

# **Representational and Ideational Meanings of Images and Texts of Tourism Promotion on Instagram**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is one of prospective sectors to increase Indonesian economic level. It is crucial to develop effective promotion media of tourist destinations in Indonesia. One of the recent potential media is Instagram. This paper aims to investigate the representational and ideational meanings of visual and verbal modes, including their intersemiotic relations, in promoting Taman Nasional Komodo Labuan Bajo, focused on @btn\_komodo as an official Instagram account of Balai Taman Nasional Komodo. The destination is one of the 5 super priority destinations in Indonesia. By applying the Visual Grammar framework (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006), this study views how the visual and verbal modes construe the meaning for the purpose of tourism promotion on the Instagram. The data was captured from Instagram posts in the form of visual texts (photos) and verbal texts (captions). The posts are predominantly communicated through the visual text, then completed, clarified and confirmed by the accompanying verbal text. Multimodal discourse analysis of the Instagram posts shows that both visual and verbal texts contribute the values of promotion. The result implies that future research should include more complete material of semiotic resources and implement more comprehensive analysis related to multimodal discourse.

**Keywords:** *Multimodal discourse analysis; representational meaning; ideational meaning; intersemiotic relation; Instagram*

## **1. Introduction**

Indonesia has a variety of cultural heritage and abundant beautiful natural resources which are potential to be developed in tourism sector. The potential makes tourism one of the prospective sectors to improve the Indonesian economy, especially after the industrial and agricultural sectors stagnated (Nugroho, 2020). So far, the tourism sector has given significant contribution to the Indonesian economy in the form of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), foreign exchange revenue, and provide job opportunities for work labours. The contribution makes the government expects to increase the number of tourist visits to Indonesia (Melinda, 2020). In fact, the number of tourist visits to Indonesia is decreasing continuously. Based on the data released by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, since before Covid-19 Pandemic, the number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia continues to decline from year to year. In 2019 before Covid-19 Pandemic, the number of tourist visits decreased 2.03% compared to 2018. In 2020 when Covid 19 Pandemic took place, the number of tourist visits decreased dramatically until more than

89% compared to 2019. Still in Pandemic period in 2021, tourist visits declined 0.28% compared to 2020.

In addition to the issue of Covid-19 Pandemic, the tourism sector in Indonesia still experiencing several other problems. Some of the problems faced by the tourism sector in Indonesia include overlapping regulations, lack of human resource quality, lack of publication, inadequate infrastructure, lack of investment, lack of attention to environmental aspects, and lack of attention to religious tourism (Nugroho, 2020). It is in line with the statement by the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Mari Elka Pangestu quoted by Nursastri (2014) that there were 7 problems of tourism in Indonesia. First is facilities & infrastructure. Next is human resources. Third is communication & publicity. The fourth problem is the policies & regulations applied within the scope of the state and regions. The fifth is information technology, which allows tourists to access a lot of information about Indonesian tourism. Another problem is the readiness of the community, and the last is related to investments that have not yet developed in the regions.

From some of those problems, this research tries to provide alternative solution related to communication and publication through online media. Surely, communication and publication efforts must be adjusted to the development of current technology. Fahrudin, Karlinah, & Agustin, (2020) states that the changes or developments of the industrial revolution focus on utilizing the power of digitalization of information, or known as the Internet of Things (IOTS). The development of this technology also affects changes on tourists' cyber culture. One example is a change on the process of decision making to travel by the community, where social media is a source of reference to determine the tourist destination that will be visited. Magill (2017) quoted by Fahrudin et al., (2020), said that around 85% of tourists in the world use reviews on social media as their consideration for traveling.

