 1980s (Martin & Sercombe, 1996, p. 303).

The category ‘Malay’ includes seven subgroups that are regarded as *puak jati* (‘indigenous ethnic groups’): Malay, Kedayan, Belait, Tutong, Dusun, Bisaya and Murut. No current figures are available for the numbers of each of these. According to Maxwell (2002, cited in Hussainmiya & Tarling, 2011, p. 151), the Kedayan, Belait, Tutong, Dusun, and Murut were all classified separately from the Malays in the 1947 census, but from the 1971 census onward, they have all been regarded as subcategories of Malay.

The Chinese originate from south China and Taiwan. Their main dialect groups are Hokkien, Hakka, and Cantonese, and there are also some Hainanese, Teochew, and Foochow (Dunseath, 1996, p. 284). The status of ethnically Chinese people in Brunei is controversial, as there are many whose families have lived in Brunei for generations but who have not been granted Brunei citizenship. In fact, this was one

of the issues that arose in the negotiations over the constitution that was eventually implemented in 1959 (Hussainmiya & Tarling, 2011, p. 38). Such stateless people are referred to as ‘red IC holders’, as their identification cards are red to indicate they are permanent residents but not citizens. One obstacle to obtaining Brunei citizenship is good mastery of Malay, and only some of the Chinese in Brunei have been able to pass the exam.

Of the population of Brunei in 2021, the overwhelming majority, 318,530 (72%), live in the Brunei-Muara district, 65,531 (15%) live in the Belait district, 47,210 (11%) live in the Tutong district, and just 9444 (2%) live in Temburong (Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2022).

1.3 Languages

There is a wide range of languages spoken in Brunei (Martin & Poedjosoedarmo, 1996). The official national language is Standard Malay (*Bahasa Melayu*), but the dominant lingua franca is actually Brunei Malay, a variety of Malay that is substantially different from Standard Malay in its pronunciation, lexis, and syntax (Clynes, 2001). For example, in its pronunciation, Standard Malay has six vowels: /i, e, a, o, u, ə/ (Clynes & Deterding, 2011; Deterding et al., 2022), but Brunei Malay only has three: /i, a, u/; and while /h/ can occur at the start of a word in Standard Malay, initial /h/ does not occur in Brunei Malay, so *hutan* (‘forest’) in Standard Malay is *utan* in Brunei Malay (Deterding & Ishamina, 2017).

In fact, the seven *puak jati* (‘indigenous ethnic groups’) each have their own language, and these can be paired as follows: Brunei Malay is similar to Kedayan, and, based on an analysis of 1916 words, Deterding and Ho (2021, p. 8) give a figure of 88.1% for lexical cognates between the two languages; Dusun is similar to Bisaya, with the level of lexical cognates being 76.5%; and Belait and Tutong are also related, though the shared lexicon at 51.7% is lower than that for the other pairs. The speakers of the seventh indigenous language, Murut, mostly live in Temburong, and their language is the same as the language known as *Lun Bawang*, which is spoken by many people over the border in Sarawak, Malaysia, especially in Limbang District (Coluzzi, 2010, p. 119).

Some of these minority languages are in danger of dying out. Belait is now almost extinct, and Dusun and Tutong are under threat, though efforts to maintain it are being made by some enthusiasts, for instance, by means of language classes organised by the University of Brunei Darussalam’s Language Centre (McLellan et al., 2016) and a dedicated blog on Tutong (Noor Azam, 2011). The status of Murut seems to be a little more assured (Coluzzi, 2010), partly because there is some support for the language across the border in Malaysia, including the provision of radio broadcasts and some printed materials.

Various dialects are spoken by the Chinese population, with Hokkien being the most common. In recent years, there has been a shift towards the use of Mandarin instead of the heritage dialects, a situation that matches that of Singapore (Vaish



Fig. 1.4 A sign by the side of the road in BSB, promoting the use of (Standard) Malay

et al., 2010, p. 175), with the result that many young people only have a passive knowledge of the language of their grandparents. In Brunei, nearly all Chinese people also have some knowledge of spoken Malay, though their ability in written Malay is often not so good.

Following the Compulsory Religious Act Order 2012, all Muslim children are required to attend religious schools (*Ugama* schools) for 15 h a week from the ages of 7 till 15 (Noor Azam, 2016, p. 260; Muhammad & Petra, 2021, p. 36), and Arabic is taught in these schools, principally to enable pupils to read the Quran and to perform the daily prayers. As a result, knowledge of some Arabic is widespread in the country, though it is not widely spoken outside the religious context.

