

Lampungic dialectology in a Malay contact zone

Abstract

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On the southern tip of Sumatra a cluster of related Lampungic varieties lies contiguous to Sumatran Malay-speaking areas, with some Lampung dialects so heavily influenced by Malay that they have sometimes been (mis)classified as such. With so many Malay lexical, morphological and phonological borrowings, reconstructing earlier stages of Proto-Lampung can be a difficult task.

This paper details an ongoing comparative dialectology study of Lampungic. A synchronic picture is presented, with isoglosses demonstrating the current distribution of both language-internal innovations and Malay borrowing. Tentative reconstructions of some Proto-Lampungic lexical items and its phonology are then presented, along with diagnostics for teasing apart Malay influence from native patterns. For example, *ruwi* ‘thorn’ is judged as a native Lampung word (**d*- > *r*) while *durian* ‘durian’ is considered a borrowing, as it breaks the regular correspondences.

An attempt is also made to distinguish *where* in the Malay world these borrowings originated, whether from a Sumatran Malay variety or Standard Indonesian. Finally, the direction for future research is sketched out with opportunity for audience input.

While still in its initial stages, this study illustrates the benefits that dialectology can bring to historical reconstruction, as not all Lampungic varieties have been subject to the pressure of Malay to the same degree or in the same way.

Time permitting, a brief overview will also be given of the computer program *WordCorr* that helped in the organization and comparative analysis of the roughly 3600 lexical items in this study.