

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The Bajo are an ethnic group whose lives are closely connected to the sea, with fishing as their main occupation. Their communities are found across Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Rubama et al., 2024). Known as “Sea Nomads,” they are recognized for their remarkable navigation skills and traditional way of life that is deeply tied to the ocean. Their mobility and frequent migrations have contributed to their wide distribution throughout the archipelago and Southeast Asia. This maritime lifestyle also shapes their social structure, where values such as gotong royong (cooperation) and mutual assistance are central to daily life (Rubama et al., 2024). These collective values are reflected in shared activities such as boat repair, fishing, and preparations for traditional ceremonies (Laparaga et al., 2021).

The Bajo language is classified within the Western Malayo-Polynesian group, and its speakers are found in numerous fishing communities across regions such as Eastern Indonesia, the Southern Philippines, and Malaysia (Nuraini, 2010). According to Wikibooks, speakers of this language in Indonesia are distributed across several provinces, including South Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, Gorontalo, East Java, North Maluku, West Nusa Tenggara, and East Nusa Tenggara. However, the exact percentage of speakers in these seven provinces has not been clearly documented.

This research examines the Bajo language in Sagu Village, Adonara, East Nusa Tenggara. On Adonara Island, Lamaholot is the dominant language, while Bajo functions as a minority language. The speakers of Bajo on the island are dispersed across Sagu Village, Mekko Hamlet, Adonara Village, and Waiwuring Village. Within Sagu Village, the Bajo language serves as the medium of communication for the Bajo community, which is geographically and socially situated in close proximity to Lamaholot-speaking groups on Adonara Island.

Based on dialectological research and patterns of language interaction on Adonara Island, the boundaries of the Bajo dialect in Sagu Village can be described as follows: to the east, it borders the Lamaholot Adonara Timur dialect (subdialects Oringbele, Tapobali, Lamawolo); to the south, it borders the Lamaholot Adonara Tengah dialect (subdialects Horowura and Dulhi); to the north, it borders the Lamaholot Adonara Barat dialect (subdialects Botun, Watan, and Waiwadan); and to the west, it borders the Lamaholot Adonara Barat dialect (subdialects Waiwadan and Botun) (Boli et al., 2021). Within their own community, the Bajo people in Adonara generally use the Bajo language, but in interactions with the surrounding population they also employ Lamaholot, leading to language contact and dialectal influence. The proportion of Bajo speakers in Sagu Village has not been specifically recorded.

The Bajo language in Sagu Village continues to be actively used in different aspects of community life, such as informal education, village meetings, traditional ceremonies, and weddings. Its use in these settings functions as a means of safeguarding the cultural heritage and identity of the Bajo people. Although

Indonesian exerts influence, the Bajo language remains the primary medium of social interaction and traditional practices within the community.

The Bajo language holds a vital position in shaping the social and cultural identity of the Bajo people, particularly through its distinctive communication patterns, which are evident in unique forms of request. Request expressions in the Bajo language play a significant role in daily social interactions, especially in the contexts of fishing, trade, and traditional ceremonies. Examining how requests are constructed within Bajo society is important, as these linguistic forms reflect a unique social and cultural framework. Istiyanto (2018) emphasizes that, within the Bajo Sampela community in Wakatobi, language functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a medium for sharing information closely tied to their sea-based way of life.

Research on “an analysis of request expressions in the Bajo language of Sagu Village” was considered significant because, at that time, comprehensive studies on the pragmatic aspects of the Bajo language—particularly request expressions and the influence of age differences on their usage—were still scarce. Previous investigations into the Bajo language had largely concentrated on phonology, lexicon, and dialectology (Nuraini, 2010; Istiyanto, 2018), while pragmatic research exploring how requests were constructed and applied within the socio-cultural context of the Bajo community remained limited. Nevertheless, request expressions are an essential component of interpersonal communication, reflecting the social norms, hierarchy,

and cultural values of the Bajo people, whose way of life is strongly rooted in cooperation and mutual support.

In the framework of minority language preservation, a thorough understanding of the function and usage of request expressions contributes to sustaining the Bajo language as a living language, actively employed in various social and cultural domains, including informal education and traditional rituals within the Bajo community (Rubama et al., 2024).

Although several studies on the Bajo language have been conducted—such as lexical and phonological analyses (Nuraini, 2010; Devi et al., 2023) and socio-cultural investigations of the Bajo community (Rubama et al., 2024; Oktavianto Laparaga et al., 2021)—this research was undertaken because it specifically addresses request expressions in the Bajo language within a social context, and examines whether age differences influence the choice of request strategies. Such studies, particularly in Sagu Village, remain minimal or even absent.

This situation highlighted a significant gap in linguistic and linguistic anthropology studies that required attention. The researcher undertook this study with the aim of addressing that gap by analyzing request expressions in the Bajo language within the social context of Sagu Village and examining whether age differences affected the choice of request strategies. The findings of this research provide new perspectives on communication and social interaction among the

Bajo people, while also supporting efforts to preserve their language and culture, particularly in Sagu Village.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, the problems of this study are stated as follows:

1. What are the linguistic expressions of request in the Bajo language in Sagu Village?
2. Does the speakers' age difference influence the choice of request strategies in the Bajo language?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are stated as follows:

1. Identify and analyze linguistic expressions of requests in the Bajo language.
2. To find out whether speakers' age difference may influence the choice of request strategy in Bajo.

## **1.4 Significance of the research**

1. Linguistic Contribution

This research enhanced the understanding of the Bajo language by exploring how members of the Bajo community formulate requests. Through the documentation and analysis of these expressions, a deeper appreciation of the unique features of the Bajo language—features that warrant preservation—was achieved.

2. Culture Preservation

An important aspect of the Bajo people's cultural identity is closely tied to their linguistic heritage. By systematically analyzing the ways in which they articulate their desires, a clearer understanding of their cultural values and social conventions was obtained. This understanding is essential for safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Bajo community.

### 3. Educational Implications

The findings of this research contributed to transmitting knowledge of the Bajo language to younger generations. Educators who understood the request strategies employed across different age groups were better prepared to design teaching materials that were both engaging and culturally aligned with the communication practices of the Bajo people. This effort was intended to encourage young individuals to develop an interest in learning their native language.

### 4. Understanding Social Dynamics

An analysis of the impact of age on request strategies offered valuable insights into the social relationships within the Bajo community. The patterns of interaction and communication among different age groups were understood in relation to their respective social structures.