Finally, of course, there is English. Although some older people who did not receive an extensive education have little or no knowledge of English, all young people in Brunei have a basic knowledge of the language, particularly as it is the medium of education for most subjects in upper primary and secondary schools.

Figure 1.4 shows a sign by the side of a road in the middle of BSB. It says *utamakan bahasa Melayu* ('prioritise the Malay language') in two different scripts, the Arabic-based Jawi script at the top, and the Roman script underneath. It is not clear what the main threat to the Malay language is perceived to be: the local dialect, Brunei Malay? Or English? But it does illustrate the commitment of the government to promoting the use of Standard Malay, even though, as we will see in Chap. 2, widespread knowledge of English is also emphasised throughout the education system.

1.4 Brunei English or English in Brunei?

With the emergence of a variety of English, there comes a time when it is no longer just referred to as 'English in (Country)' but instead often becomes '(Country) English' (Schneider, 2007, p. 50). So, for example, we nowadays tend to talk

about Singapore English, as it has developed its own distinctive identity, even though there is substantial variation between formal and colloquial varieties and also between Chinese, Malay and Indian varieties. In contrast, some people have in the past disputed the appropriacy of using the term Hong Kong English, as they question whether it has developed its own distinctive identity (Luke & Richards, 1982, p. 55).

What about Brunei? Should we be talking about Brunei English? Or is it merely English in Brunei? In this book, we prefer to use the term Brunei English, because we believe that the set of features that characterise this variety of English make it special and thereby distinguish it from other varieties of English. Indeed, recent studies (e.g., Salbrina, 2020, 2022, 2023; Zayani & Salbrina, 2023) looking at English usage among young Bruneians in their teens and twenties have revealed that English is now far more frequently used for day-to-day interactions than Brunei Malay and that many of the respondents see English as an intrinsic element of the modern Bruneian identity. Thus, we feel that, by using the term Brunei English, we are according it the respect that is due to a newly-emergent variety of English, and this emphasises why it is worthy of study.

We will consider the status of Brunei English once more in the final chapter of the book, particularly within the context of the five-phase model of post-colonial Englishes and the Complex Dynamic Systems theory proposed by Schneider (2003, 2007, 2020).

1.5 Variation in Brunei English

Variation in English is inevitable in any society where it is widely used, and Brunei is no exception. Wood et al. (2011, pp. 52–53) note that some people claim Bruneians speak good English, while others complain that Bruneian students are incapable of putting together a correct sentence. This educational divide will be discussed further in Chap. 2.

In fact, as one might expect, variation in Brunei English depends not just on the educational background and attainment of the speaker, but also on a range of other factors including age, gender, profession, and ethnicity. Let us consider the last factor a little further.

Based on a short extract from the Wolf passage (see Appendix 3) spoken by 10 Malay and 10 Chinese Bruneians, Ishamina (2011a) reports that Bruneian listeners are able to correctly identify the ethnicity of Bruneian speakers as Malay or Chinese in about 74% of cases, which suggests that there are distinct patterns of speech for the different communities. Where, exactly, these differences lie remains uncertain (Ishamina, 2011b), though intonation and other suprasegmental features are probably key.

In fact, even higher figures for the identification of the ethnicity of a speaker as Malay or Chinese have been reported for the conversational English of undergraduates in Singapore (Deterding & Poedjosoedarmo, 2000), but, as mentioned in the

previous section, that does not stop people from talking about Singapore English as a distinct variety of English. We will assume here that there are clear patterns shared by many different Bruneians that distinguish their English from other varieties of the language spoken and written around the world. And it is the aim of this book to describe some of those patterns.

One other kind of variation is, of course, important: personal variation. All speakers vary their style of speech depending on who they are speaking to, where the conversation takes place, and what they are talking about, and speakers of Brunei English are no exception. This variation, and those dependent on age and gender, were not captured in the first edition; each of the recordings on which the first edition was based had been obtained on a single occasion while the speaker was talking to one person. This limitation is addressed in the present edition by including recordings of free conversations between three groups of friends of different age-generations and genders.

In Singapore, variation in spoken English is often described as alternating between two distinct codes, Singapore Standard English and Singapore Colloquial English (otherwise known as ‘Singlish’), though there is some debate about whether this variation should be modelled in terms of diglossia (Gupta, 1992) or as shifting along a scale of formality (Pakir, 1991). About two decades later, the Cultural Orientation Model (COM) was developed to model patterns of English usage in Singapore as being influenced by two competing forces, the global and the local (Alsagoff, 2010).

