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Introduction

The voice system in modern Malay and Indonesian (Standard Malay) continues to be the subject of research and debate, with a substantial body of literature devoted to its syntactic properties and discourse function.¹

This article looks at another aspect of this intriguing voice system, namely the origin of the prefix *di-*. Specifically, I deal with the four hypotheses that have been put forward in the literature regarding the origin of *di-*. These can be summarized as follows.

- *Di-* is a reduced form of the free pronoun *dia*.
- *Di-* is a reflex of an earlier voice marker *ni-*.
- *Di-* is originally a preposition that became grammaticalized as a voice prefix.
- *Di-* is a blend of *ni-* and *da-*.

I start off with a general discussion on the nature of *di-* constructions and address the question whether *di-* can be called a 'passive' prefix. The four hypotheses listed above are then examined and evaluated in turn. No new data are presented here and the conclusion reached is not a surprising one. My purpose is to present a systematic overview of the problem, compare the Malay data to similar phenomena in other Austronesian languages, and move the discussion forward by assessing the plausibility of the various hypotheses from a typological perspective.

¹ For example Chung 1976; Verhaar 1978; Kaswanti Purwo 1988; Gil 2002. An earlier version of this article was presented at the Seventh International Symposium on Malay / Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL-7, Nijmegen, June 2003). I wish to thank Sander Adelaar, Mark Donohue, Paul Kroeger, David Mead, John Wolff, and two anonymous reviewers for valuable comments.

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1. The nature of *di-*constructions

Before going into its history, it may be helpful to clarify the nature of clauses containing the verbal prefix *di-*, as this has occasioned controversy. The subject warrants separate study, and I can give only a brief overview here, but the question is important and relevant to the issue of grammaticalization discussed in section 5. The basic question is whether a clause containing *di-* is a 'passive' construction, as has traditionally been held. The answer to that question can only be given when we have arrived at an adequate idea of how 'passive' is defined in a general theory of language. Following Shibatani (1985), Keenan (1985), Payne (1997), and Givón (2001), it can be said that the prototypical passive is characterized both morphosyntactically and in terms of its pragmatic function. Morphosyntactically, a prototypical passive clause is defined as a semantically transitive clause containing an agent, a patient, and a telic verb, further specified for the following features.

- The Patient is placed and case-marked as the subject of a basic active clause (and hence available to subject-oriented processes such as equi-deletion).
- The Agent is either omitted or demoted to an oblique role (for example, instrumental, locative, or genitive).
- The Verb (or verb phrase) shows special marking (often an affix or an auxiliary verb) and is intransitive.

In terms of its pragmatic function, 'the prototypical passive is used primarily for agent suppression or de-topicalization' (Givón 2001:125). The agent is linguistically suppressed because it is unknown, irrelevant, superfluous, or predictable. And when it is present (in an oblique phrase), it has low topicality.

In the light of this typological definition, let us now look at constructions (1a) and (1b), taken from Macdonald (1976).

(1a) *Kemerdekaan individu diutamakan*
'Individual freedom is stressed'

(1b) *Semua anggota ditunjuk oleh Presiden*
'All members are appointed by the President'

Notice that the subjects in (1a) and (1b) are patients which occupy the subject position (before the verb²), that the agent is absent in (1a) and present in (1b) in an oblique phrase, marked by the preposition *oleh* and of low topicality

² In certain contexts, the subject can also follow the verb, see example (2).

(though without context this statement is somewhat hard to corroborate). Both clauses are intransitive; no further arguments can be added. All this can be taken as good evidence that we are indeed dealing with a passive construction. Other syntactic tests are available which make it clear that the preverbal argument in these clauses is indeed a subject and that the agent has been demoted. Two such tests are equi-deletion and relativization, both of which are restricted to subjects (see Chung 1976 and Vamarasi 1999 for details). Many scholars therefore use the label 'passive' for the prefix *di-* (Chung 1976; Vamarasi 1999; Macdonald 1976; Sneddon 1996, among others).

The main problem with the 'passive' interpretation of such constructions is that in some contexts, especially in narrative discourse, the agent has high topicality, as in the following example, from the novel *Senja di Jakarta* by Mochtar Lubis, quoted in Cumming (1991:167):

- (2) *Setelah rambut Hasnah disusunnya, diambilnya cat bibir dari tasnya, dan digincunya bibir Hasnah*
 'After she had arranged Hasnah's hair, she took lipstick from her bag and applied it to Hasnah's lips'

Here the agent (marked by the third person genitive/possessive clitic *-nya*) is not low in topicality (unknown, irrelevant, superfluous, predictable), but on the contrary highly topical in this part of the discourse. Calling such a construction 'passive' may be a misnomer, as it seems to suggest that it is comparable to a European passive, whereas in fact (2) is semantically very 'active' and much better translated in European languages as an active verb. Kaswanti Purwo (1997:251, note 5) also points out that the frequency of the *di-*construction in Standard Malay is 30% to 40% in narrative, as compared to the 9% frequency of passives in English narrative.

