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#FragmentedLanguageWorkshop2021 #LU20215FLW

This presentation discusses Internet obscenities in Balinese (Austronesian), spoken on Bali, Lombok, and Sulawesi. Balinese has a socially sensitive lexicon (Eiseman 1990); thus, obscenities may not figure that much.



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For taboo language use online, Chen (2014) discusses the case of using pinyin acronyms in Mandarin CMC (computer-mediated communication) in order to bypass censors, especially with mentions of sexual or political matters. One example is MB for ma bi ‘mother’s vagina’.

你 什 么 都 不 懂， 你 在 这 儿 说 个 “妈 逼”！  
 Ni ShenMe Dou Bu Dong, Ni ZaiZheEr Shuo Ge “MaBi”  
 You anything at all NEG understand you here say CL mother vagina  
 ‘You understand nothing at all, how dare you speak up!’

你 什 么 都 不 懂， 你 在 这 儿 说 个 “MB”！  
 Ni ShenMe Dou BuDong, Ni ZaiZheEr Shuo Ge “MB”  
 ‘You understand nothing at all, how dare you speak up!’

For this study, Balinese users on Kaskus Banjar Adat Bali group, an online forum for mostly Indonesian clientele, have three strategies for obscenities: 1) explicit obscenities; 2) items marked as “low speech” directed at specific targets; and 3) a combination of 1 and 2.

KASKUS Forum Jual Beli LIGA INGGRIS SERBIO ITALIA Cari di sini Semua Kategori -

Kategori Berita dan Politik The Lounge Tribunnews.com Dota 2 Liga Italia Liga Inggris GP Mania

othey777 Kaskus Geek - Join: 31-03-2009, Post: 17,683

.. :: Banjar Adat Reg. Bali :: [Meriki Ngeranjing Nganggen Basa Bali]



**Niki forum Banjar adat mebase Bali ring Kaskus Regional Bali.  
Driki sampun genah sane pinih becik anggen ngerembug, mekedekan, matuturan, tur mligbagan  
orti-orti sane wenten ring jagate, sareng sameton kaskus ring sejebag jagat sami.**

Quote:

**Awig-awig (peraturan) Banjar Adat**

What are obscenities like in Balinese? Several options are available, including three for ‘penis’, one for ‘masturbate’, two for ‘vulva’, and three for effluvia. (Interestingly enough, the word for ‘piss’ (panyuh) does not seem to be as provocative as tai ‘shit’.)

## How can you insult someone in Balinese?

### • Explicit obscenities

Male anatomy	Female anatomy	Effluvia
<u>celak</u> ‘penis’	<u>teli</u> ‘vulva’	tai ‘shit’
<u>lolok</u> ‘dick’	<u>pek</u> ‘vulva’	<u>jit</u> ‘anus’
<u>keleng</u> ‘dick’		<u>meju</u> ‘to take a shit’
<u>ngucut</u> ‘to masturbate’ (lit. ‘shuffle cards’)		

Taking a closer look at explicit obscenities in (1)-(4), here we see *keleng* ‘dick’, *ngucut* ‘to masturbate’ (orig. ‘shuffling cards’), *teli* ‘vagina; cunt’, and *meju* ‘to shit; defecate’, all of which denote some obscene object or action.

(1) *keleng* ‘dick’

kleeee bakat gen salah ne  
 dick find only visible this.LOW  
 “Fuuuuck, you can just find this, it’s visible” (wayanris: 27/05/2013)

(2) *ngucut* ‘to masturbate (lit. shuffle cards)’

be sing jaman ngucut  
 PFV NEG times N-masturbate  
 “Now’s not the time to jerk off” (Mr. Benyahlatig: 30/05/2013)

(3) *teli* ‘vagina; cunt’

nha urek gen be teline... nyak ye <iso>  
 okay torn only PFV vagina-DEF want 3.LOW in.search.of  
 “Well, her cunt’s torn. He wants to look for more.” (Lengeh.Buah: 24/05/2010)

(4) *meju* ‘to shit, defecate’

ping kude meju awai nang  
 MULT how.many shit one-day father.LOW  
 “How many times do you shit a day, Pops?” (Mr. Benyahlatig: 24/07/2012)

How else can you insult in Balinese? One could also use words considered to be “low speech style” (after Errington 1988). In fact, this could be insulting if used to refer to someone of a higher status – especially if one refers to anything on his person with a “low” term.

## Low speech style items

Item	Gloss
(ng)amah	'to eat'
peta	'to speak'
(te)ndas	'head'
pules	'sleep'
jeneng	'face (person; self)'
nani	'you (masc)'
cicing	'dog' (cf. <i>asu</i> [high speech style])

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For examples with low speech style items: in (5), we see (te)ndas, an extremely debased form for ‘head’, which is traditionally a respectable body part. In (6), we see jeneng, a low form for ‘face,’ whereas in (7), we see low forms for ‘you’ (nani) and ‘dog’ (cicing).

