

Balinese Taboo Words Used in Kerobokan Village, Badung Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the taboo words used in Kerobokan Village. This study also aims to preserve the local culture, especially the Balinese taboo words. The design was formed in descriptive qualitative research, which combines the sociolinguistic and ecolinguistic approaches of this research methodology. The data was obtained by utilizing in-depth interview techniques by selected informants based on criteria by Mahsun (2005). Informants in this study are three Balinese native speakers in Kerobokan Village. Techniques of data analysis used Miles and Huberman's theory. The findings revealed that 45 taboo words were found in Kerobokan Village, Badung Regency, which were categorized into three classifications: *Parahyangan* (four taboo words), *Pawongan* (36 taboo words), and *Palemahan* (five taboo words). This research has implications for preserving Balinese local culture about taboo words and provide an understanding of the cultural concepts underlying the use of these taboo words.

Keywords: taboo words, Balinese language, sociolinguistics



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Words that are associated with sexual behaviours and thus considered dirty, embarrassing, or even vulgar are known as taboo (Dewipayani et al., 2017). According to Yani et al. (2019), taboo language refers to words or phrases that are improper to use or should be avoided. The term "taboo" refers to a prohibition that cannot be performed because it is thought to bring "tulah" or harm to those who did (Siska et al., 2021). A "tulah," according to Laksana (2009), is an extinction brought on by taboo acts or words that violate acceptable social mores and regional customs. Also,

depending on the traditions, values, and beliefs of the language speakers, some taboo words or things have differences in their utterances in each language.

Balinese identity and culture are reflected in the language itself, especially in the Balinese dialect (Padmadewi in Meko et al., 2011). Therefore, social elements and societal culture contribute to language development. The cultural structure that directs Balinese social and religious life and taboos cannot be separated (Laksana, 2009). In addition, taboos will also be associated with the idea of "*Tri Hita Karana*," which serves as a foundational norm for Balinese behavior and culture. In taboo culture, the idea of *Tri Hita Karana* has the importance of traditional wisdom in ethnicity or morality, which aims to maintain peaceful relationships with God, other people, and the environment (Dwijaja & Subadra, 2014).

Balinese people nowadays, especially the younger generation, need to learn more about taboo words. As a result, the only way that individuals can comprehend the taboo in Balinese is by using swearing or filthy language (Laksana, 2009). In daily conversation, people regularly use the terms "*keleng*," "*bangsat*," and "*cicing*" to express their dissatisfaction and anger. However, there are still a lot of taboo terms that the younger generation and today's society need to understand, including terms that are important in Balinese culture. For example, the male buffaloes in Tenganan Pegringsingan Village are called "*jero gede*" in this uncommon way because those beings are considered sacred by the residents of Tenganan Pegringsingan Village.

Another one is during the "*nyiramin*" ceremony or when bathing a dead person before the cremation process, residents in Kerobokan Village have been observed to utilize this taboo words. "*Jemak jep kasa anggon penekep sarira*" is the one phrase used, meaning to conceal one's genitalia with linen. The word "*sarira*" refers to "genitals," and it is used to describe the genitalia of someone who passed away. It will not be acceptable to discuss an individual's deceased genitalia in public during the ceremony. Preliminary observations indicate that young people are not as familiar with taboo words in Balinese language. Over time, taboo words in Balinese will cease to exist. Only a small percentage of proficient Balinese speakers are aware of and can appropriately use these taboo words in conversation. If this tendency remains, Balinese taboo words will be on their way to extinction.

There are four categories of taboo words (epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity) and the functions of taboo words have been found in a study conducted by Farisi et al. (2019). However,

Anggraini et al. (2022) investigated the kinds and applications of taboo language among kids in Bertais, Kota Mataram.

Anggraeni (2019), in contrast to the previous study mentioned above, identified the differences in the use of Javanese taboo words by males and females in East Java society, as well as the factors that influence these differences. According to earlier studies, most researchers are curious to identify various taboo terms and the contexts in which they are used, whether in specific cultures or films. This study aims to identify the taboo terms used in Kerobokan Village in the Balinese language spoken, especially in the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*.

