



The Analysis of Swear Words Used by People in Intergenerational Communication in Penglatan Village

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Abstract. This study investigates the use of *basa kasar* (swear words) in intergenerational communication in Penglatan Village, Buleleng, Bali. The study focuses on the forms, types, functions, and contextual meanings of swear words used by younger and older generations in everyday communication. The findings show that *basa kasar* is commonly used in informal interactions, including family conversations, peer interactions, and community gatherings. A total of 35 swear words were identified and classified into four types: obscenity, profanity, insult and slur, and emphatic swearing. Among these categories, insult and slur constituted the dominant type. The findings also show that swear words perform five communicative functions: expressive, dysphemistic, abusive, emphatic, and idiomatic. Importantly, swear words were not used exclusively to express hostility or insult. They were also used to express emotions, strengthen intimacy and solidarity, create humor, emphasize messages, and maintain informal interaction. Younger speakers tended to use swear words more frequently than older speakers, but both generations shared similar lexical repertoires and interpretations of their meanings and functions. The findings indicate that the meaning of *basa kasar* is strongly influenced by context, interpersonal relationships, tone, and communicative intention. Thus, swear words in Penglatan Village represent a context-sensitive sociolinguistic resource and an established part of local social and cultural communication.

Keywords: Basa Kasar; Intergenerational Communication; Penglatan Village; Sociolinguistics; Swear Words.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a means of transferring information but also a social resource through which speakers express emotions, construct relationships, and maintain cultural identity. One linguistic phenomenon that illustrates the relationship between language and social interaction is the use of swear words. Although swear words are commonly associated with impoliteness and offensive behavior, their communicative meanings may vary according to social relationships, interactional contexts, and speakers' intentions.

In the Balinese linguistic context, the use of *basa kasar* is particularly interesting because language choice is traditionally associated with social relationships and levels of politeness. However, linguistic practices may differ from one community to another. In Penglatan Village, *basa kasar* occurs not only among peers but also in communication between younger and older speakers. Within close relationships, expressions that may be interpreted as rude in other contexts can function as signs of familiarity, humor, emotional spontaneity, and solidarity.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of swear words in Penglatan Village is closely related to interpersonal relationships and communicative context. Speakers generally distinguish between informal and formal situations and tend to avoid *basa kasar* in formal communication. This indicates that speakers possess an awareness of contextual appropriateness even though swear words are commonly used in everyday informal interaction.

The present article focuses on the findings and conclusions of the study concerning the forms, types, functions, and intergenerational use of swear words in Penglatan Village. The study specifically examines how *basa kasar* operates as a sociolinguistic resource within everyday communication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. Language use is influenced by social factors, including speakers, social relationships, cultural background, and the social situation in which communication takes place. In the context of this research, sociolinguistics provides the theoretical basis for understanding why the same swear word may have different meanings depending on who uses it, to whom it is addressed, and in what situation it occurs. The study therefore considers *basa kasar* not simply as vocabulary with negative meanings but as part of social interaction.

Intergenerational Communication

Intergenerational communication refers to communication between individuals from different age groups. Differences between generations may influence language choice, attitudes toward politeness, and the interpretation of taboo expressions. The research in Penglatan Village is particularly concerned with communication between younger and older generations. The study examines whether age differences determine the use and interpretation of *basa kasar* and whether such expressions are maintained across generations.

Swear Words

Swear words are generally understood as taboo or emotionally strong expressions. They may be associated with anger, frustration, pain, surprise, humor, or interpersonal relationships. However, the social meaning of swear words is not fixed. An expression that appears offensive in its literal meaning may function as a marker of intimacy or solidarity when used between close speakers. Consequently, the analysis of swear words requires attention to context and communicative intention.

Functions of Swear Words

The theoretical framework used in the study recognizes that swear words may perform various functions. In the findings of this research, five functions were identified: (a) Expressive function, for expressing emotions. (b) Dysphemistic function, involving deliberately harsh or negative expressions. (c) Abusive function, when expressions are used to attack or demean another person. (d) Emphatic function, when swear words strengthen or emphasize a message.

(e) Idiomatic function, when a swear word becomes part of an ordinary expression without necessarily functioning as a direct insult. The study shows that these functions must be interpreted according to the communicative context.

Types of Swear Words

Based on Jay's classification used in the study, swear words were categorized into: (1) Obscenity. (2) Profanity. (3) Insult and slur. (4) Emphatic swearing.

The study also examined the semantic references of the expressions, including general insults, animals, body-related expressions, kinship, and activities.

3. METHOD

Research Design

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study focused on naturally occurring language behavior, meanings, social relationships, and communicative functions rather than statistical generalization.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in Penglatan Village, Buleleng Regency, Bali. The participants were native Balinese speakers who lived in the village and participated in everyday communication.

There were 20 participants, consisting of: (a) 10 younger participants aged approximately 18–30 years; and (b) 10 older participants aged 45 years and above.

Participants were selected purposively according to the requirements of the study.

