Words and images of Covid-19 prevention (A case study of tourism new normal protocols signs)

I Wayan Mulyawan and Ketut Artawa

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I Wayan Mulyawan¹* and Ketut Artawa¹

Abstract: Covid-19 is a global pandemic that changed people perspective in everyday life, either in personal activities or public activities. Covid-19 had caused an economic crisis all over the world, including in Indonesia. In order to support business and commerce sustainability in this pandemnic situation, the government, through the Health Department, had issued a circular letter No. HK.02.01/MENKES/335/2020 about Covid-19 prevention in the commercial sector known as New Normal protocol. The tourism industry is one of the most devastated by Covid-19. The tourism industry must adapt to this new normal life by implementing the new standard protocol in running its business. This study aimed to analyse the meaning of the new normal protocol signs at Rabasta @Kuta Hotel in Kuta. The result showed many new normal signs found in every public or strategic area of the hotel. The placement of the signs highly influences the visualisation of the signs. For instance, there is a sign next to a washbasin at the hotel’s front gate with a clear statement that directed all guests to wash their hands before entering the hotel area. Another sign is placed in a public area showed a neutral standard operational procedure notice of Covid-19 prevention. In terms of composition meaning, those signs showed an ideal and real value of new normal practices. The salience is about personal and environmental hygiene to stop the spread of Covid-19 with either linear or nonlinear framing to the extent of the desired meaning.

Keywords: covid-19 prevention; outdoor signs; new normal; value; salience; framing

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
I Wayan Mulyawan and Ketut Artawa are Lecturer at the English Department, Faculty of Humanities Udayana University Bali. They have joined in many group-research projects and the latest research was the Linguistics Landscapes study in Kuta. One of their joint publication is published at Journal of Critical Reviews 7(7), 2020. Both have regularly and independently participated in many international seminars on linguistics and published many articles in an international journal with the latest publication in Indonesia and the Malay World, 49(145), April 2021 and Cognitive science 2021, 45(4), e1294.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT
Covid-19 prevention protocols are essential to our life. It is the only way to live together with Covid-19. Linguistic Landscape is a study of signs in public space. This article proposes critical thinking in analysing the implementation and adaptation of the new normal protocols in the tourism industry. Through this approach, we are able to identify the intended meaning or desire of the sign maker, such as the reason for using a certain image or person, the use of certain material and the reason for the placement of the sign in a certain public area. In other words, by this approach, we are able to decode the “visual grammar structure” of the Covid-19 prevention signs.
1. Introduction

2020 is the most devastating year. It is the year of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). Based on reported data on September 23rd, 2020, at 4.47 pm, there have been 31,425,029 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 967,164 deaths worldwide (https://covid19.who.int/). Covid-19 is a new strain of severe acute respiratory syndrome caused by coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) that was believed to be transmitted from bat to human (Shereen et al., 2020; Y-c et al., 2020). This disease was initially noticed in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Within a month, it has become an outbreak that infected 98 people in 18 countries outside China. Besides, it was reported that it has 8 new cases of human-to-human transmission in four countries: Germany, Japan, Vietnam and the United States of America. On January 30th, 2020, the Director-General of World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). Later, on March 11th, 2020, the outbreak has exceeded 118,000 cases in 114 countries, with 4,291 death, which consequently made WHO declare COVID-19 as a world pandemic. It has made Covid-19 the fifth global pandemic since Spanish Flu in 1918 (see Figure 1).

To stop the outbreak, many countries had to administer lockdown in certain regions, which are considered endemic areas. Wuhan was the first area that was locked down by Beijing on January 23rd, 2020. Then, in March 2020, after the WHO declared Covid-19 as a global pandemic, 18 countries with the obvious outbreak were also went into lockdown. These are Italy, Poland, El Salvador, Ireland, Spain, Denmark, Lebanon, France, Belgium, New Zealand, Malaysia, America, Rwanda, UK, India, South Africa, Thailand (NN, 2020).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the were no Covid-19 cases reported up to February 2020. However, four days after the WHO declared Covid-19 as a PHIEC, the Health Department issued a regulation no. HK.01.07/Menkes/104/2020 about Covid-19 plague and the protocol of prevention. The first reported case in Indonesia was announced by the President on March 2nd, 2020 (Nugroho, 2020). Within a month, by March 31st, 2020, Indonesia has reported 1,528 confirmed cases, including 81 recoveries and 136 deaths (Nugroho, 2020). Covid-19 reported cases increased significantly ever since. In order to contain the outbreak, on March 31st, 2020, the President issued a local lockdown regulation no. 21/2020, which is known as a large scale social quarantine. Starting from April 1st,
2020, all non-essentials businesses were shut down, including limitation of all mass transportation to minimise people's mobility to stop the spread of Covid-19.

Hotel service is one of the commercial sectors that experienced a sudden impact of the local lockdown regulation. It was reported that on April 1st, 2020, 698 hotels closed down their operations because of the lockdown (Nurcaya & Ayu, 2020). Within a week, on April 7th, 2020, the data showed that 1,174 hotels were closed (Nugroho, 2020). As an international tourist destination, Bali is one of the most devastated regions in this pandemic, as it is highly dependent on tourism.