The great influence of social media on community behaviour makes the importance of the role of social media as a promotional media. Adhanisa & Fatchiya (2017) states that the increasing number of social media users is now a great opportunity for business people. For instance, social media frequently used as a means of promotion is website and Instagram. Promotion through social media is widely used by tourism destinations to attract tourists to visit the tourist area. The urgency of the use of social media, especially Instagram, as a promotion media of tourism destinations in Indonesia is due to the number of social media users in Indonesia. Based on data released in January 2022, from a total population of 277.7 million people, the number of internet users in Indonesia is up to 204.7 million. More specifically, the number of social media users are 191.4 million, including Instagram users as many as 99.15 million or 84.8 % of the whole population. It is the second highest number after WhatsApp users.

Among various kinds of these social media, Instagram was chosen as a source of data in this study based on consideration that Instagram characteristics which are able to display visual and verbal texts in accordance with the needs of tourism destination promotion that require good visualization completed with verbal information.

Additionally, Instagram with the second highest number of users in Indonesia has a wide range to spread information. Instagram is a means of communication in the form of social networking application that uses images/photos as the main media in delivering messages. Instagram can be used creatively by its users, because it can make photos more beautiful, more artistic and better (Atmoko, 2012). This application was released on October 6, 2010 and as many as 25 thousand users were successfully registered on the first day. However, the excellence of Instagram as a tourism promotion media in Indonesia has not been utilized optimally. Adhanisa & Fatchiya (2017) found that the website and Instagram of the community-based tourism are only effective to attract viewers' attention and interest; whereas, they are still ineffective in attracting their desires and actions to visit the destinations. Therefore, more studies on promotional media or tourism advertisements need to be carried out to find solutions for those problems. The condition encourages the writer to study multimodality, particularly on representational and ideational meaning of visual and verbal texts, as well as their intersemiotic relation as a persuasion strategy of the Indonesian tourism Instagram account.

In Indonesia, researches on multimodality have been conducted in the field of education (Hermawan & Rahyono, 2019), literature (Yanda, 2018; Pujadiharja, 2013), politics (Susetya & Nurhayati, 2020), business (Ananda, Fitriani, Samad, & Patak, 2019; Hidayat, Abrizal, & Alex, 2019), and tourism (Furnama & Rosa, 2020; Sukma, 2021; Ansori & Taopan, 2019). These studies are mostly conducted on advertisements in printed media such as textbooks, novels, brochures, billboards, electronic media such as television, videos, films, and online media such as websites and Instagram. Among those researches, Sukma (2021) examines the promotion of national identity on the official website of Indonesian tourism; Susetya & Nurhayati (2020) analyse Sandiaga Uno's photos on Instagram to investigate his communication styles before and after the 2019 Presidential Election. Researches related to multimodalities as a promotion strategy of tourism destination on Instagram are still rarely done.

This paper aims to investigate the representational and ideational meaning of visual and verbal modes in promoting Taman Nasional Komodo Labuan Bajo, focused on @btn\_komodo as an official Instagram account of Balai Taman Nasional Komodo. The account was chosen based on consideration that Taman Nasional Komodo is a main destination in Labuan Bajo which is one of the 5 super priority destinations appointed by Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.

Multimodality, according to Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006), is used to refer to the way people communicate using different modes simultaneously. This can be understood as a communication medium that accommodates someone's thoughts to express their aspirations to the audience in general. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) revealed that the markers of modalities have been built by community groups who interact as guides who are quite reliable towards the truth or factuality of the message. The concept of modality according to Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) has an equal virtue in visual communication. This means that multimodality is used when someone communicates using more than one mode, not only visual but also verbal. O'Halloran (2008) states that multimodal discourse analysis is a theory and practice of analysing the meaning arising from the use of various

semiotic sources in discourse in the form of written sources, printed, and electronic texts, and material in the real world. Multimodal discourse analysis is a method used to analyse visuals, text or even a combination of visuals and text. Thus, it can be concluded that multimodal discourse analysis can be understood as an analytical procedure that combines linguistic aspects using different modes simultaneously, for example visual and verbal, which is used to understand messages.

