

Linguistic Landscape in Indonesia: What Public and Private Signs Reveal about Indonesia's Language Policy

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Abstract. The salience and visibility of language in a given territory's linguistic landscape is a name used to describe the public area. Laut Dendang and Pancing, two areas in the Deli Serdang District, is the focus of this study's language use in public and private signage. The qualitative research methodology served as the foundation. The study's data consisted of 30 images of billboards and signage of secondary government and privately held businesses. Digitally capturing signage allowed for the collection of all data. The result showed Deli Serdang District prefer to speak Indonesian (40%) over English (30%), both Indonesian and English (27%), and other languages (3%). Moreover, private signs tend to employ a wider variety of languages whereas public signs to utilize Bahasa more frequently. So, to maintain Bahasa as the official tongue of the nation, the government needs to continue to educate the populace on language policy.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, Public signs, Private signs, Language policy.

1 Introduction

The salience and visibility of language in a given territory's public space refer to the linguistic landscape. One can investigate the linguistic landscape by looking at traffic signs, billboards and or business signs, street signs, and building names [4].

In bilingual and multilingual situations, particularly in Indonesia, linguistic landscape research is fascinating. When comparing language signs to regional government policy & linguistic diversity, language use can reveal details about the sociolinguistic context and use of various languages. The distinction between the primary language policy, which demonstrated in upper edge signs and symptoms including main streets or identifiers of government buildings, and thus the repercussions of that policy on individuals, which might incorporate in lower right symbols including shop names or street posters, makes investigating the nature of the linguistic landscape fascinating.

The linguistic landscape conveys literal information as it expressed in written texts as well as symbolically expressing the hierarchical legitimacy and prominence of that language system [15]. It does so because it shapes how people perceive certain languages, has an impact on how people speak, and builds the larger sociolinguistic environment.

The terms ‘public signs’ and ‘private signs’ used to distinguish between signs that exhibited in public areas [4]. The government produces public signs, which related to official signs shown in public spaces, like street names, road signs, and signage linked to government buildings. Private signs include billboards, storefronts, and commercial signs and advertisements.

In linguistic landscaping, leading and bottom-up influences can be further separated by contrasting public and private indicators [14]. Official guidelines from the "top" determine the type of policy or official/public signage. As a result, can be categorized as being influenced by top-down factors; in contrast, those exhibited by the private enterprise are influenced by bottom-up forces.

Indonesia's linguistic landscape is less studied than that of other sub-linguistic areas [8]. In Indonesia, linguistic landscape research is still in its infancy as an area of study. There has been some prior research done regarding the analysis of Indonesia's linguistic landscape. Initially, Jogjakarta, Semarang, and Depok—three major Indonesian cities—were examined to determine how languages are utilized and manipulated there [8]. This study identified Indonesian, Javanese, and English are among the linguistic landscape patterns, whereas Indonesian, English and other foreign languages are featured on private signs (Korean, Japanese, and Mandarin).

Moreover, another study examined the spatial grammar of an outdoor shop sign in Kuta [6]. The findings demonstrated that full salience is given to actor representations in outdoor signs. All players operate in terms of interrelations, like the intensity of demand, and/or give guidance, resource, and object with measurable attitudes. With composition processes, the text framing is non-linear but the salience is accused on different information value positions.

Based on the previous studies elaborated above, several studies related to linguistic landscape analysis, especially in Deli Serdang Districts, North Sumatera, Indonesia. Consequently, the researchers conducted a study to analyze the language used in public and private signs in two regions in Deli Serdang District, namely, Laut Dendang and Pancing.

This investigation focused on the two areas where Deli Serdang used and manipulated language. It investigated the tension between the macro-language policy—the right to speak any language—and the micro-language policy, as set forth by national and regional language policies. Finally, it looked into the factors and procedures that influenced Indonesia's linguistic development.

2 Method

Via qualitative content analysis, a qualitative research design was applied [13]. It claims that conducting qualitative research requires close, prolonged engagement with something like a field or real-world event. This study presents the current of study in a systematic and accurate manner by describing and explaining the present research situation based on the variables

under observation or examination. Since this data evaluated are in the manner of words, phrases, clauses, including sentences and are analyzed depending on the theory utilized, this style of qualitative research is appropriate.

