

Conference Paper

Language of Online Reviews For the Digital Promotion of Madura Tourism Destinations

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ORCID:Rosyida Ekawati: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3012-8753>**Abstract**

This article deals with the language used in online reviews by the people visiting the tourist attractions in Madura, particularly the beaches of Madura Island. These online reviews generally comprise of people's opinion and/or feedback on their overall experience of the place. Destinations such as Madura can widely benefit from such online reviews, if channelled in the right way. The reviews in large tourism websites such as *Trip Advisor* can be an effective medium of digital promotion. Accordingly, the data for this study were gathered from the *Trip Advisor* website (retrieved from: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g1574414-Activities-c61-t52-Madura_Island_East_Java.html). The study attempted to uncover the language of the reviews used by the tourists visiting and experiencing the tourism destinations in Madura Island. Using the analysis of appraisal proposed by Martin and White (*The Language of Evaluation. Appraisal in English*, 2005), positive and negative reviews of the beaches in Madura Island were evaluated intended to providing inputs and suggestions on the resources, properties, and other complementary facilities as part of Madura tourism promotion.

Keywords: appraisal, online review, digital promotion, Madura, tourism comment on the resource, properties, and other complementary facilities

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1. Introduction

Having many tourism destinations is an advantage for Madura. Besides being able to increase economic income in Madura, this is also the branding of Madura Island. Madura has religious tourism, cultural treasures, natural wonders, conservation tourism, and special interest. From those kinds of tourism, like any other tourisms in Indonesia, they still need efforts to introduce and promote Madura tourisms to all people in local region, regional, national, or worldwide.

Tourism promotion is an important source of information that helps any prospective tourists to make any kind of decisions about the destination that they want to visit.

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In this digital era, tourism development through a digital approach has received a great attention and this has been used to encourage the development of the tourism sector. Through the digital mode, the information can be easily spread and widely reached the potential tourists. Any information about the destination could help to promote the places. Information about the destination comes from the official, i.e. the government that manages the tourism destination, community, tourists who have visited the destinations, travel agents, and other tourism services. The information can be shared through the websites, blogs, or other internet applications. They could be in the form of written information or accompanied with any pictures or videos. One of the written forms of information is the real testimonials or reviews about the places which were written by the tourists who have visited the destinations. Tourists' reviews comprised of information about their preferences and interests and can be used as a source for collecting information to help the process of the decision-making (Pan and Zhang, 2011).

Regarding to the tourism, a tourism destination is considered as an open system with reasonable offers to attract potential tourists based on its properties, resources, any available infrastructures, accommodation, and supplementary offers, such as eateries and restaurants, shopping area, thematic destination, culture and history spots, and so on (Rodríguez-Díaz & Espino- Rodríguez, 2008), then the reviews of the tourists in travel websites can also give a brief description of the real condition of the tourism destinations.

One of the helpful websites providing information and services about travel is TripAdvisor that operates worldwide. TripAdvisor has become the most widely used virtual travel agency that lets users to openly plan their trip (Jeacle and Carter, 2011). The website also provides space for the travellers or tourists to write their reviews about the tourism destinations. Online reviews that are posted individually by tourists can reach a large group of other potential tourists. Then, the language used in online reviews is essentially useful in the tourism industry (Mauri and Minazzi, 2013). In the tourism sector, online reviews are greatly influential for the travellers' decision on destination choice. The information in online reviews is also considered more unbiased, massive, and objective, because the online reviews are posted spontaneously (Yacouel and Fleischer, 2012). They provide prominent information because they express the most current, straight, and realistic evaluations.

Evaluations for tourism destinations in online reviews usually use a certain kind of language expressions. It uses a certain language based on the reviewers' point of view about something. In this matter, the review is about tourism destinations that have been

visited. The language that used in the reviews or the real testimonials usually concerned with the writers' own perspectives, feelings, and experiences. In expressing those kinds of reviewers' feelings, Martin & White (2005) organized three systems of appraisal. They are attitude, engagement, and graduation.

