



**Journal of Linguistic and Literature Studies**

**ISSN: 3032-0739**

**Vol. 2 No. 1, March 2024, pp 39-48**

**<https://doi.org/10.36663/jolles.v2i1.667>**

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## **Taboo in the Frame of *Tri Hita Karana*: Balinese Language Spoken in Menyali Village**

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### **Article History**

*Submitted: February 25<sup>th</sup> 2024*

*Revised: March 20<sup>th</sup> 2024*

*Accepted: March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024*

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### **Abstract**

*Taboo language is a local culture that is very important as the identity of each region. However, due to developments over time, culture in the form of taboo language is starting to be abandoned by Balinese people. This also happened in Menyali Village. New studies related to taboo language are urgently needed as a step to revitalize taboo language. Therefore, this research discusses taboo in Balinese language spoken in Menyali Village as a concrete action to protect taboo languages from extinction. This study focused on taboo words used in the Village of Menyali as a research object. The data was analyzed with descriptive qualitative design. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with three informants and used interview guide as an instrument. The results showed that there were 45 (forty-five) taboo words used in Menyali Village. These taboo words were classified into three scopes based on the Tri Hita Karana concept, namely there were 15 words in Parhyangan, 24 words in Pawongan, and 6 words in Palemahan. This study is expected to provide implications in linguistics, especially for preserving Balinese culture in the form of taboo language.*

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**Keywords: Taboo Words; Balinese; Menyali Village**

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### **Recommended Citation**

Mulana, I., & Mahendrayana, G. (2024). Taboo in the Frame of *Tri Hita Karana*: Balinese Language Spoken in Menyali Village. *Journal of Linguistic and Literature Studies*, 2(1), 39-48.  
<https://doi.org/10.36663/jolles.v2i1.667>

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Taboo language is a culture that has been passed down from generation to generation and has a large role in personal identity. Based on the etymology taboo is something that needs to be avoided, the term taboo was first introduced in 1777 by Captain James Cook who came from England (Affini, 2017). This is in accordance with the statement of Wardhaugh (2000) The word "taboo" refers to a social norm that forbids certain actions that might be harmful, like experiencing guilt or anxiety. Taboo language is created based on the personality and culture

of the local community. This indicates that the relationship between culture and taboo language is very close. This is in accordance with the statement of Laksana (2003) that taboo language is closely tied to the cultural system as a social order. Based on this, each region has its own unique and distinctive taboo language. One of them is in Menyali Village. Taboo language in this village is influenced by the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, namely the basic concept to create a harmonious relationship with God "*Parhyangan*", relationship with fellow human beings "*Pawongan*", and relationship with environment "*Palemahan*" (Yhani & Supastri, 2020).

Based on preliminary observations and due to developments over time, culture in the form of taboo language is only known and understood by the elderly. In other words, the younger generation as the future generation have no understanding related taboo language as their culture. One example of taboo language culture in Menyali Village is the prohibition on referring to mouse as *bikul*. This is because the Village community believes that if mouse called *bikul*, especially in the agricultural sector, the mouse will cause trouble and destroy rice crops. Based on that, this taboo term is unknown to the younger generation. Moreover, in Menyali Village, the used of taboo language properly as cultural content is not included in learning at school. These things are signs that the taboo language in Menyali Village is threatened with language death. This is not something trivial, but it must be handled seriously considering the importance of culture contained in taboo language so that it is used correctly as the identity of a society.

Language death is a phenomenon of language extinction brought on by a lack of usage of the language by both native speakers and the general public (Atifnigar et al., 2021). According to Harrison (2008) people who do not learn the language and refrain from communicating in their mother tongue or local language are the root causes of the phenomenon known as "language death." In addition, Menyali Village's taboo language is in danger of disappearing due to the influence of national and modern languages. As a result, the problem requires serious action to be solved. The implementation of language revitalization initiatives is one of the solutions.

According to Crystal (2000), the goal of language revitalization is to preserve the use of an endangered language as a medium of communication in society. There are several strategies to revitalise language in life, including learning it, practicing it, keeping it up to date, using it as a learning tool, and creating archives of documentation of it. This is in accordance with Soedarsono's (2002) statements that revitalization is the process of preserving something that is on the verge of extinction but is still in good condition so that it can be used and enhanced. However, it is very unfortunate that efforts to revitalize taboo language in Menyali Village are very rarely carried out, so it is very likely that culture in the form of taboo language will gradually experience language death.

