

## PHONOLOGICAL AND LEXICAL DIFFERENCES IN PULAU LAYANG, RANTAU ALAY, AND SALAM BUKU VILLAGES

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### Abstract

This study investigates the dialectal variations within the Jambi Malay language as spoken in three villages: Pulau Layang, Rantau Alai, and Salam Buku, all located in the Batang Masumai Sub-district of Merangin Regency, Jambi Province. The study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative descriptive methods. Data were collected using a Swadesh list consisting of 200 basic vocabularies. The theoretical framework guiding this study is rooted in the field of dialectology. The results reveal that the dialects spoken in Pulau Layang, Rantau Alai, and Salam Buku are highly similar overall, suggesting that they likely belong to a single dialect cluster within the Jambi Malay language. However, the data also reveal clear and consistent differences, especially at the phonological and lexical levels, which indicate localized linguistic shifts influenced by geography, social interaction, or historical migration patterns. From the analysis of the 200 vocabulary items: 113 items were identified as cognates, 77 items exhibited phonological differences, 30 items showed lexical differences. These findings suggest that while the dialects are mutually intelligible and share a strong common linguistic foundation, there are distinctive features that differentiate one village from another. These features are important markers of regional identity and demonstrate the dynamic nature of language change even within a relatively small geographical area.

**Keywords;** lexical, phonology, dialectology

### INTRODUCTION

Language, society, and culture have a very intense relationship that is inseparable (Changas, Angela; Taffarel, Korotowī; Txicao, 2024; Cummins, 2021). Language has an influence on society and culture and vice versa. When we discuss, the language studied is indirectly related to society (Indriati, 2015). In general, people who are said to be residents of an area must use the local language where they live to communicate with

each other with the same speakers. Local language is the language used by natives of an area in the context of a multilingual area and is conventional, meaning that there is an agreement between fellow speakers.

One of the regional languages in Indonesia, is Jambi Malay. However, the Jambi Malay isolect spoken by one community can be different from other communities living in different areas. These differences can be in the form of phonological and lexical differences which are the realm of dialectology studies. Dialectology is a branch of linguistics that studies language variations by treating them with an intact structure (Dewi et al., 2024).

Dialectology also examines the differences in isolects by looking at these differences (Chambers & Trudgill, 2004). The differences between one isolect and another are analyzed so that the existence of an isolect can be determined; as a language, as a dialect or as a sub dialect (Nadra & Reniwati, 2009). Jambi Malay isolect in Batang Masumai Sub-district which is divided into three villages is unknown whether it includes the same dialect or different dialects. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct dialectological research to find out the results of the percentage of differences.

The observation area of the researcher here is to try to describe the phonological variation and lexical variation of Jambi Malay language in Batang Masumai District, Merangin Regency. The researcher's used to determine the isolect status between languages being compared is the geographical factor. The closer an area is to another area, the less differences there are in the language and vice versa. Researchers took three observation points in Batang Masumai District, Merangin Regency, namely: Pulau Layang, Rantau Alai, and Salam Buku Village.

This research was conducted based on the kinship or similarity of languages used by people between villages in understanding the language used so that local people often misunderstand and misinterpret the meaning of the words used. Another fundamental reason is that research on the Jambi Malay language in this region has never been carried out, so there is no language map that thoroughly describes the dialectal and dialectometric variations of the Jambi Malay language in Batang Masumai District, Merangin Regency. Dialectological research is needed to see an overview of the linguistic conditions that occur in the observation point area.

Some previous studies related to this research are research conducted by Afria et al., (2024); Afria & Lijawahirinisa, (2020); Alfikri et al., (2023); Dewi et al., (2024); Harmedianti et al., (2023); Imansari et al., (2023); Kartika & Fitriana, (2025); Setiawan et al., (2024); Taembo, (2025). All these studies explain lexical and phonological variations with a dialectological approach, meaning that they have similarities in the use of theories and methods. While the difference lies in the place of research and the point of observation. The most relevant research is the research conducted by Afria & Lijawahirinisa, (2020) and Alfikri et al., (2023). Both studies conducted dialectological research in the same area, namely Merangin Regency - but the difference is the observation point. The results of the research will be different.

