Investigating Women's Representation and Identity in Tourism Context Using Narration: A Perspective from Bali

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Abstract

The present study discussed the representation and identity of three selected women figures who contributed to the development of tourism in Bali and worked as a team leader, an entrepreneur, and an influencer, respectively. This study has two objectives: 1. to find out how women represent themselves and 2) to find out how women build their identity in the tourism context using narration. The authors used narrative inquiry to collect valuable stories from the informants. Using narrative inquiry, the stories produced by the informants were unique and meaningful. The study's results revealed that women represented themselves as figures responsible for fulfilling domestic, i.e. family, and non-domestic roles, i.e. careers. The study also revealed that they still embraced traditional and domestic roles as their identity while simultaneously managing to actualise themselves in their careers.

INTRODUCTION

Language is viewed as a means of self-expression that represents a person's motivations, feelings, desires, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, in addition to being a tool for information transmission and a significant aspect of a social system (Apte, 2001; Wardhaugh, 2006). Furthermore, language can be utilised to understand various constructions, social practices, and realities, such as social roles, social controls, and social statuses (Edwards, 2006; Fairclough, 1992; Omoniyi, 2006; Van Dijk, 1993).

However, one of the products of that social construct is men's domination over women, thus creating gender bias, for example, in verbal expressions (Sartini, 2020, 2021). Thus, regarding language and social context, women are often associated as powerless, emotional, diminutive, and have fewer contributions to a conversation (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

In Bali, the social relationship between men and women is embedded in patriarchy and social hierarchy (Ottino, 2006). Consequently, this affects

language use and choice, whereas women must shift their language style to match societal norms (Praminatih, 2021).

However, in the present time, modern Balinese women already actively participate in the activity outside of their domestic roles. Therefore, their language choice would reflect their representation and identity based on the current circumstances. For example, in the tourism context, primarily in Bali, several women are declared using the term 'Srikandi' a heroic figure for their roles in promoting and maintaining local culinary traditions on the global scene through businesses such as local *warungs* and restaurants (Putra, 2014).

In addition, some literature also discusses the development of Balinese women's capability and intellectuality (Putra, 2007, 2020). In addition, women's motivation, self-actualisation, and how they stepped out of the depicted societal roles in the tourism context have also been investigated (Kumala Pratiwi, 2016; Widiastuti, 2018). Thus, it is interesting to find out how they can depict their representation and identity.

Language and social practices create multi-layers of social constructions in tourism. Thus, women's language in the tourism context is crucial to investigate. However, the study that exploits the use of women's language in the tourism context remains rare. Therefore, the study proposed two objectives to find out 1) how women represent themselves and 2) how women build their identity in the tourism context using narration.

This study is expected to contribute to the linguistics field of study, especially language and gender. Besides, it can enrich the study of language conducted in tourism. Consequently, this study could be a reference for linguists regarding language phenomena in the tourism context in Bali.

METHOD AND THEORY
Research Method

In narrative inquiry, the authors listened to the interviewee's story while arranging the questions to control the information produced (Andrews et al., 2008; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Informants' narratives can be reflexive and representative of critical events or experiences for developing a distinct point of view about how the informant perceives the world, and thus they choose and tell the stories in the way they understand and give meaning to their life (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Wertz et al., 2011)

Informants

The authors purposively selected the women figures as the informant using three criteria. First, they must be around productive age to work. They must still be actively working in the tourism industry. Thus, they can give insights into their current self-representation and identity.

Second, they must have achievements. It will be beneficial primarily related to the quality of stories produced. Third, they consented to the authors collecting their stories of personal experiences. From those criteria, three Balinese women were selected. In order to protect the informants' privacy, the naming would be the first informant, the second informant, and the third informant.

The first and the second informants were Balinese women by birth. Thus, they were born and raised in deeply rooted Balinese cultural settings since they were born. The first informant is an academic and practitioner. She is also a CEO of tourism start-ups and actively leads many activities of the Tourism Awareness Group in her village.

The second informant was a former employee in a five-star hotel who became

a yoga practitioner. She runs a yoga business and has become an experienced yoga instructor to domestic and foreign tourists.

The third informant is an Australian-born who married and lived in Bali. Although she was not a Balinese by birth, to the sociologist, she is the wife of a Balinese man. She performs Balinese traditions like joining *banjar*, *ngaben*, and religious festival in the temple. In addition, she was an influencer in culinary and the host of two prestigious international annual events in Bali.

