

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Bali and South Korea have forged progressively stronger connections in recent years, especially in tourism and cultural exchange. South Korea ranks among the top contributors of international tourists to Bali, with 294,024 Korean visitors recorded in 2024 alone (Antara News Bali, 2024). Enhanced connections between Koreans and Balinese across multiple sectors, including hospitality, education, and commerce, accompany the rising flood of tourism. Many Balinese individuals are currently employed in Korean-owned enterprises or are undertaking language training to secure job prospects in South Korea. In increasing cross-cultural interaction, language is essential for facilitating efficient communication and fostering mutual understanding. But linguistic norms can cause miscommunication, interpersonal friction, and conflict in the workplace, particularly when using swear words.

Swear words frequently have significant emotional and cultural connotations, and each culture's social standards influence how they are understood. Swear words often have important emotional and cultural associations, and the social norms of each culture affect their interpretation. In Balinese culture, swear words are closely associated with cultural beliefs, relationships, and practices. Aryasuari et al. (2024) showed that Balinese taboo words often involve animals, spirits, and culturally sensitive attributes that are based on cultural beliefs. Similarly, Yogiantari et al. (2024) found that Balinese taboo words are dominated by culturally embedded references that are shaped by community norms and shared cultural knowledge. These words are highly dependent on community norms and shared cultural knowledge, especially in the Buleleng dialect (Wisudayanti, 2020) ; (K. Dewi et al., 2020). This means that many Balinese swear words have culturally specific meanings that may not be readily understandable to people who speak different languages.

For instance, hierarchy and politeness levels have a big impact on language use in South Korea, yet in Bali, expressions can differ depending on the social context

and generation. Communication and social harmony can be disrupted when people from different linguistic origins interact, particularly in professional settings, when they misunderstand inappropriate language Jay, 2009 Swearing is one of the most socially charged linguistic features, revealing cultural views on emotion, politeness, and interpersonal interactions. In this respect, the study of swear words provides valuable insights into how different cultures express states of affect, mark the boundaries between social groups, or handle interpersonal situations. What may be considered informal or joking in another culture may be considered impolite or even insulting. Studying the sociolinguistic function of swearing is essential for promoting more effective communication and a greater awareness of other cultures, as Balinese and South Koreans come into greater contact through travel, education, and work (Ljung, 2011).

According to Schippers (2013) Swear words can be used to communicate anger, make someone laugh, insult someone, or emphasize or exaggerate a point. They are frequently divided into categories depending on their semantic connotations, such as statements that are sexual, religious, excretory, associated with mental illness, or animal-based (Yani et al., 2017). Swear words are commonly employed in casual contexts in Balinese culture, where they are more often used as playful taunting than as grave insults, especially among close friends or peer groups (Wisudayanti, 2020). On the other hand, South Korean society, which is heavily impacted by Confucian values, upholds a rigid hierarchy in language usage. Swearing is strongly stigmatized in official or public contexts because it is frequently perceived as rude or disruptive. However, in private talks or among young people, especially in pop culture and online media, swearing can be more acceptable (Kim & Plester, 2021).

Swearing can have a beneficial or detrimental social influence, depending on the interaction's nature and the cultural setting Budasi, (2012). Swear words can be used to humorously violate social standards in some contexts, but they can also be perceived as rude or offensive in others. These results are mostly driven by cultural interpretation. In this manner, the social norm of the community can impact the use of cursing in terms of whether it has a societal effect, perhaps perpetuating stereotypes by linking specific expressions to the notion of lack of education or lack of politeness. Furthermore, as Dewaele (2017) states, people who often use these

expressions can be more sociable and expressive, while those from a more puritanical language environment might see this as being offensive or aggressive. Swearing takes a multifaceted role in cross-cultural relations, exemplifying how a term that might be deemed as offensive in one culture might mean something else entirely different.

There have been a number of studies analyzing swearing habits in Balinese and South Korean cultural settings. Breaking down Balinese swearing expressions in terms of word compositions and phrase and sentence formats, Yani et al. (2017) identified elements of sex and pornography, religion and God, animals and beasts, and human body parts and functions. The prevalence of swearing expressions in everyday expressions by Buleleng Bali students was analyzed by Wisudayanti (2020), showing its prevalence at all age levels, and is often used for fun or to let off stress. According to sociolinguistic observations, slang and vulgar expressions are widely used by the younger generation, especially through digital media, entertainment, and casual peer interactions-although explicit studies on Korean swear words are limited (Kwon & Cho, 2017). Comparative studies that look at how swear words are used and interpreted in South Korean and Balinese cultures are still lacking, despite this corpus of work. Particularly in light of the growing cross-cultural interaction facilitated by media, education, and tourism, a direct comparison of these two cultures would provide insightful information about the forms, functions, and references of swear words.