Attitude system is "concerned with feelings" and deals with the positive or negative valuation or assessment of a person, thing, place, or matter, comprises three semantics domains in construing "emotions, ethics, or aesthetics." The system of attitude refers to affect, judgement, and appreciation. Attitude system expresses emotions or what is referred to affect system or conveys evaluations of people that are called judgement systems or evaluation of ideas and things that are known as appreciation. Affect deals with the emotional reactions for example expression of happy, sad, worry etc. Judgements of behaviour usually deal with the normative principles, and also evaluation or appreciation of things ranging for reaction, composition, and valuation.

Engagement deals with the way resources such as "projection, modality, polarity, concession and various comment adverbials" place the speaker or the writer to the value position and to potential responses by the way of quoting or reporting, acknowledging, denying, countering, affirming, and so on. It expresses the authorial voice to position itself with respect to and to engage with. Meanwhile, graduation works across two axes of scalability, namely, grading by intensity or quantity, and grading by prototype and precision used for category boundaries.

In relation with the online reviews of Madura tourism destinations, this study is aimed at explaining the language of reviews used by the reviewers and the way the reviewers convey their valuation of Madura tourism destinations through the system of appraisal.

2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative design to deal with the description, interpretation, and explanation of the meaning of the language used in online review. Qualitative research is concerned with collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to gain insight into certain interesting phenomena (Gay et al., 2006). Since the main objective of qualitative research is to understand, the researcher is the main instrument for data collection and analysis. The data were gathered from TripAdvisor website that is one of the most popular travel websites in the world. It is reached through https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g1574414-Activities-c61-t52Madura_Island_East_Java.html. Data are words, phrases in sentences of online reviews available in that website address. Only Madura tourism destinations containing the reviews from the visitors were used. They are

reviews for Pantai Lombang (Lombang Beach) coded as LB, Pantai Siring Kemuning (Siring Kemuning Beach) coded as SKB, Pantai Sembilan (Sembilan Beach) coded as SB, and Pantai Camplong (Camplong Beach) coded as CB.

Data collecting was done by categorizing the appraised items for each destination and classifying the language used in online reviews based on a system of appraisal for each tourism destination, either positive or negative valuation, in particular four beaches in Madura which are reviewed in TripAdvisor website. Data from each category were identified based on the appraisal system and then displayed. Coding of data based on appraisal category, for example +/- react = positive/negative appreciation of reaction, +/- comp = positive/negative appreciation of composition, +/- val = positive/negative appreciation of valuation, force-intens = graduation of force to intensify, and force-quanti = graduation of force to quantify, focus-sharp = graduation of focus to sharpen, focus-soft = graduation of focus to soften. Furthermore, to understand the language of appraisal used in the online reviews and the ways of the reviewers conveying the online reviews in the website, the theory proposed by Martin and White (2005) is inevitably used to confirm the language used in the reviews as one of the alternative source of references for tourists in deciding their travel destinations.

3. Findings and Discussion

There are four beaches in Madura reviewed on the TripAdvisor website. Each beach has a different number of reviews. Lombang Beach has seven online reviews, Siring Kemuning Beach has three reviews, Sembilan Beach has two reviews, and Camplong Beach has three reviews. The online reviews provide any evaluation about the resources or properties of the beaches in general, infrastructures, accommodation, eateries or restaurants and the likes, shopping area, and other complementary facilities.

The testimonial of the resources and the beaches are the main things to be reviewed. All reviewers give the evaluation about this resource, either in positive or negative ways accompanied with grading evaluation. Lombang Beach and Camplong Beach have reviews on their infrastructure. In addition, Lombang Beach and Sembilan Beach get reviews on their accommodation. Lombang Beach gets attention from the visitors by the reviews of the eateries or restaurants, shopping area, and other complementary facilities. The rest of the beach destinations have no reviews at all about these facilities, except Siring Kemuning Beach that has reviews on its complementary facilities.

From the online reviews, it is notable that the reviews are mostly in appreciation because the reviewers only express their preferences. Besides, there is also the graduation system used in the reviews, both focus and force category for both intensification and quantification. Other categories do not exist in the online reviews. The four reviews for each destination in Madura are slightly various in terms of the features that experienced by the reviewers. The distribution of appraisal categories in the online reviews of the beaches can be recognized across them. General reviews of each destination can be observed in the following table 1.

