



## The status of Lexicon used in *Tabuh Rah* ritual in Menyali Village North Bali: An Ethnolinguistic study

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### Abstract

*Tabuh Rah (TR)* is a cockfighting ritual dedicated to neutralizing the evil spirits by Balinese people. In TR, many specific terms in the lexicon are used by the people involved in the practice. However, since TR is identical to gambling and the national law forbids gambling, the number of people involved in this ritual has decreased. Besides, this ritual is only dominated by adult male villagers. That situation potentially influences the number of lexicon users. Thus, this study aims to identify the lexicon status based on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale and explain why the lexicon is in a particular position. The researchers collected the data by distributing questionnaires and interviewing the respondents. There were 277 respondents selected in this study. The obtained data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the study show two significant findings. First, based on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, the lexicon is labeled in a threatened position. Only 47 (16.97%) respondents transmitted the lexicon to their children, and the average respondent only understands 50 (70.42%) terms of the lexicon from the total 71 terms of the lexicon used in the TR ritual. Second, the lexicon is in threatened status because of the villagers' overconfidence that the young generation will learn it from the environment, the negative attitude to the lexicon, and the villagers' belief that such lexicon is masculine. Those situations lead to ignorance of the villagers toward the existence of the lexicon.

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### Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago that consists of thousands of islands and hundreds of ethnic groups. Those ethnic groups normally speak an indigenous language as their

first language and Indonesian as their second and formal language. Many bilingual people do not use their mother tongue since their mother tongue's prestige is lower compared to the other language (Weinberg & Korne, 2016; Nonaka, 2014). Once they think that their mother tongue is inferior to the majority language, they will believe that there is no need to speak using their mother tongue, then they stop using it (Gibbs, 2002).

Indonesia has 652 Local languages (Language Agency, 2018). However, hundreds of those languages are vulnerable

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or even dying (Anderbeck, 2015). That condition is mostly caused by shifting the local languages to the Indonesian language (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). Commonly, language shift is driven by economic and social domination (Grenoble, 2006). It can be a sign of the beginning of the process of language death (Holmes, 2013). The Balinese language is one of Indonesia's local languages that experiences that problem, i.e., language shift to the Indonesian language.

Since Balinese people conduct many cultural and religious activities, the Balinese language has a lexicon with many specific terms used in particular cultural and religious activities. However, some rituals as a part of Balinese culture and religious activities are simplified. This simplification influences those specific terms in the lexicon. One of the Balinese rituals that has been simplified is *Tabuh Rah (TR)*. The simplification is done because *TR* is identical with cockfighting gambling and cockfighting is against the Indonesian criminal code.

Language and culture are related to each other (Mikhaleva & Régnier, 2014). It means that we can maintain a language through cultural activities (Johnson, 2012). Therefore, if a part of the culture is disappearing, there is a possibility that a part of the language is lost. Thus, in the *TR* and Balinese language, many specific terms in the lexicon in *TR* are no longer used by the Balinese people.

The situations above potentially endanger specific terms in the lexicon in the *TR* ritual. Thus, an effort to avoid the lexicon from extinction is needed, since more and more local languages are in endangered status (Kraisame, 2018). So far, there is no study about the *TR* ritual that has examined the status of *TR* specific terms in the lexicon. Most previous studies examined *TR* from a cultural and legal point of view (Widayanti & Suardana, 2020; Wiryawan, 2019; Sari & Wirasila, 2019). Therefore, this study aimed at identifying the status of the lexicon based on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale. By doing the status identification, a better plan for maintaining the lexicon existence can be made, which is significant, since language and culture deal with people's identity (Edwards, 2006). Furthermore, besides the loss of individual social identity, the loss of a language can be the loss of a community's sense of itself and its history (Rogers & Campbell, 2015). Based on these reasons, this study is urgently needed to maintain the identity and a part of the Balinese people's history.

