Signage Function in the Culinary Business:
A Linguistic Landscape of Youngsters Language

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Abstract. The linguistic landscape becomes a symbol of language's presence in public spaces, which depicts the visible representation of written language in public areas such as streets, tourist spots, buildings, and food business complexes. The language choice and functions of signage are required in response to the linguistic landscape of an area with a strong culinary business reputation for youth. This article aims to describe language choice and functions as the primary sources of reasons for language use in the food business' linguistic landscape (LL). Data dominated by bottom-up signage, like shop names, ads, and street food stall signs, were collected from signage in areas where many youngsters congregated to shop, walk, sightsee, and eat. The results of this study show that the bilingual Indonesian-English language dominates the language contestation in the area. In addition, slang languages are also found in the commercial area. The functions of the signs will be described and explained at the end of the article.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Language Choice, Language Functions

1 Introduction

Signage is generally described as any graphic display communicating information to the public. Signage often has a few everyday purposes: to promote, identify, convey information, give instructions, or raise awareness of safety. Nonetheless, signage is a component of the linguistic landscape. [16] published a study in 1997 that comprised linguistic landscape definitions. Linguistic landscape is defined as "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration". Therefore, signage as part of the linguistic landscape is an indicator of the use of language in public areas like streets, parks, markets, and tourist destinations since it can be classified according to location, function, appearance, or placement.

Several attractive signs can be seen in the culinary zone of college students known as the Kerto region in Malang. The area offers informal and private products (food and housing options), and the food-related business there frequently employs slang or jargon per the business's goals in its signs. It shows up by using a variety of mixed languages in accordance with the desires of the

owners of culinary businesses to attract customers. This is related to the linguistic landscape of particularly private businesses (business names), as [4] define the linguistic landscape as "any sign announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location. Similar studies that examined linguistic landscape studies related to private signs were also done by [24], [1], [18], and [14] in different countries. Hence, the linguistic landscape of other areas can be further investigated to recognize the diversity of languages used and their functions that may reflect the intention of a particular group/individuals.

LL studies that have been identified in several regions in Indonesia (for example, [9], [18], [21], [27]) indicate that Indonesia has a diversity of languages used. In a study on the role of the Indonesian language, [27] discovered that the Indonesian language has a strong position in Malang LL. However, Javanese, the local language, appears to have no place in Malang LL, and English, as an international language, is associated with lifestyle and modernity. Similarly, [20], who conducted LL research on Burger King's menu in the Depok area of Indonesia, explains that English is used because the menu is from America and is mixed with Indonesian slang to reach buyers, particularly the youngster community.

Notably, it is generally accepted that youngsters are likely to learn a foreign language alongside Bahasa Indonesia; thus, being able to speak more than one language is just natural. In this situation, English is commonly used alongside Indonesian. Yet, it worries us how the usage of English might bring up questions of power and identity, which could affect how well the various languages coexist in contexts where there are multiple languages ([19], [10], [20]). In Indonesia, according to [13], the usage of English among Indonesian millennials has increased owing to extensive exposure to English in secondary schools in urban areas. English is widely acknowledged as the primary language in international trade and business. In addition, English is an international language spoken worldwide, and it has come to symbolize modern trends and economic and academic success.

The tendency to develop rapidly, freely, and uniquely is a defining characteristic of youngsters' language. Youngsters' language typically refers to the vocabulary, slang, or informal communication style used frequently by young people and those in their early twenties. It might use certain words, phrases, and communication techniques that differ from more formal or standard types of language. Young people use it as a mode of self-expression and communication in their social relationships despite the fact that it may be informal and playful.

