

# THE INTERNATIONALITY IMAGE OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE THROUGH THE EXISTENCE OF ARABO, SINO-TIBETAN AND DRAVIDIAN PERIPHERAL LEXIS IN THE MALAY LANGUAGE

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## ABSTRACT

Arabo, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian peripheral lexis can demonstrate the internationality of the Malay language, establishing it as one of the world's most critical languages. One can research it through the history of the inclusion of non-Austronesian languages, such as the assimilation of Arabic from the Semitic language family, the assimilation of Chinese lexis, which is in the branch of the Sino-Tibetan family and Tamil language in the Dravidian language family, which is used as Malay lexis. The approach used in this study involves conducting a literature review and performing content analysis that is described in the basic descriptive. In this analysis, the researchers verified a lot of assimilated lexis, especially from non-Austronesian languages such as Arabic, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian, used in spoken and written Malay adapted according to the Malay language. Accordingly, it verified that the non-Austronesian lexicons have been assimilated and adapted as Malay lexicons. Hence, this assimilation of Arabo, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian lexis authenticated the internationality image of the Malay language, in which, through the assimilation of the foreign lexis, it recognised Malay to be the dominant language, the language of diplomacy, and global knowledge.

**Keywords:** lexis; language flexibility; assimilation; internationality; the Malay language

### **Introduction**

Peripheral lexis is an additional vocabulary that comes from different language families. According to Abdullah (2013), peripheral, in linguistic terms, is an auxiliary lexicon that enriches the primary language's vocabulary. Generally, peripheral lexis results from a clash of languages between societies of different races or civilisations. Socio-economic and socio-political needs and the survival of a civilisation cause the clash. These needs encourage a civilisation to migrate by establishing economic and political relations with other regions. Thus, a clash of languages occurs that ends with the result of peripheral lexis or additional vocabulary. Through communication, language clashes occur between different language families, causing a language to be quickly assimilated into another language (Rahman, 2007).

The Malay language has many assimilated lexis, especially from the Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), and Dravidian (Tamil) language families. This is related to the history of Malaya, where this region has established economic and political relations with the empires of China and India and Islamic traders from the Arab land since the beginning and even before the Malacca Sultanate empire. This makes the use of the languages clash, and the borrowing of languages occurs extensively. Furthermore, when the Straits of Malacca became the focus of trade stopovers in the eyes of the world, Malay was used as a lingua franca or tongue language, which is the spoken language for trading in the Straits of Malacca (Abdullah & Abdullah, 2018; Mulyani & Noor, 2018).

How can the loanwords of Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), and Dravidian (Tamil) be explained, as well as further expand the vocabulary of the Malay language as one of the main languages in the world? This study proved to the world that the assimilation of foreign lexis into the Malay language verified the flexibility of the Malay language, which could assimilate not only with the Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Dravidian language family but also with the Semitic language family even though the family of these languages is starkly different from in terms of lexical structure and sentence structure as well as grammar with the Malay group (Dahaman, 1990).

This research examines the phenomenon of cultural interactions particularly those involving the Arab, Chinese, and Indian communities and the Malay community that have contributed to the assimilation of Arabic, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian lexis into the Malay language. The study specifically focuses on the integration and characteristics of peripheral lexis from these language families, aiming to enhance understanding of how Arabo, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian elements have been incorporated at the margins of the Malay lexicon. The study further clarifies the concept of peripheral lexis as it has evolved in the Malaynesia archipelago since, or prior to, the Malacca Malay Sultanate. It systematically catalogues the assimilated lexical elements present in Malay, highlighting changes in spelling, pronunciation, and phonemic structure. Through this analysis, the research highlights the shifts in assimilated lexis and their linguistic implications within spoken Malay.

## Literature Review

In this analysis, the researchers referred to multiple relevant sources to produce findings on the Internationality Image of the Malay Language Through the Assimilation of Arabo, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian Peripheral Lexis. The researchers completed the research by listing the lexicons assimilated from Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) and Dravidian (Tamil) in which the researchers only listed the lexicon when it was available in the *Kamus Dewan* (2007).

In Jones' book *Loan-Words In Indonesian and Malay*, published in 2008, there is a study on the list of loanwords from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Tamil, Chinese, European languages, and Japanese languages assimilated into Malay and Indonesian. Instead of categorising the loaned lexicons of the languages according to their source language, Jones lists them alphabetically. Furthermore, readers may need clarification due to the loan lexis intermingled between Malay and Indonesian.

There are still differences in Malay and Indonesian vocabulary usage despite coming from the same language family. As per Eswary and Aman's (2014) findings, the Malay language employs metaphors to depict reality and lexical terms with analogies to represent the essence of a word that cannot be explained concretely. Conversely, when referring to a concept or object in question, Indonesians tend to demonstrate and adopt lexical meaning through adaptation, depending on assimilation from the source language (Eswary & Aman, 2014). Consequently, it is essential to cite *Kamus Dewan* (2007) to persuade readers that those assimilated lexis exist in the Malay language.