## Literature Review

### *Tabuh Rah (TR)*

*TR* is a cultural activity practiced by Balinese people from generation to generation. It is the activity of dripping

blood of cocks to neutralize the evil spirits around the village. It is usually held as a part of Bali villages' whole ceremonies in a year (Kniten & Gunanta, 2005). *TR* uses three pairs of cocks as the media of the ritual, in which they are released to fight each other. The implementation of this cultural activity is believed to neutralize and free the village from any danger or mystical attack caused by the state of the anger of the evil spirit. This ritual is led by a traditional leader called *Jro Pasek Menyali* and assisted by several priests, namely, the priest of the *Puseh temple (God Visnu Temple)*, the priest of the *Dalem temple (God Siva Temple)*, the priest of the *Village Temple (God Brahma Temple)*, and *Jro Kubayan* (the highest priest). In addition, this ritual is also attended by 40 people from the *Bali Mula clan* and 40 people from the *Majapahit clan*, traditional village administrators, gong musicians, and offering makers. The other attendees are adult male villagers who are interested in cockfighting.

### Lexicon

Lexicon is the list of words found in a language (Aronoff & Anshen, 2003). As the list of existing items in one language, lexicon can be in the form of idioms and affixes (Aronoff & Anshen, 2003). They are used daily and have their units in specific and daily activities of a particular language (Katamba, 2005; Solonchak & Pesina, 2015). Lexicon also has its word-class: noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, numeral, article, pronoun, conjunction, and interjection (Rijkhoff, 2007). Each class has its function in forming sentences. Lexicon of a language is transmitted or passed down from one generation to the next, through human actions, often in the form of face-to-face interaction, through linguistic communication (Duranti, 2009).

### *Endangered Languages and Language Shift*

An endangered language is a language that is in danger of extinction, and the phenomenon is called language endangerment (Tsunoda, 2001). Language endangerment happens when the language speakers abandoned their indigenous language and prefer to use another language, which is more dominant socially or economically, instead (Grenoble, 2006). That process of acquiring a new language by a community that replaces the community's first language is known as language shift (Richard, Platt, & Platt, 2002).

### *Language Maintenance and Language Death*

The attempts to counter language shift is called

language maintenance (Brenzinger, 2006). Abdelhadi (2018) mentions that language maintenance is the condition where people maintain the language by using it in their daily life, regardless of the cultural pressures from other languages. Crystal (2000) and Holmes (2013) state that language death happens because the native speakers no longer exist. Once a language becomes a dead language, it will be tough to revive the language from extinction (Crystal, 2000; Holmes, 2013).

### *Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale*

The standard method used to analyze the language vitality, i.e., survival chance of a language, uses the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (Gorter, 2006). To give a more detailed classification on a language's vitality, Lewis & Simons (2010) expanded the GIDS from the former GIDS developed by Fishman (2001). Five key points are used as the indicators to classify the level of a language using Expanded GIDS. They are the identity function, official use level, the number of language transmissions from parents to children, literacy status, and the youngest generation of proficient speakers.

### **Methodology**

This study was a mixed-method study that followed the sequential explanatory method. It started with a quantitative approach that aimed at identifying the status of the lexicon used in the TR ritual based on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis & Simons, 2010). Then, it followed with a qualitative approach to identify why the lexicon was in that status. The samples of the study were taken by using the quota technique. Since the TR ritual is dominated by adult male Balinese, the second research question population was 899 people. They were adult male Balinese who lived in Menyali Village, married, and whose ages were around 35 to 59 years old. Thus, based on the Slovin formula, the appropriate number of samples is 277 people.

The data of the study were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was used to collect the data about the lexicon status while the interview was done to find the reasons why the lexicon was in a certain status. The researchers used the result of the study that was conducted by Kusuma (2020) to develop the questionnaire. His study identified 71 terms in the lexicon used in the TR ritual, and those 71 terms were used as the questions in the questionnaire to the samples' understanding of the meaning of the lexicon.

The results of the questionnaires were quantified and analyzed using a descriptive statistic. When the lexicon status had been identified, the researchers conducted interviews to identify the reasons why the lexicon was in that status. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively using an interactive model of analysis consisting of three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

### **Results**

#### *The Status of the Lexicon*

Based on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, the lexicon used in TR ritual is in threatened status (see Table 1 and Table 2). The lexicon is still used by all generations, but only a few people transmitted the lexicon to their children or the younger generation. The interview results show two reasons why the respondents do not teach the lexicon to their children or the younger generation. First, the lexicon is identical to cockfighting gambling. Second, most of the respondents believe that the younger generation will acquire it automatically in their environment.