Data Collection

Data were collected through:

Non-participant observation

The researcher observed naturally occurring informal conversations without actively participating. Attention was given to the swear word used, the speakers, interlocutors, context, tone, communicative purpose, and reactions.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were conducted with participants from both generations. Questions concerned the meaning, use, appropriateness, functions, and use of swear words in communication with people from different generations.

Documentation

Field notes and audio recordings were used to preserve contextual information and the wording of relevant utterances.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The analysis consisted of: (1) data reduction; (2) data display; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. The data were coded according to form, type, function, context, and social meaning.

Triangulation was also applied through method, data source, and temporal comparison to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Swear Words Used in Penglatan Village

The findings identified 35 swear-word items used in everyday informal communication in Penglatan Village. These expressions occurred mainly in family conversations, peer interactions, and informal community gatherings.

The identified forms included:

Table 1. Forms of Swear Words Used in Penglatan Village.

Semantic reference	Examples
General insults	<i>goblok, tolol</i>
Animal-related	<i>cicing, bangsat</i>
Body-related	<i>pekok, bego</i>
Kinship-related	<i>nyama, memene</i>
Activity-related	<i>ngamah</i>

The findings show that general insults represented the most frequently occurring semantic group in the data. However, the literal meaning of a word did not automatically determine its communicative meaning.

For example, the word “goblok”, which literally expresses a negative judgment about someone's intelligence, could be used between close individuals without an intention to seriously offend. Its interpretation was influenced by tone, relationship, situation, and accompanying non-verbal behavior.

This finding demonstrates the importance of sociolinguistic context. Swear words cannot be analyzed solely through dictionary meaning because their pragmatic meaning may change according to the relationship between speakers.

Types of Swear Words

The study classified the identified swear words according to Jay's typology.

Table 2. Types of Swear Words.

Type	Quantity	Percentage
Obscenity	5	14.29%
Profanity	3	8.57%
Insult and Slur	25	71.43%
Emphatic Swearing	7	20.00%
Words belonging to multiple types	5	14.29%

The percentages above are based on the classification presented in the thesis; because some expressions belong to more than one category, the percentages should not be interpreted as mutually exclusive totals.

Obscenity

Five expressions were categorized as obscenity: *pletan*, *teli*, *tai*, *jit*, and *mekatuk*. These expressions relate to sexual matters, body parts, bodily functions, or excretion.

For example, *tai* literally refers to feces but may be used as an emotional expression equivalent to an expletive in particular contexts. Similarly, *mekatuk* refers to intimate sexual relations.

The findings indicate that these expressions may occur in informal communication even though they would generally be considered inappropriate in formal settings.

Profanity

Three expressions were identified as profanity: *pirate*, *leak*, and *memedi*.

These expressions refer to supernatural or religiously associated concepts in Balinese cultural understanding. For instance, *leak* refers to a figure associated with traditional Balinese beliefs and is used in the community as an expression of irritation, mockery, or disapproval. This finding illustrates how local cultural knowledge contributes to the interpretation of swear words.

Insult and Slur

Insult and slur represented the dominant category in the classification, with 25 identified expressions.

Examples included:

- a. *cicing* — dog
- b. *molog* — stupid
- c. *buduh* — crazy
- d. *bojong* — monkey
- e. *kaung* — male pig

- f. *pengit* — stinky
- g. *bangkung* — sow/female pig
- h. *bedogol* — fat person

The use of these expressions demonstrates that swear words may refer to animals, physical characteristics, personal behavior, mental conditions, and other socially negative attributes.

However, the findings also demonstrate that not all uses were intended as serious attacks. The interpersonal relationship and interactional context were important in determining whether an expression functioned as an actual insult or as an informal expression between close speakers.

Functions of Swear Words

The study identified five major functions of *basa kasar*: expressive, dysphemistic, abusive, emphatic, and idiomatic.

Expressive Function

The expressive function occurs when swear words are used to communicate emotional states such as anger, frustration, surprise, or excitement.

For example, a swear word may be uttered spontaneously when a speaker experiences an unexpected event. In this situation, the expression does not necessarily target another person. Thus, swear words can serve as an emotional outlet in everyday communication.

Dysphemistic Function

The dysphemistic function involves the use of deliberately harsh or negative expressions. The speaker chooses a stronger and less polite form instead of a neutral expression. This function emphasizes the negative or emotionally strong character of the message.

Abusive Function

The abusive function occurs when a swear word is directed toward another person with the intention of criticizing, mocking, demeaning, or attacking the target.

Expressions such as *cicing*, *molog*, or *buduh* may perform this function when the speaker uses them to negatively evaluate another person.

Nevertheless, the study emphasizes that interpretation must remain contextual because the same expression can have different functions in different interactions.

Emphatic Function

Swear words may also function as intensifiers. They strengthen a statement and make the speaker's message more forceful or emotionally salient. This function demonstrates that

swear words are not always the main message. Instead, they may modify or intensify another message.

Idiomatic Function

Some swear words occur as part of everyday speech and are not necessarily interpreted according to their literal offensive meanings.

