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Exploring the Linguistic Landscape: The Role of Local Culture in the Naming of Hotels and Restaurants at Sorake Beach and Lagundri Beach, South Nias, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to explore local culture in naming hotels and restaurants in Sorake Beach and Lagundri Beach, South Nias. The beach is famous for having unique characteristics of right-hand waves and heights. one of the best waves in the world for surfing . Data collection involved capturing hotel and restaurant signs using a mobile phone camera. The study focused on examining vocabulary and phrases displayed on the nameplates of business objects such as hotels and restaurants, especially those using the Nias language. This study examines the role of local culture in naming business objects through a linguistic landscape perspective. In this study, toponymy is not only viewed as a geographical marker, but also as a communication medium that reflects the dynamics of language, local culture, and global influences. The analysis was conducted using a semantic triangle approach that includes the relationship between symbols, meanings or concepts, and referents. Name places reflect cultural and social identity. Place names are an important part of local identity and often reflect the history, culture and character of the people who created or use the name.

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1. Introduction

Language, as a representation of a society's culture, is expressed through the use of language to convey information both orally and in writing. The use of written language, especially in public spaces, is a subject of study in the field of linguistics known as linguistic context. The signs and language found in public spaces show and regulate the parameters of their operation in certain places (Yusuf & Datang, 2023).

Public space is an area that functions as a means to regulate and monitor power, in contrast to private spaces such as the living room at home. In general, public space is a place that is used collectively by individuals or groups, and in some situations, managed by the government. The use of language seen in signs in public spaces is often referred to as the Linguistic Landscape.

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), linguistic landscape includes the language of public signs, billboards, street names, landmarks, commercial signs, and public signs on government buildings that combine to form the language context of a region or settlement. In this study, linguistic landscape can be interpreted as the use of language in public spaces that are reflected in place names. The phenomenon of linguistic landscape around Sorake and Lagundri Beach is of concern because as a world tourist destination, this beach is a meeting place for tourists from various countries, especially surfers.

Local culture also encompasses regional languages, which must not be forgotten. Regional languages are part of cultural heritage that must be preserved sustainably. They serve several functions, including: 1) as a symbol of regional identity, 2) as a symbol of regional pride, and 3) as a means of communication within the family and local community. (Asrif, 2010; Supu & Ramansyah, 2020) . The role of local culture, especially through regional languages, is very important in supporting tourism development and introducing cultural richness to the world. Regional languages can be a unique attraction that provides authentic experiences to tourists, as well as a means to strengthen the cultural identity of a region.

As stated by Fishman (1991) language is a marker of identity that not only reflects cultural diversity but also strengthens the sense of belonging to the cultural heritage. It is important to utilize local languages in everyday life for survival (Majidi, 2013) . Through the use of local languages in various aspects of tourism—such as tour guides, information boards, performing arts, and local product promotions—tourists not only enjoy the natural beauty or uniqueness of culture, but also get to know the linguistic richness that exists. This aligns with the view that authentic tourism experiences can create emotional appeal and increase tourist engagement with local culture (Cohen & Cooper, 1986) .

In addition, UNESCO (2003) emphasized that linguistic diversity is an important part of intangible cultural heritage that must be preserved. The use of regional languages in tourism promotion, such as in digital campaigns or cultural festivals, can be an effective medium to introduce local values to the global world. For example, tourist destinations such as Bali often combine regional languages in performing arts and cultural rituals to provide a unique experience for international tourists. By integrating regional languages in various forms of tourist interaction, not only the attractiveness of tourist destinations increases, but also global awareness of the importance of preserving local culture. This supports the sustainability of culture amidst the flow of modernization, while opening up economic opportunities for local communities.

Naming business objects, such as hotels or restaurants, using regional languages can be considered as one of the efforts in maintaining regional languages. Language maintenance itself is a method to preserve and maintain the existence of a language, in order to reduce the impact of language shift, and even has the potential to be an alternative in preventing its extinction (Chaer, 2003; Prasetya et al., 2020; Sumarsono, 2006).

