

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the fundamental aspects of the study, namely the research background, identification of the problem, scope of the study, research questions, research objectives, and significance of the study.

1.1 Research Background

Humans use language as a means to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and emotions, and they do so by utilizing culture as their semantic encoding (Amral & Sumiharti, 2022). Culture or civilization is a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and other abilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society, according to (Spencer, 2012). Language and culture are closely related; a society's culture is reflected in its language, and language is enriched by cultural diversity. Both influence each other in various ways, including literary works (Amral, 2022). The relationship between language and culture is unmistakable. Language is an element of culture. Language is a representation of culture because its characteristics are shaped by the culture in which it develops. (Putri et al., 2025). One of the elements of language that best reflects culture is the lexicon, which is a collection of terms used by a society. One of the things that can be taught and passed on formally and informally to the next generation is language, which is a cultural component and contains symbols in the form of a lexicon that has sociocultural connotations and wisdom value. Both formally and informally taught and passed on to the next generation (Yayuk et al., 2022). Due to cultural hegemonization, some Balinese words are almost extinct among the current generation. The occurrence of capitalist hegemony has touched a big thing in the form of language (Putri & Nurita, 2021).

In Bali, the use of lexicon as a reflection of culture can be found in various aspects of life, such as in daily communication, where there are levels of language according to the social status of the interlocutor.

Globalization has affected the culture and language of society, where local culture has begun to be displaced by foreign culture, and the use of foreign languages has increasingly dominated various aspects of life (Kasiyarno & Apriyanto, 2025). One of the phenomena that emerges is that the impact of globalization causes local communities, especially the younger generation, to tend to abandon traditional lexicons and prefer to use modern terms that are considered more practical and keep up with the times (Hamzah et al., 2024). Many local languages are threatened with extinction due to globalization and the supremacy of Indonesian as the official language of the country. One sign of the assimilation process and the decreasing number of native speakers is the change in the phonological pattern of the local language of the decreasing number of native speakers (Lestari et al., 2025). This causes a language shift, where the original lexicon is increasingly rarely used, especially by the younger generation. This phenomenon leads to a language shift, especially among the younger generation, who tend to abandon traditional lexicons. From this situation, local people in Bali need to maintain their local language as a mother tongue. Therefore, efforts to support and continuously use the local language are necessary to prevent it from extinction, or what is commonly known as language death (Agus et al., 2023).

As a result, their understanding of the meanings contained in the cultural lexicon becomes increasingly limited. This condition is evident in the context of Balinese culture, where many terms used in traditional rituals are becoming unfamiliar to the younger generation. Previous research shows that the use of the Balinese language, especially the lexicon associated with the ngidih wedding tradition, has decreased among the younger

generation (Budasi & Suryasa, 2021). In fact, these terms have important philosophical and spiritual meanings in the Balinese cultural structure. This phenomenon is a serious challenge in the inheritance of cultural values through language. The *Sudi Wadani* ritual is an important part of the spiritual culture of the Balinese people, especially in Tamblang Village. In general, this ritual aims to purify oneself and strengthen one's spiritual commitment to the teachings of Hinduism (Suastika, 2021). To marry a Hindu, a non-Hindu must convert to Hinduism. As a result, their marriage is only permitted under one religion. *Sudi Wadani* is the term used to describe the act of pledging and converting to Hinduism (Parisada et al., 2024)

In its implementation, this ritual contains deep spiritual meaning, which is reflected through the sacred processions that are carried out with great solemnity. Each stage in this ritual is rich in symbolism, where the use of a distinctive lexicon becomes a crucial element in reinforcing the sacred and religious significance of every action and utterance. These lexicons not only function as a means of communication, but also as a means of passing on cultural and spiritual values. In certain cultures, lexicons can help maintain the meaning of language and are closely tied to cultural identity (Yordania & Fateah, 2024). The Tamblang community routinely carries out the *Sudi Wadani* ritual, which is part of their social life, and contains religious values and strengthens relationships between citizens within the framework of shared culture and beliefs.

Initial observations conducted in Tamblang Village show that there is limited understanding of the lexicon used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual, both among the younger and older generations. Many terms used in the ritual are rarely understood in depth, even by those who are directly involved in its implementation. This ignorance not only hampers the spiritual and philosophical meaning of the ritual but also impacts the sustainability of local

culture and identity. When a lexicon full of meaning is forgotten, the values contained in it are also endangered. If there are no active preservation and documentation efforts, then it is likely that these lexicons will disappear along with the shifting generations. This is a warning that language, as a cultural container, must be kept alive in the social practices of society. This condition highlights the urgent need for efforts to preserve and sustain the use of local language, especially in cultural contexts. Therefore, to prevent language extinction, it is necessary to maintain the language and use it continuously Fisman et al., 1963), as cited in Budasi (2021).