Data Collection

The authors conducted in-depth interviews to obtain complete storylines related to the representations and identities of the informants. Before the interview, the informants' consent was obtained that they were willing to participate in this study and were informed that the information given to them would be solely for research purposes.

The formulated interview questions focused on representations and identities in the workplace and how these representations and identities against or support the existing gender roles in the tourism context. The first informant was interviewed on 20 March 2022. Then, the second informant was interviewed on 22 March 2022. Lastly, the third informant was interviewed on 24 March 2022. During the interview, the first and third informants preferred to conduct the interview using Zoom meeting. Meanwhile, the second informant chose to interview at her place.

It must be noted that the interviews for this study were conducted in the language the informants spoke most comfortably. The first and second informants with Balinese backgrounds used the Indonesian language from start to finish. The third participant used English as her preferred language during the interview. Thus, the wording of the interview questions was adjusted to the language selected but not changing the intended meaning that the authors wanted to obtain.

Although there were two different languages, the Indonesian to English translation maintained the meaning of the informant's utterances. Each interview with the informant lasted around 30-45 minutes. When the interview occurred, the authors tried to minimise personal reactions and unnecessary comments or responses that could interfere with the flow of the stories. Notes were taken during the interview considering the stories' complexity and plots' complexity. It also helped the authors to gain a better sense of the informants' stories.

Data Analysis and Narrative Trustworthiness

After collecting three informants' oral data, the authors transcribed the narration and read the transcript. Finally, the in-depth interview transcriptions were returned to the informants for their comments and feedback. This step was critical to ensure the authors' interpretations were similar to the informants. This step also served as a verification step to reduce bias resulting from the author's interpretation of the stories.

Theory

The study used several theories to analyse the narrative produced by the informants. First, the theory of language and society explains that the language of a community group not only reflects the mind but also reflects an individual's motives, emotions, desires, knowledge, attitudes, and values that can be observed through sex, class, age, and social and hierarchical system (Apte, 2001; Coupland, 2001; Omoniyi, 2006; Wardhaugh, 2006).

Second, the theory of language and gender states that women use language to demonstrate politeness, camaraderie, and interactional styles more than men (Holmes, 2004, 2006; Lakoff, 1973). Women's language is frequently perceived as powerless, emotional, and trivial, with lower contributions to a conversation (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Spender, 1998; Tannen, 1991). Nevertheless, despite that, women are said to have a modest communication style that subsequently constructs their identity (Labov, 1990; Trudgill, 2000).

Third, the theory of language, representation, and identity describes that an individual's representation and identity are inseparable and negotiable as they result from social practice and interaction (Bucholtz, 2011; Mahboob et al., 2015). Therefore, identity is fluid rather than fixed, and it is incorrect to identify an individual as belonging to one cultural background and origin but other factors besides ethnicity (Fought, 2006; Otsuji, 2010).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the narrations of the informants that included representation and identity were presented separately.

A Woman as a Team Leader

Leadership comes naturally to the first informant. Since her early days in university, she has always put herself in activities that improve her leadership skills. Then, she told the authors the stories. Her narration was mainly about her viewpoint on women and leadership.

She narrated the story as follows:
"Actually (becoming a team leader) is not based on the desire that I, as a woman, should emerge as a team leader. The motivation is more on how to attract (people) and be a role model. Every person, every human being, and every individual has the same opportunity to

improve. I want to encourage other women and the younger generations in the village to be bolder in expressing their aspirations and appearing in public. Because they have extraordinary abilities but tend to be passive."

Regarding the gender roles in the tourism context, she narrated as follows:
"So basically, (leadership) is not about women competing against men. The encouragement and support from men, community, and head of the village make me, as a woman, emerge to the surface."

Furthermore, she also narrated women's leadership style as follows:
"I realised that women's communication style is attractive. Why? Because (with that language style) it is easier for women to be close to a community. I also feel that women are more skilled at talking heart to heart and are easier to approach or introduce to the community—the woman's communication style is motherly language. Simply put, that way makes the program much easier to understand. However, I am not saying that women are soft."

There was also an inevitable aspect that influenced women's leadership as follows:
"Every leader will be required to be balanced. It cannot be that way when we are busy in a community but neglecting domestic activities. The point is that women have the capacity and commitments that can contribute to both domestic and professional work."

