

## Taboo in Balinese Language Spoken in Nusa Penida Based on Tri Hita Karana Concept

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### Abstract

*This study aimed at identifying taboo words of Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida based on the concept of Tri Hita Karana. Descriptive qualitative was used as the research design of this study. There were three of local people in Nusa Penida recruited as the research informants by using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected by conducting interview and taking-note. The instruments were interview guide and note or check-list. The obtained data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis method consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The finding showed that there were 60 taboo words of Balinese language spoken by the local people in Nusa Penida Island. It was found that there were eight forms of taboo words spoken by local people in Nusa Penida Island, such as; metaphor, metonymy, and euphemism, abusive, cursing, obscenities, blasphemies, swearing, and expletive. It also discovered that there were 16 categories of references used, such as; parents name, animal name, God name, name of people who have died, name of relatives, mentioning genitals, sexual activity, specific jobs, bodily function, wisdom of ruler, illness, nature, name of spirits, personal pronoun, specific activity.*

**Keywords: Balinese Language; Nusa Penida; Taboo; Tri Hita Karana**

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication means in which its usage is influenced by the age, gender, socio-economy status, profession, etc. (Paramarta, 2022). It attracts many linguists in concerning the use of language among society covered in sociolinguistics which is widely perceived as a branch of linguistics which deals with the language phenomenon (Campbell & Muntzel, 1989). It also concerns on the relationship between language and social factors which refers to the socio-economic status, gender, race, age, and other social features (Chambers, 2015). Language is also studied in sociolinguistics by focusing on its speakers or hearers, time of speaking, communication purpose, and the (Saputra et al., 2019). This branch of sociolinguistics focuses on studying the language and its social aspects.

There are many varieties of languages spoken among the society. Taboo is a language variety influenced by the social factors occurring in the society. It is considered as a language spoken to denote a certain entity indicating danger or prohibition (Arif et al., 2019; Samosir et al., 2020). Taboo words are commonly considered as sacred words previously but those have been advanced as something normal to be spoken among the society due to the increasing advanced era (Batubara et al., 2022). Reilly et al., (2020) argue that taboo words represent a potential subset of natural language reflecting the words referents as a negative valence. Therefore, taboo words are related to the speakers and their social behavioral factors.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of taboo words can be found easily among the society in a certain region. One of region which is famously known for its taboo words is Nusa Penida. It is located outside in Bali specifically Nusa Penida district, Klungkung regency, Bali. It is an island where its local people speak Balinese language. The language spoken by the local people is unique and offering the cultural products in the form of taboo words. The people of Nusa Penida say that the name of the sacred animal is often pronounced incorrectly without knowing its meaning, it is often called "*Tulah*". One of them is "*Bikul*" (Rat). If the word is directed at *rats*, especially if it is used with a harsh insult, then the word "*bikul*" is considered taboo. Nusa Penida usually calls it "*Jero Ketut*", because it is an animal that is considered sacred by the community. It is also found that the people who often speak taboo language having a low level of education.

Many studies have been conducted in investigating and analyzing the Balinese language spoken by the local people in Nusa Penida Island. Dewipayani et al., (2017) conducted a study to find out the swearwords spoken by teenagers in Nusa Penida Island. It reveals that there are three forms of swearwords spoken; monomorphemic, polymorphemic, and phrases. Dewi et al., (2017) also analyzed the morphological process of Balinese dialect spoken by Klumpu villagers in Nusa Penida Island. It discovers that there are three morphological processes occur, such as; prefixation, infixation, and suffixation. Matradewi and Sosiowati (2023) investigated the existence of Balinese language spoken by the villagers in Nusa Penida Island. It finds out that the Balinese language is still spoken in all generations in many domains; household, social, traditional, religious, and at school.

Those studies indicate that the Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida have its own uniqueness to be studied and related to the social factors. Related to the word taboo, there were no previous researches that identified the words, the form and references of taboo. Thus, this study emphasizes on the analysis of taboo words based on the three domains of *Tri Hita Karana* namely: *parahyangan*, *palemahan*, and *pawongan*, forms of taboo words based on the theory suggested by Frazer (1955) and Montagu (1973) and taboo references based on the theory explained by Laksana (2009). Due to that, this research was established as further research since there is no recent research that discusses specifically the taboo words, taboo forms and taboo reference in Nusa Penida Island. Therefore, this study is conducted to find out the taboo spoken by local people in Nusa Penida Island and as the novelty of the earlier studies that on the same field of interest.

