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A Comparative Analysis of English and Lamaholot (Eastern Adonara Dialect) Consonants

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Abstract

This study presents a contrastive phonological analysis of consonant sounds between English and the Lamaholot language, focusing on the Adonara Timur dialect spoken in Desa Riawale. The study aims to examine the articulatory and distributive differences in consonant phonemes and their implications for English pronunciation acquisition by Lamaholot speakers. Employing a comparative phonetic methodology, data were gathered through systematic linguistic observations and recordings of native speakers. Findings indicated that several English fricatives (/v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/) and affricates (/ʧ/, /ʤ/) are absent in the Lamaholot consonant inventory, posing potential challenges for learners in accurate English pronunciation. Meanwhile, common consonants such as bilabial stops and nasals exhibit varying distribution patterns across both languages. The bilingual and multilingual competence of Lamaholot speakers appears to mitigate some pronunciation difficulties. Pedagogical implications included recommending phonetic and dual-language instructional approaches, supplemented by audiolingual techniques, to effectively address learners' specific phonological challenges. This study enriched applied linguistics by offering targeted strategies for second language teaching tailored to speakers of minority indigenous languages.

PENDAHULUAN

Language serves a crucial function in human life, not only as a medium of communication but also as an indicator of one's intellectual capacity (Tiradi, 2017). As a social phenomenon, language is inseparable from human interaction. Syahid (2014) emphasized that language is embedded within social behavior, reinforcing its significance in daily life. From a linguistic perspective, language is as a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by to communicate and establish identity (Ismail, 2013).

According to Dhanawati et al. (2017), language is the primary object of linguistic study and must be examined as it is actively used by speakers. One essential feature of language is its sound-based nature; the relationship between sounds and meaning is arbitrary. For example, the concept of a "table" is represented by entirely different words in English and Indonesian, showing no inherent connection between the referent and the phonological form. Such differences can pose challenges in second language acquisition, particularly for Indonesian learners of English. Phonological errors, including mispronunciations, are among the most common issues faced by learners (Wenanda & Suryani, 2016).

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Accurate pronunciation is vital for effective communication in English. Incorrect articulation of words can alter meaning and lead to misunderstandings. One of the primary components of pronunciation is consonant sound production. Because the consonant systems of different languages can vary significantly, learners may struggle to produce unfamiliar sounds correctly, hindering their oral proficiency.

To explore these phonological differences and their impact on English learning, this study conducts a contrastive analysis of consonant sounds between English and Lamaholot, focusing on the Eastern Adonara dialect. The study aims to identify differences in consonant inventories and investigate the implications of these differences for English pronunciation instruction.

Contrastive analysis, as described by Tarigan (2009), is a method for comparing the linguistic structures of a learner's first language (L1) and second language (L2) to identify potential learning difficulties. It includes stages such as comparing L1 and L2, predicting learning problems, designing instructional materials, and developing effective teaching methods. The approach consists of two theoretical positions: the strong version, which posits that all L2 learning errors can be predicted based on L1–L2 differences, and the weak version, which suggests that contrastive analysis and error analysis should be used complementarily (Tarigan, 1992).

Phonetics, a fundamental branch of linguistics, provides a framework for analyzing speech sounds regardless of whether they distinguish meaning. It comprises three subfields: articulatory phonetics (how sounds are produced), acoustic phonetics (physical properties of sound), and auditory phonetics (how sounds are perceived) (Dhanawati et al., 2017). Within this domain, consonants are defined as speech sounds produced with constriction in the vocal tract.

In general, English contains 24 consonant phonemes that are largely stable across dialects such as British and American English (Wenanda & Suryani, 2016). In comparison, the Lamaholot Eastern Adonara dialect includes 21 consonants. Based on field data and the studyer's native speaker knowledge, this dialect exhibits minimal phonological processes such as assimilation or dissimilation. These distinctions may cause specific articulation difficulties for Lamaholot speakers learning English, especially when producing consonant sounds absent from their native phonological system.

