

BALINESE LANGUAGE USE IN THE GLOBALIZATION ERA: A CONTEMPORARY LINGUISTIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of Balinese language use in the globalization era through the perspectives of sociolinguistics, anthropolinguistics, ecolinguistics, and digital linguistics. The research aims to analyze the changes in Balinese language use and the factors influencing language shift and language maintenance in contemporary Balinese society. This study employed a qualitative approach using library research methods. Data were obtained from books, scientific journals, previous studies, proceedings, and other academic sources relevant to Balinese language, globalization, and contemporary linguistics. The data were analyzed descriptively and interpretatively through data reduction, classification, interpretation, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that globalization, modernization, tourism development, and digital technology have significantly influenced the use of Balinese language. In sociolinguistic perspectives, Balinese experiences a narrowing of language domains due to the dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages in education, formal communication, and social interaction. Anthropolinguistically, the decline in the use of Balinese affects the transmission of cultural values and traditional politeness systems. Ecolinguistically, changes in the social environment reduce the ecological space of Balinese language use, particularly in urban and tourism areas. Meanwhile, digital linguistics reveals that digital media not only presents challenges through global language dominance but also provides opportunities for language revitalization through social media, digital content, and online learning platforms. The study concludes that Balinese language remains an important cultural identity and requires collaborative preservation efforts from families, communities, educational institutions, and government to ensure its sustainability in the contemporary era.

Keywords – *Balinese language, globalization, contemporary era, language shift, language maintenance.*

Introduction

The Balinese language has undergone highly complex dynamics alongside developments in social, cultural, educational, technological, and globalization processes. In modern society, the use of Balinese is no longer static; rather, it continuously changes according to the communicative needs of its speakers. These dynamics can be observed in shifting patterns of Balinese language use within families, educational settings, social media, and public spaces. Whereas Balinese previously dominated daily communication, its use is now increasingly competing with Indonesian and foreign languages, particularly among younger generations and urban communities (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Wardhaugh, 2010).

On the other hand, Balinese still holds an important position as a cultural identity marker for Balinese society. The language is widely used in customary activities, religious ceremonies, traditional arts, lontar manuscript readings, and various social activities within the Balinese Hindu community. The existence of speech-level systems in Balinese also demonstrates that

the language embodies strong cultural values and social ethics. However, modernization has contributed to shifts in language preference, especially in informal communication and formal educational environments where Indonesian is predominantly used (Fishman, 1991; Duranti, 1997).

The dynamics of Balinese language use are also influenced by the development of digital technology. The emergence of social media, digital platforms, and creative content has created new spaces for the use of Balinese in more modern and flexible forms. Younger generations have begun to use Balinese in creative videos, music, memes, podcasts, and digital learning applications. This phenomenon indicates that technology is not merely a threat to the sustainability of regional languages, but can also serve as a medium for the revitalization of Balinese in the contemporary era (Crystal, 2006; Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022). Furthermore, the dynamics of Balinese reflect processes of linguistic adaptation within a multilingual society. Balinese speakers frequently engage in code-switching and code-mixing between Balinese, Indonesian, and foreign languages in everyday communication. This phenomenon reflects social transformation as well as the community's ability to adjust language use according to communicative contexts. Therefore, the dynamics of Balinese can be understood as an ongoing process of linguistic change, adaptation, and maintenance within modern Balinese society (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Mufwene, 2001).

Previous studies on Balinese have generally focused more on language shift, language attitudes, or the preservation of Balinese from partial sociolinguistic perspectives. For instance, the study by Arissulisa (2021) primarily emphasized the shift in Balinese language use in urban communities, while Suastra (2017) focused on the use of Balinese among younger generations on social media. Meanwhile, studies integrating sociolinguistic, anthropolinguistic, ecolinguistic, and digital linguistic perspectives in examining the dynamics of Balinese language use in the era of globalization remain relatively limited.