The result of the questionnaire used to identify the respondents' understanding of the 71 terms in the lexicon in TR also supports the threatened status of the lexicon. The results of the questionnaire show that most of the respondents understand 64.79 percent of the lexicon. It means that more than 30 percent of the lexicon are not understood by the respondents. In other words, those terms in the lexicon have a high potential to be forgotten. The detailed results of the questionnaire can be seen in Table 3.

To get more detailed information about which terms of the lexicon are needed in order to focus more attention for the maintenance effort, the researchers also identified the number of respondents that understand each lexicon meaning. From the identification, it was found that 39.45 percent of the terms in the lexicon are understood by less than 30 percent of the respondents while 60.55 percent of the terms in the lexicon are still understood by more than 90 percent of the respondents. These findings indicate that, in the maintenance effort, more focus on the terms of the lexicon that are only understood by less than 30% of the respondents is needed. The details of the data can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 1** The Lexicon used in TR ritual

Code	Lexicon	English	Code	Lexicon	English
L1	<i>ng-udud</i> (v)	to hoe	L37	<i>banten pejati</i> (n)	an offering for opening a ceremony
L2	<i>pi-uning</i> (n)	to inform	L38	<i>banten seetan</i> (n)	an offering in the cockfighting arena
L3	<i>panggung-an</i> (n)	level	L39	<i>caru</i> (n)	an offering for neutralizing negative power
L4	<i>ma-kebo-keboan</i> (n)	fighting ceremony using coins	L40	<i>segeh-an</i> (n)	a small offering for neutralizing negative power
L5	<i>ng-adu tingkih</i> (n)	fighting ceremony using candlenuts	L41	<i>ringgit</i> (n)	currency in cockfighting
L6	<i>ng-adu taluh</i> (n)	fighting ceremony using eggs	L42	<i>dase ringgit</i> (n)	IDR 25,000
L7	<i>ng-adu ngiu</i> (n)	fighting ceremony using a round bamboo tray	L43	<i>me-toh</i> (v)	betting
L8	<i>tabuh rah</i> (n)	fighting ceremony using cocks	L44	<i>toh</i> (n)	betting codes
L9	<i>Mebat</i> (v)	cooking	L45	<i>asah</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is equal (1:1)
L10	<i>m-(p)erani</i> (n)	a type of praying	L46	<i>pada</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is equal (1:1)
L11	<i>ng-(k)embal</i> (n)	a type of praying	L47	<i>gasal</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is four to five (4:5)
L12	<i>n-(t)unas</i> (v)	eating the offering after the ceremony	L48	<i>ke-telu-an</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is two to three (2:3)
L13	<i>ayam aduan</i> (n)	fighting cocks	L49	<i>ke-cok</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is three to four (3:4)
L14	<i>toh de-damping</i> (n)	betting tools	L50	<i>ke-dapang</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is nine to ten (9:10)
L15	<i>pis bolong</i> (n)	ancient Chinese coins	L51	<i>k-apit</i> (n)	betting system in which the amount of bet is one to two (1:2)
L16	<i>tingkih</i> (n)	candlenut	L52	<i>ukup</i> (n)	winning the gambling
L17	<i>taluh</i> (n)	egg	L53	<i>kene</i> (n)	losing the gambling
L18	<i>ngiu</i> (n)	bamboo tray	L54	<i>maret</i> (n)	base of taji is tied to the left side of cock's middle toe
L19	<i>taji</i> (n)	sharp knife attached to the cock's leg	L55	<i>maret yeng</i> (n)	base of taji is tied to the right side of cock's middle toe
L20	<i>guwung-an</i> (n)	chicken cage	L56	<i>maret tundun</i> (n)	base of taji is tied to the top of cock's middle toe
L21	<i>kere</i> (n)	chicken cage	L57	<i>ne-merang</i> (n)	base of taji is tied to outside of cock's left leg
L22	<i>kisa</i> (n)	chicken cage shaped like a bag	L58	<i>memerang yeng</i> (n)	base of taji is tied to outside of cocks' right leg
L23	<i>kemong</i> (n)	small gong	L59	<i>nge-sor</i> (n)	base of taji is tied to the middle of cock's toe
L24	<i>bulang</i> (n)	yarn	L60	<i>siap buik</i> (n)	colorful feathered cock
L25	<i>cengkilik</i> (n)	a tool made of coconut shell	L61	<i>siap kelau</i> (n)	gray feathered cock
L26	<i>tempayan</i> (n)	a water container made of clay	L62	<i>siap bihing</i> (n)	red feathered cock
L27	<i>yeh</i> (n)	water	L63	<i>siap wangkas</i> (n)	cock that has white color in its chest and red color on its wings
L28	<i>pa-kemong</i> (n)	the main referee of cockfighting	L64	<i>siap brumbun</i> (n)	cock that has red, white and black colors
L29	<i>saya</i> (n)	referee	L65	<i>siap sa</i> (n)	white feather cock
L30	<i>pa-kembar</i> (n)	a person who holds the cocks before the fighting begins	L66	<i>siap ook</i> (n)	cock that has very thick feathers on its neck
L31	<i>be-botoh</i> (n)	cockfighting gambler	L67	<i>siap jambul</i> (n)	cock that has a crest
L32	<i>pe-calang</i> (n)	local security officer	L68	<i>siap ijo</i> (n)	cock that has greenish feathered color
L33	<i>krama desa</i> (n)	villagers	L69	<i>siap godek</i> (n)	cock that has feathers on its legs
L34	<i>wantilan</i> (n)	the place where the cockfighting takes place	L70	<i>siap sangkur</i> (n)	cock that has no tail
L35	<i>satang</i> (n)	the boundary of cockfighting arena	L71	<i>Cundang</i> (n)	defeated cock
L36	<i>pah-pah jaka</i> (n)	a decoration made of coconut leaves that resemble the palm leaf base	-	-	-

