

The Information Value, Saliency, and Framing of Road Signs in Singaraja

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Abstracts: This paper reveals the language presentations of the road signs in Singaraja, the capital city of Buleleng regency in North Bali, through multimodal composition theory proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen, which includes information value, saliency, and framing. The research design is a single case study with the subjects of 4 road signs in Singaraja. The four road signs are chosen purposely from 151 road signs. In order to gather the data, those road signs were photographed using a digital camera. Each group is presented differently by the maker of the signs, in this case, the department of transportation of Buleleng Regency, which is under traffic regulation in Indonesia, especially Bali. The four categories are varied in terms of the languages presented on the road signs, namely monolingual Indonesian, Indonesian and Balinese combination, Balinese and Indonesian combination. The findings show that the information value is presented mostly using a top-down relation. The road signs present information value using Balinese and Indonesian languages less consistently. Either Indonesian or Balinese language takes their position as the ideal part on the signs. The saliency is reflected by the presence of the Indonesian language in capital letters with relatively a larger size, which is more readable from a distance than the Balinese letters. The framing analysis shows that the bilingual road signs are separated using a line which indicates that Indonesian and Balinese words convey unrelated information. However, they contain one message to the sign readers.

Keywords: composition analysis, information value, saliency, framing, road signs

INTRODUCTION

Road signs present information for the passers-by and also become symbols of the top-down policy of the government. Road signs are placed in public space, which becomes a media and an instrument of power management and control (Erikha, 2018). Landry & Bourhis (1997) proposed the two types of public signs' informational and symbolic functions. The informational function of street signs relates to street names, the direction of going to places, the location of a venue, and the prohibition that the street users have to obey. The symbolic function expands the functions of the signs for not only being the source of information but also reflect the policy of the local and national government. This policy is reflected in the discourse's multimodality, especially the makers' meanings and intentions (Alyousef, 2020). A street in a city is a transportation infrastructure and plays an important role in being the city's showcase, one of them is the language policy from the government (Purnanto & Ardhian, 2020).

Road signs in Singaraja, Buleleng, as one of Bali's regencies, have to implement Bali's language policy. Governor regulation number 80 in 2018 requires the Balinese language or the Balinese orthographic system called Hanacaraka to be presented above the Indonesian language, which uses Latin characters. The regulation aims to protect the existence of the Balinese language in public space. At the same time, in a broader area, another regulation manages the existence of the Indonesian language as the national language to exist in public space, that is, President Decree number 63 the year 2019. It emphasizes the importance of the Indonesian language as the national language of Indonesia. It should be placed at the most salient position of the top-down signs in Indonesia, including road signs.

Balinese and Indonesian language competition to gain the first noted language on the road signs is very visible. Languages in the bilingual or multilingual setting are not equal in position. The less frequently used language is commonly considered less prestigious, lacking importance for certain communities (Andriyanti, 2019). A certain language becomes more powerful and spotlighted on the road signs to achieve the sign makers' ideology. The ideology of top-down public signs is power ideology, in this case, the power to maintain the nationalism among Indonesian people throughout Indonesia and preserve local languages as a certain area's cultural identity. The Balinese language is a part of the concern of the policy on the road signs.