On its policy, several regulations on using Indonesian have been implemented due to Indonesian official and national language status. Hence, other languages are used in communication. This results from globalization and the development of the times; mutual contact and contestation between Indonesian as the national language and foreign and regional languages in the language landscape of public spaces is unavoidable. Because of this contact and contestation, the variety of languages in Indonesian LL is increasingly varied. In reflection, this area's surveyed culinary stalls and restaurants, dominated by young college students, tend to use various languages on their signs. Therefore, various languages can be the magnet in commerce nowadays, indicating globalization, academic success, and modernity.

Furthermore, there must be reasons for selecting a specific language for signage. [26] on one of the language choice principles of Jerusalem signs states, „Write the sign in a language that the people you expect to read can read". Hence, this study examines the language choice and signage function in the culinary business that has a reputation for youngsters. Considering the

area portrays economic reasons as the primary source of language choice between the owner of the food business and their customers. The signs and advertising media are the most popular ways for private/commercial sign makers to describe the landscape. Therefore, it is so important that business owners must have a considerable reason when creating and choosing the language used in their commercial signs.

The language used on signage is arguably society's most visible representation of language as [3]. Besides, there are two functions of LL: informative and symbolic. In the informative function, the meaning of the sign identifies the geographical area of the people that provides the language and the place's name. In other words, it shows a specific language or language for communication or selling products. The symbolic function, on the other hand, refers to how people of a language group view the value and status of their language compared to other languages [16, [6]. The symbolic function is also closely tied to ethnic identity portrayal. [9] in their study also found six functions of signs in LL in Sidoarjo City: (1) Information and regulation, (2) Symbolize something, (3) Conserve the local language, (4) Show and introduce identities, (5) Show the readiness to welcome international visitors, and (6) Attract customers in business. Those LL studies have found various languages in the signage which show several functions. However, the studies were not conducted mainly in culinary areas, especially the ones dominated by youths. A study focusing on the functions of signage in vibrant spaces that have a strong culinary business reputation is needed to identify whether the functions are also varied following the energetic youth life in the area. It is vital to uncover the language used in business signage to make a good impression on the customers. It is also necessary to explain to the public that sign serves a function and influences the language choice of the sign-makers in specific culinary business signs.

2 Methods

The descriptive qualitative method was used in this study. A qualitative method is used since it concerns the topic and variables being studied: language contestation and the function of the LL of youngsters. As indicated in Figure 1, the region was chosen for data collection because it is close to two famous colleges in Malang, Indonesia, with diverse populations of college students (youngsters) to congregate.
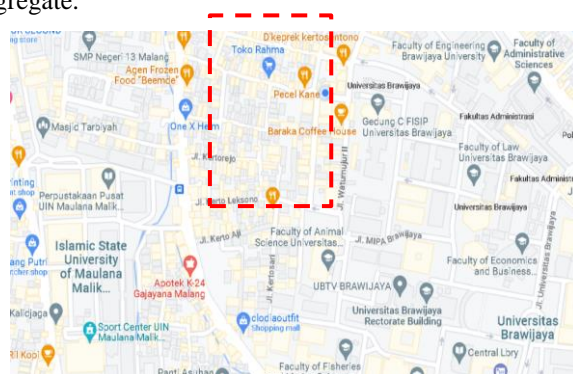
**Figure 1. A map of the Kertosari Area (Source: Google Map)**

Plenty of food-related signs are present along the examined area; most are commercial signs because the area is a housing and culinary zone. Regular observations were conducted to

photograph the business's signs as well as observe social interactions and communication in the business between consumers and the sellers' areas. The data collected in May 2023. During the observation, the researcher portrayed signs apparent in the culinary area using a digital camera to collect data just similar to the majority of LL studies which based their analysis on photography and visual analysis. Informational signs (instructions, operating hours, menus), business names, warning notices, and restrictions were all included in the research data collected. Commercial signs, such as street food stalls, grocery stores, and restaurants, dominate. Meanwhile, there are non-commercial signs with limited information and prohibitions, such as street names and warning/prohibition signs. Objects from each category were selected randomly and qualitatively analyzed to represent all functions of public signs. The data analysis began by categorizing visual data based on the linguistic contestation shown, such as monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual, and then the signs' functions investigated from the languages displayed.

