

Personal Pronouns in the Sasak Language: A Descriptive Study of the Pujut Dialect in Bilelendo, Central Lombok

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ABSTRACT

Personal pronouns are essential grammatical elements that function to identify participants in communication while also reflecting the sociocultural values of a speech community. In the Sasak language, the use of personal pronouns varies across dialects and is influenced by factors such as politeness, social status, and interpersonal relationships. However, studies specifically describing the personal pronoun system of the Pujut dialect remain limited. Therefore, this study aimed to describe the forms and functions of personal pronouns used in the Pujut dialect spoken in Bilelendo Village, Central Lombok. This research employed a descriptive qualitative design involving fifteen native speakers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, and field notes. The collected data were transcribed, classified, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that the Pujut dialect possesses a rich personal pronoun system consisting of first-, second-, and third-person pronouns with distinctions based on number and politeness levels. The selection of pronouns was found to depend not only on grammatical functions but also on communicative contexts, age, social hierarchy, and familiarity between speakers. These findings demonstrate that personal pronouns in the Pujut dialect function as both linguistic markers and representations of local cultural values. This study contributes to the documentation of the Sasak language and provides additional empirical evidence for descriptive linguistic and sociolinguistic studies concerning regional languages in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most fundamental means of human communication, enabling individuals to express ideas, emotions, intentions, and cultural values. Unlike other communication systems found in nature, human language is characterized by its creativity, productivity, and systematic organization, allowing speakers to produce and understand an unlimited number of meaningful utterances (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Through language, people establish social relationships, preserve cultural identity, and transmit knowledge from one generation to another. Consequently, language is not only a communication tool but also an essential component of culture and social interaction.

Indonesia is one of the world's most linguistically diverse countries, with more than 700 regional languages spoken across its archipelago. Besides Indonesian as the national language, local languages continue to play an important role in maintaining ethnic identity and cultural heritage. One of these regional languages is Sasak, which is spoken predominantly by the people of Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara. Although Sasak is generally recognized as a

single language, it consists of several dialects that differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structures depending on the geographical and sociocultural background of the speakers (Austin, 2012).

One of the most distinctive linguistic features of the Sasak language is its personal pronoun system. Personal pronouns function as grammatical elements that refer to the participants in speech, including the speaker, the addressee, and the person or entity being discussed. In Sasak, the use of personal pronouns is closely related not only to grammatical functions but also to politeness, social hierarchy, age differences, kinship relations, and the level of formality in communication. Therefore, the selection of pronouns reflects both linguistic structure and sociocultural values within the Sasak-speaking community.

Among the Sasak dialects, the Pujut dialect spoken in Bilelando Village, Central Lombok, exhibits unique characteristics in the use of personal pronouns. Local speakers employ different pronoun forms depending on the communicative context and interpersonal relationships between speakers and hearers. These variations distinguish the Pujut dialect from other Sasak dialects and represent an important aspect of local linguistic identity. However, despite the richness of the Sasak language, studies specifically describing the personal pronoun system of the Pujut dialect remain limited.

Previous studies on the Sasak language have primarily examined its phonological characteristics, dialect classification, lexical variation, and morphosyntactic features (Austin, 2012; Mahyuni, 2019). While these studies have contributed significantly to the documentation of the Sasak language, relatively little attention has been paid to the description and functional use of personal pronouns in specific dialects, particularly the Pujut dialect spoken in Bilelando. Consequently, there is still insufficient linguistic documentation concerning the forms, grammatical functions, and sociolinguistic usage of personal pronouns in this dialect.

The novelty of the present study lies in its comprehensive description of the personal pronoun system in the Pujut dialect of the Sasak language, focusing on both grammatical forms and their contextual use in everyday communication. Unlike previous studies that broadly discuss Sasak dialects, this study specifically documents the pronouns used by native speakers in Bilelando Village and explains their linguistic functions within natural communication. The findings are expected to enrich the documentation of the Sasak language while contributing to regional language preservation and descriptive linguistic studies in Indonesia.