A book by Mohamed and Subramaniam (2015) titled *Kata Pinjaman Bahasa Tamil dalam Bahasa Melayu* reviews, identifies, and prepares a list of Tamil loanwords in Malay. The discussion in this book aims to unravel and analyse the integration process of the loaned vocabulary from phonology, morphology, and semantic aspects. However, Mohamed and Subramaniam (2015) examined a variety of vocabulary terms that the Malay community no longer uses in speech or writing. Some lexis are listed as loaned lexis from Tamil that are not found in *Kamus Dewan* (2007). For example, in the Tamil language, some of the lexis listed from the reading source as assimilated lexis into the Malay language, such as *appalam* (appalam), *attan* (atan), *karatu* (keratu), *koolaattam* (karupilai), and *koolaattam* (kolattam), were not available in the *Kamus Dewan* (2007). In this study, the selection of specific lexis is emphasised in terms of the status of their use in speech and writing in Malay. This is to avoid confusion and ambiguity in the meaning of the loan lexis. In an attempt to make Malay a language of knowledge through peripheral lexis, it is necessary to highlight lexis that are common or still actively used in speech and writing.

The researchers also referenced the book *Chinese Loan-Words in Malay and Indonesian: A Background Study*, written by Jones (2009). This book highlighted various variants of the Chinese language that have been assimilated into Malay. In addition, Jones also explained clearly and in detail the history of the origin of lexis according to the Chinese variants but does not highlight the linguistic changes in the lexicon when assimilated into the Malay language. It is essential to highlight the changes in linguistic elements in the lexis that are assimilated into a language. Such discussions are critical to making language-borrowing research more straightforward

to understand. Meanwhile, Phong's (2015) investigation, in his article titled *Perubahan Leksis Kata Pinjaman Cina Dalam Bahasa Melayu*, underscores the analysis of Chinese lexis used in Malay. Phong (2015) focuses on changes in lexis from the perspective of morphology (form) and semantics (meaning). He examined the changes in lexis by identifying how much the Chinese language has evolved in Malay speech. In other words, Phong examines the expansion and narrowing of the meaning of some Chinese lexis that have been assimilated into Malay. In the present study, the researchers did not emphasise the morphology and semantic lexis assimilated from the Chinese language. The researchers have chosen a simpler approach: to examine the changes in the phonemes and sounds of the Chinese lexis when assimilated into the Malay lexis.

Next, the researchers also referred to a book written by Hadi (2015) entitled *Kata-Kata Arab Dalam Bahasa Indonesia*. Hadi studied phonology, morphology, semantics, synonyms, antonyms, polysemes and homography on the lexis of the Arabic language assimilated into the Indonesian language. Hadi studied the structure of sounds, forms, and spelling of Malay and Indonesian language. Therefore, researchers have used this book as a guide to analyse linguistic changes, especially Arabic lexicons. However, the list of loanwords from Arabic in this book has been filtered because not all of the vocabulary used in Indonesian can be used in Malay.

In this manuscript, the researchers also referred to the related studies, particularly those on the adaptation of various terms, such as loanwords and assimilated words to illustrate the phenomenon of language clash, especially between Malay and other languages. For example, reference was made to studies such as *Indo-European, Semitic, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian Vocabulary in the Internationalisation of Malay as the Main World Language in Malaynesia* (Abdullah & Abdullah, 2018), and *Indo Peripheral Lexis -Arabo-Euro in the Internationalisation of the Malay Language in the Archipelago* (Abdullah & Damit, 2018). These investigations examine the internationality of the Malay language by reviewing the history of including non-Austronesian lexis, such as the assimilation of Arabic, Chinese and Tamil lexis that are used as Malay lexis. Abdullah and Damit (2018) reported that the Malay language is flexible as it assimilates foreign lexis, which is an image of the internationality of the Malay language itself.

Therefore, this study seeks to address existing gaps in the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of peripheral lexis, particularly from Arabic, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian languages, within the context of the Malay language.

This study aims to list selected loan lexis from Arabo, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian languages that are assimilated into the Malay language and analyse the changes in the linguistic elements. Specifically, the research questions are as follows:

1. What lexis are borrowed from Arabic (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), and Dravidian (Tamil) languages that were assimilated into Malay?
2. What are the linguistic elements that have changed against the lexis of Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), and Dravidian (Tamil) when it is assimilated into the Malay language?

## Methodology

This research was a qualitative analysis. The approach used in this study involves conducting a literature review and performing content analysis.

Researchers have consulted various language books to obtain the data needed for this study. Nevertheless, dictionaries are the primary source of samples that are always used because the dictionary entries cover various aspects and areas of knowledge. In this study, *Kamus Dewan* (2007) is used as the key reference source in gathering the Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil loanwords, especially in ensuring the existence and applicability of those loanwords in Malay.

The data for the study was obtained from Jones' (2009) book entitled *Chinese Loan-Words in Malay and Indonesian*, Mohamed and Subramaniam's (2015) book entitled *Kata Pinjaman Bahasa Tamil dalam Bahasa Melayu*, and Hadi's (2015) book entitled *Kata-Kata Arab Dalam Bahasa Indonesia* and Jones' book (2008) entitled *Loan-Words In Indonesian And Malay*.

