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The Role of Dramatic visual in Documentary Television Programs

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Abstract

The existence of visuals in contemporary society resulted in the structuring of a new visual culture. Dramatic visual becomes necessary in presenting an event from the ordinary becomes an extraordinary one. This dramatic visual phenomenon is massive in today's visual culture. It is worth studying the role of dramatic visuals in elevating reality and presenting visual play into the documentary television program 'Indonesia Bagus episode on Nias Island'. We limit the analysis of documentary television programs to a specific discussion. This analysis draws on the multimodal discourse of Gunther Kress and Van Leeuwen, literature on the Indonesia Bagus episode program on Nias Island, and in-depth interviews with the producers of the Indonesian Bagus program Episode on Nias Island. The research shows four main factors in presenting dramatic visuals. (1) We are placing the grammar of the film through the camera's point of view, camera movement, selection of shot size, determination of editing techniques, and background music support using film score technique. (2) There is the importance of unity between shot sizes, application of bokeh techniques, presentation of language styles, accents, grammar, and the application of

natural lighting in strengthening the character of local speakers. (3) Several action shots execution combined with slow-motion effects and film scores applied in an action scene can reinforce dramatic visual elements. (4) Accuracy in frame composition usage combined with camera movement can provide a detailed picture of the shape of an architectural object.

Keywords

dramatic visual; documentaries; television programs; films language; cinematography]

Introduction

M. Franceschelli and A. Galipò at their journal entitled "The use of film documentary in social science research: audio-visual accounts of the 'migration crisis' from the Italian island of Lampedusa," *Visual Studies* (Informa UK Limited), stated that Visuals have a big role in audio-visual media because of their denotative visual properties, which can be understood by audiences quickly and are embedded in human memory longer. Franceschelli dan Galipo stated that visual arts have a big role in documenting, disseminating, and even creating a performance of events (Franceschelli & Galipò, 2021). They said that visual effectiveness is supported by the film tempo, where the film tempo can build a dramatic story/event in a film. The next journal references are from Brett Adams and his partners at their journal entitled 'Role of Shot Length in Characterizing Tempo and Dramatic Story Sections In Motion Pictures' explains that the tempo of a film is taken from two aspects, namely the length of the shot and the movement. Part of the story and events are generally associated with changes in tempo, where tempo changes are identified by transitions between shots with the term 'film tempo'. Meanwhile, we also see that this visual power is created from a good film grammar arrangement. As stated by Brett Adams and his partners at another journal entitled *Study of Shot Length and Motion as Contributing Factors to Movie Tempo*, where a film grammar can describe cinematic conventions used by the director to manipulate film elements, such as shooting, motion, and type of editing to convey the narrative structure of a story (Adams et al., 2000; Brett Adams Svetha Venkatesh, 2000). The support of advances in visual technology from photography, videography, lighting, and editing software extremely influences the development of visual culture in today's society. We agree with the three journals that the role of visuals in denotative audio-visual media through film grammar and film tempo is vital.

The existence of visuals in contemporary society resulted in the structuring of a new visual culture, where visuals have dominated in providing meaning. Documentary filmmakers have realized that making films about reality might use various ways, including combining factual evidence, gathering arguments, documentation and narrative elements, audio-visual style, and creativity drawing imagination, identification, and others; in the rhetoric of cognition and emotion. Several narrative and memory theories suggest that the emotional dimension plays

a significant role in shaping our social and cultural imagination. Antonio Damasio (1994, 1999), a cognitive neuroscientist, says that emotions and feelings are needed to rationalize feelings as internal guides in helping us communicate with other people's signals (Bondebjerg et al., 2014). Visuals in contemporary society produce a construction of new visual culture, where dramatic visual becomes necessary in presenting an event from the ordinary to the extraordinary. This dramatic visual phenomenon is already massive in today's visual culture; therefore, it is worth studying the role of dramatic visual in elevating reality and bringing it into documentary television programs.

Documentary programs offer representations of events based on factual and valuable facts through the collection of arguments aimed at conveying messages so that the audience can understand, understand and feel the problems faced by the subject. Reality becomes a basis in a documentary storyline combined with an artistic approach to build storyline tension (Fred Wibowo, 2009; Michael Rabiger, 2004; Nichols, 2001; Syaiful Halim, 2018; Xie et al., 2021). Television documentary programs have narratives that can build audience engagement and lead viewers' perceptions of artistically packaged particular agendas and discourses to enjoy them (Yusanto et al., 2021).

