

DESIGN OF BALINIKI TYPEFACE AS A BALINESE CHARACTERISTIC DISPLAY FONT

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Abstract

Bali, as one of the provinces in Indonesia, possesses a unique and diverse cultural richness, including Balinese script as an important element within it. However, the traditional use of Balinese script faces challenges in the modern era. This research aims to design a Latin typeface font that has the visual characteristics of Balinese script as an innovative effort to support the implementation of Bali Governor Regulation Number 80 of 2018 concerning the Protection and Use of Balinese Language, Script, and Literature, as well as the Organization of the Balinese Language Month. The design of this typeface is based on the need to expand the reach of Balinese script, increase cultural awareness, and facilitate its use in modern contexts, while also supporting the local creative industry. Visual Communication Design plays a crucial role in this process by studying the concepts of visual communication and the expression of creative power through graphic design elements. The result of this research is the creation of a typeface named "Baliniki" font, inspired by two words: Bali, which represents the Bali region itself, and Niki in Balinese, which means "This." Thus, the Baliniki typeface is expected to further popularize Balinese script.

Keywords: Balinese Script, Font, Typeface, Cultural Preservation, Visual Communication Design, Creative Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Bali, as one of the provinces in Indonesia, possesses a unique and diverse cultural richness. Balinese cultural heritage has attracted the attention of tourists, both domestic and foreign. One of the important elements of Bali's cultural wealth is Balinese script, the traditional writing system used on the island.

Balinese script is part of the Brahmi script family, which also includes Javanese script and other scripts in Southeast Asia. According to Suwija (2014:10), Balinese script originated from South India and was introduced to Indonesia, particularly Bali. This script is not only the identity of Balinese culture but also a means of communication for the community in daily life. In a linguistic context, Balinese script is one of the visual symbols of language that exists alongside the Latin script in writing the Balinese language.

However, in its development, not everyone can read Balinese script, including the Balinese people themselves. Several factors have contributed to this: In the past, there was a myth that learning Balinese script would cause "madness" (forbidden/unspeakable), creating a condition where access to Balinese script was limited, especially for the general public. Balinese script is often associated with sacred objects and ancient manuscripts (lontar), which

in the past might have only been mastered by certain groups such as priests or the elite (Artika, 2021. Balipost.com, February 5, 2021).

Furthermore, the lack of interest and awareness in the modern era means that the interest of the younger generation in Balinese script is increasingly being displaced by popular culture and technology. The lack of awareness about the importance of preserving Balinese script is also a contributing factor.

The island of Bali will lose its cultural civilization identity if the younger generation does not massively practice Balinese script. To that end, (the Governor of Bali, Wayan Koster) is committed to dedicating his entire life to maintaining and preserving the ancestral civilization (Koster, 2025. Balipost.com, February 17, 2025). Therefore, Bali Governor Regulation Number 80 of 2018 concerning the Protection and Use of Balinese Language, Script, and Literature as well as the Implementation of the Balinese Language Month was issued. The objectives of this governor regulation are as follows:

1. To protect and develop Balinese language, script, and literature.
2. To popularize Balinese script.
3. To utilize Balinese language, script, and literature.
4. To foster Balinese language, script, and literature.
5. To strengthen regional cultural identity.

One innovative way to support the implementation of this governor regulation, especially in the development of Balinese script, is by designing a Latin typeface font that possesses Balinese visual characteristics. The reasons for choosing the design of a Latin typeface with Balinese script characteristics are:

To broaden the reach of Balinese script, by adapting its characteristics into a Latin font, the beauty and uniqueness of Balinese script can be introduced to a wider audience, including the younger generation who are more familiar with Latin writing. Increasing cultural awareness, the use of this font in various media, such as graphic design, publications, and digital media, can increase public awareness about the importance of preserving Balinese script.

Facilitating the use of Balinese script in a modern context. A font with Balinese script characteristics can serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, enabling the use of Balinese script in various contemporary contexts without losing its identity.

Supporting the local creative industry. The development of this font can encourage the local creative industry to create innovative products based on Balinese culture, thereby providing economic added value to the region.

Based on the explanation above, the field of Visual Communication Design plays an important role in designing a typeface that can represent a font with Balinese script characteristics. Visual communication design is a discipline that studies visual communication concepts and creative expressions, which are applied in various visual communication media by processing graphic elements (images, illustrations, letters, colors, composition, and layout). All these elements are used to convey visual, audio, and audiovisual messages to the target audience (Tinarbuko, 2015: 5).

Meanwhile, typeface is one of the important elements in visual communication design, because a typeface is a visual design or style of letters that includes a set of characters, namely: letters, numbers, symbols, and punctuation marks, with consistent and comprehensive design features. Rustan (2014:32) in his book entitled Huruf, Font dan Tipografi (Letters, Font and Typography) states that "a typeface is a collection of characters that have the same visual characteristics."

