Malay/Indonesian Dialect Geography and the Role of the Javanosphere

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Whereas Java is the most populated island of the Indonesian archipelago and the political, economic and cultural centre of the region, the largest and most important language of Insular Southeast Asia is Malay/Indonesian. It is therefore hardly surprising that the island of Java has played a major role in shaping the Malay/Indonesian language. This paper explores some of the ways in which the languages of the Javanosphere have exerted an effect on the development of Malay/Indonesian, focusing on the regional colloquial varieties of the language.

This paper presents some preliminary results from an ongoing dialect survey mapping close to 300 linguistic features in varieties of colloquial Malay and Indonesian spoken throughout the archipelago. The major finding is that rather than a binary split corresponding to the political border between Malaysia and Indonesia, many linguistic features support the existence of a tripartite division based on three geographical regions: Java, Malaka and Maluku. The four logically-possible ways in which different features support this tripartite division are summarized schematically in Table 1 below. Each of these four patterns is attested in a wide range of lexical, phonological and morpho-syntactic features. The boundaries between the regions are not fixed, but rather vary in accordance with the linguistic feature chosen. For example, for the boundary between the Java and Malaka regions, isoglosses defined by different features may fall in the Sunda straits, at various locations in southern and central Sumatra, or in the straits of Malaka.

Some insights as to how these geographical patterns developed can be gained by further classifying the relevant features diachronically, with respect to which feature value represents an earlier stage of Malay/Indonesian and which feature values result from innovation. Such a classification, with illustrative examples, is shown in Table 2 below. For each of the 4 patterns defined previously in Table 1, the first subpattern (1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1) shows cases where the feature value for Javanospheric varieties of Malay/Indonesian is conservative, while subsequent subpatterns (1.2, 2,2, 3,2, 4,2, 4.3) show instances where the feature value associated with Javanospheric varieties of Malay/Indonesian is innovative — the innovative examples are shaded in Table 2.

The features with respect to which the Javanospheric varieties of Malay/Indonesian are innovative shed light on the ways in which the languages of Java have influenced Malay/Indonesian. The most common scenario is that of borrowing from Javanese; this can be seen in, among others, the plural marker *pada* and the intensifier *banget*. In addition, other Javanospheric languages have also contributed to Malay/Indonesian, such as Sundanese, with the actor orientation prefix *nge-* in words such as *ngerokok* 'smoke', and Balinese, with the applicative suffix *-in*. However, not all examples of Javanospheric innovations are the results of borrowing from local languages. In some cases, the borrowing is from a language outside of the region, such as *kecoa* 'cockroach', from Hokkien Chinese. In yet other cases, the innovation is probably most appropriately characterized as an internally motivated development, such, for example, the reduction of diphthongs to single vowels in the final syllables of words such as *pisau* 'knife' and *sampai* 'arrive', though since similar processes also happen in Javanese and other languages of the region, it may be hard to disentangle internally motivated developments from contact-induced borrowing. Finally, examination of features exemplifying patterns 1.2 and 2.2 show how innovations may spread across great distances throughout the archipelago. More detailed work is necessary, but it is already clear that in at least some

cases, the innovation is one that occurred in the Javanospheric region and then subsequently spread either north to the Malakasphere or east to the Malukusphere.

No	Pattern	Java	Malaka	Maluku
1	Java-Malaka	A	A	B
2	Java-Maluku	A	B	A
3	Malaka-Maluku	A	B	B
4	tripartite	A	B	C

Table 1:   Java, Malaka and Maluku: Patterns of Uniformity and Differentiation

No	Java	Malaka	Maluku	Earlier
1.1	Ø	Ø	impers 3PL subj	Ø
1.1	Ø	Ø	reciprocal *baku-*	Ø
1.1	*jambu* 'guava'	*jambu* 'guava'	*jawas* 'guava'	*jambu* 'guava'
1.1	[pantay] 'beach'	[pantay] 'beach'	[pante] 'beach'	[pantay] 'beach'
1.2	particle *'kan*	particle *'kan*	Ø	Ø
1.2	no *N-* with *nyanyi*	no *N-* with *nyanyi*	*me-nyanyi*	*me-nyanyi*
1.2	[bapa] 'father'	[bapa] 'father'	[bapa] 'father'	[bapa] 'father'
1.2	[roko] 'cigarette'	[roko] 'cigarette'	[roko] 'cigarette'	[roko] 'cigarette'
2.1	locative *di*	Ø	locative *di*	locative *di*
2.1	word-final [r]	Ø	word-final [r]	word-final [r]
2.2	*kecoa* 'cockroach'	*lipas* 'cockroach'	*kecoa* 'cockroach'	*lipas* 'cockroach'
2.2	*bilang* 'say'	*bilang* 'count'	*bilang* 'say'	*bilang* 'count'
2.2	[piso] 'knife'	[pisaw] 'knife'	[piso] 'knife'	[pisaw] 'knife'
2.2	[sampe] 'arrive'	[sampay] 'arrive'	[sampe] 'arrive'	[sampay] 'arrive'
3.1	person marker *si*	Ø	Ø	person marker si
3.1	'do what' morphol	'do what' periphr	'do what' periphr	'do what' morphol
3.1	Ø	*punya* 'very'	*punya* 'very'	Ø
3.1	*kepiting* 'crab'	*ketam* 'crab'	*ketam* 'crab'	*kepiting* 'crab'
3.2	comparative *-an*	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	*nge-rokok*	*me-rokok*	*me-rokok*	*me-rokok*
3.2	patient oriented *di-*	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	Ø	3PL pronoun	3PL pronoun	3PL pronoun
3.2	*doang* 'only'	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	*nggak* 'negation'	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	demonstrative *no*	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	plural *pada*	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	*banget* 'very'	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	*apa-an*	no *-an* with *apa*	no *-an* with *apa*	no *-an* with *apa*
3.2	alun-alun	Ø	Ø	Ø
3.2	*gede* 'big'	*besar* 'big'	*besar* 'big'	*besar* 'big'
3.2	*kuping* 'ear'	*telinga* 'ear'	*telinga* 'ear'	*telinga* 'ear'
3.2	[rebu] 'thousand'	[ribu] 'thousand'	[ribu] 'thousand'	[ribu] 'thousand'
3.2	[mata] 'eye'	[mata] 'eye'	[mata] 'eye'	[mata] 'eye'
3.2	[iduŋ] 'nose'	[hiduŋ] 'nose'	[hiduŋ] 'nose'	[hiduŋ] 'nose'
4.1	*punya*	*mia*	*pu-*	*punya*
4.2	[basa] 'wet'	[basah] 'wet'	[basak] 'wet'	[basah] 'wet'
4.3	applicative *-in*	applicative *-kan*	no applicative	no applicative

Table 2:   Java, Malaka and Maluku: Conservative and Innovative Feature Values