VERBAL TEXT SUPPORTS ON PICTURES IN CREATING DESTINATION IMAGE

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VERBAL TEXT SUPPORTS ON PICTURES IN CREATING DESTINATION IMAGE

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ABSTRACT
Recently, social media like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have been widely used for tourism destination attractiveness. The research investigates how to create a tourism destination image on Instagram from a social semiotic perspective. Data comprises 17 photos of Blue Flame posted by 7 Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). Applying the Visual Grammar framework by Kress & Leeuwen (2021), particularly the representational meta function, and Speech Functions by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), this study finds how verbal texts support visual modes in creating the image of the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark. Findings show that: (i) Narrative non-transactional action photos are more frequently used to promote the destination image; (ii) Statements delivering praise are most often used to give positive value to the destination; (iii) Narrative non-transactional action pictures attract more viewers’ attention; and (iv) Post with conceptual symbolic photos can evoke viewers’ interest to know more about the destination. Based on the findings, even though a picture is the main visual semiotic resource on Instagram, it needs support by verbal resources to make its meaning clearer for viewers. Practical implications of the study and directions for future studies are presented.

KEYWORDS: visual and verbal, destination image, representational meta function, speech functions, Blue Flame

INTRODUCTION
In recent years, digital platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have been widely used to convey the essence and allure of a particular tourist destination. Among the platforms, Instagram is the most favourite for young social media users to
make decisions prior to traveling (Arefieva, Egger, & Yu, 2021). In April 2023 advertisers reached 1.628 billion users on Instagram, placing it in 4th rank of the world’s most ‘active’ social media platforms (https://datareportal.com/essential-instagram-stats). This indicates that at present, roughly 20.3% of all the people in the world use Instagram. It means that in the field of tourism, Instagram has recently played a significant role in the promotion of tourist destinations. Gorji, et.al. (2023) found that when tourists do not have enough information about a particular attraction, the images shared on photo-sharing platforms might play an important role in influencing their decisions and choices.

Many scholars have examined the role of Instagram in promoting tourist destinations. Mele, Filieri, & De Carlo (2023), for example, found the role of social media for destination marketing organizations during and after a crisis of COVID-19 and using online contents to examine the destination image of a specific destination. In addition, previous studies have investigated to what extent Instagram can be applied as a tool for building destination image or branding. A destination image plays a prime role in marketing, brand distinctiveness, and tourist destination options. Other scholars provide an analysis of the main destination image attributes influencing the number of likes and comments by cross-country cluster on the basis of Stimulus- Organism-Response and find that attributes in Instagram photographs are related with the success of a country’s image (Aramendia-Muneta & Olarte-Pascual, 2022).

A different study conducted by Azeez (2021) investigated the image and personality of religious, tourist, and commercial brands, also how they relate to future tourist behavior in Karbala, Iraq. He discovered that the cognitive image, emotional image, and destination personality had different results on global image and behavioral intentions for first-time and repetitive visitors; and the qualitative remarks concentrated on allurements, culture, and the circumstances. Previously, Rossi, Boscaro, & Torsello, (2018) examined the use of Instagram photos to analyze tourism consumption in the city of Venice, Italy. In a different country, Kuhzady & Ghasemi (2019) applied visual content analysis and content analysis to search into the projected image of Portugal as a tourism destination on Instagram.

Tourist destination marketers have accepted the value of Instagram in co-creating the destination image and the essential function of social media platforms as marketing channels (Marzouk, 2022). However, few critical discourse studies explore how destination image is designated through multimodal (visual and verbal) texts from an applied linguistic perspective. To give an example, Bowcher & Liang (2013) explored how tourist site entry tickets multimodally construe a coherent message and how they are integrated into a grander eco-social process. A different study carried out by Pak & Hiramoto (2020) conducted a text and visual analysis to investigate voluntourism activity directed by a local university in Singapore. Another research done by Turra (2020) examined the visual and linguistic expressions deployed to build the identity of Piedmont and of the tourist as well as on the interaction between verbal and non-verbal modes. There is still little empirical effort made to investigate to what extent tourist destination marketing organizations (DMOs) create a destination image using multimodal semiotic resources to establish and communicate a destination image to the public through Instagram. It means that there is still a lack of research studying the topic from a linguistic perspective. This paper tries to investigate the problem using a social semiotic perspective. The multimodal analysis is done by applying a visual grammar framework (Kress & Leeuwen, 2021) on visual modes, and systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014) on verbal texts.