Because of the different pragmatic status of constructions such as (2), a number of scholars have suggested replacing 'passive' with a more neutral term, such as 'object orientation', 'goal focus', 'goal directed', 'patient-trigger' (Cumming 1991), or even 'ergative' (Verhaar 1988). I believe the ergative analysis to be a misnomer (see Cumming and Wouk 1987 for arguments), while the other terms are essentially no more than terminological variants in a desire to avoid the wrong connotations of 'passive'. As linguistic science must proceed from form to meaning and usage, morphosyntactic features must carry more weight than actual usage. There is no disagreement about the fact that the passive in Standard Malay is used much more widely than in European languages, including its use in imperatives (*jangan dimakan* 'do not eat it') and in polite requests (*tolong ditunggu ya?* 'please wait'). But the essential morphosyntactic features are indeed those of a passive, and in a

substantial number of cases there is agent suppression or de-topicalization (Cumming 1991 gives a figure of 60% for the Lubis text). I conclude therefore that *di-* is indeed a 'passive' prefix, but that the pragmatic use of the passive in Standard Malay is broader than suggested by this traditional label.

2. Is *di-* a reduction of *dia*?

The position that *di-* is somehow related to the free pronoun *dia* 'he, she, it' goes back a long way. Just how far is not clear, but it appears to have been the position held by early Dutch Indonesianists. More recently this position has been put forward by Mills (1975:165-6), who remains somewhat noncommittal, Cartier (1979), Shibatani (1985:845), who simply presents it as a piece of generally accepted knowledge,³ and also Guilfoyle, Hung, and Travis (1992). Remarks on the origin of *di-* by these authors are peripheral to their main topics.

The main arguments in favour of this position are: first, the fact that in Classical Malay⁴ and Standard Malay *di-* is only used with third person agents; and second, the formal similarity between the free pronouns and their corresponding passive prefixes. Essentially this is an analysis based on analogy. Compare the following active and passive clauses (from Mills 1975:166).

(3) a. <i>Aku</i>
<i>Engkau melihat rumah itu</i>
<i>Dia</i> | b. <i>ku-lihat</i>
<i>Rumah itu kau-lihat</i>
<i>di-lihat-nya</i> |
|--|---|

For the first and second person singular, it is generally agreed that the free pronouns and the passive prefixes are related (see Wolff 2001 for a discussion). However, for the third person the situation is not so straightforward. Notice first that for the third person the disyllabic free pronoun is reduced to its first syllable (*dia* → *di-*), whereas for the first and second person it is the

³ Shibatani (1985) deals with Indonesian in the context of a discussion of passives which are related to or derived from transitive constructions, with subject markers indicating a defocused agent. 'The third person prefix *di-*, which is also used as an indefinite marker, is in the process of being extended and used in the passive form with agents other than third person. [...] The *di-* prefix, which is related to the third person pronoun *dia*, is affixed to the verb with a third person subject.' It is unclear to me what Shibatani is referring to when he says that *di-* is also used as an indefinite marker.

⁴ Classical Malay 'is the name given to the literary language of the court of the Malacca empire [...] and its successor states' (Cumming 1991:11), covering the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

second syllable which is retained (*aku* → *ku-*; *engkau* → *kau-*). This makes the formal analogy only partial. Secondly and more importantly, this etymology fails to account for the possessive suffix *-nya* on the verb. If *di-* already marks third person, why should there be another third person agent marker? Mills (1975:166) hypothesizes that 'the addition of *-nya* '3d/poss.' must have occurred later, perhaps after the bare *di*-form came to be used as an agentless passive'. As I argue below, comparative data suggests exactly the opposite, namely that the use of the possessive suffix is a retention.

Other facts also point away from a pronominal origin of *di-*. The fact that *dia* has a variant *ia* (indeed the main variant in Classical Malay and in certain dialects), and the fact that *engkau* has a variant *dikau*, and *aku* a variant *daku* in Classical Malay, all seem to indicate that *d-* (or possibly *di-*) is some kind of formative on these pronouns. For Proto-Malayic **ia* is reconstructed as the third person free pronoun (Adelaar 1992a:124). Ross (forthcoming) analyses *dia* as consisting of Proto-Malayic **ia* with accreted topic-marking preposition **di*. Working in a synchronic perspective, Musgrave (2001) shows that the morphosyntactic behaviour of *di-* differs considerably from the behaviour of the reduced pronouns *ku-* and *kau-*, but is identical to that of the verbal prefix *meN-*. He concludes: 'The best hypothesis would seem to be that *di-* is also a verb prefix, in paradigmatic opposition to *meN-*' (Musgrave 2001:172).

In conclusion, there is no evidence for a link between *dia* and the passive prefix *di-*. Those advocating a pronominal origin of *di-* do so on the basis of superficial formal analogy only, ignoring the wider synchronic and diachronic context.

3. Is *di-* related to Old Malay *ni-*?

The position that Standard Malay (SM) *di-* is cognate with the Old Malay (OM) prefix *ni-* was put forward by Teeuw (1959:141-4), in responding to comments by De Casparis (1956:24) on sound correspondences between Old and Modern Malay.⁵ More recently this position has been defended by Hopper (1988).