A Woman as a Business Owner

The second informant was a former hotelier who had become a business owner. In the hotel where she worked previously, she was a public relation. After ten years, she decided to run her business in yoga as a yoga instructor. She

built a yoga centre and has taught many locals and international students.

Her narration was mainly about her viewpoint on women, the status quo, and the natural characteristics of women. She narrated the story as follows:
"The position of women in tourism is crucial. Women in Bali are now progressing. The current situation in business is very supportive of women. The balance between men and women is helping women's social and economic sustainability."

Furthermore, regarding women's characteristics, she also narrated as follows:
"Women are naturally nurturing, more sensitive, compassionate, and caring. However, higher tourism positions still lack women, such as high managerial positions and jobs requiring intense physical labour. Moreover, women also have another responsibility once they get married."

A Woman as an Influencer

As an Australian-born who married a Balinese, the third informant is very active in promoting tourism by being an influencer especially culinary and became the founder of two prestigious annual international events. Therefore, her narration mainly was about her perspective on working women, cultural demands, and her privilege as a 'foreigner' as follows:

"Well, it is not unusual that men expected women to stay at home. I know they changed in some ways, but some places are still like that. For example, I am from Australia, and the cost of living there is high. While in Bali, you can survive on one wage because people live very simply."

Then she further narrated about women and cultural and domestic demands as follows:
"Women are the keepers of tradition. Attending the ceremony, and going to the temple, are multi-layered activities, and (society) expected women to maintain the culture. I have met many women who work in tourism in Bali. Unlike India, where you go to restaurants, for example, you only see men. Other than supporting the family's finances, possibility that the women also want self-actualisation. Many women work for me in the restaurant. They are reliable and extremely hardworking. I have to be flexible about the ceremony or child. It is very high expectations for women as mothers. After all, it must be balanced for all."

Furthermore, she also shared her narrative on the support system and her 'foreigner' status as follows:
"I am lucky that my husband is very broad-minded. He is a PhD. Mind you, when I started the festival, I did get much opposition. However, I am a tourist so I can create my own rules a little bit."

Discussion

The language used by an individual mirrors one's self-expression, motivations, feelings, desires, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs (Apte, 2001; Edwards, 2006; Fairclough, 1992; Omoniyi, 2006; Van Dijk, 1993; Wardhaugh, 2006).

In this study, the authors used the narrative to gain the informants' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs regarding women's social position in Bali, especially in tourism. As a result, they shared their similar knowledge and beliefs that women can do more in their careers while at the same time remaining the keepers of traditional values.

Besides, the first informant also used narration to share her motivation. The

first and second informants also shared a similar point of view regarding women's approach to leadership and business. In addition, three informants also shared beliefs about balancing traditional domestic roles and work responsibilities. Subsequently, it explained that the language reflected not only the users' minds but also the values based on their social setting (Apte, 2001; Coupland, 2001; Omoniyi, 2006; Wardhaugh, 2006) which is tourism.

Furthermore, the three informants used a polite approach (Holmes, 2004, 2006; Lakoff, 1973) and were modest when narrating their stories (Labov, 1990; Trudgill, 2000). These women tried to soften their expressions in the narration using more polite and modest explanations. They also acknowledged others' contributions, such as the community they worked with and the family.

Subsequently, the findings indicated that using language choice in their narration, the women tried to depict how they represented themselves and constructed their identity. Since an individual's representation and identity were negotiable if not changeable due to social practice and interaction (Bucholtz, 2011; Mahboob et al., 2015), cultural background and ethnicity (Fought, 2006; Otsuji, 2010) the stories that they narrated justified that they aligned into both traditional domestic roles and their career.

CONCSLUSION

This study revealed that through language use, the women represented themselves as responsible for domestic chores, such as family matters, and non-domestic aspects, such as their careers. The study also revealed that they still embrace traditional and domestic roles as part of their identity. However, at the same time, they also managed to actualise themselves in their careers.

Although this study already contributed to how language and narration could emerge in the representation and identity of women, this study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted in Bali with only three informants. The informant stories were unique and valuable and can be used to reflect on what currently happened in the Balinese context. However, it could not be generalised to women in different social and geographical areas outside Bali.

The study used narrative inquiry to focus on women's representation and identity in tourism. Therefore, a future study needs to be more extensive and elaborate. For example, investigate women's representation and identity from different social and geographical backgrounds, like in Bali and Europe, using a different approach other than narrative inquiry.

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