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BALINESE LANGUAGE POLICY: THE USE OF LANGUAGE SIGNS IN PUBLIC SPACES

Yendra[1], Ketut Artawa[2]

[1]Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

[2]Faculty of Language and Culture, Universitas Udayana, Bali, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The increasing influence of multiculturalism and multilingualism, together with the expansion of tourism in Bali, has significantly contributed to the decline in the number of Balinese language speakers. To address this issue and to strengthen the sustainable use and preservation of the Balinese language and script, the government enacted Bali Governor Regulation Number 80 of 2018, known as the Balinese Language Policy. This study examines how this policy is put into practice through language signs in public places, often called the Linguistic Landscape (LL). The analysis specifically focuses on Article 6 paragraph (1) of the regulation, which mandates that Balinese script be placed above Latin letters in the naming of Hindu places of worship, traditional institutions, commemorative inscriptions, government and private buildings, streets, tourism facilities, and other public amenities. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study involves an empirical survey of language signs in public spaces, their categorization, and analysis of policy implementation. Within the Balinese linguistic landscape, signs are classified as public and personal. The findings indicate that the Balinese Language Policy has been effectively implemented on public signage in accordance with the regulation. However, its implementation on personal signage remains limited, as only some individuals have adopted the policy

Introduction

Bali is one of the best tourist destinations in Indonesia. Every year, the number of tourists both domestic and foreign tourists visiting Bali shows a significant increase. In 2023 there were 9,757,991.00 domestic tourists and 6,070,473.00 foreign tourists visiting Bali (Bali Statistics Agency, 2023). The significant increase in the number of tourists makes Bali a multicultural area, and it indirectly affects the 3.3 million speakers of the local Balinese language (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2019). In such a condition, the use of non-Balinese languages such as Indonesian, English, Japanese, Chinese, and other foreign languages is inevitable. These languages play an important role in communication and become a key instrument in social interaction both verbally and in writing. Non-Balinese languages are translated, borrowed, or used, especially for matters related to tourism and business commodities (Artawa & Sartini, 2019). As a result, Balinese as a mother tongue has gradually become a marginal language. This phenomenon is confirmed by the decline in the use of the Balinese language as much as 30.21% (Mustika, 2018; Sutama & Suandi, 2001). Therefore, the Balinese language needs to be preserved and empowered.

In an effort to preserve the Balinese language and script, the Bali Provincial Government issued a policy in the form of Bali Governor Regulation Number 80 of 2018 on the Protection and Use of Balinese Language, Script, and Literature as well as the Implementation of the Balinese Language Month (referred to as the 'the Balinese Language Policy'). Article 2 paragraph (1) outlines that the Provincial Government and Regency/Municipality Government shall protect Balinese language,

script, and literature. Article 4 outlines that the Balinese language shall be used as a means of communication by employees, teachers, academic staff, students and the public in government institutions and private institutions on Thursday, Purnama (the day of the full moon), Tilem (the day of the new moon) and the Anniversary of Bali Province on 14 August. Meanwhile, Article 6 paragraph (1) states that Balinese script must be placed above Latin letters in writing names of: a. Hindu places of worship; b. traditional institutions; c. inscriptions marking the inauguration of buildings; d. buildings; e. government institutions; f. private institutions; g. streets; h. tourism facilities; and i. other public facilities.

This article specifically discusses how Balinese Language Policy implemented in the use of the Balinese language and script as language sign in public spaces, as well-known as Linguistic Landscape (LL). More specifically, this article explores how the Balinese language and script have reshaped the Balinese ethnic space in the public sphere through LL, which Appadurai (1990) called 'ethnoscape' or as ethnic (re)modeling of space (Amos, 2016). This kind of LL field of study usually arises in situations where the use of a language in public spaces appears to be involved in social conflict (Shohamy, 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that many studies on LL have referred to language policy in various forms, either by conceptualizing LL as a mechanism through which policy influence can be achieved (Shohamy, 2015) or by examining how signs can express different opinions from the policy (Rubdy & Ben Said, 2015).