(5) (te)ndas/nas ‘one’s own head/person’

kleeee jeg sing mekita nyemak gae di nah...  
dick EMPH NEG MA-want N-take work LOC alright

stress nas e

stress head.LOW DEF

“Fuck, I don’t want to take work in, alright – this is stressful.” (de\_jus: 08/04/2013)

(6) jeneng ‘one’s face’

nasklenkk... jeneng akene <terpampang>  
dickhead face.LOW 1.LOW-DEF plastered

“Fuckin’ dickhead... I’m plastered” (derrakayana: 29/08/2013)

(7) nani ‘you’ (LOW.MASC)

cicing ‘dog’

ape tolih nani cing???

what gaze 2.LOW.MASC dog

“What are you looking at, you dog?” (Big.Tungu: 21/08/2013)

One vexing item is *ngamah*, a crass form of ‘eat’. Others have defined roles; *ngamah* has problems. Eiseman (1990:139) says that it is “almost too low even for animals” and “if you really want to get into a fight with someone, use this last word with reference to his eating.’

### An example: *ngamah* ‘to eat’

Form	Appropriate referents
ngunggahang (‘lift food up’)	High priests
ngajeng (‘to set before’)	High caste people; persons of unknown caste
nglungsur (‘ask’)	Ordinary people when speaking to others
naar	Within one’s family
neda	Animals
ngamah	??

Based on Eiseman 1990 (139).

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The third type of obscenities in Balinese combine explicit obscenities and low speech style words. The two most prevalent are: nas ‘head.LOW’ + keleng ‘dick’ -> naskeleng ‘dickhead’, and amah [crass form of ‘eat’] + liak ‘witch’ -> amah liak ‘being eaten by witches’.

(8)

**Naskeleng**,, apa ne

**dickhead** what this

“Dickhead... What’s this?” (Bigers: 25/09/2013)

(9)

last post jug pragat **amah liak**

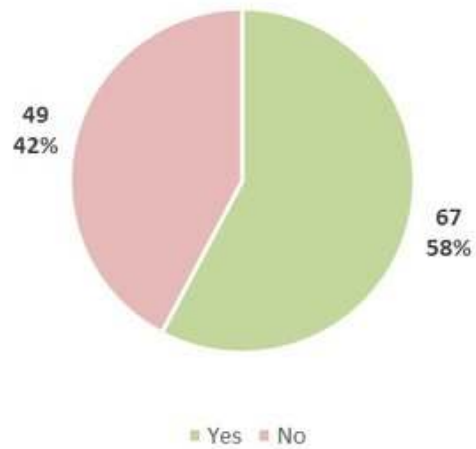
<last post> EMPH finish **eat.LOW witch**

“This is my last post (for the day), I’m done. Get eaten by witches (for all I care)” (wayanris: 28/05/2013)

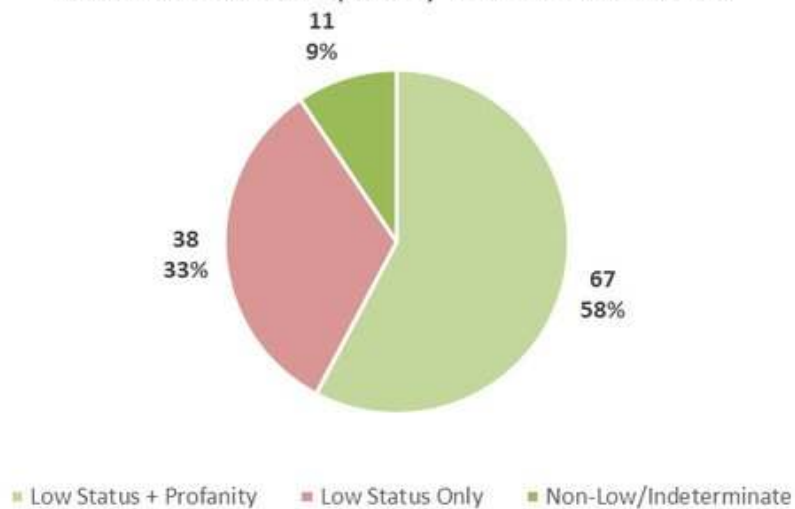


As seen here, a slight majority of tokens are explicitly obscene (N=116; 58%), whereas cases with “low status” items (either alone or in combination with obscenities) are in the minority. Why? Most items are those that are suggestive, but are neither profane or low status.

Distribution of Obscenity Tokens



Distribution of Explicitly Low Status Tokens



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Suggestive (but not profane/low) items are simply another venue where users can flaunt their linguistic creativity: here, REAL MADRID calls his audience *sampi* ‘cows’, which sounds like *sami* ‘all’, and says *sere* ‘shrimp paste’, which sounds like *sira* (high form of ‘who’).

(10)

Rahajeng semeng sareng **sampi**  
blessed morning ACCOMP cow

Wenten **sere** deriki?  
EXIST.HI **shrimp.paste** here.HI

“Good morning you cows. Is there shrimp paste here?” (A play on [Good morning everyone. Who is here?], as *sampi* ‘cow’ ~ *sami* ‘all’ and *sere* ‘shrimp paste’ ~ *sira* ‘who.HI’. (REAL MADRID: 23/08/2013)

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There are three ways to insult someone in Balinese: obscenities, low status items, or combination. Thus, if a language prioritizes politeness, this limits the proliferation of taboo language, leading available options towards potentially greater creativity and potency.

## Works Cited

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