The loan lexical data listed in the books were filtered by referring to *Kamus Dewan* (2007) to ensure the existence and applicability of the lexis in the Malay language. In this analysis, the researchers verified a lot of assimilated lexis, that is, 1175 known Arabic lexis, 292 known Chinese lexis, and 614 known Tamil lexis existed in the Malay language.

Collins' (2003) idea regarding the etymology of words is suitable for this study. This is because this study examines the origin of loanwords and emphasises the equivalence of the meaning of these words with the Malay lexis based on the source of the *Kamus Dewan* (2007). The guidelines devised by Collins in studying the etymology of words used in this study are:

- (1) before researching an etymology, make sure when the word appears for the first time;
- (2) history and geography must be considered: words can only be borrowed through a clash of languages;
- (3) the known sound equivalence must be based on etymological efforts; and
- (4) emphasis should be placed on the spoken word: the designation can explain the contradictions of the text and highlight the correct etymology.

The first guideline means that the study of etymology should track the existence and use of loanwords in Malay. Therefore, the appearance of lexis in the Malay language can be traced to the latest Malay dictionary, *Kamus Dewan* (2007). The second guideline means that a study must consider historical and geographical aspects. Collins (2003) discussed the phenomenon of language clashes, which in turn lead to the borrowing of words. In examining borrowed words, researchers need to look at how the words enter other languages and the origin of the borrowed words. Once the existence and use of the word are identified, a historical examination is made through the relationships between different linguistic communities. For example, the inclusion of the word "wangsa" or "bangsa" into the Malay language transpires through the borrowing of words resulting from the clash between the Indian and Malay communities (Norhashim & Abd Ghani, 2022). The same goes for

including the words “dharurat” or “darurat” into the Malay language through borrowing words resulting from the clash between the Arab and Malay communities (Yusoff & Mohamed Adnan, 2009). The inclusion of the Chinese word “sin kong” or “singkong” is the result of the clash between the Chinese and Malay communities (Jones, 2009). In addition, according to Nor Hashim et al. (2023), the repetition or frequency of a word studied is evidence of whether its use is widespread among speakers or vice versa.

The third guideline emphasises the equivalence of sounds, which is the primary guide when researching loanwords. This study focuses on loanwords, where each loanword is evaluated based on the similarity of word forms and fonts (i.e. sounds) without changing its original meaning, especially lexis or words from Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil that are assimilated into the Malay language. Therefore, this guideline should be applied in this study, especially in analysing the changes in the linguistic elements of lexis or borrowed words when adopted into Malay lexis. The researchers also agree with Nor Hashim et al. (2023) that the fourth guideline has almost the same focus as the third guideline because the word form studied has provided information related to the sound of a word. The third and fourth guidelines are pertinent when examined more closely because the sounds studied are based on local community pronunciations. This link gives the guidelines the same emphasis. In this study, the morphophonological approach was used to analyse the changes in Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil lexis assimilated into Malay. According to Abdullah (2022), morphophonology is closely related to the field of grammar, namely, morphology and phonology, which involves the overlap of word production with sound study. Examples of mofems are *gagah* and *gajah*. /g/ on the second syllable *gah* replaced by phonemes /j/ will change the mofem {gagah} to {gajah} and thus change the meaning of the lexis from the definition of {gagah} strong or energetic to {gajah} i.e., large mammals from Elephantide (Abdullah, 2022). Although most lexis that are assimilated from Arabic (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) and Dravidian (Tamil) into Malay have undergone changes in phonemes and phonetics (which are sounds), this does not change the original meaning of the lexis. According to Nor Hashim and Ghani (2022), the examination of the form alone cannot be used as proof that the word is a loanword because the similarity and resemblance of language only occur by chance. Therefore, the meaning of lexis or words was also emphasised in this study but differed from the focus or objective the researchers wanted to discuss.

## Findings

### List of Arabic, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian Lexis Assimilated into the Malay Language

The list of Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) and Dravidian (Tamil) peripheral lexis that were assimilated into the Malay language proved that the existence of these lexicons was put into Malay context. The researchers conducted a synchronic or diachronic study of the non-Austronesian lexicon, taking into account whether the original arrangement of foreign lexical phonemes was the same, whether there were some phoneme changes or whether it had the same lexical meaning as the non-Austronesian lexicon after being assimilated into the Malay lexicon. In listing

assimilated lexicons from Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) and Dravidian (Tamil) languages into the Malay language, the researchers completed data filtering that the assimilated lexicons should be available in the *Kamus Dewan*, especially the *Kamus Dewan* (2007) which is a reference for researchers. The lexis was listed in the list of Arabic (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), and Dravidian (Tamil) assimilated lexis into the Malay language. The list in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 are some examples of Arabo, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian lexis that have been assimilated into the Malay language.