Several previous studies on language policy in LL have been carried out by LL researchers, including: Rosenbaum, et al. (1977) on the influence of official language policies on language use in public spaces in Jerusalem; Tulp (1978) and Wenzel (1998) on the visibility of two semi-official languages, such as Dutch and French on commercial signs in various neighborhoods in Brussels, Belgium; and Monnier (1989) on the consequences of the "Bill 101" language policy in the Province of Quebec which regulates the use of language in commercial signs. Recently, research was also conducted by Modan (2009) who discusses the commodification of Chinese as an ornament of commercial success in creating a space for its original ethnic identity; Lou (2010) who explores the presentation of marginal linguistic identity by the majority group; Amos (2015) who discusses the ethnic space of Chinatown in the linguistic landscape in Liverpool; and Lanza & Woldemariam (2015) discussing Ethiopian ethnolinguistic identity in Washington DC. Conducting research on the implementation of this Balinese Language Policy is as one of the efforts to preserve and document the Balinese language and script in public spaces. In addition, this research is also important because the results are useful for determining the next Balinese Language Policy in an effort to protect and preserve the Balinese language and script in the future.

Materials and Methods

This study was conducted by employing a qualitative descriptive method with reference to what has been put forward by Modan (2009), Lou (2010), Amos (2015), and Lanza & Woldemariam (2015). The procedures carried out include: (1) an empirical survey of the Balinese Linguistic Landscape (LL); (2) classification of language signs in the Balinese LL; and (3) analysis of the implementation of the Balinese Language Policy No 80 of 2018 on language signs in public spaces in Bali. The first step, an empirical survey was conducted not to calculate the number of data but only to see a general picture of the data, and then capture the details of the super diversification of language signs in such LL. In this empirical survey, the activities carried out are recording data in a series of systems to classify the types of language signs, discourse materiality, authorship, the types of spots where language signs are found (Amos, 2015; Gorter, 2018). For this reason, data on Balinese LL was taken by means of photography. Language signs in public spaces in Bali were photographed and saved in a digital format. Then, sample photos that were relevant and in accordance with the target of the analysis were included in the data analysis. Photography was chosen as a data collection technique because one of the unique features of the LL study is the use of photographs for analysis of language signs in public spaces; and photography has become a characteristic of many LL studies (Aronin & O Laoire, 2012; Gorter, 2018; Yendra & Artawa, 2020).

The second step was that the data on Balinese LL was classified into two, namely: (1) official outdoor language signs (public signs) made by the government such as in government buildings, airports, ports, terminals, and other public facilities; and (2) unofficial outdoor language signs (private signs) made by non-governmental individuals or groups such as signage on shops, hotels, restaurants and other commercial signs. This current study refers to the research conducted by Backhaus (2007). This sign classification is carried out to find out who the sign makers are, and this will then reveal the groups implementing the Balinese Language Policy in accordance with the provisions set forth by the government. The third step was data analysis which was carried out to see preferences for language signs, and then evaluate the comparison of some data. Thus, the diverse complexities of the language signs that make up LL, the relationships between languages across their comparative distribution space, their varied uses in various contexts, and the concentration in particular places or types of places could be qualitatively explored. The items analyzed were adapted from the system for sign classification by Amos (2015) which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. System for analysis of signs in public spaces

System	Description	Gradient Example
Language	The language in the sign	Indonesian, Balinese, English, Japanese, …
Multilingual	Content relationship of multilingual signs	Replication (same content), non-relational (different content), inter-relational (complementary content)
Communicative Function	The purpose and objectives of signs	Signboards, information, announcements, advertisements, slogans, …
Point/locus	Spots where signs are presented	On walls, windows, banners, billboards, doors, arches, other places, …
Material	Types of materials for making signs	Permanent paint, printed, graffiti, …
Sign Context	Types of sign spots	Shops, restaurants, hotels, houses, buildings, sites, temples, …

The important feature of this methodology is not the large number of signs that are recorded and analyzed, but the qualitative analysis of one type of signs that can be categorized as representing many identical signs in general. Meanwhile, a unique sign is defined spatially depending on the communicative function of the text. Thus, signs that contain more than one communicative function are categorized separately.