Therefore, in this research, the author designs a typeface with the name "Baliniki" which is derived from two words, namely Bali representing the Bali region itself, and Niki in Balinese language meaning This. So the Baliniki typeface means This is Bali.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a framework or a comprehensive plan about how the research will be carried out. This includes the selection of data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and procedures to be followed to answer research questions or achieve research objectives. Research methodology is very important because it provides direction and clarity in the research process, ensuring that the research is conducted systematically and validly. In the design of the Baliniki typeface as a Balinese characteristic font, there are two stages of methodology that the author undertakes, namely data collection methods and design methods.

Data Collection Method

In this design, the author uses a qualitative research method with data collection techniques through literature study and observation. The literature study is conducted to understand the principles of typeface design. According to Kusrianto (2007:191) in Handriyotopo (2014:127), a letter not only functions to convey ideas but also has the ability to display a visual image or impression.

Meanwhile, Ambrose & Harris (2011) in their book *The Fundamentals of Typography* add that a collection of characters, letters, symbols, numbers, and punctuation marks are part of a typeface. Each typeface has strong and consistent characteristics.

Legibility

Legibility is the main foundation in typography. The typeface must be easy to read and recognize, even in small sizes or in less than ideal conditions. Factors that influence legibility include letterform, letter size, letter spacing, and contrast between text and background.

Readability

Readability relates to the ease of understanding and comprehending the meaning of the text. Several factors that influence readability are line length, line spacing, and the use of a typeface that is appropriate for the context.

Harmony

The chosen typeface must be harmonious with the overall design. When choosing a typeface, consider the design theme, target audience, and the message to be conveyed.

Contrast

Good contrast between the typeface for the heading and the typeface for the body text can create a clear and engaging visual hierarchy. Use different typefaces to differentiate important parts of the text.

Consistency

Use the same or related typefaces throughout the design to create a cohesive and professional look. Avoid using too many different typefaces in one design.

Functionality

The typeface must function well in various media and sizes. Ensure the typeface is easy to read and print, both in digital and print formats.

Observation was conducted to understand how a typeface with Balinese cultural characteristics can be used in various design applications. During the observation phase, the author collected visuals of Balinese script that will serve as a reference in designing the typeface.



Picture 1. Aksara Bali

Source : https://civitasbook.com/singo.php?cb=non&_i=ensiklopedia&id1=aaaaaaatamu&id2=&id=21650

Balinese script, or Aksara Bali, is one of the traditional scripts used in Bali, Indonesia. This script has a unique and artistic form, often appearing like a script font with thin and thick stroke variations that enhance the aesthetics of the writing.

Letterforms: The letters in Balinese script have smooth curves and lines, resembling flowing calligraphy. Each letter has variations in form that can provide an artistic nuance in every stroke.

Thick and Thin Strokes: As you mentioned, Balinese script has thick and thin strokes in certain parts of its letters. This gives a more dynamic and lively calligraphic impression.

Use of Dots and Short Lines: Balinese script often uses small dots and short lines as part of the writing of letters and punctuation marks. This adds artistic detail to the writing.

Ligatures and Letter Combinations: Like many traditional scripts, Balinese script also uses ligatures or letter combinations to form certain sounds. This adds complexity and beauty to the writing.



Picture 2. Balinese Font Pustaka Bali

Source : <https://www.behance.net/gallery/60784933/Balinese-font-Pustaka-Bali>

The second reference is a more modern form of Balinese script, namely the Balinese Font Pustaka Bali. The more balanced letterforms compared to the common Balinese script, and the slightly thicker stroke size, result in a more modern appearance of the script.

Design Method

The design of the Baliniki typeface was carried out using the Design Thinking approach as a creative method focused on cultural needs and users. This typeface aims to support the implementation of the Bali Governor Regulation related to the preservation and development of Balinese script in public spaces.

Inspiration

Observing the actions of the Bali provincial government in preserving Balinese script with the issuance of a governor regulation regarding the preservation and development of Balinese script, visual observation of Balinese script was conducted here as a basis for exploring forms that would later be processed and developed into a Latin font with Balinese characteristics so that Balinese script is better known among a wider audience.

Ideation

From the research results, various Latin letter sketches were developed that adopted the thick-thin visual contrast element inspired by Balinese script. These ideas were distilled into a main concept for a Latin font resembling the visual of Balinese script.

Implementation

The "Baliniki" typeface was developed digitally and tested on various media, such as cultural posters, public signage, and educational materials. Feedback from users and related institutions was used to refine the letterforms to ensure they remain legible and applicable.