Various researches have been conducted to analyze road signs in various places. Erikha (2018) researched the royal road names in Yogyakarta. It was found that the street names reveal the geographical, social space of the Javanese, and the use of Hanacaraka presents language limits. Symbolically, the meanings of the present signs related to Javanese culture, native Javanese language presentation, figuring out Javanese ethnic groups, showing the power relation of the government to the naming of the place, and a strategy to promote tourism sector in the city. Similar research has also been conducted by Purnanto & Ardhian (2020), which reveals that the street names in Malang in several ways. The dominant language presented on the street names signs in the city is Indonesian, which Dutch, Javanese, and English follow. The street names are taken from familiar local names ranging from animal, place or geographical, cultural figure, and heroes' names. The language choice is influenced by nationalism maintenance, power practice, economic support, and identity emphasis. Both types of research are linguistic landscape researches that reveal the informational and symbolic functions of the street name signs. They delineate the language contestation in different cities in Java in terms of the top-down signs of the street name signs. Especially for the Singaraja context, research on road signs has been conducted by Paramarta (2021), which found that the Indonesian language dominates the language on the signs and then is followed by the Balinese language. In different signs, both languages are combined in one sign. After describing the language choice, the distribution of the sign is also analyzed that the Singaraja government place the Balinese and Indonesian combination in the city center for Balinese language protection purposes. In the research, there is one aspect that is not investigated yet: the composition of the signs. The signs themselves are multimodal signs which are not only conveying writings in Indonesian and Balinese. The existence of other channels should be considered, like information value, salience, and framing, to get the intention of the sign makers.

In order to fill in the gap, research has been conducted for digging out the position of both languages on the road signs in Singaraja. The focus of government policy is analyzed concerning nationalism maintenance and local language preservation. Previously, the road signs are commonly studied from a linguistic landscape point of view, emphasizing the contestation of languages, power, and identity. Further analysis is required to analyze the composition of the road signs in Singaraja to see the most salient language on the road signs. The base of the analysis is the multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) which is developed from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Chen, 2013; Hu & Luo, 2016; Knoll & Fuzer, 2019; Kress, Gunther, and Van Leeuwen, 2006; Ly & Jung, 2015; Riesky, 2018; Terres, Torres, & Heberle, 2020). In SFL, there are three functions of meaning, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. The three functions in SFL are manifested into other three patterns, namely representation, interactive, and composition (Kress, Gunther and Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Specifically, in composition analysis, three elements contribute to the conveyance of the meaning: information value, salience, and framing. Information value refers to the placement of a sign's elements embedded in the informational value of the elements themselves. It can be viewed horizontally, left and right, vertically; top and bottom, center and margin. Salience is the element that attracts viewers' attention in certain degrees, as realized by its placement in foreground or background, relative size, the contrast in colors, and differences in sharpness. Framing relates to the presence of dividing lines literally or figuratively that connects or disconnects elements of the image (Kress, Gunther and Van Leeuwen, 2006).

METHOD

The research is a single case study with four road signs chosen purposively as the subjects of the study. Those four road signs represent the road sign classifications: monolingual Indonesian, bilingual Indonesian+Balinese, and bilingual Balinese+Indonesian. Each classification has relatively similar composition patterns, so it is not necessary to analyze all road signs. The instrument of the research is a digital camera. The road signs in Singaraja are captured, and it is found that 151 road signs are placed in the town by the government.

From the 151 pictures, four pictures were chosen as the representations. The analysis is done in three steps. The first step is analyzing the information value of the road signs, the second one is analyzing the salience, and the third one is analyzing the framing. The theory used for the analysis base is Multimodal Discourse Analysis, especially composition analysis proposed by Kress, Gunther and Van Leeuwen (2006).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings and discussions are based on Balinese+Indonesian Bilingual road signs, Indonesian+Balinese road signs, and Indonesian Monolingual road signs. Figure 1 presents a road sign which is placed under the traffic lights in most crossroads in Singaraja. Figure 1 consists of 3 pictures. The left picture is the road sign, the middle picture is the road sign attached at the same pole as the traffic lights, and the right picture is the location where the road sign is located.



Figure 1: The close-up sign, the traffic light where the sign is placed, and the location of the sign

From the information value point of view, the sign applies top-bottom composition. The sign consists of Balinese Hanacaraka at the top position or above the Indonesian writing 'BELOK KIRI IKUTI LAMPU' (turn left when the light turns green). The Hanacaraka writing is not representing the Balinese lexicon but merely the transliteration of the Indonesian lexicon. The top positioned Balinese Hanacaraka is categorized as the ideal information. The bottom-positioning writing is categorized as the 'more down-to-earth information, which is more practical for the viewers. It shows that Indonesian writing is considered easier to comprehend by the street users since the street users are not always Balinese language literates. The sign maker intends to show that Balinese Hanacaraka has to be maintained even though the passers-by cannot read it. The more understandable and practical writing has been written in Latin below it.

