Malay (Bahasa Melayu) is a member of the Malayic subgroup of the Austronesian language family. This subgroup includes languages like Gayo in Sumatra (Eades & Hajek 2006), Minangkabau in Sumatra, and Iban in Borneo, as well as many local dialects of Malay found in Borneo, Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia, and eastern Indonesia (Adelaar 2005).

Closely related varieties of Malay have national language status in Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore, where it is referred to as Standard Malay (Bahasa Melayu Baku, Bahasa Baku), and in Indonesia, where it is called Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) (Soderberg & Olson 2008). There is a high degree of mutual intelligibility between all these standard varieties, which are said to derive from the Malay of Johor in Peninsular Malaysia (Steinhauer 2005).

Indonesian is the most divergent of these standard Malays in its lexis, due to extensive influence from languages like Dutch and Javanese, while phonetically and phonologically the most divergent are probably the varieties spoken in much of Peninsular Malaysia. The Standard Malay spoken in Brunei seems to be in an intermediary position, in many ways similar to Indonesian in its pronunciation and grammar, but more like Peninsular varieties in its lexis (Poedjosoedarmo 1996).

One important reason for variation is that, for most speakers, Standard Malay is a second language or dialect, existing in a diglossic relationship with a local variety. That local variety can be a distinct language, or it can be a local dialect of Malay which, as with Brunei Malay, can diverge greatly from Standard Malay in many respects.

The local varieties naturally differ quite substantially phonetically and phonologically from Standard Malay, and these differences influence the varieties of Standard Malay that are spoken in each place. In Malaysia this has given rise to two groups of standard varieties, which can be termed the ‘a-varieties’ and the ‘schwa varieties’, as they differ in the realisation of word-final orthographic ⟨a⟩ (pronounced as either /a/ or /ə/) in addition to a range of other features (Asmah Haji Omar 1977). Pronunciation of Indonesian also varies considerably depending on the first language of the speaker, as van Zanten (1986) and van Zanten, Goedemans & Pacilly (2003) have demonstrated.

In Brunei, the pronunciation of Standard Malay similarly reflects influences from Brunei Malay (Dialek Melayu Brunei), the dominant vernacular variety of Malay in the country. Brunei Malay differs markedly from Standard Malay in its phonology, grammar, and lexis (Clynes 2001, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka 2007), to the extent that some might regard
it as a separate language (Martin 1996). One major difference in the phonology involves
the vowels: Brunei Malay has only three vowels, /i a u/, rather than the six vowels of
Standard Malay, so for example perang /pərəŋ/ ‘war’ in Standard Malay is parang /paɾaŋ/
in Brunei Malay; and orang /oraŋ/ ‘person’ in Standard Malay is urang /uraŋ/ in Brunei
Malay.

Variables such as age, gender, level of education, and profession naturally give rise to
further sociolects in the Standard Malay of Brunei. Poedjosoedarmo (1996: 38) contrasts the
formal speech of government officials, which she describes as having the ‘staccato syllable-
timed rhythm of Standard Indonesian’, with the stress-timed speech of newsreaders. Still,
the Standard Malay of all formal genres in Brunei shows the least divergence from other
varieties of Standard Malay, while that used in less formal contexts (such as in the radio
patter of disc jockeys, or the speech of teachers in classrooms) at times diverges quite
radically.

Typically, communities in which Standard Malay is used are multilingual and multiglossic
(Sneddon 2003). In Brunei, while Standard Malay dominates in the domains of education
and administration, in informal contexts Brunei Malay is strongly preferred, often with a
considerable amount of code-mixing. The overall mix is further complicated by influences
from other Malay varieties, from TV, films, radio and the Internet, so that many Bruneians
are at least passively multi-dialectal, often understanding even the informal registers of
Indonesian and Malaysian films and TV dramas. Finally, in a country where education is
bilingual in Standard Malay and English, with English dominating from the fourth year of
primary school, English increasingly constitutes a rival code in high diglossic contexts and
even, for some speakers, in low diglossic contexts. As a result, English has influenced the
syntax, lexis, phonetics, and phonology of both Standard Malay in Brunei (Poedjosoedarmo
1996) and Brunei Malay (Maxwell 1990).