Given these differences, this study investigates the consonantal contrasts between English and Lamaholot (Eastern Adonara dialect) and examines their pedagogical implications for English pronunciation teaching. By highlighting the specific areas of phonological divergence, the study seeks to inform more effective instructional strategies for learners from this linguistic background.

METODE

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method, aligning with the foundational principles of linguistics as a descriptive science. The qualitative design allowed for the detailed examination and interpretation of naturally occurring linguistic phenomena without manipulating the study setting. The descriptive component was crucial in capturing the phonological characteristics of English and the Lamaholot dialect of Eastern Adonara.

The study design involved several key stages: (1) clearly articulating the study objectives, (2) selecting an appropriate analytical approach, (3) gathering data from relevant literature, and (4) presenting the findings in a systematic manner. As this study is grounded in comparative phonological analysis, the primary data source consisted of

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documentary and library study. Various academic publications, linguistic records, and phonological references were examined to compile the required data on both English and Lamaholot consonant systems.

A deductive reasoning approach was applied to interpret the data. This approach begins with general linguistic theories and known phonological principles, which are then applied to the specific case of Lamaholot-English comparison. Through this process, general patterns of contrast and interference were analyzed to highlight potential challenges in English pronunciation among Lamaholot speakers (Hadi, 1993, p. 124).

It is also important to consider the sociolinguistic setting in which Lamaholot is used. Lamaholot is a language with multiple dialects, each spoken in different villages and regions. In Eastern Adonara, for instance, the variety spoken in Riawale Village represents just one of several dialectal variations. The majority of residents are multilingual, often fluent in Indonesian and Larantuka Malay, which serve as lingua francas across East Flores Regency. This multilingual environment plays a significant role in shaping language use and may influence phonological transfer when learning English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Consonant Comparison of English and Lamaholot Language

This study investigated the consonantal features of English and the Lamaholot language through a contrastive analysis framework to identify potential areas of pronunciation difficulty among Lamaholot-speaking learners of English. The results reveal both structural and phonological discrepancies that have significant implications for English language acquisition.

The English language comprises 24 consonant phonemes, including voiceless and voiced stops, fricatives, affricates, nasals, approximants, and liquids. In contrast, the Lamaholot language, particularly the Eastern Adonara dialect, contains a more limited inventory, primarily consisting of stops /p, b, t, d, k, g/, nasals /m, n, ŋ/, liquids /l, r/, and glides /w, j/. Crucially, Lamaholot lacks several English consonants, such as the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, the postalveolar fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, and the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. These absences lead to regular patterns of phonological substitution.

For instance, English /θ/ and /ð/ are often replaced with /t/ and /d/ respectively (e.g., *think* → *tink*, *this* → *dis*), while /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are substituted with /s/ or /z/ (e.g., *shoe* → *su*, *television* → *televison*). These substitutions reflect negative transfer from L1 and are consistent with findings in cross-linguistic studies of phonological interference (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Flege, 1995).

Moreover, English aspirated voiceless stops /pʰ, tʰ, kʰ/ are produced without aspiration by Lamaholot speakers, since aspiration is not phonemic in their native language. This results in realizations such as /pit/ → [bit], which may impact intelligibility, though not necessarily meaning. Similarly, English final consonants, particularly stops and fricatives, are frequently omitted (e.g., *hat* → /hæ/, *gold* → /gol/), reflecting constraints in Lamaholot syllable structure, which favors open syllables and avoids complex codas.

