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Language Workshop: Malay/Indonesian

With speakers spread across the Indian Ocean and maritime Southeast Asia, Malay/Indonesian is a polycentric Austronesian language with varying standard forms. Variants of the language are currently considered official languages in four Southeast Asian countries: As Bahasa Malaysia in Malaysia, Bahasa Melayu in Brunei and Singapore, and as Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia. As a result of its socio-political status, the language currently has around 250 million speakers, making it the most widely spoken Austronesian language; nonetheless, only roughly 20% of its speakers speak Malay or one of its varieties as a first language, and this has profound impact on the spoken variants of the language. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to the basic structure (including some useful phrases) of this Austronesian language, its socio-historical development as well as the differences and similarities between the various standard varieties.