⁵ Most authors, including Adelaar (1992), Ross (forthcoming) and Wolff (2001), attribute the original idea of linking OM *ni-* with SM *di-* to De Casparis (1956), but that article does not actually discuss this connection explicitly. De Casparis's discussion centres on OM *mar-*/SM *ber-* and several other lexemes where OM *m* corresponds to SM *b*. It seems that Teeuw drew the logical conclusion from his observations, which is why he says about the link between OM *ni-* and SM *di-*: 'De Casparis [...] apparently thought of that explanation and even believed that he recognized the same correspondence in other cases as well' (Teeuw 1959:142).

The arguments in favour of this idea are as follows:

3.1. As far as the limited data can tell us, OM *ni-* functions in roughly the same way as modern *di-*, that is as a passive voice marker. This is a strong argument in favour of its relationship, as it shows (partial) continuity in both form and function. Old Malay is the language found on a number of stone and copper inscriptions dating from the seventh to the tenth centuries AD. The main critical editions are Cœdès (1930), De Casparis (1950, 1956), and Postma (1992); see also Adelaar (1992b).

Here are some examples from Old Malay (taken from Wolff 2001, with glosses slightly modified). (TT = Talang Tuwo inscription, dated at AD 683; TB = Telaga Batu inscription, probably from AD 686).

- (4) *Sabañakña yang ni-tānam di-sini*
as.many.as LIG PASS-plant LOC-here
'all that is planted here' (TT 2)
- (5) *Samiçrāña yang kayu ni-mākan buah-ña*
different LIG tree PASS-eat fruit-3POSS
'all different kinds of trees, the fruit of which are eaten' (TT 3)
- (6) *tmu muah ya āhāra dngan āir ni-minum-ña*
find may.it.be also food and water PASS-drink-3POSS
'may they find food and water that they may drink (or: water to be drunk)' (TT 5)
- (7) *Yang prajā ni-rakṣān-ku*
LIG subject PASS-protect-1POSS
'the subjects which I protect' (TB 8)
- (8) *Ni-vunuh kāmū sumpah ni-minum-ā-mu ini*
PASS-kill you.pl curse PASS-drink-?-2POSS this
'you will be killed by this curse which you drink' (TB 26)

Notice that in these Old Malay examples *ni-* forms occur without agent, with third person agent, but (unlike Standard Malay) also with first and second person possessive suffixes.

3.2. A good case can be made that OM *ni-* reflects the Proto-Austronesian (PAN)/Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) perfective patient voice marker *-in-. PAN and its daughter language PMP have been reconstructed with an elabo-

rate system of verbal morphology, marking four voices (actor, patient, location, circumstantial) and five aspects/moods (neutral, perfective, durative, atemporal, projective); for details see Wolff (1973) or Ross (1995, 2002). Based on the verbal roots *káRaw ‘scratch’ and *kaRáC ‘bite’, the perfective patient voice for these verbs is *k<in>áRaw and *k<in>aRáC (where <x> marks the infix). What is important here is that in PAN/PMP, agents were optionally marked by possessive suffixes/enclitics, as in PMP *k<in>áRaw=ku ‘was scratched by me’, *k<in>áRaw=mu ‘was scratched by you’, and *k<in>áRaw=ña ‘was scratched by him/her/it’. These facts neatly account for the forms *ni-V-ku* and *ni-V-mu* in Old Malay, as illustrated above, as they appear to be straight retentions from PMP. If SM *di-* is indeed a reflex of PMP *-in- via OM *ni-*, this explains why the possessive marker *-nya* is attached as a third person agent marker in Standard Malay. The PAN/PMP construction has simply continued into present-day Standard Malay, at least for the third person singular.

3.3. At some point in the history of Malay, the passive split into two types: the old type marked by *ni-/di-* was retained for the third person and for agentless passives, while for the first and second person a new type developed, based on proclitic pronouns. Wolff (1996, 2001) offers a discussion of the mechanism by which this may have happened, an issue beyond the scope of the present article. It may be pointed out that a morphological split of ‘passive marking’ between third person and first/second person is not uncommon in western Austronesian languages; compare for instance the Sulawesi language Da’a which has a very similar split (Barr 1988; Van den Berg 1996). The use of *di-* with non-third-person agents in non-formal varieties of Malay (*dibeli oleh saya* ‘bought by me’) must be an analogical development of later date,⁶ which is presumably also true for the optional marking of the agent by means of the preposition *oleh* ‘by’ (or *sama* in colloquial varieties).⁷

3.4. But how can the phonological change from *-in- > *ni-* > *di-* be accounted for? It could be objected that this relationship is far from obvious: in the case of PAN/PMP we are dealing with an infix *-in-, in the case of Old Malay with a prefix *ni-*. Because both the order of phonemes in the affix and its position in the word are different, we may not be dealing with a cognate affix. However, infixes are typologically quite marked, and sometimes metathesize to prefixes, as in Balantak (East Sulawesi), where realis goal focus (roughly

⁶ One of the reviewers mentioned the fact that this construction has been explained as being due to Sundanese influence. This clearly needs more research.

