



Article

The Cross-Cultural Comparison on Language Strategies in Tourism Advertising between Bali and Philippines: An Appraisal System Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates how language constructs persuasion and cultural identity in Southeast Asian tourism advertising, focusing on Bali and the Philippines. The theory Appraisal System proposed by Martin & White (2005) is used to examine how attitude, engagement, and graduation as evaluative language are realized in tourism advertisements. Comparing how each culture expresses appreciation, social judgment, and emotion reveals the persuasive patterns as local values and identities in advertising. The mixed method is used to explain the data qualitatively in discourse analysis and quantitatively to count the frequency of appraisal categories. The findings contribute directly to Bali's tourism promotion efforts on developing promotional media and offering practical guidelines for developing more persuasive and culturally resonant media language strategies.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural; Bali Tourism; Philippines Tourism; Systemic Functional Linguistics; Appraisal System

Suggested citation:

Claria, D.A.K., Susanthi, I.G.A.AD., & Suwendri, N.M. (2025). The Cross-Cultural Comparison on Language Strategies in Tourism Advertising between Bali and the Philippines: An Appraisal System Analysis. *International Journal on Culture, History, and Religion*, 7(1), 610-623. <https://doi.org/10.63931/ijchr.v7i1.583>

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Introduction

The success of an international destination's branding depends on how effectively the advertisements employ language to create emotional appeal, reflect cultural values, and shape a strong competitive identity. According to Wong (2021), effective branding for a place requires an integrated linguistic strategy, particularly as global audiences become increasingly diverse and media platforms become more complex. Morgan et al. (2011) explain that success in branding can be seen from the advertisements that develop coherent, emotionally compelling narratives that highlight the unique cultural attributes and authentic experiences. Tourism advertisement has long been recognized as a discourse that combines informative and persuasive functions (Urry & Larsen, 2011). It aligns with the opinion of Jaworski & Pitchard (2005) that tourism advertising utilizes words not only to inform but also to persuade, while reflecting and shaping the cultural, social, and value perceptions offered by a destination. Branding campaigns in tourism, especially at the international level, play a crucial role in shaping tourists' mental images and expectations. The success of tourism campaigns can be attributed to linguistic strategies and the dual function of language as both a marketing instrument and a cultural medium, bridging the gap between promotional messages and tourists' imagined experiences.

Tourism advertising needs to navigate the different cultural frames by translating local experiences into globally understandable, emotionally engaging content, strategically bridging the cultural meanings (Dann, 2021). However, many tourism campaigns struggle not because of a lack of natural or cultural attractions, but because of limitations in their language strategies, especially when addressing cross-cultural audiences. The use of descriptive language in tourism rather than persuasive, passive rather than engaging, and fragmented rather than strategic causes failure in capturing international attention. Studies have shown that practical tourism discourse relies on evaluative and persuasive language, which transforms cultural and natural assets into symbolic capital for branding (Fairclough, 2010). Research by Gover's & Go (2009) shows that narrative framing and cultural translation strategies related to emotional language are essential for creating brand identities that resonate across cultures. A similar point of view, as expressed by Kiss (2018), suggests that evaluative and narrative devices in promotional texts strengthen emotional appeal and make the destination more memorable.

The difference in language navigation in marketing tourism products is evident in the way Bali and the Philippines create tourism advertisements. This cross-cultural gap in language strategy is particularly evident when comparing the two advertising

products from both countries. In 2012, the Philippine Department of Tourism published the tagline “It’s More Fun in the Philippines,” focusing on providing visitors with a fun personal experience rather than complex cultural or spiritual narratives (Dela, 2021). Bali, by contrast, often relies on descriptive language that emphasizes what the island has, but not why it is uniquely valuable or emotionally rewarding. In the competitive global tourism industry, Bali and the Philippines, which have similar natural and cultural richness, achieve different levels of popularity nowadays. The disparities result from the effectiveness of language strategies employed in tourism communication. The Philippines has achieved strong global recognition, winning multiple honors at the World Travel Awards as Asia’s Leading Beach Destination. At the same time, Bali risks being overshadowed because its promotional strategy does not fully exploit the evaluative potential of language lately (Mocini, 2013). The Philippines’ advertisements effectively combine persuasive sentences with coherent multimodal structures, while Bali is often fragmented without linguistic engagement (Elliot, 2019). As a result, the Philippine brand succeeds in building an emotional engagement.