## METHOD

### Design

This study aims to identify taboo words, taboo forms, and taboo references in the Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida. Thus, this study was designed in the form of a descriptive qualitative study. It was conducted in Nusa Penida Island. The objects of this study were the taboo words based on the three domains of *Tri Hita Karana* namely: *parahyangan*, *palemahan*, and *pawongan*, forms of taboo words based on the theory suggested by Frazer, (1955) and Montagu (1973) and their references based on the theory explained by Laksana, (2009). In this study, the data obtained presented by explaining and introducing the taboo found in Balinese Language spoken in Nusa Penida. The data from this study were represented in the form of a list of taboo in Balinese Language Spoken in Nusa Penida.

### **Participants**

There were three native speakers of Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida Island involved as the informants. They were selected by using purposive sampling technique and their selection were based on a set of criteria based on Samarin (1967) namely: the informant is a native the research setting, age above 25 years old, informants are people who are experts and knowledgeable in the research topic, and able to communicate well. These informants were native to the area of research and therefore possessed the knowledge of the topic being researched that this study needed to collect.

### **Data Collection**

The data were obtained by conducting an in-depth interview with note taking along its process. Thus, the instruments used in this study were interview guide, and note or check-list to help the researchers gathered the data in more structured and accurate manner. In this stage, this method was relevant in collecting data about taboo in Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida because researchers had direct conversations with informants as research participants to obtain information. The researchers conducted interviews with the by posing a series of questions to the informants. The interview was delivered in Indonesian, a language which proficiently mastered and understood by the informants.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) that consists of four main stages; data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The first stage is data collection process, where the data are collected from the informants by in-depth interview. Secondly, the collected data will be selected and simplified to get the specific result according to the study objectives. Then, in the data display, the data were presented and described in a descriptive form. It also help the researcher to analyze the data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **The Taboo Words of Balinese Language Spoken in Nusa Penida Island**

In this study, there were 57 taboo words found in Balinese language spoken by the local people of Nusa Penida Island. Those words were gained by obtaining the use of taboo words based on the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*. There are three main components of the concept; *prahyangan*, *pawongan*, and *palemahan*. *Prahyangan* is a realm that includes taboo words related to spiritual and holy beings. Words that are classified as *parahyangan* are 7 taboo words which include; *klewaran*, *temah pirata*, *cecek*, *rangda*, *dewa api*, *dewa angin*, *dewa laut*. These seven words are taboo to be spoken for people in Nusa Penida because they are considered

impolite towards sacred things, therefore people in Nusa Penida do not speak them in general. For example word of “*cecek*” (house lizard) in Nusa Penida is taboo to called as it is (*cecek*) because people in the Island believe it is a sacred animal and manifestation of *Sang Hyang Aji Saraswati* The Goddess of Wisdom. Everytime *cecek* (house lizard) makes a sound, people believe that it is *Sang Hyang Aji Saraswati* who make all the wish become true when it makes sound. Therefore, people in Nusa Penida is taboo to called *cecek* and rather call it as *Sang Hyang Aji Saraswati* as an sacred honor.

“*Dingeh munyin cecek e*” > “*Dingeh munyin Sang Hyang Aji Saraswati*”  
 (Listen to the sound of the house lizard) (Listen to the Sang Hyang Saraswati)

Second, *Pawongan*, which consists of 32 words, namely, *ci, cang, bapak, meme, nak ruwe, mayat, mati, keli, palit, edeh, ngidih, beling, ngelekadin, mekatuk, meju, lengoh, buduh, sedeng, bongol, tiras, bungut, sundel, katuk, goban da, nanang, nener, bangka mu, madak grubug, bani bangke kole, palit le amah, kancut le amah, poret basang*. These 32 words are considere taboo because in the *pawongan* domain they can harm relation between humans due to the impoliteness to be spoken in daily interaction. For example, the word “*meju*” is a rude word to be used to express the urge to defecate. For them, this word must be avoided because they are disgusts and *tulah*. Thus, to replace them, they use *mesakit basang* to call family relatives such as uncle “*wak made, wak nyoman*”