⁷ *Oleh* may be a denominal preposition, judging from an example in Roolvink (1949:51) where it still functions as a noun with the original meaning ‘a possession, something acquired’, as in the following example: *karena kita hendak minta perahu olehnya* ‘want wij zijn van plan hen om hun prauwen te vragen’ [for we intend to ask them for their boats].

translatable as passive) is marked either with the prefix *ni-*, or the infix *-in-*. 'These two forms appear to be identical in function and are in free variation, that is, either one can be used with any verb base with identical meaning. However, the prefix form appears to be much more commonly used in daily conversation.' (Busenitz 1994.) From the verbal root *botak* 'to split in half', the realis goal focus form is either *b<in>otak* 'was split in half' or, more commonly, *ni'-botak*. Balantak provides an excellent illustration of how the change **-in-* > *ni-* must have taken place at some stage between Proto-Malayo-Polynesian and Old Malay.

The change from *ni-* to *di-*, usually referred to as (obstruent) denasalization, is indeed unusual, but, as pointed out by De Casparis and Teeuw, it is paralleled in the language by the change of *m* to *b* in another morpheme. OM *mar-* corresponds to SM *bər-*, going back to Proto-Malayic **mAr-* and PMP **maR-*. Compare also SM Gunung Merapi 'fiery mountain', where the original *m* has been retained in the name of two volcanoes.

4. Challenges to *di-* from *ni-*

Although this position looks quite convincing, it has not remained unchallenged. The most outspoken opponent of the view that *di-* is related to *ni-* is Adelaar, the scholar who has written the most extensively about the history of Malay. In a number of publications (Adelaar 1985, 1992a, 1992b, 2002, forthcoming) he has adduced arguments to support his challenge, following a suggestion from Aichele (1942-43). Although Wolff (2001) reaches a different conclusion (see below), he has backed Adelaar in rejecting a connection between OM *ni-* and SM *di-*. Similarly, Ross (forthcoming) is also supportive of Adelaar's view on the origin of *di-*. I summarize the main arguments here, the first two of which are phonological.

4.1. All vowels in antepenultimate position in Malay prefixes have reduced to schwa (for example, SM *məN-*, *bər-*, *pəN-*, *pər-*, *tər-*, *kə-*, *sə-*), but *di-* failed to undergo this expected sound change. The OM prefix *ni-* should have ended up as **nə-* and it is therefore unlikely that *di-* is related to *ni-*.

4.2. The denasalization from *n* to *d* is unparalleled in the history of the language. The change from OM *mar-* to SM *bər-* is quite different, because it probably went through an intermediate stage with an epenthetic *b* giving rise to a cluster *mb*, which was subsequently reduced to a single *b*. Thus: **mAr-* > **m(A)r-* > **mbAr-* > **bAr-* > *bər-* (Adelaar 1992a:163). If this scenario is correct, it would leave the denasalization of *ni-* to *di-* as a unique phenomenon in the history of the language, and therefore highly unlikely.

4.3. The third argument is that *'di-* has only a limited spread outside the Malayic group. It occurs in Lampung and Batak isolects, in JV [Javanese] and SUN [Sundanese], and apparently also in languages of Sulawesi' (Adelaar 1992a:162). This argument is harder to grasp than the previous two, but I assume that Adelaar means that because of its restricted geographical distribution, this morpheme is more likely to be a local innovation.

4.4. In certain Malayic isolects (notably Kendayan and Salako) *di-* occurs not only as a voice prefix, but also as an agent marker if it precedes the verb. Example (9) is taken from Ina Anak Kalom and Hudson (1970) as quoted in Adelaar (1992a); examples (10) and (11) are from Adelaar (2002). Glosses have been slightly modified; <à> is phonetically [ɔ].

- (9) *Orang Kaya Atoi di-parintah nangkap*
Orang Kaya Atoi by-government N:catch
 'Orang Kaya Atoi was arrested by the government'

- (10) *Buuu bàà an-nyian gaʔe di-ià ngosokatn-i? ka tubuh-e.*
k.o. bamboo this also by-her N:rub.in-TV at body-3POSS
 'She also rubbed the bàà bamboo onto her body'

- (11) *là tanang agi? tangkitn-e dah tabà, di-daràh*
he look again sword-3POSS already thick by-blood

kayo mungkus, anà? bisà di-buàkng.
enemy N:wrap not able PASS-throw.away
 'He looked at his sword again which had become thick, it was completely covered with ('wrapped in') the enemy's blood which could not be shaken off ('thrown away')

Notice that the prefix *N-* in Salako has a unique usage in that it marks transitive verbs in both active and passive clauses, but in passive clauses only when the mood is realis (my terminology). In irrealis passive clauses, for example the last clause of (11), *di-* is directly prefixed to the verb. The main difference between active and passive clauses is word order: Agent-Verb-Patient for active, versus Patient-Agent-Verb for passive clauses.

