

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter introduces the study and covers the research background, problem identification, limitations of the research, research questions, research objectives, and significance of the research.

1.1 Research Background

Language is a communication tool that expresses thoughts, feelings, and desires through sound symbols. With language, humans can communicate and interact with others. Language and culture are interdependent and interrelated. Language reflects the beliefs, customs, and values of the society that uses it (Karlik, 2023). Language and culture are related and present in various phenomena, including traditional rituals such as *Metatah*. This is one of the important ceremonies in the life of the Balinese people. In this context, language not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a medium for conveying cultural values, beliefs, and symbolic meanings contained in the ritual.

Balinese society has many cultural and religious activities, with a special lexicon that is only used for certain activities (Budasi et al., 2023). In the *Metatah* ritual, various lexicons or special vocabularies describe the procession's elements. The lexicons include terms related to the tools and materials used that contain symbolic, spiritual, and social meanings. However, based on the preliminary study through observation, the young generation in Menyali Village still does not understand the lexicon used in the ritual. This ignorance causes language death,

where cultural terms and linguistic elements are slowly lost from use. Language death will occur if no more people use and learn the language (Crystal, 2002). This phenomenon can be avoided by using a lexicon in a language or documenting the lexicon. Therefore, the language can still be learned and passed on to the next generation (Setiawan et al., 2023). The study of the lexicon plays a role in preserving local languages and cultures, strengthening identity, and maintaining cross-generational communication. By studying lexicon, the young generation not only prevents language death but also understands traditional values and deep cultural heritage. The young generation is expected to continue the community's cultural heritage, language, and values into the future. By preparing and involving the young generation in this preservation through lexicon study, communities can ensure that the richness of their cultural heritage remains alive amidst changing times. A deep understanding of the lexicons opens up opportunities to share understanding with people from other countries. In a cross-cultural context, these lexicons can be a medium for exchanging stories, knowledge, and insights that enrich perspectives, and strengthen tolerance and appreciation for the diversity of traditions and beliefs. It can also be a bridge in introducing Balinese culture to the world while encouraging a broader understanding of the richness of Balinese traditions and local wisdom.

In Balinese Hindu society, culture is closely related to the implementation of various religious ceremonies and rites called *Yadnya*. It is the essence of religious life, symbolizing devotion and gratitude for all of God's gifts (Renawati, 2019). *Yadnya* involves acts of giving or sacrifice, done with sincerity as a way to honor the relationship between humans, nature, and God. The five types of ceremonies

carried out by the community are called *Panca Yadnya* which consists of *Dewa Yadnya*, *Rsi Yadnya*, *Manusa Yadnya*, *Pitra Yadnya*, and *Butha Yadnya* (Nerawati, 2021). *Dewa Yadnya* is a ritual aimed at worshiping the gods. *Rsi Yadnya* is a ritual to honor a holy person. *Manusa Yadnya* is a ritual related to human life. *Pitra Yadnya* is a ritual aimed at deceased ancestors and parents. *Butha Yadnya* is a ritual for the balance of nature and spirits. In this case, the author discusses the implementation of the *Metatah* ritual, which is included in the *Manusa Yadnya*. Examining this ritual can provide insight into how Balinese society prepares its young generation to play a role and take responsibility in society while maintaining harmony in the context of *Tri Hita Karana*. According to Silawati (2020), *Tri Hita Karana* is the balance between the relationship between humans and God (*parahyangan*), the relationship between humans and others (*pawongan*), and the relationship between humans and nature (*palemahan*).

Metatah is a tooth-filing ritual in the Balinese Hindu tradition, performed as a sign of transition from childhood to adulthood. One of the main requirements that must be met by prospective participants in the ritual is to have experienced puberty. This period indicates that a person has experienced physical and emotional maturity to take on greater responsibilities in social and spiritual life. *Metatah* has the same meaning as *Mepandes* or *Mesangih* (Citrawati & Sastrawan, 2019). *Metatah* comes from the word "*tatah*", which means chisel. *Metatah* is not the process of cutting teeth, but rather scraping teeth using certain techniques. This ritual is intended to flatten the four incisors and two canines on the upper jaw, which are symbolically carved three times, sharpened and flattened (Asih et al., 2023). The six teeth symbolize the six bad qualities inherent in humans (Sad Ripu): *kama* (lust), *loba*

(greed), *krodha* (anger), *mada* (confusion), *moha* (hatred), and *matsarya* (jealousy). *Metatah* is usually carried out with a series of processions led by priests or traditional leaders, with various symbolism and a special lexicon.

Knowing and understanding the lexicon related to local culture, such as in the *Metatah* ritual is very important in maintaining culture and traditions in society. Lexicons are a collection of words, phrases, and expressions used by the community to communicate and interact. In everyday use, the lexicon is considered synonymous with a dictionary or vocabulary (Daulay et al., 2021). The *Metatah* ritual's lexicon includes specific terms used to describe objects, actions, and concepts related to the ritual. This lexicon helps people communicate and interact with others and maintain their cultural identity. Therefore, studying and identifying the lexicons used in the *Metatah* ritual is important.