The second aspect of composition analysis is the salience which is about the presentation of sign elements that attract the viewers' attention to a certain degree, ranging from the most salient to the least salient. The Indonesian lexicon, printed in bold and biggest-size Latin letters, attracted the first attention when looking at the sign. The information contained in the sign is intended to prevent the street users from turning left directly when the red light is still on. It is common in Indonesian streets to keep turning left at a crossroad or a T- junction even though the red traffic light is still on. This site is an exception due to certain safety considerations, so a special sign is required and attached at the traffic light's pole. Above each Indonesian word part, there is the transliteration of the Indonesian-written direction in Balinese Hanacaraka. It is a strong indication that the Hanacaraka is considered a secondary element of conveying the message. The Hanacaraka is not spotlighted and is less readable from a distance of more than 5 meters. It is less readable since the size of the Hanacaraka is much smaller and thinner than the Indonesian writing. The salience of the written sign is also depicted with the white color, which contrasts with the dark green background. The absence of other elements like pictures or color gradation boosts the salience of the writing. Salience is usually boosted by elements such as size, contrasting colors, movement, weight, and types of fonts or sets that differentiate a certain object from the environment (Alyousef, 2020).

The next analysis is in terms of framing. The sign is divided into three areas using red lines and color differentiation. The largest area is the middle one that shows its dominance or the center of the sign. The

subservient areas are equally balanced on the left and right sides of the largest area. On the right side, there is additional information: a hotel advertisement attached to the sign. The hotel is a private company that becomes the sponsor of the sign. This information makes the sign so crowded and makes the Hanacaraka is becoming less and less spotlighted. The information of the hotel is written in smaller Indonesian and English languages. It is almost unreadable from the stop area on the road next to the traffic light pole, but the writing colors are white and black with bright yellow and green backgrounds, which attract the readers' attention. That written information is combined with some logos of various related authorities which are responsible and have the power in issuing and approving the validity of the information contained in the sign, namely the logo of 'Dinas Perhubungan' (Transportation Office) at the upper left corner, 'Jasa Raharja' (A State Insurance Company) at the middle left corner, and 'Polisi Lalu Lintas' (Traffic Police Squad). On the right side, there is the logo of Buleleng Regency, which some subordinate information covered by the hotel advertisement. It reflects that the concealed information is not important.



Figure 2: Balinese Hanacaraka and Indonesian Latin writing on the road sign

The use of Balinese Hanacaraka is also found on the street name signboard. The composition analysis of this sign is somewhat simpler than the one in figure 1 since the fewer number elements are available on the sign. Information value presents a top-bottom pattern that depicts ideal and practical information relations. Balinese Hanacaraka is the ideal information, and Indonesian writing is considered practical and 'down-to-earth information.' The ideal place is also connected to the salience of the information, in which Balinese Hanacaraka is appreciated as the important information presented in the street name signboard. The information value of this sign is in line with Bali Governor Regulation number 80 the year 2018, chapter IV section 6, article (1) g, which states that Balinese script must be placed above Latin letters in the writing of street names (Peraturan Gubernur Bali No 80 Tahun 2018, 2018). As the purpose of the regulation is to protect and preserve the Balinese language in a public place, the Balinese script is positioned as the ideal element of the sign. The positioning of the two languages on the sign also fulfills the informative and symbolic functions from Landry & Bourhis (1997). Both writings convey information of the street's name where the sign is placed, that is 'Jalan Ratna' or Ratna Street, and symbolically Balinese script represents the identity of the Balinese community in Singaraja. The viewers feel the Balinese atmosphere by looking at the Hanacaraka script. The Indonesian language shows the nationalism of Indonesian citizens, which is regulated in chapter III section 36 article 3 and 4 Act number 24 the year 2009. Article 3 states that the Indonesian language must be used to name buildings, streets, apartments or communities, offices, marketplace, organizations founded by Indonesian citizens, or having an Indonesian legal entity. Then article 3 is further explained in article 4 that the naming stated in article 3 may also use local and foreign languages if there is the value of history, culture, custom, and or religion. The complexity of Balinese and Indonesian languages on the street name signboard results in national and local identity harmony.