In view of these facts from Salako, Adelaar does not reconstruct a Proto-Malayic (PM) passive voice prefix **di*, but instead assumes that the voice marker *di-* developed from an original locative preposition *di*, 'which then extended its function to that of a marker of object-orientedness, and gradually became cliticized to the following verb' (Adelaar 1992a:162). No further

details are given on how this process is assumed to have taken place. At the same time, in recognition of OM *ni-*, Adelaar tentatively (and somewhat reluctantly, it seems) also reconstructs PM (**ni*) 'an object-oriented verbal prefix which seems to reflect PMP **ni*- [whose] cognates were lost in contemporaneous Malayic isolects'. Gil (2002) also draws attention to the connections between the voice marker *di-* and the locative prefix *di* in Riau Malay. He suggests there is only one unitary form *di-* which marks a 'generalized patient', that is, 'a single superordinate role, subsuming both patient and locative theme'. This could be taken as further support for Adelaar's position. Though he is not quoted by Adelaar, Wils (1952:206) in his discussion of passive verb forms in the languages of Indonesia also mentions this connection. Without any hesitation he states that passive prefixes 'were originally clearly local-deictic signs'. As evidence he mentions the fact that many of the passive prefixes also function as prepositions, and especially as agent markers.

5. A grammaticalized preposition? Some counterarguments

It appears to me that, upon closer scrutiny, Adelaar's position is difficult to maintain. In this section I repeat his arguments, here labelled 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, and give my counterarguments for each one.

5.1. In Adelaar's view, the prefix *di-* failed to undergo prepenultimate neutralization in Standard Malay and is therefore probably not a reflex of *ni-*. This observation is correct, but the conclusion is not necessarily valid in the light of the following facts:

5.1.1. All the prefixes which were reduced to schwa had a vowel other than *i* in Proto-Malayic, for instance PM **mAN-* > -*məN-*, **bAr-* > *bər-*, **sA-* > *sə-*. It is true that PMP **-um-* also reduced to schwa (retained in some fossilized forms only, such as *turun-temurun* 'continuous descent, whether of rain or of an ancient family'), but there is no a priori reason why *i* in prefixes could not have been exempt from this vowel shift. This observation is the more pertinent as the locative preposition *di* and the personal article *si* did not reduce to schwa either. Phonologically *di* and *si* are proclitics, not separate words, as they can never stand alone. From a purely phonological perspective, they should also have undergone vowel reduction, like the proclitic preposition *kə*.

5.1.2. Blust (1981) has argued that prepenultimate neutralization spread gradually through the Malay lexicon via a process of lexical diffusion. He gives examples of syllable reduction in trisyllabic words, but a case could be made that the passive prefix was simply not affected by this change. This

argument becomes even stronger when the following facts are taken into consideration.

5.1.3. In some Malay isolects, the passive prefix does actually show a schwa. Adelaar (2002:22, note 22) admits that ‘there are a few forms of Malayic in which this marker did undergo vowel neutralization; compare, among others, Mualang, a Malayic language from West Kalimantan which is closely related to Iban (Dunselman 1955)’. In his introduction to the pregnancy hymn which he edited, Dunselman points out that although *di*-forms are frequently used, these are Malay forms, whereas the corresponding form in the Mualang variety is *də*- or *de*- (Dunselman 1955:18). According to Johnny Tjia (personal communication) the vowel in this prefix varies between an open central and a mid-central vowel (schwa).⁸ Another example is the Orang Akit isolect (spoken in the Riau archipelago), as described by Kähler (1960). This isolect has *də*- corresponding to SM *di*-, as shown in the following examples (Kähler 1960:123):

- (12) *abis böbi' itu' də-bunuh oxang*
 finish pig that PASS-kill person
 ‘all the pigs have been killed’⁹

- (13) *oxang itu' də-pangel-kan kəkian*
 person that PASS-call-APPL to.here
 ‘that person was called here’

Kähler’s description is hardly an example of a lucid presentation (as pointed out by Adelaar forthcoming), but what is clear is that the passive prefix shows considerable variation in the four isolects which he describes. Whereas Orang Akit uses *də*-, Orang Utan has retained *di*-, and Orang Darat uses *j*- (before vowels) or zero (elsewhere). Orang Laut only uses zero. This variation can be taken to indicate that the prefix is losing ground in these isolects.

5.2. Adelaar and Wolff argue that denasalization is unlikely because it is not attested elsewhere in the history of Malay. A counterargument is the following:

⁸ Adelaar (personal communication) believes that this shift is related to the fact that Mualang often has word-final stress with concomitant neutralization of the vowel in the initial syllable of trisyllabic words.

⁹ Kähler’s translation of this sentence is ‘ausgerottet sind die Wildschweine, (weil) man (sie) tötete’.