There are several previous studies that have been conducted on the topic of taboo language. These studies namely Zuindra et al., (2021) compiled research entitled "Taboo Words In Deli Javanese Dialect", Mahayana et al., (2022) conducted a study entitled "Context of Taboo Words in Tenganan Pegringsingan Village", Jaya and Susanto (2022) conducted a study entitled "Social Dimension of Taboo Language as Knowledge Power Analysis for Identifying Transferable Saying English Taboo in Internet", Wiwin & Aziz, (2018) conducted research entitled "Taboo Words In Devayan, A Language in Simeulu Island, Aceh Indonesia", Nonutu et al., (2021) compiled a study entitled "Sociolinguists Analysis of Taboo Words in

Minahasa District Combies”, Aziz et al., (2020) conducted a study entitled “To Say Or Not To Say? Construing Contextual Taboo Words Used By A Chinese Speakers in Indonesia”, and Lei, (2017) conducted a study entitled A Comparison between English and Chinese Taboo Language.

In accordance to the above description of the issue, culture in the form of taboo language needs to be preserved in a proper manner. As a result, this study, titled "Taboo in Balinese Spoken in Menyali Village," needs to be conducted as soon as possible in order to serve as documentation and a source of information for maintaining taboo in this village. This is significant because Menyali Village's taboo language is deeply ingrained in its culture. This study is closely related to the preservation of culture in the form of taboo language. Because if language is lost, culture is lost (Budasi et al., 2023). This study differs significantly from previous studies, namely this study was analyzed taboo words that used in Menyali Village based on Tri Hita Karana concept with three domains, namely Parhyangan, Pawongan, and Palemahan.

## **METHOD**

This research was designed using a descriptive qualitative approach. The purpose of this approach is to obtain data related to research questions related to phenomena that occur in real life. This is also related to the research focus, namely to examine and describe taboo words that are used in Menyali Villages. The data in this research were collected through an in-depth interview process. In-depth interviews were conducted directly with three informants selected according to previously established criteria. The in-depth interview process was carried out by asking questions that have been selected and listed in the interview guide. The research procedure includes several stages, namely requesting permission for research, conducting in-depth interviews with selected informants, transcribing and grouping taboo words that used in Menyali Village, and after that interpreting the data in the form of descriptions. Data analysis in this research was carried out using the theory of Milles & Huberman (1992). First, data collection was carried out using an in-depth interview process. Followed by data reduction, namely summarizing the interview results according to the research focus, namely taboo words related to *Parhyangan*, *Pawongan*, and *Palemahan*. The process continued with data display, namely presenting the data in the form of table. The final process is conclusion drawing in the form of a temporary conclusion.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

After the data collection process through in-depth interviews with informants, this research found 45 (forty-five) taboo words used in the Village. These taboo words are classified into three scopes, namely *Parhyangan*, *Pawongan*, and *Palemahan* which are the concepts of *Tri Hita Karana*.

### **Taboo Words Used in *Parhyangan***

Result related to taboo words used in *Parhyangan* were presented in Table 1

**Tabel 1. Taboo Words Used in *Parhyangan***

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Taboo Words</b>
<i>Parhyangan</i>	<i>api, natah, cicing, cecek, gentong, be, togog, lipi, dedaaran, yeh, mangku, klenengan, megetih, teke, and leluhur</i>

Based on Table 1, there were 15 (fifteen) taboo words that found in the Parhyangan domain in Menyali Village. The first word is *api* means fire. In Menyali Village, the word *api* categorized as a taboo word, it is because Hindus in the Menyali Village believe that the word *api* must be mentioned correctly because it is a symbol of God of fire *Ida Betara Geni*. The same thing is also interpreted of the word *natah* which means land. The Hindu in Menyali Village is believed that land have magical powers, so the word *pretiwi* is used to refer to it. It is necessary to use the right words to avoid disasters that can cause harm to society.

Mentioning dogs in temples also cannot use the word *cicing* “dog” but must use the word *asu*. This is related to the belief of the Menyali Villagers that everything in the temple is sacred include animal. Apart from that, in mention lizards with the word *cecek* is also a taboo word. This is because the lizard is symbolic of goddess of knowledge *Sang Hyang Aji Saraswati*. The use of appropriate terms to avoid condemnation by the creator. Likewise, the word *gentong*, which means water pottery, must be called *juntandeg*. This is because the *juntandeg* has a very sacred function, namely a place for storing holy water called *tirta*, so its mention must use the correct rules.

