

Impact of tourism on vernacular outdoor signs in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of tourism on Ubud vernacular outdoor signs in term of their language used and designs. Ubud as one of the tourist destinations in Bali experiences changes in development of outdoor signs. The language use and the design of outdoor signs is the reflection of the vernacular.

The research was conducted from April to May 2018. The data was collected through documentation method along *Jalan Raya Ubud* as the research location. There were 757 data of outdoors signs found in the area. The finding showed that there are 11 types of outdoor signs in Ubud. There were 201 signs of mini market/shop/phone shop was found and the least outdoor signs was signs of legal office with only 3 signs. In terms of the language, 458 signs (60,50%) of the total signs use English, followed by 144 signs (19,02%) in Indonesian and only 9 signs (1,19%) in Balinese. This showed a decline in the use of vernacular language in outdoor signs in Ubud Bali as an effect of tourism. Besides, the visual design of vernacular architecture of the outdoor signs also showed strong asymmetry in which only 3 signs (0,4%) use vernacular language with vernacular architecture design and 699 signs (92,32%) used modern architecture with either Balinese, Indonesian or English.

Keywords: linguistics landscapes, vernacular signs, Balinese, Indonesian, English

Introduction

Vernacular is a term used widely in many different contexts. According to Welles (1986; in Roels, 2012), vernacular in the field of architecture refers to any common building. Thus vernacular architecture research may refer to the movement of reviving local architecture and technology in order to build a sustainability future environment (Kazimee, 2008; Dayaratne, 2010). Furthermore, vernacular also means the intuitive nature of human instinct (Griffiths, et.al, 2009). In terms of language use, vernacular refers to the indigenous or local languages (Biel, 2013).

This research looks at vernacular language use in outdoor signs as well as their vernacular visual design. It is believed that the use of local languages in outdoor signs will be accompanied by the use of local architectural design. As Mulyawan (2010) has stated, a sign is a representation of a symbol and its meaning in a certain society. In broader sense, this 'certain society' resembles all aspect of the society such as the languages and the architectural designs represented in the outdoor signs.

As a tourist destination, Bali is struggling to maintain and preserve its vernacular, especially the role of vernacular language as a language of outdoor sign. The development of tourism industry and globalization has changed the face of Bali in almost all aspects of life. According to Cheng (2000), globalization is a process of transfer, adaptation, and development of values, knowledge, technologies, and behavioural norms across countries and societies in different parts of the world. Besides having a good outcome in terms of development, globalization also changes the way of life in Bali, especially the vernacular everyday language. This may be a threat to the local language, as Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) argue that globalization processes always endangered the local.

On previous research in Kuta, Mulyawan (2017b) argued that tourism development and globalization in Kuta have caused the marginalization of Balinese language. Balinese language is only used for street names, temple names, cemetery and *Bale Banjar* in order to promote local identity.

Based on this and in order to maintain and preserve the vernacular of Bali, the government has issued many regulations in an effort to glocalize Balinese local genius. Glocalization is an on-going process of raising the vernacular of Bali as part of globalization development in Bali's tourism industry. This includes all aspects such as language, architecture, traditional costumes, and religious and cultural aspects.

For example, the government has limited the height of all buildings to a maximum 15 metres and has obliged the developers to use Balinese ornament in their front walls with Balinese style fences. In terms of hospitality staff uniforms, the government obliges the workers to use local costumes in working areas, especially during Balinese Holy days. The most sacred glocalization process is the adoption of Balinese local temples or shrines in hotels and restaurants complete with their rituals or ceremonies.



Fig. 1: Vernacular in the tourism industry (shrines, costumes and architectures)
Source: Mulyawan (2017b)

Ubud is one of the many tourist destinations in Bali that is struggling with the same threat. The most obvious change there is the presence of many outdoor signs on main roads. This study aims to investigate the impact of the tourism industry on the vernacular language and architecture design as reflected through the outdoor signs.