5.2.1. The parallel between OM *ni-/SM di-* and OM *mar-/SM ber-* remains strong. Adelaar's conjecture of an intermediate stage with *-mb-* is unconvincing, as all the examples that he adduces illustrate this process only in medial position (for example PM *tim(ə)rah > Minangkabau *timbarah*; Arabic *jumlah* > Jakarta *jumbālè*). There is no evidence that this process of obstruent excrescence ever occurred initially. Initial prenasalized consonants are typologically fairly rare anyway, and as far as I am aware, they are not attested for any of the Malay isolects in that position. A single sound change, operating at different times, which denasalized both *n* and *m* therefore cannot be dismissed as inherently implausible.

5.2.2. Old Malay already appears to have had a variant *di-*, as shown by the copper-plate inscription from around AD 900 discovered near Manila. There we find the forms *di-bari* 'was given' and *di-par-lappas* 'freed, cleared (of debt)' (Postma 1992). Even the Gandasuli inscription from AD 832 contains a form *di-rakṣa* 'is protected' (De Casparis 1950:61-5). This may point to free variation in Old Malay, which makes it even more likely that there is continuity between Old Malay and Standard Malay for this particular form and meaning.

5.2.3. Sporadic sound changes limited to one particular affix do occur in the history of languages. This topic is beyond the scope of the present article, but one example that comes to mind is the shift from *k* to *s* in the Tukangbesi (Southeast Sulawesi) affix *-su* 'my' (Donohue 1999). The shift does not occur anywhere else in the language, and neighbouring languages all have *-ku*; see also Proto-Muna-Buton **-ku*. (Note, however, that the sound change *k* to *s* does occur in Muna in a fair number of lexical items.) A more intensive search for unique sound changes will no doubt yield further examples.

5.2.4. Denasalization of earlier *ni-* to *di-* is not as rare as it appears. It has parallels elsewhere, noticeably in Sulawesi. Notice that I do not claim that there was direct influence between Malay and Sulawesi languages on this particular point. Rather, it appears that the formal similarity is due to independent parallel development. Consider the following distribution of passive prefixes in a number of South Sulawesi languages¹⁰ (most data from Mills 1975, Bambam from Campbell 1989, Mamuju from Strømme 1994, Seko from Thomas Laskowske n.d.).

¹⁰ Passive constructions marked with this prefix in South Sulawesi languages are almost always agentless.

Table 1. Passive prefixes in some South Sulawesi languages

Bugis	<i>ri-</i>
Makassar	<i>ni-</i>
Konjo	<i>ri-</i>
Duri	<i>di-</i>
Toraja (Tae')	<i>di-</i>
Bambam (Pitu Ulunna Salu)	<i>di-</i>
Mandar	<i>di-</i>
Mamuju	<i>ni-</i> (<i>di-</i> is used by young people)
Seko	<i>ni-</i>
Proto-South-Sulawesi (PSS)	* <i>ni-</i>

Notice that Bugis and Makassar, the languages which have been most influenced by Malay, do not have *di-*. The *di-* forms occur in the mountainous interior of the province, where contact with Malay was minimal until early in the twentieth century. Notice also that my reconstruction of the PSS voice marker differs from Mills (1975:165-6), who tentatively reconstructs **di*, but recognizes the difficulties associated with it (a change from **di-* to *ni-* would be unusual, whereas *ni-* is of great antiquity in the Austronesian family). My reconstruction of **ni-* is based on the fact that **ni-* reflects PMP **in-* and is preserved in that form in the outlying areas of the microgroup (Makassar in the far south, Seko in the far north, Mamuju in the far west). Interestingly, Seko does not show denasalization in the case of *ni-*, but it has a second person proclitic form *du-* (with variant form *u-*) (Kathryn Laskowske 1994). This form must go back to an earlier **nu-* (see also Makassar *nu-* ‘second person proclitic’), which was denasalized.¹¹ Denasalization can thus be seen to occur as a sporadic sound change in more than one western Austronesian language.

In conclusion, there is nothing inherently implausible about a change from *ni-* to *di-*, and hence the phonological arguments carry very little weight.

5.3. Adelaar cites the restricted geographical distribution of *di-* and its absence in some Malayic isolects as support for his argument that *di-* is not related to *ni-*.

¹¹ Mills (1975:223) reconstructs both **mu-* and **nu-* ‘second person proclitic’ for PSS.

This argument can just as easily be reversed: the limited distribution of *di-* is due to the fact that it is a phonological innovation in Malay. When other non-Malay languages show *di-*, this is either due to independent parallel development (as in the South Sulawesi languages and possibly in Batak), or to borrowing from Malay (as is most likely the case for Javanese and Sundanese). In Mamuju these two developments probably reinforced each other.