The study of the lexicon used in rituals and traditions has become an area of increasing interest among academics, reflecting the importance of language in preserving cultural heritage and understanding the nuances of traditional practices. Several studies have highlighted the diversity and cultural richness in the lexicons of various rituals. The first study was conducted by Budasi and Suryasa (2021) with the research title “The Cultural View of North Bali Community towards *Ngidih* Marriage Reflected from Its Lexicons”. The results of the study show that there are nine stages of the *Ngidih* marriage ritual. In each procedure, sixty-two (62) lexicons were found, all reflecting the uniqueness of the community's cultural meanings. The second study was conducted by Jannah et al. (2020) with the research title “The Lexicons Used in the Procedures of Muslim Wedding Ceremony in Tegalinggah Village-North Bali”. The results of the study show six procedures contained in this

ceremony. Thirty-five (35) lexicons were found in the procedures. The lexicons hold cultural meanings that underscore the importance of living in harmony with God, humans, and nature (the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*). The third research is entitled “Procedures and Lexicons Used in *Ngerorod* Wedding Ceremony in Sidetapa Village North Bali” by Angelita (2024). The results show seven procedures found in the *Ngerorod* wedding ceremony. This research shows twenty-seven (27) lexicons contained in the procedures of this ceremony. The lexicon in this ceremony has a cultural meaning that is different from other areas.

Although there have been various studies on language and rituals in Bali, there is still a gap in studies that focus specifically on the lexicon used in the *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village. An in-depth analysis of the specific terms used in this ritual can significantly contribute to understanding how language functions in cultural contexts and religious rites. Based on the arguments above, studying the lexicon in the context of culture and ritual has a very important role. This study serves as a guideline in carrying out rituals, ensuring that every step and utterance is by the traditions and meanings passed down from generation to generation. This research aims to identify and analyze the cultural meaning of the lexicons used in the procedures of the *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village.

1.2 Problem Identification

This research comes from the interesting phenomenon of the language used by the Menyali people during their ritual event, particularly in the *Metatah* ritual. However, many young generations are unfamiliar with the lexicon and its cultural meaning in this ritual. Cultural identity could be threatened if they do not

understand the lexicon used in the *Metatah* ritual. The influence of globalization causes the young generation to adopt more global or national languages. Without a deep understanding of the lexicon, communities may fail to understand the full cultural and spiritual meaning of the *Metatah* ritual, potentially diminishing their connection to their ancestral heritage.

According to the identified problems above, efforts are needed to ensure that people can preserve important aspects of their cultural identity by appreciating, understanding, and continuing to use the lexicon in the *Metatah* ritual. Therefore, conducting a study that can identify the lexicons and analyze the cultural meaning of the *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village is important.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

Based on problem identification, this study focuses on one branch of linguistics, the lexicon. It uses a descriptive qualitative design to focus on the lexicons and their cultural meaning in the procedures of the *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What lexicons are used in the procedures of *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village?
2. What are the cultural meanings of lexicons used in the *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To identify lexicons used in the procedures of *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village.

2. To analyze the cultural meaning of the identified lexicons in the *Metatah* ritual in Menyali Village.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research is expected to provide useful contributions both theoretically and practically for readers, especially for those who are interested and studying linguistics. The significance of this research is divided into two, namely theoretical significance and practical significance.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to contribute ideas in the linguistics study, especially in the field of lexicon. By analyzing a set of unique vocabularies used in the *Metatah* ritual, this research enriches the reader's understanding of the role of language in certain cultural and religious contexts, showing how the lexicon can reflect the values, beliefs, and practices of a society. This research is expected to reveal how certain words are chosen and used to create meaning in the context of rituals.

1.6.2 Empirical Significance

a. Indonesian Government

This study provides the Indonesian government with crucial data to support initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting Indonesia's rich cultural heritage. By analyzing the lexicon in the procedures of the *Metatah* ritual, the government can include these findings in cultural preservation programs, ensuring that traditional practices are maintained and respected.

b. English Education Department

This research helps English Education students enhance cross-cultural understanding by developing a deeper understanding of how language and culture are interconnected. By studying the lexicon used in the *Metatah* ritual, students can appreciate the role of language in preserving traditions and cultural identity, which is important in cross-cultural communication.

c. Future Study

Researchers can use this study as a comparative tool to examine similar rituals and lexicons in other cultures. This can lead to a broader understanding of how different societies use language in their ceremonial practices, contributing to global knowledge of cultural linguistics.

d. Villagers

This research provides an educational opportunity for Menyali Villagers to deepen their understanding of cultural practices and their meaning, and foster a sense of pride in their cultural identity and heritage. Using a proper lexicon also ensures that the ritual is carried out correctly and respectfully, which is important for maintaining the ritual's sanctity and the participants' spiritual well-being.