Languages can be preserved in a wider social context, including through media and tourism. (Krauss, 1992). Using the local language in naming business establishments, such as hotels and restaurants, can be an effective promotional tool to encourage the everyday use of that language.

2. Materials and Methods

Lagundri Beach and Sorake Beach are located in Luahagundre Maniamolo District, South Nias Regency, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia (Figure 1). The case study location was chosen because of its status as one of the popular beaches in Nias . This beach is famous for having the best right-hand wave height in the world which is always visited by foreign surfers. (Laiya, 2022; Laoli, 2021; Sihombing & Ge'e, 2022; Zega & Widjonarko, 2019) . Sorake Beach has often hosted international surfing competitions since 1993. The waves have 5 levels so that surfers can perform attractions with various styles at each level. Surfers can also ride waves up to a distance of 200 meters.



Figure 1. Lagundri Beach (left) and Sorake Beach (right)

The data used are the writings on the hotel and restaurant signs around Sorake Beach and Lagundri Beach. Specifically, this study analyzes the use of the Nias regional language on the signs. Data were collected using a cellphone camera (Iphone 14 Pro). The naming of businesses such as hotels and restaurants in Sorake Beach and Lagundri Beach was analyzed based on toponymy. Names places reflect cultural and social identity. Place names are an important part of local identity and often reflect the history, culture and character of the people who created or use the name. (Ainiala et al., 2012) . Place names, including business names such as hotels and restaurants, often reflect aspects of culture that they wish to preserve or introduce to the wider community. The Nias tribe originated from mainland China, migrating around 3500 years before Christ to the early Christian era (Zagoto et al., 2023) . The Nias people use the Nias regional language. where there is no consonant at the end of each word (Bawamenewi, 2020; Zalukhu et al., 2025) .

The concept of the semantic triangle uses three main terms: (a) symbol, (b) meaning or concept and (c) referent (Ogden & Richards, 1923) . These three elements are interconnected, as indicated by the sides

of the triangle. The relationship between meaning or concept and symbol is causal, meaning that symbols can cause certain attitudes or impacts on others. This can be applied in the names of tourist attractions, where the symbols in the name of the tour are associated with the meaning contained therein .

3. Results and Discussions

A. Toponymy Study

The use of regional languages as names of buildings or structures is regulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2009 Chapter III Article 36 paragraph 4 which states that naming can be used if it has historical, cultural, customary, and/or religious value. The role of regional languages in attracting tourists, especially for those interested in authentic cultural experiences. Names in regional languages may provide added value or exoticism that increases tourist appeal.

The characteristics of the names of traditional clothing attributes reflect the history, identity, and characteristics of each region. The naming of traditional clothing attributes usually not only describes the function, but also has a rich symbolic meaning, including the origin of the word, historical meaning to cultural aesthetics. The planting of places using the names of regional clothing attributes, especially war clothes, is shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4.



Figure 2. Villa Baluze



Figure 3 . Hotel Toho



Figure 4. Restaurant Kalabubu

In Figure 2, the accommodation located in the Lagundri Beach area is named “Villa Baluze”. The word “Baluze” comes from the word “ baluse” . The change from baluse to baluze may reflect phonological developments or dialect variations in the Nias language, where the sound of letters or pronunciation undergoes slight modifications but retains its basic meaning. This word transformation may also occur due to socio-cultural shifts or the influence of the use of the regional language in different contexts. The use of baluse involves the right hand holding a spear or called ' toho' , while the left hand holds a shield or ' baluse ', to protect the body from attacks. In Figure 3, the hotel is called Hotel Toho which is located in the Sorake Beach area. In the Nias language, the word "toho" refers to a spear-shaped weapon that is about two meters long. In the past, toho was used as a means of self-defense in battle against enemies. Now, toho and baluse have changed their function as properties in the traditional Nias dance known as " Fataele " (Figure 4). In addition, there is also the " Kalabubu " Restaurant which comes from the attributes of war clothing which is a type of necklace that is only worn by men. In addition, kalabubu as jewelry, is also a piece of war clothing that functions to protect the neck from sharp enemy weapons (Figure 4).