Whereas Adelaar attributes the absence of *di-* in Malayic isolects to a retention from Proto-Malayic (which lacks a clear passive in his reconstruction), I would argue that it is more plausible to assume that these isolects have lost *di-* (from earlier **ni-*). Western Malayo-Polynesian languages show various reductions of the original Proto-Malayic voice system, and it is not surprising that a number of languages end up without any voice markers at all, or with a rudimentary system of active marking only. Compare the Orang Akit and Orang Darat data from Kähler quoted above, which are most easily accounted for by assuming that overt passive marking is on its way out in at least two of these isolects. Compare also the variety of Malay spoken in Thailand (Urak Lawoi'), which has no passive morphology (Hogan and Pattemore 1988). This is essentially also the case in Balinese, which has retained *N*-verbs in active clauses, but lacks clear passive morphology in what have traditionally been called 'passive' clauses, sometimes relabelled as ergative clauses (see also Artawa 1998). Another example is Palu'e (Flores; Central Malayo-Polynesian), which has a passive clause type without passive morphology (Donohue forthcoming). The reintroduction of passive morphology seems to be a much rarer phenomenon than its loss in Austronesian languages, and strong reasons are needed to make this case convincing for Standard Malay.

5.4. Adelaar notes that in some isolects *di-* also functions as an agent marker. Here we are at the core of the counterarguments. In Adelaar's view, much weight rests on the agent marker *di-* in Salako, as illustrated above in examples (9) to (11). However, since Proto-Malayic had (and most modern isolects retain) a general preposition *di*, it should come as no surprise that the agent in a passive voice can be marked by means of this preposition. In other words, the agent-marking *di* in Salako is not a voice prefix at all (not even incipient), but a plain preposition.¹² There are simply (at least etymologically) two different kinds of *di*. The two kinds of *di* are of course homophonous and may indeed be considered an example of 'structural convergence'. Languages often display convergence of formal elements which originate from different sources. Phonemic merger is perhaps the most common example, but there is

¹² Salako appears to have lost the use of *di* as a general locative preposition (it uses *ka* instead), although I notice the phrase *di-antara* 'between' (Adelaar 2002:24).

also lexical merger, where lexical items from different sources may end up as homophones. An example is provided by the English word ‘ear’, which can refer to an ear of corn or to the organ for hearing, words which are etymologically unrelated but linked in many people’s minds.¹³ In the case of Salako, one could argue for a morphological merger, such that it is not always easy to distinguish whether *di* is a preposition or a voice marker, and the two may well be connected in the mind of the native speaker. This is apparently true of Riau Malay as well, as pointed out by Gil (2002), and it may be true for speakers of other varieties of Malay/Indonesian. Even Roolvink (1948:4) in his discussion of prepositions in Classical Malay gives an example where one cannot be quite sure whether *di-* is a preposition or a passive prefix: *diangkat diriba didalam pangkuan* ‘lifted and held in the lap’.

But such ambiguity does not necessarily mean that the two kinds of *di* share a common origin. On the contrary, the superficial similarity in form hides ancient structural differences. Notice also that the formal similarity between a general preposition and a passive marker in Indonesian is paralleled in a number of other Austronesian languages, again from Sulawesi, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Locative and agent prepositions versus passive prefixes

	locative preposition	passive voice prefix	agent preposition
Indonesian	<i>di</i>	<i>di-</i>	<i>oleh</i>
Salako	<i>ka</i>	<i>di-</i>	<i>di</i>
Bugis	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri-</i>	<i>ri</i>
Muna	<i>ne</i>	<i>ne-</i>	-
Wolio	<i>i-</i>	<i>i-</i>	-

Notice that in Muna and Wolio the ‘passive’ is only found in relative clauses (for example Muna *boku ne-gholi-ku* ‘the book which I bought’), not in main clauses.

5.5. Adelaar argues that the voice marker *di-* has evolved from a grammaticalized preposition. However, the grammaticalization of a preposition into a voice marker is unattested, as far as I know. Haspelmath (1990) gives an

¹³ Some Indonesians, I discovered, make a mental link between the word *koma* ‘comma’ (the orthographic symbol) and the homophonous word *koma* ‘to lie in coma’. The connection which they draw is the fact that *sakit koma* indicates a situation which is *belum titik* ‘not yet a full stop’!

overview of the 'grammaticization' of passive morphology. Based on a representative sample of 79 languages, he comes up with four possible diachronic sources of passive markers:

- Passives from inactive (that is non-agentive) auxiliaries. The first group of these is intransitive auxiliaries, for instance 'be', 'become', 'stay', 'go', 'come'. This phenomenon is well known in European languages, but also found in Korean, Tamil, and Inuit. The second group is transitive auxiliaries, for example 'undergo', 'get', 'receive', 'suffer', 'touch'. This phenomenon is common in South and Southeast Asia (Thai, Vietnamese, Munda), and the observation is also interesting in that it might shed light on the origin of the agent preposition *oleh*, which is presumably related to the verb *ber-oleh* 'get, obtain' or to an earlier noun *oleh* (according to Roolvink 1948:51) meaning 'something obtained, possession'. If so, it would be a classic case of grammaticalization. This needs more research.
- Passives from NP-reflexives ('self', 'head', 'soul', 'body'), mostly in Romance and Slavic languages, but also in Chadic.
- Passives from causatives (Gujarati, Turkic languages).
- Passives from generalized-subject constructions. Haspelmath's sample does not contain an Austronesian language for this case, but several exist, including Da'a in central Sulawesi, which uses a generalized prefix *ra-* (originally, no doubt, a third person plural prefix) as an irrealis passive marker (Barr 1988).