Based on the background above, this study addresses the following research question: What are the forms and functions of personal pronouns used in the Pujut dialect of the Sasak language spoken in Bilelando, Central Lombok?

Therefore, the objective of this study is to describe the forms, classifications, and communicative functions of personal pronouns in the Pujut dialect of the Sasak language spoken in Bilelando, Central Lombok. The findings are expected to provide linguistic documentation of one of the Sasak dialects and contribute to the preservation of Indonesia's regional languages.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to describe the forms and functions of personal pronouns used in the Pujut dialect of the Sasak language spoken in Bilelando Village, Central Lombok. Descriptive qualitative research was selected because the study aimed to identify, classify, and explain linguistic phenomena based on naturally occurring language data rather than to test hypotheses or measure causal relationships (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research was conducted in Bilelando Village, Pujut District, Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, where the Pujut dialect is widely used in daily communication. The participants were 15 native speakers of the Pujut dialect selected through purposive sampling. The participants consisted of male and female speakers representing

different age groups and social backgrounds to ensure that the collected data reflected authentic language use within the local speech community.

The primary data of this study consisted of spoken utterances containing personal pronouns produced by native speakers in natural communication. Supporting data were obtained from field notes and interview transcripts. Data were collected from March to May 2025 through observation, semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, and documentation. During the observation, the researcher recorded naturally occurring conversations among community members. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to verify the meanings, grammatical functions, and contextual use of each personal pronoun identified in the recordings.

The research instruments included an observation guide, an interview guide, a digital voice recorder, field notes, and a transcription sheet. All recorded conversations were transcribed verbatim before being analyzed.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. First, all recorded utterances were transcribed into written form. Second, utterances containing personal pronouns were identified and classified according to person, number, and communicative function. Third, the classified data were presented in descriptive tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the grammatical forms and sociolinguistic functions of the personal pronouns used in the Pujut dialect.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher employed source triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants and communicative situations. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming the interpretation of several linguistic forms with selected native speakers to ensure the accuracy of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented based on the analysis of naturally occurring conversations and semi-structured interviews with native speakers of the Pujut dialect in Bilelendo Village, Central Lombok. A total of 327 utterances containing personal pronouns were identified and analyzed. The pronouns were classified into first person, second person, and third person categories, along with their grammatical and sociolinguistic functions.

1. Personal Pronouns in the Pujut Dialect

The analysis revealed that the Pujut dialect possesses a relatively rich personal pronoun system. Several pronouns have more than one form depending on the social relationship between speakers, communicative situations, and levels of politeness.

Table 1. Personal Pronouns in the Pujut Dialect

Person	Pronoun	English Equivalent	Function
First Person Singular	<i>aku</i>	I	Informal
First Person Singular	<i>tiang</i>	I	Polite
First Person Plural	<i>ite</i>	We	Inclusive
First Person Plural	<i>kami</i>	We	Exclusive
Second Person Singular	<i>kamu</i>	You	Informal
Second Person Singular	<i>side</i>	You	Respectful
Second Person Plural	<i>side pade</i>	You (plural)	Respectful
Third Person Singular	<i>ie</i>	He/She	Neutral
Third Person Plural	<i>pade</i>	They	Plural

Table 1 indicates that the Pujut dialect distinguishes personal pronouns according to person, number, and politeness. Unlike English, which generally has only one second-person pronoun (*you*), the Sasak language provides different pronouns depending on the relationship between speakers.

2. Frequency of Personal Pronouns

The frequency analysis shows that first-person and second-person pronouns appeared more frequently than third-person pronouns because the collected data mainly consisted of daily conversations.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Personal Pronouns

No	Personal Pronoun	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	First Person	121	37.00
2	Second Person	143	43.73
3	Third Person	63	19.27
Total		327	100.00

The second-person pronouns accounted for the highest frequency (43.73%), reflecting the interactive nature of everyday communication in which speakers frequently addressed one another directly.

3. Functions of Personal Pronouns

The analysis identified four major communicative functions of personal pronouns in the Pujut dialect.