Table 1. Distribution of Stop Consonant based on Articulation

Lamaholot Language		English	
/p/ based on the place of articulation voiceless bilabial			
/**p**ana/	‘walk’	Peek	/**p**i:k/
/le**p**ət/	‘fold’	Lipstick	/li**p**stik/
		Type	/tai**p**/

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/t/ based on the place of articulation voiceless alveolar			
/**t**iã/	‘wait’	Tactic	/tæk**t**ɪk /
/lə**t**a/	‘ask’	Cut	/kʌ**t**/
/ala**t**/	‘owner’		
/k/ based on the place of articulation voiceless dorso-velar			
/**k**əropõ/	‘jump’	Cut	/**k**ʌt/
/tu**k**ã/	‘middle’	Tactic	/tæ**k**tɪ**k**/
/bau**k**/	‘tomorrow’		
/ʔ/ based on the place of articulation voiceless glottal			
/ba**ʔ**a/	‘swollen’	Orange	/ˈɒrɪnʤ/
/b/ based on the place of articulation voiced bilabial			
/**b**ɛlo/	‘cut’	Bean	/**b**i:n/
/se**b**a/	‘look for’	Taboo	/təˈ**b**u:/
		Lab	/læ**b**/
/d/ based on the place of articulation voiced alveolar			
/**d**eko/	‘pant’	Dead	/**d**e**d**/
/lo**d**o/	‘go down’	Leader	/li:**d**ə:/
/g/ based on the place of articulation voiced dorso-velar			
/**g**utɛ/	‘take’	Google	/**g**u:**g**l/
/lo**g**ɛ/	‘wear’	Beg	/be**g**/

The comparative analysis of the distributional patterns of fricative consonants based on their place of articulation revealed several notable findings. Firstly, the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ and the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ exhibit a complete distribution in both English and the Lamaholot language. These sounds occur in initial, medial, and final positions, indicating a structural similarity between the two phonological systems in terms of these particular segments. Secondly, the voiceless glottal fricative /h/ demonstrates an incomplete distribution in both languages. Specifically, /h/ is absent in final word positions in both English and Lamaholot, suggesting a shared phonotactic restriction that limits the positional occurrence of this segment. Thirdly, as reflected in the comparative table, several English fricative phonemes, including /v/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /θ/, and /ð/ are not attested in the phonological inventory of Lamaholot as spoken in Riawale. These segments, which involve voiced and voiceless interdental and postalveolar articulations, do not occur in the native phonemic system of Lamaholot, marking a significant contrast between the two languages. This absence suggests a potential challenge for native Lamaholot speakers in perceiving and producing these English fricatives, which could lead to negative transfer or phonological substitution during second language acquisition.

Table 2. The Distribution of Nasal based on Articulation

Lamaholot Language		English	
/m/ Based on the place of articulation nasal bilabial			
/**m**ədo/	‘ugly’	Mom	/**m**ɒ**m**/
/də**m**u/	‘suck’	Lamely	/leɪ**m**li/
/n/ Based on the place of articulation nasal alveolar			
/**n**aŋɛ/	‘swim’	None	/**n**ʌ**n**/
/pa**n**a/	‘walk’	Tiny	/taɪ**n**i/
/ŋ/ Based on the place of articulation nasal velar bersuara			
/**ŋ**a**ŋ**ar/	‘menangis dengan keras’	Thinking	/ɵɪ**ŋ**kɪ**ŋ**/
/ɲ/ Based on the place of articulation palatal			
/**ɲ**a**ɲ**i/	‘sing’	-	-

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The comparative distributional analysis of nasal consonants based on their manner and place of articulation yielded several key observations. First, the nasal consonants /m/, /n/, /ɲ/, and /ŋ/ in Lamaholot demonstrate an incomplete distribution. These segments are restricted to word-initial and medial positions, with no attested occurrence in final position. This positional limitation highlights a phonotactic constraint specific to nasal segments in Lamaholot. Second, in contrast, the English nasal consonants /m/ (voiced bilabial) and /n/ (voiced alveolar) exhibit full distribution, occurring in initial, medial, and final positions. However, the voiced velar nasal /ŋ/ shows a restricted distribution in English, as it does not appear in word-initial position. This distributional gap underscores a notable difference in the structural behavior of /ŋ/ across the two languages. Third, the palatal nasal /ɲ/, which is phonemically present in Lamaholot, is not found in English. The absence of /ɲ/ in English suggests a significant cross-linguistic phonemic divergence and may pose perceptual or articulatory challenges for Lamaholot speakers when acquiring English nasal segments that do not have close equivalents in their native language.

