THE LINGUISTIC STATUS OF *BAHASA TANSI* IN SAWAHLUNTO

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Abstract
The linguistic status refers to how a language is classified within the linguistic landscape, indicating whether it is considered a distinct language or a variation of another language based on its linguistic characteristics. This research aimed to analyze the linguistic status of Bahasa Tansi from a linguistic perspective using a descriptive method. The study focused on the phonetic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic features of Bahasa Tansi. The findings reveal that Bahasa Tansi is identified as Tansi Creole in West Sumatra. This determination is based on a comparative analysis of 206 words from the Swadesh list between Bahasa Tansi and standard Minangkabau, questionnaire and supported by interview responses. The Swadesh list analysis, calculated using the dialectometry formula, reveals a 21.8% lexical difference and a 71.3% difference in phonetic and phonological features between Bahasa Tansi and the Minangkabau language. Additionally, the questionnaire results highlight unique morphological features in Bahasa Tansi, specifically simpler affixes compared to Bahasa Indonesia, while its syntactic features share similarities with Bahasa Indonesia. Interview responses further corroborate the distinctiveness of Bahasa Tansi as a separate language from both Minangkabau and Bahasa Indonesia. Consequently, this study concludes that Tansi is considered as a creole in West Sumatera.

Key words: Language Variations, Language Status, *Bahasa Tansi*, Creole.

A. INTRODUCTION

Human have the ability to create new languages and adapt them to suit their needs. Humans possess the capacity for creating linguistic innovation, creating new sounds, vocabulary, and structure. Each language exhibits distinct linguistic characteristics such as sounds, vocabulary, structure, and occupies a specific status or position within the linguistic landscape, which encompasses a range of forms, from dialects, pidgins, and creoles, then to be fully recognized languages. Moreover, according to Denham and Lobeck (2010), defining a language remains challenging despite its daily use by people. Language is not

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merely a set of arbitrary sounds but a dynamic and systematic system governed by rules and structure. According to Genneti (2014), language adapts to its surrounding environment. In other words, language variations and changes occur in line with the evolution of human life. The diversity of languages introduces a wide array of linguistic structures and variations. Therefore, understanding the complexity of language requires scientific study, which allows the language description to be argumentatively unveiled.

Furthermore, one of the language variations is dialect which is a language choice that occurs within a particular social group in specific regions. People who speak different dialects of the same language can still understand each other; this is called mutual intelligibility. However, the distinction between a language and a dialect is not always clear-cut. Individuals are generally aware of the language they use, but determining whether their spoken communication qualifies as a distinct language or simply a dialect of another language can present challenges for them. Thus, dialects can be identified by examining their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Holmes, 2013). According to Wardhaugh (2006), language variations can be categorized into pidgin, creole, and lingua franca. A pidgin is a simplified language that arises when groups with different native languages need to communicate but do not share a common language, and it has no native speakers. However, creole arises when pidgin becomes the first language or becomes the mother tongue of a new generation, developing established structure and vocabulary than a pidgin. Furthermore, lingua franca is a language or dialect used to facilitate speakers who speak different languages or do not share the same native language or dialect.

However, language itself cannot exist on its own. Language is a cultural inheritance passed down through generations and exists due to various circumstances, including acculturation, trade, and colonization. For example, in Indonesia, one of the most culturally rich countries globally, has over 700 local languages. Among these are Javanese, Sundanese, Maduranese, Bugisnese, and Minangkabaunese. Minangkabaunese is widely spoken and is the dominant language in West Sumatra. Moreover, in West Sumatra, there is a multicultural city called Sawahlunto where people use Bahasa Tansi beside Minangkabau language and Bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Tansi originated from the coal mining workers during the Dutch colonial period. The Dutch brought forced laborers from various parts of Indonesia, mainly Java, who outnumbered the original population (Dian Sari et al., 2015). The dominance of Javanese culture led to acculturation between Javanese and Minangkabaunese cultures, creating a new language variation. According to Amin (2015), acculturation involves blending cultures and languages, as language is integral to culture. Thus, Bahasa Tansi emerged from acculturation and language contact in a multicultural environment.

