JETAL: JOURNAL OF ENGLISH TEACHING & APPLIED LINGUISTICS

VOLUME (8) Number (1) Page (33-39) E-ISSN: 2714-9811

A MORPHOPHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LOANWORD ADAPTATION IN INDONESIAN EFL SPEAKING CONTEXTS

Arsy Damopolii[1], Jhems Richard Hasan[2], Abdul Kadir Ismail[3], Marina Pakaja[4], Zulkifli Akhmad[5]

IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo

Email: arsidamopolii@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the morphophonological adaptation of English loanwords used by Indonesian EFL students during speaking activities. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study involved 60 students from the English Education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo. Data were collected through audio and video recordings of classroom discussions, presentations, video assignments, and examinations. A total of 16 English loanwords were identified and analyzed through transcription, coding, and classification based on morphophonological categories by comparing the adapted forms with their original English counterparts. The analysis revealed nine major morphophonological processes, namely sound substitution, vowel simplification, syllabification, stress neutralization, consonant cluster simplification, epenthesis, sound omission, orthographic adaptation, and morphological integration. The findings indicate that vowel simplification, sound substitution, syllabification, and stress neutralization were the most recurrent processes, reflecting the strong influence of Indonesian phonological and morphological systems on the adaptation of English-derived vocabulary. The study demonstrates that English loanwords are systematically reconstructed to conform to Indonesian linguistic patterns during spoken communication. These findings contribute to morphophonological scholarship by providing empirical evidence of the interaction between phonological and morphological adaptation in EFL speaking contexts and offer pedagogical insights for improving pronunciation awareness in English language teaching.

Keywords: *EFL Students, English Loanwords, Morphophonology, Phonological Change, Speaking*

Introduction

In English language learning, writing is In the era of globalization, foreign languages play an important role in various aspects of human life, including education, communication, technology, and social interaction (Rizkylillah et al., 2024). Among foreign languages, English has become the most influential international language due to its widespread use in global communication and technological development (The increasing contact between English and other languages has significantly influenced linguistic systems, including Indonesian (Lutfi, 2023). As a result, Indonesian has experienced lexical, phonological, and morphological developments through the absorption of English vocabulary into daily communication. The influence of English on Indonesian vocabulary is increasingly visible in academic, technological, and social contexts (Sulaiman & Hun, 2025). English loanwords are no longer limited to scientific or technological fields but have become part of everyday language use and modern lifestyles (Algryani & Syahrin 2024). This phenomenon reflects the strong relationship between language and social development, in which linguistic borrowing occurs as a consequence of cultural and communicative interaction. In the Indonesian context, many English words have been adapted into Indonesian forms through changes in spelling, pronunciation, and morphological structure (Cenderato et al., 2023).

In English language learning, particularly in speaking activities, students are often exposed to English vocabulary that has already been integrated into Indonesian (Asra et al.,2023). Speaking is one of the essential skills that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students must master because it enables learners to communicate ideas effectively and appropriately in academic communication (Rohmiyati et al., 2025). However, preliminary observations indicate that students frequently use Indonesian loanwords

derived from English during speaking performances (Asra et al., 2023). Words such as teknologi, presentasi, informasi, and volume are commonly inserted into English utterances instead of their original English forms. For instance, students often produce utterances such as Example Sentence : "*This "media" or this strategy, I can give score from their speaking..."* The word media in English is pronounced /ˈmiːdiə/. In the research data, the student pronounced it as /me.di.a/ following Indonesian pronunciation patterns. The morphophonological adaptation occurs in vowel restructuring and syllabification. The English long vowel /iː/ is simplified into /e/, while the final schwa vowel /ə/ is realized clearly as /a/. The syllable structure becomes /me-di-a/, reflecting Indonesian phonotactic preferences that favor open syllables and consistent vowel pronunciation. Another important change occurs in the stress pattern. In English, the primary stress falls on the first syllable, whereas Indonesian pronunciation distributes stress more evenly across syllables.

The process of adapting foreign words into Indonesian involves complex linguistic adjustments. Some loanwords experience morphological modification, phonological simplification, or both simultaneously in order to conform to Indonesian linguistic systems (Rahman 2024). For example, the English word *printer* may be translated into *pencetak*, while words such as *zoom*, *chat*, and *offline* retain their original forms but undergo pronunciation adjustment in Indonesian usage. These processes illustrate how language contact encourages linguistic integration and adaptation. This phenomenon can be analyzed through the perspective of morphophonology, a branch of linguistics that examines the interaction between morphological and phonological processes. Morphophonology explains how sound structures change when morphemes are combined, modified, or adapted into another language (Barnabas & Prosper 2025). In the context of English loanwords, morphophonological analysis becomes important because many borrowed words undergo simultaneous changes in both form and pronunciation when used by Indonesian speakers. Previous studies have examined loanword adaptation from phonological and morphological perspectives. Proposed a Logical Phonology model to explain phonological transformations across languages (Reiss, 2021), while Blevins discussed sound adaptation in loanword phonology (Blevins, 2023). From a morphological perspective, Gardani explored the spread of morphology through language contact and borrowing processes (Gardani, 2021). Although these studies provide valuable theoretical insights, they mainly focus on structural aspects of language adaptation and pay limited attention to the interaction between phonological and morphological processes in loanword use. Moreover, research has largely concentrated on written language and general borrowing phenomena rather than EFL spoken communication. Consequently, the morphophonological adaptation of English loanwords in Indonesian EFL students' speaking activities remains underexplored, providing the basis for the present study.

