

Diphthongs In Rejang Language

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses about Diphthongs in Rejang Language. The several points of this research are the classifications and formations of diphthongs in Rejang language. The purposes of this research to find out and explain diphthongs in Rejang language. The writer uses descriptive qualitative method to do the research. While, to analyze the data, the writer used theory from Peter Roach (1998) with supporting theory from Ramelan in Mustikareni (2013). The data are found by recorded the conversation of rejang native speakers. As the result, two classifications of diphthong by Roach (1998) were found, they are closing and centering diphthong. The writer found 19 diphthongs classified as closing diphthongs (eɪ/, /aɪ/, /aʊ/) and 8 diphthongs classified as centering diphthongs (/ɪə/, /eə/). The 27 diphthongs are the result from the data that the writer finds from the conversation in Rejang language.

Key words: *Diphthongs, Rejang language*

I. INTRODUCTION

Living without language will be very difficult to understand each other. Language is a very useful tool for human on this earth, even though it consists of several hundred thousand languages in this world; at least we can understand each other. Language itself is the most common tool that we use in daily life, it is almost never not used. With language, we can also create and express our mood, and it really helps us to show our mood or understand the mood of the other person. Language is not only a means of communication that is used everyday, as the time develop, human also have a shift in era that makes humans more aware of existing technological changes, this is same as language, in the world of knowledge, language is also one of the sciences that are deepened by humans, this is called linguistics.

Chomsky (1965: 3) stated, linguistic is the study of the structure of language, including the study of the sound system, the grammar, and the vocabulary. In other hand, Bloomfield (1914: 21) said, linguistics is the study of language as a social institution. From the two definitions of linguistics according to the linguists above, we can conclude that linguistics is not just linguistics or the study of language itself. In linguistics we also learn about the components of the constituents' components of words, phrases or sentences, not only that we also learn about the pronunciation system, the system or how to write it, and also the amount of vocabulary. Linguistics is also a social institution through language; this is usually found in a group of people or certain regions. Not just linguistics, linguistics is also a natural science that runs naturally in our lives. A lot of understanding about linguistics makes

us understand better and understand linguistics in this world of knowledge. In linguistics there is a branch of linguistics that discusses sound, namely phonology. Phonology is a micro branch of linguistics that discusses everything about sound in the realm of linguistics.

According to Roach (1998: 3), phonology is the study of the distribution and patterning of speech sounds in languages. On the other hand, Chomsky (1968: 17), phonology is the study of the sound system of a language, including the distribution of speech sounds. Phonology is the study of the sound patterns of languages, Wells (2006: 1). The explanation of the definitions according to the experts above explains that phonology is a linguistic science that discusses sound. However, not only about sound, in phonology we also learn about how the sound distributed and how many forms of sound can be produced, many languages in this world that use tone as a differentiator of the meaning of a word, a language that is famous for the term “different tone, different meaning” is Mandarin, in Mandarin the high and low tones produced are very influential in understanding the words or sentences spoken.

Phonemes are the smallest sound units in language that distinguish the meaning of words. Imagine phonemes as building blocks used to form words in language. Phonemes are very important in language because they help us understand the meaning of a word. In linguistics, phonemes are used to analyze the structure of language and how those sounds form meaning. Phonemes can also help identify language patterns and how language changes over time. Thus, phonemes are a very important concept in understanding language and how the sounds form meaning.

Furthermore Chomsky & Halle (1968) said, a phoneme is a minimal unit of sound which can distinguish words in a language. On other hand, Jones (1950), a phoneme is a unit of sound which is regarded as distinctive within a particular language. From the definition of phonemes according to some experts above, it

can be concluded that phonemes are the smallest sound units that can form the sounds of a language. Besides forming a language, phonemes can also distinguish a word in its pronunciation. A key component of phonology is the study of language sounds, which helps us comprehend the fundamentals of human communication. The acoustic and articulatory characteristics of language sounds allow them to divide into vowels and consonants. Ladefoged (2006) stated, language sounds can be classified based on place of articulation, manner of articulation, and voicing. In other experts opinion, language sound classification involves identifying acoustic and articulatory patterns associated with sound production (Johnson, 2011).

