



Constructing Cultural Heritage: A Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis of Wonderful Indonesia's YouTube Video on Mentawai Tattoos

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-11 Revised: 2026-06-17 Accepted: 2026-06-17 Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Fairclough; tourism discourse; Wonderful Indonesia; YouTube; cultural heritage; Mentawai DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10536 Corresponding Author: Windy Harsiwi windyharsiwi@lecturer.undip.ac.id Information and Culture Department, Universitas Diponegoro, Central Java	<i>This study examines how Indonesia, particularly the Mentawai indigenous culture, is linguistically represented in the Wonderful Indonesia official YouTube promotional video entitled "Mentawai: The Ancient Art of Indonesia's Tattoos Heritage" using Fairclough's (1992) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Despite the growing body of research on Wonderful Indonesia promotional content, studies employing a linguistically focused CDA on videos representing Indonesian indigenous cultures remain scarce, particularly those analyzing a single video in systematic textual depth. This study addresses that gap. Employing a qualitative case study approach, this study analyzes the textual dimension of the video, focusing on evaluative vocabulary (e.g., "imbued," "ancient"), metaphor ("a story written on the skin"), inclusive pronoun use ("our feet touch the land"), and sensory language, to examine how Indonesia is constructed as an attractive cultural tourist destination. The findings reveal that the video deploys a coherent set of linguistic strategies that portray Indonesia as exotic, diverse, and spiritually rich, reflecting underlying ideological values related to national branding and soft power. The study also demonstrates how the promotional framing of indigenous cultural heritage raises critical concerns regarding commodification and the absence of indigenous voices. This study contributes to tourism discourse research in the Indonesian context and demonstrates the continued relevance of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for analyzing digital promotional media.</i>

1. Introduction

Tourism has grown into one of the most significant economic and cultural forces in the contemporary world. Beyond its economic contributions, tourism functions as a complex social and communicative phenomenon through which nations project particular images of themselves to global audiences. In the digital era, YouTube has emerged as one of the most powerful platforms for destination marketing, allowing governments, tourism boards, and content creators to reach millions of potential tourists worldwide through carefully produced audiovisual content (Yanwei & Hassan, 2023). The rise of digital tourism promotion has fundamentally transformed how nations construct and communicate their identities, with promotional videos becoming sophisticated ideological instruments rather than simple informational tools.

Indonesia, as one of Southeast Asia's most diverse and culturally rich nations, has been particularly active in leveraging digital platforms to promote its tourism industry. In 2011, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism launched the *Wonderful Indonesia* campaign as its official national tourism branding strategy, positioning the country as a destination of extraordinary natural beauty, cultural diversity, and spiritual depth (Soewito et al., 2022). The campaign has since produced hundreds of promotional videos distributed across social media platforms, with YouTube serving as a primary channel for reaching international audiences. These videos do not merely advertise tourist destinations; they actively construct a particular vision of Indonesia and its people for global consumption (Ratriyana & Murti, 2023).

Language plays a central and constitutive role in shaping how a destination is perceived. Tourism discourse goes far beyond the communication of factual information about places. Through carefully chosen words, metaphors, slogans, and narrative structures, promotional videos construct particular images of places and their people, shaping audience perceptions and desires in ways that serve specific ideological purposes (Dann, 1996). As Karimalievna (2024) argues, tourism discourse employs sophisticated linguocognitive persuasion techniques that embed deep cultural meaning into seemingly descriptive language. The language of tourism, therefore, is never neutral; it reflects and reproduces the values, priorities, and power relations of those who produce it (van Dijk, 2008).

This ideological dimension of language becomes particularly significant when promotional content focuses on indigenous cultures. The Mentawai people of West Sumatra are one of the world's oldest surviving indigenous communities, with a tattoo tradition, known locally as *titi*, believed to be among the oldest in the world. When such cultures become objects of tourism promotion, the language used to represent them carries profound implications for how those cultures are perceived, valued, and ultimately commodified for global audiences (Dabadi & Sharma, 2024).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a rigorous theoretical and methodological framework for examining these processes. Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional framework, which analyzes discourse at the levels of text, discourse practice, and social practice, is particularly well suited to this study for several reasons.