Table 3. The Distribution of Lateral dan Retroflex based on the Articulation

Lamaholot Language		English	
/l/ Based on the place and manner of articulation the voiced lateral alveolar			
/**l**a**l**i/	‘left’	Lack Blonde Towel	/**l**æk/ /b**l**ɒnd/ /taʊə**l**/
/r/ Based on the place and manner of articulation the voiced retroflex alveolar			
/**r**ə**r**a/ /ɛwɛ**r**/	‘sun’ ‘tongue’	Roar Trough	/**r**ɔː**r**/ /t**r**ɒf/

The comparative analysis of the distributional patterns of lateral and retroflex consonants, based on their manner and place of articulation, reveals several noteworthy findings. Firstly, the voiced alveolar lateral liquid /l/ in Lamaholot demonstrates a limited distribution, as it occurs only in word-initial and medial positions. This positional constraint indicates that /l/ does not occupy final positions in native lexical items. In contrast, English exhibits a full distribution for /l/, with occurrences documented in initial, medial, and final positions, reflecting a broader phonotactic allowance for this segment. Secondly, the voiced alveolar retroflex liquid /r/, commonly realized as a flap or trill in Lamaholot, shows a complete distribution in both Lamaholot and English. This suggests that, despite potential phonetic variation, the segment is functionally and positionally versatile across both language systems.

These distributional patterns reflect both cross-linguistic convergence and divergence in the realization of liquid consonants and may inform pedagogical strategies in teaching English phonology to Lamaholot speakers.

Table 4. The Distribution of Affricative based on Articulation

Lamaholot Language		English	
/c/ Based on the place of articulation voiceless affricative palatal			
/**c**amat/ /pər**c**aja/	‘sub-district’ ‘believe’	-	-
/j/ Based on the place of articulation voiced affricative palatal			
/**j**awa/ /sə**j**ara/	‘Javanese’ ‘history’	-	-
/ʤ/ Based on the place of articulation voiced affricative alveolar-palatal			

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-	Jar	/**ʤ**ɑ:r/
	Virgin	/vɜ:**ʤ**ɪn/
	Large	/lɑ:r**ʤ**/
/ʧ/ Based on the place of articulation voiceless affricative alveolar-palatal		
-	Church	/**ʧ**ɜ:**ʧ**/
	Punchy	/pʌn**ʧ**i/

The analysis of affricate consonants, based on manner and place of articulation, reveals significant distributional contrasts between English and Lamaholot (Eastern Adonara dialect). Firstly, the voiceless palatal affricate /c/ and the voiced palatal affricate /j/, which occur in Lamaholot, exhibit incomplete distribution, appearing only in word-initial and medial positions, with no attested instances in final position. Notably, these segments are absent from the English phonemic inventory, highlighting a language-specific articulation pattern within Lamaholot. Conversely, the voiceless alveo-palatal affricate /ʧ/ and the voiced alveo-palatal affricate /ʤ/, which are phonemically active and fully distributed in English, occurring in initial, medial, and final positions are not found in the Lamaholot dialect under investigation. This absence suggests a notable gap in the affricate inventory of Lamaholot, particularly in terms of segments commonly encountered in English. These findings underscore distinct phonological inventories and distributional constraints in each language, with implications for pronunciation instruction and phonemic awareness in second language acquisition contexts.