The Theoretical Basis

The study of outdoor signs was first introduced by Landry and Bourhis (1997) which is now known as the study of Linguistic Landscapes (LL). They said that LL is the study of any

public signs including commercial and non-commercial signs that would signify a certain territorial condition. According to Mulyawan (2017a) LL is a study of language through outdoor signs in the environment as a media of mass communication that has a great influence in daily activities.

Landry and Bourhis (1997) divided outdoor signs into two main functions: informational and symbolic. Informational function is the function of sign as a media of information that includes non-profit signs and profit signs (advertisement). Symbolic function is the deep structure of language used that signals the symbolic meaning of language policy, status of majority/minority and social conditions such as the cultural background, customs and systems of belief.

Many linguists have studied the presence of outdoor signs in many countries and have shown the vernacular conditions of those societies. In Israel, Ben-Rafael et.al. (2006) discovered that the language used as outdoor signs determines the community in the area: Hebrew-English outdoor signs prevail in Jewish community's territory; Arabic-Hebrew outdoor signs in Israeli-Palestinian community's territory; and Arabic-English outdoor signs in East Jerusalem territory. Huebner (2006) studied the presence of outdoor signs in urban area of Bangkok. His studies showed evidence of a shifted language use in Bangkok from vernacular Chinese to English vehicular as the major language. Akindele (2011) discovered that outdoor signs of Gabarone Botswana city showed the fact of multilingualism in vernacular Setswana, English and Chinese as the result of economic activities and globalization.

In terms of the visual design, Dayaratne (2016) argued that the reviving of vernacular especially traditional architecture to adapt with modern need, may boost the local and national identity. In line with Dayaratne, the presence of traditional architecture may represents the close relation of socio-cultural similarities and homogenous within certain regional/territory (Monga and Kumar Das, 2018).

In terms of reading the architectural visual design of outdoor signs, Rapoport (1982; in Heryati et.al, 2017) stated that the meaning will be occurred when the members of the society response and react to their environment. Furthermore, he proposed three aspects of architectural meaning: semiotic, symbolic and non-verbal (Rapoport, 1982; in Monks, 1992, Heryati, et.al. 2017). Semiotic is the initial aspect of transferring semiotic signs by architect to build a physical construction; symbol and non-verbal aspect is the representation of the desired meaning of the architect. These aspects were constituted from fixed and semi-fixed feature elements (Rapoport, 1982; in Monks, 1992). Fixed elements include all physical appearance of the building e.g. wall, floor, roof, ceiling, street etc. Semi-fixed elements known as 'personalization' include all supporting environments of the building e.g. furniture, curtains, plants, garden layout etc.

As for the multimodality approach, this study adopted the theory of multimodal analysis proposed by Kress and Leuwen (2006) known as the grammar of visual design analysis. This study employed three main aspects of outdoor signs visualization, namely image, writing and colour. Kress (2010:1) stated that each aspect of the visualization, constituted certain meaning, "*.... image shows what take too long to read, and writing names what would be difficult to show. Colour is used to highlight specific aspects of the overall message.*"

Furthermore, Kress (2010: 10) argued that every outdoor signs were made based on three main principles: (1) sign are made to a certain motivated form and meaning; (2) the motivation of sign maker; (3) the use of certain available resources to certain region. These principles suggest that, every outdoor sign is ideally made based on the vernacular language (intended meanings), vernacular innate (the producer motivations) and vernacular architecture (local materials and designs).

Research Methods

This study employs a case study research method in which the analysis is limited to a social unit, be that unit a person, a family, an institution, cultural group, or even in certain society (Kothari, 2004: 113). This study was conducted from April to May 2018. The research location is on *Jalan Raya Ubud* (a street in Ubud), along which the documentation of the

outdoor signs were conducted. The outdoor signs data were in forms of images captured using a digital camera. Information pertaining to the type of location such as, shops, art galleries, hotels, restaurants, spas, banks etc. was recorded in relation to each image.

The case study location was chosen for its status as the main road of Ubud which connects many major tourist destinations including the Ubud Palace. The outdoor signs included street names, traffic signs, place names, billboards and almost any visible sign posted on the road.