First, it allows for systematic linguistic analysis of the video's narration at the textual level, moving beyond impressionistic reading to identify specific lexical, metaphorical, and pronominal strategies.

Second, it connects micro-level textual choices to the macro-level institutional and ideological contexts of their production and circulation, enabling a holistic analysis of how tourism promotional discourse operates as an instrument of national branding and soft power.

Third, Fairclough's framework has been successfully and widely applied to tourism discourse (Sari et al., 2024; Dabadi & Sharma, 2024), lending methodological coherence and comparability to this study's findings. CDA's explicit concern with power and ideology makes it especially appropriate for analyzing texts that represent marginalized or indigenous communities, as it foregrounds questions of whose interests are served by particular discursive constructions.

Previous research on *Wonderful Indonesia* promotional content has primarily focused on multimodal analysis, examining the interplay of verbal and visual elements in constructing Indonesia's tourism identity (Ansori & Taopan, 2019), or has employed semiotic frameworks to examine tourism organization promotional materials (Harsiwi & Wicaksono, 2025). While such studies have made valuable contributions, they have tended to prioritize visual modes of meaning over systematic linguistic analysis, or have focused on promotional contexts other than YouTube video narration.

Furthermore, studies specifically addressing the linguistic representation of Indonesian indigenous cultures in official tourism promotional videos through a CDA lens remain scarce. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a linguistically focused CDA of the *Wonderful Indonesia* video "*Mentawai: The Ancient Art of Indonesia's Tattoos Heritage*," examining how Indonesia and the Mentawai culture are discursively constructed through language for a global audience.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How is Indonesia linguistically represented in the *Wonderful Indonesia* official YouTube promotional video on Mentawai tattoos?
2. What discursive strategies are used to construct Indonesia as a tourist destination in the video?
3. What ideological meanings are embedded in the language of the *Wonderful Indonesia* promotional video?

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2022), focusing on a single promotional video as the primary data source. The data of this study is the *"Mentawai: The Ancient Art of Indonesia's Tattoos Heritage"* video published on the official *Wonderful Indonesia* YouTube channel (Wonderful Indonesia, n.d.). The video was selected purposively based on its official status, its representation of Indonesian indigenous cultural heritage, and its role as part of the *Wonderful Indonesia* national tourism branding campaign.

Purposive sampling is appropriate for qualitative research in which the researcher seeks a data source that is rich in the phenomena being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). It is acknowledged that focusing on a single video is an inherent limitation of the case study design; accordingly, the findings of this study are not intended as generalizations about all *Wonderful Indonesia* discourse, but rather as a detailed interpretive analysis of one richly layered promotional text. Furthermore, while the *Wonderful Indonesia* video combines verbal, visual, and auditory modes of meaning, this study intentionally focuses on the verbal/linguistic dimension of the video's narration, as this constitutes a discrete and analytically tractable site for CDA. The multimodal dimensions of the video represent a productive avenue for future research.

The data analysis follows Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which consists of three interrelated dimensions: (1) **Text Analysis**: examining the linguistic features of the video's narration and on-screen text, including vocabulary, metaphor, pronoun use, and evaluative language; (2) **Discourse Practice**: analyzing how the text is produced and how it is intended to be consumed by its target audience; and (3) **Social Practice**: interpreting the broader ideological and sociocultural context in which the video is produced and circulated.

Data collection was conducted by transcribing the verbal language of the promotional video, including narration, taglines, and on-screen written text. The transcription was reviewed twice by the lead researcher against the original video to verify accuracy and completeness. The analysis proceeded in two stages. In the first stage, a close reading of the full transcript was conducted to identify recurring linguistic patterns and candidate features for analysis.

In the second stage, identified features were systematically categorized according to Fairclough's textual analytical categories (vocabulary, metaphor, pronoun, sensory language), and representative instances were selected for detailed interpretive discussion. To enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, findings were peer-reviewed by a co-researcher familiar with CDA methodology, and interpretive disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Text Analysis

The first dimension of Fairclough's (1992) CDA framework involves close linguistic analysis of the text itself. This section examines four key linguistic features of the video's narration: evaluative and poetic vocabulary, metaphor, pronoun use, and sensory language. Each of these features contributes to the overall discursive construction of Mentawai as an extraordinary, spiritually significant, and authentically Indonesian cultural site. Table 1 provides a summary of selected instances of each feature as a reference for the subsequent discussion.

