PHONOLOGICAL AND LEXICAL DESCRIPTION OF *MODEBUR* LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article, in which the theory structural phonology was used, discusses the phonological and lexical description of Modebur language, one of the local languages in Pantar Island. The result of analysis shows that the Modebur language has five vowels; they are /i/, /e/, /a/, /o/, and /u/. They all can distribute in the initial, medial and final position of words. It has sixteen phonemes and sixteen consonants, many of which can distribute in the beginning of words, some can distribute in the initial and medial position of words only, and one can only distribute in the final position of words. The consonants which can distribute completely are /p/, /b/, /m/, /t/, /n/, /s/, /l/, /k/, /ʎ/, /g/, and the ones which can distribute in the initial and medial position of words are /j/, /h/, /w/, and the one which can distribute in the final position of words is /ŋ/.

I. Introduction

This present study explored the phonemes and lexicon of Modebur language. The Modebur language (hereinafter referred to as Md) is one of the local languages spoken in Pantar Island, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The Md language belongs to the non-Austronesian group of languages. Only a few linguists have explored the languages which belong to the non-Austronesian group of languages, especially those spoken in Pantar Island. Therefore, as an initial study, this present study explored one of the languages which belongs to the non-Austronesian group of languages. The problem discussed is what the phonological and lexical description of the Md language like?

2. Research Method

The theory which was used in the present study is the theory of structural phonology proposed by Bloch and Trager (1944: 40) applying the procedures of (1) minimal pairs, and (2) distribution of phonemes and free variation.

3. Discussion and Result of the Study
3.1 Phonological Description of Modebur Language

Before the vowel and consonant phonemes of the Md language are discussed, the phonemes are tested using minimal pairs as follows.

/i/ -- /a/ /agi/ 'memilih' [choose]   /ari/ 'janda' [widow]

    /aga/ 'ini' [this]   /b/ -- /d/ /ab/ 'ikan' [fish]

/e/ -- /a/ /tene/ 'kanan' [right]   /ad/ 'api' [fire]

    /tena/ 'merah' [red]   /m/ -- /n/ /boma/'laki-laki tua' [old man]

/a/ -- /e/ /aka/   'berdusta' [telling a lie]

                                   /bona/ 'besa' [title used

                        between   parents whose children

                        are married   to each other]

                               /ake/ 'jangan' [do not]

                              /t/ -- /l/ /geweta/'menyalakan

                        (sinar) [set fire to]

/o/ -- /i//aro/ 'musang' [civet]   /gewela/'memandikan [bath someone]

    /ari/ 'janda' [widow]   /t/ -- /r/ /jet/ 'ayam hutan' [jungle fowl]

/u/ -- /o//gubui/'cerita' [story]

/guboi/ 'menebus' [redeem]

/u/ -- /e/ /getuni/'daun jendela [window]

/geteni/ 'tangkai' [stem]

/p/ -- /b/ /jipar/ 'bermimpi' [dream]

/jibar/ 'anjing' [dog]

/p/ -- /r//rapi/ 'cebok' [wash anus]

/j/ -- /l//jeg/ 'banjir' [flood]

/leg/ 'rotan' [rattan]

/l/ -- /r/ /molo/ 'benar' [true]

/moro/ 'debu' [dust]

/r/ -- /s/ /war/ 'batu' [stone]

/was/ 'pasir' [sand]

/k/ -- /r/ /kiki/ 'kecil' [small]

/kiri/ 'tulang' [bone]

/k/ -- /n//aka/ 'berdusta' [tell a lie]

/ana/ 'menggali' [dig]

/ƛ/ -- /m/ /boƛa/ 'batang' [stem]

/boma/ 'bapak' [father]

/g/ -- /j/ /aga/ 'ini' [this]

/aja/ 'ibu' [mother]

/ŋ/ -- /ƛ//sraŋ/ 'sahabat'

/sraƛ/ 'cacar' [small fox]

/h/ -- /ƛ//haro/ 'kuskus' [cuscus]

/ƛaro/ 'nasi'

/w/ -- /g//ewat/ 'hidup' [alive]

/ega/ 'semua' [all]

/jer/ 'air' [water]

/d/ -- /n/ /mida/ 'naik' [go up]

/mina/ 'mati' [die]

/n/ -- /j/ /ana/ 'menggali' [dig]

/aja/ 'ibu' [mother]

/s/ -- /k/ /totosi/ 'menjahit' [sew]

/totoki/ 'perut' [stomach]

/w/ -- /l/ /weg/ 'tangga' [stair]

/leg/ 'rotan' [rattan]

/d/ -- /l/ /wado/ 'besar' [big]

/d/ -- /l/ /wado/ 'besar' [big]

/ŋ/ -- /s/ /kiliŋ/ 'kelingking' [little finger]

/kilis/ 'lungsin [warp in a loom]

/ŋ/ -- /ƛ//srang/ 'sahabat' [friend]

/sraƛ/ 'cacar' [smallpox]

