Public Signs in Heritage Area of Denpasar: Linguistics Landscape Studies

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Abstract: Linguistics Landscape study has become one of the interesting studies in recent years. This research aims at examining if the language on public signs was applied according to governor regulation No. 80 of 2018 concerning the protection and use of Balinese language, script and literature on public signs in Heritage area of Denpasar, and how it was applied as well as its function(s). This research is field research and used descriptive qualitative method. The data were taken from the public signs in the heritage area located in Jalan Gajah Mada, Denpasar, and also from the interview with the owners of the shops along the heritage area (bottom-up) and the administration staff of the government (top-down) in order to find out their functions. Based on the results, it was found that there were 34 signs that did not apply the governor regulation with the percentage of 61,8. Meanwhile there were 21 signs applying the regulation with a rate 38,2%. In addition to the functions, it was found that there were some motives from the authors in applying the language on public signs, they are: (1) language conservation, (2) providing information, (3) commercial purpose (4) and decorative function.
Keywords: public signs, heritage, Denpasar, governor regulation

INTRODUCTION

In terms of Balinese language preservation, the government of Bali Province has some strategy to do in addition to an effort to preserve the local language, especially the Balinese. One of them is by issuing governor regulation number 80 of 2018 concerning the protection and use of the Balinese language, script, and literature, as well as the holding of the Balinese language month. This regulation also stated that every office signboard, road sign, building, tourism facility, and public facility must be written in Balinese script and Indonesian Latin letters with black-white writing and a red to-white gradient background. This regulation must be applied to every public sign in every place in the Bali area, including the heritage area of Denpasar.

The heritage area of Denpasar is one of the iconic areas in Kota Denpasar (Denpasar city). This area is located on Jalan Gajah Mada. Furthermore, the heritage area of Denpasar has become one of the largest commercial and business centers labeled as *Pecinan Gajah Mada* "Chinese community in Gajah Mada area". This area is dominated by the Chinese ethnic community, most of whom work as traders. In addition to the ethnic groups, there are several other ethnics which can be found here, such as groups such as Arabs, Indians, and the local Balinese. In this case, heritage has meaning as a cultural heritage of the past that needs to be inherited (UNESCO, 1972). Heritage area provides a perception correlated with the area's historical value. As a heritage area in the city of Denpasar, this area cannot be separated from the emergence of various public signs in existing buildings.

Public signs are defined as an inscribed surface displayed in public space to convey a message of broader concern to an unspecified group of readers. The study that examines the use of written language in public signs is a Linguistic Landscape study. Linguistic landscape is a subfield of sociolinguistic research (Spolsky, 2009). This is in line with what was stated by Shohamy & Gorter (2009) that People are always the focus of linguistic landscape discussions, as they are the ones who construct the signs in the public area that are intended for people.

The relationship between signs, people, and language, the role of linguistic landscape in policy-making, people's motivation for displaying language, the type of messages conveyed to passers-by, the language attitudes of people towards the displayed languages, and so on, are among the most frequently discussed topics in the field.

Linguistic Landscape (LL) research has been done a lot in the last few years. Previous research discussed LL (Linguistics Lansdcape) is Erikha in her study entitled *Konsep Lanskap Linguistik Pada Papan Nama Jalan Kerajaan (Râjamârga): Studi Kasus Kota Yogyakarta*. In the research, the author examined the names of the main streets (râjamârga) around the Yogyakarta Palace in terms of their function as the identifiers of place names (informational function) and as carriers of particular messages (symbolic function). This concept encompasses a number of topics such as social, political, cultural, and economic ones (Erikha, 2018). Another research is the research entitled *Linguistik Lanskap di Bali: Tanda Multilingual Dalam Papan Nama Ruang Publik* by Wulansari. It stated that specifically, the concept of LL refers to the language of public street signs, billboards, street and place names, commercial shop or shop signs, and general signs of government buildings combined to form the LL of an area, area or urban area (urban agglomeration). LL refers to text that has been presented and spread out in the public space (Wulansari, 2020). From all of the descriptions above, we can see that Linguistics Landscapes studies are interesting to discuss, especially regarding the heritage area, in this case, the Heritage area of Denpasar. This area has a value in the exterior and interior aesthetic, which is necessary for the preservation. Public signs in this area are one of the exterior aspects that should be taken into account related to language preservation according to governor regulation number 80 of 2018. Therefore, this study aims to describe the implementation of regional regulation number 80 of 2018 on public signs in the Heritage area of Denpasar. In addition to the motivation, this study also seeks to find the authors' motive(s) in producing the signs.

