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## LOYALTY AS LANGUAGE ATTITUDE TO SUSTAIN NUSA PENIDA BALINESE LANGUAGE

<sup>1\*</sup>Ni Ketut Widhiarcani Matradewi, <sup>2</sup>I Gusti Ayu Gde Sosiowati

<sup>1,2</sup> Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Udayana

Email: ketut.widhiarcani@unud.ac.id

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### ABSTRACT:

The island of Nusa Penida is one of the islands in the province of Bali, Indonesia that has been known as a tourist destination. The research that was conducted in this island has the purposes of (1) finding out the language attitude of the people of Nusa Penida towards the three languages spoken on the island namely the Indonesian language, Nusa Penida dialect of the Balinese language (NPB) as well as foreign languages and (2) the factors that make the condition as it is at present. This research is very important to find out the recent condition of NPB to be used as the authority as the bases of making language policy. The respondents of this research were taken from three different generations to see the system of language transfer and to find out how much of the language is spoken these days. The findings show that NPB is still spoken in all generations in vital domains like household, social, traditional and religious activities as well as at school (outside classroom); the reasons for the strength of NPB are the type of tourism they mostly have, their loyalty to the language considering that it is used as a symbol of ethnicity, and their pride of being the people of Nusa Penida, the island that is famous for its religious as well as ecotourism.

**Keywords:** Dialect, Penida, Language, Balinese, Language Loyalty

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## INTRODUCTION

Nusa Penida is the one of the islands in the Province of Bali in Indonesia. The native language of the people in this island is the Balinese language. The Balinese language spoken by the people there is actually one of the Balinese dialects called the Nusa Penida Balinese dialect (NPB) which is different from the main land Balinese (MLB). According to the local informants, NPB does not have language levels like MLB but in Nusa Penida it is much used in various domains like in the household, social activities and in traditional activities. There are several facts that make this island interesting. Those facts mentioned anonymously in <https://nusapenida.org/information/nusa-penida/culture-history-of-nusa-penida-bali/> are (1) this island used to stand by itself until it was defeated by the Bali kingdom in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and it was then attached to one of the regencies called Klungkung up to the present, (2) from a Dutch map created in 1900, it was found that Nusa Penida was called the Bandit island because it was used as a deportation location for criminals, political opponents and black magic adepts from Klungkung regency, and maybe this is one of the reasons why the native language sounds rough (3) despite its bad names like Bandit island, actually Penida has the meaning of “priest” (maybe it came from the fact that it was a priest who defeated the famous wizard named *Ratu Gede Mecaling*) while Nusa means island, (4) people in Nusa

Penida speak NPB which is hard for the people speaking MLB to understand.

In relation to the facts that it is hard for the MLB speakers to understand NPB and the fact that NPB does not have levels of language; the informants (Samen; Putra; Yustika) say that politeness in NPB language is shown by switching from dialect into the mainland Balinese language. This is done to respect the non-Nusa Penida people and to respect the Balinese people who hold the concept of castes. The idea that the people of Nusa Penida switch from NPB into MLB is also mentioned by (Bagus, 1981) who further says in his research that for Nusa Penida people, knowing MLB was considered prestigious since by using MLB, they can speak properly to the ones who have a higher social status. This understanding about language use has made them perform the act of convergence which means that there is an effort of a speaker to adjust his/her ways of communication to be accepted and understood by the interlocutors (Giles et al., 1991). Thus, it can be said that the people of Nusa Penida keep on applying the accommodation theory, stating that constant changing of one’s communicative behaviour depends on the interlocutors (Giles et al., 1991). However, it does not matter what kind of dialect is spoken by the people in Nusa Penida, the most important thing is their constant claim stating that they are Nusa Penida people who speak NPB. This claim means a lot since by claiming it they will have the obligation to preserve the language which they have used as their ethnic identity. In relation to