The researcher has not yet come upon any other studies investigating the use of taboo terms in Kerobokan Village. In addition, taboo words can be found in Kerobokan Village as data sources. As part of a goal to preserve the local culture, this research also attempts to preserve Balinese taboo words. One of the methods to prevent the extinction of the Balinese language itself will be an in-depth study of the use and the form of taboo terms, particularly in the context of the Balinese language spoken in the Kerobokan Village, Badung Regency.

1.2. Research questions

The following are the research questions for this study, which are based on the research background:

1. What taboo words are used in Balinese language spoken in Kerobokan Village?

1.3. Significance of the study

This study is expected to benefit readers theoretically and practically, especially those interested in linguistics who want to study taboo words in Balinese. The study's findings could theoretically support any findings in future research on taboo words in the Balinese language. Practically, the study's findings should be brought to better use in educating people about taboo words found in Balinese. In teaching linguistics, the results of this study are also expected to provide some insight into the use of taboo phrases in the Balinese language. Besides that, the findings of this study should also give Balinese people a general understanding of the language variations that exist among them, particularly regarding taboo words spoken in Kerobokan Village. As to another researcher, the results of this study should serve as an additional resource for them to develop a more profound knowledge of linguistics in general regarding Balinese taboo words that are an element of sociolinguistics research.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study was carried out using a qualitative research design. The qualitative method provided descriptive data in the form of written words from something observed in Balinese taboo words. By gathering and examining in-depth non-numerical data from sources including interviews, the descriptive qualitative approach is a research methodology that assists in the understanding and explanation of phenomena (Sandelowski, 2000). The phenomenon in this study is the taboo words in Balinese spoken by community in Kerobokan Village. Based on that, this study explained the data by describing how taboo terms are used in the Balinese language spoken in Kerobokan Village.

2.2. Subject of The Study

The subject of this study is a Balinese native speaker who colloquially speaks Balinese language in Kerobokan Village. There are three subjects that were selected as informants of this study based on a set of criteria by Mahsun (2005). Several criteria of the informants as follows:

- a) The informants in the study are individuals who are native speakers of the language under investigation.
- b) The informants were aged 25 years and above.
- c) The informant is someone who lives in the village of origin without any extended for a long time.
- d) The informant has a strong sense of fulfillment in their language, culture, and traditions.
- e) The informant is physically and mentally healthy.

2.3. Instruments

In this study, the researcher was the main instrument of this study. Another instrument that utilized in this study is interview guide. The interview guide contained a list of questions for the informants which focus on the taboo words in Kerobokan Village. The researcher provided the interview written in Indonesian and used both Indonesian and Balinese during the interview. The list of questions asked during the interview is as follows:

1. Are there any taboo words or phrases used in Kerobokan Village, and give some examples?
2. What are the meanings of these taboo words?
3. What is the reference of these taboo words?

4. What is the function of the taboo words?
5. What things are forbidden or not allowed to be done in this village?
6. Are there certain words that are considered sacred or related to local beliefs in this village?
7. Are there any specific names for sacred animals in this village?
8. Are any special names for parents, relatives, or other things different from Balinese language in general?

2.4. Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's theory (1994). The data were collected based on the results of interviews with three selected informants based on several following informants' criteria by Mahsun (2005) above. Then processed by transcribing the data into table sheets as well as displaying the data in table form by utilizing the *Tri Hita Karana* theory. At the end, the process of data analysis followed by concluded and verified the data findings.