This research analyses the creation of a destination image of the Blue Flame at
Ijen Geopark through Instagram. Ijen Geopark is one of the world heritage sites as it was officially announced as UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) in 2023. The destination is well known with its unique Blue Flame which is very rarely found in the world. The Blue Flame can only be found at Ijen Geopark and only happens at a particular time, around 02.00 – 04.00 am. Many domestic and foreign visitors have uploaded photos of the beautiful scenery of the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark, including Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). It seems that the uniqueness of the Blue Flame attracts many tourists to visit the destination. The destination management organization of Ijen Geopark, releases data on domestic and foreign visitors during the Christmas holiday 2023 and New Year 2024, from 24 December 2023 to 2 January 2024 when about 15,000 or 1,500 people each day visited (Husdinariyanto, 2024). The condition drives to the investigation on how the destination image of Ijen Geopark, particularly its Blue Flame, is created through visual and verbal modes. The visual modes in the form of photos along with verbal modes in the form of captions are uploaded in Instagram to promote the destination. How the verbal texts support the visual modes in creating the destination image is the main question of this research.

To answer the questions, the photos of the Blue Flame are analysed using the visual grammar framework by Kress & Leeuwen (2021). They highlight the idea that meaning-making is a multimodal process that includes the integration of different modes of communication. In their book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, they contribute a systematic and comprehensive multimodal discourse analysis. Visual grammar sees language as a sort of social semiotic. The combination of language with other semiotic resources in a discourse brings about the discourse meaningful and colourful for the readers. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) count on language and visual communication represent meanings belonging to and structured by cultures in a certain society. In consequence of the possibilities and limitations of each medium, not everything that can be expressed in language can also be expressed by means of images, or vice versa (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Visual grammar applies three meta functions in analysing visual discourse: representational, interactive, and compositional. The meta functions are developed based on systemic functional linguistics’ meta functions by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), which are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. This research focused on analysing the destination image of the Blue Flame based on representational meta function.

The representational meta function explores the representation of the objects displayed in the real world. It refers to the proper reproduction of the target which includes society, human activities, places, and even what is in someone’s inner world. The meaning of representational can be understood through two processes, namely narrative and conceptual processes.

![Figure 1](https://via.placeholder.com/599x599)

**Figure 1**
Main types of visual representational structures
*Source: Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 59)*

In narrative process, image analysis includes events and participants in action. Narrative processes can be divided into agentive and conversive or non-agentive. The
agentive process is differentiated between non-projective and projective where the projective contains speech and mental processes and the non-projective consists of non-eventive and eventive. The non eventive process is classified into action and reaction, also non-transactional and transactional. The transactional covers unidirectional and bidirectional.

![Diagram of Narrative processes in visual communication](Image)

**Figure 2**
Narrative processes in visual communication  
*Source: Kress & van Leeuwen (2021: 71)*

Conceptual representational structures can be distinguished into classificatory, analytical, and symbolic. Classificational structures link participants to one another in the form of a relation, a taxonomy, subordinate and superordinate. Analytical processes connect participants concerning with a part-whole structure including one carrier (the whole) and any kind of possessive attributes (the parts). Symbolic process refers to what a participant “means” or “is”. It consists of symbolic attributive and suggestive aspects. Symbolic attributive exists where there are two participants whose meaning or identity is developed in the relation, “the carrier” and “the participant”. The symbolic suggestive happens when there is only one participant, “the carrier”.

![Diagram of Types of symbolic image structure](Image)