language loyalty, (Sosiowati et al., 2017) mention that a minority language can sustain because the speakers use the language as their identity, loyal to their language and proud of their language. Their claim shows the change of their perception towards NPB. It used to be known that the Nusa Penida people were embarrassed when they had to speak their language outside Nusa Penida or in front non-Nusa Penida people because they realized that NPB is a harsh language. They were mocked for using the language which sounds rough and incomprehensible. That is why they switched their NPB into MLB (Http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986, n.d.) when speaking to non-Nusa Penida people. However, at present, there has been a switch of the reason for their code switching. They switch from NPB into MLB or Indonesian language not because they feel embarrassed but they realize that there is formality and politeness they have to attend to as well as preventing misunderstandings between them and their non-Nusa Penida interlocutors. Actually, it is not clear whether the speakers of NPB do the code switching or code-alternation. In relation to this, (Clyne et al., 2003) claims that “the term ‘code-switching’ has now become so polysemous and unclear and that this is why it is important to find the more accurate terminology to map out the boundaries and interfaces.”

The NPB was beyond contact with any other languages since only few people

came to visit this island. It has a negative reputation as the scariest island due to black magic and evil practices (Http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986, n.d.). The legend of *Ratu Gede Mecaling* scared people. The legend says that *Ratu Gede Mecaling* was a powerful wizard who liked sending diseases and epidemics to the Balinese people who disobeyed him. A priest then defeated him but he did not completely disappear; his spirit has been retained in the temple called Dalem Ped. This temple is since then known as source of power for those who practice black magic but also a place of pilgrimage for those who look for protection from evil and sickness

**(<https://nusapenida.org/information/nusa-penida/culture-history-of-nusa-penida-bali/>)**.



**Figure 1.** People going to Nusa Penida to pray

This pilgrimage made the people of Nusa Penida start making contact with the outsiders. However, the initial contact was still with the Balinese people until the year 2010 and become booming in 2014 when the first Nusa Penida Festival was held. The purpose of introducing the island internationally was a great success marked by the booming tourism in Nusa Penida. Foreign and domestic tourists come to visit Nusa Penida to enjoy the under-water panorama and the on-land scenery including the beautiful natural beaches. The economy grows very fast and all people in Nusa Penida work in tourism both as the main agent or supporting agent ([Http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986](http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986), n.d.).



**Figure 2.** People gathering in front of the temple

For years the people of Nusa Penida have relied on tourism which provides great opportunities for language contact until the breaking out of the pandemic Covid-19 in 2019. In its golden era, tourism became the main source to fulfil their financial needs. Tourism made them switch from sea-weed farming to tourism. This condition has provided more opportunities for the people to meet foreigners to whom they have to use foreign languages (in this case English) to communicate and also, they have more opportunities to meet local tourists who communicate in the Indonesian language. This change has made the people of Nusa Penida who worked outside the island return home to partake of the booming tourism industry.



**Figure 3.** Local and foreign tourist going to Nusa Penida

Foreign and domestic tourists came and brought a lot of financial benefits which made them as well as their language gain higher and stronger status compared to the Balinese. Language contact, the situation in which people of one language interact with people of a different language or dialect, leads to the transfer of linguistic features (Nordquist, 2020), cannot be avoided. This language contact is related to the contact-induced change that occurs when some sub-groups of a speech community have adopted another speech habit (Lucas, 2015). This language contact which is caused by the arrival of both domestic Indonesian speaking) and foreign (English speaking) visitors creates worry among those who care about the sustainability of local languages. The worry is reasonable considering that being able to speak the languages spoken by those visitors is promising in the terms of economy. People can gain more income when they can communicate and provide good services to visitors. In this situation, it is very much possible that the local language will be marginalized and will slowly go to extinction/become extinct. It is worrying and it is understandable since it is said that of



