

Function of Verbal Signs in Public Spaces

Made Susini^{1*}, I Wayan Ana², Nyoman Sujaya³
Universitas Warmadewa, Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia

{madesusini@yahoo.com¹, ana.wayan@gmail.com², nyomansujaya753@gmail.com³}

Abstract. Verbal signs used in public spaces have a very important role as a means of national and international communication. By using the theory of meaning and function [1] and form [2], this study aims to examine the function of verbal signs found in public spaces in Bali. Data were collected in the Badung and Denpasar areas using observation methods through shooting and recording and analyzed using content analysis methods. The results showed that the verbal signs found in public spaces in Bali are used to convey information (giving information), prohibitions (prohibitions), warnings (warnings), orders (command / requesting), appologizing and greetings.). All these language functions are realized in various forms.

Keywords: Verbal Signs; Public Space; Function.

1 Introduction

The progress of tourism in an area is influenced by several factors. One of them is the form of promotion carried out. In tourist destination areas, tourism promotion is carried out by installing signs intended for the wider community (public signs). The signs used can be in the form of non-verbal or verbal signs. Non-verbal signs refer to signs that are realized in the form of signs, symbols, or pictures, while verbal signs are signs that are realized using certain linguistic forms. Verbal signs used in public spaces will be the most advanced information that can be obtained by visitors. Public space refers to a place where members of the community or community can gather with the same or different motives [3]. Verbal signs in the public space as the frontier in an area are a means of national and international communication. Therefore, the verbal signs that are posted must be able to convey the message according to its purpose. Verbal signs as a medium for tourism promotion are also found in public spaces in Bali, especially in the Badung Regency and Denpasar City areas. The verbal signs posted in this area are realized to convey a certain message. These signs are found in various forms. One of them is in the form of a noun phrase like the following sign.



Figure. 1. Examples of a noun phrase signs in public facilities

The success of tourism promotion also greatly depends on the function of the signs used. The use of appropriate verbal signs in accordance with their function will be able to assist visitors in obtaining information and giving instructions about something in the area concerned. Based on this, a study on the function of verbal signs in public spaces is a necessity. Several studies on verbal signs in public spaces have been carried out [4] [5] [6] [7] [3]. However, the study conducted used a different approach. Based on the above background, this study examines the function of verbal signs used in public spaces in Bali with a theoretical approach to meaning and function [1] and form [2].

2 Literature Review

Meaning is an important element in communication. [1] distinguishes meaning into seven, namely conceptual (denotative), connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative, and thematic meanings. Language as a communication tool is used to convey certain functions depending on the orientation of the communication being carried out. Based on its orientation, language functions are divided into informative, expressive, directive, fatigue, and aesthetic functions. The informative function refers to a communication function that is more oriented towards the content of the message being conveyed; the expressive function of the speaker / writer in communication; directive function on the interlocutor / reader; fatigue function in communication media; and the aesthetic function of the way the message is conveyed [1]. The function of language can also be viewed from another angle, as expressed by [2]. The language function in question includes the language function to giving information, warnings, orders (command / request), criticism (disapproval / scornful disapproval / strong disapproval), approval, offers or invitations, inquiries, prohibition, sociability, or also to convey an introduction. The function of language is not only concerned with meaning. The function of language is also related to the form or structure of the language used to realize the meaning to be conveyed. Apart from a complete form, such as in the form of a sentence with the Subject-Predicate-Object-Description structure, a meaning can also be conveyed using an incomplete form but this incomplete form is not the result of an ellipsis or substitution process. This incomplete form is called a non-sentence [2]. Non-sentences can be in the form of a noun phrase, a verb phrase, a prepositional phrase or an adjective phrase. The use of this non-sentence can be seen in the verbal signs used in public spaces, such as "Enter", "Gathering Point", "Exit", "Out".



Figure. 2. Examples of using non-sentence for verbal signs used in public spaces

3 Method

The data of this research are qualitative data in the form of verbal signs written in English and Indonesian which are used in public spaces. The research was conducted in two places, namely in the city of Denpasar as the center of the provincial government of Bali and in Badung district as a tourist destination that has long developed. The research was conducted with an unlimited amount of data. Research locations include public places, such as offices, hotels, roads, open spaces, and public facilities, such as malls and tourist attractions. The data were taken randomly from the places that had been determined in the city of Denpasar and Badung regency. Data collection was carried out using the observation method. The steps are by taking a photo shoot and recording the verbal signs that are found. Data is tabulated and marked according to the equation of function and form. Data analysis was carried out using the content analysis method with reference to the concept of language function according to [2] which is adjusted to the language function found in the data.