Table 1. Summary of key linguistic features identified in the video narration

Feature	Example from Video	Discursive Function
Evaluative vocabulary	<i>"imbued with hope for the beauty that awaits"</i>	Elevates hardship; constructs journey as spiritually purposeful
Evaluative vocabulary	<i>"living in harmony with nature"</i>	Constructs Mentawai as idealized, pre-modern other
Metaphor	<i>"a story written on the skin"</i>	Reframes tattoo as text; invites interpretive engagement
Metaphor	<i>"the moon etched permanently in the sky"</i>	Attributes cosmic scale to single tattoo line; romanticizes tradition
Metaphor	<i>"a bridge connecting the past with the future"</i>	Positions tradition as living and forward-looking
Pronoun use	<i>"when our feet touch the land of Mentawai"</i>	Collapses viewer-destination distance; positions viewer as participant
Sensory language	<i>"a village hidden behind the Lush Greenery"</i>	Constructs destination as secret; enhances appeal for discovery-seeking tourists

3.1.1 Evaluative and Poetic Vocabulary

The most immediately striking feature of the video's language is its heavy reliance on evaluative vocabulary, that is language that does not merely describe but actively assigns positive value and significance to what is being described. The narration opens by describing the journey to the Mentawai village as a path *"filled with mud and Stones, yet each step is imbued with hope for the beauty that awaits."* This framing is significant: the physical difficulty of the journey is acknowledged, but it is immediately reframed as spiritually purposeful. The word *"imbued"* is a formal, literary word that elevates the narration from simple description to poetic evocation, positioning the viewer within a quasi-mystical experience rather than a tourist itinerary.

Throughout the video, evaluative adjectives and noun phrases are deployed consistently and purposefully. The tattoo tradition is described as *"ancient,"* an adjective carrying strong connotations of authenticity, depth, and cultural significance. The community's way of life is described as *"living in harmony with nature,"* a phrase that constructs the Mentawai people as occupying an idealized, pre-modern relationship with the natural world.

This kind of language, what Dann (1996) identifies as a hallmark of tourism discourse, constructs destinations and their inhabitants as existing outside the flow of modern history, preserved in a state of timeless authenticity for the consumption of contemporary tourists. While this construction is visually and emotionally appealing, it also risks reducing a living indigenous community to an ethnographic spectacle, a point that deserves critical attention alongside the appreciative framing the narration offers.

The tattoo process is described as *"not just art but also a ritual,"* and the resulting marks as *"not only seen but deeply felt within the soul."* This elevation of the tattoo from aesthetic object to spiritual experience is a deliberate discursive strategy consistent with Karimalieva's (2024) observation that tourism promotional discourse routinely employs linguocognitive techniques to construct emotional and spiritual connections between audiences and destinations.

The description of the Mentawai tribe's hospitality, *"their Friendly Smiles greet us as if we have long been a part of their tribe,"* is another evaluatively loaded moment. The capitalization of *"Friendly Smiles"* lends the phrase an almost emblematic quality, as though the hospitality of the Mentawai people is an official, defining characteristic of the destination. This construction of indigenous hospitality as a tourist attraction is a recurring pattern in tourism promotional discourse, serving to reassure potential visitors that they will be welcomed (Dabadi & Sharma, 2024).

At the same time, it raises a question of representational ethics: hospitality is framed here as a feature of the destination rather than as an expression of the Mentawai people's own social values and agency.

3.1.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is one of the most powerful linguistic tools in tourism promotional discourse, enabling producers to frame destinations and cultural practices in ways that resonate emotionally and symbolically with target audiences. The video's narration is exceptionally rich in metaphor, deploying figurative language at several key moments to elevate the Mentawai tattoo tradition to the level of universal human significance.