Source: Kusuma, Budasi, and Suarnajaya (2020)

**Table 2** The result of the questionnaires to identify the status of the Lexicon

Question	Answer			
	Yes	%	No	%
Is the lexicon used in communication at home with the family members?	269	97.11	8	2.89
Is the lexicon used by all generations?	263	94.95	14	5.05
Do you teach the lexicon to your children or the younger generation?	47	16.97	230	83.03
Do the children understand and use the lexicon?	14	5.05	263	94.95

**Table 3** The Result of Descriptive Statistics on Respondents' Understanding on the Lexicon

Descriptive Statistic	Result	
	Number of Lexicon that the respondents understand	Percentage (%)
Mean	50	70.42
Mode	46	64.79
Min	39	54.93
Max	71	100
Range	32	45.07

**Table 4** Lexicon and the Number of Respondents who understand the Meaning of the Lexicon

Lexicon (Code)	Number of Lexicon (%)	Number of Respondents that understand the Lexicon (%)
L1, L6, L8, L9, L12, L13, L15, L16, L17, L18, L19, L20, L22, L27, L31, L32, L33, L34, L36, L39, L40, L43, L44, L46, L52, L64, L68, L71	39.44	100
L3, L4, L24, L25, L26, L29, L41, L42, L53	12.68	99
L2, L10, L37, L61, L62	7.04	98
L67	1.41	97
L5, L7, L11, L21, L28, L38, L47	9.86	26
L30, L45, L60	4.23	25
L23, L65, L70	4.23	24
L66, L69	2.82	13
L48, L49, L51, L63	5.63	12
L14, L35, L50, L54, L55, L56, L57, L58, L59	12.68	11

Note: L: lexicon used in TR.

## Discussion

### *The Reasons Why the Lexicon is in Threaten Status*

The interview result indicates that Menyali villagers assume that the environment will save the lexicon from extinction. Their assumption is based on their belief that many villagers are still actively involved in cockfighting gambling, which uses mostly similar lexicon with the TR ritual. However, it means that the use of such lexicon is limited to the gamblers. Since cockfighting gambling is forbidden by national law, the number of gamblers is

decreasing, so the number of potential people who use such lexicon is also decreasing. The interviews also found that many respondents do not want to teach their children about the lexicon because the lexicon is identical to the cockfighting gambling, and they do not want their children to be interested in any kind of gambling. Besides, since the lexicon is related to cockfighting gambling, it is also considered masculine lexicon. Thus, female villagers are not interested to know about the lexicon since, in Balinese culture, the cockfighting topic is taboo for females.

The villagers' overconfidence leads to ignorance of the lexicon, and the connotation of the lexicon with gambling that is forbidden creates villagers' negative attitude toward the lexicon. In other words, the villagers' negative attitude toward the lexicon brings the lexicon to a threatened level. If the villagers want to maintain the lexicon, such negative attitude should be eliminated, since a negative attitude on a language may cause the language to be replaced by another language (Malmkjær, 2010).