Fig. 2: Jalan Raya Ubud
Source: Google map

There are four steps of analysis conducted in order to answer the problems of this study. First, the numbers of occurrence of the types of outdoor signs found were counted. These types include all street names, traffic signs, shops signs, restaurants signs, hotel signs and etc. Second, the data were quantified based on their language i.e., Balinese, Indonesian, English or any combination of others. Third, the data were classified based on their visual architectural designs. Finally, the data were qualitatively interpreted in term of their language use and visual designs. These steps enabled the assessment of the use of vernacular languages and vernacular designs of outdoor signs in Ubud.

Finding and Discussion

Ubud is one of the districts in the Gianyar Regency. Geographically, the area of Ubud is about 42.38 km² or 11.52% from the total area of Gianyar Regency. Ubud consists of eight villages: Singakerta, Lodtunduh, Mas, Peliatan, Petulu, Sayan, Kedewatan, and Ubud. Based on statistics issued in 2016, the population of Ubud is estimated around 72.290 people, with 36.480 males (49.54%), and 35,810 females (49.54%).

Ubud has become a tourist destination because of its culture and natural sceneries. It is abundant with beautiful natural rivers, rice fields and forests. Besides, Ubud is the centre of cultural and art performances in Bali.

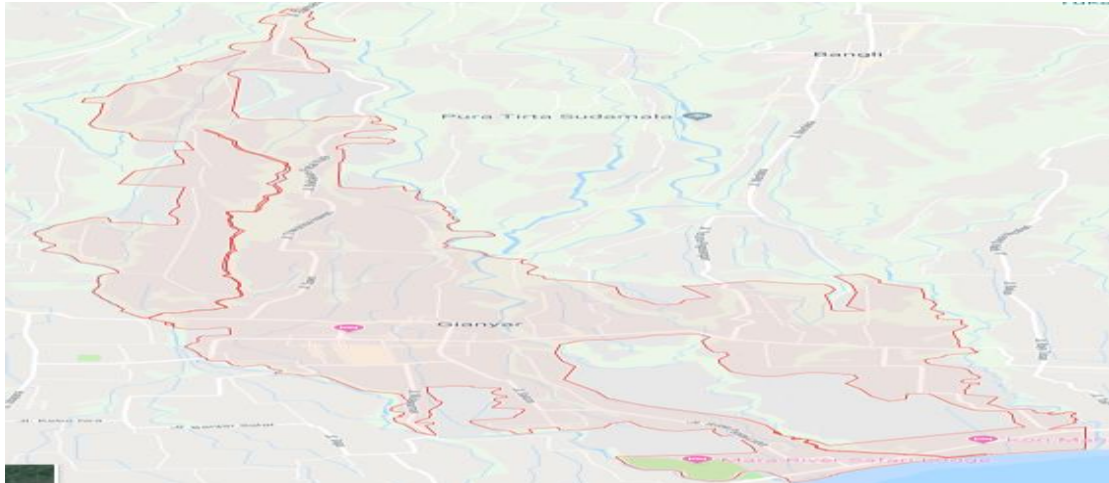


Fig. 3: Gianyar Regency
Source: Google map

According to the data collected, there are 757 outdoor signs along *Jalan Raya Ubud*. These data were classified into 11 types of signs as follows.

1. Signs of Art Galleries and Art Exhibitions (includes sign name of art/gallery shop, name of art and cultural performance/exhibition)
2. Signs of Banks & Money Changers
3. Signs of Health Care Services (includes sign name of chemist, hospital, clinic/doctors)
4. Signs of Hotel/Accommodations
5. Signs of Legal Offices (includes sign name of lawyer and other legal officer)
6. Signs of Mini Markets, Shops & Phone shops (includes all sign name of convenience store, non-art shop and phone/repair shop)
7. Signs of Restaurants/Food Courts (includes all sign name of local and international food court/restaurant)
8. Signs of Spas, Salons & Tattoo studios
9. Signs of Other Services (includes all signs of other services such as tourist information centres, advertisement of tour and travel services and etc.)
10. Signs of Non-Commercial signs (includes all signs of government buildings, non-profit advertisements, political signs and etc.)
11. Signs of Traffic signs & Street Names (includes all national and local traffic signs and street names).