METHODS

Within the scope of this investigation, this research implemented the concept and design through a descriptive qualitative strategy coupled with field methodologies. The data source for this study is public signs found in the Heritage area of Denpasar, located in Jalan Gajah Mada. While the researcher is the primary instrument in this study, additional instruments include cameras, notebooks, writing implements, and recording devices. The use of photographs is quite important in LL study because they can reveal concerns relating to the language spoken in a certain area. The data collection method is the LL "one single sign" method developed by Cenoz & Gorter (2006). In this study, an unstructured interview method was employed. In this instance, the researcher did not obtain data using interview rules that were organized regularly and systematically (Estenberg in Sugiyono, 2010). After collecting the data, the next step was categorizing them into two parts: public signs provided by government institutions and public signs provided by private institutions. This step was taken to make it easier to calculate the number of data found in this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this research showed that 34 signs did not apply the governor regulation, and there were only 21 signs applying the regulation by the authors, in this case: the government institutions (top-down) and private institutions (bottom-up). For further and clearer information of the findings, the results are divided into two: public signs provided by government institutions (top-down) and public signs provided private institutions (bottom-up) as follows.

Public Signs Provided by Government Institutions (Top-Down)

According to Gorter & Cenoz (2007) Top-down signs include government signage like official street name signs. These signs represent a particular specific language policy such as, street names, building names, and road signs (Gorter & Cenoz, 2007). In this research, the results show that the data of public signs found in the heritage area include building names, street names, road signs, banners, information signs, and public facilities. This research found that there were 15 signs along Jalan Gajah Mada. They are managed and put into place by government institutions. The visibility of the public signs here varies in appearance. In addition to language script appearance on signs, most of them were applied according to the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018. As mentioned previously, this regulation manages the use of Balinese script on public signs as well as its position.



Picture 1 public signs according to the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018 (top-down)

As shown on the pictures above, it can be seen that the road sign applied the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018. It can be seen from the position of the Balinese script, which is written above the Latin letters. The Balinese script which appears on each picture was the result of transliteration from Balinese script or known as Akshara Bali, into Indonesian Latin letters. Transliteration is a process of copying letters and replacing letters from one alphabet with another (Paramarta et al., 2015). The script of the pictures above was transliterated by using diplomatic method. According to Baried et al. (1985) diplomatic transliteration defines as changing the type of script, letter by letter from one alphabet to another as it is. It is shown on picture (A), (B), and (C) where the Balinese script was transliterated into Latin letter as it is, becoming *Kota Denpasar* on picture (A), *Jalan* (abbreviated into *Jl.*) *Pulau Sulawesi* on picture (B), and *Sang Kala Trisemaya* on picture (C). The picture (A) is an information sign providing the map of heritage area of Denpasar, and picture (B) is the road sign that is located at the first intersection on *Jalan Gajah Mada*. Meanwhile, the picture (C) also applied the diplomatic transliteration, which can be seen from the Balinese script that is transliterated into Latin letter 'Sang Kala Trisemaya'. This sign is an information sign about the statue named *Sang Kala Trisemaya* located on the bridge of *Jalan Gajah Mada*. Thus, it can be said that each sign above is bilingual sign as each of them has two languages on each sign. On the other hand, it was also found a public sign that used Balinese script and Latin letters with different position as follows.



Picture 2 public signs according to the governor regulation with different position (top-down)

Different from the previous public signs applying the governor regulation where the Balinese script was positioned above the Latin, this picture shows the opposite. This road sign is located in the corner of the street or near the entrance of heritage area. Based on the language position on this sign, the Latin letters is on the top followed by the Balinese script which reads "Jalan Gajah Mada". This blingual sign is transliterated by using diplomatic transliteration as each of the Latin letter is transliterated as it is into Balinese script. Furthermore, it was also found the public signs that are not according to the governor regulation related to appearance of Balinese script on the signs provided by the government institutions (top-down).