Besides that, the word *be* which means a side dish for offerings, is considered very sacred, so it requires a special term to mention it namely *ebatan*. Another word that considers as taboo is the word *lipi* which means snake. In mention snake Menyali Villagers used the word *due*. The word *due* is a word used to refer to something that is sacred. Other than that, the word *togog* means statue and should be called *prelingge* because it is a symbol of God in Hindu belief. This is related to the belief in Menyali Village that the statues in the temple have magical properties and are very sacred. So, the mention of such objects must be in accordance with customs to avoid negative effects “plagues and curses” on society.

When referring to food at the temple people must use the word *paice* not *dedaaran*. This is because to maintain the sacredness of the dishes served in holy places, the word *paice* which means “blessing” must be used. The same thing must also be done when referring to water in temple area, people must use the word *toye* not *yeh*. This must be adhered to show respect and keep the sanctity of everything in the temple. Another word that is considered taboo in Parhyangan context is the word *mangku*. This word is considered very impolite to address a person who is being consecrated because when referring to the prayer leader at the temple, the complete term must be used, namely *Jro maggku*. In this regard, the word *klenengan*, which means bell or *genta*, has an inappropriate meaning to refer a sacred object that is believed to ward off evil as a sacred prayer tool. Due to the very sacred function of the bell in prayer, the mention of this object must be very careful and must be in accordance with traditional provisions.

Regarding the mention of a person's condition in Menyali Village, especially in the temple environment, it must be very careful to avoid any plagues. In this regard, there is a prohibition on referring to women who are menstruating with the word *megetih* in the temple. This is because the word *megetih* is considered vulgar and dirty when spoken in the temple, and can cause harm to people who use the word. The correct term that can be used is *cuntaka*. The same thing happens with the used of word *teke*, which means coming, it also a taboo word if it is used to mention the arrival of someone or something that is considered sacred. The

sacred term that must be used in this context is *rauh*. It means coming which has sacred qualities so it is suitable and required to use this word to avoid harm and disrespect.

In the Parhyangan domain, the used of correct word to mention ancestors is very important. This is because according to people's beliefs in Menyali Village, the ancestors are highly respected. If the word *leluhur* is used to refer an ancestor, it is not in accordance with the customs in Menyali Village will result bad thing for that person. This is closely related to the belief of the Menyali people that the word *leluhur* should mention with pirate for ancestors who have not gone through the *ngaben* ceremony process. Meanwhile, when referring to an ancestor who has gone through the *ngaben* process, the name changes to *dewa hyang*. If ancestors do not mention correctly, it causes a disaster, plague, and disrespect to ancestors.

### **Taboo Words Used in *Pawongan***

Result related to taboo words used in *Pawongan* were presented in Table 2

**Tabel 2. Taboo Words Used in *Pawongan***

Domain	Taboo Words
<i>Pawongan</i>	<i>awake, sige, nyem, nyai, bedu, bape (adan bajang), meme (adan bajang), kaki, bungut, tenas, cicing, kaung, sundel, keleng, teli, kenyang, korod, mepeledan, leong, nyamprut, edeh, nasbedag, nidik, and nginem.</i>

Based on Table 2, there were 24 (twenty-four) taboo words that found in *Pawongan* domain of Menyali Village. The first word is *awake*, this word means I in a very impolite context. As is known, the people in Menyali Village strictly adhere to traditional rules governing behavior and communication styles so that the word *awake* is classified as a taboo word. Another taboo word related to this is the word *sige*, which means You in the rough context. The word *sige* is taboo word because it is synonymous with swearing. It can cause misunderstandings and conflicts, especially if used in formal communication with more mature people, this word caused harm to the person who uses it. Regarding to this, the word *nyem* which is used to refer people who behave strangely or freak is also considered as taboo word. Another taboo word, namely *nyai* which means you in the context of women. This word is considered taboo because it means impoliteness and shows disrespect towards partners of communication. There are other words namely *bedu* which means slow. This word is a harsh expression of abuse for someone who works very slowly.

There is the word *bape* followed by *adan bajang* as a taboo in Menyali Village. The word *bape* is used to address father. Meanwhile, the term *adan bajang* means the name when he was young. The term *bape* followed by *adan bajang* in Menyali Village is a taboo and considered rude towards parents. Therefore, in mentioning father have to use the word *guru* followed by the name *pungkusan*, namely the name of grandfather in the family. This also applies to call mother, prohibited from using the word *meme* followed by *adan bajang*. It is supposed to be *memek* followed by *adan pungkusan*. Apart from that, the word *kaki* which means grandfather is a taboo word in Menyali Village because this word is not appropriate for addressing someone who is an elder. In this Village grandfather is called *wayah*.

