

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Chapter one introduced this study and covered the research background, problem identification, research limitations, research questions, research objectives, and the significance of the study.

1.1 Research Background

Language is a fundamental aspect of humanity that not only enables individuals to communicate, express themselves, and share ideas but also serves as a reflection of culture, reflecting the values and identity of a community (Santana, 2016). Language and culture are so closely intertwined, like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated, as the two are inherently interconnected (Sepora & Jafari, 2012). If a language becomes extinct, its cultural heritage contained within it will also disappear. As a dynamic and complex communication system, language has various main pillars, one of which is the lexicon. In this case, the lexicon is understood as a collection of vocabulary that represents the culture of a language (Gass, 1988). Over time, the lexicon continues to evolve by adding new words and replacing the meanings of existing words in accordance with cultural and social changes.

However, previous studies show that low understanding of the lexicon among communities can lead to a weakening of linguistic and cultural connections. Research conducted by Budasi et al. (2021) found that the community's understanding of the *tabuh rah* lexicons in Menyali village was weakening, especially among women. The shift in language use and negative

perceptions misused by the community have resulted in some *tabuh rah* lexicons being rarely used. If this condition continues, it has the potential to cause cultural shifts and the loss of dozens of traditional lexicons related to the *tabuh rah ritual*. Another researcher, Jannah et al., (2024), found a lack of understanding among young Muslim generations in *tegal linggah* Village regarding the traditional lexical terms or vocabulary used in Muslim wedding ceremonies. On the other hand, Kadek et al., (2025), who conducted research in Menyali village, found that the community possesses rich lexicons related to the *tutug kambuhan* ritual. However, the younger generation is increasingly unfamiliar with these terms, leading to a tendency for the lexicons in this ritual to face extinction.

In Bali, it is often referred to as the island of a thousand temples. Lexicon is not only found in informal communication but can also be found in various dimensions of life, from religious ceremonies, art performances, or formal events, which make ceremonies in Bali seem unique (Puspani et al., 2024). One of the ceremonies that has a rich lexicon is the *ngaben* ceremony, which is the cremation procession of Hindus in Bali that is carried out to purify the *atma* (soul) of the deceased. In addition, *the ngaben* (cremation) ceremony can also be seen as a cultural asset that stores a wealth of lexicons that represent the cultural values, beliefs, and views of life of the Balinese Hindu community in death rituals (Sakka et al., 2025). In the *ngaben* ceremony, *kajang* plays a crucial role in the ceremony, as a ritual medium that cannot be separated from the implementation of *the ngaben* ceremony because it has a fundamental spiritual meaning. The presence of the *kajang* is not merely an additional

element regarded as a complement, but a crucial part of the series of ceremonies. Without the presence of the *kajang*, the *ngaben* ceremony is considered spiritually (*niskala*) incomplete and loses its essential meaning (Swandi & Nuriarta, 2023). Therefore, the *kajang* is not only important ritually, but also represents cultural and spiritual values that reflect the meaning of the lexicons related to their usage.

Based on the statement above, preliminary observations conducted in Bunutin Village, Bangli Regency, Bali, indicate that mass *ngaben* ceremonies are still routinely held once a year, with the widespread use of *kajang* showing that *kajang* still plays an important role in the implementation of *ngaben* in the village. In Balinese tradition, there are various types of *kajang* based on clan bloodlines (*kawitan*), one of which is the *kajang* of the *Pasek Kayu Selem* clan. In practice, especially in the implementation of the mass *ngaben* ceremony, a phenomenon was found where some people, not only the elderly but also the younger generation, do not understand the meaning and function of *kajang*. This situation leads to confusion regarding its use, so *kajang* is often used without being fully understood, thereby disrupting the cremation ceremony.

This situation is influenced by a lack of documentation on *kajang*, which limits knowledge of *kajang* because it can only be mastered by certain individuals. In addition, *kajang* uses verbal vocabulary written in the Balinese script (*wijaksana* and *modre* script) as well as complex visual elements in the form of symbols, which require a deep understanding to be interpreted correctly. Its status as a passive lexicon that only appears once every five years makes this knowledge even more difficult for the general public to comprehend. In an ideal

situation, the younger generation is expected to be able to act as intermediaries for cultural continuity, helping to preserve and maintain an understanding of ritual components such as *kajang*. However, the reality on the field shows a difference, the younger generation tends to experience confusion or be passive due to limited references for learning the meaning of *kajang*. If this phenomenon continues, the orientation of the *ngaben* ceremony risks shifting to merely a quick and mechanical process, so that *kajang* only functions as a passive lexicon without a complete meaning. Therefore, this research is important to document and study, so that the lexicon contained therein is not threatened with extinction, which would cause the loss of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Balinese people.