All these influences can be found in the recordings described here. The reader is a
university tutor in Malay and also a part-time professional newsreader. She is aged 26 years
and has been educated in both Brunei and England. The formal style she uses shows phonological
influences from Peninsular Malaysia (e.g. the use of glottal stop) and also apparently from
English (e.g. aspiration of voiceless plosives and the pronunciation of the affricates). However,
the level of influence from Brunei Malay is surprisingly low. This no doubt reflects genre
expectations on the part of the speaker – that she should use her best ‘newscaster’ style in the
formal context of recording a written text.

Consonants
The chart shows the consonants of Standard Malay in Brunei. The inventory of consonants
shown here is the same as that in Peninsular Standard Malay and also Indonesian (Soderberg
& Olson 2008). Loan phonemes are shown in brackets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plosive/Affricate</th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Post-alveolar*</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
<th>Labial-velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive/Affricate</td>
<td>p b t d</td>
<td>tj dž</td>
<td>k g</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>(f) (v) s (z) (j) (x) h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m n j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trill</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The ‘postalveolars’ are in fact often also articulated in the alveolar region (see below).
The native consonants are illustrated in the following data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>paraŋ</td>
<td>‘machete’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>baranŋ</td>
<td>‘thing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>tua</td>
<td>‘old’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>dua</td>
<td>‘two’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>kadjŋi</td>
<td>‘study’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>gadji</td>
<td>‘wage’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tʃ</td>
<td>tʃari</td>
<td>‘search’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dʒ</td>
<td>dʒari</td>
<td>‘finger’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>rumah</td>
<td>‘house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>masiŋ</td>
<td>‘still’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>nasiŋ</td>
<td>‘rice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>jariŋ</td>
<td>‘shadow’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>hariŋ</td>
<td>‘day’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>jariŋ</td>
<td>‘finger’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>bawaŋ</td>
<td>‘onion’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>lakiŋ</td>
<td>‘male’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plosives and affricates**

The plosives /p b/, /t d/ and /k g/ are voiceless/voiced pairs. In many varieties of Malay, /t/ is dental rather than alveolar, though not in Brunei. /k/ is velar in syllable onsets. In codas it has velar or uvular realisations, for example in the North Wind and the Sun recording terpaksa [torpakst] ‘forced’ and memeluk [mɔməłuŋ] ‘hug’. (Realisation of final /k/ as [ʔ] is also sometimes found, due to influence from Peninsular Malay or Indonesian.) Voiceless plosives are generally unreleased in syllable codas, for example word-finally in bilik [bilek] ‘room’, menyebabkan [məŋsebapkæŋ] ‘cause’, where the root sebab [səbap] ‘cause’ is a loan from Arabic. The speaker nonetheless unexpectedly partially voices the final /t/ in two Arabic loanwords, khidmat [kʰidmad] ‘service’ and syarat [ʃaraat] ‘rule’.

As in other standard varieties, /p t k/ are normally unaspirated. However this speaker at times aspirates them quite markedly. This is a feature of the speech of broadcasters in Brunei (Poedjosoedarmo 1996), due no doubt to influence from English. It has not been reported for other registers in Brunei.

The voiced plosives do not occur in syllable codas in the native lexis, and are usually replaced with their voiceless counterparts in loanwords, for example, menyebabkan [mɔŋsebapkæŋ] ‘cause’, where the root sebab [səbap] ‘cause’ is a loan from Arabic. The speaker nonetheless unexpectedly partially voices the final /t/ in two Arabic loanwords, khidmat [kʰidmad] ‘service’ and syarat [ʃaraat] ‘rule’.

/tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are phonetic affricates, though phonemically they pattern with the plosives. The speaker seems to give them a lamino-alveolar realisation, with a ‘noisy’ release (both possibly influenced by English), for example in jubah [dʒubah] ‘coat’ and memancarkan [məŋmanʃtarkæŋ] ‘shine’ from the passage, rather than the less affricated, postalveolar realisation typical for example with many Indonesian speakers.

**Glottal stop**

The glottal stop has only marginal status. In addition to its possible occurrence as a realisation of /k/ (see above), it can occur optionally at the start of morphemes with an underlying initial vowel. It is also found variably in some Arabic loanwords like saat [sɐʔat] ‘second’.

In formal styles, a glottal stop can occur non-distinctively intervocally across a morpheme boundary, for example before the /i/ locative suffix, as in mengenai [məŋʃnəi] ‘about’, or after certain prefixes, as in seorang [səɔɾəŋ] ‘one-person’ and dianggap [diʔaŋgap] ‘be considered’. However, it is often not present, partly due to first language influence, as [ʔ] does not occur in Brunei Malay, except utterance-finally, where underlyingly vowel-final words optionally occur with a final glottal stop (Poedjosoedarmo 1996).