Another taboo word is *bungut* which means mouth. The word *bungut* is usually used to refer to the mouth of an animal. In social communication, this word is categorized as a taboo word because it is not in accordance with moral and ethical norms. Apart from that, this word is categorized as a curse. The same thing is also interpreted in the word *tenas* which means

head in the rough context. The word *tenas* is taboo and the word that is supposed to refer to the head namely *sirah*.

Besides that, there is the word *cicing* which means dog. The word *cicing* considered taboo word in Menyali Village if it is used to call someone. This is because the word *cicing* is synonymous with animals which in fact do not have the ability to think. In using the word *cicing*, it is the same as cursed someone as stupid. Another word that is similar to *cicing* is the word *kaung* which means boar. In this Village, the word *kaung* is categorized as a taboo word if it is used to address men in society. Apart from that, there is the word *sundel* this word means prostitute and the used of this word same as cursed a woman very badly.

There is a word *keleng* which means male genitalia. The mention of genitalia in social society is not in accordance with moral beliefs. This is related to the norms applied within the Menyali Village community which prohibited to use of dirty and sensual terms. Apart from that, there is the word *teli* which means female genitals. This word is also very taboo in social contexts. Another taboo word in this Village namely *kenyang* which means erection. Besides that, there is the word *korod* means sexual intercourse. This word is used when someone was angry. This word is also classified as verbal harassment which can have a negative impact on the speaker and partners of communication. The same thing is also interpreted of word *mepeledan* means having sex. This word is categorized as a taboo word, because this word was not appropriate to be said in a social environment.

The word *leong* is the word used for call the first child in Menyali Village. This word can be used if the relationship between two people that known each other very well. The word *leong* is categorized as a taboo word if it is used to call an unknown person. This context also applies to the word *nyamprut* which is usually used to call the fourth child. Another taboo word that is influenced by local customs and culture is the word *edeh*, which is used to refer to smallpox. The word *edeh* in Menyali Village is categorized as a taboo word, because Villagers believe this disease is a gift from God. Therefore, local people have to call this disease with the correct word namely *paice* to avoid the disease becoming worse.

Another word that are categorized as taboo words in Menyali Village is *nasbedag*, the term *nasbedag* comes from the word *tenas*, which means head in a rough context. *bedag* comes from the word *bebedag* which means foal. Based on this definition, *nasbedag* means the head of an animal which is liked to be stupid. The word *nasbedag* same as the term *bastard*.

In the social environment, Villagers of Menyali always pay attention to moral beliefs. Therefore, in this Village the word *nginem* means drinking is categorized as a taboo word. It is because this word is used in the context of animal activities. Related of that the used of the word *nginem* is inappropriate to refer action of humans. The same thing applies to the word *nidik* which means eating in a very rough context. The word *nidik* is categorized as taboo because it can cause offense and disrespectful to the other people.

### **Taboo Words Used in *Palemahan***

Result related to taboo words used in *Palemahan* were presented in Table 3

**Tabel 3. Taboo Words Used in *Palemahan***

Domain	Taboo Words
<i>Palemahan</i>	<i>beling, melumbaan, ngelekadang, bikul, linuh, and usak</i>

Based on Table 3, there were 6 (six) taboo words that found in Palemahan domain of Menyali Village. The first word is *beling* means pregnant. This word is considered taboo in the context of referred the condition of a pregnant cat. This is because the Balinese believe that cats are animals that must be treated and called with carefully, if it is not, it will have a bad impact on life. Apart from that, it is believed that if the word *beling* is used to refer a pregnant cat, it will cause the death of the cat's fetus. The word that supposed to be used in this context is *mebusung*. A similar thing is also interpreted in the word *melumbaan* which is defined as reproductive activity in animals' context. The word *melumbaan* is categorized as a taboo word if it is used to refer to reproductive activity of the cat. In these conditions, the people in Menyali will use the word *mesaki*. Apart from that, there is the word *ngelekadang*, which means give birth. In the Menyali Village, this word is considered as taboo when it is used in the context of referring to a cat that is giving birth. The right word to express this is *metai*.

Other than that, In the context of Palemahan, the word *bikul* is categorized as a taboo word in Menyali Village. It is believed that if the word *bikul* used to refer rats, it will cause a disaster and damage to rice fields by these rats. Based on local belief rats should be called *jro Ketut* to avoid plague and undesirable things. Another taboo word is *linuh*, it means earthquake. The people in Menyali Village categorize this word as taboo word in the context of mentioning the earthquake at the time of the disaster. This is because in Menyali Village, when there is an earthquake, the local people used the term of *labak kancing* and not *linuh*. The used of this term was believed to stop the earthquake. Besides that, there is another taboo word namely *usak*. The word *usak* means damaged. This word is a taboo word because there is a belief that if the word *usak* is used to complain directly about damaged of roads then the person will have an accident.

