

Austronesian - Non-Austronesian Contact in Maluku Utara

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The North Maluku region in Indonesia is home to Austronesian languages of the South Halmahera – West New Guinea subgroup and also to non-Austronesian languages of North Halmahera including languages of the once powerful sultanates of Ternate and Tidore. Today, the region is also home to a regional Malay dialect which is steadily attracting speakers from the other indigenous languages of the region.

All of the languages of the region have been in long contact and languages from both families share a variety of features which seem to have entered the languages as a result of contact of the different varieties. In this paper I review some of those features, focussing in particular on some common features of preferred discourse behaviour that seem to be resulting in common grammatical features shared not just by the indigenous languages of the region, but also in the local Malay variety.