Further, if we look at the size of the upper and lower alphabets, it is seen that the Indonesian language is more salient than the Balinese language. The Indonesian name is printed in bold capital letters with twice bigger in size than the Balinese script. The Balinese script is printed relatively thin smaller size, indicating that it is less dominant than the Indonesian language. Despite the information value consideration, the sign maker emphasized the Indonesian language, written below the Balinese script. The viewers tend to be attracted to read the bigger, clearer, and simpler elements of the sign.

Moreover, the viewers have been exposed more to the written Indonesian language than Balinese Hanacaraka in their everyday lives. Practically, the street users will be attracted to see and automatically read Indonesian writing. This finding is relevant to the finding stated by Hu & Luo (2016) that the level of importance is much determined by size and placement. Furthermore, the color contrast between the script printed in bright white color and the background in dark green boosts the salience of the writing.

In terms of framing, the Balinese and Indonesian languages are separated with clear white lines that indicate differences and show the absence of meaning relation. Viewers who are not familiar with Balinese Hanacaraka may perceive that the Balinese language expresses something unrelated to the Indonesian-written name of the street. The areas constructed from the separating line show the effort to differentiate the elements of the signs (Riesky, 2018).



Figure 3: Indonesian Latin and Balinese Hanacaraka on the road sign

The information value in Figure 3 uses top-down relation. The ideal information is the bold Latin written street name. The name of the street is JL. TOYA ANAKAN I, which is written above the Balinese Hanacaraka. The ideal information reflects that Indonesian writing is more important than the practical information, the Balinese Hanacaraka. This street name pattern violates Bali Governor Regulation no 80 the year 2018, which requires the Balinese Hanacaraka to be written in Indonesian. The sign maker does not mean to violate the regulation since the road sign was made before the regulation's release. The placing of the Indonesian writing in the ideal position shows that the sign maker respects the Indonesian language as the national language, which should be appreciated. Nationalism is more prominent than ethnicism. The Balinese Hanacaraka represents the more down-to-earth information, which means the locals are more familiar with it. In this case, the sign maker perceives that Balinese Hanacaraka is the local language that is already familiar to the local people. The road name boards in figure 2 and figure 3 show two different points of view of the sign makers. Despite the informational function of both public signs, there are two different ideologies behind them, namely nationalism and localism ideologies.

In terms of its salience, the road name board in figure 3 emphasizes the Indonesian language more than the Balinese Hanacaraka. It can be seen from the position of the writing, the use of capital letters, and the size of the letters. Indonesian writing is placed above the Balinese Hanacaraka, which attracts more attention than the Hanacaraka writing. The passers-by will see the upper written words firstly before reading the following words. After its position, the capitalized Indonesian writing with a larger size than the Balinese Hanacaraka also boosts the salience of the Indonesian version of the street name.

On the other hand, the Balinese Hanacaraka is printed in a thinner and smaller size. It shows that the sign maker less spotlights Hanacaraka. It shows that Indonesian is perceived as more important than Balinese on this type of street name board.