**Figure 4.** Foreign tourists in Nusa

about 7,000 languages spoken around the world, 2,680 of them are in danger of disappearing, and many more are already gone (Römer, 2021) and one language disappears every two weeks on average (Quinones et al., 2023). The disadvantages of the extinction of local languages are the loss of the history of the language (Evans, 2009). The loss of linguistic diversity (Hale, 1992) local languages should be preserved because it means preserving culture and identity. Knowing the condition of a local language before it is in critical condition is very important for the policy maker to decide the steps of revitalization of that language. The perception of the people about the language they speak is very important in the sustainability of a language. Loyalty to their language is very important. This idea is in line with the idea that motivation, prestige, identity, language loyalty and the importance of their relationship to the attitude of the language speakers (Choudry, 1993). The positive attitude of the speakers towards their language will sustain the language, however, if their attitude is negative, for example they feel embarrassed of speaking it and if they believe that the

language does not have any social and economic value, they are not proud of being its speakers, the language will become extinct. To prevent NPB from extinction, this research was conducted to obtain the perception of the Nusa Penida people on the languages that they are in contact with, namely Indonesian, MLB and English. It is their perception that will provide information whether or not NPB is still well sustained.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in the regency of Nusa Penida, the province of Bali in Indonesia which has 16 villages. For this research, only two villages were chosen as the research location, namely the village of Sakti and the village of Bunga Mekar. These two villages are considered to be representative as the research sites for two reasons. First, they have the most visited attractions by both local and foreign visitors that make them have intense language contact with both Indonesian and English. The village of Sakti actually has only one tourism object which is easily reachable and thus making it a favourite tourism site, while the village of Bunga Mekar has 4 famous tourism objects/places of interest namely Broken Beach, Angel's Billabong, Kelingking Beach and Seganing Waterfall. According to ([Http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986](http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986), n.d.) Nusa Penida has 16 well known tourism objects spreading over 6 villages. Thus, taking 2 villages out of 6 tourism villages with 5 tourism objects out of

16 is considered sufficient. Another reason is that these two villages are close to one another and easy to reach that makes it easier for the researchers to do the research. The numbers of respondents taken from these two villages are 75 for each village divided into three age groups, 15 – 29 years old, 30 – 44 years old and 45 – 60 years old.

These groupings are based on the condition that the people aged 15 – 60 in Nusa Penida are strong and healthy, and are involved in many sectors that support tourism. Thus, in total, the respondents of this research are 150 divided into three age groups. The selection of respondents did not put male/female into consideration since there is no clear cut between male and female jobs. They are given questionnaires with questions basically asking about (1) if they had ever lived outside Nusa Penida, (2) what language they used when living outside the island, (3) what language they used in Nusa Penida while communicating with people at home, with relatives, friends and visitors, (4) their perception about their Balinese, Indonesian and English language. These questions were used to get information about their perception about those languages leading to the finding about sustainability of their local language. The data was taken by meeting the respondents right away to help them in case they did not understand the questions. The data collection was done by the local field worker who had been previously trained.

The data was analysed from the perspective of language contact in a multilingualism community because the



people in Nusa Penida speak at least three languages namely NPB, MLB and Indonesian while English can only be spoken by a limited number of people. The speakers of these three languages keep on choosing the language they have to use depending on their interlocutors. This is in line with the idea stated in the theory of language contact



Figure 5. Data collecting

saying that language contact takes place when speakers of one language, for various reasons want to communicate with speakers of other languages (Auer, 2020). The analysis aims at finding out the condition of NPB in the middle of other languages as previously mentioned.



Figure 6. Data Collecting

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the research shows that in the island of Nusa Penida, NPB is still very much used, especially in social activities and in the household. The data collected shows that their perception about NPB is still positive followed by MLB and Indonesian language. When they have to mix NPB, they mix it with either Indonesian or MLB. The people believe that NPB is the language they must preserve proving that most of them still use it when they are in the household domain, that is when they talk to their parents, husband/wife and children. Most of them also use NPB when talking to their friends both inside and outside their working place. Their positive perception about NPB is also the result of using it as a means of ethnic identity. The keeping of the language as ethnic identity will sustain the language

since language loss is the effect of the loss of ethnic identity (Tsunoda, 2006). The fact that all generations, reflected in the three groups of respondents, still speak the NPB has categorised this language as a safe language. **UNESCO in its expert group on endangered languages (2003)** defines that a language is considered to be safe when it is spoken by all ages, from children upwards. A similar idea is also presented by **Moseley (2010)**