3 Result and Discussion

In this part, the researchers present several types of visible languages to understand the language contestation occurring in the area. The language contestation identified on the studied signs is reflected on the aspect of multilingualism depicted in Figure 2.

3.1 Language Contestation in Signage of the Culinary Business
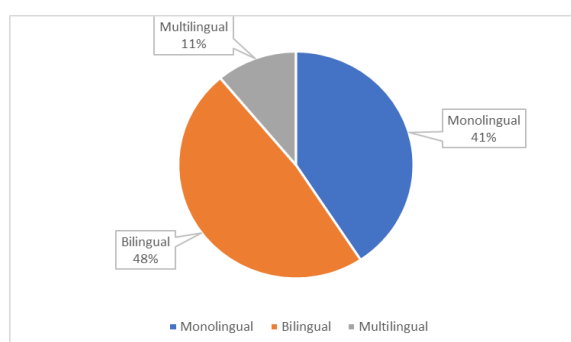
Fig. 2. Multilingualism in the Culinary Area

According to the findings of this study, visible languages in the culinary zone come in three varieties: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. A total of 54 different signs were analyzed. As seen in Figure 2, bilingual forms are the most common, accounting for over 48% of all occurrences, followed by the least common monolingual and multilingual forms. The signs and languages displayed in this area are vary. Business owners also use slang; the various languages here is evidence that the sign-maker has consideration to choose not only one language but also use more than one language in the signs they make. The slang language here represents the area's representation of commerce signs since it is made for specific purposes (e.g., to attract customers).
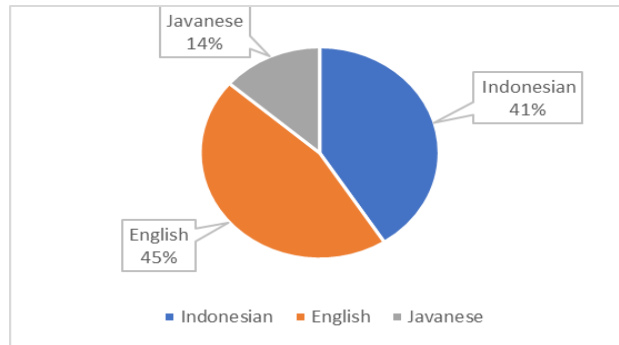
a) Signs Displaying Monolingual Texts

Fig. 3. Signs Displaying Monolingual Texts

As seen in Figure 3, A total of 22 different signs were gathered and analyzed. Monolingual English is the mostly used, as many as 45%. Surprisingly, English has influenced the linguistic situation here. Yet, it is worrying to see how the increased use of English weakens Indonesian language use and cultural identity of the customers. However, Indonesian followed as many as 41%. The difference is not too much compared to Monolingual Javanese. The use of Javanese as a local language has decreased, reaching only 14%.
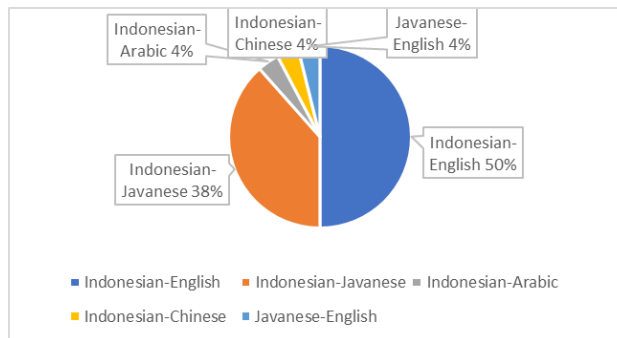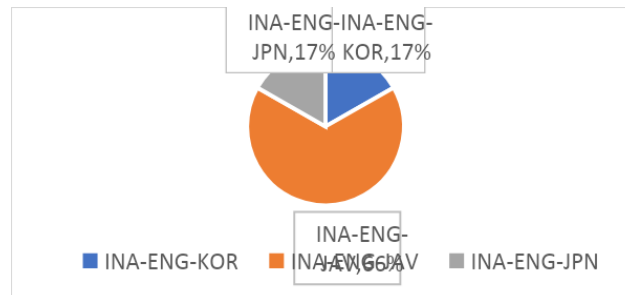
b) Signs Displaying Bilingual Texts