From the explanation of experts before, it can be recognized that the classification of language sounds can be found from the place of articulation, manner of articulation and voicing. And also in the classification of sounds in language is divided into two, namely vowels and consonants. When our tongue, lips, or other parts of our mouth block or constrict the airways coming out of our lungs, we produce letters or sounds called consonants. Consonants play an important role in word formation and distinguishing in language. With consonants, we can pronounce different words and convey the right meaning.

Ladefoged & Johnson (2014) stated, a consonant is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. On other hand, Cristal (2008) said, consonants are sounds that are produced by obstructing the airflow in the vocal tract. Based on the explanation from the experts above, it can be inferred that consonants are sounds that are fully or partially accumulated through the vocal tract. With various types of articulations that are issued, it will form different consonants. Aside of consonants, words also have vowels. Vowels are letter or sounds produced by the vibration of the vocal cords without any obstruction or narrowing of

the airways. When we pronounce a vowel, the air coming out of the lungs flows freely through the vocal tract without resistance, which helps us pronounce the right meaning.

In opinion of Ladefoged & Johnson (2014), a vowel is a speech sound that is produced without any obstruction of the airflow in the vocal tract. On other hand, Crystal (2008) stated, vowels are sounds that are produced by the free flow of air through the vocal tract, without any significant obstruction. Inferred on the explanation of the experts above, vowels are sounds produced by the sound path without any narrowing or obstacles in the articulation process, thus forming vowels or commonly called vital letters.

A diphthong is a concept or sound that occurs by combining two vowels that are read straight, clear and uninterrupted. Roach (1998) states that diphthongs are sounds which consist of the movement or glide from one vowel to another because diphthongs are the combination of two pure vowels. Ramelan in Mustikareni (2013), mentions that diphthongs are divided into two sections closing and centering diphthongs. Closing diphthong is the diphthong sounds that the second vowel is closer than the first vowel because the movement of the tongue is carried out from the

position of open vowel to the closer vowel, while centering diphthong is the second vowel that more center than the first vowels because the movement of the tongue is carried out towards the central vowel. For example, the English closing diphthongs are (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/) and centering diphthong are (/ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/) (Roach, 1998). In this research, the writer examined the diphthong in the Rejang language. Administratively, *Nangai Amen Village* is directly bordered by *Sungai Gerong Village* to the north, *Sukau Rajo Village* to the east, *Kampung Jawa Subdistrict* to the south, and *Pasar Muara Aman subdistrict* to the west. Based on population data from the *Nangai Amen* village office, the population of *Nangai Amen* village as of February 2024 was 795 people, with 265 households. According to Adelaar (1992) in his research on languages in Sumatra, Rejang language is included in the Austronesian group and is closely related to Malay and Proto-Malayic. Moreover, Adelaar noted that the Rejang language shows conservative characteristics in several aspects of morphology and phonology compared to modern Malay. Below are the examples of diphthongs in the Rejang language:

No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	kursi (chair)	<i>kersai</i>	[kersa ^ɪ]	-	-	/kɜːrsa ^ɪ / [kɜːr-sa ^ɪ]

From the example of the word “*Kersai*” given, we can clearly observe the presence of the diphthong ‘aɪ’. According to Peter Roach in English Phonetics and Phonology, this diphthong ‘aɪ’ is classified as a closing diphthong. The term “closing” is highly relevant because it accurately describes the movement of the speech organs during sound production. When pronouncing the diphthong

‘aɪ’, the tongue starts from relatively low position and then gradually moves upward and forward, while the jaw also closes slightly at the end of sound production. This movement creates a smooth transition of sound from one vowel position to the next within a single syllable. Specifically, the formation of the diphthong ‘aɪ’ in the word “*Kersai*” begins with the tongue in a low position at the bottom of the mouth and the mouth wide open.