Table 3. Communicative Functions of Personal Pronouns

Function	Description	Example
Subject	Refers to the doer of an action.	<i>Tiang lalo jok peken.</i> ("I go to the market.")
Object	Receives an action.	<i>Aku ngiring side.</i> ("I accompany you.")
Possession	Indicates ownership.	<i>Buku ite baru.</i> ("Our book is new.")
Address Term	Shows politeness and respect.	<i>Side sampun mangan?</i> ("Have you eaten?")

The findings demonstrate that personal pronouns in the Pujut dialect are not limited to grammatical functions but also express interpersonal relationships between speakers.

4. Pronoun Use Based on Social Context

Observation data indicated that speakers selected different pronouns depending on the age and social status of the interlocutor.

Table 4. Personal Pronouns According to Social Context

Social Situation	Preferred Pronoun
Talking with friends	aku, kamu
Talking with parents	tiang, side
Talking with village elders	tiang, side
Formal meeting	tiang, side
Children talking to children	aku, kamu

The use of *tiang* and *side* was dominant in formal situations and when speaking to older people. In contrast, *aku* and *kamu* were commonly used among close friends and family members of similar age.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the personal pronoun system of the Pujut dialect is influenced not only by grammatical categories but also by sociocultural values embedded in the Sasak speech community. The existence of alternative first-person pronouns (*aku* and *tiang*) and second-person pronouns (*kamu* and *side*) reflects different levels of politeness and social distance. Speakers carefully select pronouns according to the age, social status, and familiarity of the interlocutor, demonstrating that language functions as a marker of respect and social identity.

This finding supports Austin (2012), who argues that Sasak dialects exhibit considerable variation in their lexical and grammatical systems across different regions of Lombok. Although the basic functions of personal pronouns remain similar, each dialect develops its own preferred forms and patterns of usage influenced by local cultural practices.

The findings also agree with Mahyuni (2019), who emphasizes that linguistic variation in the Sasak language is closely related to geographical distribution and social interaction. The Pujut dialect preserves several pronoun forms that continue to be actively used in everyday communication, particularly in family interactions and community activities. This demonstrates that the dialect remains an important marker of local identity despite the increasing influence of Indonesian as the national language.

Furthermore, the study reveals that personal pronouns in the Pujut dialect perform dual roles. Linguistically, they function as grammatical markers referring to participants in speech events. Socially, they serve as indicators of politeness, solidarity, and interpersonal relationships. Similar observations have been reported by Richards and Schmidt (2010), who state that pronoun choice in many languages reflects both grammatical structures and pragmatic considerations.

The novelty of this study lies in its detailed documentation of the personal pronoun system in the Pujut dialect spoken in Bilelando Village. Previous studies have mainly focused on dialect classification and phonological differences, whereas the present study specifically describes the forms, frequencies, grammatical functions, and contextual usage of personal pronouns. These findings contribute to the documentation of the Sasak language and provide valuable information for future research on regional languages and descriptive linguistics in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study described the forms and functions of personal pronouns in the Pujut dialect of the Sasak language spoken in Bilelando Village, Central Lombok. The findings revealed that the Pujut dialect possesses a rich system of personal pronouns that distinguishes speakers according to person, number, and levels of politeness. The use of personal pronouns extends beyond their grammatical role as references to speech participants and reflects important sociocultural values, including respect, social hierarchy, familiarity, and interpersonal relationships within the Sasak community.

The study also found that speakers consistently selected different pronoun forms depending on the communicative context and the relationship between interlocutors. Informal pronouns were commonly used among peers and family members, whereas polite pronouns were preferred in formal situations and when addressing older people or individuals with higher social status. These patterns demonstrate that the personal pronoun system of the Pujut dialect functions as both a linguistic and a cultural marker.

Overall, this study contributes to the documentation of the Sasak language by providing a descriptive account of the personal pronoun system in the Pujut dialect. The findings enrich the existing literature on Sasak linguistics and support ongoing efforts to preserve regional languages as part of Indonesia's linguistic and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the study provides baseline data that may serve as a reference for future research in descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, language documentation, and regional language preservation.

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