The most striking metaphor in the video is the description of Mentawai tattoos as *"a story written on the skin."* At the most literal level, this positions the

tattoo as a form of text, a communicative act rather than merely a decorative one, consistent with anthropological understandings of Mentawai tattooing as a practice through which personal, social, and spiritual identity is inscribed and communicated. However, the metaphor also serves a broader ideological function: by describing the tattoo as a “*story*,” the narration invites viewers to approach the tradition with curiosity, interpretive engagement, and emotional investment (Fairclough, 1992).

The second major metaphor is the comparison of each tattoo line to “*the moon etched permanently in the sky*.” This cosmic metaphor attributes a remarkable scale of significance to a single tattoo line, comparing it to an object of universal human wonder and a symbol of permanence and the cyclical nature of time. The word “*permanently*” reinforces the sense of timelessness and immutability that the video seeks to associate with the Mentawai tradition, aligning with what Yanwei and Hassan (2023) identify as the strategy of destination romanticization.

The third significant metaphor is the description of Mentawai tattoos as “*a bridge connecting the past with the future*.” This spatial metaphor positions the tattoo tradition as a living link between historical depth and contemporary relevance, challenging any perception that indigenous practices are relics of a dead past. The “*bridge*” metaphor implies movement, connection, and continuity, suggesting that the Mentawai tradition is not merely preserved but actively lived and carried forward, serving the ideological purpose of positioning Indonesia as a nation that honors and sustains its cultural heritage (Soewito et al., 2022; Ratriyana & Murti, 2023). Taken together, these three metaphors constitute a coherent ideological strategy for constructing Mentawai as both timeless and relevant, both ancient and alive.

3.1.3 Pronoun Use and Audience Positioning

The use of pronouns in the video’s narration reveals a carefully constructed strategy for positioning the viewer in relation to the Mentawai community and the tourism experience being promoted. The narration employs the first-person plural pronouns “*we*” and “*our*” at several key moments: “*when our feet touch the land of Mentawai*” and “*their Friendly Smiles greet us as if we have long been a part of their tribe*.” This inclusive pronoun strategy is a well-documented feature of tourism promotional discourse (Ansori & Taopan, 2019), and its function here is to collapse the distance between the viewer and the experience being described.

By using “*our*” and “*us*,” the narration positions the viewer as already present in the Mentawai village, already a participant in the journey rather than a distant observer. This is a powerful persuasive strategy because it bypasses the viewer’s potential sense of cultural distance or unfamiliarity. The phrase “*as if we have long been a part of their tribe*” is particularly significant: it not only describes the warmth of the Mentawai people’s hospitality but also suggests that the viewer belongs there, making the Mentawai experience feel accessible and personally

relevant to global audiences (Dann, 1996).

The shift between “we/our/us” and “their/the” in the narration also performs an important ideological function. While the inclusive pronouns bring the viewer close to the experience, the third-person references to the Mentawai people, “*their Friendly Smiles*,” “*the indigenous Mentawai tribe*,” “*their culture*,” maintain a subtle but persistent distinction between the tourist gaze and its object. The Mentawai people are consistently positioned as welcoming hosts and cultural spectacle, not as co-narrators of their own story. This asymmetry reflects what van Dijk (2008) identifies as the power-laden nature of representational discourse: the producers of the text speak for the Mentawai community without giving that community a direct voice in how they are represented.

3.1.4 Sensory and Immersive Language

A fourth key feature of the video's linguistic strategy is its consistent appeal to multiple sensory registers, creating a rich, immersive textual experience that anticipates and simulates the physical experience of visiting Mentawai. The narration describes the physical setting in vivid visual terms, “*dense forests*,” “*Lush Greenery*,” “*a village hidden behind the Lush Greenery*,” that construct the destination as a place of natural abundance and hidden beauty. The word “*hidden*” is particularly evocative, suggesting that the Mentawai village is a secret place, not easily found, and therefore all the more rewarding for those who seek it out.