**Figure 3**
Types of symbolic image structure  
*Source: Kress & van Leeuwen (2006: 105)*

In addition to investigating the visual modes, the verbal text is also analysed in this paper. Linguistic analysis is done based on systemic functional linguistics by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014). Previously, this theory was developed by Halliday in 1994. It introduces a functional system and systemic theory in linguistic field of study. Systemic functional linguistics considers language as part of social phenomenon relating to social contexts in language use. The language as a function refers to the use of language in social interaction. To realize the interaction function, it is necessary to arrange and organize the language. Language is used to create meaning, so the most important component of the language is functional components to make the meaning. The language as a system means the language along with other social systems take a role in making meaning. In other words, the language is structured, in order, and patterned which is formed by relating components functionally to create meaning.
Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) propose the most fundamental types of speech role are: (i) giving, and (ii) demanding. Giving expresses “inviting to receive”, and demanding represents “inviting to give”. Beside doing something himself, the speaker is also requiring something from the listener. Accordingly, an act of speaking is more appropriately called an interaction or an exchange. In the exchange, giving implies receiving; and vice versa, demanding implies giving a response. The nature of the commodity being exchanged may be (a) goods and services or (b) information. These two elements define the four primary speech functions consisting of “offer”, “command”, “statement”, and “question”. “Offer” is used to ask someone whether they want to have something or whether they want you to do something (English Language & Usage, 2021). “Command” is intended to give orders, and “statement” means the act of stating or presenting orally or on paper. “Question” refers to a clause or phrase used to get information (Promova, 2024).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in exchange</th>
<th>Commodity exchanged</th>
<th>Speech Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>goods- &amp; services</td>
<td>offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demand</td>
<td></td>
<td>command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give</td>
<td>information</td>
<td>statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demand</td>
<td></td>
<td>question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Halliday & Matthiessen (2014:137)

METHODOLOGY

The method of this research was qualitative study implementing the Visual Grammar framework by Kress & Leeuwen (2021), particularly on representational structures to investigate how visual modes support verbal semiotic resources to deliver the destination image of the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark. The visual text in the form of photo and the verbal text in the form of caption are posted on Instagram as one of social media platforms which is often utilized to promote tourist destinations. The data was captured on 17 Instagram posts of 7 DMOs in the form of photos and captions showing the Blue Flame phenomenon from January to December 2023. In 2023, UNESCO decreed Ijen Geopark as a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG).

The data of the research was collected using the following steps. 1) Opening the Instagram account of DMOs of Ijen Geopark; 2) identifying texts (captions) containing evaluative expressions of the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark; 3) selecting relevant images by taking screenshots of Instagram posts. The photos are selected based on three characteristics: posting year in 2023; the representation of destination image indicated with the use of evaluative expressions in caption; and the highest number of likes and comments on the posts. Data analysis was carried out using visual grammar framework by Kress & Leeuwen (2021) focusing on representational meta function.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Groups and types of pictures

The phenomenon of the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark is represented by 17 photos uploaded on 7 DMOs’ Instagram accounts. The photos are classified into three groups: “People”, “Blue Flame”, “Flyer”. People contain pictures of the Blue Flame with one,
two, or a crowd of people around the Blue Flame. The second group is “Blue Flame”, in which the photos display only the Blue Flame without the presence of other participants around it. “Flyer” is a group of photos containing the picture of the Blue Flame and verbal texts of information about trips or trekking to the Ijen Crater or the Blue Flame. Among the photos, only “Flyer” includes verbal text inside the pictures; none of “People” and “Blue Flame” photos enclose verbal text. Most photos are grouped in “People”, that is 13 or 76%. All the 13 photos are narrative representational structures with non-transactional action. On the other hand, there are 2 or 12% photos of “Blue Flame”, and 2 or 12% photos of “Flyer”. The 4 photos are conceptual representational structures which are symbolic. The following table provides a summary of the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of Photos</th>
<th>Types of Pictures</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Flame</td>
<td>Conceptual - symbolic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyer</td>
<td>Conceptual - symbolic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Representational structure of pictures and captions**

In promoting the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) upload photos of the Blue Flame with or without other participant(s). Some photos display the Blue Flame as the only participant or the main participant with some others around it. Other photos show one or more people or a crowd of people with the Blue Flame as the circumstance of location. The photos can be differentiated into narrative and conceptual representational structures. The narrative photos are grouped in “People”, because all narrative photos provide pictures of one, a couple, or some people as the main participants. In the meantime, the conceptual photos consist of “Flyer” and “Blue Flame”. “Flyer” contains the picture of the Blue Flame and some verbal texts, while “Blue Flame” only shows the Blue Flame as the single participant.

**People - Narrative representation**

Most photos uploaded on DMOs’ Instagram of Ijen Geopark are narrative representational structures. Narrative structures display ongoing process, action, change, or spatial arrangements. It represents actions performed by one or more participants, with or without other participants in the picture. The visual narrative pictures mostly show a crowd of people around the Blue Flame. Most narrative pictures contain non-transactional actions, in which the people are not doing interactive actions with one another. They are performing their own activities: standing, looking at the Blue Flame, and taking photographs.