In the book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) provides a systematic and comprehensive multimodal discourse analysis. Visual grammar views language as a form of social semiotic. The combination of language with other semiotic forms in a discourse makes the discourse meaningful and colourful for the reader. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) believes that the visual components of a text do not depend on verbal texts and messages from the visual text are organized independently. Visual grammar is used to analyse discourse based on three meta functions: representational, interactive, and compositional. The metafunctions are derived from three metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), which are ideational, interpersonal, textual. This paper focuses on the investigation of representational and ideational metafunctions only. The meaning of representational refers to the proper reproduction of the target which includes society, human activities, places, and even what is in someone's inner world. The meaning of representational explores the representation of the objects displayed in the real world. The meaning of representational can be understood through two processes, namely narrative and conceptual processes. The narrative process includes action, reaction, verbal, and mental processes. While the conceptual process is related to the relationship and existential processes.

Beside the metafunctions, it is important to analyse intersemiotic relationship between visual and verbal texts. Barthes quoted by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006:18) states that verbal can increase/expand the meaning of the image and vice versa. It can also be said that verbal elaborates images, and vice versa. Kress and van Leeuwen further said that for Barthes, the meaning of the picture in particular, and other semiotic modes, always associated with, and depends on the meaning of verbal text. As for Kress and Van Leeuwen, the visual component of the text, image, is a message that is set and arranged independently, related to verbal text but does not depend on it. Liu & O'Halloran (2009) base the discourse relationship between verbal and visual text on their analysis of cohesive devices between verbal and visual texts. According to Martin (1992, 179); Martin and Rose (2003, 119) in Liu & O'Halloran (2009) logical relations that might appear in visual and linguistic messages include comparison, addition, consequences, and time. Comparative intersemiotics occur when the language and image components have the same experimental meaning (Martin 1992, 208-214) in Liu & O'Halloran (2009). Reformulation of relations between linguistic and visual messages has different strategies, namely generality and abstraction. Conversely, additive intersemiotics appear when one semiotic component adds new information to the other, and then the two messages are connected with verbal and visual messages. Additives intersemiotics convey related but different messages. Consequence intersemiotics occur when a semiotic

message causes or defines another message (Martin, 1992: 193 in Liu & O'Halloran 2009). Conversely, contingency intersemiotics arise when the cause has the potential to determine a possibility, but there is no definite effect. The last is time intersemiotics that occur when different procedural stages are represented both verbally and visually, so that the relationship of text and images can be described with time logic.

The social media used to promote tourism destination in this paper is Instagram. According to Pradianingtyas (2016) Instagram is a social networking application by sharing photos. Landsverk (2014) quoted by Pradianingtyas (2016), said that Instagram facilitates users to see the post uploaded by friends that have been followed, interact with friends who are followed through uploaded photos, likes, or comments and bring up notifications on Instagram as information for Instagram users at any time, give like to the photo by giving a double tap and can give a comment to interact with other users. Profile can be seen in square icon, on the profile of the photo document that has been uploaded by the user. Post or posting is a term used when uploading photos. Photos to be uploaded can be given a layer to make it look attractive using the available text. Furthermore, according to Atmoko (2012), there are several parts that should be filled in so that the uploaded photos have more meaning of information, including the title or photo caption, hashtag, and location text. The following are some activities that can be done on Instagram. Those are follow, like, comment, and mention. Hence, the operational definition of Instagram in this study is an internet-based media that facilitates users to communicate with virtual communities by uploading images (photos) and text (caption and comments), symbols (emoticons), and hashtags.

## **2. Method**

The method of this research was descriptive-qualitative method. The approach was adopted in conducting multimodal analysis based on Visual Grammar by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006), particularly to investigate the representational and ideational meaning of visual and verbal modes in promoting Taman Nasional Komodo Labuan Bajo. The data was captured on Instagram posts in the form of visual texts (photos) and verbal texts (captions) from January to August 2022. The data source was the official Instagram account of Balai Taman Nasional Komodo @btn\_Komodo, which is one of the 5 super priority destinations in Indonesia.