Indonesia Bagus documentary program on Nias Island episode broadcasted on NET (one of the private television stations in Indonesia) is chosen as the object of research, considering that this program was awarded as the best documentary program in 2014 and 2015 in KPI award (Indonesian Broadcasting Commission - an institution tasked with drafting and supervising broadcasting regulations in Indonesia). Nias Island episode documentary program uses an observational style as well, where information is conveyed by local speakers as owners of the culture in Bawomataluo village so that it has a powerful element of realism (Yusanto et al., 2020).

Marlia Yossie, the producer of the documentary program Indonesia Bagus on episode Nias island, says in an interview that this program aims to promote the diversity of Indonesian local wisdom because Indonesia has culture and extraordinary natural beauty. This genuine and cultural beauty must be displayed more beautifully through a good camera angle so that dramatic visual is needed in representing the facts in the field. As stated by Franceschelli and Galipo, dramatic visual is one of the crucial factors in building storylines in a television program. Involving the audience's emotions by taking pictures, movements and types of editing in a documentary is one of the needs of a documentary program to maintain the audience's interest in the documentary program.

In this paper, we see a visual presence from a different point of view compared to the last three journals (Adams et al., 2000; Brett Adams Svetha Venkatesh, 2000; Franceschelli & Galipò, 2020). We are interested in analyzing visual efficacy from a dramatic visual perspective. The extent to which the role of dramatic visual in supporting visual effectiveness is denotatively is the focus

of our analysis in this paper. We also analyze the audio mode to determine the extent of its role in supporting the creation of a dramatic visual. The splendour, beauty, pride, concern, and curiosity presented through visualization focus on our analysis. We call this dramatic visual. Cinematography has a significant role in creating film grammar, where filmmakers/television program producers can manipulate film elements to convey the structure of the storyline. The role of cinematography can produce dramatic visuals in representing the phenomenon of an event. As Piliang said, the ups and downs of the audience's emotions brought into an audio-visual display make it a visual fantasy (image), space, and time (Spacetime) in the 21st century today (Piliang, 2010). This analysis aims to explain how the role of dramatic visual works in Indonesia Bagus documentary program on Nias Island episode. The research shows that there are four main factors in presenting dramatic visuals. Those are related to the preparation of the grammatical structure of the film, strengthening the character of local speakers, the application of action shots, and the accuracy of the use of frame composition. The last three factors are related to the tempo of the film.

Method

To explain how the dramatic role of visuals works in the Indonesia Bagus documentary program episode of Nias, we conduct an analysis using a multimodal discourse approach by Gunther Kress and Van Leeuwen, where communication practices always involve interaction and representation (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). We use multimodal to see how far the signs in this program interact to present a dramatic visual. We use Bateson and Labov's metacommunication theory to explain how it affects dramatic visuals. We also interviewed producers to explore how they presented visuals in the Indonesia Bagus program on an episode of Nias Island. Meanwhile, to strengthen the analytical framework, we use film grammar and film tempo due to experimental research conducted by Brett and Svetha (Brett Adams Svetha Venkatesh, 2000)

To build a comprehensive dramatic visual on a documentary program on the Nias Island episode, we analyze the representation process through film-grammar, film-tempo, and meta-signs. Shooting techniques (camera angle, framing, moving camera, and editing techniques) analyze the film grammar. Meanwhile, film tempo, namely the length of the shot and the movement or scene, are analyzed from the point of view of rhythm (cohesion of the modes in a text), composition (organization between modes in a text), information linking (relationships of information elements in the text) and dialogue (dialogic exchange) in text). Meta Signs are also a significant concern in interpreting the visuals displayed.