Does this kind of shifting between two distinct varieties exist in Brunei English? It seems less clear cut than in Singapore, if only because no name such as ‘Brulish’ has become widely accepted to describe a colloquial variety. Nevertheless, substantial variation in the English used by individual speakers undoubtedly exists, even if we are not able to model it in our data. The data analysed in this book is described in the next section.

1.6 Data

This book is based substantially on the analysis of data. Both spoken and written data are used to illustrate the patterns of Brunei English and, wherever possible, to estimate the frequency of occurrence of various features.

The spoken data consists of four types. First is the recordings of 53 undergraduates at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) reading a short text, the Wolf passage. The second kind of spoken data consists of recordings of the same students being interviewed by the second author of this book. The third and fourth are new data specifically acquired for this second edition. The third comprises 56 Bruneians of various ages reading a specially crafted passage containing words which have been identified as having idiosyncratic pronunciations in Brunei English, while the fourth is recorded conversations over lunch between three groups of friends. These four sources of spoken data are described in the next section.

Most of the written data is from issues of the two local English-language newspapers, *The Brunei Times* and the *Borneo Bulletin*. This is described in Sect. 1.8 below. In addition, analysis will be made in Chap. 5 of short extracts from texts printed at the Kampong Ayer Cultural and Tourism Gallery, and in Chap. 7 analysis is made of data from the University of Brunei Darussalam Corpus of Spoken Brunei English (UBDCSBE) interviews, recent recorded conversations among Generation X (Gen-X) and Generation Z (Gen-Z) speakers, and on-line postings on the BruDirect internet discussion forum, which, unfortunately, no longer exists today. So, to update the information in this chapter, new data is gathered from Reddit, a social media platform that has grown in number and popularity in recent years, and this is done specifically through the subreddit *r/brunei*. Although the primary focus of our analysis was on the ‘Brunei daily random discussion and small questions’ threads from early 2022 to late 2023, we also utilised examples from earlier posts to showcase the presence of a feature. Additionally, we extracted examples from other relevant threads under *r/brunei* to ensure a comprehensive examination. These data sources will be described in Chaps. 5, 6 and 7, respectively, as they are only referred to in those three chapters.

In addition, occasional reference will be made to utterances heard in oral presentations by students, extracts from student written assignments, and signs and notices occurring in Brunei. Although these additional sources of data are admittedly rather unsystematic, it is hoped that they can supplement the data mentioned above by providing interesting instances of various features.

1.7 Spoken Data

The first and second kinds of spoken data both come from the (UBDCSBE). This consists of high quality recordings of 53 English-medium undergraduates at UBD reading a passage and then being interviewed for 5 min each. The recordings took place in a quiet office at UBD. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the speakers: we recorded students who seemed to speak well and who were willing to be recorded. While there are obvious limitations to this sampling procedure, the data do represent a substantial range of the spoken English of reasonably well-educated young people in Brunei.

38 of the speakers are female and 15 are male, reflecting the imbalance between the two genders among students at UBD. The female students are referred to as F1 to F38, while the males are M1 to M15. All were aged between 20 and 24 at the time of the recording, except for one female (F6) who was 35 and one male (M2) who was 28. Of the total, 33 are ethnically Malay, 15 are Chinese, one is Kedayan, one is Dusun, one is Iban, one is Tutong, and one is mixed Chinese/Dusun/Malay, though in a few cases, this ethnic classification is misleading. For example, F10 and F14 are officially classified as Chinese, but both state that their spoken Malay is actually better than their Chinese, and F10 claims little knowledge of any Chinese language

and says she feels culturally Malay. Details of the female students are provided in Appendix 1 and the male students in Appendix 2. All the speakers have good spoken English, though inevitably some speak it better than others.

The read text is the Wolf passage, a short passage specially designed to be suitable for the description of the pronunciation of English, as it includes all the consonants and vowels of English as well as lots of instances of word-final consonant clusters (Deterding, 2006). The full text of the Wolf passage can be found in Appendix 3. The subjects were invited to read through the passage briefly before being recorded directly onto a laptop computer. The recording of the passage took an average of about 70 s.