The data of the research were collected using the following steps. 1) Opening the Instagram account of Balai Taman Nasional Komodo @btn\_Komodo; 2) identifying images (photos) and texts (captions) posted on the Instagram; 3) select images and texts by taking screenshots of Instagram posts consisting images and texts.

The data were divided into two parts by cropping the posts based on visual and verbal texts. They were analysed using visual grammar framework particularly on representational meaning for visual text, and ideational meaning for verbal text. The next analysis was identifying intersemiotic relation between visual and verbal texts. The analysis used visual and verbal intersemiotic relation proposed by Martin (1992) in Liu & O'Halloran (2009), consisting comparison, addition, consequence, time intersemiotics.

### 3. Findings and discussion

Leo van Lier (2004, 2007) perhaps one of the most influential educational linguists extensively conceptualizes the *action-based approach* based on Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory and Gibbon's Affordance Theory of Cognitive Psychology. Van Lier's action-based approach puts *perception-in-action* in the core learning process that precedes affordance which will influence language development. The role of ecological situations (Kramsch & Steffensen, 2008) within which the learners' engagement is encouraged and intensified is, in this case, irreplaceable. It implies the importance of *learning environment design* to make it possible for the learners as social agents to experience ecological learning. This type of learning is transformative, not exclusively related to and focused on language-related learning, but can be more holistic covering the authenticity of social activities facilitated through tasks or activities of reception, interaction, (re)production, and mediation (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018, 2020).

There are eight selected images completed with captions captured from the official Instagram account of Balai Taman Nasional Komodo @btn\_komodo. The images were posted from January to August 2022. Each image was posted in different month during the period.

#### a. Representational meaning of the images

The images posted on @btn\_komodo contains different representations like event, participant, and setting. Most images are conceptual representations which symbolize what are represented. The followings are the selected images.

Image 1



Image 1 shows a beach surrounded with land and mountains. There are also some logos of institutions, a logo of a community G20, and some verbal texts that give information about announcement for viewers that a place there, Resort Gili Lawa, is closed temporarily. The image dominantly shows a natural scenery on a beach without any participant who roles as an actor or a reactor. On the other hand, the verbal elements mention the name of a building around the beach, which is closed temporarily. It seems that the purpose of the verbal elements is to complete the image by providing more

detailed information for the viewers. Symbolic attribute in this image is a beach which lays around lands and mountains.

Image 2



Image 2 displays a picture of a woman with short hairs wearing a soft yellow T-shirt, green trousers and a hat, a wrist watch, and a bag hanging on her shoulders. It seems that she is ready to travel. However, the most dominant part of the image is the texts written on the most part of the page. In addition to some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The verbal elements contain information about the price of the ticket, the name of some destinations that can be visited by tourists, and the name of places which are still closed temporarily. It seems that the woman looks at the texts which represent the reactional process. The image explains to the viewers that the visitors need to know the crucial information.

Image 3



Image 3 shows the photo of a komodo dragon on the edge of a beach. There is also mountains around the beach. The komodo dragon is the dominant part of this picture. The image is accompanied with a text celebrating “World Oceans Day” on 8 June 2022. It is also completed with some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The symbolic attribute of this image is a komodo dragon which is an iconic animal that only exists in Indonesia.

