

Malay loanwords in Jahai: the case of the domains of body and landscape

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This paper discusses borrowing of Malay lexical items into Jahai, an unrelated Aslian (Mon-Khmer) language of Hulu Perak and Hulu Kelantan, northern Peninsular Malaysia. In particular, it investigates patterns of borrowing of terms into well-defined semantic domains, like body parts and landscape. In the case of the latter, for example, the indigenous terminology, based primarily on systematic metaphorical mapping from human domains like body parts and kinship, is supplemented by a set of borrowed Malay terms. Such terms typically denote perceptually salient details within the larger and conceptually coherent indigenous categories. Terminology related to the flow of water presents a particularly interesting case.