

The Bajaus Language

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Abstract. The Sama-Bajau peoples are one of the maritime communities found in Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia. Sama-Bajau has recently been suggested as a general term for the language spoken by the various Sama populations. The group as a whole is probably coordinated with Malay and the Philippine, and language as a member of the Hesperonesian branch of Austronesian. The Sama-Bajau peoples are noted for their close association with the sea and are even given the appellation of sea-gypsies. Nowadays, however, a large number of Bajaus have become house-dwellers through a small member still prefer to be boat-dwellers and lead a nomadic type of life. Most of them who have settle on land are strand-dwellers, perhaps because of their fishing activities which undoubtedly, require an easy access to the sea. Today, in Sabah, the Bajau people are enjoying an earned period of prosperity and importance, whereas in the past, here and elsewhere, they were treated usually as ‘odd man out’, ‘water gypsies’ and other condescending classifications. In general, the objective of this paper is to explore the language aspects of the Bajaus among three countries namely Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia, in terms of the basic vocabularies used in both the Bajau language and the Proto Austronesian language.