/h/ -- /ƛ/ /haro/ 'kuskus' [cuscus]

/ƛaro/ 'nasi' [rice]

/ŋ/ -- /ƛ//srang/ 'sahabat' [friend]

/sraƛ/ 'cacar' [small fox]

/h/ -- /ƛ/ /haro/ 'kuskus' [cuscus]

/w/ -- /g//ewat/ 'hidup' [alive]

/egat/ 'semua' [all]

/w/ -- /l/ /weg/ 'tangga' [stair]

/leg/ 'rotan' [rattan]

/d/ -- /l/ /wado/ 'besar' [big]

3.1 Phonological Description of Modebur Language

After the vowels and consonants were proved, then the phonemes are described based on where they are located, in the initial, in the medial and in the final position of

words. The phonemic distribution is initiated with vowels, consonants, diphthongs, consonants series, and word combinations in Md language.

The vowel phoneme /i/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/iga/ 'sembunyi' [hide]	/dira/ 'sakit' [sick]	/totoki/ 'perut' [stomach]

The data above show that in Md language the phoneme /i/ was found. It can be realized as a distinctive sound featured by front, upper, and high vowels. In Md language, it can distribute completely, in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

The vowel phoneme /e/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/ede/ 'membakar' [set fire]	/tewesiŋ/ 'gigi' [tooth]	/tekil/ 'tipis' [thin]

The data above show that in Md language   the phoneme /e/ was found. It can be realized as a distinctive sound featured by front, mid, and low vowels. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial and final position of words.

The vowel phoneme /a/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/ab/ 'ikan'	/natang/ 'tangan' [hand]	/naba/ 'apa' [what]

The data above show that in Md language the phoneme /a/ was found. It can be realized as a distinctive sound featured by mid and low vowels. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

The vowel phoneme /o/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/odor/ 'mengetuk' [knock]	/gora/'ekor' [tail]	/tuko/ 'pendek' [short]

The data above show that in Md language the phoneme /o/ was found. It can be realized as a distinctive sound featured by back, mid, mkid-high vowels. In Md language, it can distribute in the initial, medial and final position of words.

The phoneme /u/

Initial position   Medial position   Final position

/ujaλa/ 'orang' [person]   /tamagul/ 'punggung' [back] /duru/ 'tikus' [mouse]

       The data above show that in Md language, the phoneme /u/ was found. It can be realized as a distinctive sound featured by back and high vowels. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can be in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

       Based on the findings above, Md language has five phonemes; they are /i/, /u/, /a/, /o/, /u/ which can distribute completely. In other words, they can be in the initial, medial and final position of words. The five phonemes can be mapped as follows.

1) **The vowel chart of Md language**

Position of Tongue	Front	Middle	Back
High	i		u
Mid-high	e		o
Low		a	

2) **Diphthongs**

       In Md language diphthongs were not found; in other words, it does not have any diphthongs.

3) **Consonants**

Phoneme /p/

  Initial position   Medial position   Final position

  /pai/'memotong'   /api/'cebok' [wash anus]   /merap/'gula' [sugar]

       The data above show that the phoneme /p/ was found in Md language. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiceless bilabial stop consonants. It can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial and final position of words.

Phoneme /b/

Initial position   Medial position   Final position

/baga/'menangis'   /gubui/'buang' [throw away] /λabib/'kambing' [goat]

The data above show that the phoneme /b/ was found in Md language. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced bilabial stop consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial and final position of words.

Phoneme /m/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/mida/'naik' [go up]	/umuŋ/ 'daging' [meat]	/bram/ 'abu' [dust]

The data above show that in Md language the phoneme /m/ was found. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced, bilabial, nasal consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /t/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/toku/ 'tunduk' [be bent down]	/matilak/'kotoran rambut' [hair waste]	/demat/ 'ikan moncong' [a kind of fish]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /t/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiceless, avicodental, stop consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /d/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/doa/'merebus' [boil]	/kamadal/ 'ikat pinggang [belt]	/ad/'api' [fire]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /d/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced, avicodental, stop consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /n/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position

/namaŋ/'keras' [hard]   /toramana/'nyawa' [soul]   /haban/'desa' [village]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /n/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced, avikodental, nasal consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /s/

Initial position   Medial position   Final position
/siar/'pisau' [knife]   /gesur/'cuci pakaian'   /iris/'biawak' [lizard]
                          [wash clothes]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /s/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiceless, lateral consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /l/

Initial position   Medial position   Final position
/lagu/'lauk-pauk' [side dishes] /moli/ 'anting-anting'   /nel/ 'liar' [wild]
                          [earings]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /l/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced, avikopalatal, lateral consonants. In Md it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /r/

Initial position   Medial position   Final position
/rama/'diam' (quiet)   /wiriŋ/'terbakar, sedang'   /sir/ 'keris' [wavy-double bladed
                                                  dagger]
                          [get burned, medium]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /r/. It is realized a distinctive sound featured by voiced, avikodental, fricative consonants. In Md languge, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final of words.