In addition to the photos, there are verbal texts in the form of captions to support the posts. The captions are written in some speech functions including statement, offer, command, and question. The following are examples of narrative representational pictures and their captions.
Figure 4 shows a view around the Blue Fire in which many people are enjoying the view in a smoggy and dark sky. It is taken from long shot, so the view looks intact. Due to the good lighting, the photo is quite clear and attractive. We can clearly see a crowd of people with their activities. The blue light of the flame combined with smoggy and dark sky around the mountain results in a very unique and exotic atmosphere.

In this picture, the Blue Flame is not clearly visible, but the blue color of the light is clear enough and surrounded by a crowd of people. It seems that the producer of the photo focuses on the activities of the people around the Blue Flame. The people are standing, taking photographs, or looking at something like a handphone or camera in their hand. There is no interactive activities among the people or non-transactional action. It indicates that the people are enthusiastic in enjoying the unique view around the Blue Flame.

The picture is completed with a caption of two clauses in the form of a “statement.”

*Menemukan keindahan alam yang luar biasa di #KawahIjen: Destinasi wisata alam terbaik di #Indonesia*
(Finding extraordinary natural beauty at #KawahIjen: The best tourism destination in #Indonesia)

Both clauses are “statements” containing expressions of praise including *keindahan alam* (natural beauty), *luar biasa* (extraordinary), and *terbaik* (the best). The expression *keindahan alam* refers to the beautiful scenery around the Blue Flame at Ijen Geopark. Despite the term, it is a kind of noun phrase, it implies adjectival meaning as its original word *indah*. It gives positive valuation to the view at Ijen Geopark particularly related to Blue Flame phenomenon. The phrase *luar biasa* is an attributive used to show the extraordinary condition in nature. It refers to the uncommon phenomenon Blue Flame which can only be found at Ijen Geopark. The third expression is *terbaik* which denotes superlative degree *the best* which is derived from adjective *baik* (good). The writer intends to place Ijen Geopark at the top level of destinations compared to other destinations in Indonesia. Additionally, the caption uses hashtags (#) to make theme mapping about Kawah Ijen and Indonesia. The hashtags are used to facilitate easier
searching of the destination.

The photo visualizes the view around the Blue Flame at Ijen crater, but the verbal texts in the caption do not mention the Blue Flame at all. The caption highlights the beautiful, extraordinary natural scenery at Ijen crater and the best tourism destination in Indonesia. It means the verbal texts supports the visual mode by giving positive value to the destination.

Similar to the previous post, Figure 5 is also a narrative representational photo displaying a person as a main participant, many people, the Blue Flame, mountain, and smoggy sky. The picture differs in the focus, which is a person as the main participant. The person wearing a raincoat, hat, and mask, is looking at the camera, raising two fingers, and squatting around the Blue Flame. Behind the main participant, there are many people standing, looking at the Blue Flame, and taking photographs. It seems there is no interactive activity among the people indicated by the non-transactional actions. The main participant and many other people are focusing on their own activities.

![Figure 5](image_url)

A person squatting among the crowd of people around the Blue Flame

*Source: Instagram screenshot data, 2023*

Another difference of the photo is the appearance of the Blue Flame. In previous photo, we can see the light of the Blue Flame only. In this photo the light is not quite shining, but the Blue Flame seems like the flow of blue water. It may be caused by the weather, which is drizzling at that time as stated in the caption. The drizzling weather, the smoggy and dark sky makes the people behind the main participant not clearly seen, and the picture looks a little bit blurry.

To make the photo have a clearer meaning, the writer provides a “statement” in the caption of Figure 5:

*Meskipun grimis tidak menghalangi semangat para pengunjung yang ingin melihat venomena Blue Flame di kawah ijen*  
(Eventhough it is drizzling, it does not hinder the spirit of visitors who want to enjoy the Blue Flame phenomenon at Ijen crater)

There is a contradictory condition between the word *gerimis* (written as *grimis*) and *semangat*. *Gerimis* (drizzling) is a condition of bad weather which can hinder people to do activities outside the room. On the other side, *semangat* (spirit) refers to the
possitive feeling of a person to do particular activities, like visiting the Blue Flame. The “statement” in the caption describes a fact that there are still many visitors who are enthusiastic to see the Blue Flame although it is drizzling. The caption gives a verbal description toward the photo, so the verbal text is certainly supportive of the visual texts in building the destination image.