Results and Discussion
Classification of Types of Signs on the Linguistic Landscape of Bali
The main question of this research is concerned with how the Balinese Language Policy is implemented in the use of Balinese language and script from the perspective of the Linguistic Landscape (LL), which specifically refers to Article 6 paragraph (1), which reads: "Balinese script must be placed above Latin script in the writing of the names of: a. Hindu places of worship; b. traditional institutions; c. inscriptions marking the inauguration of buildings; d. buildings; e. government institutions; f. private institutions; g. streets; h. tourism facilities; and i. other public facilities. The policy set out in Article 6 paragraph (1) is clearly consistent with the concept of Landscape Linguistics (LL) proposed by Landri & Bourhis (1997) who state that the LL in certain regions includes the language used in traffic signs, advertisements, billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signage, and public signage on government buildings. In this research, to facilitate the analysis of the implementation of the Balinese Language Policy, the signs on the LL of Bali are classified into two types, namely public signs and personal signs.

A public sign is a specific type of semiotic sign that serves to present a declaration, information, notification, and announcement that is displayed on a public sphere, which provides information or instructions in text and symbolic form (Backhaus, 2007). In the context of the LL in the public spaces in Bali, public signs are displayed as signs indicating public facilities and public services, including: government center buildings (Governor's office, Mayor/Regent's office, urban village/village office, department office, and DPRD (Regional House of Representatives) office), health facilities (hospitals, primary health centers, and clinics), school buildings (elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, vocational schools), higher education institutions (universities, colleges, and academies), temples (Hindu places of worship), street signage, markets, museum buildings, airports/seaports, and bus terminals. The estimated number of places where public signs are distributed on the LL of Bali is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of public signs

Places with Public Signs	Number
Schools	6,668
Higher education institutions	71
Government center buildings	783
Health facilities	5,284
DPRD buildings	10
Temples	4,356
Main street signs	112
Markets	111
Museums	44
Tourist sites	120
Government offices	49
Seaports	6
Bus terminals	8
Airports	1
Total	17,623

A personal sign on the Linguistic Landscape (LL) is a symbol or a sign that represents an object, a quality, or an event, whose appearance indicates a probable presence of a person's intention or will, or an occurrence, or other things related to a concept that is intended by the maker (Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2006). In the context of the LL in the public spaces in Bali, personal signs are commodified for tourism and business purposes, which include: signs on shop signage, names of restaurants, names of hotels, and other manners of business commodification. The estimated number of places where personal signs are distributed in the public spaces in Bali is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of personal signs

Places with Personal Signs	Number
Minimarkets	1,275
Grocery stores	50,152
Restaurants	3,233
Hotels	4,487
Other shops/stalls	98,654
Total	157,801

The data on the distribution of public signs presented in Table 2 and the distribution of personal signs presented in Table 3 show that personal signs with a total number of 157,801 are more dominant on the LL of Bali compared to the public signs with a total number of only 173,623.

The Implementation of the Balinese Language Policy on Public Signs

Based on the data analysis, the implementation of the Balinese Language Policy on public signs has been carried out properly, in the sense that the use of Balinese script is already in accordance with the provisions set out by the Bali government. Public signs such as signage indicating the airport, schools, temples, inscriptions, and other public facilities already use Balinese script in their writing (see examples of Figures 2 and 3). In this case, public signs are relatively easy to control through the language policy mechanism because they are indeed made by government institutions as stakeholders and policy makers.