**Table 1**

*List of Arabo (Arabic) Lexis Absorbed into the Malay Language*

	Arabic Lexicon in Roman Writing	Reference Source	Lexical Meaning	Arabic Assimilation Lexicon in Malay	Dictionary Source	Lexical Meaning of Arabic Assimilation in Malay
1	<i>ḥadīth</i>	LIIM <sup>101</sup>	1. tradition about the prophet	hadis <sup>Ar</sup>	KD <sup>498</sup>	1. abda (deeds or behaviour) of Nabi Muhammad PBUH narrated by his companions (to explain or determine an Islamic ruling)
2	<i>`aqd</i>	LIIM <sup>8</sup>	1. agreement, contract	akad <sup>Ar</sup>	KD <sup>22</sup>	1. deal, agreement
3	<i>`aqrab</i>	LIIM <sup>9</sup>	1. near	akrab I <sup>x</sup>	KD <sup>26</sup>	1. closer, intimate
4	<i>shahih</i>	LIIM <sup>272</sup>	1.genuine, legitimate	sahih <sup>x</sup>	KD <sup>1366</sup>	1. confirmed, true, valid, can be recognised (accepted)
5	<i>bathal</i>	LIIM <sup>34</sup>	1. decide or announce that (something planned) will not be carried out.	batal <sup>x</sup>	KD <sup>134</sup>	1. invalid, no longer valid, void.

**Note:**

Reference source

- LIIM – Loanwords In Indonesian and Malay (Jones, 2008)
- KD – *Kamus Dewan* (2007)

*Superscript* in letter form (<sup>abc</sup>) refers to the original language recorded in the relevant lexis according to *Kamus Dewan* (2007).

- Ar – (Arab) lexis recorded in the *Kamus Dewan* (2007) is assimilated from the Arabic language.
- X – (Unspecified), lexis not specifically recorded as originating from a particular language.

In number (<sup>123</sup>), the superscript refers to the lexis page in the referred reference source.

**Table 2**

*List of Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) Lexicon Assimilated into the Malay Language*

	Chinese Lexicon in Rumi Script	Original Source	Lexical Meaning of Chinese in Malay	Chinese Assimilation Lexicon in Malay	Dictionary Source	Lexical Meaning of Chinese Assimilation in Malay
1	<i>á chí</i>	CLMI <sup>95</sup> LIIM <sup>4</sup>	1. sister	aci III	KD <sup>5</sup>	1. sister
2	<i>á peh</i>	CLMI <sup>97</sup> LIIM <sup>21</sup>	1. old man 2. uncle 3. father's younger or elder brother	apek	KD <sup>71</sup>	1. call to (older) Chinese men.
3	<i>chamcha</i>	LIIM <sup>46</sup>	1. spoon	camca	KD <sup>240</sup>	1. spoon
4	<i>sam seng</i> <i>II</i>	CLMI <sup>153</sup> LIIM <sup>275</sup>	1. villain	samseng	KD <sup>1383</sup>	1. villain
5	<i>sin kong</i>	CLMI <sup>157</sup> LIIM <sup>290</sup>	1. tapioca	singkong	KD <sup>1501</sup>	1. tapioca

**Note:**

Reference source

- LIIM – Loanwords In Indonesian and Malay (Jones, 2008)
- CLMI – Chinese Loanwords in Malay and Indonesian (Jones, 2009)
- KD – *Kamus Dewan* (2007)

In number (<sup>123</sup>), the superscript refers to the lexis page in the referred reference source.

**Table 3**

*List of Dravidian (Tamil) Lexis Assimilated into the Malay Language*

	Tamil Lexicon in Rumi Script	Reference source	Lexical Meaning	Tamil Assimilation Lexicon in Malay	Dictionary Source	Lexical Meaning of Tamil Assimilation in Malay
1	<i>manṭiram</i>	KPTM <sup>71</sup>	1. Words spoken to evoke supernatural power	mantera	KD <sup>2667</sup>	1. Words spoken to evoke supernatural



			2. Advice 3. Words in the Vedas			powers, spells
2	<i>muttirai</i>	KPTM <sup>74</sup> LIIM <sup>201</sup>	1. the official symbol of an organisation	meterai	KD <sup>2755</sup>	1. official symbol of an organisation, stamp, seal, impression 1. small balls (made up of stones), gundu, jaka, marbles
3	<i>kooli</i>	KPTM <sup>57</sup> LIIM <sup>99</sup>	1. small balls made up of glass	guli	KD <sup>1287</sup>	
4	<i>kooṇi</i>	KPTM <sup>57</sup> LIIM <sup>99</sup>	1. a kind of sack 2. fiber from trees to make sarong	guni	KD <sup>1293</sup>	1. fiber sacks
5	<i>čamuṭṭiram</i>	KPTM <sup>33</sup> LIIM <sup>275</sup>	1. oceans 2. many	samudera	KD <sup>3696</sup>	1. ocean

**Note:**

Reference source

- LIIM – Loanwords In Indonesian and Malay (Jones, 2008)
- KPTM – Kata Pinjaman Bahasa Tamil Dalam Bahasa Melayu (Mohamed & Subramuniam, 2015)
- KD – *Kamus Dewan* (2007)

In number (<sup>123</sup>), the superscript refers to the lexis page in the referred reference source.

