SYNTACTIC UNIT ANALYSIS IN THE TULAMBEN TOURISM AREA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the syntactic units employed in public signs within the Tulamben tourist area, East Bali. The focus of the study is on the linguistic structures that form messages in the linguistic landscape. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study identifies five categories of syntactic units, namely words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts, from a total of 63 documented public signs. The findings show that phrases are the most dominant unit, followed by words and texts. An in-depth discussion reveals that the choice of syntactic form is influenced not only by communicative function but also by aesthetic considerations, readability, and promotional needs in the context of international tourism.

Keywords*: Linguistic Landscape, Syntactic Unit, Public Sign, Tulamben, Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism in Bali has led to a significant increase in the use of public signage as a medium of visual communication across tourist areas. Tulamben, renowned as one of the world's premier diving destinations, features diverse public signage throughout diving centers, hotels, restaurants, and other tourism facilities, including the iconic USAT Liberty Wreck. In tourism contexts, signage functions not only as a source of information but also as a strategic tool for branding, business identity formation, and cross-cultural interaction. Recent studies emphasize that multilingual signs in tourism destinations reflect the socio-economic character of the community and the influence of global mobility (Hult, 2021; Kasanga, 2020; Wang & Hua, 2023).

Landry and Bourhis (1997) classify the linguistic landscape into informational and symbolic functions. The informational function concerns direct communication directions, warnings, or services while the symbolic function represents identity, values, and social position through linguistic and visual choices. More recent scholars extend this view by showing that signage in tourism spaces constructs cultural narratives and shapes visitors' perceptions of a destination (Shohamy, 2020; Lou, 2022). In Tulamben, these functions coexist: shop signs, hotel banners, diving center boards, and safety instructions convey literal information while implicitly signaling professionalism, service quality, and the international character of the tourism environment.

In linguistic studies, syntactic units such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts constitute the fundamental building blocks for meaning construction (Radford, 2004). Current research highlights that the syntactic structure of public signs directly affects readability, visibility, and message processing, especially in multilingual tourism settings (Gorter & Cenoz, 2021; Ivković, 2020). In destinations like Tulamben, concise and visually appealing syntactic forms such as single words and noun phrases are frequently used to ensure rapid comprehension by international tourists. Imperative sentences, in contrast, serve regulatory functions, ensuring clarity and authority in safety-related contexts (Zhao & Liu, 2022). Although linguistic landscape studies in Indonesia are expanding, most recent works still focus on language choice, multilingual patterns, and symbolic representation (Sari, 2021; Agustina & Cahyono, 2022; Rahardi et al., 2023). Research examining syntactic structure remains limited, even though syntax plays a key role in determining clarity, communicative efficiency, and persuasive impact in tourism signage. This gap aligns with

global linguistic landscape scholars who call for more structure-focused investigations rather than purely symbolic or sociolinguistic analyses (Laihonen & Szabó, 2019; Belpoliti & Olvera-Lobo, 2020).

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the syntactic units used in public signs in Tulamben, an aspect rarely explored in previous linguistic landscape research in Indonesia, especially within Bali's tourism corridor. By analyzing the syntactic structure of various types of signage, this study not only documents linguistic forms but also reveals visual communication strategies employed by tourism practitioners in producing informational, promotional, and regulatory messages. This approach provides a more comprehensive perspective by treating public signs as structured linguistic artifacts shaped by deliberate grammatical choices (García & Cater, 2021). The study thereby contributes both theoretically to linguistic landscape research and practically to tourism stakeholders in designing signage that is communicative, aesthetically appealing, and effective for international tourists.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design within the framework of linguistic landscape studies. Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: direct observation, photo documentation, and interviews with several tourism business operators. Observation was used to record the presence of public signs along the research location, while photo documentation was carried out to record the visual form of the signs in detail for further analysis. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain additional information related to the purpose of creating the signs, language usage strategies, and the context of their use. Through this process, a total of 63 public signs were collected, becoming the main source of data. Data analysis in this study referred to the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which consists of three main stages:

1. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, grouping, and focusing the data according to the research needs. At this stage, each documented public sign was selected based on visual clarity, completeness of information, and relevance to the focus of the study. After that, the linguistic content of each sign was sorted into five categories of syntactic units, namely words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts.

2. Data display is carried out by presenting the reduced data in the form of tables, syntactic unit classifications, and narrative descriptions. This presentation makes it easier for researchers to see patterns in the use of syntactic units, their frequency of occurrence, and the function of each unit in the communicative context of public signs.

3. Conclusion drawing and verification are carried out by concluding the patterns that emerge during the analysis. The conclusions are tested for validity through a process of repeated verification, comparing data between categories, and ensuring the consistency of the findings with syntactic theories as proposed by Lyons (1968), Katamba (1993), Radford (2004), and Halliday & Hasan (1976).

Through this stage, the research produced a comprehensive understanding of the use of syntactic units in public signs in Tulamben, while ensuring that the findings obtained were valid, consistent, and scientifically accountable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study produced one main finding in accordance with the research question formulated earlier. The finding relates to the types of syntactic units used in public signs in the Tulamben tourist area. These units were analyzed to understand how language structure is used to convey information, instructions, and promotional messages to domestic and

foreign tourists. The analysis identified five types of syntactic units that consistently appear on public signs, namely words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts. Each unit was examined to determine its structural form and communicative function in the context of tourism.

In addition, these findings reveal two main communicative purposes that influence the use of syntactic units on public signs, namely the need to convey messages efficiently and the need to create a persuasive visual appeal for tourists. Furthermore, this study also shows the syntactic units most commonly used by tourism businesses and operators in Tulamben. This dominance provides an overview of how tourism language is formed in public spaces to support business identity, marketing, and ease of understanding for visitors.