Using a narrative non-transactional photo, Figure 6 provides a different look of the Blue Flame. In this photo, the Blue Flame looks little but shining as the circumstance of location. The human participant consists of three persons who are standing and enjoying the view around the Blue Flame without interactive contact among them. The photo focuses on the man wearing a blue raincoat, black hat, and mask as the main participant. In addition, there is a girl with a soft blue raincoat and mask, and another person in a yellow raincoat whose head is invisible.

![Three persons standing around the Blue Flame](image)

Figure 6

Three persons standing around the Blue Flame

Source: Instagram screenshot data, 2023

The photo is taken in medium shot and bright lighting. It makes all participants like the man, the Blue Flame, stone, smog, and dark sky are clearly seen. The view seems very scarce and is rarely found. With this picture, the producer tries to expose how captivating and alluring the Blue Flame phenomenon is, so it will be very enjoyable for visitors.

To complete the picture, there are two “statements” on the caption of Figure 6. They are:

1. **Blue Flame kawah ijen yang begitu mempesona dan sangat memikat banyak wisatawan untuk datang kesini**
   (The Blue Flame ijen crater which is very captivating and alluring for many visitors to come)

2. **Oh iya Blue Flame hanya ada satu lho di dunia**
   (You know …. the Blue Flame is the only one in the world)

The first sentence expresses praise indicated by the use of phrases *begitu mempesona, sangat memikat, and banyak wisatawan*. The three phrases are preceeded by adverbial intensifier *begitu, sangat, and banyak*. In the second statement, the writer tries to persuade viewers to visit the destination. The persuasion is expressed by emphasizing
the uniqueness of the Blue Flame through the phrase *hanya ada satu lho*. The phrase highlights that the viewers can only find the Blue Flame phenomenon at Ijen Geopark because there is no more permanent Blue Flame exists in other places in the world. In this post, the verbal texts supports the picture by giving highlight on the characteristics of the destination which are developed as its image.

**Flyer - Conceptual representation**

In addition to narrative pictures, DMOs post conceptual representational pictures. The conceptual pictures are classified into two groups: “Flyer” and “Blue Flame”. The following are examples of conceptual pictures in the form of flyer.

![Flyer containing the Blue Flame, dark sky, and verbal texts](source)

*Figure 7*

A flyer containing the Blue Flame, dark sky, and verbal texts

*Source: Instagram screenshot data, 2023*

The picture in Figure 7 is a flyer of destination promotion which is a conceptual representation consisting of verbal and visual texts. The verbal texts in the picture contain information about tour package to Ijen crater in December. The text consists of *Ijen Expedition Tour, Paket Wisata Kawah Ijen, Desember, Book Now, contact number, More Information*, and *website link*. The picture shows the Blue Flame which is shining brightly in the dark sky. There is no other participant in the picture. It applies symbolic structure suggestion because the meaning of the picture can be understood from the participant itself; that is the Blue Flame.

To attract the viewers, the producer adds a caption in Figure 7. In the caption, the writer uses some different types of sentences including “commands” containing praise and “statement” expressing persuasion. The commands which implies invitation are expressed through:

1. *Yuk yang mau ke Kawah Ijen dan Explore Banyuwangi!*
   (If you want, let’s go to Kawah Ijen and explore Banyuwangi!)
2. *Mari saksikan keindahan alam yang memukau dan nikmati momen magis di setiap langkah.*
   (Let’s watch the stunning natural beauty and enjoy magic moment in every step.)
More direct sentences can be seen in the following sentences:

(3) Terbanglah bersama impian di atas Kabut Biru Kawah Ijen! 🌋✨
(Fly with your dream above the blue mist of Ijen Crater! 🌋✨)

(4) Bergabunglah dalam petualangan ajaib di mana alam mempertemukan keajaiban dan ketenangan.
(Join in miraculous experience in which nature unites miracle and serenity.)

Both sentences indicate instruction by adding the suffix -lah into the verb in the terms terbanglah (fly) and bergabunglah (join) at the beginning of the sentence. Additionally, the first command is added with two emoticons. The first emoticon shows the symbol of a volcano, and the latter is stars which expresses happiness.

In the last statement the writer tries to persuade viewers to visit the destination.

(5) Kawah Ijen menunggu, siap membuat kenangan tak terlupakan.
(Ijen Crater is waiting, ready to make unforgettable memory.)

The words menunggu (waiting), siap (ready), kenangan (memory), and tak terlupakan (unforgettable) are used to give persuasion to the viewers. The closing caption tries to convince the viewers that they will get an unforgettable experience if they visit the destination.