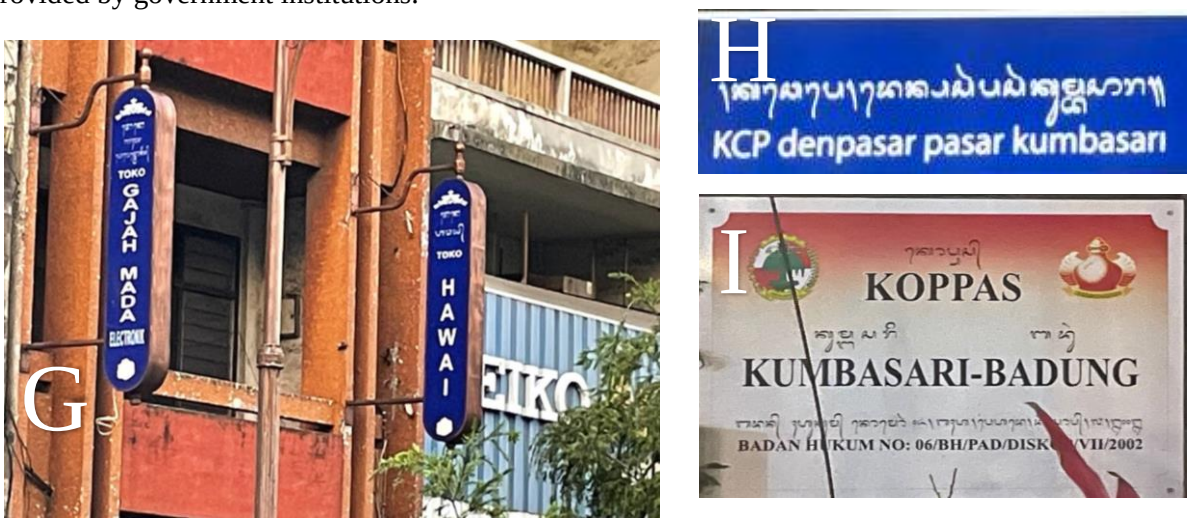
Picture 3 public signs that are not according to the governor regulation provided by the government institutions

Seeing the pictures above, it is clear that there was not any Balinese script that appears on both pictures. The picture E shows that written language on public sign is written in Indonesian stating *di atas trotoar dan badan jalan* 'on the sidewalk and the road' as well as crossed out P above the sign. This road sign provides information that anyone is not allowed to park his/her vehicle around. This sign can be classified as monolingual sign because there is only one language appearing on the sign. The picture (F) is also similar to the picture (E) where there is only one language that can be seen on the sign. However, the public signs on picture (F) use English on the sign, which reads 'stop' and *Shelter Bus Trans Metro Dewata*. This road sign provides information and indicates where the bus usually stops or where the bus is waiting for passengers on Jl. Gajah Mada. In addition to the number of this case,

there were only a few public signs provided by the government agencies that were not according to the regulation found in heritage area of Denpasar.

Public Signs Provided by Private Institutions (Bottom-Up)

Bottom-Up may be defined as signs produced by individuals and commercial signs on business institutions, private offices that may be influenced by language policy but mainly reflect individual preferences (Backhaus, 2007; Gorter & Cenoz, 2007; Muriungi & Mudogo, 2021). Mulyawan (2016) classified those signs as commercial sign. It is defined as a sign made by the authors to promote their product to the public with profit orientation (Mulyawan, 2016). Regarding to the public signs provided by private institutions, it was found that only a few of public signs according to the government regulation concerning Balinese language, script and literature on public signs with total number of nine. In other words, it is not many as the numbers of public signs according to the governor regulation provided by government institutions.



Picture 4 public signs according to the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018 (bottom-up)

Based on the data that were found, there are several private public signs according to the regulation in some shops on Gajah Mada Street. Those public signs shown on the picture (G) above can be found on the west side of Jalan Gajah Mada. They look similar to the others. Based on the interview that was done, it was found that a few years ago the government helped them provide and facilitate public signs for free which would later be installed in several shops located on the west side of Jalan Gajah Mada. Those signs were designed according to stipulated regulations. In other words, the government helps facilitate the sign in order to maintain the local language. However, it is still not evenly distributed. because there are still many shops that have not been facilitated so like them, especially the shop located in east side of the street. Unlike the picture (G), the public signs on picture (H) and (I) were provided by the company itself without any help from the government. In order to make both Latin letter and Balinese script in line with the regulation, the standard transliteration was applied by substituting Balinese script to Latin letter according to the standard rules. On the other hand, it was



also found a few public signs according to the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018 with different position. One of them can be seen below.

Picture 5 public signs according to the governor regulation with different position (bottom-up)

Based on the picture, all the words written in Latin letter is classified as English. There isn't any Indonesian shown on the sign. The English was placed above the Balinese script. Different from Indonesian word's Latin letter discussed previously, the transliteration process from English into Balinese script is quite complicated. Therefore, the absorption process is required to make the transliteration run well. The English term that will be absorbed should increase the inter translate ability of both SL and RL and conversely. It makes the RL readers understand the terms more easily as the terms sound familiar to them (Suryasa, 2014). In this case, the English word 'restaurant' was transliterated into restoran 'restoran'. This public sign is one of the commercial signs along the Jalan Gajah Mada located near the bridge of *Tukad Badung* 'Badung river'. Regarding to the private institutions that did not provide the signs according to the governor regulation, it was found that there were many owners of shop or business signs that did not produce the public signs based on the regulation, most of which are signs categorized as bilingual sign written in Indonesian and English.



