

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter presents the research background, identification of research problem, research limitation, statement of the problems, research objectives, significance of the research

1.1 Research Background

Balinese and Australian cultures exhibit different linguistic and cultural characteristics that influence the use of swear words. In Balinese society, language is deeply rooted in a hierarchical structure, in which speech levels reflect social status and respect (Arka, 2018). The use of swear words in Balinese is strongly influenced by these traditional norms, making certain expressions highly offensive when used outside their appropriate context. In contrast, in Australian English, swear words are more frequently integrated into everyday interactions and function not only as expressions of emotion but also as markers of intimacy or humor (Stapleton, 2010).

Australian English is a variety of English that developed within a relatively egalitarian social structure. This variety is characterized by informal and direct communication styles, as well as a high tolerance for the use of non-standard language, including swear words. In many social contexts, speakers of Australian English use swear words spontaneously as part of natural conversation rather than

as deliberate acts of verbal aggression. These linguistic characteristics indicate that the use of swear words in Australian English has become normalized in daily interactions, particularly in informal situations. Meanwhile, the Balinese language is characterized by strict hierarchical norms and culturally embedded politeness strategies, whereas Australian English operates within a more egalitarian social framework. This contrast helps explain the differing perceptions of swear word usage in the two cultures.

A comparison between swear words in the Balinese language and Australian English is essential to understanding how cultural and linguistic differences shape the expression of strong emotions and social interactions. A study by Wiyasa et al. (2017) shows that in the Bali Aga community of Sidetapa Village, swear words such as *celeng* ‘pig’ and *bojog* ‘monkey’ can be perceived as humorous or insulting depending on the context of use. This finding illustrates that the meaning of swear words in Balinese is highly dependent on social context and interpersonal relationships. This condition differs from that of Australian English speakers, who are generally accustomed to using swear words informally without considering hierarchical norms, which may lead to unintentional offenses. From a pragmatic perspective, swear words in Australian English perform various social functions beyond merely expressing anger or frustration. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), taboo language may function as a linguistic resource for expressing emotion, reinforcing social bonds, and constructing group identity. Similarly, Ljung (2011) argues that swear words are not always used literally but often serve pragmatic purposes such as intensification, humor, or solidarity. However, these pragmatic functions rely heavily on shared cultural understanding. When

Australian English swear words are used in a different cultural environment, such as Balinese society, which emphasizes politeness and hierarchical language norms, their intended pragmatic meaning may not be interpreted as expected. As a result, such expressions may lead to offense or miscommunication.

A deep understanding of these linguistic and cultural differences is crucial, given the close relationship between Bali and Australia in the tourism sector, where Australian tourists play a significant role in Bali's tourism industry. Based on research published in *Guna Sewaka: A Journal of Management*, over the past three decades, the average contribution of Australian tourists to the total number of foreign tourist arrivals to Bali has reached nearly 20%. The study states that, based on historical data over the last three decades, Australian tourists have consistently made the largest contribution to total tourist arrivals in Bali and therefore represent a highly potential tourism market. Furthermore, following the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Australian tourist visits to Bali has shown a positive trend. The reopening of direct international flights from Australia to Bali in March 2022 contributed significantly to the recovery of the tourism sector. The same study noted that in 2022, Australian tourists accounted for almost one-third of total foreign tourist arrivals in Bali, with the number of arrivals reaching 605,955 people. The large number of tourists arriving from Australia is prone to misunderstandings when communicating between local residents and Australians. In tourist areas, misunderstandings can arise from language barriers or more seriously, the misuse of swear words.

Despite the strong tourism relationship between Bali and Australia, various problemrelated to the use of swear words by Australian tourists continue to occur.