Opening Scene

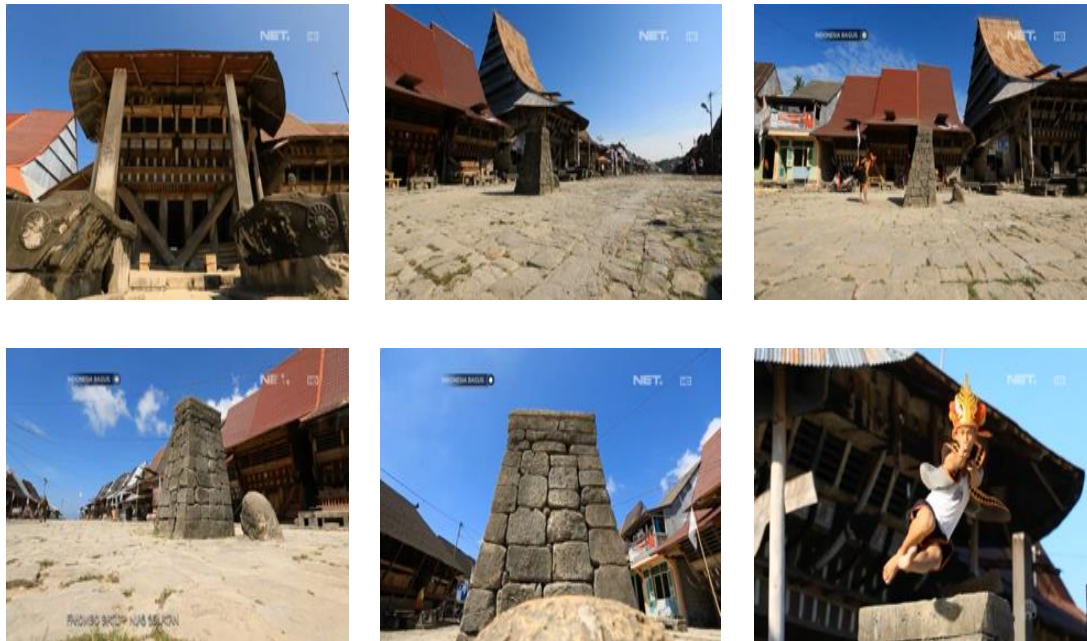


Figure 2. The opening program shows the background of the stone jumping activity

Source: Indonesia Bagus Program on episode Nias Island

The opening scene shows footage of several sea tourism shots, the atmosphere of the Bawomatuluo village, the houses' buildings, and the stone pile artifacts used as stone jumping rituals. Several camera angles are combined with camera movements and presented with a cut to cut editing techniques, showing the general visualization of Bawomatuluo village. Then the track in camera movement is combined with a low angle camera on traditional buildings and stone pile artifacts to create a majestic impression. The fast-motion effect on the sky as a traditional house background adds an artistic element to the appearance of a traditional house. It is to build the structure of the film's language through visual mapping of the environment in Bawomatuluo village to enhance the visual beauty.

We are interested in analyzing the role of audio in this scene, where the audio presents a mix of background music (back sound) with the original sound (direct sound). Slow tempo music is delivered through weak and loud tone intensity. In the world of the film industry, this is called film score or music scoring. That is the music that goes along with a scene in a film. The film score is shown to support the concept of a scene or film as a whole, to be able to involve the emotional audience in watching a film show. The application of the film score in this opening scene felt where the audio mode provides dramatic reinforcement to the scene displayed by the visual mode. For example, when the stone jumper is preparing, the intensity of the music weakens, then the stone jumper runs toward the pile of stone. The music's intention increases when the stone jumper can pass through the pile of stone.

Meanwhile, when the stone jumper made it through the pile of stones, the intensity of the music weakened again. The researcher thought that the film score in the opening scene could arouse the audience's emotions in watching the scene. Direct sound (original sound) when the stone jumper screams when jumping over the stone, becoming the culmination of the action of the stone jumper performed by the stone jumper. The shout was able to add to the dramatic scene. Determination of the duration of each shot for the rock-jumping action and the film score technique carried out in the editing process. It results in a combination of grave film tempo (slow music tempo) and dynamic (fast music tempo) to produce a dramatic visual that can make the rock jumper look more manly and heroic.