The online reviews for Madura tourism destinations, in particular four beaches that got reviews from the visitors expressed in TripAdvisor website, used language of evaluation in appraisal system of appreciation, both positive and negative, and graduation of focus and force for all appraised items ranging from resources, infrastructure, accommodation, eateries or restaurants and the likes, shopping area, and other complementary facilities for each destination. There are absence of other appraisal categories, such as affect, judgement, and engagement in the reviews. Lombok beach gets more reviews than other destinations, albeit other three destinations also get the same category of reviews.

The absence of affect both positive and negative indicates that the reviewers did not express their personal feeling of emotional reactions about the destination. The same thing happened with the affect variable, there are no judgement evaluations, both positive and negative. Here, judgement expressed attitudes for behaviour that usually not for things but humans, and concerned with certain rules or moral principles. No manifestation of engagement can indicate that the reviewers do not position themselves for their commitments in giving the reviews of the tourism destinations.

3.1. Reviews in positive appreciation

Madura tourism destinations, four beaches in this study, were reviewed using expressions of positive appreciation, either in reaction, composition, or valuation. Any comments for resources as the appraised items are in the appreciation system which was used for giving evaluations of objects or ideas. In this matter, the appraised items are the object i.e. Lombok beach got mostly positive comments, followed by Siring Kemuning Beach and Sembilan Beach, while Camplong Beach got less positive comments. The examples of positive evaluations can be illustrated below.

- (1) "It's a nice beach" (LB/+react)
- (2) "Lombok beach is a potential tourism destination" (LB/+val)
- (3) "The beach is clean, sand is soft and white" (LB/+comp)

TABLE 1: Overview of appraisal in the online reviews.

Appraisal		Lombang Beach (LB)	Siring Kemuning Beach (SKB)	Sembilan Beach (SB)	Camplong Beach (CB)	
Category	Sub-category					
Affect	Affect +	–	–	–	–	
	Affect –	–	–	–	–	
Judgement	Judgement +	–	–	–	–	
	Judgement –	–	–	–	–	
Appreciation	Appreciation +	nice, potential, white	awesome,	worth to visit,	clear,	
		sand, gentle, blue	great,	really blue,	beautiful	
		sea, quiet, soft,	natural,	white, nice,		
		natural, not polluted,	white,			
		awesome, beautiful,	decent, nice			
	Appreciation –	spectacular, fresh				
		water, clean, popular				
		hard to get, far	rubbish	really hot	depressing,	
		enough, current is	everywhere		dirty, not	
		strong, almost empty,			worth	
	rather remote, very					
	crowded, lack of					
	infrastructure, not					
	very good, some local					
	food, very limited, only					
	street food, no					
	appropriate					
Engagement	Disclaim	–	–	–	–	
	Entertain	–	–	–	–	
	Proclaim	–	–	–	–	
	Attribution	–	–	–	–	
	Monogloss	–	–	–	–	
Graduation	Focus	–	kind of	–	–	
	Force	many, quiet, longest, almost, rather, very, a little, no appropriate, only, very, a little, constant	no lifeguard	plenty of, many	a lot of	

- (4) “Awesome view” (SKB/+react)
- (5) “Descent beach” (SKB/+val)
- (6) “Worth to visit” (SB/+val)
- (7) “Beautiful Beach” (CB/+react)

Concerning Madura tourism resources, the reviewers provided evaluations in positive reaction both for the impact and quality of the resource. The impact and quality of the resource were considered to be able to grab them and be liked such as in examples no

(1), (4), and (7). Giving comments on the resource, the reviewers also used expressions of positive appreciation for valuation as appeared in examples (2), (5), (6). The valuation expressed the worthiness of the resource to be visited based on the reviewers' considered opinion (Martin & White, 2005). In addition, the evaluation for the resources was also expressed by using positive appreciation of composition which comprised of balance and complexity of the resource from the reviewers' view of order. Example (3) showed the composition of the beach resource. Positive reviews of the destinations were expressed by appreciation that mostly in the form of positive adjectives.