Image 4

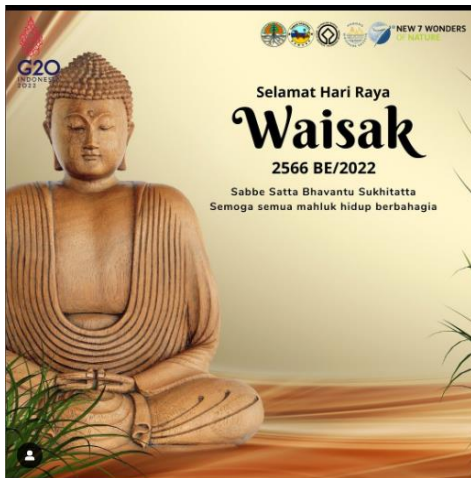


Image 4 exposes the picture of a big Buddha statue. The picture is completed with verbal text celebrating Vesak day 2566 BE/2022 for Buddhists and best wishes for all creations. The dominant parts of this image are the big Buddha statue and the word Vesak. The image also contains some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The symbolic attribute of this image is a big Buddha statue which is the icon for celebrating Vesak day.

Image 5



Image 5 displays a picture of a white bird, namely *cacatua sulphurea* perching on twigs. The picture is completed with verbal texts which fill the most part of the page. The verbal elements contain information about the ecosystem of the bird, the size and condition of the ecosystem, as well as the way the bird lives with its colony. Besides, there are some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The symbolic attribute of this image is the *cacatua* bird which is one of animals that lives in Taman Nasional Komodo.



Image 6



Image 6 shows the photo of 5 women standing behind the grass. The women are wearing different uniforms. There is also verbal texts celebrating “International Women’s Day” and containing information about the history of the international women’s day. It is also completed with some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The symbolic attributes of this image are 5 women who become representatives or symbol of all women in the world.

Image 7



Image 7 displays the picture of some Komodo dragon’s heads. The picture is completed with verbal texts which fill the half part of the page. The verbal elements contain information about the time of Komodo dragon’s eggs hatch, the number of Komodo dragon’s eggs, and closed with a question about newly born Komodo dragon. Besides, there are some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The symbolic attribute of this image is the Komodo dragon’s heads which represent their community in Taman Nasional Komodo.

Image 8



Image 8 displays verbal texts containing information about opportunities for viewers to have internship and research programs in Taman Nasional Komodo in order to improve the quality of science through direct learning in nature. In addition, there are some logos of institutions and a logo of G20. The verbal texts were completed with the picture of 4 people standing on the outdoor showing grass, sunshine, beach, mountains, and coconut trees. The most dominant part of the image is the verbal texts written with big, bold, red, and uppercase letters.

*b. Ideational meaning of the captions*

The visuals of the posts are accompanied with captions. If the viewers open the Instagram account through smartphones, the captions are written below images. If the Instagram account is accessed through computer/ laptop, the captions are available on the right side of the images. The followings are the captions of the above images.

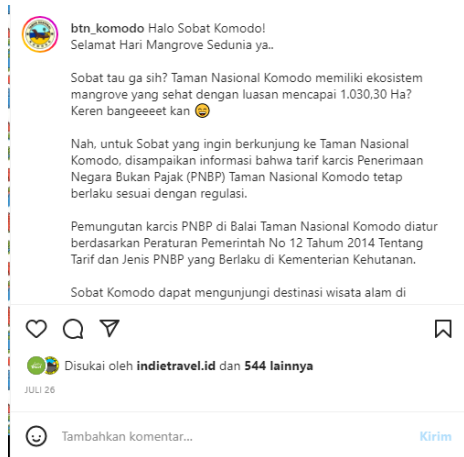
Caption 1



Caption 1 is written in two paragraphs. The first paragraph contains information about an island Gili Lawa Darat and Resort Gili Lawa which are closed temporarily until next

announcement. It is carried out to accelerate the recovery process of savanna in the island Gili Lawa Darat. The second paragraph provides information about alternative activities which can be done by tourists during the condition, by considering policy and regulation in Taman Nasional Komodo.

### Caption 2



Caption 2 is written in some paragraphs. The first paragraph contains information about condition and the size of mangrove ecosystem. It is completed with expression and emoticon indicating admiration. The second paragraph provides information about the price of the ticket. The information is continued to the third paragraph which mentions the government law of deciding the price of the ticket in Taman Nasional Komodo.