The findings of the study in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 show the existence of various lexis from various non-Austronesian language groups, especially Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) and Dravidian (Tamil) languages that are spoken.

**Analysis of Changes in Linguistic Elements of Phonology and Morphology of Arabo, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian Lexis, which are Assimilated into the Malay Language**

The following are the Arabo, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian lexis assimilated into Malay. The language of the lexicons has undergone a process of changing linguistic elements that make the lexicon change in terms of sound and form. Adapting the original phonological structure or the pronunciation of the Malay language itself induces a change in lexical phonemes. Therefore, when translated, the following were some phonological and morphological linguistic analyses of assimilated lexicons from Arabo, Sino-Tibetan and Dravidian languages.

**Figure 1**

*Analysis of Phonological and Morphological Linguistic Elements of Arabo (Arabic) Lexis Assimilated into the Malay Language*

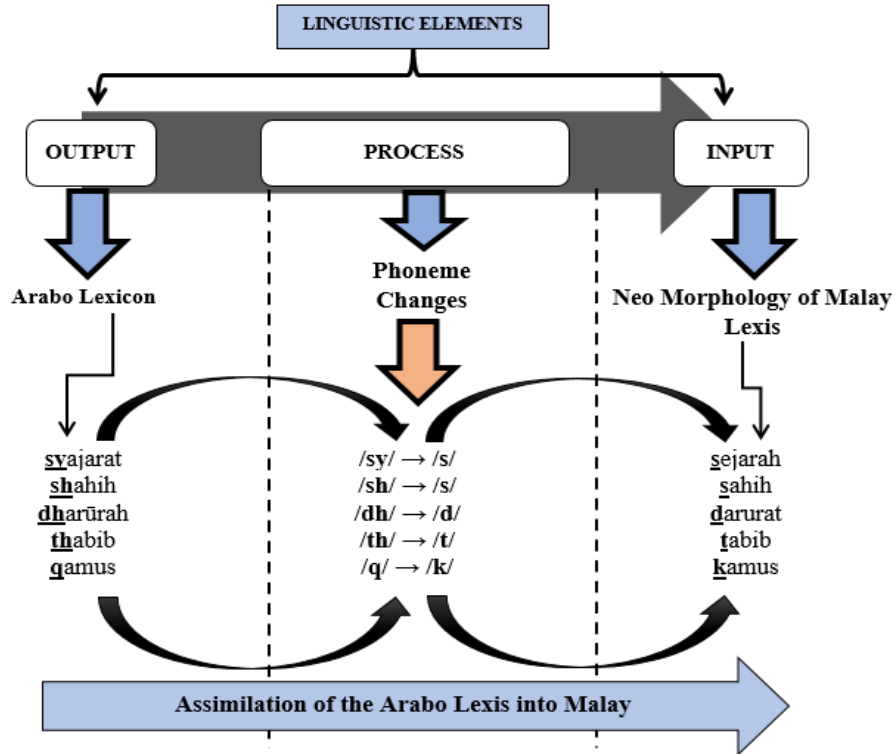


Figure 2 shows the assimilation of Arabo lexis into the Malay language, which includes some changes in linguistic elements (phoneme changes) to Arabo lexis when assimilated into the Malay lexis. In Figure 2, one can see some phoneme changes when the assimilation of the language from the Arabic language into the Malay language occurs, such as the phoneme /sy/ changes to the phoneme /s/, the phoneme /sh/ changes to the phoneme /s/, the phoneme /dh/ changes to the phoneme /d/, phoneme /th/ changes to phoneme /t/ and phoneme /q/ changes to phoneme /k/. Since these lexis are initially from the Arabic language, phoneme changes often occur when an Arabo lexis is assimilated into a lexis with a Malay pronunciation (Hadi, 2015; Maris, 1980). For example, when assimilated into the Malay language, Arabo lexis such as *syajarat* ( لَشَجْرَة ) becomes *sejarah*, lexis *shahih* ( صَحِيْح ) becomes *sahih*, lexis *dharurah* ( ضَرْوْرَة ) becomes *darurat*, lexis *thabib* ( طَبِيْب ) becomes *tabib*, lexis *qamus* ( قَامُوْس ) becomes *kamus* (Hadi, 2015; Jones, 2008).

Next, the researchers presented an analysis of the linguistic elements of the Sino-Tibetan lexis, which is the Chinese language assimilated into the Malay language. The researchers used pinyin writing, which represents the original Chinese lexis, to make it easier for the reader to understand the data analysis done. The analysis of the Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) linguistic elements in the Malay language is more focused on the study of phonology. Ahmad (2004) remarked that phonology is a field of linguistics that explores the system and function of sounds in a language. Therefore, the researchers highlighted several aspects of Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) phonology that have

been assimilated into the Malay language, such as phoneme inventory, phoneme structure in syllable formation and the spread of phonemes as well as the constraints of their presence in certain positions in the word. Figure 3 analyses the phonological aspect of the Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) lexis assimilated into the Malay language.