The imbalance requires a linguistic and cultural analysis of how evaluative meanings are constructed across cultures within the scope of cross-cultural analysis. To address the issue, a comparative study of Bali and the Philippines’ tourism advertisements, employing a cross-cultural approach and utilizing the appraisal system theory, becomes essential. Comparative studies demonstrate how different destinations employ distinctive strategies to increase awareness. The Philippines has garnered accolades for its well-structured and consistent international marketing, which combines persuasive discourse with multimedia promotion (Zhipeng, 2022). In contrast, Bali’s promotion has been described as fragmented and passive, relying heavily on social media postings without centralized institutional coordination (Sutama, 2020). Comparative research in tourism discourse reveals that disparities in strategy often result in unequal worldwide recognition, where the Philippines begins to receive global honors while Bali struggles to remain competitive.

The appraisal framework, developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), examines how language reflects attitude, engagement, and graduation to produce evaluative meanings. Martin & White (2005) emphasized that appraisal resources shape how readers and audiences align affectively with discourse. Kress & Leeuwen (2006) have demonstrated that a similar concept of language choice in promotional texts indeed influences readers’ emotions and perceptions, while Cohen (2004) highlights his perspective on how cultural narratives encode tourist expectations. Appraisal directly focuses on how positive or negative values, emotions,

and intensity are linguistically encoded, which is central to promotional discourse. Analyzing how the Philippines and Bali generate evaluative meanings in the commercial field for their advertisements provides valuable insights. The Philippines' success implies that effective linguistic strategies, such as powerful evaluative words and persuasive engagement, contribute significantly to global competitiveness. The Philippines' advertisement meets the goals by utilizing evaluative resources, whereas Bali's tends to underutilize them, resulting in less persuasive messaging.

Language and cultural analysis are essential to understanding how tourism branding succeeds or fails in reaching international audiences. Although previous studies have examined tourism discourse from various aspects and perspectives, such as promotional strategies or destination branding, few have conducted a systematic comparative analysis using the appraisal system to evaluate meanings. By applying the appraisal system, the study can systematically reveal how evaluative meaning is constructed through the choice of attitude, engagement, and graduation in tourism advertisements in Bali and the Philippines. Integrating a cross-cultural approach in tourism branding ensures that language strategies are not only persuasive but also culturally sensitive and respectful. The comparative findings also provide practical insights and recommendations for strengthening Bali's tourism promotion strategies, enabling it to compete more effectively in the global tourism market.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing Appraisal System theory, as developed by Martin & White (2005), which extends the main concept of language meta-function within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory. The study aims to examine how tourism advertisements from Bali and the Philippines construct the evaluative meaning and how these meanings can help advance cross-cultural tourism promotion strategies. The data were collected from Instagram advertisements published by the Bali Tourism Board and the Philippines Department of Tourism. To ensure the relevance of the data, only advertisements posted in 2024 were included through purposive sampling. To maintain manageability and depth of analysis, the data was limited by selecting only 35 posts related to tourism promotion. The data were archived and analyzed using the appraisal system framework to identify the evaluative language. A cross-cultural comparative analysis was carried out to highlight the similarities and contrasts between the two tourism boards' advertising strategies. This approach enables the study to examine how cultural perspectives influence evaluative language, as well as how these differences impact the effectiveness of international branding.

Findings

Tourism advertisements are persuasive discourse intended to affect potential visitors' opinions, feelings, and decisions, rather than simply offering information. Their effectiveness is determined not only by how the content is promoted but also by how language is used to create evaluative meanings. In this context, the Appraisal System, developed under Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), provides a practical framework for analyzing how texts persuade.

Martin & White (2005) established the Appraisal System, a component of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), by providing a framework for evaluating how texts construct evaluative meaning. It is divided into three subsystems: Attitude, which conveys emotions, judgments, and appreciation; Engagement, which manages intersubjective positioning; and Gradation, which strengthens or softens evaluative force. Previous studies have utilized appraisal in various contexts, including news reports (Martin, 2000), education (Yang, 2016), and advertising (Nugraheni, 2011). In tourism discourse, appraisal has been discovered to indicate how destinations are framed (Marsakawati, 2022). However, comparative appraisal studies across competing destinations are infrequent, leaving a gap in understanding of how evaluative strategies affect global tourism competitiveness. The Appraisal System consists of three subsystems, namely attitude, engagement, and graduation. Attitude refers to how emotions, judgments, and appreciations are expressed. It is evident in tourism branding, where destinations are often described as breathtaking or welcoming. Such evaluative expressions go beyond neutral description and work to build positive feelings toward a place. Engagement refers to how a text positions itself compared to other perspectives. For example, a statement "recognized globally as a top destination" found in the Philippines' advertisement draws on external authority to enhance credibility. Graduation examines the intensification of meaning. Phrases such as "*the most stunning sunset*" or "*a truly unforgettable experience*" have evaluative force, resulting in a more substantial persuasive impact than weaker versions, such as "*a nice sunset*."

