

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Kupang, the capital city of East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, is situated on the western tip of Timor Island. Its diverse population, representing various linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, has shaped Kupang Malay (KML) into a regional Creole language with a Malay foundation. Serving as a lingua franca, KML facilitates communication across these communities. Jacob and Grimes (2006) describe Kupang Malay as a Malay-based creole spoken primarily in West Timor, with Grimes (2000) estimating approximately 220,000 native speakers and tens of thousands of second-language speakers in and around Kupang.

Loanwords are words adopted from one language (the donor language) into another (the recipient language), often undergoing phonological or morphological adaptations to fit the recipient language's phonological system (Jones, 2008). This process can involve simplifying complex sounds that do not exist in the target language. For example, English words like "chat" (from French *chatter*) may undergo phonological changes in languages that lack the English "ch" sound, adapting to the nearest equivalent available in the phonetic system of the recipient language (e.g., *shat* in some languages).

Kupang Malay (KML), part of the Malayo-Polynesian language family, shares similarities with Indonesian but also contains borrowed words from Dutch and Portuguese. For instance, the Portuguese word *carta* (paper) evolved into *kartas* in KML and 'kertas' in Indonesian. Such borrowings reflect the historical interactions during the colonial and trade periods, enriching the vocabulary of KML and distinguishing it from standard Indonesian. Kemmer (2009) defines borrowing as "taking and using words from another language in the recipient's language," which aligns with the phenomena observed in KML. According to Kang (2011), lexical borrowings are one of the most common results of language contact, and Yule (1996)

notes that Indonesian contains approximately 1,109 loanwords, constituting 30.87% of its total vocabulary. This trend is similarly reflected in Kupang Malay.

Based on Howard Giles' Communication Accommodation Theory (1973), the process of adaptation in language occurs through social interactions and prestige dynamics, leading to lexical borrowing. This theory explains how individuals adjust their language based on social contact, resulting in the adoption and integration of foreign terms. Through cultural exchange, migration, and globalization, borrowed words undergo adaptation, becoming a natural part of the recipient language and reflecting the influence of external linguistic environments.

The process of adaptation helps maintain the rhythm and phonetic harmony of the recipient language (Haspelmath & Tadmor, 2009, p. 15). In his research on loanwords in Indonesian and Malay, Jones (2008) discusses several phonological processes that occur as a result of loanword integration, including lenition, deletion, assimilation, and insertion.

These phonological processes: lenition, deletion, assimilation, and insertion, help naturalize loanwords, allowing them to fit more seamlessly into the phonological system of the borrowing language. Such adaptations are essential for the smooth integration of foreign words into the recipient language (Jones, 2008; Haspelmath & Tadmor, 2009).

In this research, the author focuses on the phonological processes, specifically deletion and lenition, as described by Jones (2008) in *Loan-Words in Indonesian and Malay*, which occur in loanwords. These processes are explored under the topic: *Deletions and Lenitions in Kupang Malay Loanwords from Indonesian*.

1.2 Research Problems

To explore this topic in depth, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do deletion and lenition occur in the adaptation of Indonesian Loanwords into Kupang Malay?
2. How do deletion and lenition contribute to the integration of loanwords into the Kupang

Malay phonological system?

1.3 Aims of Study

This study is guided by two main aims related to the phonological adaptation of Indonesian loanwords into Kupang Malay:

1. To analyze the role of deletion and lenition in facilitating the integration of loanwords into the phonological system of Kupang Malay.
2. To explore how these phonological processes contribute to shaping the distinctive linguistic characteristics of Kupang Malay compared to standard Indonesian.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research helps us comprehend language interaction and borrowing processes. Researchers can obtain insight into the mechanics of linguistic adaptation and the factors influencing loanword integration into the language by investigating how Indonesian loanwords are adapted into Kupang Malay.

1.4.1 Implication

This study shows that deletion and lenition are the primary phonological strategies in the adaptation of loanwords from Indonesian into Kupang Malay.

1. Phonological Simplification

Deletion occurs as a form of phonological simplification to adjust words to the syllabic patterns of Kupang Malay, as explained in Generative Phonology Theory (Chomsky & Halle, 1968, pp. 61–79), where phonological rules modify word forms to fit the recipient language system. Meanwhile, lenition emerges as part of a sound change mechanism that facilitates pronunciation, supported by Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky, 1993, pp. 161–165), which states that languages tend to select the most optimal form based on phonological constraints.

2. Highlight The Role Of Social Factors And Language Interaction

The processes of deletion and lenition also highlight the role of social factors and language interaction in phonological adaptation, as described in *Language Contact Theory* (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, pp. 35–39). Speakers of Kupang Malay unconsciously modify loanwords to better align with their phonological system, reflecting the sociolinguistic dynamics of a bilingual community.

The processes of deletion and lenition in the adaptation of loanwords from Indonesian into Kupang Malay are crucial phonological strategies that ensure foreign words fit the local phonological system. As explained in Generative Phonology Theory (Chomsky & Halle, 1968, pp. 61–79) and Optimality Theory (Prince & Smolensky, 1993, pp. 161–165), these processes modify loanwords to align with the phonological patterns of Kupang Malay and facilitate pronunciation. Additionally, these processes highlight the influence of social factors and language interaction, as discussed in *Language Contact Theory* (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Bilingual speakers of Kupang Malay unconsciously adjust loanwords to better align with their phonological system, reflecting the sociolinguistic dynamics in a bilingual community that shape language change, as Giles and Coupland (1991, pp. 1–68) stated in *Communication Accommodation Theory* where speakers tend to converge toward the speech patterns of their interlocutors often automatically to achieve social affiliation.

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1.4.2 Application

This study offers valuable applications for language teaching, linguistic documentation, cultural preservation, and comparative research by examining the phonological processes of deletion and lenition in the adaptation of Indonesian loanwords into Kupang Malay.

1. Enhancing Linguistic Understanding

The research contributes to the study of language contact and adaptation, providing a deeper understanding of the phonological processes in Kupang Malay. This aligns with theories of linguistic borrowing and adaptation, as outlined by Jones (2008) and Haspelmath and Tadmor (2009), who emphasize the importance of phonological processes such as lenition and deletion in integrating loanwords into the recipient language.

2. Preserving Linguistic Heritage

By documenting the phonological adaptations in Kupang Malay, this study highlights the unique features of the language, supporting efforts to preserve and promote local linguistic diversity. Such work reinforces the importance of regional languages as a vital part of East Nusa Tenggara's cultural identity.

3. Applications for Language Teaching and Learning

The findings offer insights into the phonological characteristics of Kupang Malay, which can be used to develop teaching materials for local language learners and aid linguists in explaining the differences between standard Indonesian and Kupang Malay.

4. Foundation for Future Research

This study provides a methodological framework for analyzing phonological adaptations, paving the way for further exploration of loanwords in other regional Creole languages. The focus on deletion and lenition highlights key phonological processes, which can be compared across other languages in the Malayo-Polynesian family.

5. Fulfilling Academic Requirements

As a focused study, this research meets academic regulations for graduation while

showcasing the researcher's ability to conduct detailed linguistic analysis. It demonstrates the application of foundational theories in phonological processes, borrowing, and creole studies, emphasizing the practical scope of the study within linguistic research.