In order to help the businesses remain sustainable during this Covid-19 pandemic, on May 20th, 2020, Indonesia’s Health Minister issued a Circular Letter No. HK.02.01/MENKES/335/2020 on Protokol Pencegahan Penularan Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) di Tempat Kerja Sektor Jasa dan Perdagangan (Area Publik) dalam Mendukung Keberlangsungan Usaha [Protocol for the Prevention of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) Transmission in the Workplace of the Service and Trade Sector (Public Area) in Supporting Business Continuity]. This circular letter is later known as the new normal protocol. Through this circular letter, all businesses are allowed to open with strict New Normal protocols: facilitating adequate wash-hand basin or hand sanitiser in the public area; all employees and customers are obliged to always wear a mask; maintaining a hygienic workplace; and maintaining social distancing. This study seeks to investigate and analyse the representation of the new normal protocol signs and procedures in the tourism industry in Kuta.

2. Material and method
Theoretically, the study of outdoor signs is known as Linguistics Landscapes (LL) study. It is a visible salience of written language in public space (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). According to Kress (2010), an outdoor sign is a social sign that is made based on certain motivated meaning by sign makers within a certain region through certain available resources or materials. Mulyawan (2019) mentioned that available resources and materials are divided into vernacular (local) and modern materials. Moreover, Ron. and Scollon (2003) stated that outdoor sign is a social world presentation by which the meaning of its discourse is represented through signs, structures, and people actions toward it. Similarly, Mulyawan (2021) discovered that the language of the outdoor sign represents the local indigens through its writing. For instance, an outdoor sign of “No Parking” in front of an entrance (see Figure 2) is effective in carrying out its social discourse when everyone who sees it “obeys” the sign. In other words, outdoor signs meaning is socially dependent on public response.

In addition, Gunther and Theo van (2006) proposed a multimodal approach in analysing the meaning of a visual sign through its visual grammar. They noted three points of visual sign analysis, namely, representation, interaction and composition. Representation is the analysis of visual action and dimension of the actor or figure depicted in the sign, through narrative and conceptual processes meaning. Narratively, a sign meaning is gazed from action and reaction of
the actor or figure through the verbal message, position, and transactional structure. Concurrently, the conceptual meaning is the relation among actors in the sign regarding their position, possession and symbolisation.

Interaction processes meaning is the visible salience of the sign maker’s desired meaning. It involves the contact, social distance and attitude meaning of the actor or figure in presenting the prepared meaning. It is the intended meaning of the sign, in which it was made either as an offering or demand sign. Lastly, the most important aspect is the composition processes meaning by which it is representing the overall meaning of the sign (Mulyawan, 2020) in terms of information value, salience and framing. Information value is the information packaging of the sign, either it is “new and given” or “ideal and real” information. In contrast, salience meaning is the peak of composite meaning established from representation and interaction meaning as a core meaning with its linear/nonlinear framing.

This study is a case study of multimodal Linguistic Landscape in analysing the representation of New Normal protocol signs in the tourism industry in Kuta. A case study is a study of a limited unit of a certain society in a certain region in terms of social interaction, person, family, institution, cultural group, or an event (Kothari, 2004). The data of this study is all outdoor signs that represent the New Normal protocol in the Rabasta @Kuta hotel area. Rabasta @Kuta is a budget residence hotel that is located at Pudak Sari Street No. 3 Kuta-Bali. The data is collected by direct observation method with photographic technique (Kothari, 2004). All collected data is analysed in terms of its composition processes, meaning by which it is considered as the overall meaning of the sign (Mulyawan & Geraghty, 2020).

3. Result and discussion

Kuta is one of the most desired tourist destinations in Bali. It is located in the Kuta sub-district, Kuta District, Badung Regency, Bali, Indonesia. As a tourist destination, Kuta’s global revenue is highly dependent on the tourism sector. Robino (2019) reported that Kuta is awarded as Mastercard’s best tourist destination in Indonesia that is always crowded and busy with tourism activity (see Figure 3). However, in April 2020, when Covid-19 became a global pandemic, Kuta became a ghost town without any tourist activities (see Figure 4). It happened due to the implementation of the presidential directive on local lockdown, which stopped the foreign visits to Bali and local ones.

The situation became worse as the Ngurah Rai International Airport in Bali was closed to international flights (Wiyanto, 2020). Consequently, many hotels, restaurants, and other public
tourist destinations, including Kuta Beach, were closed to the public, as shown in Figure 5. As the national economy began to decline, the Circular Letter No. HK.02.01/MENKES/335/2020 is immediately implemented to save the business and commerce.

The implementation of the new normal protocol is shown by many outdoor signs in the tourism industry. One of the hotels that have implemented the new normal protocol is Rabasta @Kuta Hotel Residence. It is located at Kartika Plaza St., Pudak Sari Lane no. 3. The collected data showed four types of new normal protocol signs placed around the hotel, as shown in Figure 6. The signs are placed from the front gate to all the strategic public areas of the hotel. The first sign is placed at the front gate, next to the front office and at the back entrance near the parking lot. The second sign is placed on the floor of the front office. The third sign is placed at the front area of the hotel and at the back entrance near the parking lot. Lastly, the fourth sign is placed on every floor of the hotel and next to all the stairs.