If we break down the phonetic structure of the word “Kersai” further, its phonetic transcription is /kɛɪrsaɪ/. This transcription shows that the word consists of two distinct syllables: the first syllable is /kɛɪ/ and the second syllable is /saɪ/. Our main focus is now on the second syllable, /saɪ/, because this is where the diphthong /aɪ/ is located. This diphthong is not simply a combination of the vowel pronounced separately, but a seamless or uninterrupted blend between the first vowel [a] and the second vowel [ɪ]. These two vowels, although different, are pronounced as a single phonological unit in the one breath and form a single peak of sonority in the syllable. This phenomenon is very important in understanding how language sounds work and how we distinguish different words through variations in diphthong pronunciation.

From the explanation above, the writer wants to observe more about the Rejang language, especially diphthong in Rejang language. The writer finds similarities between the diphthongs in the Rejang language. In his theory, Roach points out two classifications of diphthongs, which are the centering and closing diphthongs. This is also found in the Rejang language, for example in Roach’s theory there is aɪ diphthong, this diphthong was also found in the Rejang language, for example aɪ in *kersai* which means chair. As one of the descendants of the Rejang tribe who was born in Rejang land but grew up outside Rejang land, the writer wants to explore more about the diphthongs that exist in the Rejang language and wants to preserve and recognize the Rejang language to the public, so through an agreement that has been approved, the writer raises research with the title, “**Diphthongs in Rejang Language**”.

II. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 Source of the Data

The data source is data obtained in the field. Data sources are where data is obtained. Data sources are divided into two types, namely substantive data sources and local data sources, Sudaryanto (1993:40):

a. Substantial Data

Datum that the writer originally gathers for the first time is referred to as substantial data. Conversations, screenplays, transcripts, articles, surveys, observations, in-person interviews, speeches, and more are all included in this datum. Data such as diphthong sounds used by four native speakers of the Lebong dialect of Rejang language

b. Locational Data

In order to support substantive data, location data is utilized as a supplemental data source. The location of the data in this research is located at Nangai Amen Village Hall, Nangai Amen Village, North Lebong District, Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province.

2.2 Technique of Collecting the Data

According to Sudaryanto (1993:88) states that there are two ways to gather data. Participant Observational Method (SLC) and Non-Participant Observational Method (SLBC). Non-Participant Observational method is a method of collecting the data that be done through the process of listening or observation on the use of the language under study. Furthermore, participant observational method is a method of collecting the data that be done by having a conversation between writers with language speakers as data sources (informant). In addition of using listening techniques, the writer also uses two other techniques in obtaining data from data sources, they are:

1. Recording Technique

According to Sudaryanto (1993: 135) the recording technique is a data collection technique by recording process is secretly so that the data obtained is natural. The writer

records conversations between five native speakers who use Rejang language as a daily language at the location of the data source using handphone to record and obtain the data needed in this research.

2. Note-Taking technique

Writer uses note-taking technique to write down the data that the writer recorded before. According to Mahsun (2005: 93), stated that note-taking technique is to record some relevant forms from the use of language in writing. After recording, the writer wrote down the data found, such as what diphthong appeared in the conversations made by native speakers in the recording that had been made previously

2.3 Technique of Analyzing the Data

Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out during data collection and after data collection is completed within a certain period. During data collection, the writer records the data that has been obtained and if there is data that falls with the qualifications of the data sought, the writer will sort it out. Miles & Hubberman (1994: 10) states data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the data to increase understanding, and to develop concepts and themes that emerge from the data. Activities in data analysis, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification

III. RESULT

(Datum 1)

No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	<i>kepala desa</i> (village chief)	<i>patai</i>	[pata ⁱ]	-	-	/pata ⁱ / [pɑ:-ta ^ɪ]

(Table 1)

In presenting this research, the writer uses both methods, this is due to the writer using verbal statements and also symbols such as phonetic symbols in presenting the results of this research. Sudaryanto (1993) stated two methods in presenting data analysis. They are informal and formal methods. He stated that the verbal statements are used in informal method, while the sign and symbol are used in formal method. In accordance with the explanation in the background of the research above, the writer limits this research to what kinds of diphthong and how are diphthong formations in phonologically in Rejang language base on Roach's theory. Based on the limitations above, the writer concludes some questions as follow:

1. What are the classifications of diphthong in Rejang language?
2. How are the formations of diphthong in Rejang language in phonologically?