Data for this study came from bilingual or multilingual signage on government property as well as privately held business signs and billboards. This study looks into how the signs are used in multiple languages to address the data. Our goal is to clarify the distinction between public and private indicators in this particular instance that we discovered during the data collection process. The data source was private and public signage found in two areas of the Deli Serdang District, namely Laut Dendang and Pancing. They were picked because they are the two most populated places in the Deli Serdang District and feature a large number of both public and private signs. Documentation was used to gather the qualitative data. All information was gathered by digitally photographing billboards, government-related signs, and privately held business signs.

The methods of data analysis include data condensing, data visualization, and generating and verifying conclusions from the data [13]. As a result, the methods for data analysis include first taking pictures of publicly and privately owned billboards and commercial signs, then transcribing the text, then looking into the languages featured on signs in Deli Serdang District, both public and private, outlining the specifics of how those languages are used, outlining the motivations behind those motivations, and finally drawing a conclusion. The analysis was done using Shohamy's proposed Linguistic Landscape theory [9].

3 Results and Discussion

The signs that have been gathered are both public and private. The names of universities (Universitas Negeri Medan, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara), pawn shops (Pegadaian), gas stations (Pertamina), village councils (Kantor Kepala Desa Laut Dendang), and post offices are among the public signs that have been gathered (Kantor Pos). The names of establishments like MC Donald, Istana Café, Quality Fried Chicken, etc., as well as those of shops like Toko Besi Makmur, Oppo King Cellular, Nagamart, a university like Universitas Amir Hamzah, courses like May English Course & Bimbel SD, bakeries like Karo Mah Bakery & Cake Shop, and orphanages are among the private signs that have been gathered (Panti Asuhan Yayasan Kasih Nurani Indonesia, Asrama dan Panti Asuhan SLB-C Santa Lusia). Moreover, Table 1 below shows the linguistic landscape elements by languages in two regions (percentages).

Table 1. Linguistic Landscape in Pancing and Laut Dendang

Languages of all items	Regions	
	Pancing	Laut Dendang
Indonesian	33%	47%
English	47%	13%
Indonesian and English	13%	40%
Other languages	7%	0%
Total	100%	100%

The aforementioned data showed people in the Pancing region tend to use English (47%) more frequently than Indonesian (33%) or a combination of the two (13%). Contrarily, residents in Laut Dendang have a propensity for using Indonesian (47%) followed by a propensity for combining Indonesian and English (40%) and English (13%).

Also, the researchers made certain calculations that can be shown in Table 2 below in order to see the linguistic landscape in the Deli Serdang District.

Table 2. Linguistic Deli Serdang District

Languages of all items	Deli Serdang Districts	
	Total	Percentage
Indonesian	12	40%
English	9	30%
Indonesian and English	8	27%
Other languages	1	3%

The data showed English is the second most common language spoken in Deli Serdang District after Indonesian (40%) and is followed through both Indonesian and English (27%) and other languages/Japanese (3%). The findings of this study demonstrate that residents in Deli Serdang have a favorable attitude toward language and adhere to government policies regarding the usage of Bahasa. Also, there are no signs in the local tongue in either public or private spaces, which may be because Deli Serdang is a multilingual area.

3.1 Public Signs

Some of the street signs in the Deli Serdang District are shown below. Because Indonesian is the country's official language, Bahasa predominates on public signs.



Fig. 1. SPBU located in Laut Dendang.

A SPBU in Laut Dendang is depicted in Figure 1, and the sign that is being utilized appears to promote Bahasa. This is in compliance with Language Law 24/2009 and PR 63/2019, which mandate that Indonesian be given higher priority and visibility. The size and location of language usage, as illustrated in Figure 1, suggest that the municipal authority still favors Bahasa. The phrase is still present on the street sign. Bahasa essentially superior to and outsizes English on this street sign at SPBU. The word Bahasa is put immediately above it in an expanded font at the top of the sign. This implies that the government recognizes the value

of Bahasa in conjunction with the broader language policy. Findings about signs in the public domain add to assertion that LL is a powerful tool for building and establishing institutional aspects in public signs [9].



Fig. 2. Universitas Negeri Medan located in Pancing.

