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# Enhancing destination image on tourism brochure of Barru Regency Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia: A tourism discourse perspective

## Abstract

Along with the growth of tourism, tourism brochure has become the main resource for assessing information about the potential tourist destinations. Hence tourism brochure is a highly significant domain in enhancing destination image, which is posing challenges for the tourism industry. By focusing on the tourism brochure of Barru Regency Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia, this paper attempts to examine how the tourism brochures portray the tourist attractions of the country. Adopting a discourse approach, the analysis was carried out on both language and visual elements. This paper discusses the lack of research on tourism promotional media, particularly on the effects of language and visual elements in tourism brochure in enhancing the destination's image and reproducing discourses for the tourists. Using discourse analysis, text and visual imaginary from tourism brochures are selected for investigation. Lexical and syntactical choices in the brochures are the focus of textual analysis. Accordingly, main concepts in visual analysis such as modality and salience are also reviewed. The finding shows that language and visual imaginary are the important elements employed in the tourism brochures of Barru Regency, yet do not manage to represent the destination fully.

**Key words:** naturalness; discourse; tourism brochure; image; Indonesia

## Introduction

Technology, communication, and transportation advancement in this modern age increase people's motivation to travel and explore different societies. Tourism is one of the greatest worldwide economic activities and social interaction. It encourages the community to provide and consume services and goods (Reisenger, 2009). Most countries around the world attempt to portray their tourist destinations favourably through providing valuable information and establishing the destination's image. Consequently, tourism promotional activities have important media impact in introducing and portraying the tourist destination. Language and visual elements are the factors that create particular discourses about the image and identity of specific destinations (Adams, 2004; Jørgensen, 2004; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998).

A number of studies were conducted on tourism discourse, particularly investigating the role of language usage or visual element. Notably, only few studies examined the combination of text and visual elements of tourism promotional mode (Salim, Ibrahim & Hassan, 2012; Salim, Ibrahim & Hassan, 2014). Language usage and visual element play a significant role in portraying the destination in the tourism promotion modes. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the relationship between language or texts and visual elements in enhancing the tourist destination's image in tourism brochure designed by the government of Barru Regency, Indonesia and other stakeholders.

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Tourism plays an important role in the economy of Indonesia and it is a significant source for the country's foreign exchange revenues, particularly in South Sulawesi. The large country of spreading archipelago has abundant offerings ranging from natural beauty and historical heritage to cultural diversity. For example, Barru Regency is one of the regencies with a number of tourist attractions in South Sulawesi. In 2013, South Sulawesi recorded 40,380 tourist arrivals (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2014). This figure indicates that South Sulawesi is a popular destination in Indonesia. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to elevate South Sulawesi's position to be included in the top ten destinations in Indonesia.

Barru Regency is a tourist attraction with various wonderful tourism resources such as nature, cultural heritage, and tradition. The main components of tourism in Barru Regency are nature and cultural heritage; both components boast a unique blend of tropical environment. All of the natural temptations are complemented by an exciting cultural heritage that reveals dynamic culture and tradition. Promotional media plays a significant role in enhancing the value of the destination. For instance, utilisation of brochures as well as other printed media has become increasingly vital to promote and market the destination. Brochure is considered as the most effective promotional mediation as this tool uses different discourses to enhance the product or the tourist destination (Loda, 2011).

Glancey and Pettigrew (1997) stated that 28% of tourism industry in selected countries including United Kingdom depends merely on the tourism board. Meanwhile, 24% use three or more forms of brochure to promote tourist attractions. A study by Hair (1998) identified owner-manager views on the effectiveness of several types of advertisement and they were ranked as follows: (a) word-of-mouth, (b) brochure, (c) chamber of commerce, (d) mobile and AAA guidebooks, (e) B&B guidebooks, and (f) websites. Notably, brochure was ranked second in persuading and enhancing the tourism attraction's image.