Feta music/ Music using stone

The feta music scene begins with people jumping stones and voiceovers explaining the stone-jumping culture. This stone-jumping scene is used as a background for Hikayat Manao's statement (a local speaker) by introducing Bawomatuluo village. The stone jumping scene begins by showing a shot of a pile of stones as the object of the stone jumper jump. Camera movement applies tracking techniques with gradual camera movements. It is to provide a detailed description of the shape of the stone pile. The background music that is displayed uses a slow music tempo (grave) to elevate the mood of this stone jumping scene. This shot is then juxtaposed with a group shot of tourists paying attention to the preparation of stone jumpers. The slow movement of the camera, the expression of tourists who are seriously paying attention to the scene, the selection of a grave tempo back sound, according to our analysis, resulted in a slow film tempo while creating an intense dramatic visual of this scene.



Figure 2: Dramatic visual of the stone jumping scene
Source: Indonesia Bagus Program episode on Nias Island

The stone-jumping scene then continues with Hikayat Manao's statement explaining the meaning of cultural existence in Bawomataluo village. Hikayat Manao's explanation of Bawomatuluo village begins with traditional Feta music or

rock music. Hikayat Manao's Medium Close Up shot size presents the bokeh technique. Bokeh is a photography technique that produces a blur effect on the background of an object so that it seems to separate the target from its background. Hikayat Manao's figure stands out even more with the bokeh technique while ignoring the atmosphere behind him. In the grammatical structure of the film, the use of this bokeh technique strengthens Hikayat Manao's character as a local speaker while at the same time elevating the aesthetic value in this scene.

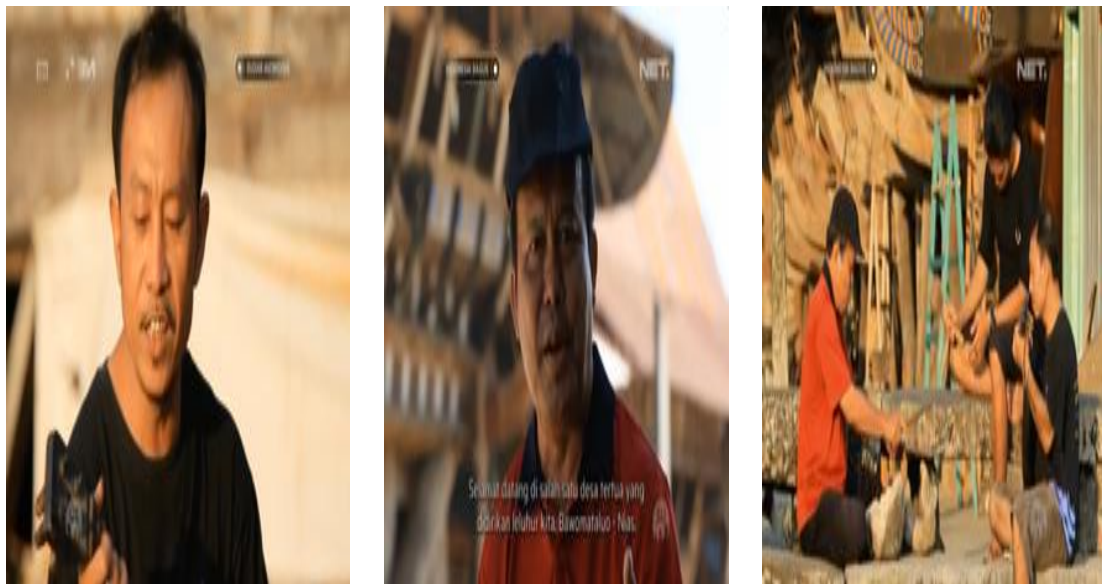


Figure 3. Meta signal local speaker & insert music feta
Source: Indonesia Bagus Program episode on Nias Island

The scene of Hikayat Manao playing feta music is as the insert of Hikayat Manao's statement. Hikayat Manao's explanation of feta music combined with some modern music to attract the younger generation's interest in getting to know traditional music is clarified with a visual insert of feta music combined with guitar and maracas. The emergence of feta music as the back sound for Hikayat Manao's statement strengthens the regional atmosphere while creating information linking and rhythm that can build up feta music culture in Bawomatuluo village. Hikayat Manao, as a local speaker, displays meta signals, namely language style, accent, and grammar who strengthens the characteristics of the people of Nias Island. The visual insertion of a feta music game that supports the statements of local speakers can build up the understanding of the history and characteristics of feta music while at the same time elevating the meaning of traditional music in Bawomataluo village. We state that local speakers who display meta signals supported by the film's language structure and tempo can produce dramatic visuals that the audience can easily understand and more easily embedded in the audience's memory.

