IDEAS

Framing of Eco-Discourse in Social Media

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Abstract

In this digital era, social media such as Instagram certainly plays an important role in promoting sustainable actions that can attract the attention of its users. Visual content that depicts strategically-framed messages about sustainability has the potential to influence people's perspectives and may lead to social change. This study aims to analyze the framing of eco-discourse in Kembali Becik and Astungkara Way through Instagram. In addition, this study also aims to discuss solutions related to sustainable actions offered by the two forums. This study was designed using a qualitative descriptive method. The results revealed that positive and negative framing can be found in both accounts.
Keywords: *framing; eco-discourse; social media*

Introduction

Environmental issues have become a focus of research across various disciplines. This aims to raise public awareness, which remains relatively low when it comes to environmental issues. In Indonesia, issues regarding environment are linked to the authenticity of the tourism (Istianah & Suhandano, 2022). For instance, a study by Istianah and Suhandano (2022) pinpoints how the richness of Kalimantan nature in the tourism website is described using appraisal patterns, in efforts to encourage the readers to preserve the natural beauty.

Besides websites, social media platforms also play a crucial role in promoting sustainable actions that attract the attention of users interested in these issues. In line with this, research by Lee and Weder (2021) revealed that visual contents conveying strategically-framed messages about sustainability has the potential to influence public perspectives and facilitate social change. Furthermore, Muliawan et al. (2024) also highlights how Instagram serves as a powerful tool to raise awareness regarding environmental sustainability by the use of hashtags.

There are several sustainability action forums that choose Instagram as a platform to promote sustainable actions, one of which is "Kembali Becik." This forum is a collaboration between the government, communities, traditional villages, and businesses supporting sustainable actions in Bali. Swari et al. (2023) have discussed how this forum actively uses salience or the emphasis of language patterns related to environmental conservation through social media. From an ecolinguistic perspective, the lexicon highlighted mainly consists of adjectives such as "eco-friendly" and "sustainable".

Framing analysis on specific issues can facilitate an understanding of how meanings are constructed to reflect a phenomenon (Lee & Weder, 2021). The framing process involves perceived aspects of reality and makes messages more meaningful or memorable to the audience through a form of communication and it can be used to generate four dimensions of communication—defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and offering solutions. Framing theory has provided significant findings for sustainability in many studies, including ecolinguistic research. In the ecolinguistic paradigm, framing theory is adapted and developed by Stibbe (2015), focusing on environmental issues. Multiple studies applied Stibbe's theoretical framework. One of the recent ones is a study by Maureen and Janjua (2024) that discusses the importance of lexical choices in framing ecological issues in The Dawn editorial news. The findings of the research include phrases such as "global food waste", "toxic air", and many more.

This study aims to analyze the framing of environmental issues in Kembali Becik and Astungkara Way forums through Instagram. These forums were chosen due to the distinctive approaches; the former one focusing on Bali tourism and social actions, and the latter one focusing on activities in Bali nature. Hence, the research questions are: 1) How do Kembali Becik and Astungkara Way frame environmental issues on Instagram? and 2) What are the dominant frames used by both forums?

Method

This study was designed using descriptive qualitative method. The data source are the Instagram account @kembali.becik, which has 260 posts and 4,105 followers (as of January 2024), and the Instagram account @astungkaraway_trails, with 474 posts and 5,703 followers (as of January 2024). The data collection process begins with taking screenshots of each post on the Instagram accounts of @kembali.becik and @astungkaraway_trails from September 2023 to March 2024 (a six-month period). The next step was dividing the data based on the contents, such as tourism, social actions, and nature. The criteria in choosing the samples include the highest number of likes and comments, hence showing the interactivity rate between the forum and the Instagram users.

Data were categorized based on two types of framing, namely positive framing and negative framing. Additionally, data were analyzed using framing theory from an ecolinguistic perspective by Stibbe (2015). The analysis stages include classifying the lexicon, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and offering solutions. In this case, the focus is on trigger words used in the captions of each post from both forums. The discussion involves interpreting the framing with reference to ecological implications. Moreover, in order to ensure the reliability, this study applied researcher reflexivity method. From the results of the analysis, conclusions were drawn regarding the the framing of eco-discourse in both forums.

