

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. It consists of the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the research methodology, the clarification of the terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

This study classifies into the field of *historical linguistics* that examines language change and relationship among languages. Campbell (1999) states that *historical linguistics* is sometimes called *diachronic linguistics*, which means that linguists are basically concerned with change in languages over periods of time. In this study, the *historical linguistics*' main approach is the *comparative method* which specifically compares the sound changes between an ancestral language *Standard Malay* and its descent language *Palembang Malay*. *Wilkinson Dictionary* in 1904 is used to be the source of *Standard Malay* spelling system in this study since it is considered to be the first *Malay* spelling system that is used widely in *Malaya, Singapore, and Brunei* (Omar, 1989).

As introduced by Sir William Jones in 1786, *protolanguage* means a set of words that derived from a single original form that provides the idea of parallel development in language (Crowley, 1997). Lewis (2009) through his research called

Novita Arsillah, 2013

The Phonemic – Syllabic Comparisons of Standard Malay and Palembang Malay Using a Historical Linguistic Perspective

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Ethnologue: Language of the World had demonstrated that the historical classification of Palembang Malay is started from its *protolanguage Austronesian* → *Malayo-Polynesian* → *Malayo-Sumbawan* → *North and East* → *Malayic* → *Malay* → and finally *Palembang Malay*. Therefore, *Standard Malay* and then *Palembang Malay* are believed to be a branch of languages that include in the *Austronesian* language family.

From the viewpoint of *Taiwan* as the *Austronesian* homeland, Adelaar (2004) points out that there is an agreement among *Malay* historical linguists that the *Malay* homeland certainly places in *Western Borneo* rather than in *Malay Peninsula* or even *Sumatra*. Before AD 1500 the *Austronesian* languages belonged to the most common *protolanguage* in the world with a distribution from *Madagascar* to *Easter Island* (Bellwood, Fox & Tryon, 1995:1). Widely, it is predicted that there are between 1000 and 1200 distinct *Austronesian* languages that exist most or all of the inhabitant populations of *Indonesia*, *Malaysia*, *Philippines* and *Madagascar* and so forth (*ibid*).

As already stated in the first paragraph, this study examines the sound changes between an ancestral language *Standard Malay* and its descent language *Palembang Malay* by using *Historical Linguistics' Comparative Method* as the main approach. Lass (1984) cited in Smith(2007) states that a sound change is a phenomenon in the *phonological* structure of a language which is assumed to occur after there had been a change in the system in which that sound existed. This study focuses on Crowley's (1997) and Campbell's (1999) theories that provide some types

of attested sound changes. These changes are classified into sound changes in *Standard Malay* that have undergone change to *Palembang Malay*.

There are a number of studies on *Malay*. Omar (1989) investigates three ways of *Malay* spelling reform, namely the standard norm spelling, the practical language development spelling and the *Malay* spelling in the cultural and linguistic network. Meanwhile, Adelaar (2004) had investigated *Malay* homeland, migrations and classifications for twenty years. Additionally, there are many hypotheses that emerge from Adelaar's investigations such as *back-migration* hypothesis and *Borneo* hypothesis. At last, Adelaar (2004) points out that the homeland of *Malay* is located in *Western Borneo*.

A couple of years ago an *anthropologist* named David Gil was interested in *Malay*. His interest is shown by many articles that can be accessed under his name. Gill (2007) wrote one paper entitled '*A Typology of Stress, and Where Malay/Indonesian Fits in*', but this time the investigation appears to be more about the position of lexical stress in *Malay*. Hence, one more previous study that has investigated *Malay* comes from Mohamed (2006) who demonstrates research about historical and linguistic perspective of *Malay Chetty Creole Language of Malacca*. It discusses the appearances of the chetties' descendents of two ethnically and culturally different groups, Indian men from south India and local women of *Malacca* (Mohamed, 2006). Thus, some preceding studies seem to focus on the study of *Malay* in general. The present study aims to reveal specifically a historical linguistic

comparative method perspective of sound changes that have occurred in *Palembang Malay*.

1.2 The Research Questions

The research questions of the study are formulated as follows:

- 1) What types of sound changes have occurred in *Palembang Malay* in comparison with *Standard Malay*?
- 2) What are the distributions of the *vowel* and *consonant phonemes* in *Palembang Malay* used by the participants?