Combination of language and visual elements constructs specific discourses that portray the destinations. Language usage (Dann, 1996) and visual element (Hallett & Weinger, 2010) are the significant factors constructing tourism discourses on the brochure. Through the tourism discourses, branding of the tourist destination can be developed to enhance the destination image. Nonetheless, very few researches investigated the integration between language usage and visual images in tourism brochure (Salim et al., 2012). Moreover, Triandjojo (2008) suggested that research on the advertisement in both printed and electronic media needs to examine different data sources and social semiotics.

Referring to the earlier discussion, conducting this study is significant to investigate the language usage and visual elements adopted in the tourism promotional brochure to construct the discourses of tourism. These discourses can be constructed through the usage of appropriate lexical or words and syntactical choices. Furthermore, utilisation of visual elements such as modality and salience as discourses has the potential to enhance the portrayal of the destination. Several studies were conducted on the discourses in tourism promotional media (Jaworski, 2010; Kim, Hwang & Fassenmaier, 2005; Mocini, 2005; Mohamed, 2004; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Zhang, 2011). Nonetheless, these studies did not cover all important aspects that construct the tourism discourses; visual element is one prominent example.

More importantly, few studies were only concerned with content and empirical investigation of the printed promotional tools. The interrelation between language and visual elements was not examined (Salim, et.al, 2012, 2014). Hence, a clear gap in research that covers both language usage and visual elements, particularly in tourism brochures and documents, is the main focus of this study. Discourse analysis was employed in this study to discover the relationship between language and visual elements in constructing and enhancing the destination image. Therefore, this study focuses on examining how

language usage and visual elements enhance the tourist destination image in tourism brochure designed by the government of Barru Regency, Indonesia and other stakeholders.

## Review of literature

### Discourse of tourism

Tourism has become one of the most common community discourses with plentiful number of people involved in its development. The industry has numerous communicative situations (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010). From a promotional perspective, tourism has its own discourse in the interpretations of its specialists and patrons (Dann, 1996; Rázusová, 2009). Realised in this light, the language of tourism is therefore exceedingly more than a representation.

Apart from that, the language and the visual image are the representation and the consideration of the reality (Midalia, 1999; Morgan & Pritchard, 1996). Additionally, the tourism brochures are ideal element for discovering language and visual image offered to potential tourists, simply because the brochures improve the understanding and the perception towards the products and destinations. Therefore, the interrelation between text and image may represent and portray the tourism products and destinations on the brochures.

A significant number of studies were performed on tourism promotional media ranging from television commercial's publicity programs to the more current online platforms including the social media (Grimm & Needham, 2012; Hvess & Munar, 2012; Pan, Tsi & Lee, 2011). Nevertheless, few researchers explicitly addressed the role of language and visual image in valorizing the destination on these promotional platforms (Cousins, Evans & Saddler, 2009; Salim, Ibrahim & Hassan, 2012, 2014).

Language and visual elements are the aspects that generate specific discourses, particularly the image and identity of the destinations (Jørgensen, 2004; Morgan & Pritchard, 1998). Notably, tourism brochures use both language and visual image to enhance the tourist destination (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Najafian, 2011). This invokes a need for further research that extends the analysis from covering only language to also include the adoption of visual image. Hence, this current study explores how language and visual image are utilised in the tourism brochures of Indonesia to valorize the tourist destinations and products.

Tourism discourse is the language and communication that are put into a frame of study to unfold tourism as a powerful domain of existing social life (Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). Despite the different emphasis, discourse is an essential conception in understanding society responses and the language itself (Jaworski & Coupland, 2006). Hence, language plays a vital role in tourism promotion to attract and persuade the potential tourists to be actual tourists.

### Destination image

The image construction process consist of a series of steps that involve a connection between the tourist destination image and the tourist's perception (Camprubi, Guia & Comas, 2008; Camprubi, 2011). Therefore, the process of image construction is carried out through the prototypical seven stages of the tourist's experience. Tourists primarily prototype or yield images based on broad information about a place obtained from books, brochures, magazines, television, and booklets (Govers & Go, 2005; Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007). These images evolve into tempting images when the tourist begins to actively pursue information about a place from brochures, websites, guidebooks, and many more. Hence, the images are harmonising into a perceived image of a front-seat travel.