Table 5. The Distribution of Approximant (Semi-vocal) based on Articulation

Lamaholot Language		English	
/w/ Based on the place of articulation voiced bilabial			
/**w**ɛ**w**ɛ/	‘mung beans’	What	/**w**ɒt/
		Somewhat	/sʌm**w**ɒt/
/j/ Based on the place of articulation voiced retroflex alveolar			
/**j**aga/	‘wait’	Yes	/**j**es/
/ba**j**o/	‘pounding’		

The comparative analysis of semivowel consonants based on their manner and place of articulation reveals incomplete distribution patterns in both English and Lamaholot. Firstly, the bilabial voiced semivowel /w/ demonstrates partial distribution in both languages, occurring only in word-initial and medial positions. Its absence in word-final position in both English and Lamaholot suggests a shared phonotactic constraint that limits the positional flexibility of this sound across the two linguistic systems. Secondly, the voiced retroflex alveolar approximant /j/ (often represented phonetically as a palatal glide) also displays incomplete distribution in both languages. In Lamaholot, /j/ appears in initial and medial positions, while in English, its occurrence is restricted to initial position only. These patterns further indicate that, despite being present in both languages, the semivowel /j/ is subject to positional limitations that vary between the two systems.

Overall, these findings underscore the constrained distribution of semivocalic consonants across both languages and highlight areas of potential difficulty in phonological acquisition for learners transitioning between the two systems.

An additional challenge arises from consonant clusters. English permits both onset and coda clusters (e.g., *street*, *asked*), while Lamaholot generally adheres to simple syllable templates (CV or CVC). As a result, learners often employ epenthesis, inserting vowels to break clusters (e.g., *school* → /sə.ku:l/, *spring* → /sə.pə.ring/). This strategy, although phonetically adaptive, may interfere with L2 prosody and stress patterns.

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The findings underscore the pedagogical importance of explicitly addressing segmental differences and raising learners' awareness of cross-linguistic variation. This aligns with prior study suggesting that targeted phonological instruction, particularly involving perception and production training (Derwing & Munro, 2005; Saito, 2015), can reduce fossilized errors and improve intelligibility. Instructors should focus on high-functional load sounds absent in the learners' L1 and provide corrective feedback through communicative and contextualized tasks.

Furthermore, the data supports the need for tailored pronunciation instruction informed by contrastive analysis. For learners from the Lamaholot-speaking context, focused training on English fricatives and affricates, syllable-final consonants, and cluster simplification would directly address the common sources of intelligibility breakdown observed in this study.

In summary, the contrastive analysis of English and Lamaholot consonants revealed systematic areas of difficulty stemming from L1 interference, particularly in articulating unfamiliar phonemes and managing English phonotactic structures. These results not only validate the utility of contrastive phonological analysis in anticipating learner challenges but also provide empirical direction for L2 pronunciation pedagogy in East Indonesian contexts.

Implementation of Contrastive Analysis Results in English Language Teaching

This section attempts to address the question formulated in the previous subtopic regarding the implementation of the phonological contrastive analysis results of consonant sounds in both Lamaholot and English as a second language to be learned by Lamaholot-speaking students from the village of Riawale.

1) Difficulties in Learning English

Based on the comparative data presented earlier, there are seven consonant sounds present in English that do not exist in the phonemic inventory of the Lamaholot. These absent consonants predominantly belong to the fricative and affricate categories. The fricative sounds missing in Lamaholot, classified by their place and manner of articulation, include: /v/ (voiced labiodental), /θ/ (voiceless interdental), /ð/ (voiced interdental), /ʃ/ (voiceless alveolar-palatal), and /ʒ/ (voiced alveolar-palatal). Meanwhile, the affricate sounds /ʧ/ (voiceless alveolar-palatal) and /ʤ/ (voiced alveolar-palatal) are absent from the Lamaholot sound system.

Given these seven consonants absent in Lamaholot but present in English, it is anticipated that learners who speak Lamaholot will experience difficulties pronouncing English words that include these consonants, regardless of whether these sounds occur in initial, medial, or final positions within words.