“*Maluan mulih nah, laku meju kole*” > “*Maluan mulih nah, mesakit basang kole*”  
 (I go home now, I want to defecate)

And third, *Palemahan*, which consists of 18 words, namely *memen meong, kakia, ngeleak, bikul, kadutan, leak, celuluk, ubuan, bojog, cicing, celeng, alu, lubak, bangkung, panak bebinjat, cicing berung, amah temah, and amah leak*. These 18 words are considered taboo because people of Nusa Penida believe those words are rude and impolite towards an object or person, and if those words are spoken it will cause *tulah* or misfortune to happen. For example word of “*memen meong*” To call a mother of cats “*memen meong*” (mother cat) in Nusa Penida is taboo. Because people believe if they call a cat mother in that way it will make it angry and careless to its kitten. So, to respect a cat mother, they call it as *gurun meng/guru meong* which is a more respectful way to call a mother cat because it is a special address to it.

“*Ja e lakune memen meonge ?*” > “*Ja e lakune gurun meng e?*”  
 (Where does the mother cat go?)

### The Forms of Taboo Words Found in Balinese Language Spoken in Nusa Penida Island

There were six classifications of taboo words categorized based on taboo names and words, such as; *metaphor, teknonym, euphemism, code switch, metonymy, and diglossia* as suggested by Frezer (1955). Those classifications were elaborated as follows.

**Table 1. The Classifications of Taboo Words**

No	Utterance	Meaning
Classification: Metaphor		
1.	<i>kakia</i>	Shark
2.	<i>ngeleak</i>	Doing black magic
3.	<i>edeh</i>	A disease of small fox

4.	<i>bikul</i>	Mouse
5.	<i>cecek</i>	Lizard
6.	<i>ngelekadin</i>	Giving birth
Classification: Euphemism		
7.	<i>mati</i>	Died
8.	<i>keli</i>	Female genital
9.	<i>palit</i>	Male genital
10.	<i>mekatuk</i>	Having sex
Classification: Metonymy		
11.	<i>nak ruwe</i>	Relatives who live based on the cardinal directions
12.	<i>memen meong</i>	Kitten's mom
13.	<i>mayat</i>	Corpse
14.	<i>ngidih</i>	A Balinese sacred weapon
15.	<i>kadutan</i>	Asking or requesting
Classification: Diglossia		
16.	<i>ci</i>	You (for male)
17.	<i>cang</i>	I
18.	<i>bape</i>	Father
19.	<i>meme</i>	Mother
20.	<i>meju</i>	Defecating
21.	<i>beling</i>	Pregnant
22.	<i>rangda</i>	A sacred feature
23.	<i>dewa api</i>	Fire goddess
24.	<i>dewa angin</i>	Air goddess
25.	<i>dewa laut</i>	Ocean goddess

Table 1 shows that there are 25 taboo words classified into four categories, namely; *metaphor* is comparing two things that are actually different in nature, *metonymy* is expressing something by connecting it with the name of the characteristic or name of the something, and *euphemism* is more subtle expression to replace expressions that can be hurtful or embarrassing, and *diglossia* is expressing something or term by using politer word or more less explicit specific expression. There are six (6) taboo words categorized into *metaphor* because these words expressed by comparing them into some things that are actually different with their meaning, such as the word *rat* that expressed with *jero ketut*. Then, five (5) taboo words categorized into *metonymy* because these words expressed by connecting their meaning into something else that is specific, for example the word *memen meong* expressed as *gurun meng*. Furthermore, four (4) taboo words categorized into *euphemism* because they contain explicit and vulgar that can be embarrassing so that they are expressed with another term, such as the word *palit* which means male genitalia replaced with *kukur*. Lastly, there are ten (10) words classified as *diglossia* because they must be expressed with politer term such as the word *meju* that has disgust feeling, so instead it is expressed by word *ka teba* (to the yard). In addition, the taboo words of Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida Island was also categorized based on the swearing words form, such as; *abusive*, *blasphemy*, *cursing*, *obscenity*, and *expletive*. Those forms were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. The Swear Words Classifications**

