

Cultural Representation on Temples Signage in Kuta

(A Case Study of Linguistics Landscapes)

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Received: July 9, 2024

Accepted: August 1, 2024

Published: August 10, 2024

doi:10.5296/ijl.v16i4.22045

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v16i4.22045>

Abstract

Material culture in the Linguistic Landscape (LL) perspective is a public concrete visualisation of a certain culture in a certain society in a given territory. Balinese Hindu culture is one of a kind practice of Hinduism in the world. Balinese Hindus can unite three supreme deities of Hinduism (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) into one supreme trinity known as *Trimurti*. This study aims to analyse the representation of Balinese Hindu material culture in the temple signage of *Trimurti* in Kuta village. The data was collected by observation using a photographic technique in January 2024 in Kuta village. The findings showed three temple signages of *Trimurti* found in Kuta village: *Pura Desa*, *Pura Puseh*, and *Pura Dalem*. The result showed that Balinese Hindu's material culture is significantly represented in all temple signages. Culturally available resources such as local stone are used as sign material in all signage. The local carving pattern of '*karang boma*' is vigorously used in all signages. In terms of the language used, all signages use Balinese language with Balinese script. Besides material culture representation, the analysis also showed non-material culture representation, such as the philosophical meaning of *Trimurti* is represented by the spatial location of the signage: the sign of *Pura Desa* is located in the northern part of the village; the sign of *Pura Puseh* is situated in the eastern part of the village; and the sign of *Pura Dalem* is located in the western part of the village.

Keywords: Linguistics landscapes, Material culture, Non-material culture, Temple signage, Cultural representation

1. Introduction

Culture is the whole system of ideas, feelings, actions, and art that humans make in certain societies (Koentjaraningrat, 2003). Similarly, Merriam-Webster online dictionary defined culture as:

- a. a customary belief, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group;
- b. a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterise an institution or organisation;
- c. a set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic; and
- d. an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.

Honingmann (in Koentjaraningrat, 2003) divided culture into three main forms: ideas, activities, and artefacts. Ideas are the form of abstract culture that is shaped inside our minds. Some called it the value of a culture. Activities are a culture in the form of human activities that can be observed as habitual or routine activities. In contrast, an artefact is the concrete material culture that humans create.

Furthermore, in terms of its elements, Kluckhohn (in Koentjaraningrat, 2003) stated that culture is formed from seven elements: language, knowledge, social organisation, utility and technology, livelihood, religious system and arts. Language is the most intense medium humans use to interact with each other in society, which may result in a culture. Knowledge is the abstract form of the human capability to run their life through logical thinking. Social organisation is human behaviour in running social life from the smallest group, known as the family. Utility and technology is the desire of human to make their life easier through inventions and technology. Livelihood is how humans support their existence through hunting, farming, fishing, etc. The religious system is humans' ultimate response to defining nature's divine power. Lastly, art is the final result of human exploration through their sense of beauty in life. These elements act as the elements of culture and the culture itself since they all manifest human ideas, and activities are represented as a product/artefact. For instance, as the main subject of this study, the Balinese Hindu religious system is the source of the Balinese culture either in the form of ideas, activities or artefacts. One of the most obvious and observable forms is the manifestation of temple signage.

Balinese Hindu culture is a new form of customary religious belief that only materialises in Bali, including its attitude, values and social practice. It has become Bali's unique cultural signature. Besides, it is continuously transmitted from generation to generation as a societal characteristic, with the Hindu religion being the majority in Bali.

Hinduism is a faith or religion that is rooted in India. Three main deities (God manifestation) are worshipped independently as supreme Gods in India. They are Brahma (the God's power of creation), Vishnu (the God's power of preservation) and Shiva (the God's power of

destruction). On the other hand, these three supreme deities were united as one supreme trinity in Bali, known as *Trimurti* (three supreme manifestations of God). This adaptation made Balinese Hindu culture different from its ancestor in India. The concept of *Trimurti* has created a unique material culture representation throughout public space in Bali, which consequently earned Bali the nickname of ‘island of God’ or ‘island of the temple’.

The most visible and observable Hindu culture is its material culture in the form of outdoor temple signage. Outdoor signage is any observable written language used in public space, known as Linguistic Landscape (LL). Landry and Bourhis (1997) stated that LL is a study of language used in the public sphere in a given territory, such as traffic signs, billboards, site names, and building names. Previous research on LL has mainly focused on the rule or status of language in a given territory. In Israel, the language of outdoor signs in certain territories reflects the ethnic community of the region: Hebrew-English languages are found in the Jewish community’s outdoor signs; Arabic-Hebrew languages are found in the Israeli-Palestinian community’s outdoor signs; and Arabic-English languages are found in East Jerusalem community’s outdoor sign (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Backhouse (2006) stated that the language of outdoor signs in Tokyo reflects a monolingual city. In contrast, Akindele (2011) found that the language of outdoor signs in Botswana reflects a multilingual society.

