Paradigmatic-Syntagmatic Structure Relation in the Narrative of Animated Music Video “Sabda Alam” as a Campaign Design for Endemic Birds in Indonesia

Winny Gunarti Widya Wardani¹, Syahid², Taufiq Akbar³
¹winnygw@gmail.com, ²syahid@unindra.ac.id, ³grapickology.ta@gmail.com
123Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Indraprasta PGRI Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

There are many media campaign models, one of which is an animated music video. In 2021, an animated music video entitled “Sabda Alam” by students of SMK Raden Umar Said (RUS) Kudus won appreciation from national and international filmmakers at the Balinale International Film Festival 2021. As an audio visual-based campaign design, “Sabda Alam” has become one of the creative economic product models produced by vocational high school students. This video presents a narrative about the life of endemic birds in Indonesia that are threatened with extinction. The urgency of the issue of endangered species underlies the importance of this study to analyze the structure of visual narratives in animated music video designs that is able to carry campaign messages in ways that attract attention. This research uses a combination method, namely qualitative and quantitative analysis using a paradigmatic and syntagmatic structural approach in semiotic theory. Qualitatively, examines the visual narrative of animated music videos based on three storyline structures, namely the beginning, middle, and ending storyline. In each part of the storyline, analysis refers to the visualization of visual signs of the subject, event, and setting in the scene. While quantitatively, this study formulates the audience’s level of understanding of the campaign message in the animated music video. The results of the analysis of the structure of the visual narrative show that there are paradigmatic associations from the scenes that link the existence of interest as a message clue. While syntagmatically, analysis refers to the existence of a function in the scene about something. The two are interrelated to produce a campaign message about the importance of protecting endemic birds in Indonesia. This study can be an academic reference, both in vocational high schools and universities, in developing inspiring campaign media designs in the creative industry.

Keywords: paradigmatic-syntagmatic, animated music video, campaign design
INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has the highest diversity of wild birds in the world, but it is estimated that 10 percent of the total bird species population continues to deteriorate (Prawiradilaga, 2019). The factors causing the decline in the population of these endemic birds typical of Indonesia are due to the high level of poaching and the widespread hobby of keeping wild animals (https://surabaya.tribunnews.com/2016/05/26/13-spesies-burung-di-indonesia-di-ambang-kepunahan, 2022). Efforts to build public awareness about the importance of conserving these endangered species must continue. The government has also issued Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems, especially those stated in Article 40 concerning the existence of criminal sanctions in prison and fines for the perpetrators of illegal hunting.

In addition, environmental problems need to be socialized in various ways. According to Law No. 23 of 1997, the environment is the unity of space with all objects, power, circumstances, and living things, including humans and their behavior, which affect the survival and welfare of humans and other living creatures (Suryani, 2014). Among the various forms of campaign media, animated films can also be used as campaign media. Animated film products in their application have the power to convey messages through moving images in entertaining ways.
One form of animation-style campaign media that narrates about the environment is the animated music video "Sabda Alam" by students of SMK Raden Umar Said (RUS) Kudus. “Sabda Alam” tells the story of the life of the Yellow-Crested Cockatoo, Bali Starling, Hornbill Ivory, and Ekek Geling which are endangered. This animated music video has received appreciation from national and international filmmakers at the 2021 Balinale International Film Festival. Featuring the main character of the Ivory Hornbill, this animated music video conveys a campaign message about the importance of protecting endangered animals through a blend of visual and musical language. The design of this animated music video is able to attract attention because of its specialty in conveying environmental messages through visual narratives.

Research on animated music videos with environmental themes is rare. Generally, the existing research discusses the design of animated music videos for the needs of song promotion media, such as research from M. R. Darmo Saputro (2019) who designed a 2D animated music video for the song Negeri Syam entitled 5 in 1. There is also research on making interactive animations of natural and artificial environments using video motion to add learning tools for teachers in attracting the interest and attention of students at school (Solihah and Sundari, 2021).