Fig 4. Signs Displaying Monolingual Texts

26 distinct signage in total were gathered and analyzed. The combination of Indonesian-English displayed as many as 50% occurrence (Figure 4), followed by bilingual signboards of Indonesian-Javanese (38%). English is an international language spoken worldwide, symbolizing modern trends, economic and academic success. Youngsters commonly use Indonesian English to convey their messages and meaning for communication. Arabic and Chinese languages also enter the bilingual contestation here with the combination of Indonesian as many as (4%). Since most of the population are Muslims, Arabic exists in public places, especially in the name of Mosque. It adds to evidence that the penetration of foreign languages in this area widely happens. Surprisingly, there is a combination of Javanese-English (4%). Based on the previous findings, monolingual Javanese is rarely used, but in this bilingual form, Javanese comes with the most used language, English.

c) Signs Displaying Multilingual Texts

Fig. 5. Signs Displaying Multilingual Texts

The combination of languages displayed in Multilingual texts dominated by Indonesian-English-Javanese as many as 66% occurrences (Figure 5) than other languages. There were gathered and analyzed a total of 6 distinct signs. The combination of Indonesian-English-Javanese indicated a significant relationship between Indonesian, English, and Javanese presence. Those languages are the most widely used in the signs considering the Indonesian has a status as an official language of Indonesia, thus it is common that Indonesian is used and Javanese as the local language is used since it conveys the environment a certain identity that is the mother tongue of most indigenous people there. At the same time English has a status as a foreign language in Indonesia and used as an international language which can add a modernity to the business. Other multilingual texts are included, albeit only 17% of them combine Japanese and Korean with Indonesian. These languages are used solely in the food stalls that sell foreign products, thus they are less common.

3.2 Signage Function in the LL Youngsters

Next, the researcher will described the seven signage function of the displayed languages namely: (1) to provide information and regulation, (2) to symbolize something, (3) to conserve the local language, (4) to show and introduce identities, (5) to portray the readiness of an area in adapting to young people, (6) to attract more customers in culinary business, and (7) to shape customers' perceptions of culinary business authenticity.

Additionally, the signs in the LL of youngsters appear mainly as bottom-up signs, which are frequently more democratic and inclusive than top-down signs. The bottom-up sign that portrayed indicates the business owner's voice in the sign decision-making ro responds to the youngster's language. According to Ben-Rafael et al. [4], bottom-up (signs created by typical individuals such as business owners), whereas top-down (public signs created by the government). In contrast, warning signs are limited and are made mainly by public authorities—public associations or organizations (RT/RW) as seen in Figure 6.

Fig. 6. Top-down Monolingual Indonesian in Warning Sign

Figure 6 is an example of the *first* function available in this study. This sign is to provide information and regulation. As apparent in a public sign, this is a warning sign using monolingual Indonesian to forbid something means riders are not allowed to pass the street since there is a public interest; citizen event. Indonesian is written on it to help people understand what it means.

Fig. 8. Monolingual Indonesian language in coffee shop name

Fig. 7. Slang language in Monolingual English food-business name

The signs' second function is to symbolize something. Language is utilized to depict certain symbols as well as for informative signs. The owner of the shop might be identified by the language used in the advertisement or business name they used. Scollon and Scollon [23] claim that languages on signs either index the community to which they belong or "symbolize something about the product or business which has nothing to do with the place in which it is located" (p. 119). In the Indonesian context, English is considered a way for people to interact with other people in the world and have access to global information. So it is commonly known

if signs in Indonesia can be found written in Monolingual form in English as seen in Figure 7 and/or Indonesian, as seen in Figure 8.