Picture 6 bilingual signs written in Indonesian and English

Both pictures above are bilingual signs located on the west side of Gajah Mada street. Picture (J) is a restaurant named Atoom Baru. The use of Indonesian written on the sign can only be seen on the sign that reads restoran 'restaurant'. Meanwhile, the rest of the written language on the sign is in English, such as 'the best Chinese cuisine in Bali', 'since 1940', and the menu's name written on the sign as 'rice with chop suey'. On the picture (K), it shows that there were some English words on the sign, for instance 'mart' and 'good stationery'. The rest of which is written in Indonesian; namely UD (an initialism of Usaha Dagang) Nadhi 'Nadhi mart' and alat tulis dan kantor 'stationery'. Furthermore, it was found that many private or commercial signs in the heritage area of Denpasar were produced in no accordance with the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018.

Motivation(s) in the use of particular language(s) on public sign

This subchapter presents the results the motivation(s) of the author producing the sign on the heritage area of Denpasar. The author includes the authority of the government institutions (top-down) and the business owner or business institutions (bottom-up). Based on the function, Landry & Bourhis (1997) divided it into two terms, namely symbolic and informational function. Informational function on public sign serves as a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community (Bourhis, 1992). In contrast, symbolic function is the use of language om public sign used

as the most important dimension of Ethnic identity (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1990). Furthermore, this research found that there were some motivations of the authors in producing public sign, namely language preservation, providing information, commercial purpose, and decorative function. Each motive is provided in detail in the following sub chapters.

A. Language Preservation

In terms of language preservation, the emergence of Balinese script public signs provided by the authors located in the Heritage area of Denpasar are indirectly in accordance with the governor regulation regarding language preservation. However, based on the results of interview, it was found that there were authors who did not know the issue regarding to the regulation, and used Balinese script writing on their signs in order to show Balinese characteristics (symbol of identity) and create natural impression which later help the authors, especially private institutions in attracting consumers.

B. Providing Information

Basically, the purpose of providing public signs on public space is to provide information and serve as a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community. Thus. Particular language shown on signs outside and inside a building convey the expectation that everyone can be served in the in-group language within such establishments (Maurais & Plamondon, 1986). In this case, most data of language written on public signs are Indonesian. However, although most languages were written in Indonesian (Latin letters), consumers happening to visit the building can be served in any other languages, such as Balinese or English. As mentioned on the introduction, almost all people who have lived in Bali for years can speak Balinese. In the case of English, it has become international language for years, and many people who live in Denpasar can speak and understand English.

C. Commercial Purpose

Based on the findings, it was found that the signs provided by authors, especially those classified as private institutions, use particular language on signs for commercial purpose. Besides being used to attract consumers, the written language on public sign can serve as luxury and modernity. One of the languages on sign is English. It is in line with what was stated by Fakhiroh & Rohmah (2018: 107), that the use of English helps the owners increase the prestige and increase the level of social class, especially in the case of a society where not everyone can understand and speak English. On the other hand, the use of Balinese can also be used as commercial purpose. Some shop owners who use Balinese script on their signs stated that Balinese script appearance might work in order to welcome the consumers, both locals and foreigners to come over to their store. They believed that Balinese script has its own *taksu* 'positive radiance of power and aura' for their own business store.

D. Decorative Function

The last motive found in this research is decorative function, especially the use of Balinese script on the sign. In other words, it functioned as creating a natural/ artistic impression. As for the government institutions authorities, they said it is in line with the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018. It helps them to make the signs more attractive with Balinese script above the Latin letter. Meanwhile, the business owners (bottom-up) thought that besides using Balinese script as decorative function, it helps them attract the customer. It could give a good impression to consumers who happened to visit the store, especially the tourists.

CONCLUSION

A frequent occurrence, multilingualism can be examined from a various view, including how languages are used in sociolinguistic contexts. One option is to focus on the textual information which is accessible on language signs in a particular location to analyze languages in context. Analyzing public signs in a given territory, this perspective is known as Linguistic Landscape (LL). In this case, the LL study answers that the public sign in open space is not a merely a mark of place identification. It is more than that. The public signs on heritage area of Denpasar contains discourse created by authorities and authors in its social space. In this research, the results show that the data of public signs found in heritage area include building name, street names, road signs, banners, information signs, and public facilities. The study of linguistic landscape in this research shows that there were 34 signs that are not according

to governor regulation with the percentage of 61,8. Meanwhile there were only 21 signs applying the regulation with a rate 38,2%. They were mostly provided only by government institutions (top-down). In other words, the socialization regarding the governor regulation No. 80 of 2018 still needs improving both to authorization of government institutions and private institutions (bottom-up). As a result, both government and private institutions should work together. Regarding to the motives, it was found that there were four motives of the authors in producing public sign, namely language preservation, providing information, commercial purpose, and decorative function.

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