In close relationships, these expressions may become conventionalized components of informal communication. The speaker and listener share an understanding that the expression is not necessarily intended as a serious insult.

Swear Words in Intergenerational Communication

One of the most significant findings of this study is that *basa kasar* is used by both younger and older generations.

The younger generation tends to use swear words more frequently, whereas older speakers tend to use them less frequently. However, both groups share many of the same lexical expressions and generally demonstrate similar understandings of their communicative functions.

The comparison can be summarized as follows:

Table 3. Comparison Of Generation.

Aspect	Older Generation	Younger Generation
Frequency	Less frequent	More frequent
Vocabulary	Uses most identified expressions	Uses similar expressions
Functions	Emotion, humor, intimacy, solidarity, emphasis	Emotion, humor, intimacy, solidarity, emphasis
Context	Family, neighbors, community	Family, peers, community
Attitude	Acceptable in informal close relationships	Acceptable in informal close relationships

The important distinction is therefore frequency rather than fundamental linguistic function. The findings indicate that age hierarchy does not automatically prevent younger speakers from using *basa kasar* toward older speakers. Instead, familiarity and interpersonal relationships appear to have a stronger influence on whether the expressions are considered appropriate. This finding suggests that *basa kasar* has become a shared pragmatic resource within the community.

Context and Meaning

The study demonstrates that the meaning of swear words cannot be determined from lexical form alone.

Several contextual factors influence interpretation: (1) Relationship between speakers. (2) Tone of voice. (3) Interactional setting. (4) Communicative intention. (5) Non-verbal behavior. (6) Degree of familiarity.

Field notes showed that swear words were frequently accompanied by smiling, laughter, and relaxed body language. Such contextual evidence supported the interpretation that some expressions were used for humor, familiarity, or solidarity rather than hostility.

This finding is particularly important in understanding intergenerational communication. A swear word addressed to an older person might appear impolite when interpreted according to general linguistic expectations. However, within Penglatan Village, shared cultural norms may lead speakers to interpret the same expression differently.

Cultural Perspective on Politeness

The findings demonstrate that politeness is not determined exclusively by formal linguistic forms. In Penglatan Village, relational closeness and communicative intention can influence whether *basa kasar* is perceived as acceptable.

This does not mean that swear words are appropriate in every situation. Participants demonstrated awareness that such expressions are generally avoided in formal contexts or when interacting with unfamiliar people.

Therefore, the findings suggest that the community maintains a distinction between *formal and informal language practices*. *Basa kasar* is accepted within particular social relationships and contexts, while speakers remain capable of adjusting their language according to the situation.

Discussion

The results support the sociolinguistic perspective that language is shaped by social relationships and cultural context. The 35 swear-word items identified in Penglatan Village demonstrate that *basa kasar* is not simply a collection of offensive expressions but a linguistic resource with multiple social and pragmatic functions.

The findings are consistent with previous studies cited in the thesis. Earlier research on Balinese swear words has similarly found that swear words may function to express emotion, humor, solidarity, identity, and interpersonal closeness. However, the present study extends previous research by focusing specifically on intergenerational communication in Penglatan Village.

An important contribution of the study is the finding that the use of swear words is maintained across generations. Although younger speakers use them more frequently, older and younger participants share similar interpretations of their functions.

This indicates that the use of *basa kasar* is not simply a characteristic of younger speakers. Rather, it forms part of a broader community linguistic practice.

The findings further demonstrate that the social meaning of swear words is negotiated through shared cultural knowledge. Expressions that may be considered offensive in another community can function as markers of intimacy or familiarity in Penglatan Village.

Consequently, the analysis of swear words requires attention to the relationship between language, culture, identity, generation, and social interaction.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that the use of *basa kasar* in Penglatan Village represents a complex sociolinguistic phenomenon embedded in everyday communication.

First, the study identified 35 swear-word items used in informal communication. These expressions include general insults, animal-related expressions, body-related expressions, kinship-related expressions, and activity-related expressions.

Second, based on Jay's classification, the swear words were categorized into obscenity, profanity, insult and slur, and emphatic swearing. The insult and slur category represented the dominant category in the classification.

Third, *basa kasar* performs several communicative functions, namely expressive, dysphemistic, abusive, emphatic, and idiomatic functions. These expressions may be used to express emotion, emphasize a message, create humor, establish intimacy, and maintain social relationships.

Fourth, both younger and older generations use *basa kasar*, although younger speakers tend to use it more frequently. The two generations nevertheless demonstrate similar understandings of the meanings and functions of these expressions.

Finally, the meaning of swear words in Penglatan Village is strongly dependent on context, interpersonal relationship, tone, communicative intention, and cultural norms. Therefore, *basa kasar* should not automatically be interpreted as an expression of hostility or disrespect. Within the appropriate social context, it can function as an important resource for expressing emotion, humor, familiarity, solidarity, and interpersonal closeness.

Overall, the study demonstrates that *basa kasar* is a dynamic and context-sensitive part of the linguistic practices of Penglatan Village and reflects the relationship between language, culture, and social interaction.

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