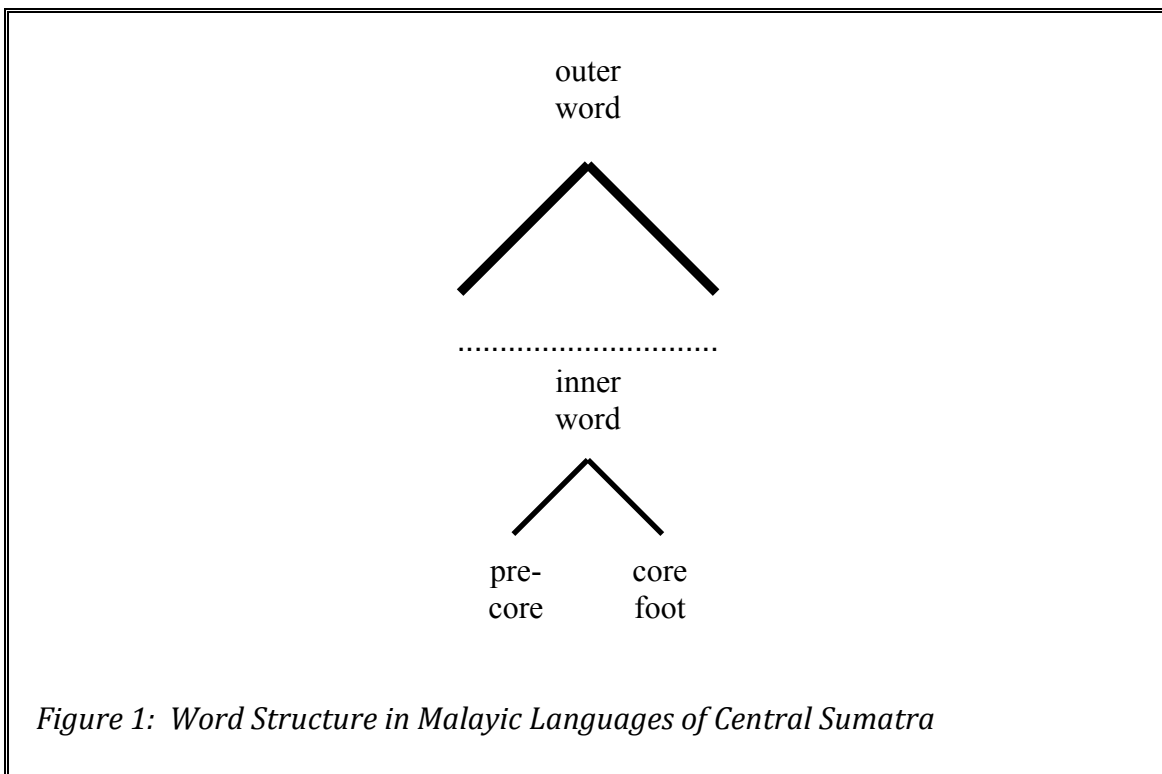


Word Structure in Malayic Languages of Sumatra: Evidence from Special Registers

David Gil

The Malayic languages of Central Sumatra are amongst the world's most highly isolating languages, with very little inflectional or derivational morphology. Accordingly, there is also very little direct grammatical evidence for word boundaries and word-internal structure. What little evidence there is derives largely from a variety of "para-grammatical" phenomena involving special register, such as ludlings, pantun (a traditional poetic form), and the language of SMSs (text messaging).

Languages such as Minangkabau, Siak Malay and Riau Indonesian are argued to have word-internal structure along the lines presented in Figure 1:



In accordance with the above, an outer word contains an inner word plus optional additional material, while an inner word consists of a core foot plus optional pre-core. Evidence for the above word structure is obtained from five different sources involving special registers, as summarized in the following table:

	CORE FOOT	INNER WORD	OUTER WORD
Warasa ludling	X		X

Sabaha ludling		X	
Bahasiswa ludling		X	
Pantun rhythm		X	
SMS spelling		X	X

Table 1: Sources of Evidence for Word Structure