

# Balinese Language Elucidation as an Attempt to Preserve Balinese Language in Bali Province

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## ABSTRACT

The research problems are (1) what are the activities that have been done by the Balinese language elucidators; (2) how the Balinese people respond to the implementation of the elucidation of the Balinese language; and (3) what has hampered the elucidation of the Balinese language program? The study applied the qualitative approach and was conducted in four regencies in Bali; they are Buleleng Regency, Tabanan Regency, Badung Regency and Klungkung Regency. One administrative village/sub-district located in the urban area and one administrative village located in the rural area were randomly determined as the locations where the study was conducted. The data were collected from four sources, namely (1) the elucidators of the Balinese language; (2) those who participate in the elucidation program of the Balinese language; (3) the leadership staff of both the administrative and traditional villages and their other leaders purposively determined; (4) the documents related to the implementation of the elucidation of the Balinese language such as its work programs: through questionnaire, interview, observation, and documentation. The collected qualitative data were descriptively analyzed. Based on the result of analysis, the conclusions are as follows. (1) Out of 13 work programs, 11 (85%) have been implemented as planned. (2) the local people have felt that almost all the work programs have contributed to the Balinese language maintenance. (3) It has been found that limited funds and low participation of the local people had turned out to hamper the program of the elucidation of the Balinese language in Bali Province.

**Keywords:** *Elucidation, Maintenance, Balinese Language*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As one of the local languages in Indonesia, the existence of Balinese language plays an important role in the attempt of developing and preserving Balinese culture. It is said so because language is a part of culture; one of the elements that form culture and also a storehouse of culture. Balinese ethnic society is a society with high culture. Therefore, if one day Balinese language extincts, the high culture will also extincts. "Language endangerment and extinction is currently a critical issue among linguists around the world. It is known that language attrition and loss dramatically progress, .... "[1]

Unfortunately, the existence of Balinese language is now facing a quite tough challenge. The challenge comes from two things. First, related to the democratization process in the society. In democratization context, Balinese language, which recognizes speech level is considered as a feudal language by its speakers. This made some speakers of the language did not use it any

longer or there has been a shift in the use of Balinese language itself. If it continues to take place, Balinese language, one day, will extinct.

Such extinction is not impossible. According to UNESCO records, ten languages extinct every year. Language extinction is predicted to take place even faster in this century. Among more than 6000 languages in this world, there will only be 600 until 3000 languages remaining by the end of the century.[1] A study by Utama and Suandi entitled *Loyalitas Penutur Bahasa Bali terhadap Bahasanya* reveals that the loyalty of speakers of Balinese language decreased. Among the three domains: family, traditional custom, and religion, the decrease of loyalty happens the sharpest in the domain of family, followed by traditional custom and religion.[2] This shift apparently did not only take place in democratization context, but also related with the inability of Balinese speakers in using Balinese language, especially the high Balinese. Apparently, nowadays, quite many Balinese, including older people, have to ask for help from a special spokesman, when they need to talk

in the domains of religion and traditional custom domains (for example when they need to propose a girl for marriage), as in those domains, high Balinese is compulsory.

Secondly, the existence of Balinese ethnic society and their language in the context of state affairs. Balinese people generally live in Balinese province, which is a part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. In the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, it is stated that the national language is Indonesian language. This establishment has made Indonesian language the official language of the country and therefore has many functions. As a result, since then, in the daily lives of the Balinese ethnic society, two languages are used, namely Balinese and Indonesian languages.

In order to cope with the challenge, the Government of Bali Province appointed Balinese Language Elucidation Providers in every village in Bali. Their task is to map the activities related to Balinese Language (Head of Culture Department) and supervise the *sekaa truna* (organization of young people in village) to revive language circumstances (Secretary of Selection Team). Unfortunately, this solution in its realization creates a new problem, in its relation to the subject of the elucidation and the parties that involved in the execution of the program. For the effectivity of the Balinese language elucidation, to solve the existing problems, empirical data about those various existing problems need to be collected. Therefore, this study is significant to be conducted.

Based on the rationale above, the problems investigated in this study are as follows: (1) What are the activities that have been done by the Balinese language elucidation providers? (2) How the Balinese people respond to the implementation of the elucidation of the Balinese language, particularly the contribution of the attempts made by the Balinese language elucidator providers on the preservation of the Balinese language in Bali?