On the other hand, Gorter (2006) suggested that linguistic landscape is a study of cultural heritage. As it is revealed by Guliati (2010), outdoor signs of public art painting in Israel represent the region’s socio-cultural product. A recent study in Kuta shows that outdoor signs indicate that Balinese tradition (i.e. Balinese scripts) has survived the globalisation effect of tourism (Artawa et al., 2020). Furthermore, public signage represents social semiotics, which is made based on a certain purpose and designated location and are highly influenced by local cultural conditions (Bezemer & Kress, 2015; Mulyawan, 2020).

In order to discover more of the outdoor cultural perspective in Kuta, this study aims to analyse the cultural representation of temple signage in Kuta village in terms of the Balinese Hindu perspective, especially in *Trimurti*. This analysis involved all aspects of material and non-material culture representation, such as signage material, the signage’s location, and the signage’s philosophical meaning.

2. Research Method

A case study is a limited analysis of a social unit, a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group, or an event in a certain society of a certain region (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the research is limited to Balinese Hindu temple signage in Kuta village, especially the cultural representation meaning of the temple signage.

Kuta village is located in Badung Regency Bali Province, Indonesia. It is one of the well-known tourist destinations in Bali. As a tourist destination, Kuta has experienced a great infrastructure development of tourism facilities, represented in public signs along the main streets (Mulyawan, 2017a). The surge of globalisation undoubtedly accompanies tourism development, continually endangering the locals (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007). Mulyawan (2017b) stated that the Balinese language is marginalised in public spaces by foreign

languages, especially English. Despite the negative globalisation effect of tourism development, in terms of material culture development, Kuta can maintain its Hindu identity, which is shown by the visualisation of temple signage.

The data in this study was collected in January 2024 by direct observation using a photographic technique (Kothari, 2004). The data is limited to *Trimurti's* temple signages in Kuta village. Based on Balinese Hindu culture, the temples of these three supreme deities are the main temples of every village in Bali. These temples represent Brahma in *Pura Desa*, Vishnu in *Pura Puseh*, and Shiva in *Pura Dalem*. The focus of the analysis is limited to the meaning of cultural representation of Trimurti temple signage in Kuta village as a representation of Balinese Hindu's material culture.

3. Finding and Discussion

Formerly, there was no so-called Hindu religion in the world. However, Hinduism has been practised in India in the form of sects or religious cults for many years. This sect worships deities independently as the only supreme God. The three biggest sects were those that worshipped Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. These practices of Hinduism came to Bali as a sectarian religion. According to Watra (2018), formerly, there were 15 Hinduism sectarians in Bali, they are 1). *Siwa Sidhantha*; 2). *Pasupata*; 3). *Bhairawa*; 4). *Waisnanawa*; 5). *Bodha (Sogatha)*; 6). *Brahma*; 7). *Resi*; 8). *Sore*; dan 9). *Ganapatya*; (10). *Sambu*; 11). *Brahma*; 12). *Indra*; 13). *Wisnu*; 14). *Bayu*; and 15). *Kala*. These sectarians were claimed to have created a chaotic condition in Bali that triggered the initiative to hold a supreme holly priest meeting in *Samuan Tiga* temple. In this meeting, all sectarian high priests agreed to put aside their differences and unite them into a new concept of *Trimurti*, later known as 'Balinese Hindu religion' (Warta, 2018).

The cultural manifestation of Balinese Hindus of *Trimurti* is the presence of 3 (three) main temples in every village in Bali known as *Pura Kahyangan Tiga* (three primes temples), which are *Pura Desa*, *Pura Puseh* and *Pura Dalem*. These temples are built according to the spiritual and philosophical beliefs of 3 (three) supreme deities: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Depicted Figure of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

Source: <http://tentanghindu.blogspot.com/2016/06/tri-murti-dalam-agama-hindu.html>

Brahma is the manifestation of God in the power of creation. His primary duty is to create life. Vishnu is the power of God in preserving life. Lastly, Shiva is the ultimate power of God in taking life. Philosophically, suppose we put Them in spatial public space (state/village territorial). In that case, Brahma is placed in the *ulu* or northern part, Vishnu in the *pengawak* or the middle or eastern part, and Shiva in the *teben* or southern or western part.