Moreover, on 10th October 2018, The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Decree number 264/M/2018 officially certified Bahasa Tansi as an intangible heritage of Indonesia from West Sumatra. This marks a significant recognition of Tansi as the tradition and oral expression. This certification underscores its cultural importance within West Sumatra. However, many people in West Sumatra still do not know about the existence of this language. Due to

these reasons, the researcher is interested in conducting this research. Therefore, by the lack of awareness about Bahasa Tansi among local communities, the researcher aims to investigate its linguistic status, whether it is a new language or a part of language variation in West Sumatra. This study also seeks to raise awareness of Bahasa Tansi as linguistic items, not just as cultural items.

Several studies have explored Bahasa Tansi. The first study, conducted by Dian Sari et al. (2015), investigated dialectal variations and the origins of Bahasa Tansi by examining its phonetics and the origins of its words. The second study, by Pambudi (2019), sought to determine whether Bahasa Tansi is a distinct language or merely a dialect within West Sumatra. Using a sociolinguistic perspective, Pambudi argued that Tansi is a creole language rather than a variant of Minangkabau. This study focused exclusively on comparing Bahasa Tansi and Minangkabaunese in terms of vocabulary and phonetics.

In contrast, this study aims to throughly compare the grammatical features of Bahasa Tansi not only with Minangkabaunese, but also with Bahasa Indonesia. This includes examining phonetic and phonological features, morphological features, and syntactical features. Moreover, this research seeks to explain and determine the linguistic phenomenon in Sawahlunto, focusing on the linguistic status of Bahasa Tansi within its linguistic landscape. Various instruments will be used, including a list of 206 Swadesh words, questionnaires, and interviews. Moreover, understanding Bahasa Tansi is necessary due to its linguistic uniqueness and the need for a comprehensive understanding of its classification and structure. This research is important as it will reveal information about language variation, the linguistic characteristics of Bahasa Tansi, and language phenomena in West Sumatra, especially in Sawahlunto.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is fieldwork-based and falls under dialectology. It's a descriptive study that aims to determine if Bahasa Tansi is a new language or just a variation of an existing one by examining its grammar. According to Mahsun (2017), descriptive dialectology focuses on detailing the linguistic features of a language, such as its phonology, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, and sociolinguistic variations. This study specifically looks at phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax. It uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method calculates percentages of differences in vocabulary, phonetics, and phonology, while the qualitative method helps analyze and interpret non-numerical data for a deeper understanding. Dornyei (2007) notes that qualitative research includes various data sources like recorded interviews, photographs, and written materials such as field notes and journals.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
1. Research Findings

Based on the analysis of the data, the researcher found that there were the exact findings of the research. According to the research questions, there were several findings of the research:

a. **The Percentage and the Categories of Phonetic and Phonological Differences from the Swadesh List Results**

1) The percentage of lexical differences between Minangkabau Language and Bahasa Tansi, calculated using dialectometry formula, is as follows:

$$\frac{S \times 100}{n} = d \%$$

$$\frac{45 \times 100}{206} = 21.8 \%$$

It can be seen that the percentage result is 21.8%, which is obtain from **S** (the amount of different words) are 45, divided by **n** (the amount of words in the instrument, the Swadesh list which consists of 206 words) and then multiplied by 100. According to Guiter's (as cited in Mahsun, 2017), the result of the calculation above is categorized as speech difference. Speech difference is the variations or differences in how language is spoken, which characterize how individuals or group speak.

2) The percentage of phonetic and phonological differences between Minangkabau Language and Bahasa Tansi calculated using dialectometry formula, is as follows:

$$\frac{S \times 100}{n} = d \%$$

$$\frac{147 \times 100}{206} = 71.3 \%$$

It can be seen that the percentage result is 71.3 %, which is obtain from **S** (the amount of different words) are 147, divided by **n** (the amount of words in the instrument, the Swadesh list which consists of 206 words) and then multiplied by 100. Based on the Guiter's categories of dialectometry, the result of the phonetic and phonological calculation above is a language difference. Language difference refers to variations or differences between different languages, encompassing differences in linguistic features, including phonology that can distinguish one language from another.

The researcher found the percentage of lexical differences, as well as the phonetic and phonological differences, between the Minangkabau language and Bahasa Tansi using a dialectometry formula proposed by Seguy (in Lauder, 1993). The researcher found that Bahasa Tansi has 161 identical lexicons according to the Swadesh list. However, both the phonetic and phonological comparisons yielded 59 identical results.

b. The Types of Affixation

After analyzing the data, it was found that Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Tansi use several types of affixation that belong to the seven types of affixes by Kridalaksana (2010). However, there only five type of affixation are present in the data, namely prefixes, suffixes, confixes, simulfixes and combination of affixes. The table below shows that out of seven types of affixes according to Kridalaksana's theory, only five types are present in the data for Bahasa Tansi.