In this post, all the sentences including “commands” and “statement” express praise of the destination. The praise is delivered through the words keindahan, memukau, magis, impian, ajaib, keajaiban, and ketenangan, and tak terlupakan. It seems that the expressions of praise are the most favourite way to build the destination image.

The participant in the photo is little different from the information in the caption. The photo displays the Blue Flame, while the caption tells about Ijen Geopark without mentioning the Blue Flame. Despite the verbal texts there is no mention of the Blue Flame explicitly, the use of praise expressions in all commands surely give positive value to the picture of the Blue Flame as the icon of Ijen Geopark.

Figure 8
A flyer containing the Blue Flame, dark sky, and verbal texts
Source: Instagram screenshot data, 2023

Another example of flyer is shown in Figure 8 which contains the picture of the Blue Flame in very close shot without any other participant. Similar to the previous flyer, it is a conceptual representation with a symbolic structure suggestion. The difference is
in the types of verbal texts. The previous flyer only provides phrases of information about the trip to Ijen crater. The flyer in Figure 8 contains some sentences in the form of “statement” giving positive valuation to the destination. The statements are:

1) *Tips melihat keindahan fenomena blue fire kawah ijen*  
(Tips to enjoy the beauty of Bue Flame phenomenon at Ijen crater)

2) *Melihat keindahan blue fire di Kawah Ijen adalah pengalaman yang luar biasa*  
(Enjoying the beauty of Blue Flame at Ijen crater is an extraordinary experience)

3) *Berikut adalah beberapa tips untuk memaksimalkan pengalaman Anda*  
(The followings are some tips to maximize your experience).

In this post, the writer does not build the destination image in the caption. The sentences are written inside the photo. The verbal texts are “statements” containing the expressions of praise *keindahan* (beauty), *luar biasa* (extraordinary), and *memaksimalkan* (maximize). Through the phrases, the writer tries to create the image of a beautiful and outstanding destination.

In this flyer, the producer provides information about how to enjoy the beauty of the Blue Flame phenomenon. To build the destination image, the writer uses statements containing expressions of praise. Additionally, the picture of the Blue Flame in very close shot as the main icon of the destination is displayed to attract the viewers.

**Blue Flame - Conceptual representation**

The next picture is another example of conceptual representation. The picture is different from the flyers in terms of visual mode content. The flyers provide pictures of the Blue Flame and some verbal texts promoting the destination. On the other hand, the following picture contains only a picture of the Blue Flame without any verbal text at all.

![Figure 9](https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/irhs/vol9/iss2/6)

*Figure 9*  
Ijen Crater view with the Blue Flame phenomenon and dark sky  
*Source: Instagram screenshot data, 2023*

The picture in Figure 9 focuses on the Blue Flame in a dark sky. Like previous conceptual photos, this picture is symbolic structure suggestive. The meaning of the picture is developed by the Blue Flame itself because there is no other participants except the Blue Flame. Different from the pictures in the flyers, the picture of the Blue Flame in
Figure 9 is taken from long shot, so the Blue Flame looks like a flow of blue fire. The circumstance is the very dark sky which makes the Blue Flame the focus of attention. It provides a very unique phenomenon illustration. Through this photo, the producer intends to highlight the Blue Flame as the most iconic spot in Ijen Geopark which can give a memorable experience to visitors.

The picture in Figure 9 is accompanied with a caption which consists of “question” and “command”.

1. Selamat pagi fren, seberapa besar kerinduan kalian untuk kembali mendaki kawah ijen secara normal, pada pukul 1 pagi

(Good morning friends, how big is your longing for trekking to Ijen Crater normally again, at 1.00am.)

2. Ayo berikan komentar kalian, agar @bbksda_jatim_official dan @twakawahijen mendengar kerinduan kalian 😍😍😍

(Let’s give comments, so the @bbksda_jatim_official and @twakawahijen listen to your yearning 😍😍😍)

Both question and command contain an expression of praise kerinduan which means the feeling of yearning. The expression implies a desire to repeat the experience of visiting Ijen Geopark. When people want to revisit a destination, it means that the destination has given an impressive experience due to its positive characteristics like its beauty or uniqueness. Next, praise can be found at the end of the second sentence in the form of three emoticons of laughing faces with red love eyes. The emoticons express high levels of happiness. Certainly, they give positive value to the destination image. The caption only mentions Ijen crater, no Blue Flame. In this case, the verbal text supports the visual mode by giving positive value to Ijen Crater, while the picture displays the Blue Flame as the most iconic spot in Ijen Geopark which can give an unforgettable experience for visitors. Hence, the visitors want to go back to the destination.