As seen in Figure 7, the phrase used is uniquely designed. A logo in the sign combines chicken and iPhone, which are widely known to be almost similar even though they are not precisely the same. The I can represent AY, and yum is YAM, so when it is read, it is pronounced AYAM in Indonesian. Moreover, the "Foodizz" text can be slang language replacing "foods'.". As a passerby, it interestingly shows that the owner of the building is selling food-based chicken.

Furthermore, the monolingual Indonesian language in the coffee shop name (see Figure 12) given that the shop's name is derived from Indonesian. The "Kopi" word in the signs indicates that it is selling coffee, while "dari hati" means from the heart with an addition of a heart symbol. In relation, there is the semiotic triangle theory proposed by Ogden & Richards [17], which explains how a concept (reference) that represents an object (reference) is represented by a symbol (language symbol). Thus, it can be seen that there is a relationship between symbols and referrers with references or thoughts in the coffee shop. Symbols refer to linguistic or language elements, namely words, verses, and so on.

By using a variety of languages in their signs for food-related businesses, business owners or sign makers are supporting the development of youngsters' language that is used to reflect signage functions. The sign-makers are the ones who create, implement, and interpret the message contained within the signs, according to Shang and Guo [24]. According to Kress [15], there are three main principles in sign making: (1) Signs are made according to a specific purpose and meaning; (2) the purpose of the sign maker; and (3) the use of particular resources for a specific area. Owing to the area's economy's rapid growth, which has the potential to create a prosperous society, this principle is crucial for business owners there to understand.

The preservation of local languages is the *third* function of signs. The majority of the local people in this observed area speak Javanese as their native language. However, Javanese language and inscription are rarely discovered; only three signs are found using Monolingual Javanese, and twelve signs are found in combination with other languages. Only two Javanese signs are developed by the public authorities(RT/RW); the others are either personal or private signage. Only a sign is written in Javanese script in combination with Indonesian (see Figure 9) says "ꦮꦺꦴꦁꦏꦼꦂꦠꦱꦫꦶꦫꦺꦴ" in latin "Wong Kertosariro".
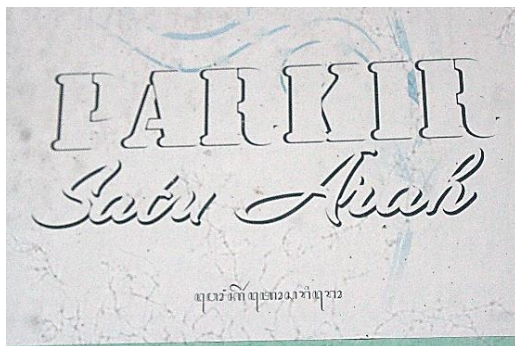

Fig. 9 The Javanese script in the bottom of the sign   **Fig. 10. The Malang language "Boso Walikan" in the name of a business**

Figure 10 depicts the name of a restaurant that also incorporates the Malang word "Boso Walikan" into its name. The English translation of "KANE" is "Delicious." This restaurant is the only place where this language is utilized. The business owner is selling traditional food (Pecel), and utilizing words in Boso Walikan.

Additionally, the *fourth* function of the signs is to show and introduce the identity. The Javanese script and Boso Walikan convey a symbolic message in a particular language that is considered important and relevant to what is happening. This sign gives the environment a particular identity even if geographical, social, or linguistic boundaries are not clearly defined. The Javanese is used to show identity as a Javanese person, while the Indonesian and Javanese together serve to convey information.