To answer the above-mentioned problems, the theories related to bilingualism and diglossia are used. Bilinguality stages from acquiring L1 and knowing L2 until increasing mastery of B2 so that one person masters L2 as much as L1.[3] According to Nababan bilingualism can be individual or societal.[4] In this study, the bilingualism is the societal bilingualism, in which most of the society members know two languages, namely the mother tongue (in this case, Balinese) and another language, that their ability in using this language (in this case Indonesian language as L2) is minimum, for example they understand when people talk in L2.

The diglossia concept used in this study referred to the statement of Fishman (1972)[5] and Ferguson (1959).[6] Fishman, unlike Ferguson, stated that diglossia exists only within a society that has only one

language with two varieties, and each variety has its own role. Referring to those two statements, in diglossic society, there have to be two languages or two varieties of language; each has its different roles in different domain; one language or variety is dominant or has high prestige, marked as H (High) language, and the other one is the one with lower prestige, marked as L (Low) language.

The existence of Balinese language as stated above is now facing a quite heavy challenge. The challenge comes from two things. The first one is democratization process in the society. In democratization context, Balinese language is considered as a feudal language by most of its speakers. The second is the existence of the ethnic Balinese society and their language is their state affairs. Balinese people generally live in a province, that is Bali Province. It is a part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. In the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, it is stated that the national language is Indonesian language. This establishment has made Indonesian language as the country's official language, which has many functions. As a result, since then, the ethnic Balinese society in their daily lives use not only one, but two languages, namely Balinese and Indonesian languages.

Balinese and Indonesian languages actually have different functions in the communication of the ethnic Balinese society. This makes the ethnic Balinese society diglossic. In the later development, the diglossic characteristic gradually decreased due to many factors. As a result, the use of Balinese language is interfered by elements of Indonesian language. To make it worse, some functions that initially were done by Balinese language, then were done by Indonesian language.

## **2. METHODS**

### ***2.1. Research Design***

As this study is oriented to natural phenomena, this research applied qualitative approach. This study aimed to investigate (1) what activities have been done by Balinese language elucidation providers and (2) Balinese people's responses on the activities that have been done by the elucidation providers.

### ***2.2. Setting and Participants***

This study was conducted in four regencies in Bali, namely Buleleng Regency (representing North Bali); Tabanan (representing West Bali); Badung Regency (representing South Bali); and Klungkung Regency (representing East Bali). There were two locations in each regency which were randomly chosen; one village/sub-district in the urban area and one village in the rural area. By applying random sampling, the locations determined are as follows: Timuhun Village

and Semarapura Tengan Sub-district (Klungkung Regency); Wanagiri Village and Banjar Jawa Sub-district (Buleleng Regency); Delod Peken Village and Pujungan Village (Tabanan Regency), Sempidi Village and Pelaga Village (Badung Regency).

### 2.3. Data Collection Methods and Analysis

The data collected were basically from three sources, namely: (1) the Balinese language elucidation providers, who were the people appointed by the local government to give Balinese language elucidation, (2) the Balinese people whom the elucidation is given to, (3) village/sub-district leaders of both administrative and traditional villages and other village leaders, which are purposively determined, (4) the documents related to the implementation of the elucidation program, such as its work program. The data collected from (1) and (4) are on what has been done by the elucidators in the field. The data collected from (2) and (3) are on the responses provided by the society on the implementation of the elucidation program, especially its contribution in preserving the Balinese language in Bali.

The data were collected through four methods, namely questionnaire, interview, observation, and documentation. The questionnaire is intended to collect data about (1) the programs that had been done by the elucidation providers; (2) the responses of the Balinese speakers on the elucidation program, particularly its

contribution to the preservation of the Balinese language. Interview was added to equip and strengthen the data on the three things above. Data on the obstacles faced by the elucidation providers in the field were collected by conducting in-depth interview. To equip and strengthen the data mentioned above, observation was also conducted. Four instruments were used based on the methods of data collection, namely questionnaire, interview guide, observation guide, and data card in documentation method.