Images can be reflected as the ideas and impressions that are presented for a touristic place. Essentially, they can also be assumed as a reproduction of signs and meanings that are socially constructed and distributed (Bramwell & Rawding, 2004). Furthermore, the image is a collection of messages that are produced consciously or unconsciously (Gale & Donaire, 2005). Perceived images are generated in the mind of an individual and become an interaction between projected messages and (a) specific consumer needs, (b) prior knowledge, (c) experience, (d) motivations, (e) preferences, and (f) other personal characteristics (Bramwell & Rawding, 2004). The integration of all elements affects the tourist destination image that is always very personal (Govers et al., 2007).

## Tourism brochure

The main purpose of tourism brochure is similar to advertising for other products. Holloway (2004) concluded that the primary aims of brochure or advertising are stated in three words: informing, persuading and reminding. These words are in line with the AIDA standard used in marketing: attention, interest, desire, and action. Moreover, Berger (2004, p. 71) defined brochures and advertisements as a genre of communication that uses specific lexis and images to persuade people to purchase the products or services being promoted. The description is also pertinent to the case of tourism promotion that is the ultimate aim of tourism brochure. In the context of Barru Regency, the key purpose is to relay the message across to tourists; Barru is an exciting and dynamic tourist destination with a lot of attractions to be explored and enjoyed. Plog (2004, p. 175) claimed that tourists need to know that the destination has key elements of former image, for example cultural heritage and nature.

Brochure is one of the popular tools used by tourists to explore destinations. Most tourists prefer using brochure mediation to gain information on a particular tourist destination (Fakharyan et al., 2012; Loda, 2011). A study by Suradnya (2006) depicted that brochure is an important source of information for exploring destination in Indonesia. Due to advances in information technology, usage of printed media such as brochure, booklet, and advertisement as a tool for tourists in decision-making continuously increases.

The effectiveness of brochure is evident from how the different discourses enhance the product or the tourist destination (Loda, 2011). Moreover, many scholars stated that the effectiveness of a tourism promotional tool may be measured from (a) information, (b) content quality, (c) design perspectives, (d) simplicity of text, and (e) usage of high quality images (Law, 2010; Pan, Ting & Bau, 2014). Therefore, tourism brochure constructs considerably deeper and longer-lasting relationships with current and prospective tourists (Kasli & Avcikurt, 2006).

Tourism brochures have specific features that vary from other tourism promotional tools. Simple texts and high quality visual images are employed to allow the simultaneous visual and epistemic travel (Hallet & Wenger, 2010; Lepp, Gibson & Lane, 2011; Pan, Ting & Bau, 2014). Tourism brochures are the representation of the nation; language and visual image may have various roles in portraying and valorising the tourist destination. This study focuses on the language usage and visual images using discourse analysis, emphasising on texts and visual elements of the tourism brochures of Barru Regency.

## Methodology

This research employed a qualitative research design in order to provide insights on the philosophical assumptions. In the context of tourism research, this study has a qualitative nature because it aims to explore the different discourses of tourism as constructed through language usage and visual elements

or images in the tourism brochures. The data were collected from tourism brochure, which was officially designed by the government of Barru Regency, Indonesia. The research was focused on the brochures which designed by officially by the government and published in the period of the year 2014 up to 2015. The research concerned with the brochures which describe the culture and nature attraction in English Language version. This allowed a better understanding of how tourism brochures enhance the tourism destination and ensured consistency of the data collected.

As this study employed the qualitative approach, the discourse analysis was used to analyse the data in order to obtain a better understanding on how the different discourses of tourism enhance the value of the tourist destination (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). This approach is especially valuable in investigating the importance of language usage and visual element in social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tuchman, 1991).

This approach referred to an in-depth understanding in examining language usage (Dann, 1996) and visual elements (Kress & Van Lueween, 2006) in tourism brochure designed by Government of Barru Regency, Indonesia. Hence, this study applied two types of analysis, namely textual analysis and visual analysis. Textual analysis was adopted to analyse the texts found in the tourism brochure, whereas visual analysis was utilised to examine the visual components of the tourism brochure.

