

**A STUDY ON LOAN WORD ADAPTATION IN DELA: A  
LANGUAGE OF ROTE**

**A THESIS**



**MERIANA ELISABETH HANGGE**

**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM  
TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY  
ARTHA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

**KUPANG**

**2026**

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KUPANG**

**202**

# **A THESIS**

**This Thesis is Presented as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education Study Program**



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KUPANG**

**2026**

## APPROVAL PAGE

### APPROVAL PAGE



This thesis, entitled *A study on Loan Word Adaptation in Dela: A Language of Rote*, written by *Meriana E. Hangge*, has been approved to be defended in a thesis examination.

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## LEGITIMATION PAGE

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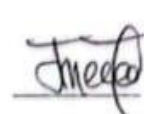
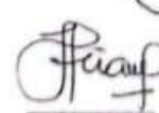


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### DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY OF WORK

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I hereby declare that the thesis I am submitting to fulfil the requirements for a Bachelor of Education degree at Arta Wacana Christian University is original and free from plagiarism. If any discrepancies with this statement are found in the future, I am willing to be prosecuted in accordance with the provisions of the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 17 of 2010

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That state



Meriana E. Hangge





## **MOTTO**

**"It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed".**

**Deuteronomy 31:8**

## **DEDICATION**

This paper is dedicated to the author's loved ones:

1. Almighty God, who has given the author grace, wisdom, and health in completing this thesis.
2. Beloved parents, Ibrahim Hangge and Amelia Lenggu, who always provide support, affection, and encouragement to the author. Thank you very much.
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Kupang, 18 Februari 2026

The writer



Merian E. Hangge

# A STUDY ON LOAN WORD ADAPTATION IN DELA: A LANGUAGE OF ROTE

## ABSTRACT

(Meriana E. Hangge)

(Theresia Magdalena Tamelan)

(Alfriani Ndadara)

This study explores the phenomenon of loan word adaptation in the Dela language, a regional language spoken on Rote Island, East Nusa Tenggara. Due to intense language contact through trade, media, and religion, the Dela language has integrated various foreign terms—particularly those derived from Dutch and Portuguese, absorbed through Kupang Malay. The research problem focuses on: How are consonants and vowels adapted to loanwords in the Dela language? This study aims to identify and describe the systematic phonological adjustments made to align these foreign words with the native Dela linguistic structure. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach. The primary data source was obtained through a documentary study of Dela Bible texts, specifically Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). The data were analyzed qualitatively by classifying sound change patterns based on the Dela phonological system through the stages of identification, classification, and interpretation of cultural context. The results indicate that the Dela language has significantly simplified its original sound system. Regarding vowels, the Dela language, which has only five vowels (/a, e, i, o, u/), replaces the schwa (/ə/) with /a/ and monophthongs with diphthongs (e.g., /au/ becomes /o/). Regarding consonants, a process of "devoicing" occurs, in which the voiced plosives /b/ and /d/ become voiceless plosives /p/ and /t/. Furthermore, a prenasalization pattern appears in consonant clusters (e.g., /nt/ becomes /nd/), and there is a strong tendency to maintain the open syllable (CV) structure by dropping the final consonant (codon). In conclusion, loanword adaptation in the Dela language is a defensive linguistic strategy that helps maintain sound harmony and the original phonological identity despite external influences. This study is expected to contribute to the documentation and preservation of regional languages in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Loan word Adaptation, Dela Language, Phonology, Consonants, Vowels.

## STUDI TENTANG ADAPTASI KATA PINJAMAN DALAM DELA: BAHASA ROTE

### ABSTRAK

*(Meriana E. Hangge)*

*(Theresia Magdalena Tamelan)*

*(Alfriani Ndadara)*

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Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi fenomena adaptasi kata pinjaman dalam bahasa Dela, sebuah bahasa daerah yang dituturkan di Pulau Rote, Nusa Tenggara Timur. Seiring dengan intensitas kontak bahasa melalui perdagangan, media, dan agama, bahasa Dela mengintegrasikan berbagai istilah asing terutama yang berasal dari bahasa Belanda dan Portugis yang diserap melalui bahasa Melayu Kupang. Rumus B anasalah dalam penelitian ini berfokus pada: "Bagaimana adaptasi konsonan dan vokal pada kata pinjaman dalam bahasa Dela?" Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mendeskripsikan penyesuaian fonologis sistematis yang dilakukan agar kata-kata asing tersebut selaras dengan struktur linguistik asli Dela. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Sumber data utama diperoleh melalui studi dokumentasi terhadap teks Alkitab dalam bahasa Dela, khususnya kitab-kitab Injil (Matius, Markus, Lukas, dan Yohanes). Data dianalisis secara kualitatif dengan mengklasifikasikan pola-pola perubahan bunyi berdasarkan sistem fonologi bahasa Dela melalui tahap identifikasi, klasifikasi, dan interpretasi konteks budaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahasa Dela melakukan penyederhanaan signifikan terhadap sistem bunyi asing. Pada aspek vokal, bahasa Dela yang hanya memiliki inventaris lima vokal (/a, e, i, u, ə/) mengubah bunyi schwa (/ə/) menjadi /a/ dan melakukan monofongisasi pada diftong (misalnya, /au/ menjadi /o/). Pada aspek konsonan, terjadi proses "devoisasi" di mana konsonan plosif bersuara /b/ dan /d/ berubah menjadi plosif tak bersuara /p/ dan /t/. Selain itu, muncul pola prenasalisasi pada gugus konsonan seperti /nt/ menjadi /nd/ dan kecenderungan kuat untuk mempertahankan struktur suku kata terbuka (CV) dengan menghilangkan konsonan akhir (koda). Secara keseluruhan, adaptasi kata pinjaman dalam bahasa Dela merupakan strategi linguistik defensif yang bertujuan menjaga harmoni bunyi dan identitas fonologis asli di tengah pengaruh eksternal. Studi ini diharapkan dapat berkontribusi pada dokumentasi dan pelestarian bahasa-bahasa daerah di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** Adaptasi Kata Pinjaman, Bahasa Dela, Fonologi, Konsonan, Vokal.

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