These issues are generally caused by a lack of awareness of the meanings and social implications of swear words in different cultural contexts. The use of offensive language has the potential to provoke conflict, cause discomfort among local residents, and lead to disturbances that result in reports to authorities. Therefore, foreign tourists need to develop greater awareness of the impact of swear word usage in their interactions with local communities. If such issues are not properly addressed, the tourism sector may suffer a negative image, as legal cases involving tourists can affect the length of stay and complicate tourism management.

Based on the above discussion, this research is not only important but also necessary to obtain clear and systematic information regarding the similarities and differences in the forms, functions, and references of swear words in the Balinese language and Australian English. Therefore, this study is entitled “The Comparison of Swear Words between Balinese and Australian”, with the expectation that it will provide valuable insights into improving cross-cultural understanding and fostering more effective and respectful communication.

1.2 Identification of Research Problem

Balinese and Australian English reflect different social and cultural systems that influence the use of swear words. Balinese is rooted in strict hierarchical norms and politeness strategies, making the use of swear words highly dependent on context, social status, and interpersonal relationships. In contrast, Australian English operates within a more egalitarian social framework, allowing swear words to be used more freely in informal interactions as expressions of humor, solidarity,

or emotional emphasis. These differing linguistic norms result in variations in how swear words are perceived, interpreted, and socially accepted in each culture. In the context of the close relationship between Bali and Australia, particularly in the tourism sector, such differences have the potential to cause misunderstandings, discomfort, or even conflict in cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, the limited number of comparative studies that systematically examine the similarities and differences in the forms, functions, and references of swear words in both languages indicates the need for a more in-depth and structured analysis to understand the potential for cross-cultural miscommunication.

1.3 Research Limitation

This research focuses on the comparison between Balinese and Australian swear words in terms of forms, functions, and references. This study uses primary data obtained through semi-structured interviews with native speakers and secondary data collected from relevant journal articles and theses. However, this study has several limitations. The Balinese data used in this study are specifically based on the Buleleng dialect of Balinese, which may not fully represent other regional dialects of Balinese. Despite this limitation, by combining these sources, this research will offer deeper insights into the sociolinguistic aspects of swearing and contribute to the development of future studies in cross-cultural communication.

1.4 Statement of the Problems

Based on the topic outlined above, the research questions of this research are:

- a. What are the similarities and differences of the forms of swear words between Balinese and Australian?
- b. What are the similarities and differences of the functions of swear words between Balinese and Australian?
- c. What are the similarities and differences of the references of swear words between Balinese and Australian?

1.5 Research Objectives

The statement of the problem above, the purpose of the study can be formulated as follows:

- a. To find out the similarities and differences of the forms of Swear Words between Balinese and Australian.
- b. To analyze the similarities and differences of the references of Swear Words between Balinese and Australian.
- c. To explore the similarities and differences of the functions of Swear Words between Balinese and Australian.

1.6 Significance of the Research

As stated in the research objectives above, this research provides two significances and is also expected to provide meaningful and valuable

contributions to:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the development of intercultural linguistics studies, especially in understanding the use of swear words in two different cultures, namely Bali and Australia. This study can enrich theories on pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis, especially related to language functions in different social and cultural contexts. In addition, this study also contributes to the understanding of how cultural values and social structures influence the form and meaning of emotional utterances in daily interactions.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Readers

This study provides new insights into the importance of understanding the cultural context in language use, especially regarding emotional or abusive utterances. Readers are expected to be more aware of the potential for language conflict in intercultural communication and be able to develop an attitude of tolerance and empathy in communicating across cultures.

b. For Balinese Society

This study can help Balinese people to better understand the communication patterns of Australian tourists, especially in terms of language use that may be considered rude or disrespectful. With this understanding, local communities can be better prepared to deal with

cultural differences and manage interactions more wisely to avoid unnecessary conflict.

c. For Australian Tourist

This research provides Australian tourists with guidance and a deeper understanding of the norms of language and politeness in Balinese culture. Thus, they can be more careful in choosing words when communicating, maintaining good relations with the local community, and creating a more positive and harmonious tourism experience.