Language extinction is a phenomenon that occurs when a speech community no longer actively uses a language or set of vocabulary that is part of their identity. One of the most important issues, especially in Bali, is the Balinese language. The city government must act now to address concerns about its possible extinction. Promoting and maintaining the Balinese language as an important component of the island's identity is made possible by regional autonomy (Widiantana et al., 2022). In the context of *Sudi Wadani* rituals, the threat of language extinction is apparent from the increasingly rare use and understanding of specialized lexicons that have sacred and philosophical meanings (Pratama, 2024). When these vocabularies are no longer recognized or passed on, not only is the language lost, but also the cultural values contained in it. Language plays an important role as a container of tradition and heritage, so when it weakens or becomes extinct, the cultural identity of the community is also eroded. This shows that language preservation, especially in cultural practices such as *Sudi Wadani*, is an important part of maintaining the continuity of a community's identity.

In previous research, no one has discussed the lexicon of the *Sudi Wadani* ritual, especially highlighting aspects of language inheritance and the involvement of the younger

generation in understanding the meaning of the lexicon. The lack of research in this area indicates a gap that needs to be filled immediately, given the importance of documenting language elements that contain cultural and spiritual values. The novelty of this research lies in its approach that combines linguistic documentation with contextual analysis of local culture. It also emphasizes the importance of language preservation as an integral part of efforts to maintain Bali's distinctive and valuable identity and cultural heritage.

1.2 Problem Identification

Traditional rituals serve as important expressions of cultural and spiritual identity, often containing unique lexicons that reflect the community's values, beliefs, and history. The *Sudi Wadani* ritual in Tamblang Village is one such practice that has culturally embedded linguistic elements used to convey sacred meaning. However, these traditional lexicons are at risk of fading away due to modernization, decreased ritual participation, and a lack of linguistic documentation. Many community members, especially the younger generation, are no longer familiar with the specialized terms used in rituals, which threatens the authenticity of these rituals and the preservation of their cultural meanings. Despite its importance, limited academic attention has been given to documenting and analyzing the *Sudi Wadani* lexicon. Without proper documentation, the meaning and function of these lexicons may be lost over time. This situation has led to an urgent need to study and preserve the linguistic aspects of the ritual before they disappear from collective memory.

1.3 Research Limitation

The scope of this study is limited to the lexicons used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual in Tamblang Village. This research does not examine other aspects, such as the historical background of the ritual, its ceremonial structure, or broader external influences on

cultural change. The analysis focuses on the forms, meanings, and uses of the lexicons in the ritual context as representations of culture and local identity among Balinese speakers in Tamblang Village.

This study aims to identify the lexicons used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual and to analyze the cultural meanings they convey, particularly those related to the stages of the ritual, sequences of activities, ritual tools, and verbal expressions. The study employs an ethnographic approach through in-depth interviews and observation. The observation is conducted using a non-participant observation method, with limitations in terms of observation duration and the number of participants, which includes two participants of the ritual and one mangku (local priest).

1.3 Research Question

1.4.1 What are the lexicons used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual in Tamblang Village?

1.4.2 What are the cultural meanings of the lexicons used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual in Tamblang Village?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 To identify and describe the lexicon used within the *Sudi Wadani* ritual in Tamblang Village.

1.5.2 To understand the cultural meaning of the identified lexicon in ritual in the tradition of *Sudi Wadani* in Tamblang Village.

1.6 Significance of the Research

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research will help improve our understanding of language and culture, particularly in the context of religious practices in Bali. This research can add to

linguistic studies by examining specific lexicons used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual in Tamblang Village.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

- a. Due to modernity and the declining use of indigenous languages in ceremonies, the distinctive lexicons used in the *Sudi Wadani* ritual are in danger of being lost. This research aims to record and preserve them.
- b. Students, teachers, and researchers who are researching Balinese language, customs, or local wisdom, particularly those concentrating on linguistic anthropology or regional linguistics, can use these findings as a reference.
- c. Especially for cultural events or festivals involving foreigners or the younger generation, knowing the unique language used in traditional ceremonies can enhance cultural tourism content and strengthen community identification.