The narration also appeals to touch and proprioception through phrases such as “*the path is winding, filled with mud and Stones*” and “*marks that are not only seen but deeply felt within the soul*.” The former phrase grounds the experience in physical reality, acknowledging the effort required to reach the destination. The latter phrase moves from the physical to the spiritual, suggesting that the Mentawai experience operates on a level deeper than ordinary sensory experience. This appeal to what might be called spiritual sensation is consistent with the broader discursive strategy of constructing Mentawai as a site of profound, transformative tourism experience (Karimalieva, 2024; Sari et al., 2024).

Taken together, these four linguistic features constitute a highly coherent and sophisticated discursive strategy for constructing Mentawai as an extraordinary, accessible, and deeply significant cultural tourism destination. However, it should also be noted that the analysis identifies a predominantly one-sided promotional construction: the narration does not acknowledge tensions, conflicts, or challenges within the Mentawai community's relationship with tourism, and alternative readings of the tradition (e.g., as a contested or evolving practice rather than a timeless heritage) are entirely absent. This selectivity is itself an ideologically significant feature of the text.

3.2 Discourse Practice

The second dimension of Fairclough's (1992) framework, discourse practice, concerns the processes by which texts are produced and consumed. This dimension examines not the linguistic features of the text itself but the institutional, social, and communicative contexts that shape how texts are made and how they reach and are used by their audiences.

The *"Mentawai: The Ancient Art of Indonesia's Tattoos Heritage"* video is produced by the official *Wonderful Indonesia* campaign, managed by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism. This institutional context is of fundamental importance to understanding the video's discursive function. The video is not the product of an independent filmmaker or a private tourism operator; it is an official government production, created with the explicit purpose of promoting Indonesia as a tourism destination to international audiences. This institutional authorship gives the video a particular kind of authority: it speaks not merely as one voice among many but as the voice of the Indonesian state, claiming the right to represent the Mentawai culture and to determine how it is presented to the world.

The production of the video reflects a sophisticated understanding of the conventions of contemporary digital tourism marketing. The narration is delivered in polished, literary English rather than Indonesian, signaling that the video's primary target audience is international rather than domestic. The language register, formal, poetic, and emotionally resonant, is calibrated to appeal to educated, culturally curious global viewers attracted by promises of authentic, off-the-beaten-path cultural experiences. This reflects a broader trend in national tourism branding toward what Ratriyana and Murti (2023) describe as the construction of exotic local identity as a core brand value.

One of the most strategically significant production choices in the video is the inclusion of Anthony Kiedis, the vocalist of the globally renowned band Red Hot Chili Peppers, as a featured personality who travels to Mentawai to experience the tattoo tradition firsthand. This celebrity endorsement strategy accomplishes several rhetorical objectives simultaneously: it provides Western audiences with a familiar cultural reference point through which to approach an unfamiliar practice, it legitimizes the Mentawai tattoo tradition in the eyes of global audiences by associating it with a figure of international cultural prestige, and it frames the Mentawai experience as something that even globally celebrated, sophisticated individuals find compelling and worth traveling far to experience (Soewito et al., 2022).

Critically, however, this choice also reinforces a Western-centric framing of the Mentawai tradition: its value is implicitly measured through the appreciation of a Western celebrity, rather than articulated on its own terms or through the voices of Mentawai community members themselves.

The choice of YouTube as the primary distribution platform is also strategically significant. YouTube's global reach, searchability, and capacity for audience engagement through likes, comments, and shares make it an exceptionally effective platform for tourism promotion (Yanwei & Hassan, 2023). The video is designed to circulate widely and to be discovered by viewers searching for content related to Indonesia, tattoos, indigenous cultures, or adventure travel, with the platform's algorithm further amplifying its reach by recommending it to primed audiences.

From the consumption side, the video is designed to be consumed in a relaxed, leisure context by viewers browsing YouTube for entertainment, inspiration, or travel planning purposes. Its narrative arc, from the initial journey through dense forests to the encounter with the Mentawai people, to the witnessing of the tattoo ritual, to the final reflection on the tradition's meaning, is structured to provide a complete and satisfying emotional experience within a brief viewing time, leaving the viewer with a sense of wonder and a desire to learn more or to visit Mentawai.

3.3 Social Practice

The third and broadest dimension of Fairclough's (1992) framework, social practice, situates the text and its production and consumption within the larger social, political, cultural, and ideological context in which they occur.