Furthermore, the adaptation of English loanwords in students' speaking activities also demonstrates the influence of first language (L1) interference in second language production. Indonesian EFL students tend to rely on Indonesian phonological and morphological systems when pronouncing English-related vocabulary because these patterns are more familiar and easier to articulate during spontaneous communication (Aryanika, 2023). This phenomenon commonly occurs in EFL contexts where learners frequently combine elements of the target language with structures from their native language during speech production (Najla, 2024). In addition, the continuous exposure to English loanwords in social media, education, and digital communication has strengthened the integration of adapted English vocabulary into everyday Indonesian usage, causing students to unconsciously transfer Indonesianized forms of English words into their English speaking performances (Cenderato, et al., 2023). This study aims to analyze the forms of morphophonological changes occurring in English loanwords used by Indonesian EFL students and to identify and classify their linguistic the types and characteristics.Through this analysis, the study is expected to contribute to the development of morphophonological and loanword studies, particularly in the context of English language learning in Indonesia.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the morphophonological changes of English loanwords used by Indonesian EFL students in speaking activities. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study focused on describing and interpreting linguistic phenomena in depth rather than measuring them statistically (Fix et al., 2026). The

research was conducted at the English Education Department of IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants consisted of 60 students selected through purposive sampling because they regularly engaged in English speaking activities. The primary data were obtained from students' spoken utterances collected through classroom discussions, academic presentations, video assignments, and examinations. Data were gathered through audio and video recordings, with recording durations ranging from approximately 47 minutes to 1 hour and 4 minutes, supported by observation notes to document contextual information. The data collection process involved recording students' speaking performances, transcribing the recordings verbatim, identifying English loanwords, and preparing the selected data for analysis. The coding process was conducted by comparing each loanword with its original English form and classifying the identified changes into morphophonological categories, including sound substitution, vowel simplification, syllabification, stress neutralization, consonant cluster simplification, epenthesis, sound omission, orthographic adaptation, and morphological integration. The coded data were subsequently analyzed and interpreted using relevant morphophonological theories. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher repeatedly reviewed the recordings, transcripts, and coding results to verify data accuracy. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from audio recordings, video recordings, speech transcripts, and observation notes (Chand, 2025). Reliability was enhanced through repeated coding at different times to ensure consistency in data classification. Ethical considerations were also observed by informing participants about the purpose of the study, obtaining their consent prior to recording, and anonymizing all participant identities in the research report.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the morphophonological analysis of English loanwords used by Indonesian EFL students in speaking activities. The data were collected from several speaking contexts, including casual discussions, speaking classes, video assignments, and examinations. The findings reveal that English loanwords used by students underwent various morphophonological transformations influenced by Indonesian phonological and morphological systems. The analysis identified several types of morphophonological changes, including sound substitution, vowel simplification, syllabification, stress neutralization, consonant cluster simplification, epenthesis, sound omission, orthographic adaptation, and morphological integration. These transformations demonstrate how Indonesian EFL students adapt English loanwords into forms that are easier to pronounce according to Indonesian phonotactic patterns.

Morphophonological Changes in English Loanwords, Based on the analysis, the researcher found several dominant morphophonological processes occurring in students' speech. These processes include sound substitution, phonological adaptation, sound omission, epenthesis, and morpheme adjustment. The findings show that English loanwords used by Indonesian students tend to undergo structural changes in order to fit the phonological and morphological system of the Indonesian language. Most of the transformations occur because certain English phonemes, consonant clusters, and stress patterns are not naturally found in Indonesian phonology. As a result, students unconsciously modify the pronunciation of English loanwords into forms that are easier and more familiar for them to articulate during speaking activities. Furthermore, the data indicate that Indonesian phonological patterns strongly influence students' production of English-related vocabulary. Complex English vowels and diphthongs are frequently simplified into simpler Indonesian vowel sounds, while consonant clusters are often reduced through deletion or vowel insertion. In addition, several loanwords also experience morphological integration through Indonesian affixation patterns, showing that the adaptation process involves both phonological and morphological changes. These findings indicate that English loanwords are naturally reconstructed to conform to the phonological and morphological system of Indonesian during students' speaking activities.