If it is seen from the theory of endangered language and language shift, further efforts are needed to maintain the lexicon, especially by using it in the family domain. This is because using a language in the family domain will influence the maintenance of the language (Pillai, Soh, & Kajita, 2014). The view of families on the minority tongue toward the dominant language will affect the minority tongue (Smolicz & Radzik, 2004). If a community does not consider their mother tongue or the minority language a useful thing, they will shift to another popular language that they think will bring more benefits (Nguyen & Hamid, 2016). In other words, children's decision to use their mother tongue is significantly influenced by their parents' attitude towards their mother tongue (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). If the younger generation does not have enough exposure to the language, it will be difficult for them to acquire it (Maluch, Neumann, & Kempert, 2016). Thus, the support of family members, especially for children, to maintain the endangered mother tongue will significantly impact its maintenance (Verdon, McLeod, & Winsler, 2014).

Besides family, education also plays an important role in language maintenance (W.Minnett & S-Y.Wang, 2008). School can help the language maintenance effort by creating a bilingual or multilingual environment that includes the minority language (Shee, 2020). Thus, Balinese language teachers can introduce the lexicon by presenting *the TR* ritual as cultural orientation in reading material forms. That kind of learning material is vital to maintain the language. This is because involving the cultural field in the language materials will help the students to understand the structure and dynamic of a minority language (Amezaga, 2019). Moreover, language and culture cannot be separated because they relate to each other (Mikhaleva & Régnier, 2014). Thus, to help the students understand the language well, a language should be learned in its cultural context (Lytra, 2011).

Several researchers have studied the Tabuh Rah ritual. However, most of the previous research was conducted only from a cultural and legal point of view, such as research conducted by Widayanti and Suardana

(2020), which examines the practice of abusing Tabuh Rah from a legal point of view. Similar research was also conducted by Sari and Wirasila (2019). They found that Tabuh Rah diversion was a gambling activity due to the absence of a shared perception of the public and related parties that Tabuh Rah should not be tainted with gambling. Besides, Wiryawan (2019) also researched Tabuh Rah and found that gambling under Tabuh Rah's guise, which was carried out in the temple area, was often carried out by Balinese people. Meanwhile, from the point of view of linguistic studies, research conducted by Kusuma, Budasi, and Suarnajaya (2020) has identified the lexicon used in the Tabuh Rah ritual and the meaning of the lexicon. Meanwhile, Diari (2018) examines the morphological processes that occur in terms used in the Tabuh Rah ritual.

This study's results support the results of previous studies; namely, the implementation of Tabuh Rah is really identical to gambling. This has resulted in most people in Menyali village not teaching the lexicon used in the Tabuh Rah ritual to the younger generation for fear that they will be attracted to gambling activities, which often pose as Tabuh Rah. What is different with this study from previous research is that this study looked at the maintenance of the lexicon in the community in the village of Menyali as seen from lexicon status. No previous research has been done to look at this, and nothing has been done to conserve it. So, it can be said that the results of this study complement previous studies in terms of the implications of shifting the Tabuh Rah ritual into gambling activities on the maintenance of Tabuh Rah's special lexicon in the village community of Menyali. This study is limited to the use of the lexicon by adult male villagers in Menyali village. To get a better and more comprehensive description of the lexicon status, a further study that collected the samples using a stratified sampling technique has to be conducted. In using a stratified sampling technique, we can identify how many terms of the lexicon are lost from one generation to the next generation. The study can also be done to see the difference between males' and females' understanding of the lexicon since the lexicon has something to do with gender.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

From the study results, it can be concluded that the lexicon used in the TR ritual is classified into threatened status. The lexicon is still used by all generations, but only a few people transmitted the lexicon to their children or the younger generation. Some of the terms in the

lexicon are not commonly used in daily communication because many villagers do not know and understand the meaning of those terms. The reasons that trigger the lexicon to be in threatened status are: (1) the overconfidence of the villagers that the young generation will learn the lexicon in the environment; (2) the negative attitude of the villagers to the lexicon because the lexicon is identical with cockfighting gambling; and (3) the villagers believe that the lexicon is masculine. Such situations lead to the villagers' ignorance of the lexicon's existence resulting in some of the terms in the lexicon disappearing or rarely being used by the villagers in daily communication.

### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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