The form of animation itself is a work of art built by visual elements. When the visual elements in animation are combined with musical elements, both of them can have visual power that can build certain perceptions in the minds of the audience. It is said in the research of Ahmad, et al. (2015) that the lack of public knowledge about the environment, among others, is influenced by the right form of media in disseminating information. While the video model media is one of the educational media that can influence and change a person’s behavior in a positive direction, so it is considered a fairly effective medium in conveying messages and knowledge about the environment.
This research on animated music videos is also important because it becomes a media campaign model that takes different forms. Windahl et al (2009 in Winarni, 2015) said that the campaign model must be specific to make it more attractive. In addition, the element of persuasion cannot be separated from campaign actions, including its processing in the media. Venus (2019) said persuasive actions in campaigns can be done by dramatizing the ideas conveyed, both symbolically and practically, so that the audience can be interested in participating.

The animated music video "Sabda Alam" in this research is a case study of how to visualize a message in a narrative way through the events in the scene. Based on the results of an interview with cinematographer Sigit Hermawan, the design of the visual narrative of "Sabda Alam" was made based on observations in the field, so that the public can feel the realities of the real environmental problems. The choice of a theme based on a true story is considered to be more emotional and thought-provoking, because it represents the life that is happening around it.

In its application, the animated music video "Sabda Alam" uses two-dimensional (2D) animation techniques with a duration of about 6 minutes, and has been broadcast through the RUS Animation Studio channel, on YouTube, since mid-2021. This animated music video has also been watched by more than 3.2 million viewers.
As a media campaign that carries environmental messages, this animated music video focuses on educating the public about the problems of endemic birds typical of Indonesia which are increasingly rare. This message is conveyed through visual elements in the narrative as signs that build the signified in the form of a physical existence visually, and the signified in the form of the association concept or the resulting meaning. According to Saussure (in Fiske, 2007), the key to understanding signs is to understand their structural relations with other signs, which it calls paradigmatic structural relations or syntagmatic structural relations. In film semiotics, paradigmatic structural relations are a form of association when viewing a visualization or a series of texts, as a series of events in interconnected visual narrative signs.

Limited research that discusses animated music videos as campaign media, so this study formulates the question of how paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures are processed in the animated music video "Sabda Alam" to convey campaign messages about the environment? This study examines paradigmatic and syntagmatic structural visualization in animated music videos to show sign relations in scenes and events that carry messages. Paradigmatic is an association of scenes that connect an interest. Events in paradigmatic act as "hints" about something, while in syntagmatic, scenes show "function" about something. Both are interrelated to produce a meaning (Barthes, 2010).

This research is expected to be present as a scientific reference for creators in producing audio-visual-based campaign media. In addition, this study can also provide inspiration for the development of creative economy products in the creative industry sector, especially in producing works on various social, cultural, and environmental issues in interesting and aesthetic ways.
RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a combination method, namely quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitatively, this study formulates the level of audience understanding of the campaign message in the animated music video. This study conducted a survey of 150 respondents aged 20 to 50 years and over, from various groups who like to watch YouTube videos, from students to employees. The selection of respondents was carried out randomly through the distribution of google form which was distributed through the WhatsApp application. The respondents were invited to watch the animated music video “Sabda Alam” and asked to give their views on the visualization of the spectacle.

While qualitatively, this study uses a paradigmatic and syntagmatic structural approach in semiotic theory, especially film semiotics. According to Sobur (2003, in Widianto, et al., 2015) reading the science of signs in films refers to the use of iconic signs, namely to describe objects that cannot be presented through visual signs as cues to convey messages to the audience and each signal received will be different, according to what is played.

In qualitative analysis, the visual narration of the animated music video is divided into three storyline structures, namely the beginning, middle, and end storylines. For each part of the storyline, the analysis refers to the number of events in the narrated scene. Events in the narrative can be said as a series of stories that refer to a theme. The series of stories in the narrative according to Beiman (2007) can be divided into linear stories and nonlinear stories. Linear stories are told sequentially, while nonlinear stories are more focused on creating effects or building the mood of the audience, so they can be presented in a non-sequential way. Most short animations use a nonlinear style because they are adapted to time constraints.
In the context of the events shown in the animated music videos, this study refers to the type of forward or linear storyline, namely the storyline that is one-way, starting from the initial event, moving towards the climax, and closing with the final event. The series of events in the visualization of this scene become a collection of signs that can be interpreted paradigmatically and syntagmatically, and produce a structural relationship.