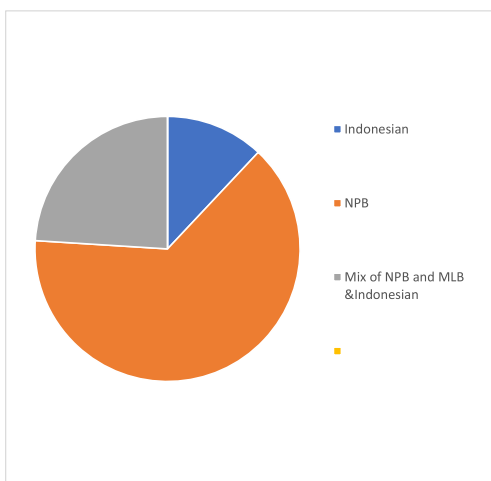
Although the language is safe, many of the respondents mentioned that they want to learn foreign languages. Considering that this island is a famous tourist destination, the Nusa Penida people want to learn or improve their ability in speaking English and Mandarin. The reasons for being interested in those two languages is that English is mostly used in international communication and they are interested in

learning Mandarin because there are many Chinese visiting Nusa Penida. Thus, they learn both languages to support their work in tourism as well as to increase the ability to communicate for better services. The small number of people who do not want to learn any foreign language, have their own reasons. Firstly, their work has no direct contact with tourism, for instance, they are farmers who support tourism by supplying the needs of the accommodation, secondly, they think that they are too old to learn a new language, instead they encourage the youngsters to study it, and thirdly, for the time being, they think they have to improve their MLB first to be able to speak it properly before learning any other foreign languages. NPB is truly used a lot in Nusa Penida and it has gained positive perception from the people (Bagus, 1981). Although NPB is much used, it does not gain the highest status because the language of instruction used at school is not NPB but the Indonesian language (Informan-Darmawan & Manik). This makes the Indonesian language hold the highest status which is in line with the idea that a language will have the highest status when it is used as the medium of instruction at school since it is controlled by the government. (Gora & Mutasa, 2015) This is true because the use of the Indonesian language is controlled by the State Government of Indonesia.

The result of the analysis shows that the NPB is still safe which is proved by the fact that it is still widely used in Nusa Penida by three generations selected as respondents. This means that language has

been handed down from the older generation to the younger generation. However, it cannot be denied that there is slight change in language as a result of the language contact-induced language. One type of contact-induced language change is borrowings which is one form of language change (Thomason, 1988). The language contact has caused some borrowings in NPB that were taken from Indonesian, MLB or English, for example the words taken from the Indonesian language are *keluarga* 'family', *upacara* 'ceremony', *tahu* 'know', the words taken from MLB are *pidan* 'sometimes ago', *melajah* 'study', *uling* 'from'; the words borrowed from English are waterfall, beach, bungalow. The analysis also shows that the Nusa Penida people are very loyal to NPB and even, according to one of the informants (Manik), miss the language when she does not speak it for a longer period due to her living outside the island for a long time. According to her, this is a friendly language that does not discriminate people based on social status. The loyalty of the people to NPB is shown by their answers stating that in everyday life, they still use NPB. Following are the charts that show languages spoken in the household domain.