Every community has strong cultural ties to swear words, which reflect its values, beliefs, and communication customs. Swear words are an example of how language expression varies and is comparable in different cultures. The forms, functions, and references of swearing have not yet been directly compared in previous research, even though usage, formality, and social perception appear to differ greatly between South Korea and Bali. Comparative studies like this are essential, particularly for those who communicate across cultural boundaries. For example, it may be helpful for Balinese tourism workers who often engage with South Korean tourists to be aware of Korean language sensitivities, especially about very context-sensitive taboo terms. Increasing numbers of tourists and cultural interactions also show that Koreans are becoming more interested in Balinese

culture. Through the methodical documentation and analysis of the similarities and differences in the use of swear words between South Korean and Balinese speakers, this study seeks to advance mutual understanding in a world that is becoming more interconnected while also adding to the expanding field of forms, functions, and references of swear words.

This study aims to analyze and compare Balinese and South Korean swear words by examining their similarities and differences in terms of forms, functions, and references. While several studies have investigated the use of swear words in Balinese and South Korean contexts individually, there is a lack of comparative research that systematically analyzes the forms, functions, and cultural references of swearing between the two cultures, particularly in light of increasing cross-cultural interaction driven by tourism, education, and media. Additionally, this research is beneficial to language learners, teachers, and professionals working in the fields of tourism, education, and intercultural communication, especially those who work with South Korean and Balinese communities. By being aware of the subtle differences in how swear words are used in the two cultures, one can avoid misunderstandings, encourage cultural awareness, and facilitate more productive and cross-cultural interaction. Concerning the discussion, this study is entitled “A Comparison Between Balinese and South Korean Swear Words”.

1.2 Identification of Research Problem

South Korea is one of the top contributors of international tourists to Bali (Antara News Bali, 2024). Balinese and South Korean exchanges are growing, especially in the travel and service sectors. Many Balinese people have chosen to work and study in South Korea, which has brought attention to the importance of language in intercultural communication. One issue is the usage of swear words, which vary in meaning and social acceptability depending on the culture. Previous studies have examined swear words in Balinese and South Korean separately. There is a limited study of research that explicitly compares similarities and differences in form, reference, and function. As a result of the close social and economic relationship between Bali and South Korea, it is important to understand these linguistic differences to promote intercultural communication and minimize potential conflicts.

1.3 Research Limitation

In this research, the focus is on the similarities and differences between Balinese and South Korean swear words in terms of forms, functions, and references. The analysis is based on previous studies discussing swear words in both languages, including journal articles and undergraduate theses. In particular, only informal swear words of Standard Korean (Pyojuneo) are considered, while the Balinese data represent swear words used in the Buleleng dialect, as presented in the selected studies. In addition to providing a foundation for further research on cross-cultural communication, this study seeks to offer insights into the sociolinguistic aspects of swearing.

1.4 Statement of Research Problem

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

1. What are the similarities and differences between the forms of South Korean and Balinese swear words?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the functions of South Korean and Balinese swear words?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the references of South Korean and Balinese swear words?

1.5 Objectives of The Study

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this study could be obtained as below:

1. To identify the similarities and differences in the forms of swear words in South Korean and Balinese.
2. To analyze the similarities and differences in the functions of swear words in South Korean and Balinese.
3. To investigate the similarities and differences in the references of swear words in South Korean and Balinese.

1.6 Significance of The Study

This study provides two significances: theoretical significance and practical significance.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The results of this study contribute to the understanding of the functioning of swear words in multilingual and multicultural settings. By comparing Balinese and South Korean swear words based on forms, functions, and references, this study makes use of the sociolinguistic theories that are currently accessible on taboo language and how it functions in communication.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Readers

The result of this study, for those with an interest in sociolinguistics and cross-cultural communication, can help show how swear words reflect cultural norms and social relationships and facilitate an understanding of language diversity in communities. Particularly for tourism workers who frequently interact with South Korean visitors, and also Balinese people who are studying and working in the tourism field, is that learning South Korean swear words can minimize misunderstanding and improve communication with South Korean tourists.

b. For Ganesha University of Education

The results of this study can help students and instructors better comprehend the phenomenon of swearing in Korean and Balinese, particularly in the fields of linguistics and cross-cultural communication.

c. For Other Researchers

The results of this study are hoped to be a useful step for other researchers to understand more about the field of linguistics. Other researchers can understand more deeply related to linguistics, especially about the term swearing used in South Korean and Balinese society, which is also part of the field of linguistics. This research can also be another source of results to strengthen sociolinguistic studies,² especially for students of Ganesha University of Education.