Based on these conditions, the novelty of this research lies in the application of a multidisciplinary contemporary linguistic approach to analyze the dynamics of Balinese language use more holistically. This study not only examines changes in the use of Balinese within modern society, but also relates them to cultural aspects, social environments, and developments in digital communication that influence the sustainability of Balinese in the globalization era. By combining sociolinguistic, anthropolinguistic, ecolinguistic, and digital linguistic perspectives, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the position of Balinese in contemporary society while also contributing theoretically to the development of contemporary linguistic studies, particularly regarding the preservation of regional languages amid modern social and digital transformation.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon of the dynamics of Balinese language use in the era of globalization. Through library research, the study is directed toward examining various concepts, theories, and previous studies related to the use of Balinese in society, particularly amid globalization, digital technological developments, and socio-cultural change. This research positions written sources as the primary object of analysis in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of language shift and language maintenance in Balinese.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data include scientific journal articles, academic books, theses, dissertations, and previous research findings that directly discuss the Balinese language, sociolinguistics, language globalization, language shift, and language maintenance. Meanwhile, secondary data consist of supporting documents such as conference proceedings, research reports, government policies, popular scientific articles, and other relevant sources related to the research topic. These sources were obtained through various academic databases and scientific publications, including Google Scholar, SINTA-indexed journals, Garuda, and various national and international publications relevant to the study. The selection of sources was based on topic relevance, author credibility, and the relationship of the data to the research focus.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method aimed at describing and interpreting linguistic phenomena in a deep and contextual manner. This study refers to the stages of data analysis proposed by Obeyd (2021), which include data reduction, data classification, interpretative analysis, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and focused on data relevant to the objectives of the study, while unrelated data were excluded to ensure a more focused analysis. Subsequently, the selected data were classified according to research themes, such as the dynamics of language use, factors causing language shift, the influence of globalization and digital media, language attitudes among younger generations, and forms of Balinese language maintenance. After the classification process, the researcher interpreted the data using sociolinguistic perspectives, particularly theories of language shift and language maintenance. In addition, this study also applies anthropolinguistic, ecolinguistic, and digital linguistic approaches to understand the relationship between language, culture, social environments, and the development of digital communication media.

The analyzed data were then presented in the form of systematic descriptive explanations in order to clearly illustrate the relationships among the observed phenomena. Data presentation was conducted by connecting theories, previous research findings, and contemporary phenomena related to the use of Balinese in society. The final stage of the study involved drawing conclusions based on the overall findings of the analysis. The conclusions were arranged logically and systematically to address the research focus concerning the dynamics of Balinese language use in the era of globalization and its implications for the sustainability of the Balinese language amid modern social and technological developments.

Finding and Discussion

Balinese as one of the regional languages in Indonesia holds an important position in Balinese society because it functions not only as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of cultural identity, a medium for transmitting traditional values, and a vehicle for conducting customary and religious activities. However, the development of globalization, modernization, urbanization, and advances in communication technology have brought significant changes to the patterns of Balinese language use in contemporary society. These changes affect the intensity of language use, its domains of use, linguistic variation, and the ways younger generations perceive their regional language. In this context, the existence of the Balinese language can be analyzed through several linguistic perspectives, namely Sociolinguistics, Anthropolinguistics, Ecolinguistics, and Digital Linguistics.

1. The Existence of the Balinese Language from a Sociolinguistic Perspective

In sociolinguistic studies, language is understood as an integral part of social life whose use is influenced by social, cultural, economic, educational, and communicative factors. The existence of the Balinese language in the contemporary era demonstrates a dynamic pattern of language use that is strongly shaped by changes in the social structure of modern Balinese society.

In traditional Balinese communities, the Balinese language was dominantly used in almost all domains of life, including family interactions, social environments, customary activities, traditional markets, performing arts, and religious practices. Balinese functioned as the primary language of daily communication, enabling intergenerational language transmission to occur naturally (Fishman, 1991). Nevertheless, this condition has gradually changed alongside the increasing use of Indonesian as the national language and the medium of instruction in formal education (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Ardika, 2018).