3.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

The findings showed that 45 taboo words were found in Kerobokan Village. The presentation of the data can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Taboo Words in Parahyangan

No.	Words List	Meaning
1.	<i>Sedan Sakti</i>	A sacred name for the "Giant Ki Buto Ijo" who <i>melinggih</i> (resides) in Petitenget Temple, Kerobokan as the guardian of the temple in the invisible realm (<i>niskala</i>).
2.	<i>Ratu Ayu</i>	A sacred name used to refer to the " <i>rangda</i> " when performing <i>sesolahan</i> or dancing.
3.	<i>Ratu Gede</i>	A sacred name used to refer to the " <i>barong</i> " when performing <i>sesolahan</i> or dancing.
4.	<i>Dewa Made</i>	A sacred name used to refer to the " <i>rarung</i> " when performing <i>sesolahan</i> or dancing.

Table 2. Taboo Words in Pawongan

No.	Words List	Meaning
1.	<i>Jelema Lengeh</i>	A word that refers to someone who is insane, stupid, or someone who does whatever they want and breaks the rules.
2.	<i>Ngamah</i>	A rough word in Balinese language which means “eat”. One should not use this word when communicating with each other.
3.	<i>Nas Bedag</i>	This word is a swearing word that means “damn”, but in the literal meaning of the word <i>nas bedag</i> means “foal’s head”.
4.	<i>Nas Keleng</i>	This words is a swearing words that means “damn” or “asshole”, but in the literal meaning of the word <i>nas keleng</i> means “a dickhead”.
5.	<i>Nyai</i>	This is a harsh word in communication on Kerobokan Village, Badung, which has the meaning “you”.
6.	<i>Cang</i>	This is a rude word that is considered impolite if used in communicating with someone new or with an older person. It means “I/me.”
7.	<i>Panak Liak</i>	This word is a harsh word sworn by the speaker by expressing the someone behavior who is the same as “ <i>panak liak</i> ”. “ <i>Panak</i> ” is “child” and “ <i>liak</i> ” is “spiritual knowledge”, so “ <i>panak liak</i> ” means the child of one who possesses the spiritual knowledge.
8.	<i>Memedi</i>	This word means spirit creature, which is usually seen with long red hair. The mention of this word will be disrespectful and can offend if the speaker insults the appearance of the someone who is like <i>memedi</i> .
9.	<i>Ratu Tonya</i>	This word also means spirit creature that lives in water areas, such as rivers. People should not daringly utter this phrase when in a river, as it is believed to cause something negative.
10.	<i>Jelema Kolok</i>	A word that refers to someone who is speech disable. This word is considered rude by insulting someone’s ability.

11.	<i>Pletan</i>	A word that refers to male genitals. This swear word cannot be used in social communication because it refers to impoliteness in conversation.
12.	<i>Buduh</i>	This word can be considered rude because it refers to people who are crazy or insane.
13.	<i>Madak</i>	This word contains prayers to wish for good or even bad things to happen.
14.	<i>Sintli</i>	This word is a swear word that cannot be used in social communication because it refers to impoliteness and profanity in conversation. It means female genitals.
15.	<i>Sinclak</i>	This is a swear term that cannot be used in social communication because it refers to impoliteness and swearing discussion. It means male genitals.
16.	<i>Mekatok</i>	The meaning of this words is having sex. This expression has dirty words and obscenity talk, which cannot be used in social communication.
17.	<i>Kleng</i>	This word is a swearing word that means “damn”. In another meaning, this word means male genital.
18.	<i>Amah</i>	A rough word in Balinese language which means “eat”. In another context of “ <i>amah</i> ” can refer to something unwanted that has happened, so when the speaker swears with the expression “ <i>amah to!</i> ” that means “feel it!”.
19.	<i>Tai</i>	A swearing word that refers to “dirt”. This is not impolite expression.
20.	<i>Sarira</i>	This word is a special word spoken to refer to the genitals of someone who has died. The word is a euphemism as a refinement of another word that has the same meaning of genitals.

