

Nelleke Goudswaard

The Begak (Ida'an) language of Sabah

This work contains the first comprehensive description of Begak (Ida'an), an Austronesian language spoken by approximately 6,000 speakers at the east coast of Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia. The language currently consists of two dialects: Ida'an, which has the largest number of speakers, and Begak, which is the focus of this study.

Begak (Ida'an) is an isolate within the Sabahan subgroup. Unlike most other Sabahan languages, which display four or more voices, Begak (Ida'an) has only two voices: Actor Voice and Undergoer Voice. On the phonological level, the language presents an interesting case of infix allomorphy and vowel coalescence. Its syntax is characterised by a rigid word order.

The study is based on primary data gathered by the author during fieldwork in Sabah. The book has not been written against a particular theoretical background, although insights from several linguistic theories are used to support the analysis. The numerous example sentences are mainly taken from spontaneous speech. The appendix contains Begak texts of several genres and a preliminary word list of over 2,300 items. An index is provided for easy reference. The book is of interest to scholars of Austronesian languages and linguistic typology.

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