IV. DISCUSSION

3.1 The Classification and Formation of Diphthong in Rejang Language

There are two classifications of diphthong that provide by Roach (1998), namely Closing and Centering diphthongs. All the diphthongs that generate from the data source will be analyzes base on their classification.

3.1.1 Closing Diphthong

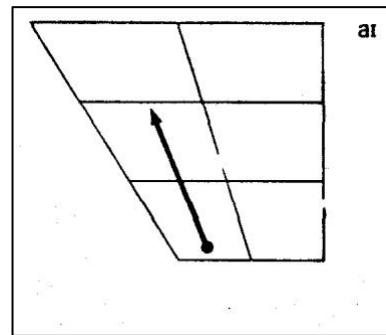
In Rejang language we could find some word that contain diphthong, based on the data that the writer found according to Roach (1998) theory, the data are:

First, from the datum (1), it can easily see that the diphthong /aɪ/ occurs in the word “*patai*”. With reference to the classic description of the theory by Roach, this diphthong /aɪ/ is regarded as a closing diphthong. In the pronunciation of the word “*patai*”, it allow the tongue to glide upward or forward from a low or centering position toward the front or top of the mouth. The tongue action is combined with the jaw gradually closing at tail end of the sound, which results in a soft and steady transition from one vowel to next in a single breath.

The word “*patai*” can be divided into two separated syllables from a phonetic transcription /pa/ and /taɪ/. It is /pɑː-taɪ/ according to the more accurate phonetic transcription. The second syllable, /taɪ/, is the primary focus of the analysis because it (**Datum 2**)

contains the /aɪ/ diphthong, which is forms the syllable’s core. It’s important to realize that this diphthong is more than just a combination of two distinct vowel sounds. Rather, it is a smooth combination of its two vowel components.

The following is an illustration of the tongue when pronouncing word containing the diphthong /aɪ/ based on Roach theory and produced by place of articulation:



No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	<i>mati</i> (dead)	<i>matei</i>	[mateɪ]	-	-	/mateɪ/ [ma-teɪ]

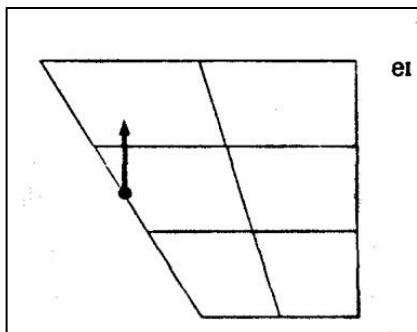
(Table 2)

The table clearly shows the /eɪ/ diphthong is present. In the English word “*matei*”, which meaning “dead” this particular diphthong is present. The /eɪ/ diphthong is categorized as a closing diphthong according to Roach’s theory. This classification makes sense since it describes how our articulators move, the jaw often closes a little as the tongue glides forward and upward after starting in the middle of the front. This action creates a smooth transition between the two vowel sounds that comprise the diphthong.

The two separates syllables that make up the word “*matei*” are /ma/ and /teɪ/. Focusing on the second syllables, /teɪ/. The /eɪ/

diphthong is located at the very end of the word, in this last syllable. The /eɪ/ diphthong is a single, cohesive sound unit where the two vowel qualities blend together to form a single cohesive peak of sonority, rather than just two distinct vowel sounds pronounced consecutively. A diphthong is distinguished from a series of separate vowel sounds by this blending.