N	Utterance	Meanings
Classification: Abusive		
1.	<i>leak</i>	A holy creature
2.	<i>celuluk</i>	A holy creature
3.	<i>ubuan</i>	Animals
4.	<i>bojog</i>	Monkey
5.	<i>cicing</i>	Dog
6.	<i>celeng</i>	Pig
7.	<i>alu</i>	Lizard
8.	<i>lubak</i>	Fox
9.	<i>bangkung</i>	Pig
10.	<i>lengoh</i>	A female pig
11.	<i>buduh</i>	Crazy
12.	<i>sedeng</i>	Crazy
13.	<i>bongol</i>	Dip
14.	<i>Tiras</i>	Head
15.	<i>bungut</i>	Mouth
16.	<i>sundel</i>	Prostitute
17.	<i>katuk</i>	Fucking
18.	<i>goban da</i>	Your face
19.	<i>panak bebinjat</i>	An illegitimate child
20.	<i>nanang</i>	Father
21.	<i>nener</i>	Prostitute
22.	<i>cicing berung</i>	Wounded Dog
Classification: Blasphemy		
23.	<i>klewaran</i>	Ancestor
24.	<i>temah pirate</i>	Ancestor
Classification: Cursing		
25.	<i>bangka mu</i>	Your corpse
26.	<i>madak grubug</i>	Wish you bad
27.	<i>amah temah</i>	Cursed by ancestor
28.	<i>amah leak</i>	Cursed by holy figure
Classification: Swearing		
29.	<i>bani    bangka    kole</i>	Swear to dead
Classification: Obscenity		
30.	<i>paling le amah</i>	Searching for foods
31.	<i>kancut le amah</i>	Menstruation blood
Classification: Expletive		
32.	<i>poret basang</i>	Upset

Table 2 shows that there are five classifications of swear words found in the taboo words spoken by the local people in Nusa Penida Island. It discovered that there were 22 taboo words categorized as *abusive* because they often used as harassment and insult. Then, there are 4 words classified as *cursing* because people in Nusa Penida used them to express strong emotions with offensive words. Moreover, there are words classified as *obscenities* because it has strong sexual theme. Next, there are 2 words classified as *blasphemies* because they are



used to mock sacred things. Furthermore, there is 1 word classified as *swearing* because it is used to express anger. Lastly there is 1 word classified as *expletive* because it is used to express disgusts and irritation.

### The References of Taboo Words of Balinese Language Spoken by Local People in Nusa Penida Island

Regarding to the reference of taboo words spoken in Nusa Penida Island, among the 16 reference categories of taboo word based on [Laksana \(2009\)](#), there were only 13 reference categories were found namely: *parents name* (3), *Animal's name* (12), *God's name* (3), *People names who died* (3), *name of relative* (1), *mentioning genitals* (2), *sexual activities* (2), *Specific profession* (2), *Body Function* (4), *illness* (2), *Name of spirit* (4), *personal pronouns* (3) *specific activities* (16). Those are elaborated in Table 3.

**Table 3. The References of Taboo Words**

Reference	Taboo Words
Parents Name	<i>nanang</i> "father", <i>bapak</i> "father", <i>meme</i> "mother".
Animals Name	<i>cicing</i> "dog", <i>bojog</i> "monkey", <i>celeng</i> "pig", <i>bangkung</i> "pig", <i>alu</i> "lizard", <i>lubak</i> "weasel", <i>bikul</i> "mouse", <i>cecek</i> "house lizard", <i>kakia</i> "shark", <i>memen meong</i> "mother cat", <i>ubuan</i> "animals", <i>cicing berun</i> "scabies dog".
God's Name	<i>dewa api</i> "god of fire", <i>dewa angin</i> "god of wind", <i>dewa laut</i> "god of sea".
People Names who died	<i>klewaran</i> "ancestor", <i>mayat</i> "dead body", <i>temah pirate</i> "cursed by ancestor".
Name of Relative	<i>nak ruwe</i> "easttern".
Mentioning Genitals	<i>teli</i> "female genital", <i>palit</i> "male genital".
Sexual activities	<i>mekatuk</i> "to fornicate", <i>katuk</i> "fuck".
Specific Profession	<i>sundel</i> "whore", <i>nener</i> "prostitute".
Bodily Function	<i>tiras</i> "head", <i>goban da</i> "your face", <i>bungut</i> "mouth", <i>bongol</i> "deaf".
Illness	<i>edeh</i> "smallpox", <i>gerubug</i> "illness".
Name of Spirit	<i>leak</i> "witch", <i>celuluk</i> "the devil", <i>rangda</i> "the devil", <i>kadutan</i> "sacret weapon".
Personal Pronouns	<i>ci</i> "you", <i>cang</i> "I".
Specific Activities	<i>ngeleak</i> "bewitch", <i>ngidih</i> "to propuse", <i>beling</i> "pregnant", <i>ngelekadin</i> "to give birth", <i>mati</i> "dead", <i>meju</i> "to defecate", <i>lengoh</i> "stupid", <i>buduh</i> "crazy", <i>sedeng</i> "lunatic", <i>bangke</i> "to die", <i>amah leak</i> "eaten by witch", <i>amah temah</i> "turned curse", <i>bani bangka</i> "swear to death", <i>kancut le amah</i> "menstruation blood", <i>palit le amah</i> "eat your dick", <i>poret basing</i> "upset".