Phoneme /k/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/ketel/'poci' [tea pot]	/leki/ 'kera' [monkey]	/menarek/'berhenti' [stop]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /k/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiceless, dorsovelar, stop consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /ƛ/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/ƛali/'batuk' [cough]	/maƛobar/ 'katak' (kulit halus) [frog (soft skin)]	/taƛ/ 'pelir, buah' [penis, fruit]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /ƛ/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiceless, dorsovelar, lateral consonants. In Md language, it can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

Phoneme /g/

Initial position	Medial position	Final position
/getaraŋ/'begini'[like this]	pigili/ 'kokoh' [solid]	/jeg/ 'banjir' [flood]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /g/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced, dorsovelar, stop consonants. It can distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial, medial, and final position of words.

The consonants which only distribute in the initial and medial position of words

Phoneme /j/

Initial position	Medial position
/jam/ 'tentang' [about]	/wunajak/ 'cerana (tempat sirih)' [metal container for betel-chewing paraphernalia]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /j/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced palatal blend consonants. In Md language, it cannot distribute completely; it can only distribute in the initial and medial position of words.

Phoneme /h/

Initial position   Medial position

/haro/ 'kuskus'[cuscus]   /ahung/ 'halus' [soft]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /h/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiceless, pharyngeal, slide consonants. In Md language, it cannot distribute completely; it can distribute in the initial and medial position of words only.

Phoneme /w/

Initial position   Medial position

/wahara/ 'dengar' [hear]   /meliwa/ 'berperang' [be involved in war]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /w/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by semi labiodental vowels. In Md language, it cannot distribute completely. It can distribute in the initial and medial position of words only.

Phoneme /ŋ/

Medial position   Final position

/beŋa/ 'lain'   [other]   /somoiŋ/ 'rangkai' [bunch]

The data above show that Md language has the phoneme /ŋ/. It is realized as a distinctive sound featured by voiced, dorsovelar, nasal consonants. In Md language, it cannot distribute completely; it can distribute in the medial and final position of words only.

Based on what was inventoried above, it was found that Md language had 16 phonemes, many of which can distribute completely, that is, in the initial, medial and final position of words, some can distribute in the initial and medial position of words only, and some others can only distribute in the final position of words only. The consonants which can distribute completely are /p/, /b/, /m/, /t/, /n/, /s/, /l/, /k/, /ƛ/, /g/;

those who can distribute in the initial and medial positions of words are /j/, /h/, and /w/; and the only one which can distribute in the medial and final position is /ŋ/. They can all be mapped as follows.

Consonants in Md language

Articulator and Place of Articulation

Sound system	Bilabial Glotal		Labiodental		Avikodental		Avikoalveolar		Palatal		Dorsovelar		Laringal	
b Tb	b	Tb	B	Tb	b	Tb	B	Tb	B	tb	b	tb	b	tb
Stop	b	p			d	t					g	k		
Lateral Blend Fricative Lateral					r	j	s		λ				h	
													l	
Nasal	m				n								ŋ	
Semivowel														

5.1.3 Diphthongs in Modebur Language

/iaλ/ 'kaki' [foot]
/kielaŋ/ 'burung layang [a kind of bird]
/murai/ 'belut' [eel]
/auλ/ 'piring' [plate]
/nekau/ 'adik' [younger sibling]
/gauba/ 'yang' [which/that]
/toaŋ/ 'lebih' [more]
/goe/ 'pasang' [install]

/wou/ 'mangga' [mango]
/soiŋ/ 'ayakan' [sifter]
/tei/ 'kayu' [wood]
/bea/ 'sarung pedang' [*pedang* wrapper]
/heola/ 'jarak' [distance]
/geung/ 'jejak' [track]
/kibui/ 'daging buah' [flesh of fruit]
/gua/ 'panjat' [climb]

5.1.5 Consonant Clusters/Series in Modebur Language

/bleleŋ/ 'luar' [outside]
/brenu/ 'meringkik' [neigh]
/grejaweŋ/ 'minggu' [Sunday]
/krusiŋ/ 'kuku' [kneel]
/ploit/ 'malas' [lazy]

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusions

Based on what was described above, it can be concluded that Md language has five vowels and sixteen consonants. All of the vowels can distribute completely; they can distribute in the initial, medial and final position of words. The consonants which can distribute completely are /p/, /b/, /m/, /t/, /n/, /s/, /l/, /k/, /ƛ/, /g/; those which can distribute in the initial and medial position of words are /j/, /h/, /w/; and the only one which can distribute in the medial and final position of words is /ŋ/.

4.2 Suggestions

This article only discusses Modebur language spoken in Pantar Island. There are still many other languages spoken there. It is suggested, therefore, that researchers should explore the other languages spoken by the speech communities in Pantar Island. Linguistically, this article only discusses the phonemes in Modebur language. It is, therefore, suggested that the other linguistic aspects such as morphological aspect, semantic aspect, syntactic aspect and others should be investigated as well.

5. Acknowledgements

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