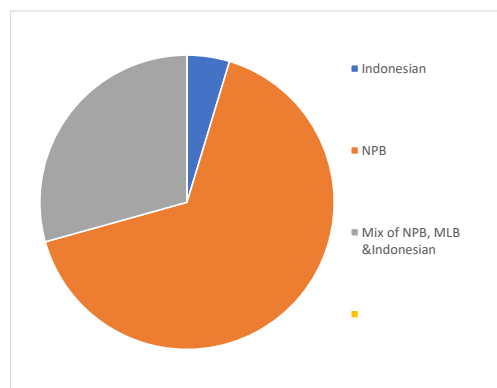


**Chart 1.** Languages spoken by parents to their children.

Chart 1 shows that out of 150 respondents, 18 (12%) use Indonesian when talking to their children, 96 (64%) use NPB and 36 (24%) use a mixture of NPB, MLB and Indonesian. The percentage shows that the majority of the respondents use NPB which indicates that they feel comfortable when they use it. It is known that NPB does not have speech levels and thus, they cannot use it when they want to show language politeness. When parents speak to their children, language politeness is not very important, thus NPB will be sufficient. However, when they want to teach their children to be able to speak MLB, they will use it. Teaching their children MLB is important considering that the children should use it when talking to non-Nusa Penida Balinese for the reason because it sounds more polite and is more understandable. Another important thing is that the pronoun of “I” can also create problems. In NPB, pronoun *iba* means “I”

while in MLB *iba* means a low-level language of “you”. None of the Balinese people will be happy when they are addressed by *iba*. A lot of parents are proud when their children can speak MLB well. The Indonesian language is also used for the same reason, that is for learning and practicing because the language of instruction at school is Indonesian language and this will be used a lot when they speak to non-Balinese people. Thus, it can be said that the Nusa Penida people have a language awareness in the sense that they have special occasions when to use each of those three languages namely NPB, MLB and Indonesian.

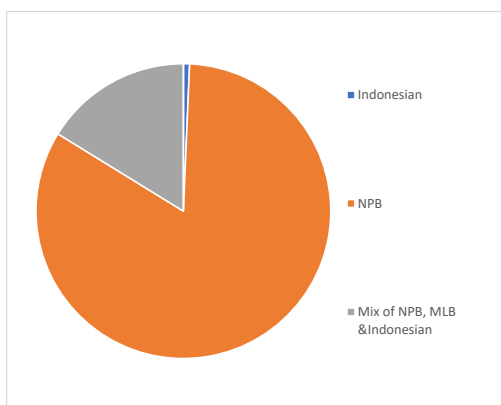
Chart 2 shows the result of the



**Chart 2.** Languages spoken by husband and wife

languages used between husband and wife. Based on the analysis out of 150 respondents only 2 (4,7 %) speak Indonesian, 99 (66%) speak NPB and 44 (29,3%) use a mixture of NPB, MLB and Indonesian. This condition is triggered by the perception they have about those three languages. Indonesian is considered to be too formal when it is used in husband-wife communication while they have to maintain

an intimate relationship. The MLB is also considered to create a distance between husband-wife. This idea about formality and



**Chart 3.** Languages used by children to parents

convenience makes them choose NPB that makes them feel close, non-distanced and comfortable. The fact that husband and wife or parents and children use this language in the household has created a good transfer channel of NPB. Children, since they were babies, get familiar with this language. The great degree of familiarity leads the children to use NPB a lot when talking to their parents as shown in chart 3 below.

Chart 3 shows that there are three languages used by children to their parents. However, the percentage of the use of Indonesian is so small that it can be ignored since it cannot even be shown in the chart (0,7%) This actually makes the languages competing are only NPB and MLB although MBL is still small in percentage (26%)

compared to NPB (82%). Household is one of the very important domains that can measure the sustainability of a language. Chart 1 and chart 3 have proved that NPB is

still widely used in two generations and this means that this language is also used in social activities both for younger and older generations. To strengthen the proof that NPB is still strong and safe, the following table (Table 1) will describe the percentage of use of the languages of NPB, MLB, Indonesian and English in and outside working place.