The current study found that there were sixty taboo words in Balinese language spoken by local people in Nusa Penida Island. Those sixty words were obtained based on *Tri Hita Karana* consisting of three domains namely; *parahyangan*, *pawongan*, and *palemahan*. This study found out that there were ten forms of taboo words spoken by local people in Nusa Penida Island, such as; *metaphor*, *metonymy*, and *euphemism*, *diglossia*, *abusive*, *cursing*, *obscenities*, *blasphemies*, *swearing*, and *expletive*. This finding strengthened the previous study conducted by [Mahayana et al., \(2022\)](#) which revealed that there were seven types of taboo words of Balinese language spoken in Tenganan village covering; activities, animal names, body parts, excrement, sacred things, abusive swearing, and pronouns. The current finding was in contrast with the study which was conducted by [Gay and Susanti \(2017\)](#). It was found that there were five forms of taboo words spoken among Ternate society, such as; root word, derivative word,

word repetition, phrase, and clause. Gunas (2021) also found a similar finding in his study in which it discovered the cursing and swearing forms of taboo words in Manggaraian language.

The second finding showed that there were parents name, animal name, God name, name of people who have died, name of relatives, mentioning genitals, sexual activity, specific jobs, bodily function, wisdom of ruler, illness, nature, name of spirits, personal pronoun, specific activity. This recent study was relevant to the previous study conducted by Mahayana et al., (2020) which also discovered name of relatives as the reference for taboo words. In addition, another earlier study revealed that the taboo words spoken in Minangkabau language used human bodily sex as the references Yunanda et al., (2022). The finding was similar the previous study conducted by Nonutu et al., (2021) in which the study revealed that the references used in taboo words in Minahasa language were animal and part of body.

The findings of this study strengthened the existence of Balinese language. It supported the previous study conducted by Matradewi and Sosiowati (2023). The study discovered that the Balinese language spoken in Nusa Penida Island still existed among the young generations and adults. Dewipayani et al., (2017) discovered the similar findings related to the use of swearwords in Nusa Penida dialect. The findings of current study indicated that the language was not changed. This current study contributed an awareness to Balinese language speakers in preserving the Balinese language itself. It also implicated the existence of Balinese language among the society particularly for the local people in Nusa Penida Island.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it can be concluded that (1) there are 57 taboo words of Balinese language spoken by the local people in The Island. which which were categorized based on the *Tri Hita Karana* Concept. It is found there are 7 data in the *prahyangan* domain, 32 in the *pawongan* domain, 18 in the *palemahan* domain. (2) related taboo forms found; there are 25 taboo names and taboo words, with the classification namely: (a) *metaphor* are 6 words, (b) *euphemism* are 4 words, (c) *metonymy* are 5 words, and (d) *diglossia* are 10 words. and in the swearing words section there are total of 32 words found, with the classification namely: (a) *abusive* are 22 words, (b) *cursing* are 4 words, (c) *blasphemy* are 2 words, (d) *obscenity* are 3 words, and (e) *swearing* is 1 word. (3) And based on the 16 reference categories of the taboo word by Laksana (2009), there are 13 reference categories found in this study, namely: *parents name* (4), *animals name* (12), *god's name* (3), *people names who died* (3), *name of relative* (1), *mentioning genitals* (2), *sexual activities* (2), *specific profession* (2), *body function* (4), *illness* (2), *name of spirit* (4), *personal pronouns* (3) *specific activities* (16). It is suggested for other researchers to conduct a further study related to the taboo words spoken in other regions in Bali to preserve the Balinese language.

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