Attitude Distribution in Tourism Advertisements

Martin and White (2005) define attitude as evaluative tools that allow individuals to express their perspectives and emotions. In this study, the attitude found in the advertisement is divided into positive and negative attitudes. This finding aligns with previous research by Ho (2019) and Ho & Suen (2017), who similarly found

that appreciation is used to evaluate objects or phenomena and to convey emotional responses through affect. The result is shown below.

Table 1: Attitude System

Form	Attitude	Character	Occurrences in FTA	Occurrences in BTA
Positive	<i>Love</i>	Affect	15 (10.3%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Support</i>	Affect	5 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Awaits</i>	Affect	15 (10.3%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Excites</i>	Affect	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Offers</i>	Affect	7 (4.8)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Experiences</i>	Judgement	10 (6.9%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Beauty</i>	Appreciation	14 (9.7%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Paradise</i>	Appreciation	3 (2.1%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Explore</i>	Judgement	7 (4.8%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Discover</i>	Judgement	7 (4.8%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Ignite</i>	Affect	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Magnificent</i>	Appreciation	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Lauded</i>	Appreciation	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Ideal</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Unforgettable</i>	Judgement	8 (5.5%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Smooth</i>	Affect	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Exhilarating</i>	Appreciation	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Vibrant</i>	Affect	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Stunning</i>	Appreciation	5 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Impress</i>	Affect	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Calming</i>	Affect	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Soothing</i>	Affect	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Unwind</i>	Affect	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Boast</i>	Affect	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Awarded</i>	Appreciation	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Capture</i>	Affect	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Remarkable</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Pristine</i>	Appreciation	5 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Charming</i>	Appreciation	5 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Celebrate</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Relax</i>	Affect	7 (4.8%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Stunning</i>	Affect	7 (4.8%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Valuable</i>	Judgement	4 (2.8%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Incredible</i>	Judgement	2 (1.4%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Gift</i>	Affect	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Clean</i>	Judgement	0 (0%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Purified</i>	Judgement	0 (0%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Enchanting</i>	Affect	0 (0%)	1 (9.1%)
	<i>Serenity</i>	Judgement	0 (0%)	1 (9.1%)
Negative	<i>Rushing</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Extreme</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	<i>Fall</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)

<i>Mellow</i>	Judgement	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
Total		145 (100%)	12 (100%)

The findings reveal a marked imbalance in the distribution of evaluative language between the Philippines Tourism Advertisement (FTA) and the Bali Tourism Advertisement (BTA). The FTA data records a significantly higher frequency of terms, most notably love (15), awaits (15), beauty (14), and experiences (10). This finding reveals that the Philippines' promotional discourse employs a range of expressive and appreciative emotions, as well as repetition, to foster a positive image of tourism. On the other hand, the BTA dataset shows far fewer occurrences of evaluative terms, with most appearing only once, such as "love," "offers," "experiences," "beauty," "paradise," "explore," and "discover." It suggests that Bali's strategy focuses on highlighting the emotional and cultural aspects of tourism.

Additionally, negative judgment of adjectives, such as "rushing," "extreme," "fall," and "mellow," appears exclusively in FTA. These terms function as contrastive strategies to position the Philippines as a destination of calmness and escape. The combination results show two different strategies for destination branding. The Philippines emphasizes persuasive repetition and emotional intensification, while Bali adopts a strategy of linguistic variation to shape tourist perceptions in a more nuanced way.

Engagement Distribution in Tourism Advertisements

According to Martin & White (2005), the engagement system deals with how speakers and writers position their intonation and viewpoints. They might be in the form of rejection, statement, entertainment (possibility, seem, and suppose). These options in engagement allow language users to highlight a dialogue by asserting or rejecting, and opening a space for negotiation by entertaining viewpoints.

Table 2: Engagement

No	Engagement	Category	BTA	(%)	FTA	(%)
1	Monoglossic	Rejection	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
2	Heteroglossic	Statement (Disclaim, Proclaim)	36	76.60%	155	55.56%
4	Heteroglossic	Entertain (Possibility)	7	14.89%	90	32.26%
5	Heteroglossic	Suppose	4	8.51%	34	12.19%
Total			47	100%	279	100%

The analysis of engagement resources reveals apparent differences between BTA and FTA. In BTA, statements (disclaim and proclaim) dominate (76.60%), indicating a strong tendency to present information without any persuasion. By contrast, the statement is also the most frequent resource in FTA (55.56%); its dominance allows other engagement strategies, such as entertainment (32.26%) and supposition (12.19%), to play a significant role. These findings reveal that FTA texts are more dialogically expansive, often framing propositions as persuasive or open to negotiation, whereas BTA texts are more dialogically expansive. The absence of rejection in both contexts suggests a preference for indirect ways of positioning oneself against alternative views rather than outright contradiction.

