



## **BAHASA TANSI IN USE: AT AND OUTSIDE HOME**

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### **Abstract**

Language use refers to the way speakers of a language use their language in different situations and contexts, including variations in written and spoken language. This research aimed to explore the dynamics of *Bahasa Tansi* use by the Sawahlunto community. It focused not only on language use at and outside but also on language use by children and the younger generation, as well as the language attitudes of the Sawahlunto people towards *Bahasa Tansi*. The research used a descriptive approach with data collection methods including Swadesh lists, questionnaires, and interviews with native Tansi speakers in Tansi Baru and Sikalang Village. The results showed that based on the lexical and phonological analysis of the Swadesh list, *Bahasa Tansi* was classified as a creole and was still not strong enough to be categorized as a language. These findings were derived from a comparative analysis of 206 words from the Swadesh list comparing Minangkabau and Bahasa Tansi. To this day, *Bahasa Tansi* is still used by the people of Sawahlunto in daily communication, with questionnaire results showing 86.8%. The community's positive attitude towards Tansi was also reflected in the questionnaire results, reaching 94%.

**Key words:** Sociolinguistics, Language Use, *Bahasa Tansi*, Language Attitude

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Language is a communication tool used for interaction among people. It allows for the exchange of thoughts, ideas, intentions, and states of mind. Communication relies on language as the primary means of conveying messages, making it essential in all aspects of human life. Sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society, focusing on language form, meaning, and context. This branch of linguistics examines how social, cultural, historical, and political factors influence language use, particularly in speech communities where language use varies by context.

Language use in different situations and contexts, including written and spoken variations, is a key topic in sociolinguistics. Factors such as the speaker, audience, topic, and location influence language choice. Younger generations

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play a crucial role in shaping language dynamics through media and education. Their daily interactions and attitudes toward language provide insights into societal language dynamics. Positive or negative attitudes towards language can significantly impact its use and preservation.

Indonesia's linguistic diversity includes around 700 languages, such as the Minangkabau language in West Sumatra. Another lesser-known language in the region is Tansi, originating from Sawahlunto city. The *Bahasa Tansi* emerged among coal miners during the colonial era, incorporating elements from various languages due to the miners' diverse backgrounds. This language blend reflects the cultural diversity and communication needs of the miners.

According to the results of previous study by Pambudi (2019) focused on the linguistic status of Tansi, classified Tansi as a creole. Meanwhile Sari et al. (2021) classified Tansi as a Minangkabau dialect, highlighting its use in mixed linguistic contexts.

This research was important to discuss because it explored information related to language dynamics in Sawahlunto. It examined how *Bahasa Tansi* was used in various contexts, particularly by children and the younger generation, and investigated the language attitudes of Tansi speakers in Sawahlunto. This influenced language loyalty and language maintenance in Sawahlunto. The research demonstrated that Bahasa Tansi was a language or language variation, such as pidgin, creole, or dialect, that played an important role in the culture and identity of the people in Sawahlunto.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used descriptive research to describe the current state of language as it exists in reality. The approach was chosen to align with the research objectives of portraying the language's use and attitudes accurately. According to Zaim (2014), descriptive research focuses on linguistic phenomena in the form of words rather than numbers, providing meaningful descriptions of existing realities. This research specifically examined the use of Bahasa Tansi both at home and outside, as well as the attitudes of Tansi speakers toward the language. Data for this study were respondents' answers to the Swadesh list, respondents' answers obtained from questionnaires, and informants' answers provided during interviews to obtain more in-depth information.

The data for this study were in the form of transcriptions of 206 words from the Swadesh list, which were used to compare *Bahasa Tansi* with Minangkabau. The second data were respondents' answers obtained from the questionnaire, which included 35 specific questions posed to 10 respondents. Of these 35 questions, 22 were related to language use, and the remaining 13 were related to language attitudes. Indicators were created by considering that language use and attitudes toward language are interrelated. The third data were informants' answers given during interviews to obtain more in-depth information. The interviews included 30 questions posed to 2 informants. Interview data were collected orally and then transcribed into written form. This process was important for obtaining valid data regarding the use of the *Bahasa Tansi*.