The identical pattern was also discovered by the researchers on a public university's Universitas Negeri Medan facade symbol (see Figure 2). This similar mentality is also apparent in the font and size selection, which nevertheless reflect a preference for Bahasa based on the size and placement of the linguistic knowledge. Bahasa is much more noticeable because it is printed large and in silver. University Negeri Medan, a public institution, seems to emphasize Bahasa as the national language of Indonesia. As an Indonesian institution, it also supports and projects The official language of the nation is Bahasa.



Fig. 3 Headman Office located in Laut dendang.

Additional public signage includes principal place of business (see Figure 3). Bahasa is the primary language utilized with large font sizes and signage in the headman's office to display information. The nation also emphasizes at this public institution that Bahasa is the primary language utilized in government.

3.2 Private Signs

The following list of exterior government building signs is in no particular order. In contrast to public signs, private signs are more diverse since they are developed ingeniously by private businesses or individuals to draw customers or service providers' attention. The option made is a hybrid of Bahasa and English in the type of spoken language that they employ each day or not given that Indonesians do not speak English, and the corporate sector is capable of

employing its language more effectively than the public sector. It used to function as a customer attention grabber. For instance, Figure 4 shows a photograph of a café called "Café Serasa Food and Drink" in Dendang Sea that serves a variety of foods and drinks.



Fig. 4. A café named 'Serasa Food & Drinks' in Laut Dendang, Medan.

The restaurant's name can be read as a nod to its innovative and unconventional marketing strategy. To make it more appealing and appear more current, business owners purposefully use a blend of Bahasa and English, increasing the likelihood of it being remembered stick in customers' minds. Because Indonesian is the language of choice there, it utilizes the phrase 'Serasa' in Bahasa. It indicates or anticipates that the food and drink served at this café will appeal to a wide range of palates. Nonetheless, the English language suggests that this cafe's cuisine and beverages not only follow local customs but also incorporate Western characteristics. Hence, in order to draw clients who, enjoy both regional and international cuisine, business owners combine the two languages. To keep this impression, a brand name in English is crucial.

The following intriguing customized sign, Figure 4, is for a store called 'Dewi Collection and Elektronik,' which sells both apparel and electronics. Owners of businesses sometimes mix English and Bahasa. Yet, the language employed lacks both consistency and balance. The establishment owner's name was initially chosen to be used, then came English, then Bahasa once more. Customers may notice the conspicuous utilisation English throughout this non-English environment, but it begs the question of why this linguistic decision was made. Also, we see this as a problem for Bahasa construction. The three combination words are centered and written in the same style of writing and typeface. Nonetheless, the shop owner lists many kinds of apparel or electronics in his store to give the impression that it is the most comprehensive store in an effort to draw in more consumers.



Fig. 5. A cloth and electronic shop named 'Dewi Collection & Elektronik' in Laut Dendang, Medan.

Figure 5 depicts a further private symbol. Namely, 'Rumah Makan Harapan One', a restaurant. This business owner chooses to submit his business name in both Bahasa and English, just as the previous private signs. The word 'Rumah Makan Harapan' in Bahasa signifies the desire to welcome the lower class as patrons. Furthermore, the addition of the English letter 'One' to the end of this company name is a distinctive mark that appears to have been done so on purpose to connote a global character in order to draw in contemporary, urban, and modern clients. Hence, in this instance, both local and international influences have an impact on the language choice on the private sign.



Fig. 6. A restaurant named 'Rumah Makan Harapan One' in Laut Dendang, Medan.

It is inversely correlated with the number of public signs that nevertheless demand private businesses highlight Bahasa on their signage in order to preserve Bahasa and discourage the use of other languages. The laws appear to only apply to private signs, though, so they are able to use more inventive wording, particularly when choosing the language for their company signs to draw clients.

4 Conclusion

Following Indonesian (40%) and English (30%), including Indonesian and English (27%) and other languages/Japanese (3%), it was determined that inhabitants in the Deli Serdang District primarily speak Indonesian. The findings of this study demonstrate that residents in Deli Serdang do have favorable attitude toward language and adhere to government policies regarding the usage of Bahasa.

Bahasa is inscribed on street signs in a much larger type, at the top of the sign, and directly below. This suggests that in terms of the overall language strategy, the government acknowledges the significance of Bahasa.

Private signs have a wider diversity since they are developed ingeniously by private businesses or individuals to draw customers or service providers' attention. As the privately owned sign is not supported by the government and it doesn't appear that the regulations apply to them, the text on it can be more imaginatively chosen to draw customers.

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