My point here is that there is no recognized prepositional origin of a passive marker. This is confirmed by *The world lexicon of grammaticalization* (Heine and Kuteva 2003), the most up-to-date listing of known grammaticalization pathways. It lists several instances of locative prepositions being extended in usage or fully grammaticalized – as an agent marker (see Salako), as a marker of cause ('out of anger'), of comparison (*lebih besar dari saya* 'bigger than me'; *dari* is literally 'from'), of continuity ('at work'), of existence, and a few others. It also gives a listing of possible sources of passives, largely based on Haspelmath's work. Again, one searches in vain for an instance of a locative or general preposition being extended to or having been grammaticalized as a voice marker. The only case that approaches the scenario we are looking for is a comitative 'with' grammaticalizing as a passive, but even this is far from identical with the alleged scenario and explicitly said to be limited to Africa. There is much discussion in the grammaticalization literature about the various paths and origins of prepositions, but nowhere does one find any men-

tion of a link with passive or voice morphology (for example Heine, Claudi and Hünemeyer 1991; Pagliuca 1994; Wischer and Diewald 2002).

5.6. A further difficulty is the categorial status of the following element. A preposition is followed by (or projects) a noun phrase, whereas a voice prefix can of course only be followed by a verb stem. It is unclear to me how the putative grammaticalization process can account for this drastic change in subcategorization.

In summary, then, the idea of a grammaticalized preposition is best abandoned as typologically highly implausible.

5.7. Not only is Adelaar's argument typologically implausible, it also leads to a rather bizarre diachronic scenario. If I understand Adelaar correctly, Proto-Malayic probably had a passive marker **ni-* (tentative reconstruction) which in Old Malay also developed a variant *di-*. As this prefix shows no trace in present-day isolects, it must have disappeared from the language. At the same time or some time later, a morpheme appears which in present-day isolects has the same form as one of the earlier variants (*di-*) and essentially the same meaning, but allegedly derives from a completely different source (a preposition). This scenario is hard to believe.

6. *Di-* as a blend of *ni-* and *da-*?

In a recent article, Wolff (2001) has argued for a rather different historical scenario. He also rejects the origin of *di-* as coming from OM *ni-* (using the same two phonological arguments as Adelaar does), claiming instead that *di-* is a blend of *da-* and *ni-*. Since his proposal is unique, it is worth quoting in full.

My account is as follows: if the *kumakan*, *kaumakan* begin as hortatory/optative forms then there should be a third person form as well. There is a plural honorific form *da*, well attested in Old Malay documents. The free standing nominative form of this pronoun was *sida*,¹⁴ the shortened form of which before a verbal stem would be **da-stem*. Further, even though plural in form, this is in fact also used as a singular honorific, so that it is third person singular or plural in its meaning. A hortatory form consisting of *da-stem* is in fact attested in Toba Batak and was cited as the 'poda passive' by van der Tuuk (§104: pp. 156-7) and refers to the third person agent. As the hortatory/optative forms spread to indicative contexts, it is likely that there was competition between the hortatory and the inherited passive in certain contexts. In this situation intermediate forms can develop – that is,

¹⁴ According to a note by Wolff, this form does not happen to be attested in the Srivijaya texts, but it is found in the Kedu text of two centuries later.

forms that are neither one nor the other but have characteristics of both. In short, at an earlier stage in certain contexts both *ni-stem* and *da-stem* could occur, and there was no difference in meaning in that particular context. At some point an intermediate form *di-stem* develops, and this form eventually wins out over the form consisting of *da-stem*. In our Malay documents only the innovated form consisting of *di-stem* is attested, no form with /da/. (Wolff 2001:8-9.)

I regard this scenario as possible, but highly speculative. Apart from the fact that there was a plural honorific *da* (and a reconstructed third person plural pronoun **sida*? 'they' in Proto-Malayic), the following steps are all hypothetical:

- There was a third person plural *da-stem* (possible, but not attested).
- This was also used as a singular (possible, but again, not attested).
- There was competition between the hortatory forms (*ku-stem*, *da-stem*, etc.) and the inherited passive (marked by *ni-*) (speculative, but possible).
- This competition led to a situation where both *da-stems* and *ni-stems* were used without difference in meaning (speculative and improbable, as language normally strives to maintain a one form – one meaning relationship).
- A blend form *di-stem* arose (highly speculative and improbable; lexical blends are common, morphological blends are either unattested or extremely rare).

7. Conclusion

In view of all the evidence presented here, I maintain that De Casparis and Teeuw were correct in seeing a link between Old Malay *ni-* and Standard Malay *di-*, a prefix which ultimately goes back to Proto-Austronesian *-in-. The grammatical and phonological similarities are simply too striking to be explained away, and all that one needs to accept is one irregular sound change. Although irregular, this sound change is paralleled in another affix and in other western Austronesian languages. The various counterarguments which have been brought forward hold very little water. Alternative hypotheses are typologically implausible and to all intents and purposes unnecessary.

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