Although there have been many studies discussing language and traditions in Bali, there is still a gap in studies that specifically examine the lexicon of *kajang kawitan*, particularly *kajang pasek kayu selem*, in the context of the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin Village, Bangli, Bali. An in-depth study of the lexicon found in *kajang pasek kayu selem* can make a significant contribution to the preservation of language and culture. In addition, this research also plays a role in documenting the lexicon that can be passed on to future generations. Given this urgency, this research is not only important but must also be carried out immediately to ensure that the cultural meaning contained in *kajang* is preserved.

1.2 Problem Identification

Kajang plays an important role in the *ngaben* (cremation) ceremony for the community in Bunutin Village, Bangli. However, the lack of documentation

about *kajang* has caused to become increasingly unfamiliar and misunderstood because it is only used during the *ngaben* ceremony. Furthermore, knowledge about *kajang* is limited due to the fact that it can only be performed by certain individuals, and *kajang* uses a lexicon in Balinese scripts (*wijaksana* and *modre*), as well as complex visual symbols that require a deep understanding to be interpreted correctly. If this situation continues, there is a risk of losing knowledge about the lexicon of *kajang*, because much of this knowledge is controlled by key informants. Without proper linguistic documentation, this could lead to a narrowing of meaning. The impact of the general community's lack of understanding of the function of the *kajang* lexicons often hinder the flow of the *ngaben* ceremony, especially in the context of mass *ngaben*. As a result, it is common to find people who simply place *kajang* without understanding its meaning, which has the potential to undermine the sacredness of the ceremony. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to identify and understand the lexicon in *kajang*, especially *kajang pasek kayu selem*, so that the richness of the lexicon and symbols remains part of the collective knowledge of the community, ensuring that the *ngaben* ceremony does not lose its sacred and educational value for future generations.

1.3 Research Limitation

Based on the identification of problems, this study is limited to the lexicon analysis found in the *kajang kawitan* of the clan *pasek kayu selem* used in the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin Village, Bangli. The focus of this study is to identify the verbal and visual elements contained in *kajang pasek kayu selem* that are used during the ceremony. In addition, this study also analyzes the

lexical meaning and cultural meaning of the lexicon based on the understanding of clan *pasek kayu selem* native speakers in Bunutin Village.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the above background, several research questions can be raised, as follows:

1. What lexicons are used in *Kajang Pesek Kayu Selem* at the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin village?
2. What are the lexical meanings of the lexicons are used in *Kajang Pesek Kayu Selem* at the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin village?
3. What are the cultural meanings of the lexicons are used in *Kajang Pesek Kayu Selem* at the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin village?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the above research questions, the objectives of this study can be stated as follows:

1. To identify the lexicons are used in *Kajang Pesek Kayu Selem* at the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin village?
2. To identify the lexical meaning of the lexicons used in *Kajang Pesek Kayu Selem* at the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin village?
3. To identify the cultural meaning of the lexicons used in *Kajang Pesek Kayu Selem* at the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin village?

1.6 Research Significant

1.6.1 Theoretical Significant

This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of linguistics, particularly in the study of lexicon in a cultural context.

By identifying and analyzing the lexicon found in the *kajang pasek kayu selem* used in the *ngaben* (cremation) ceremony in Bunutin Village, Bangli. This research can enhance the understanding of language preservation in traditional rituals. The results of this research can also serve as a valuable reference for linguists interested in conducting similar research in other rituals or cultural contexts. Additionally, this research is also expected to raise awareness among the community, including younger generations, about the importance of preserving and safeguarding cultural heritage to prevent the loss of traditional knowledge due to generational changes

1.6.2 Practical Significants

a) For Government

The results of this study can provide authentic information that supports the preservation of the lexicon used in the *ngaben* ceremony in Bunutin Village, Bangli, as part of Bali's cultural heritage.

b) For the English Language Education Department

This research is expected to enrich understanding of lexicon, both for lecturers and students studying linguistics, particularly in courses related to lexicon, sociolinguistics, or language and culture.

c) For Other Researchers

This research can serve as a reference and guide for other researchers interested in studying similar topics, particularly in the fields of lexicon, cultural linguistics, or language maintenance.

d) For Bunutin Villagers

The people of Bunutin Village are expected to gain new insights into the lexicon used in the *pasek kayu selem* during the *ngaben* ceremony. With this understanding, the community is expected to be able to maintain and preserve the existing lexicon as part of their cultural identity. With this understanding, the community is expected to be able to maintain and preserve the existing lexicon as part of their cultural identity.

e) For The Reader.

This research can provide new context and insights into the lexicon of the Balinese language, particularly in relation to *pasek kayu selem* in the *ngaben* (cremation) ceremony, as well as the importance of efforts to preserve local languages and cultures in the midst of changing times.