**Figure 2**  
Phonological Aspects of Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) Lexis Assimilated into Malay

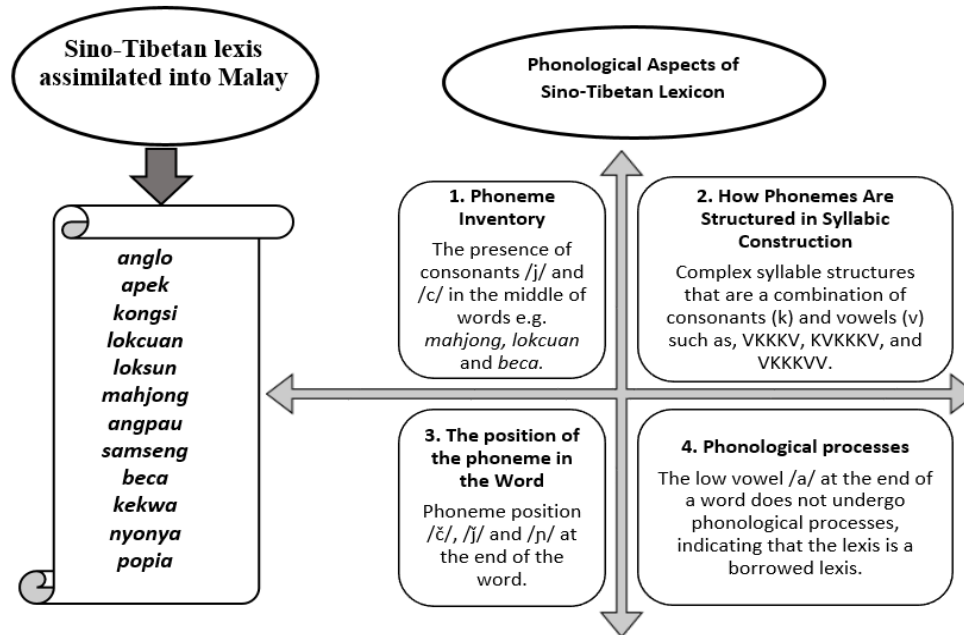


Figure 3 shows the lexicons assimilated from the Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) language into the Malay language that were checked through four main aspects: the phoneme inventory, the way phonemes are structured in syllable formation, the position of phonemes in words, and phonological processes. Ahmad (2004) reported that the presence of consonants /j/ and /c/ in the middle of a word ensures that the lexis is an assimilated lexis from a foreign language. This is because the existence of the consonants /j/ and /c/ in the middle of a word violates phonological rules in Malay (Ahmad, 2004). Among the assimilated lexis in the Sino-Tibetan language with the consonants /j/ and /c/ in the middle of the word are *mahjong*, *lokcuana*, and *beca*.

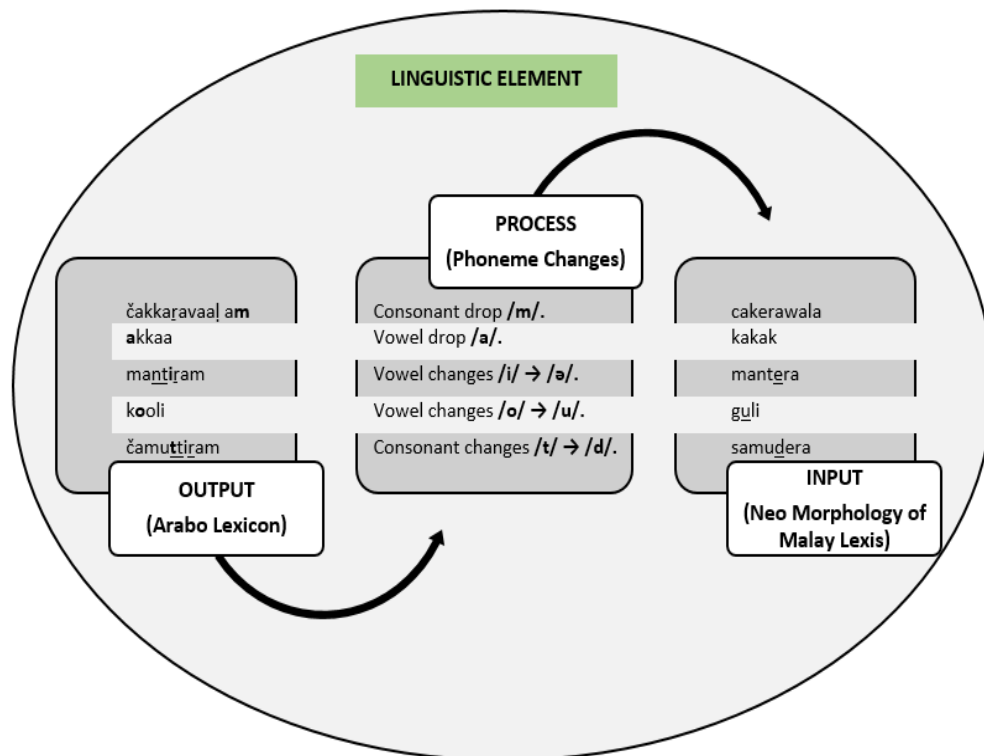
The next aspect of the study of phonology is how phonemes are structured in syllable formation. By examining and identifying how phonemes are structured in the formation of syllables, one can easily predict that lexis is an assimilated lexis from a foreign language. Maris (1980) noted that the phonological system of the Malay language has a simple syllable structure consisting of V, VK, KV, and KVK. This means that if a lexis has a complex syllabic structure in the Malay language, one can establish that the lexis is an assimilated lexis from a foreign language. In the phonological study of the Sino-Tibetan language assimilated lexis that was introduced into Malay, the researchers discovered many assimilated lexis from Sino-Tibetan languages had a complex syllabic structure. These lexis include *anglo*, *kongsi*, *angpau*, and *bangpak*.