Figure 5. Nias War Dance “ Fataele ” (source: museum-nias.org)

In the book Tanah Para Pendekar by Vanni Puccioni, it is explained that baluse is ideally used in battles in jungle terrain, while kalabubu - a necklace made of special wood - can be worn by a Nias warrior only after he has successfully decorated his village with at least one skull of an enemy he has killed himself. Other sources reveal that the function of kalabubu is also as a neck protector from machete attacks launched by emali or headhunters (Puccioni, 2013) . This attack is generally carried out diagonally, from the left neck to the right armpit, to obtain the head and right hand intact (binu) which are used in the mangai binu (beheading) tradition. This tradition has long been abandoned by the Nias people during the

Dutch East Indies government and the arrival of Christianity on Nias Island.

Sosui Restaurant is located on Sorake Beach (Figure 6). In the Nias language, the phrase sosui comes from the words " so ," meaning there is or comes, and " sui ," meaning again. In the context of naming a restaurant that uses the term sosui from the Nias language—meaning "there is again" or "come again." Business owners or service providers in tourist areas often choose English terms over their Indonesian equivalents, such as "restaurant" instead of "restoran," with the aim of creating a broader appeal and communicating an international impression. This move also allows tourists from different countries to more easily recognize the services offered.

Baga Lagundri Bay Resort Hotel is located in the Lagundri Beach area (Figure 7). The word " baga " in Nias language means good. The meaning of "good" from the word " Baga " in the context of toponymy is very dependent on the local Nias culture and language which reflects the expectations or nature of the place which is considered good, beautiful, or profitable.

Kabunohi Sorake Resort is located on Sorake Beach (Figure 8). The phrase Kabunohi consists of two words in the Nias language, namely " kabu " which means garden, and " nohi " which means coconut. Literally, " Kabunoh i" refers to "coconut garden." The choice of this name for the hotel refers to the identity of Nias Island which is known for its abundant coconut wealth.

Sosui Restaurant, Baga Lagundri Bay Resort Hotel, and Kabunohi Sorake Resort apply the English writing pattern, where the name (modifier) is placed before the noun. This is different from Villa Baluze, Hotel Toho, and Restaurant Kalabubu which follow the Indonesian writing pattern, namely by placing the type of property followed by the name of the location or place.



Figure 6. Sosui Restaurant



Figure 7. Baga Hotel



Figure 8. Kabunohi Sorake Resort

B. Analysis based on Semantic Triangle

In semantic studies, the term toho —which refers to a spear in a particular language—can be analyzed through a semantic triangle model consisting of three main elements. As a symbol, toho functions as a word or linguistic sign that represents a particular object, namely a spear. When someone hears or reads the word toho , this term will evoke a certain mental image or concept, such as a sharp weapon used for hunting, war, or in traditional ceremonies. As a referent, toho refers to a physical spear in the real world, namely a concrete object that can be recognized based on certain characteristics, such as its length and sharp tip. In the semantic triangle, the relationship between symbol and meaning or concept is causal, because the symbol toho triggers the emergence of the concept of a spear in someone's mind. The relationship between meaning or concept and referent shows the relationship of ideas to real physical objects. Meanwhile, the relationship between symbol and referent is arbitrary and indirect, because the use of the word toho to refer to a spear is determined conventionally in the language.

The term baluse, which means “shield” in the Nias language, functions as a symbol representing the word used to describe protective equipment within the Nias language and culture. As a symbol, baluse enables communication about shields using a single word that is widely understood within Nias society. When the word baluse is spoken, it brings up the concept or mental image of a shield, which not only has a defensive function, but also value in traditional ceremonies. This concept provides an understanding of the form, function, and cultural relevance of the shield. The third element, the referent, refers to a real physical shield object, with characteristics such as shape, size, and material that are in accordance with

the concept of Nias culture. In the semantic triangle model, the relationship between the baluse symbol and its referent is causal, where the word baluse brings up an understanding of a shield in th listener's mind. The relationship between the symbol and the physical object is arbitrary, as it is based on linguistic conventions within the Nias-speaking community.