Table 1. Summary of the syntactic units of the 63 public signs:

Type of Syntactic Unit	Frequency	Function	Example
Word	58	Informational/Commercial	Welcome, Open, Wi-Fi
Phrase	163	Commercial/Symbolic	Tulamben Dive Resort
Clause	7	Educational/Promotional	Develop your knowledge and skills
Sentence	9	Regulatory/Instructional	Do not park here!
Text	22	Informational/Promotional	Freebird Express schedule text

Based on Table 1, a summary of the syntactic units identified from 63 public signs collected in the Tulamben tourist area is presented. Through in-depth linguistic analysis, 259 syntactic units were identified, comprising words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts. These units reflect the structural organization of the language used in public signs, illustrating how linguistic forms interact with communicative functions within the context of tourism. The results of the analysis show that phrases are the most dominant syntactic units, with 163 occurrences. Phrases such as *"Tulamben Dive Resort," "Paradise Sea Front Restaurant,"* and *"Dive Concept"* generally serve a dual purpose, both commercial and symbolic, with the aim of attracting tourists and promoting local businesses. These phrases are concise yet informative, providing a clear identity to a place or service while representing the professional and international image of the tourism industry in Tulamben.

The second most frequently appearing syntactic unit is the word, with 58 occurrences. Examples include *"Open", "Restaurant", "Wi-fi", and "Diving",* which serve an informative and symbolic function. Single-word signs are highly effective for conveying messages quickly and easily to a wide audience, including foreign tourists who may not be familiar with the local language. The use of these meaningful single words also reflects the influence of English as a global medium of public communication in tourist areas. Moreover, single-word expressions tend to maximize visual simplicity and readability, which are essential in public signage where space and attention span are limited. Their concise nature allows them to be universally recognized regardless of linguistic background, turning them into visual symbols of accessibility and modernity. This trend highlights how linguistic economy and global comprehensibility play an important role in shaping the linguistic landscape of Tulamben's tourism environment.

Furthermore, clauses were found 7 times, which generally served an informative and educational function. Examples include *"We offer perfection"* and *"Develop your knowledge and skill"*. Such clauses indicate a more complex language structure and are often used in promotional or service contexts that aim to convey persuasive messages. The use of clauses indicates that the sign makers are trying to present syntactic variations to give

more specific and interesting meanings. In addition, the presence of clauses demonstrates a balance between brevity and expressiveness, where sign creators strategically employ slightly extended linguistic forms to attract attention while maintaining clarity. These clause-based constructions often emphasize action or quality, reflecting the persuasive tone typical of tourism and service-related discourse. Thus, clauses not only inform but also subtly influence readers by appealing to their interests, curiosity, and expectations as potential customers or visitors.

Then, sentences appear 9 times and serve informative, symbolic, and instructional functions. Examples include *"Have a safe trip!"* and *"Do not park here!"*, which are used to provide directions, offer advice, or convey polite expressions to readers. Complete sentence structures like this are commonly found on signs that require clear and unambiguous communication, especially in the context of safety, public service, or social ethics. Moreover, the use of full sentences reflects the sign-makers' intention to achieve direct and explicit communication with audiences of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Such constructions enhance the readability and authority of the message, ensuring that instructions or prohibitions are easily understood and followed. In tourism contexts, sentence-level signage also helps establish a welcoming and well regulated environment, reinforcing both the professionalism and hospitality of the local tourism industry.

Lastly, Text was found 22 times. These signs are usually paragraphs or a combination of several sentences that convey more detailed information, such as on promotional boards or travel instructions. For example, the text on the *"Freebird Express"* board provides information on departure schedules, ship facilities, and service contacts. One clear instance of this category is the sign reading *"Experience the fastest, safest, and most comfortable ride"*, which exemplifies how extended linguistic constructions are used to promote services persuasively. This phrase, when combined with additional sentences about facilities and schedules, forms a cohesive text that aims to attract attention and build trust among potential customers. The presence of text based signage indicates that certain public signs in Tulamben are designed not only for identification or direction but also for comprehensive communication. Such texts often integrate persuasive and descriptive language to attract readers' attention and provide full explanations about services or activities offered. This extensive use of language demonstrates a higher level of linguistic planning, reflecting how local tourism stakeholders employ English to reach international audiences and enhance the professional image of Tulamben as a global diving destination.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that public signs in the Tulamben tourism area employ a variety of syntactic units, including words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and texts. Among these categories, phrases appear as the most dominant unit, followed by words and texts, indicating a strong preference for concise yet information-rich linguistic structures in tourism communication. The dominance of phrases reflects the communicative need to construct clear and appealing identities for tourism-related services, while the prevalence of words highlights the demand for simplicity, readability, and immediate message processing by international visitors.

Clauses and sentences, although less frequent, contribute significant functional roles, particularly in delivering persuasive messages, promotional statements, instructions, and safety-related information. Meanwhile, text-based signage serves more complex communicative purposes by providing detailed explanations, schedules, and service descriptions, demonstrating a higher level of linguistic planning aimed at enhancing tourist engagement.

The use of syntactic units in public signs in Tulamben illustrates how linguistic forms are strategically selected to support informational, symbolic, and promotional functions within a tourism context. These findings enrich the understanding of linguistic landscape studies from a structural perspective by showing that syntactic choices directly influence clarity, persuasion, and the visual appeal of signage. Practically, the results provide valuable insights for tourism stakeholders regarding the importance of effective linguistic design in producing public signs that are accessible, professional, and capable of supporting Tulamben's image as an international tourist destination.

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