In the context of assimilated lexicons from the Sino-Tibetan (Chinese) language, many lexicons contain the phonemes /č/, /j/, and /ɲ/ either in the middle of the word or at the end of the word. The researchers examined whether the phonemes /č/, /j/, and /ɲ/ align with the nasal-obstruent couplet in Malay words, ensuring homophony or similar articulation areas. Nasal-obstruent pairs that exist in Malay are /mp/, /mb/, /nt/, /nd/, /ŋk/, /ŋg/, /ɲč/, and /ɲj/. Therefore, if the lexicon has the phonemes /č/, /j/, and /ɲ/ in a word or Malay lexicon that does not comply with the Malay nasal-obstruent couplet, then the lexicon is an assimilated lexicon from another language. In the phonological study of assimilated lexicon from the Sino-Tibetan language, the researchers concluded that many lexicons from that language did not fulfil the nasal-homorganic couplet condition in Malay—for example, *camca*, *lokuan*, *capcai*, *capjiki*, and *ongji*.

Next, the analysis of the linguistic elements in Figure 3 is a study of the phonological and morphological linguistic aspects of the Dravidian (Tamil) language lexicon that was assimilated into Malay.

**Figure 3**

*Analysis of Phonological and Morphological Linguistic Elements of the Dravidian (Tamil) Lexis Assimilated into the Malay Language*



Mohamed and Subramuniam (2015) pointed out that the phonemes /č/, /k/, /p/, and /t/ each has two pronunciations, namely, /č/ is pronounced with /č/ and /s/, while the phoneme /k/ is pronounced /k/ and /g/, then the phonemes /p/ are called /b/ and /p/, and the phonemes /t/ are called /ṭ / and /ṭ / . Therefore, it is apparent

that phonemes in the pronunciation of the Tamil language change within the scope of how they are pronounced when assimilated into the Malay lexicon.

As a result of this research, the researchers established that this study aligns with Mohamed and Subramaniam's (2015) data, which recorded that dropping consonants at the end of words is popular in Tamil-assimilated lexicons when assimilated into the Malay lexicon. Dropping the consonant at the end of this word involves dropping phonemes such as /m/, /n/, /r/, and /l/. Dropping vowels is also expected to help Tamils assimilate lexis when introduced to Malay. In Tamil lexicons, vowel dropping occurs at the beginning of words, in the middle of words, and at the end when adapted to Malay pronunciation. Based on Figure 3, vowel dropping occurs at the beginning of the word, namely the vowel /a/, when the lexicon of the Dravidian language (Tamil) is assimilated into the Malay language. For example, *akka*, when assimilated into the Malay language, will become *kakak*. That is, the dropping of the vowel /a/ at the beginning of the next word is followed by the insertion of the vowel /a/ between two consonants /k/ and flanked by the consonant /k/ to form a sister that meets the lexical characteristics of the Malay language, namely (KVKVK). [K = consonant; V = vocal]

Next, the Tamil language's lexicon also changed from the front vowel /i/ to the middle vowel /ə/. Based on the data found, 16 assimilated lexicons of the Tamil language into the Malay language experienced the change of the front vowel /i/ to a middle vowel /ə/. As shown in Figure 3, it is clear that the narrow vowel changes /i/ to be a middle vowel /ə/, which is *mantiram* becomes *menteri*. Among other examples of lexis are *puttiran*, *puttiri*, *paatiri*, and *panṭitan* when used, will become lexis *putera*, *puteri*, *paderi*, and *pendeta*.

Thus, this analysis demonstrated that most of the assimilated lexis from Arabo (Arabic), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), and Dravidian (Tamil) change when assimilated into lexis in Malay. Furthermore, many loan lexis have undergone more than one change, and some are challenging to identify as loan lexis, whether they come from Arabic, Chinese, or Tamil, because they have been integrated into the Malay language. According to Mohamed and Subramuniam (2015), certain parties also carry out the process of borrowing lexis at will, which has caused problems of inconsistency in the assimilated lexis.