**Table 1**

**Languages Used In and Outside Working Place**

Language	In work place		Outside work place	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Indonesian	54	36	19	12,7
MLB	-	-	-	-
NPB	15	10	103	68,7
English	29	19,3	-	-
Mix of NPB and MLB	52	34,7	28	18,6

Table 1 presents the findings about language use in both inside and outside the work place. Inside the work place, the first mostly used language is Indonesian which shows that the people obey the state regulation (UU\_2009\_24) concerning the use of national language in public areas including government and non-government offices/work place. It must also be used in

public services. The reason for doing this is to sustain the national language and to make it easy for the official/staff to provide public services because this language is considered understandable for everyone. This is very true because Indonesian has been made the language of instruction in all levels of education. The second mostly used language is the mixture of those two languages (NPB and MLB). Using NPB and MLB means that they switch from NPB to MLB or vice versa depending on who they are talking to. When they are talking to people of the same rank or lower in the work place, they will use NPB. However, when they talk to someone of a higher position, they will switch into MLB since this language can be used to show politeness. The third mostly used language is English which is used when the people/the islanders communicate directly with foreigners. Usually they do this when explaining to the foreigners what they can and cannot do when visiting Nusa Penida, showing direction when the foreigners want to go to some places, finding accommodation and other related information for tourism. However, the small number of people speaking English in their work place (for example the job as guides) indicate that communication in English is not significant. English becomes the fourth language mostly used there. The main reason for this is the type of tourism that is performed in Nusa Penida. (<http://www.nusapenida.nl/index.php/history/history-postcolonial/nusa-penida-eiseman-1986>, n.d.) mentions that tourist normally go there for a one-day trip. They

have their own guide accompanying them from the mainland so people in Nusa Penida just do the driving. The people of Nusa Penida do not need a lot of speaking skills because the guiding is done by the visitors' own guide. For them, the little English they speak is fine because without good English they can earn sufficient money. If by living an easy life they can get more than enough money, why would they bother to learn English? However, this research proves a different result about their willingness to learn English. Out of 150 respondents, 143 (95,3%) say that they want to learn English to increase their income in tourism, to provide better services for visitors and to increase the respect from their own Nusa Penida fellows. Those who are not interested in learning English (4,7%) believe that English is a difficult language to learn, they are too old to learn English and let the younger people do it, or they want to be good at MLB first before learning a foreign language. The fourth mostly used language in the work place is NPB making up 15 (10%). They use this language when they are talking with good friends and talking about something which is not related to their official work. This following sentence is an example of the sentence they claim as NPB: *Dugas ne kole uyut ajak tunanganle angkane kole matang duang*. The whole sentence which means "Last time I had a fight with my girlfriend, that is why I kept silent" is not understood by the MLB speaking people although there are Balinese words *dugas*, *angkane* and *tunangan*. *Tunanganle* "my girlfriend" comes from *tunangan* "girlfiend"

and the short form of *kole* “my”. The sentence is actually the mixture of NPB and MLB words which serves as the proof that NPB is the dialect of MLB.

There are also the findings of language choice outside work place. The first language mostly used outside work place is NPB spoken by 103 (68,7%) respondents. They use the language in social events, traditional events and household. The coverage of NPB use is very wide. NPB is freely used despite of the fact that it does not count social status. This language is the symbol of equality among Nusa Penida people. The second mostly used language is the mixture of NPB and MLB. The switch between those two languages is done based on the need to suit the interlocutors. The third mostly used language is Indonesian used by 19 (12,7%) respondents. Again, this language is used when the islanders meet strangers whom they think to be visitors from different parts of Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions that can be drawn from this research are as follows. The Nusa Penida Balinese Language is one of the Balinese dialects that is still powerful and proven by the fact that this dialect is still widely used in its community. The factors that support the sustainability of this dialect are (1) it is used as a sign of ethnic identity, (2) it is used in important domains such as household, religious ceremonies, and social activities, and (3) the loyalty of the speakers in using the language even when they are outside Nusa Penida; they are proud of using

it. The strength of this dialect also contributes to the strength of the Balinese language because Balinese is always used when they want to perform language politeness. Thus, NPB and MLB are used side by side. The Nusa Penida people are considered the ones who are eager to improve themselves. It is proved by their willingness to improve themselves in terms of learning foreign languages to upgrade their performance as well as to gain higher prestige despite the fact that even without good mastery of English, they are already able to enhance their economic life.

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