Phonological cover-up: undoing sound changes in Sri Lanka Malay

The lexicon of the Malay varieties of Indonesia contains, next to inherited Austronesian words, many words from the Indian subcontinent. Those words come from different language families (Indo-Aryan, Dravidian) and have different time depths (*singa* 'lion' from Sanskrit, *topi* from Tamil). The loanwords are phonologically integrated into the Malay system and have lost the phonological peculiarities of their languages of origin (aspirates, retroflexes, vowel length, gemination). The Sanskrit word *bhūmi* 'earth' for instance loses the aspiration and the vowel length (*bumi)*; Tamil *toppi* 'hat' degeminates to become *topi* in Indonesia; Tamil *kal̲ud̪ai* 'donkey' has the place of articulations adapted to fit the Indonesian model: the voiced dental stop becomes alveolar and the retroflex approximant becomes an alveolar lateral, leading to *kel(e)dai*.

These words were part and parcel of the Trade Malay varieties which the immigrants brought to Sri Lanka, and underwent the same sound changes as native words. *Baca<vaca* (Skrt.) 'read' for instance became *baaca* in Sri Lanka with regular lengthening of the open penultimate vowel. Some of the words, however, deviate from this pattern. These are the words where the adstrates Sinhala or Tamil, unlike *baaca*, happen to have a salient cognate of the original loan. The root for 'hat' is *toppi* in both Sinhala and Tamil. The familiarity with the realization of this lexeme with a geminate stop led to a geminate in Sri Lanka Malay as well ([t̪oppi]). The encounter with another diachronic path of this lexeme meant that the degemination, which had occurred in Indonesia, was undone and the lexeme retroactively became closer to the initial lexeme again.

The phonological changes which are affected by this undoing come from various domains:

	Origin	**Indon. form**	**Expected form**	**SLM form**	**Cognates**	**Control word**
consonant length	*kappal* (Tamil)	*kapal* 'ship'	**k**aap**al*	*k**app**al*	*kappal* (Tamil)	*baapa* 'father'
vowel length	*guru* (Sanskrit)	*guru* 'teacher'	**g**uu**ru*	*g**u**ru*	*guruvarayaa* (Sinhala)	*thuurung* 'descend'
NC Clusters	*sam.bal* (Hindi)	*sam.bal* 'sambal'	**saa**.mb**a l*	*sa**m.b**al*	*cam.bal* (T) *sam.bol* (S)	*gaa.mbar* 'picture'
Syllabification of ŋ	*si[ŋ].ha* (Sanskrit)	*si.[ŋ]a* 'lion'	**sii**.[ŋ]**a*	*si**[ŋ].**ga*	*ciŋ.gam* (T) *siŋ.hayaa* (S)	*ii.[ŋ]ath* 'think'
alveolar voiced stops	*kal̲ud̪ai* (Tamil)	*kel[d]ai* 'donkey'	**kal**[d]**e*	*kal**[d̪̲]**e*	*kal̲ud̪ai* (Tamil)	*aa[d]e* 'younger.sibling'

Next to the description and illustration of the phenomenon, this talk will also relate it to other cases where the diachronic pathways of a lexeme diverge to cross again at a later point in time. Cases in point are doublets and reborrowings.