The following is an illustration of the tongue when pronouncing word containing the diphthong /eɪ/ based on Roach theory and produced by place of articulation:



(Datum 3)

No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	<i>besar</i> (big)	<i>lai</i>	[la ^ɪ]	-	-	/la ^ɪ / [la ^ɪ]

(Table 3)

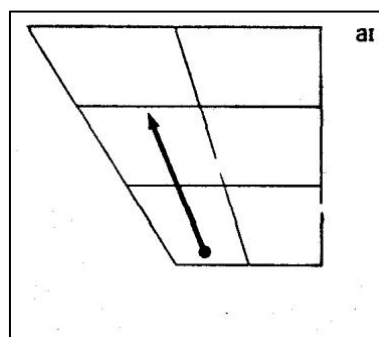
The word “*lai*” in our third set of data contains the /a^ɪ/ diphthong. Because it literally means “Big” in English, this word’s semantic background is provided. From a phonological perspective, “*lai*” is interesting because it makes up the basic building blocks of a diphthong, a single consonant followed immediately by two adjacent vowel sounds.

According to Roach’s theory, diphthong /a^ɪ/ is classified as a closing diphthong. This classification is exceptionally appropriate, considering how well it describes the movement of our articulators during production.

The tongue typically begin by pronouncing /a^ɪ/ more openly and lower, then move smoothly upward and forward, often with a slight closure of the jaw. Instead of two distinct vowel sounds, this dynamic movement produces a continuous, fluctuating sound. “*lai*” is pronounced /la^ɪ/. This transcription reveals that the term is surprisingly composed of only one syllable, even though it contains two vowel elements. The fact “*lai*” is a single syllable

highlights how the diphthong /aɪ/ functions as a single vocalic nucleus within that syllable, with both vowel components contributing to a single summit of sonority.

The following is an illustration of the tongue when pronouncing word containing the diphthong /a^ɪ/ based on Roach theory and produced by place of articulation:



3.1.2 Centering Diphthong

In Rejang language we could find some word that contain diphthong, based on the data that the writer found according to Roach (1998) theory, the data are:

(Datum 4)

No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	<i>katakan</i> (say)	<i>nadeak</i>	[nade ^ə k]	-	-	/nade ^ə k/ [na-de ^ə k]

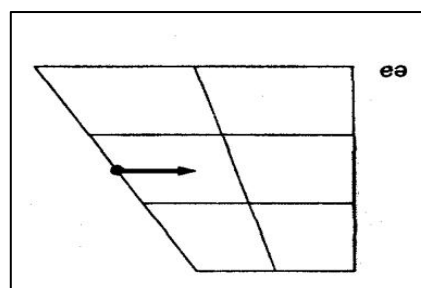
(Table 4)

Moving to the twentieth data, it shows the word “*nade^ək*”, a term that translates to “say” or “tell” in English. The word introduces a different type of diphthong from previously datum. Consistent with the phonetic theories developed by Roach (1998), the diphthong found in “*nadeak*” is /e^ə/, and it’s categorized as a centering diphthong. Phonetically, “*nadeak*” is spelled /na-de^ək/. it is clear that the word is broken into two syllables, the /na/ syllable and the /de^ək/ syllable. the diphthong /e^ə/ is located in the /de^ək/ syllable, which is the syllable that serves as the nucleus vowel sound of the word “*nadeak*”.

The tongue is in the lower position and does not move, and the mouth is moderately open, producing the sound /na/. Then the tongue moves to the middle position, slightly obstructing the airflow using the tip of the

tongue and the front of the palate, producing the sound /nade^ək/ with the mouth slightly open. This dynamic motion creates a single, continuous sounds that blends two vowel qualities seamlessly, but with a distinct trajectory towards a central, neutral vowel position.