Based on the philosophy of Trimurti, these three prime temples are believed to have been placed according to their philosophical site. This positioning process and its cultural attributes align with Kress's (2010) statement, in which signs are motivated in conjunction with sign-maker interests based on the cultural availability of resources. Furthermore, Mulyawan (2019) stated that cultural resources material of public signage are divided into local (vernacular) materials, i.e. stones, timber, log, or wood, and modern materials, i.e. plastic, iron or stainless.

The fieldwork observation in January 2024 discovered six temple signages: *Pura Desa*, *Pura Puseh*, *Pura Dalem*, *Pura Penyarikan*, *Pura Segara* and *Pura Prajapati*. The first three temple signages represent the *Tri Murthi* temples, known as *Kahyangan Tiga* temples. *Pura Penyarikan* is the place of *Ida Bhagawan Penyarikan* (the Gods of Administration and Writing), *Pura Segara* is the place of *Bhatara Baruna* (the Gods of the Sea/Ocean), and *Pura Prajapati* is the place of *Bhatari Durgha* (the Goddess of the Underworld).

As stated in the research method, this study is focused on the cultural meaning representation of the site of *Pura Kahyangan Tiga* in Kuta village (see Figure 2) as the palace of Hindu Supreme Three Deities (*Tri Murthi*): Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The visualisation of the temple signage is genuinely resembling the materialistic representation of Balinese Hindu culture. It can be identified from three aspects of visualisation: the material of the signage, the carving of the signage, and the written text of the signage.

Following available material resources, as stated by Mulyawan (2019), it can be seen that all temple signage is made of stone, which is locally available in Bali. In terms of art visualisation, it resembles local carving design and pattern known as '*karang boma*' (see Figure 3). It is depicted as a fierce giant face with big eyes, sharp fang and teeth. Based on *Baomantaka* legend, it is said that '*boma*' is the son of Vishnu and Pertiwi Devi or Goddess of Earth (Hartanti & Nediari, 2014; Wijaya & Mustika, 2016). His birth represents earth's fertility and is philosophically symbolised as a thick jungle and a big tree. In Balinese Hindu culture, the ornament or carving of '*karang boma*' is always placed in front of the premises or at the entrance gate to symbolise Vishnu's blessing and acts as a negative aura purificator before entering the premises.



Figure 2. Signage of *Pura Kahyanagn Tiga* in Kuta village

From left to right: *Pura Desa*, *Pura Puseh* and *Pura Dalem*

Source: Author



Figure 3. *Karang Boma*

Source: Author



Figure 4. Balinese Language in Balinese Script

Source: Author

The use of the written form of the Balinese language with the Balinese script is also solid evidence of Balinese culture in the form of material representation (see Figure 4).

Consecutively, it is written: *Pura Desa Adat Kuta*; *Pura Puseh Desa Adat Kuta*; *Pura Dalem Pura Penataran Desa Adat Kuta*.

Based on non-material philosophic cultural representation, the compass position of the temples in spatial public space follows the philosophical value of each temple. *Pura Desa* is located or placed in the northern part of the Kuta village (see Figure 6); *Pura Puseh* is situated in the eastern part (see Figure 7); and *Pura Dalem* is located in the western part of the village (see Figure 8).



Figure 5. Kuta Village

Source: Author / Google Map

<p>Figure 6. Location of <i>Pura Desa</i> Source: Author / Google Map</p>	<p>Figure 7. Location of <i>Pura Puseh</i> Source: Author / Google Map</p>	<p>Figure 8. Location of <i>Pura Dalem</i> Source: Author / Google Map</p>

4. Conclusion

Based on the preceding analysis, it can be concluded that LL represents the cultural manifestations of a certain society. The landscape of the Balinese Hindu's cultural life is well

presented through its outdoor signs. The positioning and the artefact of the temple signs are a representation of a genuine Balinese Hindu Culture. It is proven by the significant visualisation of material and non-material aspects of the temple signage. In terms of the material used, all signage used local stone (see Figure 2). In art and cultural visualisation, all signage used local carving patterns (see Figure 3). In terms of the language used, all signage uses Balinese language with Balinese script (see Figure 4). Lastly, in terms of non-material cultural aspects, i.e. spatial location of the temple signage in given territory, all signage are placed in accordance to Balinese Hindu's cultural perspective: sign of *Pura Desa* is located in the northern part of the village (see Figure 6); sign of *Pura Puseh* is located in eastern part of the village (see Figure 7); and sign of *Pura Dalem* is situated in western part of the village (see Figure 8).

Acknowledgement

We want to express our gratitude and thank all our colleagues for their help and support in this study.

Conflict of Interest

On behalf of all author(s), the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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