

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The taboo is a phenomenon that occurs when speaking is inappropriate with an understanding of cultural diversity. The word "taboo" comes from a Polynesian word introduced by Captain James Cook whose concept is that "Prohibition" is fixed and unchanging and those who break it will be hit by "*Tulah*", Laksana (2009). *Tulah* as a sins or wrongs, In religious or spiritual contexts, *tulah* often refer to sins or wrongs committed by a person, whether against God, other, or moral rules. In terms of language use, society has language rules or ethics that are either determined by factors of politeness or custom and belief. Violation of the "Taboo of names" will result in violators being subject to evil, while the prohibition on the "Taboo of swearing" means that violators will be subject to physical or social sanctions. Matters relating to magic and religion cause punishment for offenses (Douglas, 1994). Taboo language is a form of language variation used by certain groups in society (Laksana, 2009). Taboo contains concepts such as "sacredness" and "profanity", "danger", and "impurity". Even though the study is oriented towards taboo behavior (nonverbal), Douglas's concept of taboo shows its superiority because it can accommodate Frazer's concept of taboo names and Montagu's concept of swearing.

Language use will always vary, which can be seen in education, economic status, occupation, age, social status, gender, and so on (Holmes and Wilson, 2017).

In language use, it can be proven that there are variations whose existence is influenced by social factors, such as who speaks, where he speaks, and for what purpose he speaks. This fact is the background to the emergence of language studies which try to see the relationship between language and social factors which are now widely known as sociolinguistics. To understand language you must understand how it is used in everyday society (William Labov 1927). More specifically regarding the social structure of society and society's behavior, therefore everything that humans do in speaking is influenced by the situation and conditions in society (Wijana, 2006). Through a deep understanding of taboo language in a social context, we can understand more wisely the role of language that reflects social values and norms in society. Mekarsari Village is a village located in the Baturiti sub-district, Tabanan district. Those who still use Balinese to communicate compared to other areas in general, this is due to the distance between Mekarsari village and other areas which are quite remote. In addition, because it is different from other Balinese languages, this language offers cultural products such as taboo languages that can be learned and researched.

According to data that researchers found in an article entitled "The Shift of Balinese Language as a Mother Language in the Global Era" written Mustika, it is stated that the Balinese people, especially those living in urban areas or tourist areas, the Balinese regional language is no longer fully their mother tongue There are parents who do not introduce Balinese to their children. This phenomenon is increasingly strengthened by the condition of a multicultural society and also for certain reasons. Loyalty and pride in the Balinese language seem to be declining.

As many as 726 out of 746 regional languages in Indonesia are threatened with extinction because the younger generation is reluctant to use regional languages. In fact, of the 746 regional languages, only 13 currently have more than one million speakers, mostly the older generation. These languages are Javanese, Batak, Sundanese, Balinese, Bugis, Madurese, Minang, Rejang Lebong, Lampung, Makassar, Banjar, Bima, and Sasak (Setyawan, 2011).

From this data, researchers are concerned that the use of Balinese in Mekarsari village is decreasing, including taboos that have a narrower scope than Balinese. The majority of taboo languages are used/known by people from the older generation, so the younger generation does not know the meaning. Therefore, there are no longer any heirs leading to no descendants, interactions are broken and the current culture is not connected to the original culture. Taboo language that is no longer used by the younger generation will become language death, which of course is one of the causes of the loss of the community's identity. According to Campbell and Muntzel (1989), language death is a language that no longer exists and no one uses it at all. If taboo language is lost then Balinese culture and cultural identity as well as the identity associated with the use of taboo terms will also be lost. This study is important to carry out to revitalize the language. The need to revive this language stems from the fact that losing a language also means losing every aspect of the culture and identity of native speakers of that language. Regional languages are still the mother tongue in every region, one of which is Balinese. It is important to immediately return Balinese culture to the younger generation who appreciate it through this research study.