Results

The results of this research are divided further into positive framing and negative framing used in Kembali Becik and Astungkara Way forums on Instagram. It can be highlighted that the dominant lexicons used for positive framing are adjectives related to environment such as "sustainable" and "environmentally-friendly". Meanwhile, when it comes to negative framing, a combination of adjectives, verbs, and nouns are used to strengthen the urgency to the readers.

Positive Framing

(1) "A little throwback for our previous Sustainable Trip! We look forward to embarking on more environmentally-friendly journeys in the time to come. Any thoughts on where our next sustainable exploration should be?"

Datum (1) employs nostalgia and future orientation using positive adjectives such as "sustainable" and "environmentally-friendly" to highlight past achievements and future commitments. It assumes that sustainability in travel is a shared value among its audience, promoting the belief that individual and collective efforts in choosing sustainable trips are important and desirable. The caption serves to reinforce community bonds by reminiscing shared experiences while encouraging continued engagement in sustainable practices. It acts both as a reflection and a call to action, motivating followers to participate in future environmentally-conscious journeys. It aligns with contemporary values of environmental responsibility and ethical travel, appealing to an audience that prioritizes these ideals.

(2) "Time flew by, and it's been a few weeks since we had Pasar Becik at Jiwa Garden! We're still buzzing with excitement from the event, the energy, and the community. Huge thanks to everyone who contributed and to our wonderful visitors, your presence warmed our hearts. Together we'll build more responsible and sustainable travel in Bali. See you on the next event!"

Datum (2) shows positive adjectives like "wonderful," "exciting," and "responsible" to frame the event and its participants in a highly favorable light. By describing the visitors as "wonderful" and their presence as "warming," the discourse establishes a sense of community and mutual appreciation. The use of "buzzing" and "energy" conveys a lively and dynamic atmosphere, while the phrase "responsible and sustainable" shifts the focus toward ethical values, subtly aligning the event and its audience with a broader commitment to sustainability.

(3) "Together Towards Bali's Green Future. Join Eco Tourism Bali & KemBali Becik in their mission to propel sustainable tourism in Bali forward. Together, we're building an eco-friendly, resilient Bali for generations to come. Stay tuned for a day of collaboration between us!"

Similarly, datum (3) shows the emphasis of collective action and a shared vision for sustainability. The adjectives "eco-friendly" and "resilient" underscore a positive and proactive stance towards environmental stewardship. By using "green" and "sustainable," the message evokes a sense of responsibility and long-term commitment. The framing positions the audience as active participants in a collaborative effort, reinforcing the idea of unity and forward momentum in building a better, eco-conscious Bali.

(4) "Our GROUNDED COURSE is starting soon! Let's learn together the full rice cycle over 10 sessions starting on February 21st. Let's gather together in the fields, to spend quality time in nature, and learn something new each time. The course is not only about rice but also about other farming techniques, including how to make your own natural fertilizer and pesticides. Get your hands and feet dirty in mud while breathing fresh air and expose your skin to sun."

In datum (4), "natural" highlights the focus on eco-friendly practices, such as making natural fertilizers and pesticides, which appeals to those interested in sustainable farming. Another adjective "fresh" describes the air as "fresh" creates a positive image of the outdoor environment, encouraging readers to appreciate the benefits of being in nature, while the word "new" implies that participants will learn unique skills and knowledge, generating excitement about the course, and "dirty" in the context of farming gives the activity a sense of authenticity, connecting participants directly to the land. This post promotes environmental consciousness by encouraging participants to engage actively with their surroundings, learn how to care for the land, and adopt practices that benefit in agriculture.

(5) BREAKFAST IN THE MOUNTAINS. On one of our newest platforms built in Tamblingan area. Sleep over the clouds, enjoy fresh breeze and sounds of nature. Even though we are in Bali, high up in the mountains, the temperature can go as low as 17°C at night, so get ready and pack some warm beanie too."

These adjectives in datum (5) help frame the post by emphasizing the uniqueness and appeal of the experience. "Newest" suggests a recent addition, making the platform sound modern and exclusive. "Fresh" highlights the refreshing qualities of the air and atmosphere, creating a sense of rejuvenation. "High" refers to the elevation, which emphasizes the special setting of being in the mountains. Lastly, "warm" adds a comforting note, reminding readers to prepare for colder temperatures, which subtly enhances the adventure aspect of the trip. The post overall creates a frame of travel and nature immersion, showcasing the beauty and uniqueness of the mountain experience while ensuring comfort and exclusivity.