According to Fiske (2007), the visualization of one event with another event becomes a collection of interconnected signs. Paradigmatically, each event can build signifier and signified to show intent or as a clue. While syntagmatically, a series of scenes are selected based on the events to be shown. The sequence of scenes becomes an arrangement of signs that influence each other, as long as the relation of the sign is in accordance with the rules or conventions that form the basis for the preparation of the signs, so that the arrangement of the scene shows its function about something. Syntagmatic structural relations can also be subdivided according to their types. There is a chronological syntagma, in the form of a syntagma of successive scenes. There is an achronological syntagma, in the form of a syntagma of scenes that are not sequential.

![Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic](image)

**Figure 1. Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic**

Source: adapted from Wardani (2011)
Thus, the methods and approaches used in this study are not only to understand the meaning of signs, but also to find out how signs work in paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations in animated music videos to convey messages about the importance of protection for endemic birds in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Obtaining quantitative data on audience understanding of the easy-to-understand animated music video campaign message “Sabda Alam” shows the following: 76 (50%) respondents stated strongly agree, as many as 67 (45%) respondents agreed, as many as 7 (5%) respondents said they were in doubt, while those who disagreed and strongly disagreed the results were 0%. The total percentage of respondents who strongly agree and agree is 95%, so it can be said that the audience’s understanding of the campaign message is in accordance with the expected goals.

Figure 2. Percentage of audience understanding of the campaign message
Source: author’s documentation

Meanwhile, regarding the viewer’s view of the interesting storyline and building curiosity, the results show the following: as many as 62 (41%) respondents stated strongly agree, 75 (50%) agreed, as many as 13 (9%) expressed doubt, while those who disagree and strongly agree, the result is 0%. The total
percentage of respondents who strongly agree and agree is 91%, so it can be said that the storyline built through the narration of the animated music video has succeeded in attracting the attention of the audience to continue watching. In other words, the visual narrative in the spectacle is proven to have visual power that invites curiosity.

![Percentage of storyline attracts attention and invites curiosity of the audience](image)

Figure 3. Percentage of the storyline attracts attention and invites the curiosity of the audience

Source: author’s documentation

The results of the quantitative data above can be used as the basis for qualitative analysis to describe the arrangement of signs that build relationships between paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures, especially relations in scenes and events.

The discussion on the storyline is divided into four events, namely the events of the lives of endemic birds in the wild, in the early; Bird hunting event and illegal wildlife trade event, in the middle; And the loss of habitat for endemic birds, at the end of the storyline.
Event and Scenes in the Early Storyline as Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Structure

The animated music video “Sabda Alam” begins the story by describing life in the wild, where endemic birds can breed in their habitat. They are the Yellow-Crested Cockatoo, Bali Starling, Hornbill Ivory, and Ekek Geling. They fly happily, in pairs, and raise chicks. The music and song “Sabda Alam” is an introduction to a safe, comfortable, and beautiful living environment. The space setting in this animated music video is depicted as a lush forest area, while the time setting is depicted as a sunny morning to midday. It depicts the life of the Hornbill Ivory mother engrossed in foraging and feeding her young who live in a small hole in a tree.

Paradigmatically, the events in this early storyline are an indication of the importance of an ideal environment for wildlife. The events are built through chronological syntagmatic, where the scenes are shown sequentially, namely the visualization of clear river water, the scene of the Ekek Geling bird perching on a tree branch while singing and flying high into the blue sky. Then the scene of the Yellow Crested Cockatoo family shouting in the tree branch. Followed by the scene of the Bali Starling pair flying while chatting. Followed by the scene of the mother bird Hornbill Ivory feeding her young who lived in a hole in a tree branch, and went looking for food.