**C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Research Finding**

Based on the results of the data analysis, the Swadesh list was analyzed using the dialectometry formula by Guiter. Swadeshlist analysis compared the *Bahasa Tansi* with the Minangkabau language, which consists of 206 words, and found lexical differences of 46 words with a percentage of 22.3%. Apart from that, differences in phonetics and phonology were found in 147 words with Minangkabau, with a percentage of 71.3%. Apart from that, the researchers found the following results regarding the use of the *Bahasa Tansi* and language attitudes towards the *Bahasa Tansi*. These findings indicate differences not only in vocabulary but also in pronunciation and sound structure between the two languages. These lexical differences reflect variations in word usage, and phonetic and phonemic differences reflect variations in the way sounds are pronounced and differentiated. Guiter (in Mahsun, 2017) states that dialectometry can be categorized using these percentages for lexicon and phonology in the following ways:

**Table 1. Percentage Criteria of Dialectometry by Guiter (1973)**

Dialectometry		
Phonology	Lexical	Category
17% - 100%	81% - 100%	Different language
12% - 16%	51% - 80%	Different dialect
8% - 11%	31% - 50%	Different sub-dialect
4% - 7%	21% - 30%	Different speech
0% - 3%	20% - 0%	No difference

**a. The percentage of language use of Tansi at home**

Based on the results of the data analysis, researchers found that the Sawahlunto people use *Bahasa Tansi* in their daily lives, both at and outside home, used by children and the young generation in Sawahlunto. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the use of *Bahasa Tansi* in the *Bahasa Tansi*-speaking community has an overall percentage of 86.8%, followed by the percentage of *Bahasa Tansi* use at home reached 85.8%. This shows that the majority of Tansi speakers in Sawahlunto use this language in daily communication with their family members. Interview results strengthen these findings, as parents and siblings use Tansi as the main language in the household even though they sometimes use Indonesian. This indicates that the *Bahasa Tansi* still plays an important role in family life and is the main language in daily interactions.

**b. The percentage of language use of Tansi outside home**

According to the questionnaire's results, 85.6% of respondents use *Bahasa Tansi* outside home, this number does not differ considerably from its use at home. This percentage shows that the *Bahasa Tansi* is still actively

used in everyday life outside home environment. It is used in various social interactions among Tansi speakers, with friends, neighbors, and even when interacting with new people. This finding is further supported by interviews, which show that the people of Sawahlunto prefer to use the *Bahasa Tansi* outside home.

**c. The percentage of language use by children and young generation**

The use of the Tansi by children and the younger generation has a lower percentage, at 69%. Although still quite high, this figure is lower compared to the use of the *Bahasa Tansi* at and outside home. This indicates a slight decline in the use of the *Bahasa Tansi* among the younger generation. Factors such as the influence of other languages, media, and education may have contributed to this decline. However, the figure of 69% still shows that the majority of children and young people in Sawahlunto continue to use Tansi, which is a positive indication of the sustainability of this language in the future.

**d. The percentage of language attitude of *Bahasa Tansi***

Based on the results of the questionnaire regarding attitudes towards the *Bahasa Tansi*, the percentage was 94.4%, indicating that Tansi speakers have a positive attitude towards the *Bahasa Tansi*. They are happy and don't mind using the *Bahasa Tansi* in various contexts. This is also supported by interview results, which show that the Tansi-speaking community feels proud and happy and does not feel inferior or embarrassed when using Tansi in various social circumstances.

## **2. Discussion**

Based on Guiter's theory (1973), regarding the standards for distinguishing between lexical and phonological levels in dialectometry theory, in the findings section regarding lexical differences, Tansi was identified as a different speech with a percentage difference of 22.3% when compared to Minangkabau language. Although there are lexical similarities, Tansi cannot be considered a speech variation of Minangkabau because there is no mutual intelligibility between speakers of the two languages. According to Crystal (2008), mutual intelligibility is the ability of speakers of two different languages or dialects to understand each other without having to study the language or dialect specifically. This is often used as a criterion to distinguish between languages and dialects. This means that speakers of Tansi and Minangkabau do not understand each other. This low level of mutual understanding suggests that the relationship between Tansi and Minangkabau is more complex than just a variation in the way of speaking.

However, based on analysis at the phonetic and phonemic level, the *Bahasa Tansi* was identified as a different language with a difference percentage reaching 71.3%. These findings show that Tansi is a different language from Minangkabau. Although the vocabulary of the Tansi and the Minangkabau language have many similarities, there are significant differences in the way of pronunciation and sound structure between the two. But Tansi cannot be called a language because Tansi has not been standardized and has not fully met the criteria for a standard language. As

defined by James and Milroy (1991), who emphasize that standardization is a social and political process, they argue that standard language is not only about linguistic consistency but also about power and control, and that standard language often reflects and reinforces the social and political status of dominant groups. Based on this statement, it strengthens that Tansi cannot yet be called a language. Apart from the low lexical differences compared to Minangkabau language, Tansi has not gone through a standardization process from the government.

The results indicate that Tansi is now categorized as creole. When speakers of various languages interact with one another, a new language called creole is produced. According to Thomason and Kaufman (1988), creoles are formed through contact between two or more languages, with elements from the substrate language (the native language of the speaker) and the superstrate (the dominant language). Similar to Tansi, it was formed from language contact between the Minangkabau language and other languages during the Dutch colonial era.