(6) "We are so excited to start the last 10-day trail across Bali for this year tomorrow From Cemagi Beach, through the heart of Bali, across the mountains and lush jungle, all the way to Seririt area on the north coast. 135 km in total, but on average between 10 to 20 km a day

The adjective "excited" conveys the enthusiasm and anticipation of starting the trail, setting a positive and enthusiastic tone. "Memorable" emphasizes the significance of the experience, framing it as something participants will cherish. The frame is about travel and nature immersion, emphasizing the excitement, physical challenge, and the rich, unforgettable experience participants will have while exploring Bali. The word lush refers to something rich and abundant, usually related to nature, like dense vegetation. It frames the post by emphasizing the abundance and natural beauty of the environment (in this case, the jungle), making it seem vibrant and full of life.

Negative Framing

(7) "Feeling the scorching heat lately? Over the past week in September 2023, many parts of Indonesia including Bali, have been sweltering in high temperatures reaching a range of 35-38.0 °C which is very high. This heat wave is projected to continue into October and November."

In datum (7), adjectives like "scorching," "sweltering," and "very high" are used to frame the current weather conditions as extreme and uncomfortable. The term "scorching" evokes an intense, almost unbearable heat, while "sweltering" reinforces this feeling of discomfort. Describing temperatures as "very high" further emphasizes the severity of the situation. This framing serves to heighten the sense of urgency and concern, making the ongoing and projected heat wave a pressing issue for the audience. Besides adjectives, there are nouns such as "temperatures" and "heat wave" are employed in order to frame the topic of the environmental issue. Additionally, "projected" and "continue" are the verbs that also frame the urgent situation more clearly.

(8) "Quoted from Earth.org, every hour, forests equivalent to the size of 300 football fields are being cut down. By the year 2030, the planet might have only 10% of its forests left: if deforestation isn't stopped, they could all be gone in less than 100 years."

In line with the previous one, datum (8) employs verbs such as "cut down" and "stopped" to frame the issue of deforestation as both urgent and critical. The choice of lexicon in this eco-discourse starkly emphasizes the potential drastic reduction in forest coverage, heightening the sense of impending loss. This framing creates a narrative of environmental crisis, urging decisive action to protect natural resources and secure a sustainable future.

Discussion

The use of certain lexicons plays a pivotal role in framing the message and shaping how the audience perceives the call to action. Both Kembali Becik and Astungkara Way forums appeal to a sense of collective identity and responsibility, encouraging readers to see themselves as part of a community that values and cherishes the island. This supports Stibbe's positive framing theory in which the discourse emphasizes solutions and hopeful outcomes. However, in some cases, the message underscores the severity of the weather. This negative framing highlights the dramatic impact and connects it to the larger issue of the climate crisis, urging for collective awareness and action to address environmental challenges and safeguard the planet's future. As Stibbe (2015) puts it, it is likely that negative framing evokes fear yet also raises awareness about the urgency of the problem.

Framing is employed mostly through its use of adjectives to construct a positive and sustainable image of the enterprise. It frames tourism as a restorative, eco-friendly activity, inviting travelers to explore beyond typical tourist paths. This is in line with Swari et al.'s study (2023) that discusses the salience of adjectives in environmentally-related Instagram captions. Moreover, it also aligns with

Muliawan et al.'s (2024) research that Instagram serves as a powerful tool to call for social change, for instance to minimize plastic waste in Bali. The framing positions the enterprise as a mindful, ethical choice, aligning with values of sustainability and community connection, not only for audience in Bali but also audience from different parts of the world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the framing of eco-discourse in social media can be categorized into positive framing and negative framing. The positive framing, being the most dominant one, mainly emphasizes authenticity and discovery, inviting travelers to explore beyond typical tourist paths. The framing positions the enterprise as a mindful, ethical choice, aligning with values of sustainability and community connection. Meanwhile, the negative framing suggests that with proper planning and awareness, people can still have an enjoyable experience. This framing encourages proactive behavior to mitigate potential inconveniences. However, it needs to be highlighted that this study is limited to the framing used on Instagram captions of two accounts based in Bali. Consequently, it is suggested that future studies delve more into eco-discourse from other types of media.

Acknowledgment

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