**Fricatives**

The fricative /h/ may occur in both onsets and codas. In final position, it is sometimes not audible, as in the first instance of lebih kuat [lɛbi kʰwɔt] ‘stronger’ in the recording, though at other times it is quite clear, as in mengalah [məŋlah] ‘give in’.

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In the consonant chart above, five fricatives are shown in brackets: /f v z ñ x/. These occur only in loanwords, generally from Arabic or English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>faham</td>
<td>‘understand’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>zakat</td>
<td>‘tithe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>xidmat</td>
<td>‘service’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>visa</td>
<td>visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>šarat</td>
<td>syarat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The realisation of these consonants in loan words varies. In more formal registers such as the ‘newscaster’ register, they are generally given their standard values, as is the case with our speaker, though she realises the /x/ in xidmat as [ç]. /x/ is often replaced by /h/ in syllable onsets, hence akhirna /āxirna/ ‘finally’, [āxirna] in the reading passage, and by /k/ in codas akbar /āxbar / akbar/ ‘newspaper’. Examples of some other replacements found in more basilectal pronunciations include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>pa(h)am</td>
<td>faham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>sakat, dʒakat</td>
<td>zakat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>bisa</td>
<td>visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>šarat</td>
<td>syarat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sonorants

/i/ has both trill [r] and tap [ɾ] realisations. In the recording, [ɾ] occurs word-initially in rapat [ɾapat’], and in codas in sinarña [sinarñana] ‘its light’ and at the end of bertengkar [bṛtēṅkara] ‘fight’, while [ɾ] occurs intervocally in matahari [matœhari] ‘sun’ and as a syllable nucleus in tersebut [tɾsœbut] ‘aforesaid’. It is possible that the trill and tap are in free variation, with [ɾ] tending to occur in more emphatic pronunciations.

/l/ is always clear, as with both tokens of /l/ in lalu [lalu] ‘then’ in the recording. It is also clear in coda position, as in menanggalkan [mœnanggalkan] ‘take off’.

Approximants /w/ and /j/ occur both in onsets (as in the consonant word list above) and in codas: pulau /pulaw/ ‘island’ and cukai /tʃukai/ ‘tax’. (This analysis assumes there are no phonemic diphthongs in Malay; see below.) /u/ and /i/ are often reduced to [w] and [j] before a following vowel in allegro pronunciations, so kuat /kœuat/ ‘strong’ can be [kœuat ∼ kwat], and siapa /sjapa/ ‘who’ can be [si.apa ∼ sjapa]. In the recording, the speaker uses these allegro forms.

Phonemic patterning

In terms of phonemic patterning, it is valuable to consider further how the consonant table is represented. Although the columns of the table above use the passive articulator, as is normal for the IPA, phonemically the consonants pattern primarily in terms of the active articulator, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Apical</th>
<th>Laminal</th>
<th>Dorsal/Back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive/Affricate</td>
<td>p b</td>
<td>t d</td>
<td>tf dʒ</td>
<td>k g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m n η</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trill</td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td>w j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidence that these are the relevant natural classes comes from a variety of sources, including phonetics, phonotactics and morphophonemic alternations. Take for example the...
behaviour of meN-, the ‘active voice’ prefix, where the ‘N’ is realised as a nasal segment homorganic with the initial consonant of the root:

before labials /m/, /p/, /b/, meN- is [mən]: \[məN+buat\] \[məmbuat\] ‘make’
before apicals /n/, /t/, /d/, meN- is [mən]: \[məN+darat\] \[məndarat\] ‘land’
before laminals /ʃ/, /dʒ/, /s/, meN- is [mən]: \[meN+sawa\] \[məŋewa\] ‘rent’
before dorsals /k/, /g/, /h/, meN- is [mən]: \[moN+gali\] \[məŋgali\] ‘dig’
\[moN+hantar\] \[məŋhantar\] ‘send’

An analysis that classifies /s/ as an ‘alveolar’ incorrectly predicts meN+sawa as *[mənewa] rather than the actual [məŋewa] (the /s/ is deleted by a regular process). Furthermore, the phonetic overlap noted above, where the consonants shown in the ‘postalveolar’ column are often actually alveolar, becomes irrelevant once the primacy of the active articulator is recognised. Evidence from consonant harmony (Adelaar 1992), which limits co-occurrence of homorganic consonants in root morphemes, also works in terms of the active articulator categories, and not the passive categories.