At the most fundamental level, the *Wonderful Indonesia* promotional video on Mentawai tattoos is a product of and contributor to Indonesia's national branding strategy. The *Wonderful Indonesia* campaign, launched in 2011, represents a deliberate and sustained effort by the Indonesian government to construct and project a coherent national identity to global audiences through the medium of tourism promotion (Soewito et al., 2022). The campaign's core brand values, cultural diversity, natural beauty, spiritual depth, and authentic indigenous heritage, are all prominently reflected in the Mentawai video. The video thus functions not merely as a piece of tourism advertising but as an instrument of nation-building, contributing to the construction and global circulation of a particular image of Indonesia (Ratriyana & Murti, 2023).

This national branding function reflects what scholars of international relations and cultural studies identify as soft power, the use of cultural attraction rather than coercive force to advance a nation's interests and influence in the world (van Dijk, 2008). By presenting Indonesia's indigenous cultural heritage as a source of global fascination and spiritual value, the *Wonderful Indonesia* campaign positions Indonesia as a culturally significant nation whose traditions enrich the global human heritage.

The ideological construction of Mentawai in the video is also deeply shaped by the tourist gaze, the particular way in which tourism discourse frames its objects as spectacles for the enjoyment and consumption of outside observers (Dabadi &

Sharma, 2024). The village is “*hidden*,” the tradition is “*ancient*,” the people “*live in harmony with nature*”: all of these characterizations construct the Mentawai as existing in a space apart from the modern world, preserved and available for the curious traveler to discover.

This construction, while emotionally appealing, carries significant ideological implications. Indigenous cultures are positioned as the Other, fascinating precisely because they are different from and seemingly untouched by the modernity that the presumed tourist inhabits. As Dabadi and Sharma (2024) argue, this pattern routinely results in the exoticization and commodification of indigenous cultures, which are reduced to their most visually and symbolically striking features for the pleasure of outside audiences.

A critical concern that emerges from this analysis is the near-total absence of indigenous agency in the video’s representational discourse. The Mentawai people are represented, described, and interpreted for global audiences entirely through the voice of the institutional narrator. There is no indication in the video’s narration that the Mentawai community participated in the production of the video, approved its representational choices, or had any input into how their tradition and identity were framed.

This is not merely an ethical concern but an ideological one: the *Wonderful Indonesia* campaign claims to celebrate and honor the Mentawai heritage, yet the discursive structure of the video reproduces the very power asymmetries that postcolonial scholars have identified in colonial-era representations of indigenous communities, where the right to define and represent rests with the outside authority rather than with the community being represented (van Dijk, 2008).

The commodification of Mentawai cultural heritage is the most significant ideological consequence of the video’s discursive strategies. The tattoo tradition, a practice of profound personal, social, and spiritual significance, is repackaged as a “*magical*” spectacle, a visual and emotional highlight of the tourism experience, and a site of personal transformation for the tourist-viewer.

The consequences of this commodification for the Mentawai community itself are not addressed in the video, raising important questions about the distribution of economic benefits from tourism, the impact of increased tourist attention on community life and cultural practice, and the ethical responsibilities of government tourism institutions toward the communities they represent.

At the same time, the video’s ideological construction is not wholly without nuance. The narration’s insistence that the tattoo tradition is “*not just art but also a ritual*,” and its description of the marks as “*deeply felt within the soul*,” reflect a genuine effort to convey the spiritual depth and human significance of the tradition beyond its surface visual appeal. The “*bridge*” metaphor similarly works against any reduction of the tradition to a static museum piece.

These elements suggest an awareness of the risks of cultural trivialization at the level of language, even if the broader framing of the video as official tourism promotion inevitably involves a degree of commodification (Ansori & Taopan, 2019; Soewito et al., 2022).

The social practice dimension of the analysis thus reveals the *Wonderful Indonesia* Mentawai video as a complex ideological text that simultaneously celebrates and commodifies indigenous cultural heritage, serves the interests of the Indonesian state while claiming to honor the Mentawai community, and appeals to global audiences' desire for authentic cultural experience while constructing that authenticity through carefully crafted linguistic and discursive strategies.