## **METHOD**

This research uses qualitative and quantitative methods (mix method) (Creswell, 2014; Bowen, 2009). The data comes from spoken language based on 200 swadesh vocabularies used by speakers in Pulau Layang, Rantau Alai, and Salam Buku villages. The data was obtained from informants who have met valid criteria (Mahsun, 2012; Sudaryanto, 2015). Data collection was conducted using interview and questionnaire techniques. Data analysis used comparative method and dialectometric method (Wieling & Nerbonne, 2015).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of field research obtained some dialktology data in the form of lexical and phonological variations. The results of data analysis by comparing observation points 1, 2, and 3 found 113 cognate data (the same form and meaning), meaning they share a common form and meaning across all three villages. This high number supports the general mutual intelligibility among the dialects. Phonological variations between observation points found 6 data, respectively 1 data in OP1 and 2, 2 data in OP2 and 3, and 3 data in OP3 and 1. Lexical variations found 30 data.

### **Fonological Variation**

Phonological variation is a variation of phonemes in the form of vowels, consonants, and diphthongs. As explained, there are 6 different data at the observation

point. However, when viewed from the phoneme correspondence, 77 data were found. These variations are  $\eta \sim \emptyset \sim \eta / \#$ ;  $e \sim i \sim i / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim r \sim r / \#$ ;  $i \sim i \sim \emptyset / \text{ultima}$ ;  $m \sim \emptyset \sim \eta / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim u \sim u / \text{penultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim p \sim p$ ;  $\emptyset \sim c \sim c / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim e \sim a / \text{penultima}$ ;  $m \sim m \sim \emptyset / \text{penultima}$ ;  $a \sim a \sim \emptyset / \text{antepenultima}$ ;  $n \sim \emptyset \sim n / \#$ ;  $r \sim r \sim R / \text{ultima}$ ;  $i \sim \emptyset \sim I / \text{ultima}$ ;  $u \sim \text{ow} \sim u / \#$ ;  $a \sim a \sim u / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim o \sim u / \text{ultima}$ ;  $a \sim o \sim a / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim a \sim a / \text{penultima}$ ;  $i \sim \emptyset \sim I / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim i / \text{ultima}$ ;  $t \sim t \sim \emptyset / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim i / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim p / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim h / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim h / \#$ ;  $ai \sim ai \sim i / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim t / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim o \sim ua / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim a / \text{penultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim r / \text{penultima}$ ;  $e \sim e \sim ea / \#$ ;  $d \sim \emptyset \sim \emptyset / \text{penultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim o \sim u / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim R / \text{penultima}$ ;  $a \sim o \sim a / \text{antepenultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim n / \text{penultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim ia / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim s \sim s / \text{ultima}$ ;  $i \sim \emptyset \sim i / \text{ultima}$ ;  $e \sim ia \sim ia / \text{penultima}$ ;  $l \sim \emptyset \sim \emptyset / \#$ ;  $e \sim e \sim i / \text{ultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim \emptyset \sim l / \#$ ;  $a \sim \emptyset \sim \emptyset / \text{antepenultima}$ ;  $\emptyset \sim o \sim ua / \#$ ;  $\emptyset \sim i \sim i / \#$ .

The results of the dialectometric calculation comparing each observation point obtained 0.5% OP1-OP2, 1% OP2-OP3, and 1.5% OP3-OP1. Based on the dialectometric indicators, the three observation points get the linguistic status of “no difference”. This is due to the significant similarities between the three observation points in the use of dialect, it means that there is only a small difference in pronouncing the sounds of the language. Furthermore, this is indicated variations in pronunciation while maintaining similar meanings. These differences may include changes in vowels, consonant shifts, or tonal variations

## Lexical Variation

Based on research 30 items showed lexical differences, where completely different words are used to express the same concept. These lexical variations are especially significant because they reflect deeper cultural or historical influences, such as contact with other languages or dialects.

The significance of this work is threefold: academic, practical, and cultural. It will generate the first detailed linguistic map of the area, contribute new methodologies to the field of dialectology, and provide a foundational resource for crafting effective local language preservation policies. Ultimately, this study serves as a crucial effort to document and safeguard Indonesia's threatened linguistic diversity while providing a model for future research in other complex regional contexts.

## Conclusion

These findings suggest that while the dialects are mutually intelligible and share a strong common linguistic foundation, there are distinctive features that differentiate one village from another. These features are important markers of regional identity and demonstrate the dynamic nature of language change even within a relatively small geographical area. In conclusion, the study contributes to our understanding of intra-dialectal variation in Jambi Malay and provides valuable insights into how geography, social interaction, and historical context shape the evolution of local dialects. The data collected may also serve as a foundation for further research in linguistic mapping, language preservation, and regional language policy.

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