Moreover, after analyzing and comparing the data with the cue of standard Bahasa Indonesia, which consists of 140 instances of affixation, the researcher found only 101 instances of affixation in Bahasa Tansi. Bahasa Indonesia predominantly uses combinations of affixes, which is the highest category for both languages but much more frequent in Bahasa Indonesia. In contrast, Bahasa Tansi favors suffixes more prominently than Bahasa Indonesia. The presence of a simulfix in Bahasa Tansi is a unique feature not observed in standard Bahasa Indonesia. Overall, Bahasa Indonesia demonstrates a higher total frequency of affix usage compared to Bahasa Tansi. The breakdown of affix types is detailed in the following data:

Table 1 The Frequency Types of Affixes

No.	Type of Affixes	Frequency	
		Bahasa Indonesia	*Bahasa Tansi*
1.	Prefixes	29	17
2.	Suffixes	13	36
3.	Infixes	-	-
4.	Simulfixes	-	1
5.	Confixes	19	11
6.	Suprafixes	-	-
7.	Combination of affixes	79	36
Total		**140**	**101**

c. The Sentence Stucture

There are 160 data points examined, 86 pertain to word order. It was found that Bahasa Indonesia has 58 data points and Bahasa Tansi has 60 data points that aligns with the basic word order configurations of Bahasa Indonesia, as outlined by Chaer (2011). The remaining 28 data of Bahasa Indonesia and 26 data of Bahasa Tansi have other word order configurations. The amount of pattern of word order is shown in the following data:

Table 2 Frequency of Word Order

No.	Word Order Configurations according to Chaer	Frequency	
		Bahasa Indonesia	*Bahasa Tansi*
1.	SP (subject + predicate)	5	5
2.	SPO (subject + predicate + object)	26	27
3.	SPOA (subject + predicate + object + adverbial)	24	25
4.	SPOO (subject + predicate + object + object).	3	3

The table above shows in both languages, the SP configuration occurs 5 times each. Moreover, the SPO configuration is the most frequent and the occurrence is very similar in both languages, with only a one-instance difference. This indicates a strong alignment in using this common sentence structure, reflecting similar syntactic preferences in both languages for sentences involving direct objects. Next, is the frequency of the SPOA configuration is almost identical in both languages with only one difference. Lastly, the SPOO configuration that is exhibits an equal and it is the least frequent. This structure, which involves sentences with two objects, is used sparingly in both languages. The data show that Tansi and Bahasa Indonesia are syntactically very similar, with only a small number of sentences exhibiting different word orders. This suggests that despite remarkable differences in lexical, phonetic, and phonological aspects, as well as in the use of affixation, the syntax of Bahasa Indonesia and the data of Bahasa Tansi share a common foundation.

d. The Language Status of Tansi

Based on data analysis of lexical, phonetic, and phonological differences between Tansi and the Minangkabau language, it can be stated that Tansi is not a variation or dialect of the Minangkabau language. Moreover, comparative analysis of affixes between Tansi and Bahasa Indonesia also categorizes Tansi as a distinct language separate from Bahasa Indonesia, despite their common foundational sentence structures.

Furthermore, interview results support the view that Tansi speakers regard their language as equal to other languages, although opinions vary regarding its hierarchical status compared to Indonesian. They also recognize the existence of their language very well. Moreover, proficient informants can express all matters in Tansi, indicating its completeness and versatility for various contexts. Tansi speakers deeply respect and take pride in their language, viewing it as equal to other established languages. This perception is reinforced by its active

use, versatility, social acceptability, and preferred status in community settings.