(8) "Bathroom is clean" (LB/+comp)

(9) "It is a popular attraction" (LB/+val)

Instead of reviewing the resource, other complementary facilities of the tourism destination also got some comments. Although there were only few comments compared to the comments for the resource, the complementary facilities were reviewed in positive appreciation of composition and valuation as in examples (8) and (9). The reviewers seemed to use positive appreciation of reaction, composition, and valuation as a way to express their own evaluations of the destinations.

3.2. Reviews in negative appreciation

There are negative reviews of beach tourism destinations. The negative comments were expressed in negative appreciation of reaction, composition, and valuation. Some examples of the reviews in negative appreciation are as follows.

(10) "...hard to get to without a car and GPS" (LB/-val)

(11) "...the lack infrastructures could be addressed to lombang area." (LB/-comp)

(12) "it's really hot." (SB/-react)

(13) "Depressing beach" (CB/-react)

(14) "It is dirty" (CB/-comp)

All the above examples (10)–(14) showed negative evaluations for the resource and other complementary facilities of the tourism destinations. Negative appreciation of valuation was used to express the location of the resource. Negative composition expresses the reviewers' view of order for the resource or other supporting facilities. Negative reaction also expresses the quality of the resource and supporting facilities. Negative reviews were expressed through the language such as 'hard, lack, hot, depressing, and dirty.

3.3. Reviews in graduation

Graduation deals with the increasing or decreasing in attitude, and its degree can be categorized. For a person or thing that is categorized, it can be described through force that was completed by enhancing adverbs and numbers. For a person or thing that cannot be classified, it can be described through focus. There are only evaluations in graduation systems of force, both force of intensification and quantification for Madura tourism destinations. Evaluations in the graduation system were used to comment on the resource and any supporting facilities.

(15) "...and longest beach-line..." (LB/force-intens)

(16) "...and many horse riding hawkers..." (LB/force-quanti)

(17) "There are some local food vendors " (LB/force-quanti)

(18) "There is no lifeguard so you are kinda at your own risk." (SKB/force-quanti)

(19) "They had many cottages..." (SB/force-quanti)

(20) "This place needs a lot of improvement."(CB/force-quanti)

(21) "...some kind of nice beach in Bali..." (SKB/focus-soft)

From example (15) above, the reviewer gave a comment on the resource in which the beach line is the longest. The use of the superlative form of long means that compared to other beach lines that the reviewer has visited, Lombang Beach is number one in its length. The relative scaling with regard to intensification is recognized via superlative longest.

The use of quantifiers many, a lot of, and some, in examples (16), (17), (19), (20) show imprecise reckoning of numbers. Many, some, and a lot of could give an idea that the thing they evaluate could be more than their expectations because after all those quantifiers followed by countable nouns. They are in a large amount. The quantifier of no gives an idea that the reviewer knows the real amount of what they appraised. No has the same idea of not any or nothing. The use of quantifiers in the reviews could be one of the ways to highlight the up/down-scale of the appraised items.

Graduation of focus was also used to comment on the resource of tourism destination as in example (21). The reviewer expressed 'kind a nice beach in Bali' to grade the beach in Madura compared to the beach in Bali. Softening of positive values happens when the positive evaluation is understood as possibly problematic for writer–reader solidarity (Martin and White, 2005).

4. Conclusion

The reviews about Madura tourism destinations, in particular beaches, in TripAdvisor website used not only some expressions in appraisal system of appreciation of reaction to express the quality of the destination, appreciation of composition to express the balance and complexity of the destinations, and appreciation to express the worthiness of the destination, both in negative and positive expressions, but the reviews also used graduation system of force of intensification and quantification. All of the evaluations in the appraisal system were used to comment on the resource, properties, and other complementary facilities. Expressions of positive appreciation are more than expressions of negative appreciation. Expressions of graduation of force intensification were used to refer to the quality scale and quantification was used to emphasize the amount, while graduation of focus only to soften the appraised items.

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