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21. **Mekedeng Ngaat** The term “*mekedeng ngaat*” refers to a forbidden marriage in Balinese. Exchange marriages, also known as “*mesiluran*,” are prohibited. For example, a son from family Q marries a daughter from family Y, but a few years later, a son from family Y marries a daughter from family Q. So, there is an exchange system. This behavior is frowned upon and prohibited as it is thought to bring danger and tragedy.
22. **Matan** A rough word in Balinese language which means “eyes”. People should not use this word when communicating with each other because it is impolite connotations.
23. **Not** This word means “to look” or “see”. It is a rude word in Balinese language because it is considered impolite and disrespectful when speaking to each other.
24. **Sakit Ila** This phrase means “dangerous ill”. The word is the name given to people who have *kusta* (the name of the disease suffered by a person).
25. **Kakin Be** The literal meaning of this phrase is “foot feces”. The expression can mean “damn”.
26. **Bebeki** A word that refers to someone who likes to lie.
27. **Meketet** A word that refers to sex activity. But the word “*meketet*” is a mating activity of animals. This expression has a dirty and messy meaning, mainly when referring to activities carried out by humans.
28. **Gering Agung** This phrase can refer to a big disease. It is curse where the speaker shows the courage to swear that if his statement is invalid, a big disease will occur.
29. **Sundel** The meaning of the word is a sex laborer.
30. **Cicing** This word translates to “dog”. This is a harsh swear word because dogs have historically been believed to be dirty and disgusting animals. Another meaning of the word can is “damn”.
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31.	<i>Bangkan</i>	The word means a corpse or refers to someone who cannot do anything like a corpse.
32.	<i>Jelema Gelem</i>	This phrase refers to someone who is insane or crazy. It has the same meaning as the phrase “ <i>jelema lengeh</i> ” above. However, the difference is that this expression can refer to people who are suffering from mental illness.
33.	<i>Polonne</i>	The literal meaning of the word is “your brain”. But, in the context of communication, the word “ <i>polonne</i> ” is interpreted as “yourself” or “him/her”.
34.	<i>Polo Mbuh</i>	The expression means “stupid” or refers to someone who does not know anything.
35.	<i>Dadong</i>	The word means “grandmother”. In the several contexts, mentioning the word “ <i>dadong</i> ” can refer to ancestor. For example, “ <i>Dadong ci ngelah jalan ne?</i> ”. “Your grandmother has this road?”. That expression is impolite and show disrespect.
36.	<i>Memotoh</i>	The word refers to someone who likes to play gambling. This is a word that is avoided because it can offend someone if it is said that they are “ <i>memotoh</i> ”.

Table 3. Taboo Words in Palembang

No.	Words List	Meaning
1.	<i>Jero Balang</i>	The term relates to the grasshopper insect. This term is unique name for grasshoppers to prevent them from disturbing and damaging farmers’ crops in the fields.
2.	<i>Jero Ketut</i>	The phrase refers to rats. This phrase is used to that that the animal does not disrupt or damage the human’s work.

3. Banteng	The word means “cow”. Cows are sacred animals in Kerobokan village for the “ <i>mecaru</i> ” ceremony (a Hindu ceremony to maintain the harmonious interaction between humans and nature). When this animal is used as a sacred sacrifice, the word “cow” will be forbidden. As a result, the cow is called “ <i>banteng</i> ” since it is a sacred animal utilized in Hindu Yadnya rites in Kerobokan Village.
4. Banteng Selem Batu	This term refers to a black-colored cow used as a sacred sacrifice in the <i>mecaru</i> ritual at Petitenget Temple, Kerobokan.
5. Sampi Biang Blang Kebang	This name refers to a type of cow that is recognized by a hidden white patch on the inside of its legs. This animal has a unique name that is used as a ceremony in Petitenget Temple, Kerobokan.

