

Language Contact in Malay-Indonesian: The Asymmetry Effect

Uri Tadmor

De Gruyter Mouton Publishers

As a regional and international lingua franca for many centuries, Malay-Indonesian has come in contact with—and has been influenced by—many languages. The influence is manifested most conspicuously in the lexicon (Tadmor 2009) but also in the structure (Tadmor 2007). This paper examines the effect of so-called ‘language empires’ on Malay-Indonesian and whether the strong asymmetry involved has had any specific outcomes. As will be shown, language empires need not be physical; in this case, the most significant influences were from religious and cultural ‘empires’ (India, with Sanskrit as its main linguistic conduit, and Islam, conveyed by Arabic and Persian). Moreover, it will be argued that it is not the ‘imperial’ nature of the influencing language itself but rather related factors (such as whether the initial interference was in speech or in writing) that play the most important role in determining the outcome of the language contact.

Tadmor, Uri, 2007. Grammatical Borrowing in Indonesian. In: Matras, Yaron, and Jeanette Sakel (eds.): *Grammatical Borrowing in Cross-Linguistic Perspective*, pp 301-328. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Tadmor, Uri, 2009. Loanwords in Indonesian. In: Haspelmath, Martin, and Uri Tadmor (eds.): *Loanwords in the World's languages: A Comparative Handbook*, pp 686-716. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton.