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Tansi Creole Language: Identity and Communication in Sawahlunto Society

(Bahasa Kreol Tansi: Identitas dan Komunikasi dalam Masyarakat Sawahlunto)

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Abstract

Creole is an interesting linguistic phenomenon in Indonesia. One of them is the Tansi language, which comes from Sawahlunto and is used by coal workers from various regions in Indonesia such as Minangkabau, Malay, Java, China, Sundanese, Bali, Madurese and Bugis. In this society, Tansi Creole not only functions as a means of communication, but also reflects cultural identity and diversity. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of the data collected, in which the speech used by the community in Lembah Segar subdistrict. The aim of this study is to analyze the Tansi Creole language used by the community in Lembah Segar subdistrict. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation. The results of the study showed that the Tansi Creole language not only plays a role as a means of daily communication, but also becomes a symbol of cultural unity and diversity in Sawahlunto. Therefore, the Tansi Creole language is not only a linguistic heritage, but also a local identity for Sawahlunto society.

Abstrak

Bahasa Kreol merupakan fenomena linguistik menarik yang ada di Indonesia. Salah satunya adalah Bahasa Tansi, yang berasal dari Sawahlunto dan digunakan oleh buruh batubara yang berasal dari berbagai wilayah di Indonesia seperti Minangkabau, Melayu, Jawa, Cina, Sunda, Bali, Madura, dan Bugis. Dalam masyarakat ini, Bahasa Kreol Tansi tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat komunikasi, tetapi juga mencerminkan identitas dan keberagaman budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif untuk secara sistematis menggambarkan fakta dan karakteristik data yang dikumpulkan, yaitu tuturan yang digunakan oleh masyarakat di Kecamatan Lembah Segar. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis Bahasa Kreol Tansi yang digunakan oleh masyarakat di Kecamatan Lembah Segar. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi partisipatif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bahasa Kreol Tansi tidak hanya berperan sebagai sarana komunikasi sehari-hari, tetapi juga menjadi simbol persatuan dan keberagaman budaya di Sawahlunto. Oleh karena itu, Bahasa Kreol Tansi bukan hanya merupakan warisan linguistik, tetapi juga merupakan identitas lokal bagi masyarakat Sawahlunto

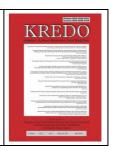
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INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who interact by using language as a means of communication. Communication definitely facilitate social interactions. Furthermore, we need a language as a basis of such interactions. All over the world, there are various languages that characterize and differentiate regions. Language is not a single thing, but has These different variations. language variations are influenced by socio-cultural factors, where the individual or group Although sociolinguistics explain language variations that emerge based on the social context and structure of society, but sometimes the meaning contained in someone's speech is difficult to understand or exceeds sociolinguistic understanding (Mailani, et. al., 2022).

Sociolinguistics is a branch of science that focuses on the study of how language relates to society (Wati, et. al., 2020). Language has a strong connection with society. As means communication among individuals in the society, language plays a very important role. Besides, language also has a significant social function in forming identity and strengthening social relations between individuals in society. Selain itu, bahasa juga dapat mencerminkan nilainilai dan norma-norma sosial yang ada di dalam masyarakat (Arman, et. al., 2023).

In sociolinguistics, the relationship between language and society is an interesting research focus because it provides valuable insight into how language operates in the social context of society, especially to social relations within a community, as well as how society conveys and constructs aspects of their social identity through the use of language (Yusup, Lukman, & Gusnawaty, 2024).

In the beginning, creoles received little attention from linguists. However, as time went by, creoles began to attract the interest of researchers and many studies were conducted on creoles throughout the world. This is due to the fact that the creole language, no matter how it is formed. remains a means communication used by its society. Talking about creoles, we are discussing a type of language that is based on aspects. There are four sociological important factors that need be considered in determining the type of standardization, language. (1) autonomy, (3) history, and (4) vitality (Muhlis, 2021).

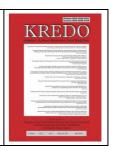
This language is the result of the development and mixing of different languages, often formed in regions with complex colonial histories. Creoles have unique characteristics reflect that interactions between diverse cultural groups. Creoles often appear as a language of daily communication in communities that use different mother tongues. This language is often used as a means of communication between people with different language backgrounds (Asrifan, 2021).

In sociolinguistics, creoles are an interesting research subject because they can provide valuable insight into how language operates in society, especially in the context of social relations within a community, as well as how people use language to convey and construct their social identity (Mutmainnah, 2018).



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Tansi language is a creole which emerged in Sawahlunto, West Sumatra, during the Dutch colonial period when coal miners worked there. This language is formed from a mixture of various languages used by miners, including Minangkabau, Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Sundanese, Balinese, Madurese and Bugis. Tansi language has important historical and cultural value for Sawahlunto society and Indonesia as a whole. The use of the Tansi language reflects the combination and diversity of regional languages in which have Indonesia unique characteristics, and this language is recognized as part of the culture of the region. The Tansi language plays a role as a means of daily communication for people in Sawahlunto. This language is an important means for interaction among people also used in various social contexts, such as in families, communities and daily activities in Sawahlunto.

This research is in line with the study (Afilta & Jufrizal, 2022) entitled of "Code-Switching in Tansi Language used by people in Lembah Segar". This research aimed to analyze the types and functions of code-switching that occur in public conversations in Lembah Segar subdistrict. The researchers analyzed conversations in Tansi language Minangkabau which carried out by people in this region. The study results showed that intra-sentential switching was the most common type of code-switching. Moreover, the code-switching function that most frequently used by people in Lembah Segar is interjection. The results of this study provide an important contribution to the field of sociolinguistics because they show the close relationship between language and society.

By those facts, the researcher chose the use of Tansi Creole language in Berangin sub-district, Sawahlunto to be used as research object because it is very interesting to discuss as the language in Sawahlunto has unique characteristics that reflect the close relationship between the language and culture of the local people. This research will be able to make a valuable contribution to the field of linguistics by digging deeper into the culture of local communities, so this research has the potential to support development in the field of sociolinguistics as a whole and add to a better understanding of the history and development, maintenance and preservation of language, also increasing cross-cultural understanding Sawahlunto.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Basic Concepts of Creoles

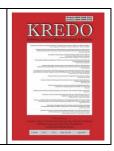
The origin of the term "creole" comes from Portuguese *crioulo*, which consists of the word *criar* means "raise" and the suffix *oulo* that refers to "authenticity is a concern" (Dewi & Theresia, 2021). Creole is a field of linguistic study that emerged because of the relationship between language and social society (Purawinangun & Wiharja, 2019). Creole is a form of pidgin that relies heavily on native speakers. Many of these pidgin variants later developed into

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creoles. It is generally used by children as their first language and has widespread use in various contexts (Asrifan, 2021). According to classical creole theory, creole is a pidgin language acquired naturally by native speakers who are descendants of pidgin speakers (Budiman, 2020).

Creole is the result of expanding the structure and vocabulary of a pidgin to express meaning and function similar to the first language. Creole emerged when a new generation of children use pidgin as their mother tongue. For example, when a man and a woman with different languages get married, both have knowledge of pidgin and learn their partner's language. Pidgin then developed into the language used at home and became the mother tongue of their children (Ariyana, 2019). Creoles are known as different languages or dialects of a particular language (Nopianti, et. al., 2019).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Creoles are the result of a pidgin development which has native speakers. This language is the mother tongue for a group of people with diverse backgrounds. Creoles are formed through a combination of two or more languages used in the context of meetings by individuals who come from different groups or ancestry. Most pidgins will be developed into creole. This language is the first language for children and is used in various communication contexts. As an example, Tok Pisin, which has become the first language for many speakers and has developed according to existing linguistic needs. Creoles also experienced several processes, namely Decreolization, Postcreole Continuum, and, Hypercreolization (Ariyana, 2019).

First, Decreolization is the process in which a creole dissolves into a native pidgin when they meet. This occurs when the influence of a pidgin affects a creole language and causes it to undergo changes that are more similar to native pidgins. Second, Post-creole Continuum is process in which a series of language variations develop as creole speakers are language. taught a standard variations occur along a continuum, with some speakers using creoles that are closer to the standard language, while others stick to the thicker creole variations. Third, Hypercreolization, a process of creole language experiencing development that emphasizes the uniqueness of the creole, moving away from the existing standard language form. This occurs when creole speakers actively maintain their creole characteristics and features on purpose (Purawinangun & Wiharja, 2019).

Creole languages are formed through a process called creolization, in which two or more languages are mixed in the context of encounters, especially in markets or trade centers, by individuals who come from different ethnic backgrounds or ancestry. This process occurs when a pidgin language, which was originally developed by adults as a second language, becomes the mother tongue and main language for a particular group. The creole language then developed and had native speakers, also had a distinctive structure and vocabulary. Many of the creole languages known today emerged in the last 500 years as a result of the expansion of European maritime power and trade during the Colonial Period, which led to the spread of European colonial empires. The process of forming a creole language involves social, historical and cultural factors, as well as the influence of the

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languages involved in the creolization process (<u>Budiman, 2020</u>).

The researchers can conclude that the creole process begins when two or more languages meet and interact in a meeting situation, such as in a market or trading center. People from different ethnic backgrounds or ancestry use these languages in daily communication activities.

Sociolinguistic Functions in Creole

Sociolinguistics studies language by considering the interaction among language and society, including the individuals who use the language (<u>Utami</u> & Hairunisah, 2023).

Sociolinguistics in the context of creoles involve understanding the interaction among language and society, as well as how the language experienced development and adaptation in various situations and contexts. Furthermore, sociolinguistics plays an important role in uncovering language variations that exist in a particular society, including creoles used by people in the context of their communication.

Gaining an understanding of these sociolinguistic factors, we can explore in greater depth how creoles play a role as a means of communication and as a culture expression in the communities that use it. Thus, sociolinguistics has an important role in understanding the complex relationship between creole and its society. As well as sociolinguistics contributes to understanding the social, cultural and political aspects related to the use of creole.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach. According to Bungin, qualitative approach is considered as the only reliable and relevant method for understanding social phenomena or human actions (Adlini, et. al., 2022).

Researchers used a descriptive method to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of the existing data (Harmoko, et. al., 2022). The data collected was a speech spoken by the people in Lembah Segar. The researcher collected the data through an interview and documentation. Interview method is an approach to collect information that involves direct interaction between researchers and respondents through verbal questions and answers, with predetermined objectives (Sugiyono, 2022).

In this research, data analysis techniques were used based on *Moleong* theory, which consists of the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Saadah, et. al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of Tansi Creole in Sawahlunto

The history of mining in Sawahlunto reflects significant changes from an agricultural and plantation area to a modern city known as *Kota Arang*. Sawahlunto is a city that has a history as the oldest mining city in Indonesia. This city is known for its natural resources in the form of coal mines which were exploited by the Dutch colonial government (Rezeki, 2021). This history began in 1851 when Ir. C. De Groot

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discovered coal deposits in East Singkarak. Then in 1868, Ir. W.H. de Greve, a geologist from the Netherlands, discovered coal seams in Ulu Air, an uninhabited hill valley along the *Ombilin* river (Perdiana & Mubarak, 2022).

The discovery of coal reserves in Sawahlunto had the aim of meeting the fuel needs of steamships, which at that time was very important. This encouraged the Dutch colonial government to exploit the mine. In order to support this exploitation, mining companies owned by the Dutch colonial government used large numbers of forced laborers. The Dutch colonialists reached an agreement with the Department of Justice in Batavia to employ prisoners, mainly from the already overcrowded Glodok and Cipinang prisons. With the presence of these workers, the history of mining began in the interior of West Sumatra, which then had an impact on the Tansi community in Sawahlunto (Syafrini, et. al., 2022).

In order to provide a place for mining workers, an assistant of Tanah Datar Resident named H.G. Heyting proposed to build a workers' village. However, this proposal implemented. As an alternative, mining companies build barracks for workers known as Tansi. There were three definions of Tansi. First, Tansi defined as an abbreviation of "tahanan besi", refers to the forced laborers who were always bound by iron chains. Second, Tansi defined as an abbreviation of "tahanan kongsi" which refers to Chinese descendants who are the next generation of Chinese laborers who were sold by labor sending companies in Pinang Singapore. Third, Tansi defined as a barracks or residence for workers

(Rosmiati, Wahyuni, & Syarifuddin, 2020).