Sound Substitution, Sound substitution occurred when English phonemes that do not exist in the Indonesian phonological system were replaced by more familiar Indonesian

sounds. This process was identified in several English loanwords found in the students' speech data. The examples of sound substitution identified in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. ***Examples of Sound Substitution in English Loanwords***

English Form	Loandwords	Syllable Pattern
Thermos	Termus	/θ/-/t/
Technology	Teknologi	/dʒ/-/g/, /ə/ -/o/
Geography	Geografi	/dʒ/-/g/
Psychology	Psikologi	/s/-/s/, /dʒ/-/g/

These findings support Jennifer L. Smith's theory, which explains that loanwords commonly undergo adaptation through substitution strategies when the recipient language does not possess equivalent phonemes (Smith, 2025). The substitutions identified in this study, such as /θ/ becoming /t/ in termus and /dʒ/ becoming /g/ in teknologi and geografi, indicate that Indonesian EFL students relied on the closest phonological equivalents in Indonesian when pronouncing English loanwords. This pattern reflects the influence of phonological similarity constraints, whereby foreign sounds are adapted into more familiar forms to facilitate speech production (Gvion et al., 2026). The findings further suggest that phonological adaptation occurs naturally as learners adjust English loanwords to conform to the Indonesian phonological system during spontaneous speaking activities. Vowel Simplification, Vowel simplification was one of the most dominant morphophonological processes identified in this study. In this process, English vowels and diphthongs were simplified into vowel forms that are more compatible with the Indonesian phonological system. This adaptation occurred because Indonesian has a relatively simpler vowel inventory than English, leading speakers to reconstruct unfamiliar vowel sounds into more familiar forms. The examples of vowel simplification identified in the students' speech data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. ***Examples of vowel simplification in English Loanwords***

English Form	Loandwords	Syllable Pattern
Machine	Mesin	/i:/-/i/
History	Histori	/ɪ/-/i/
Satellite	satelit	/aɪ/-/i/, /æ/ -/a/
psychology	psikologi	/s/-/s/, /dʒ/-/g/

These findings are consistent with Blevins' (2023) view that vowel adjustment represents a form of phonological adaptation in which complex vowels are replaced by simpler and more stable vowel forms. In the present study, Indonesian EFL students tended to simplify English vowel sounds because the Indonesian vowel system is more limited and does not distinguish vowel length in the same way as English. As a result, vowels such as /ɪ/, /i:/, and diphthongs such as /aɪ/ were reconstructed into simpler Indonesian vowels that are easier to articulate. Similar patterns of vowel substitution have also been observed in phonological studies, where speakers tend to replace less familiar vowel sounds with acoustically and articulatorily simpler alternatives (Reynolds, 2025). The transformations found in words such as mesin, histori, and satelit indicate that students unconsciously adapted English vowel patterns into forms that conform to Indonesian phonological rules during spontaneous speaking activities.

Syllabification, The findings also revealed that English loanwords experienced syllabic restructuring in order to conform to Indonesian consonant-vowel syllable patterns. Indonesian phonology generally favors open syllables and clear vowel articulation, leading speakers to reorganize the syllable structure of borrowed words into forms that are easier to pronounce. This process reflects the tendency of Indonesian EFL students to adapt English loanwords to Indonesian phonotactic patterns. Examples of syllabification identified in the students' speech data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. ***Examples of Syllabification in English Loanwords***

English Form	Loandwords	Syllable Pattern
Dispense	dispenser	/dis.pen.ser/
Internet	internet	/in.ter.net
Panorama	panorama	/pa.no.ra.ma/
Media	media	/me.di.a/

These findings support the theory proposed by Brian Mott, which explains that loanwords frequently undergo syllable restructuring to conform to the phonotactic patterns of the recipient language (Mott, 2022). These findings are consistent with previous studies on syllabification, which suggest that syllable structure plays an important role in shaping vowel realization and pronunciation patterns in speech production (Treiman et al., 2023). In this study, Indonesian EFL students tended to reorganize

English syllable structures into simpler consonant-vowel patterns because Indonesian phonology generally favors open syllables and clear vowel articulation. The pronunciations /dis.pen.ser/, /in.ter.net/, and /pa.no.ra.ma/ demonstrate that students clearly separated syllables and articulated vowels consistently according to Indonesian pronunciation habits. This finding indicates that syllabic restructuring occurred as students adapted English loanwords to conform to the phonotactic constraints of Indonesian, resulting in forms that were easier to pronounce and process during speaking activities.