3.2. Discussion

According to the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, there are three major aspects of life: *Parahyangan*, *Pawongan*, and *Palemahan* (Wisnawa et al., n.d.) There are four (4) taboo words in the *parahyangan* concept: *sedan sakti*, *ratu ayu*, *ratu gede*, and *dewa made*. These terms relate to a sacred object (*pelawatan*) of Ida Sesuhunan in the temple. Mentioning these phrases (*sedan sakti*, *ratu ayu*, *ratu gede*, and *dewa made*) in specific contexts is sacred to establish a harmonious relationship between humanity and God through sacred utterances. When performing *sesolahan* (dancing), the phrases *ratu ayu*, *ratu gede*, and *dewa made* are used to substitute the nomenclature of *rangda*, *barong*, and *rarung*. Taboo speech in *parahyangan* intends to educate a person to keep his word when he is in a sacred place (Dwijia & Subadra, 2014). Table 1 shows that the phrases are sacred designations utilized by the Kerobokan Village, Badung community, to maintain a peaceful relationship with God and the Gods in a holy location or temple.

Most of these terms are used in the context of *pawongan*, indicating that someone upset, frustrated, or furious will utter these words as a form of their expression. The prohibited speech in *pawongan* demonstrates that individuals must be respectful, polite, and appreciative of each other (Dwijia & Subadra, 2014). This research has led to the discovery of taboo phrases that should be avoided to maintain harmonious relationships among other people. However, some of the abovementioned words in Table 2.D20 and Table 2.D24 are refined or paraphrased to avoid pronouncing taboo words prohibited by the Kerobokan Village, Badung community.

In the concept of *palemahan*, this study found taboo words related to naming certain animals. As shown in Table 3.D1 is a unique name for grasshopper insects, a term used by farmers in ancient times to prevent these insects from destroying their fields. Table 3.D2 is also a paraphrase for rat or “*bikul*” in the Balinese to keep the animal so as not to disturb it. In the Balinese language, the mention of several animal names is prohibited because they are believed to cause something dangerous or destructive (Mahayana, 2021). In addition, another word related to the *palemahan* concept is the mention of sacred cows (see Table 3.D3, 3.D4, 3.D5). Those words are specifically utilized to name the cows used for *mecaru* ceremony in Kerobokan Village. *Mecaru* is a Hindu ceremony to maintain and pray for harmony between humans and nature. The use of taboo speech in the *palemahan* concept aims to educate people about environmental protection (Dwijia & Subadra, 2014). As a result, in this study, those words paraphrase the taboo words used in certain conditions because they are thought to have spiritual value or particular things, such as naming animals specifically utilized as religious ceremonies by the Hindu community in Kerobokan Village.

Based on this study’s results, taboo words are not always forbidden to be said, but these taboo words form a norm and rule in a particular culture. This is aligned with what is stated by Mahayana (2021) that taboo words are not always considered negative, but these words are the most important part of language, especially in local wisdom values that contain moral messages that need to be preserved. The results of this study also support previous studies on the use of taboo words in a culture. The empirical analysis of previous research conducted by Mahayana et al. (2020), Mahayana (2021) and Dwijia & Subadra (2014) support the findings about taboo words found in Balinese language spoken in Kerobokan Village.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, this research shows that 45 taboo words were found in Kerobokan Village, Badung Regency. There are four words in the *parahyangan* concept, 36 words in the *pawongan* concept, and five words in the *palemahan* concept. The taboo words in the *parahyangan* concept show that people in the temple use certain words to maintain a harmonious relationship between humans and God. In *pawongan*, some taboo words are avoided to maintain a harmonious connection between fellow humans, and there are words such as “*sarira*” (euphemism) and “*sakit ila*” (paraphrase) which are encouraged words to avoid taboo words.

Lastly, in *palemahan*, taboo words are indicated to maintain the harmony between humans and the natural environment.

4.2. Suggestions

The suggestions that can be conveyed based on the results of this study are addressed to the Balinese people have to actively participate in maintaining Balinese culture, especially in preserving the Balinese language and Balinese taboo words which are part of Balinese local culture. By maintaining language as a cultural identity, the Balinese people can save the sustainability of the Balinese language from extinction. In addition, for other researchers, the discovery of taboo words by integrating the concept of *Tri Hita Karana* in this study can then be explored more deeply about the cultural background that underlies the use of taboo words in Balinese or different cultural contexts.

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