Vowels
There are six vowel phonemes in Standard Malay: /i e a o u ə/. They can be represented as in the vowel quadrilateral below:

Some words illustrating the occurrence of these six vowels are:

/i/ bilik bilik ‘room’ /u/ buluh buluh ‘bamboo’
/e/ peraŋ perang ‘blonde’ /o/ oraŋ orang ‘person’
/ə/ paɾaŋ perang ‘war’ /a/ marah marah ‘angry’

/i/ and /u/ both have centralised allophones that can be represented as [ɪ] and [ʊ] respectively in closed syllables, for example itik [iːtik] ‘dot’ and duduk [dудʊk] ‘sit’. In Brunei Malay [ɪ] and [ʊ] may also occur in open final syllables, hence the reader’s bersetuju [bɾestudʒu] ‘agree’ in the passage. Utterance-finally, high vowels often have mid or mid-low realisations, perhaps conveying pragmatic information (Poedjosoedarmo 1996), as in bilik /bilik/ ‘room’ pronounced as [bilek]. This also reflects influence from the three-vowel system of Brunei Malay.
In Standard Malay spoken in Brunei, the vowels /i/ and /u/ contrast fully with /e/ and /o/ respectively only in penultimate syllables: bila /bila/ ‘when’, bela /belə/ ‘defend’; and dua /dua/ ‘two’, doa /doa/ ‘prayer’. In final closed syllables, /u/ and /i/ can also have mid or even low realisations, so burung /burun̩/ ‘bird’ can be [burun̩ ∼ burun̩ ∼ burun̩], and giling /gilin̩/ ‘mill’ can be [gilin̩ ∼ gilên̩ ∼ gilên]. The mid vowels /e/ and /o/ on the other hand never have high allophones, thus geleng /gelen̩/ ‘shake (one’s head)’ is [gelen̩ ∼ gelên̩] but never *[gelenɪ], and similarly borong /boron̩/ ‘buy in bulk’ is never *[boron̩].

The open vowel /a/ is generally a low central vowel. In our reader’s ‘newscaster’ style, word-final /a/ sometimes has raised allophones, e.g. sehingga akhirnya [səhingə ahiɾnə] ‘until finally’ and terpaksa [təɾpɑkʂə] ‘forced’. This raising is probably an influence from the prestigious schwa-variety of Malaysia. Antepenultimate /a/ is also commonly raised to [ə] or [œ], but this time due to Brunei Malay influence: bersamaan [bəɾsəməʔaʔan] ‘(occur) at same time’, kawasan [kwəsən̩] ‘region’, balapan [bələpən̩] ‘race track’.

/a/ does not normally occur in final syllables in most varieties of Standard Malay, including that of Brunei. Where /æ/ occurs, it is not normally given prominence, and it is often elided. There are several examples of elision in the recording, such as semakin /səməkɪn/ ‘the more’ and sekutanya /səkətuʔaɾa/ ‘as strongly as possible’, and almost all occurrences of the ber- and ter- verbal prefixes, for example bertipu /bəɾtiʔup/ [bəɾtiʔup] ‘blow’, and the first token of tersebut /təɾsəbut/ [təɾsəbut] ‘foresaid’.

In the reading, there are two examples of central vowels assimilating when they are next to front or back vowels, even across an intervening [ʔ]: seorang /səorəŋ/ [sɔɾəŋ] ‘one-person’, and mengenai /məŋənæi/ [məŋənæʔi] ‘about’. Note that in the orthography both /e/ and /æ/ are represented as (e), so in some cases the pronunciation of a word cannot be predicted from its spelling. In addition to perang as shown above, we find occasional homographs like beri which can be /beri/ ‘berry’ or /bɐɾi/ ‘give’.

Diphthongs?
Some analyses (e.g. Teoh 1988) suggest that there are three phonemic diphthongs in Malay: /ai/ (as in cukai “tax”), /au/ (in pulau “island”), and /oi/ (in baloi “weight”). These only occur morpheme-finally, and only in disyllabic or trisyllabic morphemes. Other analyses (e.g. Asmah Haji Omar 1985, Zaharani Ahmad 1993) consider these morpheme-final sequences to be a monophthong followed by an approximant, thus cukai /tʃukai/, pulau /pulaw/, and baloi /baloj/. The description presented here assumes the latter analysis. For a detailed discussion, see Clynes (1997).