### Caption 3



Caption 3 contains expression of Happy World Oceans Day ended with red heart emoticon. The expression is completed with advice or request to maintain the cleanliness of the environment by not wasting rubbish into river, beach, or any other sanitations. Especially for the society who live in Labuan Bajo, it is strictly prohibited to waste

rubbish improperly because the rubbish might come to the area of Taman Nasional Komodo.

#### Caption 4



Caption 4 conveys expression of Happy Vesak Day 2022 for Buddhists. It is also completed with best wishes not only for Buddhists, but also for all creations in the world.

#### Caption 5



Caption 5 is preceded with the expression of Happy Fast Breaking for moslem people. The second paragraph reminds the viewers about the main topic, that is Cacatua birds as one of the main animals who exist in Taman Nasional Komodo. The next paragraph talks about the Cacatua needs to be able to live there. The last paragraph states that based on the research, the existence of Cacatua is supported by the population of Komodo lizards.

### Caption 6



Caption 6 expresses celebration of International Women's Day 2022 with hashtag #BreakTheBias. It is continued with recommendation for respecting women and regarding gender equality. To celebrate the day, Balai Taman Nasional gives special attention to 17 woman rangers who have worked hard in the institution. They have dedicated themselves for the conservation in this country: The World's Hidden Paradise.

### Caption 7



Caption 7 is begun with Sunday greeting. Then, it is continued with information about the appearance of neonate (komodo dragon puppies) in Taman Nasional Komodo, the time of their appearance, where is their shelters to avoid predators, the name of their behaviour (semi-arboreal), and the duration of the behaviour. The last part of the caption contains information about the size of Komodo dragon's nests.

### Caption 8



Caption 8 gives detailed information that Balai Taman Nasional provides opportunities for students (domestics and foreigners) to have internship and research programs. The second paragraph emphasizes on scientific interdisciplines and multiculturalisme to optimize the quality of management. The last paragraph states that Balai Taman Nasional will conduct tight selection for proposals to maintain the quality of management.

#### c. Intersemiotic relation between images and captions

Based on the result of visual and verbal analysis, intersemiotics relations between images and captions are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Visual and Verbal Intersemiotic Relation

Visual	Verbal	Intersemiotics Relation
Image 1	Caption 1	Addition
Image 2	Caption 2	Addition
Image 3	Caption 3	Consequence
Image 4	Caption 4	Comparison
Image 5	Caption 5	Addition
Image 6	Caption 6	Consequence
Image 7	Caption 7	Addition
Image 8	Caption 8	Consequence

From the above distribution, the images and captions relation complete each other. Interaction happens when visual text gives information about verbal text, and vice versa. If the image is posted without caption, it may result in various interpretation of the viewers different from author's message intention. On the other hand, if the caption is posted without image, the viewers do not get concrete illustration about the object. From 8 images completed with captions, the intersemiotics relation which occurred were addition, consequence, and comparison. Additive intersemiotics happens when the caption adds new information to the image, or the image adds new information to the

caption. This intersemiotics provides related but different messages. Consequence intersemiotics occurs when the image causes or defines the caption, or the caption causes or defines the image. Comparative intersemiotics takes place if the image and the caption have the same experimental meaning.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the result of visual and verbal analysis, the representational meaning of images and the ideational meaning of captions support or complete each other. The posts are predominantly communicated through the visual text, then completed, clarified and confirmed by the accompanying verbal text. Most interaction or intersemiotic relation between visual and verbal texts are addition and consequence. Surely, that is beneficial for the purpose of promotion. The first step analysis of the three meta functions shows that both visual and verbal texts contribute the values of promotion. However, the research needs to be completed with analysis of the other two meta functions, including their intersemiotic relation. Future research should include more complete material of semiotic resources and implement more comprehensive analysis related to multimodal discourse.

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