Fig. 11. Banner sign that intended to warn the Youngsters

Moreover, the *fifth* function is to show the area's capability for adjusting to young people. This is apparent in multilingual signs of Indonesian, English and Javanese on a banner at the gate. As seen in Figure 11, it reminds young people not to use loud exhaust because it is something they frequently use but many find upsetting when they ride in confined spaces. The Javanese language is in the form of verse, "Mangan Lontong lawuh 'e Kangkung, NGGAWE KNALPOT BRONG MUSUH 'E WONG SAK KAMPUNG".. Language use in public places reveals particular groups of people are present. Since it was made by the public authorities, the sign shows the capability to adjust to young people through the signs intended to overcome any mischief of the youngsters.

The *six* functions of the signs, particularly those that use foreign languages, are for commercial purposes, such as to improve the reputation of the products and draw in more customers. Most of the languages displayed use monolingual English as well as English in combination with other languages. In reaction to that reason, the interesting thing is that English translated and incorrect spelling are also found.

As seen in Figure 12, an English translation is used in the menu. It is common to find much use of Indonesian Translated, but here, instead, English Translated is used. Moreover, as seen in Figure 13, incorrect spellings are found. The spelling of "HYGIENES" instead of hygienic in English the sign maker actually means "HIGIENIS" in Indonesian, and "Others service" should be "Other services". The signs can give the impression that there is something being forced, that is, there is a desire from the business owner to sound modern. This cannot be said to be good or bad because this is still understandable. However, the language used in business signage must

be taken into account to make a good impression. A poor choice of words in a business will reflect negatively on the business itself.

Fig. 12. The English translation is used in Menu

Fig. 13. Incorrect spelling in English sign

The *last* function of the signs, particularly those languages that have characters, is to shape customers' perceptions of authenticity.. This can be seen from the existence of food stalls selling foreign foodAs seen in Figure 14, the owners use Chinese characters for their restaurantsThe character written in Chinese, "奶奶饺子", means "grandmother's dumplings," indicating that Chinese product is offered. Authentic food frequently refers to a certain nation or region of origin. Nevertheless, in the sign found, small advertising words in Indonesian are underneath.

Fig. 14. Indonesian-Chinese Advertisement sign on a Banner of a food stall

Selected phrases and words in the sign reveal certain ideas. The selection of various linguistic display characters can communicate information and symbolic meanings to customers. Thus, this symbolic function might reflect the authenticity and status of the business. Food serves as a symbol of cultural uniqueness and identity as well as fulfilling basic human needs. The signs and languages presented have always been important for food business owners that offer foreign products, even if they have been adapted to Indonesian.

4 Conclusions

This study reveals the varieties of languages in the culinary business dominated by youngsters. It reports that English is used the most in the sign. Compared to Indonesian and English, Javanese, the mother tongue of local people, is used far less frequently in signage. Even more so than Indonesian, English is utilized more frequently. Additionally, there are Arabic, Chinese, Korean (KOR), and Japanese (JPN) languages that are only discernible in the names of businesses and on their menus. In the LL of youngsters language, there are fewer top-down signs than bottom-up. English predominates on menu and business name signs, whereas Indonesian is used more frequently on warning and private ownership signs, but occasionally along with other languages. The signage function in the food industry serves commercial objectives, such as promoting sales of products. Most often, and freely, foreign languages are employed in business to draw customers, especially in this case young people.

The research lists seven functions of signs in the culinary business as the LL of youngsters' language. The first is to provide information and regulation, the second is to symbolize something. Then, to conserve the local language, and the fourth is to show and introduce identities. Next is to show whether the area can adjust to young people, attract more customers to the culinary business, and shape customers' perceptions of culinary business authenticity.

Future studies may include surveys or interviews as the instrument to obtain additional qualitative data to improve LL research and better understand why English is used more frequently than Indonesian, Javanese, and other languages, as well as how passersby react to the signs. This study only uses observational data since no surveys or interviews were undertaken throughout the research process; however, questionnaires and interviews are highly recommended because it is important to understand the background of the business's seller.

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