**Likes and Comments on the posts**

The posts which get high numbers of likes also has a high number of comments. The post with the highest number of likes is Figure 4 which gets 3.346 likes from viewers. However, there are only 7 comments on the post, and the comments do not convey statements or questions related to the Blue Flame or Ijen Geopark. Despite the viewers being quite interested in the photo of the Blue Flame, they are not yet attracted sufficiently to ask information about visiting the destination.

From all posts, figure 9 and its caption get the highest number of positive comments related to the destination. It has 963 likes and 20 comments. Most comments ask for information about the weather, schedule of trekking, express their yearning, interest, hope to visit the Blue Flame, and mention the beauty of the Blue Flame. Here are the examples of viewers’ comments.

1. Mau ka…dah normal lagi belum saya tgl 2 mau kebanyuwangi
   (I will ka… it is already normal again or not I will go to Banyuwangi on 2 Feb)

2. Sangat rindu serindu-rindunya wyaaak ngetrip sama tamu start dr jam 00.00-01.00Am ...

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(I am very longing and longing yeahhh having trip with guests from 00.00-01.00am …)

(3) ... semoga saja gunung ijen bisa kembali sehat dan kondusif lagi biar para wisatawan bisa tau keindahan Bluefire Ijen 
(… hopefully Ijen mountain can be safe and conducive again, so tourists can know the beauty of Ijen Bluefire)

(4) Yok bisa yokk buka jam 1 (lagi) ☺️
(It’s possible, let’s open at 1.00 am (again) ☺️)

(5) Pen liat bluefire:((((
(Want to see bluefire :((( )

Those comments are given in response to the caption asking viewers’ longing for Ijen crater particularly the Blue Flame, as well as asking viewers to give comments. It seems that the caption is quite effective to invite viewers’ comments, although the conceptual picture only shows the Blue Flame as the only participant. It implies viewer’s interest to visit the destination.

Another picture that gains many likes is Figure 8 which obtains 1.725 likes and 5 comments. The five comments ask and give information about trekking and weather at Ijen Geopark. The likes and comments show that the post can attract 1.725 viewer’s attention, although there are only 5 viewers who are interested in the trip to Ijen Geopark. Figure 7 has 131 likes and 2 comments. Similar to the previous posts, the number of likes is not equal to the number of comments. It means the post which gets many likes is not certain to arouse viewer’s interest in visiting the destination.

CONCLUSION

The Blue Flame phenomenon at Ijen Geopark is visualized through photos in narrative and conceptual representational structures. Narrative representational photos with non-transactional action are more frequently used to deliver the unique phenomenon of Blue Flame. Nevertheless, the conceptual representational photo with symbolic structure suggestive gets significant more comments which supports the idea that the photo creates a stronger destination image.

Photo is the main visual semiotic resource in Instagram, but it needs support by verbal texts to make its meaning clearer for viewers. To support the visual modes, the writer uses some different verbal semiotic resources. The verbal texts in the form of sentences, clauses, and phrases are written in captions and inside pictures. There are giving and demanding clauses which consist of offer, statement, command, and question. The most clauses written in the caption are statements, then it is followed by command, offer, and question, respectively. Most clauses include a positive value of the destination in the form of expression of praise. The praise can directly create particular characteristics as the writer intends. Besides, the writer applies many emoticons as iconic resources in social media communication, including hashtags. Most emoticons express the feeling of happiness, while hashtags are used to make theme mapping about the destination. The most frequently used clause in supporting the visual modes are statements with expressions of praise.

The number of likes is not always followed with equal numbers of comments. Some photos get many likes from the viewers, but there is only a few comments on them. Some other photos have a small number of likes and also obtain small numbers of comments, and even some with no comments at all for the posts. It seems that the posts can attract viewers’ attention; however, they are not yet able to evoke viewers’ interest to know more about the destination.
Practical implications for the next studies include the analysis of creating a destination image (branding) with more comprehensive analysis using a visual grammar framework. Analyzing destination images by applying another development of systemic functional linguistics like appraisal framework is also recommended.

REFERENCES


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