Tourists in Bawomataluo

This scene tells about domestic and foreign tourists who come to Bawomataluo village every day. We divide it into three parts. Firstly, it is the

activities of foreign tourists who are watching the stone-jumping ritual. Secondly, they are the stone-jumping action and the last one, a description of the stone-jumping culture found only in Bawomataluo village (see figure 4). We see the structure of the film's language through the shot by shot in this scene which is interesting to analyze. If we pay close attention to the first section, foreign tourists are very few compared to domestic tourists. It shows when the scene of the crowd of tourists around the activity. However, it tries to show a shot of foreign tourists at the beginning of the scene with the composition of Close Up and Medium Close Up. The organization between the shoots shown (composition) and the dialogue exchange between shots (dialogue) in presenting the visuals of foreign tourists at the beginning of the scene displays a meaning for the interest of foreign tourists in the stone-jumping culture in Bawomataluo village. Local culture witnessed by foreign tourists strengthens stone jumping culture at the international level. The expression of tourists enjoying the stone jumping scene presents the unity of the visual mode with the meaning (rhythm) of the interest of foreign tourists. In terms of audio mode, the narration from Hikayat Manao, which explains the arrival of foreign and local tourists, strengthens the relationship between information elements (information linking) between audio and visual modes.

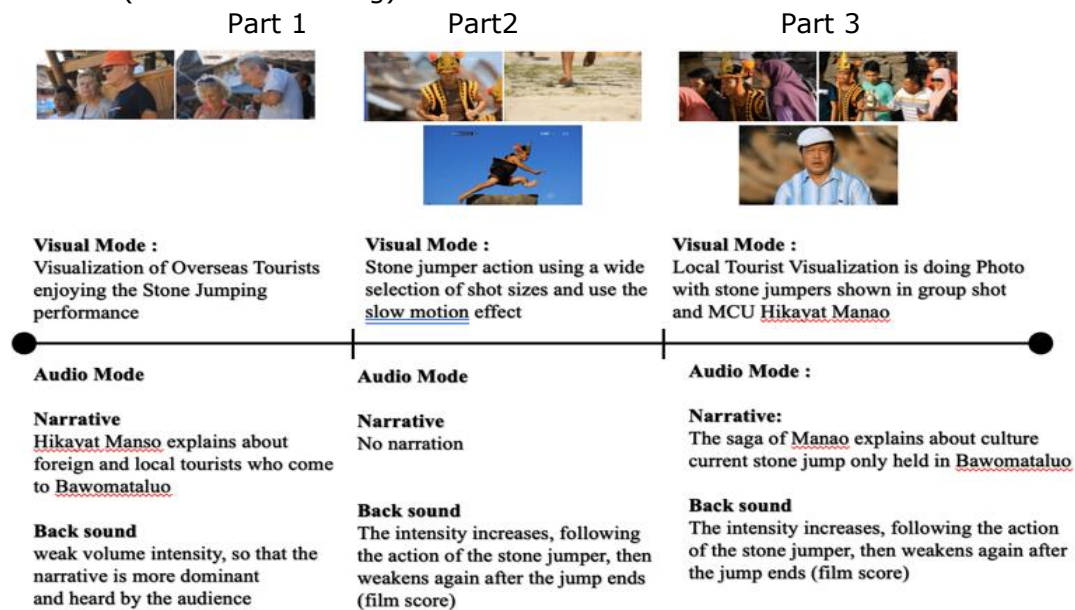


Figure 4. Tourist visits in Bawomataluo

Source : Indonesia Bagus Program episode on Nias Island

This narrative then leads to the second part of the scene, namely the stone jumper who does the stone jump. This section wrapped using a firm dramatic visual approach. It shows in the application of the film score in the rock jump scene, where the intensity of the back sound begins to increase as the stone jumper approaches the pile of stones and then jumps over it. The selection of close-up shots on several body parts of the stone jumper and the slow-motion effects displayed on several action shots produce a single shot (rhythm), thereby increasing the dramatic visual of this stone jumping scene. This second part has a