The absence of indigenous voices, the asymmetric power relation between institutional producer and indigenous subject, and the ethical dimensions of cultural commodification constitute areas of concern that deserve critical attention from both scholars of tourism discourse and practitioners in tourism marketing and policy.

4. Conclusion

This study has examined how Indonesia, particularly the Mentawai indigenous culture, is linguistically represented and discursively constructed in the *Wonderful Indonesia* YouTube promotional video "*Mentawai: The Ancient Art of Indonesia's Tattoos Heritage*" through the lens of Fairclough's (1992) Critical Discourse Analysis framework. By analyzing the video across three interrelated dimensions, text, discourse practice, and social practice, the study has uncovered the complex and multilayered nature of the linguistic strategies deployed to construct Mentawai as a site of extraordinary cultural tourism significance.

At the textual level, the analysis demonstrated that the video employs a sophisticated and coherent set of linguistic strategies, including evaluative and poetic vocabulary, rich metaphorical language (e.g., "*a story written on the skin*," "*a bridge connecting the past with the future*"), inclusive pronoun positioning, and multi-sensory immersive language, that work together to construct Mentawai as an exotic, spiritually profound, and personally accessible cultural destination.

These strategies reflect deliberate discursive choices shaped by a deep understanding of how language can shape audience perceptions, emotions, and desires (Dann, 1996; Karimalieva, 2024). The analysis also identified the predominantly one-sided nature of this promotional construction, noting the absence of counter-narratives or acknowledgment of tensions and complexities within the Mentawai community's relationship with tourism.

At the level of discourse practice, the analysis showed that the video's production context, as an official Indonesian government tourism promotion distributed through YouTube and featuring a globally recognized Western celebrity, shapes its meaning in fundamental ways. The choice of English as the language of narration, the celebrity endorsement strategy, and the platform choice all reflect a sophisticated awareness of the conventions of contemporary global tourism marketing (Yanwei & Hassan, 2023; Ratriyana & Murti, 2023). At the same time, these choices reinforce a Western-centric framing of Mentawai cultural value.

At the level of social practice, the analysis revealed that the video functions as an instrument of national branding and soft power, contributing to Indonesia's broader project of constructing and projecting a particular national identity to global audiences (Soewito et al., 2022). Critically, the analysis also identified significant concerns regarding indigenous agency and the ethics of cultural commodification.

The Mentawai people are represented entirely through the voice of the institutional narrator, without any apparent involvement in or control over the representational choices made about their community. The commodification of Mentawai cultural heritage as a tourism spectacle, while framed in appreciative and respectful language, reproduces power asymmetries that deserve sustained critical attention (Dabadi & Sharma, 2024; van Dijk, 2008).

These findings contribute to the growing body of research on tourism discourse and CDA (Dann, 1996; Ansori & Taopan, 2019; Sari et al., 2024) in several ways. First, the study provides a detailed CDA of a *Wonderful Indonesia* video specifically focused on indigenous cultural heritage, a topic that has received relatively limited attention in the literature. Second, it demonstrates the applicability of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to digital video content, extending the reach of CDA methodology to a medium increasingly central to contemporary tourism promotion. Third, and perhaps most importantly, it contributes to critical conversations about the representation of indigenous cultures in official tourism promotional discourse, raising important questions about the ethics and politics of cultural commodification and the need for more participatory and community-centered approaches to heritage tourism promotion.

As an inherent limitation of the qualitative case study design, the findings of this study are not generalizable to all *Wonderful Indonesia* discourse. Future research may build on this study through comparative analyses of multiple *Wonderful Indonesia* videos focusing on different cultural groups and regions, which could reveal broader patterns in the campaign's discursive construction of Indonesian national identity.

The incorporation of multimodal analysis, examining how visual and auditory elements interact with verbal language to produce meaning, would provide a more complete picture of the video's discursive complexity (Yanwei & Hassan, 2023). Finally, reception studies examining how diverse audiences, including Mentawai

community members themselves, actually interpret and respond to the video could shed vital light on the relationship between the discursive construction of destinations and the lived experiences of those who are represented.

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