

Borrowed elements in the Malay–Indonesian numeral system
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Throughout its millennia of contact with other languages, Malay–Indonesian has borrowed many foreign elements, including into the numeral system. This deserves some attention, since borrowings into this closed system (especially lower numerals) is not common. The best known (yet controversial) example is the replacement of Old Malay form *tlu* ‘three’ by *tiga*, in all probability a loanword from Indic. A systemic change has affected numerals from 11 to 19. Whereas In Old Malay such numerals were expressed by simple juxtaposition, e.g. *sa-puluh dua* (lit. ‘one-ten two’) ‘twelve’, in modern Malay–Indonesian they are formed with the special element *belas* ‘-teen’, e.g. *dua belas* (lit. ‘two-teen’) ‘twelve’. This pattern was borrowed from Old Javanese, along with the element *belas* itself. A similar pattern was also borrowed from Old Javanese for numerals between 21 and 29, using the borrowed element *likur* ‘score’: *se-likur* ‘twenty-one’, *dua-likur* ‘twenty-two’, etc., but these forms are rarely used in modern Malay–Indonesian. Some higher numerals have also been affected by borrowing, although such cases are not unusual universally. A special case is the Hokkien numeral system, which has been borrowed in its entirety by varieties of Malay–Indonesian spoken by ethnic Chinese. Interestingly, some of these numerals have also made their way into more general varieties, and are used in some particular contexts. This paper will list and discuss borrowed elements in the Malay–Indonesian numeral system, trace their sources, and endeavor to throw light on the sociolinguistic circumstances which facilitated the borrowing.