4 Result and Discussion

Verbal signs posted in public spaces have several functions, namely to giving information, to convey prohibitions, to give warnings, to Command/Request, to Appologizing, and Welcoming.

Function of Giving Information

Verbal signs that are used in public spaces have a function to provide information to the public about places, conditions, etc. as written in the form of displayed verbal signs.



Figure. 3. Examples of Giving Information signs used in public spaces

Text : Tsunami evacuation route

Form : Noun phrase

Text : Closed

Form : Verb phrase

Text : Open Living Room

Form : Noun phrase

Text : Taking a break

Form : Verb phrase

Text : Out

Form : Verb phrase

The data above consecutively has a function to show that the route in question is a route for evacuation (data a.); the place in question is currently closed (data b); the place in question is an open living room (data c); officers on duty are resting (data d); and the route in question is the exit route for visitors (data e.). The forms used to convey this function are noun phrases, verb phrases, active declaratives, and adjective phrases.

Function of Prohibition

Verbal signs are also installed to prohibit visitors from doing something as written on the verbal sign concerned.



Figure. 4. Examples of Prohibition signs used in public spaces

Some of the verbal sign texts indicating the prohibition are as follows:

- a. Text : Selling / sunbathing is prohibited in this area.
Form : Negative imperative sentence
- b. Text : Prohibited from entering the mall for all who have fever / cough
Form : Negative imperative sentence
- c. Text : No gathering
Form : Negative imperative sentence
- d. Text : Make sure you don't bring / use cellphones, drugs and other prohibited items
Form : Positive imperative sentence

The verbal sign above means the prohibition to sell / sunbathe (data a), to enter the mall for all those with a fever / cough (data b), to gather (data c), and to carry / use cellphones, drugs, and other prohibited items. (data d).

Function of Warning

Warning sign is a function of language to give warning.



Figure. 5. Examples of Warning signs used in public spaces

Verbal signs that contain a warning function are manifested in the following forms.

- a. Text : Keep your distance
Form : Positive imperative sentence
- b. Text : Adhere to social distancing rules
Form : Positive imperative sentence
- c. Text : Protect yourself and your family from the corona virus.
Form : Positive imperative sentence
- d. Text : Do not leave valuables on the bicycle.
Form : Declarative sentence
- e. Text : Required to use an additional security key yourself.
Form : Declarative sentence

The meaning of warning in the data above is as follows: giving a warning to always keep your distance (data a); to always comply with the rules of social distancing (data b), to protect yourself and your family from the corona virus (data c); not to leave valuables on the bicycle (data d.), and to use an additional safety lock (data e.).

Function of Command/Requesting



Figure 5. Examples of Command/Requesting signs used in public spaces

The command / requesting function is found in the following verbal cues.

- a. Text : Check body temperature
Form : Positive imperative sentence
- b. Text : Take the queue number.
Form : Declarative sentence
- c. Text : Use a mask
Form : Positive imperative sentence
- d. Text : Please use another door.
Form : Positive imperative sentence

- e. Text : Avoid crowds
Form : Positive imperative sentence
- f. Text : Let us set an example and be modest in clothing
Form : Positive imperative sentence

The meanings of the verbal signs above are: instructing visitors to check body temperature (data a); to retrieve the queue number (data b); to use masks (data c); to use another door (data d); to avoid crowds (data e); and to set an example and modesty in dress (data f.).

Function of Appologizing



Figure. 6. Examples of Appologizing signs used in public spaces

- a. Text : Sorry for the inconvenience
Form : Verb Phrase
- b. Text : Sorry. (The door is temporarily closed)
Form : Verb Phrase

The function of asking for forgiveness (Apologizing) in the data above is marked by the use of the words apologize and sorry. Data a. contains notice of inconvenience and data b. It was understandable because the door was temporarily closed.

Function of Welcoming

- Text : Welcome to a new living culture at Mal Bali Galeria
- Form : Verb Phrase

The welcoming function in the data above is indicated by the use of the word Welcome.

5 Conclusion

Verbal signs in public spaces in Bali are used for (giving information), (prohibition), (warning), (command / requesting), (appologizing), and (greeting). The function of giving information is realized in the form of noun phrases, verbal phrases, active declarative

sentences, and adjective phrases; function of prohibitions in the form of declarative sentences, positive and negative imperative sentences; function of warning in the form of positive and negative imperative sentences; function of command / requesting in the form of positive imperative sentences and prepositional phrases; function of apologizing in the form of verb phrases and declarative sentences.

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