Graduation Distribution in Tourism Advertisements

Martin & White (2005) explained that graduation is the appraisal system that deals with the scaling of interpersonal meaning, showing how speakers and writers adjust the strength or precision of the evaluations. Graduation is divided into two forms, namely force and focus. Force can be used to intensify or diminish qualities, processes, and quantities. Focus can be used to sharpen or soften category boundaries, indicating how prototypical something is.

Table 3: Graduation

No	Graduation	Form	BTA Frequency	FTA Frequency
1	Force	Explicit	39 (42.39%)	226 (44.75%)
		Implicit	8 (8.70%)	53 10.50%)
2	Focus	Sharpening	9 (9.78%)	34 (6.73%)
		Softening	0 (0.00%)	70 13.86%)
		Swearing	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
		Metaphor	5 (5.43%)	20 (3.96%)
		Neutral	31 (33.70%)	102 (20.20%)
Total			92 (100%)	505 (100%)

Based on the data above, there is a contrast between BTA and FTA. Force-explicit emerges as the most dominant category, accounting for 42.39% in BTA and 44.75% in FTA, reflecting a shared tendency to intensify meanings. Force-explicit occurs less frequently, only 8.70% in BTA and 10.50% in FTA, showing that indirect amplification plays a relatively minor role compared to direct intensification. The fact that neutral shows a larger portion in the BTA total, at 33.70%, but a smaller portion in the FTA, at 20.20%, indicates that BTA focuses more on neutral expression. Softening appears only in FTA, accounting for a total of 13.86%. Sharpening occurs

slightly more frequently in BTA, with a total of 9.78%, compared to FTA, which has a total of 6.73%. At the same time, metaphor is used in both BTA (in total, 5.43%) and FTA (in total, 3.96%).

Discussion

Martin & White (2005) explain that appreciation is used to appreciate objects. These resources are divided into reaction (related to the attention and emotional impact), valuation (assessment of the social significance of an object), and composition (perceptions of proportionality and detail of an object). The findings are described as follows.

Reaction

The data analysis indicates that reaction is the most predominant type of appreciation employed in FTA advertisements. Within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, a reaction refers to the emotional or affective response to an object, event, or phenomenon, thereby highlighting its interpersonal significance. It suggests that the advertisements primarily aim to raise personal feelings and subjective evaluations from their audience. In this case, BTA tended to describe tourism destinations based on their own perceptions, which limited the posts' focus to delivering general information. FTA promoted tourism based on experiences and emotional responses, rather than focusing only on factual or material aspects.

Reaction is broadly related to engagement. Martin and White (2005) explain that engagement is divided into monoglossic and heteroglossic. Monoglossic is a style of writing where the writer presents information from a single perspective, without referencing alternative viewpoints. Heteroglossic focuses on the writer's interaction with others as much as possible. It concerns every acknowledgement, quote, or disclaimer. The reaction of a text can be seen from the use of engagement. It is divided into four main subcategories under heteroglossic. They are 'statement', 'possibility', 'seem', and 'suppose'. Examples of clauses containing reactions can be seen as follows:

Statement

Statement in LSF related to the dialogic contraction of a text. The appearance of any statement in an advertisement will affect the readers' viewpoints. A statement can be in the form of a disclaimer or a proclamation. A disclaimer is a form of statement that contradicts another voice, while a proclamation is a form of statement that reinforces or endorses the writer's stance. Proclamations tend to present opinion by

emphasizing it. The example of words used to express proclaims are obviously, clearly, and indeed.

- a. This underwater paradise awaits you in the Philippines.
- b. Let us guide you around the Philippines!

Entertain

The entertaining form in an advertisement is related to the dialogic expansion of a text. The writer opens up the possibility of other perspectives or signals uncertainty or possibility.

- a. Love diving?
- b. Are you ready to ride the waves in Baler or conquer off-road terrain at the base of Mt. Pinatubo?
- c. Explore these popular diving spots in the Philippines and discover why it has been touted as the “center of marine biodiversity”.

Suppose

The supposed form opens the possibility of other perspectives, or it may involve information from someone else. The writer acknowledges someone else’s statement to show awareness.