## Findings and discussions

This section discusses the discourses discovered through texts and visual images in the brochure. Specifically, the discussion focuses on the discourse of naturalness realised through texts and visual images that emerged from the data analysis. Texts and visual images play a significant role in enhancing the tourist destination and attractions. The tourism brochure designed by Government of Barru Regency, Indonesia provides certain elements of its tourism, namely cultural heritage and nature. Notably, the perspective of the tourism brochure is fashioned through two important elements: naturalness of cultural heritage and naturalness of nature.

The analysis carried out revealed that the tourism brochure designed by Government of Barru Regency, Indonesia primarily uses the discourse of naturalness to enhance the destination image and tourism attraction.

## Naturalness of cultural heritage

In the modern literature, Cohen (1988) stated that tourism always conserves the naturalness of cultural heritage. Naturalness leads to tourist's genuine curiosity for the natural experience (MacCannell, 1999). The data analysis shows that Barru Regency, Indonesia has different cultural heritage attractions that can drive the tourist's attention. Notably, language and visual images are the intermediates used to construct the naturalness. Lexical and syntactical choices are the two main strategies used in texts to express the naturalness of touristic destinations (Dann, 1996; Hughes, 1995; MacCannell, 1999). The discourse of naturalness is constructed to enhance the tourist's experience of the destination.

The findings show that the tourism brochure depicts the naturalness of cultural heritage elements through descriptive verbs and informative sentences. Previous studies illustrated that tourists seek for naturalness, authenticity, and uniqueness from the host country (Dann, 1996; Hughes, 1995; MacCannal, 1989; Salim, et al., 2012). Therefore, naturalness has become one of the main discourses constructed in tourism brochures. For example, the brochure portrays different cultural attractions such

as traditional dance, traditional house, and the ancient King's Tomb in descriptive and informative ways to enhance its naturalness. Extract 1 illustrates the tourism brochure that describes the authentic traditional dance, Sere Api Dance.

### Extract 1

*Sere Api Dance (Fire dance) is one of the traditional dance in Barru society, especially the village Gattareng. The uniqueness of this dance is that the dancers perform dance attractions in the number of the fire to the accompaniment of traditional music (Brochure No. 1)*

The naturalness, originality, and authenticity perspective highlight a driving motivation for traveller to pursue the natural experiences (Dann, 1996). The naturalness of the cultural heritage of Barru is portrayed via careful selection of lexis. The absence of commoditisation is an important consideration in the judgment of originality, naturalness, and authenticity (Cohen, 1988). Therefore, the naturalness aspect highlights the cultural heritage.

Findings showed that the discourse of naturalness of cultural heritage is achieved via the astute application of syntactical strategies (Calvi, 2000; Dann, 1996; Kelly, 1997). The syntactical strategy constructs the naturalness of the tourist destination that differs from other destinations. Therefore, the selection of descriptive verbs and informative sentences used in the tourism brochure depicts the genuine naturalness and the authenticity of the cultural heritage (Dann, 1996).

Apart from improving the function of textual elements in constructing the destination image on the tourism brochure of Barru, the visual elements are also used to enhance the naturalness of cultural heritage (Choi, Xinvan & Alastair, 2007; Loda, 2010; Mocini, 2005). The data analysis illustrated that foreground and sharpness in the salience element; and brightness, colour differentiation, and saturation in the modality element are used to construct the originality of the heritage. Figure 1 shows the originality of traditional house in the brochure.

Figure 1  
Traditional house



The picture enhances the potential tourist's perceptions on the naturalness, originality, and authenticity of the cultural heritage (Hughes, 1995; Jaworski & Coupland, 2006; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Taib, 2009; Hassan, 2014). Notably, the cultural heritage of Barru is one of the important tourism elements portrayed in the tourism brochure.

The language and visual elements construct the discourse of naturalness which is the dominant discourse used to portray the tourist destination image. This discourse was achieved through lexical and syntactical strategies in the texts, modality, and salience in visual elements. Nevertheless, the language and visuals used in the brochure do not describe the cultural heritage in detail. The language and visuals are merely an informative category.