Tab. 1: Outdoor Signs in Ubud

Source: Author

Type of Outdoor Sign	Total	Percentage
Art Galleries & Exhibitions	28	3,70
Banks & Money Changers	66	8,72
Health Care Services	7	0,92
Hotel/Accommodations	29	3,83
Legal Offices	3	0,40
Mini Markets, Shop & Phone shops	201	26,55
Restaurant/Food Courts	126	16,64
Spas, Salons & Tattoo studios	31	4,10
Other Services	167	22,06
Non-Commercial signs	75	9,91
Traffic signs & Street Names	24	3,17
Total	757	100

Table 1 show that the outdoor signs in Ubud represent the orientation of the city towards tourism facilities to serve the tourists. Signs of mini markets, shops and phone shops are the highest with 201 signs (26,55%), followed by other services with 167 signs (22,06%).

Tab. 2: Language Use in Outdoor Signs in Ubud
Source: Author

Language of the Sign	Total	Percentage
Balinese	9	1,19
Indonesian	144	19,02
English	458	60,50
English Combination	130	17,17
Universal Language / Symbol (Traffic sign)	16	2,11
Total	757	100

Table 2 shows that the outdoor signs use Balinese, Indonesian, English and English mixed with other languages. The language of traffic signs is considered to be a universal language/symbol used in traffic. English and combinations of English with other languages are mostly used with a total 588 signs. Only English is shown in 458 signs (60,50%) and English in combination with others (e.g. Indonesian, Balinese, Korean, Japanese, Netherland, France and Russian) in 130 signs (17,17%). Indonesia as the national language is used in 144 signs (19,02%), meanwhile Balinese as the vernacular language in Bali is used the least, only in nine signs (1,19%).

As stated by Kress (2010) one of the characteristic of signs making is the availability of material and visualisation. In this study, the material of signs is divided into two groups: vernacular designs and modern designs. Vernacular designs are signs that use stone or timber/log/wood as their material with or without Balinese feature ornaments. Modern designs are signs that use other/modern material such as plastic, qualibright, iron or stainless without Balinese feature ornaments. In term of outdoor visual designs, the analysis showed that there are four groups of combination between the vernacular designs and the language used:

1. Vernacular designs with vernacular language
2. Vernacular designs with vernacular language combination with others
3. Vernacular designs with non-vernacular language
4. Modern designs with or without vernacular language

Tab. 3: Visual Architecture Design in Outdoor Signs in Ubud
Source: Author

Visual design of the signs	Total	Percentage
Vernacular Designs and Vernacular Language	3	0,4
Vernacular Designs and Vernacular Language Combination with Others	12	1,59
Vernacular Designs and Non-Vernacular Language	43	5,69
Modern Designs with or without Vernacular Language	699	92,32
Total	757	100

Table 3 shows that Balinese vernacular architecture designs is only used in 58 signs (7,68%) out of 757 signs. Among those 58 signs, pure local vernacular combination of vernacular designs and vernacular language is used the least with only three signs (0,4%).



Sign of Vernacular Design and Vernacular Language

Sign of Vernacular Design and Vernacular Language combined with English

Sign of Vernacular Design and Non-Vernacular Language

Sign of Modern Design

Fig. 4: Visual Design and Language Use of Outdoor Signs in Ubud

Conclusion

This study showed that the tourism industry and globalization have an impact on the society as reflected through the visual designs and language use in outdoor signs in Ubud. The street of *Jalan Raya Ubud* is full of signs that represent the tourism facilities. Among them, signs of mini markets and non-art shops are dominant (see Table 1). Most of them use either English or English combined/mixed with other language (see Table 2). In term of the visual designs, most of the outdoor signs use modern design and only few of them use Balinese vernacular designs (see Table 3).

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