The collected qualitative data were descriptively analyzed. According to Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono), qualitative data analysis in this study is divided to three steps which were conducted simultaneously, namely data reduction, data presentation and data verification or withdrawing conclusion.[7]

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. The Programs that Had Been Done by the Elucidation Providers

The data about the implementation of the elucidation work program in Bali were collected using questionnaire. As there were eight research locations, there were eight elucidation providers as respondents. The programs that had been done by the elucidation providers are presented quantitatively in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Implementation of The Elucidation Work Program

No.	Program Plans	Percentage of Implementation	
		Implemented	Not Yet Implemented
1	Coordinating with the head of the village/sub-district and the leader of the traditional village to compose elucidation program in village/sub-district	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
2	Preparing instruments for identifying the existing potential in the customary village	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
3	Preparing the elucidation material	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
4	Writing Yearly Balinese Language Elucidation Work Program	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
5	Meeting/visiting some components of society in the customary villages	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
6	Reviving or re-creating the <i>pasraman</i> (a traditional and informal learning group where children learn things pertaining to tradition and Hinduism)	3 villages/sub-districts (38%)	5 villages/sub-districts (62%)
7	Supervising and guiding <i>Sekeha Santi</i> (a group of those who are interested in and like reciting the old Javanese poetry <i>kakawin</i> ) in <i>Karang Taruna</i> (organization of young people in village)	4 villages/sub-districts (50%)	4 villages/sub-districts (50%)

No.	Program Plans	Percentage of Implementation	
		Implemented	Not Yet Implemented
8	Mentoring the <i>nyastra</i> (practicing Balinese letters and literature) activity, kind of an additional Balinese language lesson for children in the village	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
9	Introducing innovations on Balinese language to children and youngsters in the village	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
10	Coordinating with fellow elucidation providers within one district to organize competitions in Balinese language for villages in one district	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
11	Supervising and fostering the use of Balinese language, letters and literature	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
12	Facilitating and bridging society needs in the development and preservation of Balinese language, letters and literature	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0
13	Motivating and encouraging society to preserve Balinese language	8 villages/sub-districts (100%)	0

Among the 13 work programs that had been planned (see table 4.1 above), it can be reported that 11 programs (85%) had been done as planned. Only two programs (15%) did not reach 100% completion, namely work program of organizing pesraman (with only 50% completion) and supervising sekeha santhi in village (with only 50% completion)

### ***3.2. The Responses of the Society on the Implementation of the Balinese Language Elucidation***

The responses of the society here are on the contribution of the implementation of the elucidation program to the society. The responses are as written in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** The Responses On The Implementation of The Balinese Language Elucidation

No.	The Programs Conducted	The Contribution of the Elucidation Program	
		YES	NO
1	Reviving or re-creating <i>pasraman</i> in every administrative village	26 respondents (65%)	14 respondents (35%)
2	Supervising and mentoring <i>Sekeha Santi</i> in <i>Sekeha Teruna</i> in Village	20 respondents (50%)	20 respondents (50%)
3	Mentoring the <i>nyastra</i> program (practicing Balinese letters and literature), kind of an additional Balinese lesson for the children at village	40 respondents (100%)	0
4	Introducing innovations on Balinese language to children and young people in village	32 respondents (80%)	8 (20%)
5	Coordinating with fellow elucidation providers in one sub-district to organize competitions in Balinese language skills for villages in one district	34 respondents (85%)	6 respondents (15%)
6	Supervising and fostering the use of Balinese language, letters and literature	40 respondents (100%)	0
7	Facilitating and bridging society needs in the development and preservation of Balinese language, letters and literature	40 respondents (100%)	0

8	Motivating and encouraging society to preserve Balinese language	40 respondents (100%)	0
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From Table 4.2, it can be seen that among eight programs, the society had felt the contribution of most of them. Only two programs were not conducted to the maximum extent, namely reviving or re-creating pasraman in every administrative village and supervising and mentoring Sekeha Santi in Sekeha Teruna in village. Those two programs did not run smoothly, except in Delod Peken and Pujungan Village (Tabanan). Thus, it can be said that the society did not feel the contribution of these two programs. This is due to several factors, such as the unavailability of funds for their implementation.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the statements of the problem and the results of the study, it can be concluded that (1) Most of the elucidation work program (85%) had been implemented as planned. Only a little part (15%) of the program, namely work program of creating a pasraman and supervising sekeha santhi at villages had not been implemented to the maximum extent. (2) The society had felt the contribution of most of the work programs. Only two programs whose contribution had not been felt by the society because, in fact, these two programs; creating pasraman and supervising sekeha santhi in villages, could not be done to the maximum extent. This is due to the unavailability of funds for their implementation.

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

I Nengah Suandi and I Made Sutarna developed the research proposal, did the research, discussed the results, and contributed to the final manuscript.

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