Based on data explained above, taboo words in Menyali Village were concentrated on the *Tri Hita Karana* "three causes of happiness and prosperity in the beliefs of the Balinese people". The three domains were used to analyze the focus of the study namely *Parhyangan*, *Pawongan*, and *Palemahan*.

There were fifteen (15) taboo words in the *Parhyangan* "relationship between humans and God," those taboo words namely *dedaaran*, *megetih*, *leluhur*, *lipi*, *be*, *mangku*, *klenengan*, *teke*, *cicing*, *gentong*, *api*, *yeh*, *natah*, *togog*, and *cecek*. Besides that, "Human relations with other humans" is the second domain, which is *Pawongan*. The following twenty-four (24) taboo words were discovered in this context: *bape* (*adan bajang*), *meme* (*adan bajang*), *kaki*, *edeh*, *nener*, *nasbedag*, *mepeledan*, *kenyang*, *keleng*, *teli*, *sige*, *nyai*, *awake*, *cicing*, *nidik*, *nginem*, *korod*, *kaung*, *nyem*, *nyamprut*, *bedu*, *bungut*, and *leong*. The next domain is *Palemahan* which means "the relationship between humans and the surrounding environment". Six (6) taboo words were identified in this domain: *bikul*, *usak*, *melumbaan*, *beling*, *linuh*, and *ngelekadang*. The data indicates that the *Pawongan* domain had the most word count, while the third domain, *Palemahan*, had the least word count.

In the *Pawongan* domain, there were twenty-four (24) taboo words in total. This is due to the fact that people in Menyali Village make jokes about taboo subjects and use them to build relationships with one another. There are only fifteen (15) taboo words in the *Parhyangan* domain, which makes it different. The reason is that the locals still firmly believe in Hinduism, which dictates that language used must follow religious precepts to ward off bad luck and curses from God. Only six (6) taboo words were found in the *Palemahan* domain. These words

were created by the culture to emphasize the sanctity of the surrounding area, which calls for respect and careful handling. Because of this, taboo words need to be used sensibly in all contexts, particularly in the Pawongan domain. Taboo words should also be avoided in formal settings to minimize their harmful effects.

The most relevant prior research to this investigation is that conducted by Mahayana et al. (2022), which examined the taboo language types and context in Tenganan Village. In order to gather data for this study, interviews were conducted using a qualitative descriptive methodology. But this research's uniqueness which examines Menyali Village's taboo words based on three distinct domains Tri Hita Karana. This is the novelty of this research and is something new in this study compared to previous studies.

The completion of this study is crucial because action must be taken to prevent the taboo languages in Menyali Village from language death. What can be done is conduct a study related to taboo word in this village in order to revitalize the language. This attempts to prevent taboo language from disappearing, which is a significant and highly valued aspect of culture.

based on the focus of the research, namely the taboo words of the Menyali Village which function as linguistic culture and identity for the Menyali community. Therefore, it is very important to preserve this taboo language. However, the Menyali people are starting to switch from traditional language which contains taboo words to Indonesian in line with current globalization trends. Of course, this condition is very dangerous and threatens the continued use of cultural values in taboo language.

In light of this, it can be concluded that this research is not only crucial, but also urgently needs to be done in order to keep taboo languages alive in Menyali Village. When a language goes extinct, it means that its speakers are no longer involved in daily communication, which is a very bad thing because when a language disappears the culture in it will also disappear.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis of the results and discussion described above, it can be concluded that there were 45 (forty-five) taboo words in Menyali Village. These taboo words were classified based on three scopes in accordance with the *Tri Hita Karana* concept. Therefore, the findings related to taboo words in Menyali Village are 15 (fifteen) taboo words in the *Parhyangan* scope, 24 (twenty-four) taboo words in the *Pawongan* scope, and 6 (six) taboo words in the *Palemahan* scope. Apart from this, related to the result, Menyali Village has customs that uphold moral norms, this can be seen in the existence of certain terms or words need to be used in order to avoid things that are considered taboo. The results of this research have several implications, such as in the field of sociolinguistics namely language used aspect, in the field of education, in the field of language culture, and social field as cultural notes for the Menyali Village community.

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