## Discussion

Global attention to the Malay language as an international language has existed in education since the seventh century, when I Cing, a Buddhist, came from China to learn the ancient Malay language and study Buddhism (Sariyan, 2019). Since the establishment of relations between the Government of China and Malacca, approximately 500 input words have been compiled and recorded in the form of a dictionary in Chinese entitled *Man La Jia Guo Yi Yu*, or List of Words of the State of Melaka (Liji, 1996). The arrival of Islam in Malaya around the 13th century (Acheh sources quoted that Islam arrived in Malaya earlier, since the eighth century) empowered the interaction of the Malay language with one of the world's major languages, Arabic (Rahman, 2007). The entry of Islam into Malaya led to translating texts from Arabic to Malay, such as the measures taken by *Aqaid al-Nasafi*, a Malay

scholar who translated the foundational book of the Islamic faith (Al-Attas, 1988). In those days, learning a language meant understanding other nations' languages through religious groups, especially Buddhism and Islam. It was needed so that religious knowledge would be more practical to convey. According to Sariyan (2019), knowledge is more effectively conveyed in the mother tongue. From the current point of view, the Malay language has also been offered in foreign study centres, and Malay language courses have also been established in several countries, including Europe and Asia. In Europe, there are courses in Malay Studies, such as at Leiden University and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and in Asia, such as Malay Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, China.

Malay is a vocabulary-rich language because it accepts and assimilates languages from the Dravidian family (Tamil), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese), or the Semitic family, such as Arabic. Abdullah and Abdullah (2018). Malay is a flexible language that assimilates foreign lexicons into Malay lexicons. As a result, its use encompasses all aspects of life, including science and technology. Occasionally, the assimilated lexicons retain the original pronunciation, and some are adapted to the rules of the phonological system in Malay. Despite changes in form and pronunciation, the original meaning of the lexis assimilation from foreign languages, particularly Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil, has remained the same. *Kamus Dewan* dictionary is used as a reference, especially in Malay language classes in overseas study centres such as the Chair of Malay Studies in Europe, Leiden University at the University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand, and the Chair of Malay Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, China. The quality of *Kamus Dewan* production will improve with a comprehensive examination of the foreign lexicon integrated into the Malay lexicon. Chong and Subramaniam (2015) argued that the effectiveness of creating a high-quality Malay dictionary depends on how the language is presented. By examining the peripheral lexicons of Arabo, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian languages and analysing their assimilated vocabulary, dictionary compilers can use this as a reference to further enhance the labelling of borrowed words found in *Kamus Dewan*. Additionally, this research can raise public awareness about the presence of foreign words in Malay.

Ergo, assimilating foreign lexis into Malay lexis verifies that Malay is a flexible and dynamic language (Phong, 2015). Due to its flexible and dynamic qualities, the Malay language readily accepts the influence of foreign languages and can adapt the inclusion of lexis or vocabulary from those foreign languages into the Malay language. Abdullah and Damit (2018) suggested that many lexis from all language families in the world that are assimilated into the Malay language through assimilation adapted to the pronunciation of Nusantara show the international image of the Malay language. Besides, studying the Malay language abroad has further substantiated the essence of the Malay language in the world and the realm of Malaynesia. The government's move to make Malay language courses compulsory for international students who continue their studies in Malaysian universities is a measure that can place Malay as the language of science and as the language of science and technology (Abdullah & Damit, 2018; Hassan, 1989). The assimilation of foreign lexis in the Malay language further enriches the Malay vocabulary, which facilitates the learning and understanding of the Malay language and makes it simple for all levels of society to

understand and learn. The assimilation of foreign languages into Malay also verifies that the language has the strength to adapt to the development and needs of modern times, like today. The assimilation of foreign languages into the Malay language can further preserve the vocabulary and make the Malay language a "sustainable" tongue that lives eternally (Collins, 1999; Sariyan, 2011).

### Conclusion

The Malay language contains all the major languages of the world from various language families, assimilated into the Malay language. The study shows that the assimilation of Arabo, Sino-Tibetan, and Dravidian peripheral lexis reflects the Malay language's international characteristics. The Malay language has become stronger not only through the establishment of the Faculty of Malay Studies abroad, such as at the University of London in England, the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, Ohio University in the United States, and Beijing Foreign Studies University in China, but also through a large number of non-Austronesian lexis loans aspired at making Malay a language of science and technology as well as a language of progress. This research is part of a more extensive etymology study. Hence, examining borrowed lexis or loanwords by highlighting the analysis of changes in linguistic elements of a word that is assimilated into the Malay language is one of the essential ingredients in deepening the knowledge of etymology. Understanding the meaning also allows the identification of the origin of words based on the form of the word that has been identified as having similarities. The history and semantics of words need to be traced throughout time until they reach the root or language of the source of the loan if the word studied is a loan word. The study of loan words and the analysis of changes in the linguistic elements of these words can deliver answers and information about the changes that occur to a loan word in the Malay language. This study only concentrates on listing Arabic, Chinese and Tamil loanwords and analysing the changes in the linguistic elements of these loanwords when assimilated into the Malay language. The researchers hope that more in-depth deconstructions will be performed, especially on the influence of Malay grammar rules on the morphology of Arabic, Chinese, and Tamil loanwords in the Malay language.

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