If no effort is made to study this issue, it will lead to extinction. On the other hand, it can have implications for the loss of cultural richness and local wisdom of a particular ethnic group in using language because it can only be known through the language used by a community unless the language has been documented and revitalized. If this continues, it will lead to the death of the language with signs that the younger generation does not understand the meaning of the taboo words spoken by their parents when communicating. One example is *"soleh gen ci"* which means "you are strange". This is a taboo word for someone who does not understand the meaning of the word pious in Balinese. Meanwhile, *"soleh"* in Indonesian means good. In Balinese, the word *"soleh"* is not good for other people, especially for someone you just met

The people of Mekarsari Village say that the name of the sacred animal is often pronounced incorrectly without knowing its meaning, which is often called *"Tulah"*. One of them is the name of a sacred animal. Rat (*bikul*) is a taboo word. According to the belief that these animals should not be killed carelessly because of their properties and services. People call *bikul "jero ketut"* which consists of the words *jero* and *ketut* which means house or residence of people from the warrior caste (Laksana 2009).

The use of taboo language which is rarely used by the people in Mekarsari Village. Like saying the word *"nyem"* is used for food, and it has different meanings, such as *"nyem jukute"*, which means bland-tasting vegetables. However, if it is used for someone *"jleme nyem pragat ngomongin jelek anak,"* the word *nyem* means strange if it is directed at someone who can cause other people to be

offended. This expression is classified as vulgar because it goes against the norms of decency. This is in line with what was stated by Laksana (2009), in terms of taboo, the use of taboo words can be dangerous because a word has benefits and is detrimental to other people. This is consistent with the form of Tabu based on Frazer's (1955) theory.

The extinction of a language, one of which is a regional language in Mekarsari village, is a very important topic to be discussed in this research. Balinese is a minority language that is threatened with extinction, according to Dewi, Budasi, and Suarnajaya (2020). Balinese taboo language is an endangered minority language. The impact of globalization that occurs today is one of the factors that cause the extinction of a culture, especially the Balinese language in Mekarsari Village. Language that is rarely used or even not used anymore, it will cause the death of the language. A decrease in the frequency of language competency levels among speech groups, where a decrease in certain language variations can cause or influence speech groups (Jha, 2018). Balinese language learners should prioritize learning and preserving the Balinese language, as they speak it frequently. The use of regional languages, particularly Balinese, in the current globalization period has made it difficult for the Balinese population to provide a significant amount of support for the preservation of Balinese language. Balinese language may be quite accurate if it is consistently practiced. (Devi & Kasni, 2018).

Therefore, as a community, we must preserve the Balinese language, especially taboo words and taboo forms in Mekarsari village. The efforts of language users or language communities to preserve the vitality of a language depend on whether the

language can continue and avoid extinction. Banned words will become extinct if left unchecked. Society as a whole will lose its identity due to the death of language. In Bali, especially in the village of Mekarsari, taboos are widely known. Previously, only Balinese speakers and older speakers who knew the language could speak the language. There is not even much taboo language spoken, and there are no taboo dictionaries. Therefore, Balinese people must be aware of the positive and negative impacts of the language they use when communicating with other people to avoid threats or harm to other parties and to protect their cultural identity. This happens because the uniqueness of these taboos elevates regional language culture. Mahayana et al. (2022) provide evidence by stating that although people will enjoy something if they do it correctly, not everyone agrees to use good, correct, and appropriate language because these behaviors speak different languages for each group of people. This happens for several reasons, one of which is that some individuals do not know the cultural consequences of the language they use.