Initially, there were three Tansi established in the old city center, namely *Tansi Besi* for people bound by chains, *Tansi Tanah Lapang*, and *Tansi Baru* in the village of *Air Dingin*. However, along with the expansion of mines and the opening of new mines in the north, new tansis continued to be built. The development of mining locations and the establishment of new tansis, such as in the villages of *Surian*, *Sungai Durian*, and *Sikalang*, form what is called the old city terrace (Pratama & Suryani, 2020).

In these tansis, miners experienced an unfair social life, where they are always monitored and often become victims of violence. This supervision was carried out by foremen who lived around the tansi, as well as by colonial officials and company management (<u>Pratama & Suryani, 2020</u>).

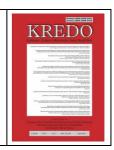
However, social interaction between workers at the tansi tends to be more open than when they are at the mining site. There are wards and small streets known as alleys, as well as kitchens and bathrooms which are places where miners meet and facilitate social interaction between them. Apart from the local people of Minangkabau, there are also other ethnic groups to Sawahlunto, including the Chinese community, Batak, Sundanese, Madurese, Bugis, Balinese and Javanese (Putri, 2022).

As a result of these meetings, communication occurs involving various levels of complexity, ranging from simple to more complex. This communication is characterized by the existence of a



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"language" that can be understood and used together in social interactions between workers. This language later became known as the Tansi language. The Tansi language became a significant artifact from the colonial period in Sawahlunto because Dutch colonial interests were the main supporter in the development of this language.

The Use of Tansi Creole in Sawahlunto

Tansi language is a Creole language originating from Sawahlunto, used by coal workers who live in mining pits or tansi. This language is a mixture of various languages used by mining workers who come from various regions in Indonesia, such as Minangkabau, Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Sundanese, Balinese, Madurese and Bugis. Examples of the use of Tansi Creole in greetings include: ' Uni' sister in Minang language), 'Mas' (older man or older brother in Javanese), 'Kang' (a word of greeting for older men or older brothers in Sundanese), 'Beli' (a word of greeting for older men or older brothers in Balinese), 'Deyeng' (a word of greeting for older men or older brothers in the Bugis language), 'Daeng' (greetings for older men in Chinese), 'Incek' (a word of greeting for older women or older sisters in Chinese), and 'Koko' a word of greeting for older men or older brothers in Chinese). There are also words of greeting 'ke' which is thought to originate from Javanese 'koe'. Furthermore, there is 'Kede' (Kade) which comes from Malay which means stall, 'Cammana' (cemana) which means "how" in Malay, and 'Kerna' (karna) which means "because" in Malay.

The use of Tansi language in sentences uses informal language, so it is very simple and informal. There are also words and sentences cut from certain languages. For example:

No	Tansi Creole	Indonesian
1	Eh, mana aja ke, kok	Eh. Kemana aja
	lamo gak ketok-	kamu, kok lama tidak
	ketok?	kelihatan?
	Ndak do mana-	Tidak ada kemana-
	mana?	mana
2	Ni neni, mo pigi pasa	Kak neni, mau pergi
	ke lik?	(ke) pasar kamu?
	Ndak, mo pigi kede	Tidak, mau pergi (ke)
		warung
3	Kalau pasa, mo titip	Jika (ke) pasar, mau
	apa ke?	titip apa kamu?
	Ndak, aku sanka mo	Tidak, aku sangka
	pigi pasa, aku mo	mau pergi ke pasar,
	titip lado.	aku mau titip cabe.
4	Aku ndk tau, kek	Aku nggak tau, kayak
	mana ke tu ha?	gimana dia?
	Ndak tau do ha	Aku tidak tahu
5	ince ngambil air di	Kak (perempuan)
	kolang-kolang ya?	ambil air di parit ya?
6	Udah ke kabek-in	Sudah kamu ikatkan
	jawi ke?	sapimu?
7	Kecek ke main game.	Kata kamu mau main.