Syllable structure
More than 90% of the native lexicon is based on disyllabic root morphemes, with small percentages of monosyllabic and trisyllabic roots (Adelaar 1992). However, with widespread prefixing and suffixing, many words of five or more syllables are found.

In the native lexis, syllable structure is C1VC2, where both C1 and C2 are optional and C1 can be any consonant (though /w/ and /j/ occur word-initially only in one or two morphemes). In morpheme-final syllables, C2 can be any consonant except the laminals /tʃ/ dʒ p/ or the voiced plosives. In non-final syllables in the native lexis, C2 is usually either a nasal (homorganic with a following obstruent, except that /ŋ/ precedes /s/, as in bangsa /baŋsə/ ‘ethnic group’), or /t/ before any consonant except /h/, /w/ or /j/, for example in bersih /bəɾsɪh/ ‘clean’, terbang /təɾbɑŋ/ ‘fly’, and bernas /bəɾnas/ ‘fertile’. In loanwords, obstruents and other sonorants also appear in non-final C2 positions: akbar /aʔxəbar/ akbar/ ‘newspaper’ (from Arabic), saudara /sawdəɾa/ ‘brother’ (Sanskrit), hajran /hajɾən/ ‘amazed’ (Arabic). A wider range of consonant clusters occurs in the native lexis across morpheme boundaries before suffixes, as in kuatkan /kuatkan/ ‘strengthen’ and sampaikan /səmpəkən/ ‘deliver’, where -kan is a verbal suffix. Initial clusters occur at the phonetic level only, as the
result of either optional ellipsis of /ə/, as in bersetuju /bərsɛtuːjʊ/ [bɾʃtud̚ʒu] ‘agree’, or the optional reduction of /u/ to [w] or /i/ to [j] before a following vowel, as in kuat /kwaːt/ [kwat] ‘strong’ of siapa /siapa/ [ʃiapa] ‘who’.

In the native lexis, any vowel except /ə/ can occur in morpheme-final syllables, while /ə/ predominates in antepenultimate syllables. Only /i/, /u/ and /a/ occur in final open syllables. Vowel sequences occur only across syllable boundaries, and there are vowel harmony rules within a morpheme (see below). /ə/ never occurs immediately before a following vowel; where /ə/ is penultimate, only /i/, /u/ or /a/ may occur in the final syllable.

A rule of vowel harmony applies morpheme-internally to the non-central vowel phonemes (/i u e o/). Where they occur in both the penultimate and final syllables, they must agree in height (but not necessarily in frontness); thus, we find giling /giлин/ ‘mill’ and burung /burʊŋ/ ‘bird’, and also words like hidung /hidʊŋ/ ‘nose’ and boleh /boleh/ ‘can, may’. Sequences of high and mid non-central vowel phonemes do not occur in either order, thus the following do not occur: */hɛdʊŋ/, */bolɪh/, and (at the phonemic level) */hɪdʊŋ/, */gileen/ (Adelaar 1992).

**Stress and intonation**

There appears to be no inherent lexical stress in the Standard Malay of Brunei. This conclusion is in line with the findings of van Zanten et al. (2003) for Indonesian (as spoken by speakers of Javanese and Jakarta Malay), as well as Zuraidah Mohd Don, Knowles & Yong (2008) for schwa-variety Standard Malay of Peninsular Malaysia. Instead, various phrase-level intonation or accent patterns are found, generally giving a degree of prominence to phrase-final words.

Most commonly, a rise–fall pitch movement occurs across the penultimate and final syllables of a phrase (van Zanten et al. 2003, Zuraidah et al. 2008). Here, we will consider the prominence on words that occur at the end of phrases in the passage, as well as words in the reading lists. We find a rise–fall pitch movement on words such as jubah [dʒubah] ‘cloak’ and bersetuju [bɾʃtudʒu] ‘agree’ (where [’] indicates the start of this rise–fall pitch movement). This can create an impression of penultimate word stress, something which is even more evident when words are uttered in isolation or in lists, and so constitute phonological phrases in their own right, as in items such as burung [bəɾʊŋ] ‘thing’ and tua [tua] ‘old’ in the recording of words illustrating the consonants above. In some cases, the penultimate vowel may be louder, while the final vowel is often lengthened, such as in nasi [nasi:] ‘rice’ and hari [hari:] ‘day’, a phenomenon also reported by Zuraidah et al. (2008).