1.3 The Aims of the Study

The study aims to explore the types of sound changes found in *Palembang Malay* used by the participants. It is interesting in how the language has shaped the sounds in order to make variation of languages. It also aims to reveal the distributions of the *vowel* and *consonant phonemes* in *Palembang Malay*. Additionally, the investigation uses a historical linguistic *comparative method* to compare the sound changes between an ancestral language *Standard Malay* and its descent language *Palembang Malay*.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study investigates *phonemic and syllabic* changes in the context of comparing *Standard Malay* and *Palembang Malay*. The comparisons are limited by

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The Phonemic – Syllabic Comparisons of Standard Malay and Palembang Malay Using a Historical Linguistic Perspective

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the number of isolated words that were obtained from data collection, which implies that the level of linguistic truth is limited to the analyzed data at the researcher's disposal. Then, this study examines the use of *Palembang Malay* in order to categorize and to analyze the data into types of *phonetic and syllabic* changes. Finally, it covers the distributions of the *vowel and consonant phonemes* in *Palembang Malay*. The participants of this study were *Palembang Malay* native speakers. There were seven native speakers whose ages range from 20 to 40 years old.

1.5 The Research Methodology

This study primarily employs a *qualitative method*. It specifically seeks to describe the changes of sounds from *Palembang Malay* which are considered to be interesting phenomena to analyze. In a similar vein, Creswell (2008) states that a *descriptive method* investigates detailed interpretation of people, places, or events in a setting in the *qualitative method*. Therefore, the investigation approach of the study has also affected the field of *historical linguistics*, especially in the *comparative method*. *The comparative method* concerns with the relationship between *Standard Malay* as an ancestor language and *Palembang Malay* as a descendent language.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data were collected from the voices of the participants using *Palembang Malay* that were recorded in group conversations and group interviews. Within one

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The Phonemic – Syllabic Comparisons of Standard Malay and Palembang Malay Using a Historical Linguistic Perspective

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month in *Palembang* and three months in *Bandung*, the data observation was done. The observation started from May 2012 to September 2012. This data observation was conducted by analyzing the process of sound changes in *Palembang Malay*. Voice records and interview notes were used as the data sources and the voice recordings were transcribed into voice transcriptions.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

The data obtained from two techniques were divided into several steps of analysis to answer the research questions. Miles and Huberman (1984) state that there are three steps in analyzing the data, namely *data reduction*, *data display*, and *conclusion (drawing/verifying)*. Firstly, *data reduction* refers to the process of *selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming* the data that emerge in written-up field notes or transcriptions (Miles and Huberman 1984). Secondly, after the data were reduced and the important items remain, the next step was to display the data. Miles and Huberman (1984) further suggest revealing the most frequent form of displaying data for qualitative data is in the form of narrative text. There are also some tables that are used to display the distributions of data including the frequencies and the percentages calculation. This study used *PhoTransEdit Online* application that helped to locate the correct *phonetic spelling* using the *International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) phonetic symbols*. Finally, the study presents conclusions through verifying the data from the observation, the participants' voice recordings, and the group interviews.

Novita Arsillah, 2013

The Phonemic – Syllabic Comparisons of Standard Malay and Palembang Malay Using a Historical Linguistic Perspective

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1.6 The Clarification of the Terms

To avoid misunderstandings of the problem in this study, there are several terms that have to be clarified as follows:

- Palembang Malay

Palembang Malay is *Malay* spoken by about 1.6 million inhabitants of *Palembang – Southern Sumatra, Indonesia*. *Palembang Malay* is highly influenced by *Malay* and *Javanese* (Dunggio, 1983).

- Standard Malay

In this study, *Standard Malay* refers to the *Wilkinson* system in 1908 which is considered to be the first *Malay* used widely in *Malaya, Singapore, and Brunei*. The system was recommended by the *Federated Malay States Government* in 1904 (Omar, 1989).

- Sound Changes

Sound changes in this study means to compare the sound changes between an ancestral language *Standard Malay* and its descent language *Palembang Malay* using the *historical linguistics' comparative method*.

- Types of Sound Changes

There are some types of attested sound changes that can classify what kind of sound changes one language undergoes, namely *lenition* and fortition, *sound addition*, *metathesis*, *fusion*, *unpacking*, *vowel breaking*, *assimilation*, *dissimilation*, and *abnormal sound changes* (Crowley, 1997).

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1.7 The Organization of the Paper

The chapter contains a general introduction that covers background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, research methodology consisting research design, data collection and data analysis, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

The second chapter employs some related theories which serve as the foundation of the study. It presents theories that were used to answer the research questions. Furthermore, some previous studies that are related to the study are demonstrated in this chapter.

The third chapter elaborates the research *methodology*, involving statements of the problems in the study and the research method that consists of research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis. This chapter also outlines the procedure of the study and the analysis techniques.

The fourth chapter presents the results of the study. It contains the research findings and discussions. The result analysis and the research questions' answers are reported in this chapter. Moreover, the explanations of the results are also deeply discussed.

The last chapter contains the interpretation of the results of the study. In addition, this chapter also briefly provides the conclusion and suggestions in accordance with the study.