The following is an illustration of the tongue when pronouncing word containing the diphthong /e^ə/ based on Roach theory and produced by place of articulation:



(Datum 5)

No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	<i>mentah</i> (raw)	<i>mateak</i>	[mate ^ə k]	-	-	/mate ^ə k/ [ma-te ^ə k]

(Table 5)

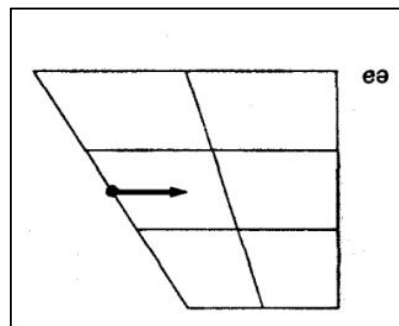
In data point number twenty one, its shows the /e^ə/ diphthong, in the word “*mateak*”, which means “Raw” in English. The phonetic theory of Roach (1998) shows that the /e^ə/ diphthong as a centering diphthong. Upon examining the sound of “*mateak*”, it could be observe that it’s contains two separate syllables, the first is /ma/, and the second is /te^ək/. By simply integrating two vowel sounds into one element within a syllable as part of a word, this

illustrates how centering diphthongs are a component of the phonetic structure of words.

Articulation for the tongue starts from the lower position, there is no movement, and the air passing through with the mouth open produces the sound /ma/. Then, the tongue moves to the center with the tip of the tongue slightly narrowing the air passage between the tongue and the front of the palate with the mouth slightly open, producing the sound /te^ək/.

The following is an illustration of the tongue when pronouncing word containing the

diphthong /eə/ based on Roach theory and produced by place of articulation:



(Datum 6)

No	Gloss	Rejang	Phonetic Transcription	Beginning	Mid	Final
1	<i>entah/tidak tahu</i> (I don't Know)	<i>teak</i>	[te ^ə k]	-	-	/te ^ə k/ [te ^ə k]

(Table 6)

The next datum is “teak”. The word “Teak” translates directly to “don’t know” in English, indicating its primary semantic meaning. In “teak” its early shows a diphthong, specially the /eə/ diphthong. Based on the phonetic descriptions put forth by Roach (1998), the /eə/ diphthong in “Teak” is classified as a centering diphthong. It’s important to note that a centering diphthong is a specific type of articulatory movement. In phonetic terms, “teak” is transcribed as /te^ək/. Interestingly, although “teak” has two vowel elements that comprise a diphthong, this word is composed of just one syllable. This single-syllable structure demonstrates how the vocalic nucleus to merge two qualities into one sound unit in the word.

For a centering diphthong, the tongue begins its articulatory motion towards a

V. CONCLUSSION

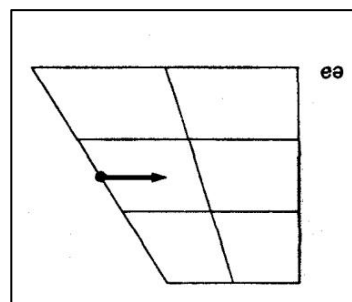
4.1 Conclusion

Based on the data analysis in the previous chapter, the writer has analyzed diphthongs in rejang language using theory by Peter Roach (1998) with supported theory by Ramelan in Mustikareni (2013).

The results of this research show that there are 27 diphthongs found in the rejang language, divided into two classifications:

peripheral vowel sound and then glides towards the center of the mouth, with ending position like a schwa sound. the articulatory movement creates a single continuous sound, assimilating two vowel qualities while moving actively toward the center of the mouth

The following is an illustration of the tongue when pronouncing word containing the diphthong /eə/ based on Roach theory and produced by place of articulation:



closing diphthong and centering diphthong. There are 19 closing diphthongs, including 6 /eɪ/, 7 /aɪ/ diphthongs, and 6 /aʊ/ diphthongs.

In addition to closing diphthongs, there are also 8 centering diphthongs, including 2 /ɪə/ diphthongs and 6 /eə/. These 27 data were obtained from everyday conversations of local Rejang people who are active and live in areas where the Rejang language is actively spoken.

It can be concluded that diphthongs in the rejang language, based on the data was

found by the writer, are not only found in English, but also in Reang, such as /aɪ/, /aʊ/, /eə/, etc. Furthermore, it can also be concluded that the diphthongs that appear or exist in the Rejang language also share similarities or resemblances with the diphthongs in English as mentioned by Roach (1998).

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