The interview of each speaker took place immediately after the recording of the Wolf passage. It began with the interviewer asking the question, ‘What did you do during your last vacation?’ and then proceeded to other topics, including countries the student had visited and plans for the future. The interviewer is the second author of this book, a British national in his early 50s at the time of the interviews, who was also an academic lecturer of most of the subjects. The data therefore represents a fairly formal conversation between undergraduates and their lecturer. In total, the data from the UBDCSBE interviews (ignoring the questions from the interviewer) constitute about 30,000 words.

The third set of data was collected from 56 Bruneians of different ages and educational backgrounds in order to capture any variations that have been postulated to exist along the educational and age clines (Wood et al., 2011; Salbrina, 2022). All are ethnically Malay, with 36 females (labelled PF1 to PF36) and 20 males (labelled PM1 to PM21). Their ages ranged from the early 20s to the mid-50s, and there is considerable representation from the 30s and 40s. While a majority of the participants indicated that their education has mostly been in the English medium (36 or 64.3%), a considerable number have graduated with a degree in the Malay medium (20 or 35.7%), with a handful having completed up to the doctoral level.

The read text for this third data set, henceforth the Peter passage (see Appendix 5), was a specially crafted text that contained several words with noticeable distinctive pronunciations among Bruneians. These included words such as *Wednesday* and *colleague*, the former of which has been reported to be pronounced with three syllables, [ˈwɛnəsdɛɪ], while the latter is popularly pronounced with a schwa as the first vowel and a stressed second syllable, [kəˈliɡ] (English in Brunei, 2020). The respondents also completed a survey on their language use, experience and preferences before recording. Following Salbrina (2023), a language index score (LSI) was calculated for each, where the possible scores ranged from 1 to 4.5, with a higher score indicating an inclination towards English. The median of 3.13 was used as the cut-off score in grouping the respondents as either inclined towards Malay or English. The results showed that 23 participants were English-inclined, 27 were Malay-inclined, and six participants were neither (that is, their LSI is the median value of 3.13).

Further analysis revealed that female participants (52.8%) and those in their 20s (59.3%) were more likely to prefer English. Participants who had spent most of their post-secondary student life in the Malay stream were found to be Malay-leaning

(75%), while those from an English medium education background leaned towards English (52.7%). These findings suggest that language preference is influenced by factors such as gender, age, and educational background.

The recordings of conversations making up the fourth data set were of three groups of friends, two from the generation commonly identified as Generation Z, that is those born between 1995 and 2010 (Seemiller & Grace, 2019), while the third is of the older Generation X, those born from the early 1960s to 1979 (Leidl, 2013). These two generations are selected because any contemporaneous differences along the age cline will be most noticeable when comparing generations X and Z. As one of the objectives of this book is to assess any variation based on gender, the groups of friends chosen comprised two all-female and one all-male groups. As a result of space limitations, only the transcript of the conversation among Gen-Z females has been included in this book as Appendix 6. However, the transcripts of conversations among Gen-Z males and Gen-X females can be found online at <https://fass.ubd.edu.bn/research/brunei-english-2.html>.

These four sources of spoken data offer a range of materials to allow an extensive description of the spoken language of reasonably well-educated speakers of English in Brunei. Of course, while the nature of the recordings means that the spoken data was not truly naturalistic in the first edition, the addition of the conversational recorded data will provide a valuable insight into English that is used not only in a fairly formal environment on the UBD campus, but also in a natural, informal setting.

1.8 Written Data

Apart from the texts from the Kampong Ayer Cultural and Tourism Centre and the BruDirect and Reddit on-line forums to be discussed in Chaps. 5 and 7, the primary sources of written data analysed in this book involve editions of the two national English-language daily newspapers, The Brunei Times and the Borneo Bulletin. A total of 10 editions of these newspapers are analysed, 5 from each newspaper. These consist of five editions of the Sunday version of The Brunei Times, dated November 13, 20 and 27 and December 4 and 11, 2011, and five issues of the Borneo Bulletin, dated October 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28, 2011. The periods covered were not a special time of the year, such as the holy month of Ramadan or the celebrations of the Sultan's birthday, so the articles are not dominated by any unusual events. While these 10 issues of the newspapers represent quite a small corpus of written data, they do allow us to investigate a few features of English usage in Brunei in some detail, particularly in Chap. 6 where the incidence of words borrowed from Malay is discussed.

In addition to these 10 issues of the newspapers, extracts will sometimes be presented from other editions of these two newspapers, particularly The Brunei Times, in order to illustrate various features under discussion.