There is one exception to the above pattern: the vowel /ə/ is not normally given prominence, and where this vowel occurs in the penultimate syllable, the rise–fall pitch movement is usually confined to the phrase-final syllable. There are no examples of /ə/ in the penultimate syllable of a phrase-final word with a rise–fall pitch pattern in the reading of the passage, though, as mentioned above, there are several words with ellipsis of /ə/.

A different pitch movement, giving an impression of lexical stress on the final syllable of a word, is a rise at the end of a phrase, signalling perhaps that ‘more is to come’. Examples from the passage include kuat [kwaːt] ‘strong’, bertiup [bəɾtiːp] ‘blow’ and jubahnya [dʒubahɲə] ‘his cloak’. It is common to find well-formed alternative realisations of these words with penultimate prominence, kuat [ku.ət], bertiup [bəɾti.ʊp] and jubahnya [dʒubahɲə], and this variation is consistent with an absence of lexical stress in this variety. The occurrence of final prominence with a rising tone is also common in reading word lists, such as with bilik [biˈlek] ‘room’ and perang [peˈran] ‘blonde’ in the recording of the list of vowels above.

Further investigation of phrase accent/intonation is needed in all varieties of Standard Malay.
Transcription of the recorded passage

Orthographic version of ‘The North Wind and the Sun’


Phonemic transcription

kêtika aNin utara dan matahari sêdaŋ bêrtêŋkêr mêñêñai siapa jaŋ lêbîh kuat || dataŋ soœraŋ pêœmêmbêra jaŋ mêmakaj dêjubah || kêduaŋa bêrsatudzę || bahawa siapa jaŋ bêrdêjaŋa mêmëbêkan pêœmêmbêra tôrsebut || mênanggalkan dêjubahña || akan diâŋgap lebîh kuat || lalu aNin utara pun mœniup sokuaŋta || namun sœmakin kuat aNin bertiup || sœmakin rapat pula pêœmêmbêra tôrsebut mêmêluk dêjubahña || sêhîŋga aahirña || aNin utara pun mêmêlah || komudian matahari mêmam{jêrkan sînärña || dan dœñan sœgra || pêœmêmbêra tôrsebut mênanggalkan dêjubahña || aahirña aNin utara tôrpaœsa mœнакu || bahawa matahari lêbîh kuat daripâðaŋa

Phonetic transcription

The phonetic transcription of the passage is based on a recording of a 26-year-old female tutor in the Malay Language and Linguistics programme at Universiti Brunei Darussalam who also works as a part-time newsreader for Radio Television Brunei.

kêhtîkha aNin utara dan matêhâri sêdaŋ bêrtêñkhar | mêñêñai sjapa jaŋ lêbîh kuat || dataŋ soœraŋ pêñêmêmbêra jaŋ mêmakaj dêjubah \ || kêduaŋa bêrsatudzę || bahawa siapa jaŋ bêrdêjaŋa mêmëbêkan pêœmêmbêra tôrsebut || mênanggalkan dêjubahña || akan diâŋgap lebîh kêmawt \ || lalu aNin utara pun mœniup v skwûtña \ || namun sœmakin kuat aNin bertiup \ || sœmakin rapat pêñêlu pêœmêmbêre tôrsebut \ || mêmêluk dêjubahña \ || sêhîŋga aahirña \ || aNin utara pêñun mêmêlah \ || kêmûdijan matahari mêmam{jêrkan sînärña \ || dan dœñan sœgra \ || pêœmêmbêra tôrsebut \ || mênanggalkan dêjubahña \ || aahirña aNin utara tôrpaœsa mœнакu \ || bahawa mêmêhâri lêbîh kuat daripâðaŋa

The spectrogram below, derived using Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2009), shows the sequence bertengkar mengenai ‘argue about’ from the recording. Note that the /k/ in bertengkar has aspiration, here measured at 47 ms, but the /t/ is unaspirated. Note, also, the glottal stop before the /i/ suffix in mengenai. The variable realisation of /r/ is also illustrated in the spectrogram: there is a single tap (transcribed as [r]) in the first syllable of bertengkar but a double tap (transcribed as a trill [r]) at the end of the word.
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