Stress Neuturalization, Stress neutralization was another dominant characteristic identified in the data. In this process, English lexical stress patterns became weaker or more evenly distributed when pronounced by Indonesian EFL students. This phenomenon reflects the influence of Indonesian as a syllable-timed language, in contrast to English, which is generally classified as a stress-timed language. As a result, students tended to reduce the prominence of stressed syllables and distribute stress more evenly across words. Examples of stress neutralization identified in the students' speech data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. ***Examples of Stress Neutralization in English Loanwords***

English Form	Loandwords	Syllable Pattern
Dispense	dis-PEN-ser	/dis.pen.ser/
Technology	tech-NOL-o-gy	/tek.no.lo.gi/
History	his-TO-ry	/his.to.ri/
Panorama	pan-OR-a-ma	/pa.no.ra.ma/

These findings are consistent with the theory proposed by Daniel Korzekwa et al., which explains that non-native English speakers frequently transfer the prosodic patterns of their first language into English pronunciation. (Korzekwa, 2022). These findings are consistent with studies on prosodic structure, which suggest that stress realization is strongly influenced by the phonological system of a language and may be modified when speakers adapt linguistic forms to different prosodic patterns (Jaker, 2026). In this study, Indonesian EFL students tended to weaken or neutralize English lexical stress because Indonesian is generally characterized by relatively even stress distribution across syllables. As a result, English words such as dispenser, technology, history, panorama, and media were pronounced with more balanced syllable timing rather than maintaining strong English stress contrasts. This phenomenon indicates that students unconsciously transferred Indonesian prosodic patterns when producing English loanwords, causing English stress patterns to become less prominent during speaking activities.

Morphological Integration, The study also found evidence of morphological integration, in which English loanwords were adapted to conform to Indonesian morphological patterns. This process involved the incorporation of borrowed lexical items into Indonesian word formation systems through affixation and morphological adjustment. As a result, English loanwords functioned not only as borrowed vocabulary but also as elements that could participate in Indonesian grammatical structures. Examples of morphological integration identified in the students' speech data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. ***Examples of Stress Neutralization in English Loanwords***

English Form	Loandwords	Syllable Pattern
Cable	Kabelan	Addition of suffix *-an*
Distortion	Distoris	Adaptation of *-tion -si*
Location	Lokasi	Adaptation of *-tion -si*
Information	Informasi	Adaptation of *-tion -si*

These findings support the theory proposed by Booij, which states that morphology functions as the "grammar of words" connecting phonological, syntactic, and semantic systems within a language. (Booij, 2022). The data indicate that English loanwords used by Indonesian students were not only adapted phonologically but also integrated morphologically into Indonesian word formation patterns. The addition of the suffix -an in kabelan and the transformation of the English suffix -tion into -si in distorsi and lokasi demonstrate how borrowed lexical items are systematically adjusted to fit Indonesian morphological rules. These findings are consistent with Nugraha Satria, who argues that Indonesian affixation plays an important role in integrating lexical items into the Indonesian linguistic system by enabling them to function according to local grammatical and semantic conventions (Nugraha & Satria, 2024). In the present study, the loanwords no longer functioned merely as borrowed forms but became part of Indonesian word formation processes through suffixation and morphological adaptation. This indicates that

English loanwords gradually undergo morphological integration, allowing them to operate as natural elements within Indonesian communication and grammatical structures.

Conclusion

This study examined the morphophonological adaptation of English loanwords used by Indonesian EFL students in speaking activities. The findings revealed that English loanwords underwent various morphophonological processes, including sound substitution, vowel simplification, syllabification, stress neutralization, consonant cluster simplification, epenthesis, sound omission, orthographic adaptation, and morphological integration. These processes demonstrate how students systematically adapted English-derived vocabulary to conform to Indonesian phonological and morphological patterns during spontaneous speech production. The findings contribute to morphophonological scholarship by providing empirical evidence that phonological and morphological adaptations operate simultaneously in the integration of English loanwords within EFL speaking contexts. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on written language or examined phonological and morphological adaptations separately, this study highlights the interaction between these processes in authentic spoken communication. From the perspective of applied linguistics, the findings also enhance understanding of how first-language influence shapes learners' pronunciation and lexical usage in English speaking activities. The study further offers practical implications for EFL teaching. Teachers should raise students' awareness of the differences between English and Indonesian phonological systems, particularly regarding vowel quality, lexical stress, syllable structure, and morphological patterns. Increased exposure to authentic English pronunciation and targeted speaking activities may help learners reduce the transfer of Indonesianized loanword forms into English speech.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a single institution and focused exclusively on Indonesian EFL students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. In addition, the study primarily examined morphophonological adaptation in speaking activities without exploring learners' perceptions or the sociolinguistic factors influencing loanword use. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve participants from different educational settings, compare learners with different proficiency levels, and investigate the relationship between morphophonological adaptation, language attitudes, and speaking proficiency. Such studies would further enrich the understanding of loanword adaptation in EFL contexts and contribute to the broader development of morphophonological and applied linguistics research.

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