The visualization of the birds in the scene becomes iconic signs whose function is to convey messages about the life of endemic birds. The first bird visualization scene to the next bird visualization scene becomes a sequence that influences each other, where the audience’s perception is built to feel the 'happiness' of the birds who live freely in the beauty of the dense forest as their habitat. As is known, the Bali Starling is an endemic species typical of Indonesia whose natural distribution is only found in the West Bali National Park (Alikodra, 2000), while the Ivory Hornbill can only be found in Kalimantan.
Visualization in the syntagma becomes a signifier that leads to the signified about the threat of illegal hunting and the high interest in collecting them as pets. This is represented through the next event in the form of visualization of a hunter’s shoe stepping on the food source of the Hornbill Ivory bird. In this scene, the audience begins to be invited to share the anxiety and worries about how the life of the wild birds will be next.

![Figure 4. Event and scenes in the early storyline](source: author's documentation)

**Events and Scenes in the Middle Storyline as Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Structure**

In the middle storyline, the first event visualizes bird hunting, starting with the scene of a hunter preparing his weapon. Followed by the Bali Starling hunting scene using adhesive traps on tree branches, so the entangled Bali Starling birds can’t fly anymore. The next scene is the hunting of the Yellow Crested Cockatoo family using snares, and the hunting of Ekek Geling using cages. The hunting scene ends with the shooting of the Hornbill Ivory, causing the bird to fall to the ground. Instrumental music accompanies the scene to build a tense atmosphere. The spatial setting in this hunting event is described as still in a dense forest area, but the atmosphere is dim. This is to represent the background of the twilight time. Darkness represents the dark life journey of the captured birds to the center of the illegal wildlife trade.
Paradigmatically, the first event in the middle storyline is an indication of the importance of applying sanctions to anyone involved in the practice of hunting protected wildlife. Syntagmatically, a series of scenes showing the hunting process serves to represent the helplessness of these animals. The visualization of “helplessness” is designed as iconic signs through the chronology of confinement, trapping, capturing, and shooting scenes.

Although the government has issued regulations, such as Law No. 5 of 1990 which stipulates positive laws against hunting and trading of protected wildlife, as stated in Article 21 and Article 40, in practice, these incidents continue to occur, even increasing. Research conducted by Ranita Saputri Yanti (2021) states that stopping wildlife hunting requires an innovative and participatory strategy from all parties, including refusing to buy and sell endangered animals. This is because there are still many obstacles, especially in inadequate facilities and infrastructure and the limited number of law enforcement officers. In addition, there is still weak supervision and public knowledge of laws and regulations is still not common.

Furthermore, the second event in the middle storyline visualizes a trading scene in a wildlife market, where hunters make transactions with sellers for profit. Paradigmatically, the incident shows the fact that the illegal trade in
protected animals is still ongoing, due to high market demand. Syntagmatically, the series of scenes shows the condition of the captured endemic birds. There are scenes of Ekek Geling and Bali Starling being locked up in a cage, the family of the Yellow-Crested Cockatoo being put in a plastic bottle, and Hornbill Ivory getting her yellow beak cut off. These chronological scenes serve to visualize the "suffering" of the animals, so that anyone who watches them feels touched by their emotions, and is moved to participate in preventing actions that disrupt the balance of the ecosystem and have an impact on ecological disturbance.

The representation of the cruelty of human behavior towards endemic birds in scenes at the wildlife trade center are iconic signs that carry messages about the need for more significant legal action. Prof. Ronny Rachman Noor, Professor of IPB University from the Faculty of Animal Husbandry said, that Indonesia is in the vortex of the world's wildlife trade. In fact, the results of the study show that Indonesia is listed as one of the largest exporters of wildlife products in the world along with Jamaica and Honduras (https://dikti.kemdikbud.go.id/kabar-dikti/kampus-kita/pakar-ipb-university-indonesia-berada-di-pusaran-perdagangan-satwa-liar-dunia/, 2022).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.** The second event and scenes in the middle storyline  
Source: author's documentation

Based on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic structural relations of the two events and series of scenes, the meaning that can be captured from the
visualization of the narrative in this middle storyline is an invitation to all parties to jointly stop hunting and wildlife trade. Every community must be proactive about these potential violations, including by participating in campaigns and continuous socialization about the importance of protecting wild animals from the threat of extinction.

