

YET ANOTHER EXPLANATION OF DI-

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Various explanations have been proposed for the origin of the Indonesian undergoer prefix *di-*. The most current ones are that it is a cliticised form of the 3rd person singular pronoun *dia* (cf. Hopper), that it is a continuation of the Old Malay undergoer prefix *ni-* (cf. van den Berg, *BKI 160*, 2004), or that it is a cliticised form of *di* (currently a locative preposition but historically a preposition with a wider application also having agents in its scope; cf. Adelaar, *BKI 161*, 2005).

The present paper adds yet another theory: *di-* and *di* both derive from Old Javanese *de* ‘1. action, way (of acting); condition, cause, reason; 2. by (through the agency of); 3. in relation to, with regard to, toward, to’ (Zoetmulder 1982).

Ogloblin (2000) describes *de* somewhat differently: ‘1. action; cause (= a noun); 2. agent preposition; 3. a nominalising auxiliary word introducing a predicative group (in analogy with modern Javanese *əḡgoné* and *olèhé*)’.

It seems that *de* became grammaticalised to an undergoer prefix *de-* and *di-* in later stages of Javanese, from where it was adopted into 9th century Old Malay and in other West Indonesian languages.

The advantage of tracing Indonesian *di-* and *di* to Old Javanese *de* is that it explains the origins of both elements as deriving from a noun ‘action, cause’ through a straightforward grammaticalisation process, instead of deriving *di-* (an undergoer prefix) from *di* (a preposition), which is typologically awkward and does not tell much about the history of *di* as a preposition.