Table 1. Example of Tansi Creole Use

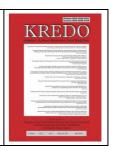
From the examples above, it can be seen that there is a combination of Indonesian, Minang, and Chinese which produces the Tansi language that has its own uniqueness. Javanese is also quite dominant in the use of Tansi because many miners come from the island of Java. In terms of syntax, there is a passive sentence structure in the Tansi language that uses the word "*Kenak*" before the predicate. For example, "Ke kalo jaek kenak marah sama bapak ntik" (If you're naughty you'll be scolded by your father). This example shows that in Tansi language, passive sentences do not use affixes "di" like in Indonesian, but it has its own pattern, "kenak+predikat" (even it is in the form of verbs, nouns, or adjectives). From this it can be seen that the Tansi language has a flexible codification (easily changed)

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based on the historical background of miners and social conditions known as "socio-historical syntax".

The lexicon description of the Tansi language states that this language has a relatively limited vocabulary because most of the words come from various languages which have undergone changes form, both phonologically morphologically. However, the use of various vocabularies does not indicate that the Tansi language only consists of "borrowed" words from one language to another. In contrast, the Tansi language is considered a pidgin because none of its language structures are directly borrowed from other languages.

The Function of Tansi Creole for Communication in Sawahlunto

Creoles became a means of strengthening tolerance for immigrants or workers in Sawahlunto at that time. This language makes it easier to convey the workers' thoughts in inter-ethnic communication because language is a symbol used to express thoughts through messages or events that want to be conveyed (Rahman, et. al., 2022).

Currently, Creole Tansi is used in daily communication by people in Durian, for deliberation in resolving conflicts or differences of opinion. Besides, it is also used in communicating death events, thanksgivings, weddings, and other traditional events that have communication. The Tansi Creole language has also been recognized as part of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage (Karim, 2019).

Tansi Creole has a strong role in forming the social identity of individuals

and the Sawahlunto society. Tansi Creole is used as an identifying characteristic or group marker. When someone speaks Tansi Creole, this indicates their affiliation with the society that speaks this language. It is useful in identifying individuals as members of the Sawahlunto society. This is a reflection of culture and history which creates a sense of pride and solidarity among the Sawahlunto people. As tools to strengthen social ties between community members. When people communicate in the same language, they create space for understanding each other, experiences, and building more intimate relationships. Tansi Creole has a high symbolic value in maintaining cultural heritage. The use of this language helps in maintaining the oral traditions, folklore, songs and the culture of local community.

Tansi Creole also has a significant function in social integration. It creates a shared social space where individuals from various backgrounds can meet, interact, and share experiences. Language helps to reduce the language gap between dominant groups and the minority. Tansi Creole plays a unifying role by providing a communication language used by various ethnic groups (Minangkabau, Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Sundanese, Balinese, Madurese and Bugis) to create identity, recognize equality and build an inclusive national identity.

By learning and applying Tansi Creole, someone can increase their knowledge of culture, social and political policies, linguistic variations, intercultural interactions, and language in general. This language can be a window that opens up the opportunities to increase knowledge and expand the understanding of the world.



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CONCLUSION

Tansi is a Creole that emerged in Sawahlunto and is used by coal workers who live in mine shafts or in prisons. This language the mixture result of various languages used by mining workers from various regions in Indonesia, such as Minangkabau, Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Sundanese, Balinese, Madurese and Bugis. The example of Tansi Creole used in Sawahlunto in greetings are *Uni*, *Mas*, Kang (Kan), Beli, Deyeng (Deyen), Daeng (Daen), Incek (Ince). Moreover, there are also several greeting words in the Tansi language which come from Javanese, such as 'ke' that possibly comes from the word 'koe'. There is also the word 'kede' (kade) which probably comes from Malay and means "stall". The word 'cammana' in Malay means "how" found in Tansi language, while the word 'kerna' in Malay which means "because" is also found in Tansi language.

The function of the Tansi Creole in communication has a strong role in forming the social identity of individuals in Sawahlunto society, owe the important role in social integration by facilitating cross-group communication, reducing language gaps, increasing community participation, maintaining identity and diversity, and creating a social space that is together. In addition, Tansi Creole plays a unifying role by providing the language of communication used by various ethnic groups.

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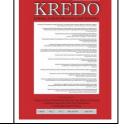
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