2. Discussion

Based on the research findings, it reveals a 21.8% lexical difference and a 71.3% phonetic and phonological difference between the Tansi and Minangkabau languages. According to Guiter (in Mahsun, 2017) these percentages for lexicon and phonology can categorize dialectometry as follows:

Table 3 Categories of Dialectometry

Dialectometry		
Phonology	**Lexicon**	**Categories**
17-100 %	81-100 %	Language difference
12-16 %	51-80 %	Dialect difference
8-11 %	31 – 50 %	Sub-dialect difference
4-7 %	21 – 30 %	Speech in difference
0-3 %	<20 %	No difference

According to Guiter's dialectometry categories, the 21.8% of lexical differences can be considered as a speech difference. However, despite this lexical similarity, speakers of the two languages experience low mutual intelligibility, indicating that practical understanding is more challenging than the lexical similarity suggests. This low mutual intelligibility strongly suggests that the relationship between Tansi and Minangkabau is more complex than mere speech variation. The communication barrier, higher than what lexical differences alone would imply, points to deeper structural differences affecting comprehension. This is further supported by the high percentage of phonetic and phonological differences found, at 71.3%. According to Guiter's categorization, this level of phonological difference means Tansi and Minangkabau should be considered distinct languages rather than dialects of the same language. The significant divergence in sound systems is a key factor contributing to the low mutual intelligibility.

In contrast, a study by Sari et al. (2015) explored the dialectal variation of *Bahasa Tansi* in Durian 1 of the Barangin sub-district, concluding that Tansi in this area is heavily influenced by other vernacular languages, particularly Javanese. The study identified three distinct linguistic forms within the Tansi Durian 1 dialect: pidgin, creole, and vernacular. This research indicates that the linguistic situation in Tansi is highly variable, and this variability, due to the different concepts of pidgin, creole, and vernacular, may suggest ambiguity in its classification. However, Pambudi (2019) reported that Tansi is a creole in West Sumatra with 73% overall differences from Minangkabau, including 31% in lexical differences and 42% in phonetic differences. This finding is similar to the present study, which also classifies Tansi as a creole. However, the present study found a different extent of divergence, with 93.1% overall differences from Minangkabau, including 21.8% in lexical differences and 71.3% in phonetic differences.

Furthermore, compared to *Bahasa Indonesia*, the affixation in *Bahasa Tansi* is significantly different. *Bahasa Indonesia* uses multiple affixes, while Tansi employs a simpler process. The researcher identified several prefixes in *Bahasa Indonesia* that are uncommon in Tansi, including *'me-', 'mem-', 'ter-', 'ber-', '-per-',* and *'-ke-'*. Instead, Tansi uses prefixes such as *'ke-', 'be-', or 'te-',* indicating a less complex grammatical structure. Both languages use suffixes, but these often differ in form. *Bahasa Indonesia* typically uses suffixes like *'-kan', '-an',* and *'-i'*, whereas Tansi tends to prefer *'-in'* or *'-an'*. Additionally, Tansi uses more suffixes than *Bahasa Indonesia* and even includes simulfixes. Overall, affixation in Tansi is simpler compared to *Bahasa Indonesia*. The researcher found a significant difference in the combination of affixes between the two languages, with a frequency difference of 43 points. *Bahasa Indonesia* tends to use complex affixation patterns, often combining multiple affixes in a single word (e.g., *'mem-per-kan'*), while Tansi relies on simpler forms like reduplication or single-prefix or suffix combinations (e.g., *'di-in', 'n-i'*). This suggests that Tansi may have simpler morphological rules but relies more on syntactic and contextual elements to convey meaning. In this study, the researcher used Kridalaksana's (2010) theory to identify types of affixes.

The researcher also found notable similarities between *Bahasa Indonesia* and *Bahasa Tansi*, particularly in their word order configurations. Despite the low mutual intelligibility and significant differences in sounds and morphological systems, both languages share a common syntactic foundation. This was determined by examining the four basic word order patterns of *Bahasa Indonesia* as outlined by Chaer (2011). Additionally, interviews revealed that Tansi speakers view their language as being on par with standardized and established languages like *Bahasa Indonesia* and Minangkabau. This perception reflects the cultural and linguistic pride among Tansi speakers, emphasizing the status and importance of their language within their community. The study highlights how shared syntactic structures can bridge languages that are otherwise distinct in phonology and morphology, suggesting a deeper, shared linguistic heritage.

Although Tansi and Minangkabau share many lexical similarities, the significant phonetic differences prevent Tansi from being considered a dialect of Minangkabau due to the lack of mutual intelligibility. Tansi cannot be considered as a variation or dialect of Minangkabau language since there is no mutual intelligibility between their speakers. According to Chambers and Trudgill (1998), dialects are subdivisions or varieties of a language. Denham and Lobeck (2010) further explain that varieties can be considered dialects if their speakers can understand each other, indicating mutual intelligibility. Thus, Tansi's status as a separate language is underscored by its communication barriers with Minangkabau.