## Naturalness of the nature tourism

The beautiful nature of Barru is one of the potential tourism resources. In this study, the discursive theme of naturalness is largely constructed through the portrayal of the pristine nature and beaches. Findings proved that the theme of naturalness is clearly portrayed through language usage and visual elements (Dann, 1996; Hughes, 1995; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). Tourism primarily involves the excitement of the novelty and originality of the tourist destinations or attractions (Cohen, 1988).

The discursive category emphasised Barru as one of the destinations offering various nature attractions (Picard, 1990). Therefore, the discourse of naturalness enhances the tourist destination image. Language and visual elements play a very important role to construct and portray the reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 1995). The findings of this study showed that the descriptive verbs and informative sentences construct and portray the naturalness of Barru as exemplified in Extract 2. Naturalness prominently allures the potential tourists to enjoy the nature tourism of Barru.

### Extract 2

*Located in Lompo Riaja Tanete Riaja, potential discharge of water and dry never as high as 25 m. supported by a very beautiful natural scenery and the cool air. There are also Mesolitikum artefact stones tools. Located 29 km from the City of Barru (Brochure No 2.)*

The appearance of "natural" in the text constructs the naturalness of Barru nature (Burr, 1995). The tourism brochure designed by Government of Barru Regency, Indonesia illustrates the naturalness of beach, island, waterfalls, and rainforest to the tourists (Berger, 1980; Dann, 1996; Markwell, 2001). Notably, simple text has prominent effect in constructing the discourse of authenticity in nature (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cohen, 1988; Dann, 1996).

Figure 2  
Beach



Visual elements also contribute significantly in the construction of naturalness of nature in the tourism brochure. Salience and modality are the dominant strategies used to construct the naturalness in tourism brochure (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Hassan 2012). For example, usage of salience elements in Figure 2 portrays the naturalness of nature tourism to construct favourable tourist's perception.

Furthermore, the photo image also illustrates high quality colours and attractive models to express holistic messages to viewers. Visual elements used in tourism brochure have positive effect on the construction of discourse of naturalness. Tourism brochure is one of the main tourism promotional modes that promote the tourism products and destinations to potential tourists. Tourism destinations in Indonesia are portrayed via two important elements: cultural heritage and nature. Discourse of naturalness is the dominant discourse constructed to portray the destination image. Language usage and visual image are the important medium in constructing the destination image in tourism brochure. Nonetheless, both elements do not represent the destination nor provide detailed information that the potential tourists need.

Even though Barru Regency has a number of tourism attractions, the findings revealed that the brochure does not significantly and clearly portray all tourism potentials including culinary. In addition, the findings also depicted that the brochure applies very limited visual images to enhance the texts describing the naturalness of the tourist attractions. Visual image has an important role in constructing the tourist's perception on the naturalness of the destination (Choi et al., 2007; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Loda, 2010; Taib, 2009; Hassan, 2014).

## Conclusion

Language usage and visual elements are the main tools applied in tourism brochure for promoting or marketing a destination. Language has a significant role to enhance the potential or actual tourist's perception or schemata about the destination (Dann, 1996). The discussion of the findings revealed that the tourism promotion of Barru Regency portrays the tourism destinations or attractions through the discourse of naturalness. This is employed in the tourism brochure to highlight and portray the tourist attractions. For example, the brochure applies certain categories in the texts to reflect the discourses of naturalness. The combination of lexical and syntactical choices enhances the tourist's knowledge, perception, and experiences towards the destination. Nonetheless, the texts in the brochure do not reflect and describe the tourism attraction in detail but only provide description of the places.

Furthermore, the aspect of visual images is also vital to create various discourses on the tourism brochure of Barru successfully. Researches showed that visual images play a very significant role to construct the discourse of naturalness in portraying the destination. Modality and salience are the elements applied to construct the discourse of naturalness. The findings of this study concur with the findings of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) that identified the discourse of tourism to be constructed through four visual strategies: modality, salience, participant, and composition or collage. Hence, the visual images depict new experience and knowledge to the potential tourists and even for the actual ones. Nevertheless, the photo images used in the brochure do not reflect and represent the destinations wholly. Application of colour saturation and positioning were unable to enhance illustration of the destinations.



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