It is important to revitalize a language because the loss of a language means the loss of part of the culture associated with it and the loss of the identity of the native people who speak that language. Therefore, language is part of the culture and a community obligation that must be maintained (Hinton et al, (2018). This is related to the *Tri Hita Karana* concept which contains the principle that humans must respect all aspects of life. *The Tri Hita Karana* concept according to Wiana (2004: 141) emphasizes three human relationships in living life in the world. These three relationships include relationships between humans, relationships with nature, and relationships with God which are interrelated with each other. With implementation

that is balanced and in harmony with each other. This concept is believed to be able to preserve the culture and environment of Balinese society despite the current dynamics of social change. *Tri Hita Karana's* relationship with taboos is how we respond to existing taboos and taboos to create a harmonious life. An example is the relationship between humans and God can be exemplified by how we respond to taboos when performing rituals or prayers, such as humans having to bathe before praying. Furthermore, the relationship between humans and humans and how we have boundaries, speaking or acting. Lastly, the relationship between humans and nature or the surrounding environment, for example, is how we respond to taboos to keep the environment safe.

For the public to be aware of the categories of taboo terms, this research must be conducted, know the forms of taboo, and know the references to taboos in the Balinese language used in Mekarsari village. This is also intended so that the public knows the reasons for reducing the use of taboo language. Based on the background of this problem, researchers are eager to carry out studies about taboos in the Balinese language, especially in Mekarsari village, Baturiti District, Tabanan Regency, entitled "**Taboo in Balinese Language Spoken in Mekarsari Village: Qualitative Descriptive Study**". Through this research, the researcher hopes to help and facilitate those who want to study taboo words in Balinese, especially those spoken in Mekarsari village, or those who wish to research the same material or topic.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

In this research, the problem that is identified or studied in more depth is the taboo words used, taboo words found, and taboo references found in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari Village where not everyone can understand the words. Taboo words communicated in Mekarsari Village. Currently, in the Balinese language, there are many different taboo words in each region according to the geographical conditions and social conditions of each. This phenomenon is important enough knowledge to be studied more deeply, bearing in mind that there are still many people, especially in Bali, who have not realized the importance of the regional language as a cultural aspect that must be preserved, one of which is by understanding the local language. The context of taboo words to maintain the integrity of the Balinese language in the long term. This also led to discoveries for researchers to find out the variety of taboo words used in Balinese as a means of communication spoken in Mekarsari Village.

## 1.3 Limitation of the Research

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#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What taboo words are used in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari Village?
2. What are the forms of taboo in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari Village?
3. What are the references to taboos found in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari Village?

#### **1.5 Purpose of the Research**

The following purposes support this study, which are based on the previously mentioned study questions:

1. To identify taboo words used in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari Village.
2. To identify the forms of taboo found in the Balinese language of Mekarsari Village.
3. To analyze the references of taboo found in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari Village.

## **1.6 Significance of the Research**

It is anticipated that readers would benefit from the theoretical and practical contributions made by this study. Particularly for someone curious about Balinese taboos. This research has two significances: theoretical significance and practical importance. The two meanings fit into the following description:

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

The hope for researchers is that this research can contribute to the development of the field of linguistics, in the field of taboo language. By identifying taboo words in Balinese, it can provide information about taboo words in Balinese. On the other hand, this research also aims to increase public knowledge about taboo words in Balinese. That way, the taboo words contained in the Balinese language are not extinct or forgotten, but continue to be preserved.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

#### **a. Researcher**

Researchers hope that this research can increase researchers' knowledge regarding linguistics, especially on the taboo words contained in the Balinese language spoken in Mekarsari village.

#### **b. Balinese People**

This study is expected to be able to become a bridge for the Balinese people as additional knowledge about taboo words in Balinese spoken in Mekarsari Village and to preserve the cultural heritage of their ancestors.

c. Lectures and Students

It is hoped that it can be used as a reference to further explore the field of linguistics, especially taboo words in Balinese, and provide benefits for lecturers and students who are interested in exploring the field of linguistics, with a new source of information about taboo words.

d. For English Language Education

This study is expected to provide a source of information and a new understanding of taboo words as part of linguistics. Students in English Language Education will gain more knowledge about taboo words which help them better understand linguistics.

e. Other Researcher

It is hoped that this research will provide an opportunity for other researchers to better understand the field of linguistics, especially taboo words in Balinese. This research can be a reference for other researchers to enrich their language studies, especially for students at the Ganesha University of Education.