In the semantic triangle analysis, the phrase kalababu as a symbol refers to a word that describes a traditional accessory worn for war preparation and ceremonies within the Nias community. This symbol links the word with a meaningful cultural image. The concept that arises when hearing kalababu is a typical neck necklace that symbolizes strength and cultural identity, with functions in traditional events and war. The referent refers to the physical kalababu, identifiable by its material and design, which is part of Nias cultural heritage. The relationship in this semantic triangle illustrates that the symbol of kalababu gives rise to meaning in the mind of the listener, while the relationship between the symbol and the referent is arbitrary, based on linguistic agreements in the Nias community.

The phrase sosui is used as a symbol or name of a restaurant, conveying a message to customers to return. The choice of this phrase is expected to make guests feel satisfied and encouraged to come again. As a referent, sosui refers to a restaurant as a physical entity that wants to be visited again. This name becomes an identity that reflects the restaurant's appeal to attract customers. For people who understand the Nias language and culture, sosui contains the meaning of an invitation to return to enjoy the culinary experience at the place, which reflects the friendliness and quality of service. By using this phrase, the restaurant not only offers dishes, but also emphasizes its commitment to providing a pleasant experience. In the context of the semantic triangle, this naming connects the meaning of local culture with business goals, while creating an atmosphere that is in line with the values of friendliness and customer satisfaction in Nias culture.

The word baga meaning “good” or “nice” is used as a symbol in hotel naming, referring to positive qualities, such as good service or experience. In this context, baga refers to the hotel as a physical entity associated with the meaning of “good,” forming a positive perception for tourists. For local people and tourists, the word baga carries connotations of quality and excellence that reflect Nias cultural values. The use of this word in the hotel name not only indicates good quality, but also connects the hotel with local values related to hospitality and quality. Within the framework of the semantic triangle, this naming connects local cultural meaning with business objectives, creating an atmosphere aligned with the values of friendliness and customer satisfaction in Nias culture.

The phrase " kabunohi " as a symbol, is a verbal representation used in the Nias language to describe the concept of a coconut grove. In this case, the meaning or concept of "kabunohi" is a coconut grove as a place planted with coconut trees. The broader concept is tropical nature, tranquility, or agrarian life associated with coconuts. Culturally, this may also include meanings about the welfare, agriculture, or traditions of the Nias people who rely on coconuts as a natural resource. So, the meaning or concept contained in the symbol " kabunohi " is the coconut grove itself, but it can also include a broader picture of nature or culture. The referent of " kabunohi " is a real object or phenomenon that can be found in the physical world, namely the coconut grove itself, which is an area or land planted with coconut trees. The environment or area planted with coconuts , which can be seen physically. The referent in this semantic triangle refers to a reality or object that directly exists in the physical world, namely the real coconut grove. Overall, "kabunohi" connects verbal symbols (spoken or written words) with the concept in our minds (the idea of a coconut grove) and a real referent in the physical world (the coconut grove in nature or the surrounding environment).

4. Conclusion

Here's the improved version of the text, with grammar checked and revised for clarity and flow:
Based on an analysis using toponymy and the semantic triangle approaches, naming business entities in the Nias language is not just about assigning a name but also serves as a means to introduce and reinforce local cultural identity. This process influences the experiences of customers and visitors, who can feel a closer connection to Nias culture through the choice of name. Such naming practices convey messages and cultural values, establishing an emotional bond between the business and the local community, while also playing a role in preserving culture in the modern era. In this context, the semantic triangle explains how the meaning of a name is interpreted by the owner, customers, and the community. Using the Nias language for business names also acts as an effort to preserve the language, which is potentially endangered, making it relevant in the face of globalization. These business names can also attract tourists interested in local culture, providing an authentic and profound cultural experience. Naming a business in the Nias language not only establishes an identity but also reflects the cultural values, history, and traditions of the local community.

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