The data sign-1 is placed at the front gate and the back entrance of the hotel. It is a sign to direct all the guests to wash their hands before entering the hotel area, complete with sets of graphics on the complete steps in washing the hand (see Figure 7). The sign is accompanied by the presence of a wash-hand basin and a hand soap.

The information value of the data sign-1 showed an ideal/real value of a firmed “order” to all guests to maintain personal hygiene as it is mandated by the new normal protocol by washing their hands before entering the hotel area. Furthermore, the guest is “ordered” to wash their hand in accordance with the hygiene steps as displayed in the sign. The salience of the sign of data sign-1 is shown by a rigorous hygiene “order”, using an eye-catching full capital, with bold-type letters, complete with colourful figures of the steps in washing hands. As for the framing, the data sign-1 used centred margin framing with linear composition text and figures since it mandated the guest to wash their hand step by step in line with the image given. Persuasively, the value of the sign, the
salience and the framing showed a strong message to all guests to wash their hands before entering the hotel area. Furthermore, it also requests all guests to wash their hands accordingly to the hygiene steps in the wash hand basin provided below to the sign. In other words, all guests must wash their hands at the point of entry in front of the sign.

The data sign-2 is placed directly on the floor at the front office, where all guests usually line up to register their arrival or check-in at the hotel, as shown in Figure 8. Through this sign, all guests
are reminded to respect social distance by standing one meter apart from each other as it is lined up on the floor by stickers.

The same as data sign-1, the information value of data sign-2 is also an ideal/real value as it is stated on the sign “RESPECT SOCIAL DISTANCE”, complete with a depicted figure of a “footprint”. As for the salience, this sign showed an intense instruction of social distance by which it is completed with sequences of the queue-sign location where the guest should stand one meter apart. This sign is displayed with real distanced framing. It is placed according to the intention of the sign maker in determining social distance among all guests as it is mandated by the new normal regulation that strongly prohibits crowd gathering. Overall, the composition meaning of this sign showed an absolute new normal representation by which the sign is placed in such a way that made all guests stand one meter apart to adopt social distancing and avoid crowd gathering.

Data sign-3 is a poster of covid-19 prevention operational procedure in the hotel area as shown in Figure 9. It is placed in the front area of the hotel and at the back entrance. This sign showed all mandatory new normal life representation that is regulated in the Circular Letter No. HK.02.01/ MENKES/335/2020 issued by Indonesia’s Minister of Health, such as: keeping clean hands, wearing a mask, maintaining social distance, no physical contact, applying sneeze and cough etiquette, and regular temperature check.

This sign showed an ideal and real information value as it is displayed through verbal text and images. The salience is firmly denoted in the headline or title of the sign “STANDARD PROCEDURE ON PREVENTING COVID-19 IN HOTEL AREA/ SOP PENCEGAHAN COVID-19 DI AREA HOTEL”. It showed all aspects of the new normal life representation in the hotel area in preventing Covid-19. As for the framing, this sign used centred framing with nonlinear composition. This sign is not requiring a sequential reading to understand the message. It can be read in random sequences since each message from each image has an independent meaning.

Lastly, data sign-4 is a mixed sign of Covid-19 standard procedure and hand sanitiser usage procedure, as shown in Figure 10. These signs are placed on every floor of the building and next to every stairway. It is a gentle reminder to all guests of the standard new normal protocol and to use
Figure 9. Data sign-3.
(Source: Author)

Figure 10. Data sign-4.
(Source: Author)
hand sanitiser as often as necessary during their stay in the hotel. The focus of the analysis is the hand sanitiser sign.

The information value of the data sign-4 is also an ideal/real value as shown by the text of the sign “PLEASE USE HAND SANITISER AT ANY TIME/MOHON GUNAKAN HAND SANITISER SETIAP SAAT”. The salience of this sign is indicated by the steps in using a hand sanitiser. The salience is also highlighted by the presence of a hand sanitiser next to the sign. As it is a sequential step sign, this sign uses centred framing with linear composition.

4. Conclusion
Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the new normal protocol is intensely implemented in the tourism industry to provide health and safety precautions to all guests and employees in preventing the spread of Covid-19 in the hotel area used as the case study in this paper. It is shown by the presence of many outdoor signs of the new normal protocol in the hotel premises (see Figure 6). Those signs include all mandated protocols of Covid-19 prevention, such as washing hands at the point of entry in the front gate of the hotel, body-temperature check upon arrival, social distance practice, wearing a mask, no handshake, sneeze/cough etiquette and using hand sanitiser at all time necessary during the stay. Likewise, those new normal protocols are intensely emphasised through the composition meaning of all signs. All data showed an ideal and real information value as it is mandated by the regulation. The salience is shown in the variance of text display and colourful image. The framing of all signs is centred on either linear or nonlinear composition. Conclusively, the study shows the readiness of the tourism industry in Kuta to adapt the new normal protocol in preventing Covid-19, especially in Rabasta @Kuta Hotel.

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