Moreover, some challenges may also arise in pronouncing English consonants such as /p/ (voiceless bilabial stop), /b/ (voiced bilabial stop), /d/ (voiced alveolar stop), /m/ (voiced nasal), and /l/ (voiced lateral), which, although distributed incompletely in Lamaholot, are likely to be pronounced competently by Lamaholot speakers. This competence is largely due to their bilingual or multilingual background, as they are also exposed to Malay (Larantuka) and Indonesian, languages in which these consonants are fully distributed. Consequently, the influence of these second languages supports Lamaholot speakers in acquiring these sounds when learning English.

These difficulties align with Tarigan's (1992: 6) assertion that second language learning challenges are primarily caused by first language interference and differences between the first and second language sound systems. The greater the phonological differences between the first (L1) and second language (L2), the more acute the difficulties

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experienced by learners. Therefore, the phonological similarities identified in this contrastive analysis provide a facilitative advantage to Lamaholot learners, as they already possess prior auditory and articulatory experience with the shared consonant sounds.

2) Implementation of English Teaching Methods

Referring to previous study by Saito (2009), two effective methods can be utilized by teachers in English pronunciation instruction, which are phonetic method and dual-language method. The Phonetic Method emphasizes ear training as the initial phase, where learners focus on listening to English sounds, followed by pronunciation practice. Listening exercises serve as the foundation, with pronunciation drills as the subsequent step in the learning process. Dual-Language Method incorporates phonetic instruction grounded in a comparative analysis of the phonetic systems of the first and second languages. In addition to methodological considerations, learners must cultivate the motivation and habit of consistently receiving and producing the target language, especially English. The essence of language learning fundamentally rests upon habituation and repeated practice. Furthermore, Richards and Rodgers (1986: 44) endorse the Audiolingual Method as an appropriate approach for second language acquisition, rooted in behaviorist learning theory. This method conceptualizes foreign language learning as a process initiated by stimulus presentation, followed by elicited learner responses.

According to this model, English language instruction, particularly focusing on pronunciation skills, should begin with stimuli, exposure to correct pronunciations, that serve as experiential knowledge for learners. This stimulus is then internalized and translated into productive skills (i.e., speaking). Continuous stimulus-response cycles are essential for learners to internalize and reproduce accurate English pronunciation. Skinner, as cited in Syahid (2015: 92), distinguishes two types of behaviors in language acquisition: first, respondent behavior, which is an automatic reaction immediately following a stimulus; and second, operant behavior, where the behavior is self-generated by the organism in the absence of an external stimulus.

SIMPULAN

In conclusion, the contrastive analysis between English and the Lamaholot language, specifically the Eastern Adonara dialect spoken in Riawale Village, reveals several phonological differences. The findings indicate that three consonant sounds present in Lamaholot are absent in English, namely /ɲ/ (voiced palatal nasal), /c/ (voiceless palatal affricate), and /j/ (voiced palatal affricate). Conversely, seven English consonants were not found in the Lamaholot dialect, including /v/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʧ/, and /ʤ/, each distinguished by specific articulatory features.

Additionally, although some consonants such as /p/ (voiceless bilabial stop), /b/ (voiced bilabial stop), /d/ (voiced alveolar stop), /m/ (voiced nasal), and /l/ (voiced lateral) are present in both languages, their phonological distribution is not fully symmetrical across the two systems. This incomplete distribution suggests that certain English phonemes may be challenging for Lamaholot speakers to articulate accurately due to limited phonetic parallels in their native language.

From a pedagogical perspective, the contrastive analysis highlights the need for targeted pronunciation instruction in English language learning among Lamaholot speakers. The findings support the application of behaviorist theory, particularly through the Audiolingual Method, the Phonetic Method, and the Dual-Language Method, all of which emphasize repetition, phonemic awareness, and structured practice. These methods

are well-suited to address the specific pronunciation difficulties identified in this study and can enhance learners' phonological competence in English.

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