more dynamic film tempo than the previous section. The cut-to-cut editing technique of several action shots with short shot durations automatically increases the film tempo in this second part. The audience briefly focused on enjoying the stone jumping scene; then, the narration continued with an explanation in the third part, related to the identity of the tourist village attached to the suburb of Bawomataluo. Hikayat Manao explained that only the suburb of Bawomataluo still maintains this stone jumping tradition, while the villages have abandoned this tradition. The visualization of a joint photo between the rock jump runner and the tourists completes this narrative which depicts the stone jumping scene as a show for tourists, no longer a cultural ritual. Stone jumping is to entertain the tourists who visit the village of Bawomataluo. Based on our analysis, the arrangement of the film's grammatical structure through the selection and placement of shots must be adjusted to the purpose of the storyline. Placement between shots can elevate the existence of local culture so that the audience can easily understand it.

Traditional building



Figure 5. Oma Seboa's traditional building in Bawomataluo
Source: Indonesia Bagus Program episode on Nias Island

This scene describes a traditional building called Oma Seboa, occupied by nobles and one of the historical witnesses in Bawomataluo village. Its existence has become one of the cultural icons in this village. In general, this village has not changed since 154 years ago. There are only the roofs of some houses no longer using coconut sago palm leaves, considering the high price and heavy maintenance. The earthquake that hit South Nias in 2005 proved that the construction of houses in Bawomataluo village had undoubted strength because none of the residents' houses collapsed at that moment. It resulted in the meaning of the greatness of the Bawomataluo village community in making building constructions.

These scenes are supported by the film's grammar which is structured by showing the detailed sides of Oma Seboa's building and the houses of the people there. The use of camera movement through low angles accompanied by very smooth camera movements presents the grandeur of Oma Seboa's building. The

long duration of each shot, supported by applying a back sound with a grave tempo, provides a visual exploration of the building ornaments. The size of the shoot is more dominant close-ups and extreme close-ups. The description from Hikayat Manao explains the history and function of Oma Seboa to date produces information linking the visualizations displayed. The mutually reinforcing dialogical exchange between the visual mode and the audio mode resulted in an understanding of the greatness and beauty of Oma Seboa's building.



Figure 5. Use of symmetrical composition and perspective on Oma Seboa
Source: Indonesia Bagus Program episode on Nias Island

The application of frame composition in this scene is also interesting to analyze. The symmetrical construction using a low angle combined with camera movement in both track-in and panning when displaying the Oma Seboa building as a whole led the audience to enjoy Oma Seboa becoming more majestic against the background of a bright blue sky. Symmetrical constructions are commonly used by photographers in architectural objects to display a stable composition while helping the eye view not to be disturbed. In addition to this balanced composition, the perspective composition is applied by taking advantage of the near-far effect obtained by the lens. The perspective composition can display the dimension of depth that can enhance visual beauty. We state that the representation of visual modes (shown through symmetrical construction, camera moving, and the use of the right camera angle) and the audio mode (presenting meta signs as identity reinforcement) can produce dramatic visual. It strengthens the understanding of the greatness of the Bawomataluo people in making building constructions and having a high artistic value in their ornaments.

Conclusion

The analysis results explain that the representation of dramatic visuals in the program 'Indonesia Bagus episode on Nias Island' has four main factors, supporting denotative visual efficacy on the beauty and richness of local wisdom Bawomataluo village. The first factor, determining the duration of each shot for action and using the film score technique in the editing process, can produce grave (slow music tempo) and dynamic (fast music tempo) tempos. Second, local speakers who display meta signs can strengthen cultural identity. Third, the preparation of the grammatical film structure through the selection and placement of shots should be by the purpose of the storyline because the placing between shoots can elevate the existence of an object. Fourth, the visual mode displayed must consider the visual composition, the selection of the right camera angle, and the moving camera can produce visual hyperreality. These four factors ultimately explain how the role of dramatic visual works is to be understood and embedded in the audience's memory longer.

Limitations and study forward

This analysis focuses on the role of dramatic visuals in documentary television programs. The analysis results are specifically in the research focus and the object of television documentary programs. Further analysis performed using analytical objects outside of television documentaries can produce diversity on the role of dramatic visuals in facilitating understanding of the storyline. It can be embedded in the audience's memory longer.

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