- a. As an archipelago, our country has been profoundly shaped by the ocean, influencing our livelihood, tourism, and culture.
- b. Palawan, known for its emerald shores, scenic caves, and rich cultural heritage, including the world-famous UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park.
- c. Celebrate love this Valentine’s season by visiting these precious gems in the Visayas Region!

Valuation

Valuation refers to the way the author assesses a phenomenon more objectively (Mocini, 2013). Valuation on appraisal for advertisement is often used to influence the audience’s perception. In BTA and FTA, valuation is used to appreciate the promoted place based on the reality or the fact that the writer wants to promote. The valuation of a text can be seen from the use of graduation (force and focus).

Force

Force refers to the intensity or amount of an evaluation. It involves the quality to show how strong the feeling is and the quantity to show how many or how much it involves. As a quality, it deals with the intensification of how strong a quality, process, or emotion is. While, as a quantification, it deals with the number, extent, or size.

- a. The Philippines lies along the western edge of the world's largest ocean, the Pacific Ocean.
- b. We are here to ensure you have an unforgettable experience in the Philippines!

Focus

Focus refers to sharpening or softening a word. Focus scales the category boundary to see the typical or precise. Focus is used to mark something as clear and accurate. Meanwhile, force is used to explain that something is less typical.

- a. Travelers come to this beach in Pagudpud for its pristine aesthetic and charming rustic touch.
- b. Bagasbas Beach is lauded as one of the Philippines' top surfing spots.

Composition

According to Martin & White (2005), composition in appraisal is ordered or harmonious; something appears. Positive composition praises clarity and balance, while negative composition is used to enrich the advertisement. The composition can be seen from the appearance of attitude (affect, judgment, and appreciation).

Affect

Affect in appraisal refers to the way advertisements express or trigger emotions (positive or negative) to persuade their audiences. Positive effects make the product attractive by associating it with joy, love, or comfort, while adverse effects can be used to motivate action. Affect is the most frequently used type of attitude resource in FTA. Satisfaction is one aspect of affect that reflects the emotional expression and shows someone's pleasure or fulfillment with a particular situation or object (Ho & Suen, 2017).

- a. However you enjoy the water, every journey in the Philippines is Unforgettable!
- b. It is your sign to embrace the LOVE in the Philippines.

Judgement

In appraisal theory, judgments involve whether something is good or bad, helpful or harmful, and right or wrong. Favorable judgment is the evaluation of something as beneficial, pleasant, or satisfying, while negative judgment is the opposite. Mainly, judgment is used to evaluate people or objects.

- a. Explore these popular diving spots in the Philippines and discover why it has been touted as the “center of marine biodiversity”.
- b. The long stretch of fine gray sand is the ideal beach break for beginners, with expansive shores to navigate the waves.

Appreciation

Appreciation is a part of appraisal used to express the value of things, events, or products. It deals with phenomena and reflects people’s sense of value and quality, and has an impact on something. Appreciation is often closely tied to personal emotions.

- a. The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park has captured the heart of travelers from around the globe, receiving a remarkable reader score of 90.59.
- b. These stunning islands continue to impress travelers worldwide as they fall in love with the Philippines as a travel destination.

Conclusion

The word love on FTA creates a powerful emotional appeal and presents the nation as a popular travel destination. The word "awaits" reinforces anticipation and readiness, positioning the Philippines as a welcoming destination for visitors. Lastly, the word unforgettable in FTA implies an emotional impact and frames the Philippines as a place of lasting memories. In contrast, Bali’s strategy is less repetitive and more diversified, relying on words that highlight both cultural authenticity and visual spectacle, stunning the viewer with visual excitement and sensory appeal.

The Philippines and Bali Tourism use different strategies in resource engagement to achieve persuasive effects. BTA texts rely heavily on assertive statements, presenting information confidently and authoritatively that seeks to close alternative viewpoints. This contractive stance functions to assure potential tourists of certainty, reliability, and the unquestionable appeal of Bali as a destination. In contrast, FTA texts employ a wider range of engagement resources such as tentative expressions and hypothetical framing, which create a more expansive and dialogic style. This approach invites readers to imagine possibilities and explore options, positioning the Philippines as a flexible and welcoming destination open to diverse interpretations

and experiences. In this way, the two authorities deploy engagement differently to achieve promotional aims: BTA builds trust through certainty, while FTA appeals to tourists by fostering inclusivity and imaginative involvement.

Acknowledgement

The author extends heartfelt gratitude to Universitas Warmadewa for the invaluable opportunity and support provided for this research. Additionally, the author expresses deep thanks to the Bali Tourism Office and the Philippine Tourism Office for their content on Instagram.

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