**Event and Scenes in the End Storyline as Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Structure**

The event in the final storyline are the closing of the visual narrative, so the substance of the events is the essence of the message to be conveyed to the audience. This final event is a continuation of the last scene in the middle storyline, which is when the Hornbill Ivory imagines a chick left in its nest before death picks him up.

The event of the loss of habitat for endemic birds presents a series of scenes starting from the condition of the Hornbill Ivory chick who loses its mother, so that in the end it must die because it has not been able to find its own food. This was followed by a scene of the habitat loss, no more dense trees or flying birds.

Paradigmatically, the events in the final storyline are clues about the impact of the extinction of protected species, thus affecting the ecology. The meaning of the series of scenes in this end event shows the importance of wildlife habitat problems as a place to live that can support their reproduction. The existence of habitats is related to the balance of the ecosystem and the preservation of ecology, namely the relationship of organisms with their environment. According to Effendi, et al. (2018) "One of the awareness of the importance of protecting the environment, including the social environment is to create a sustainable environment, whose main emphasis is on ecology, where every ecological component starting from the smallest should not go unnoticed. Ecological emphasis will be an important component of environmental sustainability, not only because of its potential to reduce the impact of environmental damage, but also because of its potential to introduce new concepts about the relationship between humans and nature". In other words, the disturbance of habitat will disturb all living creatures.
Syntagmatically, there are two important scenes in the final events that become iconic signs, where the Hornbill Ivory chick and the barren trees are signifier and signified. Its function is to carry the message that the extinction of one species can affect the survival of other species on earth.

![Figure 7. Event and scenes in the end storyline](Source: author’s documentation)

Based on the three elements of the discussion above, the visualization of the animated music video "Sabda Alam" is able to carry a campaign message about the environment through the association of paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures, as summarized through the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sample images of paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures</th>
<th>Visualization</th>
<th>Campaign Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="" /></td>
<td>The live of endemic birds in the wild</td>
<td>Birds that fly freely as a campaign message for the public to participate in protecting wildlife in the wild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="" /></td>
<td>Poaching</td>
<td>Poaching as a campaign message so that the perpetrators can be dealt with and subject to legal sanctions in accordance with applicable laws.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Summary of campaign messages based on paradigmatic and syntagmatic structures
Source: author's documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Illegal wildlife trade</th>
<th>Illegal wildlife trade as a campaign message so that this activity can be put in order by the government.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The loss of habitat for endemic birds</td>
<td>Habitat loss as a campaign message for the community to participate in maintaining potential ecosystem damage, one of which is caused by the extinction of endemic animals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the visual narrative in animated music videos can be designed through paradigmatic and syntagmatic structural relations. Events and the series of scenes that make them up can be visualized through iconic signs to represent the reality of the surroundings, so that messages about the importance of protection for endemic birds typical of Indonesia can be easily digested, but contain deep meanings.

CONCLUSION

This study succeeded in demonstrating the existence of a paradigmatic and syntagmatic structure relation in the design of the animated music video “Sabda Alam” which carries a campaign message about the environment, especially the visual narration of endemic birds, such as the Yellow-Crested Cockatoo, Bali Starling, Hornbill Ivory, and Ekek Geling. Paradigmatically, each event shows an interconnected association, where each event is strung together by chronological syntagmatic scenes with a forward storyline.

The effectiveness of this campaign message is presented gradually through the narrative of introducing the life of endemic birds in their habitat environment, then the content narrative as a climax that describes the hunting of these endemic birds, and the final narrative as an anticlimax describing the condition of endemic birds that have been captured, then traded, and even killed to sell valuable body parts. The entire narrative confirms the impact of illegal fishing and trade on endemic birds, while urging communities to participate in preserving nature. The campaign message of this animated music video shows
the importance of wildlife habitat issues. Then there is a need to implement strict sanctions against anyone involved in the practice of hunting and trading in wild animals.

This campaign message can also build public awareness and concern for endemic bird conservation. Apart from that, it is also necessary to carry out ongoing campaigns and outreach. This study is also expected to be an academic reference in designing environmental campaign media that is able to attract the attention of the audience, delivered in ways that are easy to understand, and it can inspire creators in the field of creative economy products to create other campaign media models.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT


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