Additionally, the second finding, namely the language use of Tansi, shows an overall percentage of 86.8%, which can be categorized as Tansi always being used by the Tansi speaking community in Sawahlunto, especially in the Tansi Baru area and Sikalang Village. This percentage is followed by the language use of Tansi at home, reaching 85.8%, which can be categorized as Tansi always used when communicating with family, such as with parents and siblings. Then the percentage of language use of Tansi outside home reached 85.6%, which can be categorized as Tansi always being used when communicating with interlocutors outside home, such as in market environments, local cultural events, or meeting new people.

Apart from that, the percentage obtained for the use of Tansi by children and young generation was 69%, which can be categorized as Tansi being often used by children and young generation circles in Sawahlunto, especially the Tansi Baru and Sikalang Village. This percentage is relatively low compared to its use at and outside home, where the social context is broader. Based on the data, children's language use is influenced by Indonesian use in educational contexts. In elementary schools where the context is formal, teachers and students use Indonesian, which is considered more formal than Tansi, which is considered a non-formal language context. Likewise, the younger generation is slightly more inclined to use Indonesian when communicating due to digital influences and technological advances. Even so, the children and young generation in Sawahlunto still use Tansi when communicating with their parents and siblings. According to Holmes (1992), language use refers to who you are talking to, the social context of the talk, and the function and topic of the discussion.

Moreover, the next finding from the questionnaire results in the aspect of language attitude of Tansi obtained a fairly high percentage, namely 94.4%, which was categorized as the Sawahlunto community having a high positive attitude towards their language. This is also supported by the results of interviews, which show that the people of Sawahlunto are always proud, happy, and confident in the language they use. They do not feel inferior or embarrassed when using Tansi, even though it is in public. The Sawahlunto government even holds a *Bahasa Tansi* competition every year.

This study offers a new perspective by comparing it to previous research. For example, Sari et al. (2021) concluded that Tansi is a dialect of Minangkabau. However, this study places a different emphasis by asserting that Tansi is actually a creole. Thus, this research not only broadens our understanding of the Tansi but also provides new insights into its linguistic status. Furthermore, this study also emphasizes attitudes towards the Tansi language. Afilta's research (2022), which focuses on code-switching, concluded that the attitude of Tansi speakers is not very positive, as code-switching frequently occurs among the younger generation when communicating in the Lembah Segar district. However, this study highlights that the attitude towards the Tansi language is notably positive among Tansi speakers in the Tansi Baru and Sikalang Village areas, based on data collected from individuals aged 20-65 years. Then, Pambudi's research (2019) states that Tansi is a creole language. This study reinforces that finding by emphasizing that Tansi is still categorized as a creole. Additionally, this study offers a new perspective by demonstrating that the use of Tansi and attitudes towards it remain consistent. The results show that the percentage of Tansi language use remains high and that there is a significant positive attitude towards the language among its speakers.

Based on the very positive language use and language attitude of Tansi speakers, it plays an important role in strengthening language loyalty and supporting language maintenance. According to Fishman (1991), language use in various social domains, such as family, community, and workplace, strengthens language loyalty. When language is used in important and recurring contexts, it creates emotional and cultural ties that strengthen loyalty to the language. Likewise with language maintenance, according to Spolsky (2004), language maintenance depends on community support, language policies, and widespread language use. Active use of language in education and media helps strengthen language maintenance.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The results showed strong language use and very positive language attitudes towards Tansi. When using Tansi, the people of Tansi Baru and Sikalang villages always use Tansi in appropriate contexts, such as at home when talking to parents, children, and siblings. Then, outside home, Tansi is still used in markets, schools, and community meetings. Tansi is also still used by children and the young generation in the area, although they occasionally use Tansi in educational contexts. The language attitude shown is very positive, showing how proud and happy they are to have Tansi to communicate with in their daily lives.

According to the findings on phonetic differences, Tansi can be considered a new language. However, Tansi is not properly said to be a language because the level of lexical differences is low when compared with the Minangkabau language. Apart from that, Tansi also does not meet standards as a language through the government's standardization process. Then, Tansi is categorized as Tansi Creole. Even so, Tansi will become a language if it is supported by other factors such as language maintenance, language loyalty, and strong grammatical features.

Based on research findings regarding language use in the *Bahasa Tansi*, researchers suggest that further research needs to be carried out, especially providing a more in-depth study regarding the comparison of language use in Tansi between various generations. Further research might compare the use of Tansi between different generations in Sawahlunto to see whether there has been a change in language preferences and how factors such as technology, globalization, and social change influence this.

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