Furthermore, despite the syntactic structures being remarkably similar, the morphological features, such as affixes, show significant differences between Tansi and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Tansi and *Bahasa Indonesia* might share similar sentence structures, the way they form words through affixes are different, highlighting distinct morphological characteristics. Additionally, *Bahasa Tansi* has not undergone the process of standardization, which means it cannot be

considered the same language as a standardized one like *Bahasa Indonesia*. Standardization, as Wardhaugh (2006) describes, is the process by which a language is formally established and regulated, this process typically involves creating grammars, spelling guides, and dictionaries, and may also include developing a body of literature. Furthermore, Stockwell (2002) stated that standardization occurs when a language or variety is approved by institutions and utilized in prestigious texts such as national newspapers, religious texts, or canonical literature. The absence of standardization of Tansi prevents it from being uniformly taught, understood, and used in formal contexts, unlike *Bahasa Indonesia*, which has been standardized. Standardization not only facilitates clear communication and education but also helps preserve and promote the language through written literature and formal documentation.

Therefore, Tansi is more appropriately classified as a creole rather than as a pidgin. Pidgins, according to Brikerton (cited in Isa et al., 2015), have simplified syntax, word order, and other linguistic features because they typically arise spontaneously or develop from interactions among mutually unintelligible languages. Additionally, Hymes (2020) describes pidgin as a stable mode of communication that is not learned as a first language but serves as an auxiliary language with limited functions. In contrast, Tansi has developed a more complex system and is a mother tongue for its speakers, indicating it is a creole. Moreover, interview results show that Tansi speakers can fully express themselves in Tansi, without the limitations like pidgin.

Therefore, after thoroughly analyzing Tansi's grammatical features and comparing them with *Bahasa Indonesia* and Minangkabau, it is appropriate to classify Tansi as a creole. A creole forms when a pidgin evolves into a fully developed and stable language, acquiring a more complex structure and vocabulary, and becoming the native language of a community, passed down through generations. As Hymes (2020) argues that creole is a pidgin that has evolved into the first language of a community, accommodating all aspects of community life with a significantly expanded vocabulary and more complex structure compared to its pidgin origins. Key characteristic of creole includes having native speakers who use the creole as their first language or mother tounge, developed or expansion in morphology, syntax and phonology and stability and consistency in usage in community and not resicted in the usage. The development of new languages such as creoles demonstrates language's innate creativity and adaptability in addressing diverse sociocultural contexts and communication requirements (Mühlhäusler, 1996). This highlights the dynamic and flexible nature of Tansi which originating in a multilingual and multicultural setting. This shows how Tansi can develop and change to suit the needs of their speakers; as a result, Tansi is not just a blend of different languages but a fully functional language in its own right.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research was conducted to find out the linguistic status of *Bahasa Tansi* by examining its grammatical characteristic and compared it to Minangkabau language and *Bahasa Indonesia*. The findings underscored that

Tansi possesses unique grammatical features that set it apart significantly from both Minangkabau and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Differences in lexical choices, as well as variations in phonetic and phonological features compared to Minangkabau, prevent Tansi from being classified as a dialect of Minangkabau language. Furthermore, while Tansi's syntactic structure may be similar to standard *Bahasa Indonesia*, it exhibits a weak and inconsistent pattern of affixation, contrasting with *Bahasa Indonesia*'s standardized morphological features. These distinctions strongly suggest that Tansi qualifies as a creole when compared with the characteristics of standard languages, dialects, and pidgins. Therefore, it can be concluded that Tansi is best categorized as a Tansi creole. This classification emphasizes Tansi's status as a distinct language that has evolved uniquely within its multicultural context, incorporating influences from various linguistic sources to develop its own grammatical identity and communicative functions.

Additionally, this research can serve as a foundational resource for sociolinguistic and dialectology studies, particularly regarding the linguistic status of specific languages, with a focus on micro-linguistic aspects. Furthermore, with the conclusion that Tansi is categorized as a creole, future research avenues are suggested, as there is potential for Tansi to develop into a new standard or established language in West Sumatra. Further exploration from different perspectives of Tansi's linguistic features is recommended. Moreover, considering the influence of Javanese on Tansi, there is a need for deeper investigations to compare and contrast similarities and differences between these two languages.

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