In urban areas such as Denpasar, Indonesian has increasingly dominated social communication, particularly in education, government, professional settings, and formal interactions. Indonesian is often perceived as possessing greater practical value, social prestige, and relevance for social mobility within modern society (Arissulisa, 2021; Ariana, 2024). Furthermore, the expansion of the tourism sector and global interaction has encouraged the use of foreign languages, especially English, in economic activities and public communication. Consequently, the Balinese language has experienced a narrowing of its functional domains.

This phenomenon indicates the occurrence of language shift, namely the gradual transition from the use of a regional language to languages considered socially and economically dominant. Sosiawan (2021) states that the shift of the Balinese language is reflected in the decreasing use of Balinese as the primary language of family communication, particularly among younger generations in urban areas. Many young families prefer to use Indonesian with their children because it is perceived as more relevant to educational needs and modern communication. Holmes (2013) argues that the family constitutes the primary domain for maintaining regional languages. When a local language is no longer used in family communication, the possibility of language shift becomes significantly greater. In the context of Balinese society, the declining use of Balinese within the family environment has become one of the major factors contributing to the reduced use of the language among younger generations.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this condition is also closely related to language attitudes toward the Balinese language. Some younger generations still regard Balinese as an important symbol of cultural identity that should be preserved. However, others increasingly perceive Balinese as less practical in modern contexts due to its limited function in formal education and professional environments (Chaer & Agustina, 2010). These differing language attitudes significantly influence the level of Balinese language use in everyday life (Fishman, 1991; Suastra, 2010).

In addition, contemporary Balinese society is characterized by bilingualism and even multilingualism. Most people are capable of using Balinese, Indonesian, and foreign languages simultaneously according to communicative contexts. This condition gives rise to phenomena such as code-switching and code-mixing in everyday conversations (Holmes, 2013; Chaer & Agustina, 2010). Younger generations frequently combine Balinese and Indonesian in informal communication, both in spoken interactions and on social media platforms (Suastra, 2017). This phenomenon demonstrates that the Balinese language is currently undergoing adaptation to the social transformations of contemporary society.

2. *The Existence of the Balinese Language from an Anthropolinguistic Perspective*

From an anthropolinguistic perspective, language is understood not merely as a means of communication, but also as a representation of culture, social identity, knowledge systems, and the worldview of a community. The Balinese language maintains a very close relationship with the cultural system of Balinese society because it is used in various customary practices, traditions, religious rituals, and social structures. This condition indicates that the Balinese language continues to possess strong symbolic and cultural functions within society (Jaten, 2013).

The Balinese language embodies philosophical and cultural values that have been transmitted across generations through oral traditions, Balinese literature, lontar manuscripts, folklore, mantras, and customary communication systems (Ardika, 2018). In traditional Balinese society, the use of the Balinese language is closely associated with concepts of politeness and social hierarchy. The selection of linguistic forms is adjusted according to age, social status, kinship relations, and communicative context. Consequently, the Balinese language constitutes an important element in shaping the social and cultural character of Balinese society. One of the distinctive characteristics of the Balinese language is its system of speech levels (*anggha-ungguh basa*), which reflects ethics, respect, and social relationships within the community (Suastra, 2009). The use of these speech levels demonstrates that the Balinese language possesses not only linguistic functions, but also social and cultural functions, as language forms an integral part of the identity and cultural system of Balinese society (Duranti, 1997; Artawa, 2012).

In the contemporary era, modernization and globalization have contributed to changes in the patterns of social interaction within Balinese society. Younger generations tend to use the complete system of Balinese speech levels less frequently in daily communication. The use of refined or high-level Balinese (*bahasa Bali halus*) has gradually declined because modern communication increasingly prioritizes practicality and efficiency (Artawa, 2012). In addition, the dominance of Indonesian in formal education has reduced younger generations' understanding of traditional Balinese linguistic structures (Suastra, 2017). These conditions demonstrate that globalization and modernization have significantly influenced changes in the use of the Balinese language in contemporary society (Ardika, 2018; Chaer & Agustina, 2010).

These changes have implications for the weakening transmission of cultural values embedded in the Balinese language. From an anthropolinguistic perspective, the loss of certain linguistic elements may lead to a decline in public understanding of cultural values, social ethics, and local philosophies contained within the language itself (Duranti, 1997).