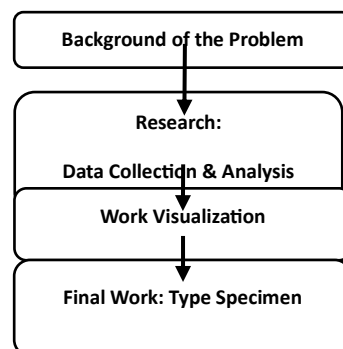


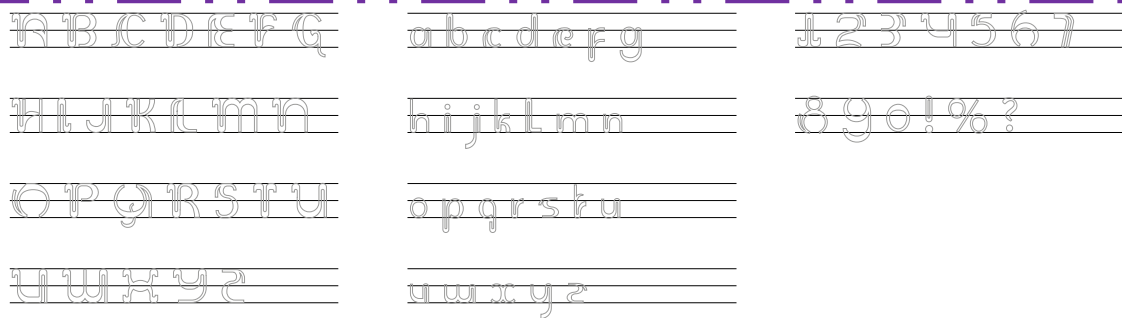
Chart 1. Stages of Creation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Design Process

The process of designing this typeface went through various stages that were carried out sequentially and systematically. The typeface designed is an interpretation of the Balinese script form itself. The letter characters were made slightly thicker and more uniform compared to the actual Balinese script, but still maintain the characteristics of Balinese script. This resulted in the Balini typeface with cultural, modern, contemporary, display, and eclectic characteristics.

Based on the two Balinese script references above, they were then applied to Latin letters by considering the typeface principles that have been elaborated in the literature study, thus producing the following typeface sketches:



Picture 3. Sketch Baliniki Typeface
Source : Personal Documents

Design Results

By developing the basic forms of the typeface that had been determined previously, a font with Balinese script characteristics was created with the name "Baliniki."



Picture 4. Baliniki Typeface
Source : Personal Documents

With the existence of the Baliniki typeface, which is a Latin font with Balinese script characteristics, it is hoped that the community will be more interested in learning and using Balinese script in everyday life. This will also strengthen Balinese cultural identity and increase pride in ancestral heritage.

Thus, the design of the Baliniki typeface as a Latin font with Balinese script characteristics is a strategic step in supporting the Bali Governor Regulation on Balinese Script and preserving this valuable cultural heritage.

Type Specimen

A type specimen is a sample of typesetting that is produced to show the visual properties of a typeface (Carter Rob et al., 2018). This type specimen is used by designers for the purpose of study and comparison.



Picture 5. Baliniki Typeface on Business Card
Source : Personal Documents

In the first Type Specimen, the Baliniki typeface was applied to a business card. The Baliniki typeface became a logo for that business card. The letter "M" logo on the business card looks like it has Balinese characteristics yet remains elegant and modern, also supported by the colors black, gray, and maroon, as well as an embossed logo, making this business card look elegant.



Picture 6. Baliniki Typeface on Billboard
Source : Personal Documents

In the second Type Specimen, the Baliniki typeface was applied to a billboard. The billboard displays a lush green terraced rice field landscape with several women in traditional Balinese attire walking on a path between the rice paddies. They appear to be carrying offerings on their heads. The text on the billboard is titled "Bali Odyssey" in an elegant writing style and is followed by the subtitle "Enjoy your holiday" in a simpler writing style. Overall, this image presents an attractive advertisement for Bali tourism, highlighting the natural beauty and cultural traditions of Bali.



Picture 7 Baliniki Typeface on Sign System
Source : Personal Documents

In the third Type Specimen, the Baliniki typeface was applied to a toilet sign. The sign is made of shiny silver embossed letters forming the word "Toilet" with a unique and slightly curved writing style, making the appearance of this sign look elegant yet still possess Balinese characteristics.



Picture 8. Baliniki Typeface on T-Shirt
Source: Personal Documents

In the fourth Type Specimen, the Baliniki typeface was applied to a t-shirt. The t-shirt design combines modern elements of tie-dye technique with Balinese cultural touches through illustrations of dancers and the writing "Baliboys," which depicts Balinese culture.



Picture 9. Baliniki Typeface on Beverage Label
Source : Personal Documents

In the fifth Type Specimen, the Baliniki typeface was applied to the label of a traditional Balinese liquor, namely arak, with a white label and the word "Arak" written in black with a unique letter style, making this arak product look elegant yet still showcasing Balinese characteristics through the writing style on the product.

From the results of the type specimens above, it is evident that the Baliniki typeface can be applied to various visual communication design media, such as business cards, billboards, signage systems, t-shirts, and product labels. This is very much in line with the design objectives, namely to broaden the reach of Balinese script, increase cultural awareness, facilitate the use of Balinese script in a modern context, and support the local creative industry.

CONCLUSION

Balinese script is an important part of Balinese cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. The design of the Baliniki typeface, a Latin font with the visual characteristics of Balinese script, is an innovative and strategic step to support the implementation of the governor regulation regarding Balinese script. The design of this typeface aims to broaden the reach of Balinese script, increase cultural awareness, facilitate the use of Balinese script in a modern context, and support the local creative industry. Thus, it is hoped that the community will be more interested in learning and using Balinese script in everyday life, as well as strengthening Balinese cultural identity and pride in ancestral heritage. Therefore, this research not only produces an aesthetic design product but also has cultural value and contributes to the development of more representative visual communication design.

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