

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Discourse is a structured system of meaning that shapes how individuals and groups understand the world, including social relationships, institutions, and identities. It is not limited to text or speech but also encompasses interconnected social practices that serve as a medium for constructing social reality (Howarth, 2000). Discourse is viewed as a field of struggle to define and control meaning within society, where power relations and ideologies are expressed and negotiated, making it a critical element in shaping social structures and society's worldview.

Halliday and Hasan (2014) developed the theory of discourse functions to explain how language constructs meaning in context. They propose three main functions-textual, interpersonal, and ideational-that together shape how language operates in discourse. Textual functions organize linguistic elements into a cohesive and coherent structure, making the narrative understandable and logically sequenced. The interpersonal function deals with how speakers express attitudes, negotiate roles, and manage relationships in communication. Ideational functions allow speakers to represent experiences, actions, and entities in the world around them. In the context of the *Lii Hawu*, these functions are reflected through the use of deictic expressions such as *nad'ee* ('this'), *nène* ('that'), *pa d'ee* ('here'), and *awe nad'ee* ('now') which not only help indicate reference and location, but also contribute to organizing discourse and positioning the speaker socially and culturally. For example, in traditional folktales and everyday stories among the *dèu Hawu*, deixis is used to divert attention, mark narrative perspective and structure

the flow of events. This shows that language in *Lii Hawu* not only conveys information (ideational function), but also maintains social interaction (interpersonal function) and textual coherence (textual function), which demonstrates how discourse functions are deeply embedded in the cultural and communicative practices of Sabu people.

Deictic is a key component of linguistics, used to refer to people, places, or times in specific communication contexts. It enables listeners to understand information according to the viewpoint or context of the speaker. Stephen Levinson (2006) delved deeply into the idea of deictic, emphasizing its pragmatic function by emphasizing how expressions such as personal pronouns, geographical words, and temporal markers rely on the situational context to be understood. In many languages, including regional ones like *Lii Hawu (also known as Sabu)*, deictic plays a central role in structuring and interpreting everyday interactions, as it helps speakers and listeners establish shared understanding within specific discourse contexts. Building on this, Fillmore (1997) also explored deixis as part of the “semantics of pointing,” which functions as a linguistic tool to direct the listener's attention to certain elements in the context of communication. Deictic includes language expressions that depend on the context of space, time, or the social relationship between the speaker and the listener. For example, words like *here* and *there* indicate location relative to the speaker's position, whereas *me* and *you* refer to specific participants in the interaction. Thus, deictic is not only a tool for physical pointing but also for indicating social or temporal position in an utterance.

Deictic, according to Lyons, as cited in Setiakawanti and Susanti (2018), refers to expressions whose meanings depend on the extralinguistic context, such

as the speaker's position, the location and time of the conversation, or the surrounding context in which the conversation occurs. This concept is crucial in understanding how language works in specific communication contexts. Building on this foundational idea, Lyons categorizes deixis into three main types: spatial deixis, which indicates place and distance relative to the speaker's position; temporal deixis, which refers to time relevant to the communication context; and referential deixis, which serves to identify specific people or objects within discourse. These categories provide a structured approach to analyzing how deixis operates within language and its role in shaping communication.

Sabu (*Lii Hawu*) is a language in its own right, just like every other language in Indonesia and around the world. *Lii Hawu* speakers are found on the islands of Sabu and Rajjua in the Savu Sea to the west of Timor Island in East Nusa Tenggara province. Sabu people also migrate to other islands, including Sumba, Timor and Flores. The total number of Sabu people is calculated to be around ±80,000-100,000. *Lii Hawu* consists of five dialects, each with variations in sound and distinctive vocabulary. The widely recognized name 'Sabu', referring to the island, people and language, follows the pattern of expression or pronunciation of outsiders, starting from the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century. In Sabu's own language, the name is not Sabu, but Hawu. That is, *lii Hawu* means 'Sabu language', *dèu Hawu* means 'Sabu people', and *rai Hawu* means 'Sabu island' (*Unit Bahasa & Budaya (UBB)*, 2006).

*Lii Hawu*, spoken on Sabu Island in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, possesses unique linguistic features that reflect the culture and worldview of its speakers. However, studies on the functions of deixis in this language remain

limited. Previous research, such as Walker (1982) and Grimes (2010), has provided a foundational understanding of *Lii Hawu*, but a detailed exploration of its deictic system in discourse and grammar is still lacking.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of bilingual educational materials and improve the accuracy of translations in *Lii Hawu*. Moreover, this study plays a vital role in documenting and preserving regional languages, which are part of a rich cultural heritage under threat of extinction. Additionally, it contributes to the broader field of pragmatics and typological linguistics by examining deictic in an under-documented language.

Based on the statement above, the researcher is interested in studying the Sabu language, particularly the use of deictic, due to its crucial role in daily communication. Deictic allows speakers to refer to people, places, times, or objects in a specific context, reflecting how language conveys social relations, hierarchies, and worldviews. This research is important given the limited in-depth studies on the deictics system in *Lii Hawu*, although previous studies have provided a basic understanding. Additionally, this research can enrich the field of linguistics, particularly in the context of regional languages that have not been widely studied, and contribute to the teaching and documentation of the Sabu language.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

The researcher conducts the research to answer the following problem in discourse functions of spatial, temporal and referential deictics in *Lii Hawu*: What are the functions of the spatial, temporal, and referential deictics in the grammar and discourse of *Lii Hawu*?

### **1.3 Aim of Study**

Based on the research problem above, the aim of this research is To find out the functions of the spatial, temporal, and referential deictics in the grammar and discourse of *Lii Hawu*.

### **1.4 Significance of Study**

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the Sabu language, particularly in the domain of deictics. By exploring how spatial, temporal, and referential deictics function in discourse, this research aims to provide insights that are both theoretical and practical. The following sections discuss the implications and applications of these findings in various contexts.

#### **1.4.1 Implication**

The result of this study is expected to support the theory Levinson (1983) in Viahapsari and Parmawati (2020), deictic is a word whose reference always moves or changes depending on the context to indicate person, place, time, social distinction, and role in discourse.

#### **1.4.2 Application**

The results of the study on deictics will be useful in several respects, as they will offer valuable insights into how language is used to establish spatial, temporal, and social relationships, while also contributing to a deeper understanding of the cultural and communicative practices within the Sabu language community. These insights can be applied in several areas:

##### **4.1. Development of Educational Materials**

A better understanding of the roles of these deictics will have

important practical implications, particularly in the creation of high-quality educational materials in *Lii Hawu* for bilingual education programs. This understanding can be used to develop curriculum content, instructional procedures, and resources that are linguistically and culturally suitable for the requirements of the *Lii Hawu*-speaking community.

#### 4.2.Improvement in Translation Quality

Furthermore, this understanding will improve the correctness and naturalness of translated literature like the Bible. It ensures that these translations are not only linguistically exact, but also contextually relevant and understandable to native speakers, bringing more advantages to the language community.