Nevertheless, the Balinese language continues to occupy a strong position in the cultural life of Balinese society. Balinese remains actively used in the implementation of customary ceremonies, Balinese Hindu religious activities, traditional artistic performances, lontar recitations, and social activities within the traditional village (*desa adat*) environment (Suastra, 2009; Ardika, 2018). Furthermore, the Balinese language serves as a symbol of Balinese cultural identity amidst the growing influence of modern cultural globalization (Putra, 2019). Therefore, from an anthropolinguistic perspective, the existence of the Balinese language demonstrates that it continues to function as a medium for transmitting culture and local identity, despite facing challenges arising from social changes in contemporary society (Fishman, 1991).

3. *The Existence of the Balinese Language from an Ecolinguistic Perspective*

From an ecolinguistic perspective, language is understood as part of a social ecology that lives and develops alongside the environment of its speech community. The sustainability of a language is influenced by the relationship between language, humans, culture, the social environment, and transformations in societal systems.

The Balinese language has developed within the cultural environment of Balinese society, which is strongly characterized by customary and religious traditions. In ecolinguistic studies, language is closely related to the social and cultural environment of its speakers (Haugen, 1972). However, the processes of globalization, urbanization, tourism development, and modernization have transformed the social ecology of Balinese society, thereby affecting the existence of the Balinese language in everyday life (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001). These transformations are reflected in the increasingly dominant use of Indonesian and foreign languages in various social activities within modern Balinese society (Ardika, 2018; Putra, 2019).

The development of the tourism industry in Bali constitutes one of the major factors influencing changes in the linguistic environment of the community. Economic activities and public communication in tourism areas predominantly employ Indonesian and English to accommodate communication needs with domestic and international tourists (Ardika, 2018). Consequently, the Balinese language is used less frequently in certain public spaces, particularly in urban and tourism-oriented regions (Putra, 2019). From an ecolinguistic perspective, the dominance of languages with higher economic value may reduce the functional domains of local languages within multilingual societies (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001).

In addition, changes in family communication patterns have also affected the sustainability of the Balinese language. In earlier periods, Balinese was transmitted naturally through family interaction and the customary social environment. At present, however, some parents prefer to use Indonesian with their children because it is considered more supportive of formal education and modern social development (Ardika, 2018). As a result, the intergenerational transmission of the Balinese language has declined. Fishman (1991) argues that the family constitutes the primary domain for the transmission of regional languages; therefore, the decreasing use of a language within the family serves as an early indicator of language shift.

Within ecolinguistic studies, this condition reflects a transformation in language ecology, namely the reduction of the living space of the Balinese language due to the dominance of languages possessing greater economic and social power (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001). If the functional domains of the Balinese language continue to diminish, the long-term sustainability of the language may face serious challenges (Haugen, 1972).

Nevertheless, the Balinese language still possesses ecological spaces that support its sustainability, including traditional villages (*desa adat*), religious ceremonial environments, traditional art communities, educational institutions based on local culture, and Balinese-language local media. These spaces function as socio-cultural habitats that preserve the use of the Balinese language within community life.

Furthermore, local governments and Balinese communities have initiated various revitalization efforts, such as incorporating Balinese language instruction into local-content education, organizing cultural festivals, promoting the use of Balinese on public signage, and preserving the Balinese script. These efforts demonstrate the ecological awareness of society regarding the importance of maintaining regional languages as part of the sustainability of local culture.

4. The Existence of the Balinese Language from a Digital Linguistics Perspective

The development of information and communication technology has created new communicative spaces that significantly influence patterns of language use in modern society. From the perspective of digital linguistics, language is understood as part of digital communication practices that evolve through social media, communication applications, video platforms, and various internet-based technologies.