The framing of the street name board is shown by the white line covering both languages. This outer frame emphasizes the street name that attracts the passers-by's attention. Additionally, it also supports the artistic presence of the street name board. Another framing on the signboard is the white line between the Indonesian language and the Balinese Hanacaraka. According to Kress, Gunther and Van Leeuwen (2006), the presence of the line indicates that they do not have any connection. The sign maker makes a clear distinction between the Indonesian language and Balinese language by this line. It also happened in the sign type shown in figure 2. The street name board in figure 2 is even stronger in differentiating the upper and the lower parts using a connected line that divides the board into two unconnected spaces. The street name board in figure 3 is not strongly divided into two areas since the middle line is not connected to the outer line. This framing shows that the sign maker still gives a little space that shows the upper and lower parts present related information. The presence of the middle line seems to be the emphasis of the writings to be the central point to be shown to the sign readers.



Figure 4: Indonesian Latin writing on the road sign

Another type of road sign in Singaraja is presented in figure 4. It is a directional road sign that shows the direction of 3 different places, namely Seririt and Gilimanuk Harbour, Bhuana Kerta Monument, and Penimbangan Beach. The language used on this sign is only Indonesian language. The type of writing is different from the ones in Figures 1, 2, and 3, in which the Indonesian language is written in capital letters. In this road sign, the words are written in sentence case in which the initial letter is typed in capital letter, and the rest are in small letters. It shows the inconsistency of the presentation of the writing on the road signs. The road sign in figure 4 is divided into three parts: the top, middle, and lower positions. In terms of information value, it applies ideal-real composition. The ideal information is the straight direction of the main road to Seririt area and Gilimanuk Harbour. The other places are considered less important for the street users. The street users who do not know the direction in Singaraja tend to require the way to reach the nearest city or important transport facility like a harbor compared to the direction to a monument and a beach which are considered the more specific information for specific street users.

On this road sign, there is no language competition. The only language used is the Indonesian language. The names of places on the sign are written exactly in the same size, color, and letter type, indicating they are similar in the degree of salience. However, the arrangement of the places on the sign shows that they are not similar in salience. The top-position place is the most salient information on the sign that the street users first read. The second salient one is the middle information which is about the direction to a monument. This monument is Bhuana Kerta monument which was built to commemorate the struggle of the Buleleng people against Dutch colonials. This place becomes a touristic place which is often visited mostly by the locals. The lowest writing is the direction to Penimbangan beach, which is a growing touristic place in Singaraja. This place is not as famous as Lovina beach and tends to be a local people's favorite place. The sign maker classifies the salience based on the degree of importance of the place for the street users.

The sign maker divides the board into three parts: the clear white line, the outer line, and the place names. This framing shows the readers that the information in each square is not connected. The existence of the arrows

does not relate to a process or stages of a process but a direction that the street users should follow to reach the place. The framing of the road sign in figure 4 is different from the framing in figure 1, 2, and 3. The framing of the road sign in figure 4 is considered the most appropriate in implementing the framing theory proposed by Kress, Gunther and Van Leeuwen (2006). The line shows the separated information which is not connected.

Road signs which the government designs tend to apply uniformed design in terms of its information value and framing. This finding is different from the findings of Iftikhar, Shahnaz, & Masroor (2019), who investigated three Academy Award Winning movie posters. The movie posters are varied in the information value; ideal-real, center-margin, and even absence of information value. It can be summarized that compositional analysis is dynamic depending on the subjects of the analysis.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Road signs do not only convey information for street users. It shows the ideologies of the sign makers for certain designs. Every design has a certain intention. Road signs as a top-down sign from the government indicate the government's ideologies in choosing a certain language for the sign. In Singaraja, three patterns are found: Indonesian monolingual, Indonesian and Balinese combination, and Balinese and Indonesian combination. The analysis shows that the transportation government in Singaraja put the Indonesian language as the most salient language on the road signs. The nationalism ideology is the most important idea conveyed in the signs. The Indonesian language also accommodates the street users who do not speak the Balinese language like visitors from other islands and foreign tourists. Balinese Hanacaraka is considered less important than the Indonesian language in which we could not find a road sign with Balinese language only. The use of the Balinese language is for protecting the language from extinction. Balinese Hanacaraka is presented in a less salient presentation on the signs, or it plays a subordinate position on the road signs.

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