In the contemporary era, the Balinese language has begun to experience a transformation from traditional communicative spaces into digital environments. The expansion of the internet and social media has altered communication patterns in modern society, making them increasingly digital and interactive (Crystal, 2006). Younger generations in Bali utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp to use the Balinese language in various forms of digital communication (Pradnyadewi, 2021). Balinese is employed in social media posts, entertainment videos, cultural educational content, memes, music, podcasts, and local cultural promotion (Suastra, 2017). This phenomenon demonstrates that the Balinese language is beginning to adapt to the development of modern digital communication as a form of maintaining local cultural identity in the era of globalization (Androutsopoulos, 2015; Putra, 2019).

Nevertheless, the use of Balinese in digital spaces has undergone various linguistic transformations. Digital communication tends to prioritize brief, practical, and informal language, resulting in linguistic forms that are more flexible and adaptive to the characteristics of digital media (Crystal, 2006; Tagg, 2015). In the digital communication practices of Balinese youth, the Balinese language is frequently mixed with Indonesian and English. The phenomena of code mixing and code switching have become increasingly common in the social media communication of bilingual and multilingual communities (Holmes, 2013; Chaer & Agustina, 2010). Younger Balinese generations tend to combine Balinese, Indonesian, and English in social media posts and everyday digital interactions (Suastra, 2017). This condition indicates that the use of Balinese in digital spaces is undergoing structural and functional changes due to the influence of modern communication culture and the dominance of Indonesian in digital media (Ariana, 2025).

Furthermore, the use of the Latin alphabet is more dominant than the traditional Balinese script because it is more practical and accessible within digital devices. Consequently, the use of Balinese script in everyday communication has become increasingly limited. This condition demonstrates that digitalization also affects the form and representation of the Balinese language in the modern era. On the other hand, the dominance of global content in digital media presents additional challenges to the sustainability of the Balinese language. Younger generations tend to consume more Indonesian- and foreign-language content than local Balinese-language content. If this condition continues without adequate preservation efforts, the use of Balinese in digital spaces may continue to decline.

Despite these challenges, the development of digital technology also offers substantial opportunities for the revitalization of the Balinese language. The digitalization of *lontar* manuscripts, the development of digital Balinese dictionaries, Balinese language learning applications, local culture-based educational media, and the use of Balinese in creative digital content represent innovative forms of language preservation in the modern era. Therefore, digital linguistics demonstrates that technology should not merely be viewed as a threat, but

also as a strategic instrument for maintaining the sustainability of the Balinese language in contemporary society (Ariana, 2025).

Conclusions

Based on sociolinguistic, anthropolinguistic, ecolinguistic, and digital linguistic perspectives, the existence of the Balinese language in the contemporary era demonstrates highly complex dynamics amid the social transformations of modern society. Globalization, modernization, urbanization, the development of tourism, and advances in communication technology have significantly influenced patterns of Balinese language use across various domains of social life. This condition is reflected in the decreasing use of Balinese in family communication and public spaces, the increasing dominance of Indonesian and foreign languages, as well as the emergence of bilingualism, code-switching, and code-mixing phenomena within modern Balinese society.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Balinese has experienced a narrowing of its domains of use due to changes in the social and communicative needs of modern society. From an anthropolinguistic perspective, shifts in the use of Balinese have also affected the transmission of cultural values, social ethics, and systems of politeness embedded within the linguistic structure of Balinese. Meanwhile, the ecolinguistic perspective demonstrates that transformations in the social and economic environment of Balinese society have altered the ecology of language, thereby influencing the long-term sustainability of Balinese. Furthermore, from the perspective of digital linguistics, technological development has not only created challenges through the dominance of global languages in digital media, but has also opened new opportunities for the revitalization of Balinese through social media, creative content, cultural digitalization, and language-learning technologies.

Despite facing various challenges, Balinese continues to hold an important position as a marker of cultural identity, a medium for transmitting traditions, and a symbol of the cultural continuity of Balinese society. The existence of customary villages, religious activities, traditional arts, culture-based education, and the utilization of digital technology constitute important factors supporting the maintenance of Balinese in the contemporary era. Therefore, the preservation of the Balinese language requires collaborative involvement among families, communities, educational institutions, cultural organizations, and the government to ensure that Balinese remains alive, develops continuously, and retains its relevance amid ongoing social change.

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