Figure 2. Signage for a Temple

Figure 3. Signage for a School

In general, the language used in public signs such as in the examples in Figures 2 and 3 is monolingual, namely Indonesian written using Balinese script and Latin script. In this case, the use of Balinese script either after or before Latin script is only limited to the technical aspect. Both scripts are transcriptions in Indonesian that are replication. This is most likely due to the influence of the National Language Policy which regulates and mandates the use of Indonesian in all regions (Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019). Placing Balinese script alongside Latin scripts as transcriptions of the Indonesian national language on public signs is a form of the Balinese local

government's diaspora, where special preference is used for ethnically defined zones (see Barni & Vedovelli, 2012; Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2012; Malinowski, 2009; Vandenbroucke, 2015). That is, Balinese script is used as a symbol to strengthen Balinese ethnicity in public spaces. In some data, public signs that are multilingual are also found, where there is the use of more than one language written in Balinese script and Latin script (see example in Figure 4). Usually, this kind of sign is found at the entrance or gate of a temple as a place of worship for Hindus in Bali.

Figure 4. Informative sign

Figure 4 shows the use of three languages which are transcribed using Balinese script and Latin script, namely Indonesian, Balinese, and English. The content presented is comprised of: (1) *"wantah sane jagi muspa"* (transcription in the Balinese language using Balinese script); (2) *"hanya yang sembahyang"* (transcription in the Indonesian language using Latin script); and (3) *"do not enter, for prayers only"* (transcription in the English language using Latin script). The signs in the three languages have the same content, which is replication and serves as information for temple visitors. Contextually, the strategy of presenting multilingual signs is a form of the communicative function of texts. In this case, apart from being a place of worship for Hindus, temples are also one of the authentic tourist attractions in Bali that are visited by a lot of tourists, both domestic and foreign. Therefore, the presentation of multilingual signs is indeed targeted based on the classification of visitors. The Balinese sign is intended for the local Balinese visitors, the Indonesian sign is intended for domestic tourists, and the English sign is intended for foreign tourists. This is what Leeman & Modan (2009) refer to as commodification of ethnicity into an ornament of commercial success that cannot be separated from its original ethnic identity.

The Implementation of the Balinese Language Policy on Personal Signs
Unlike the case with public signs, the implementation of the Balinese Language Policy on personal signs such as signs on shop signboards, names of restaurants, names of hotels, and others has not been carried out properly (see examples of Figures 5 and 6). This is because the implementation of the use of language in the form of written texts in public spaces is a complex and often unpredictable process, which is highly dependent on how local actors interpret and enforce the policy.

Figure 5. Signage for a hotel

Figure 6. Signage for a restaurant

In general, the examples of personal signs as presented in Figures 5 and 6 show that there are signs made by non-government entities who do not use Balinese script. This phenomenon generally occurs in shops, restaurants of lower-middle level, or non-star hotels. It is not surprising that these personal signs do not use Balinese script given that these establishments are identified as archetypal sites for the commodification of business and tourism in Bali. This is evidenced by the use of both the Indonesian national language and international languages such as English, Japanese, and other foreign languages that are dominant. However, there is also the use of Balinese script in personal signs, even if only in moderation. The personal signs that use Balinese script are generally corporate establishments or star hotels (see example in Figure 7).

Figure 7. Signage for a villa

Figure 7 shows hotel/villa signage using English with Latin transcription and a little transcription in Balinese script. The minimal presence of texts using Balinese script as in the example shown in Figure 7 is an index of the Balinese language as a symbol of values and practices related to the Balinese ethnicity and diaspora. However, it is not clear whether the Balinese script used indicates the existence of the Balinese linguistic community, or is only a symbolic presentation of the participation strategy in support of the Balinese language policy so that it is in line with the tourism and business commodification.

Conclusions

Linguistic landscape is the center of ethnic identity construction that forms at least one dimension to map the 'ethnoscape'. Therefore, making the Balinese Language Policy by presenting a preference for Balinese language/script in the Linguistic Landscape in the form of public signs and personal signs clearly shows the purpose of ethnic demarcation by the Balinese government. Based on the data analysis, it was found that the implementation of the Balinese Language Policy on public signs had been carried out properly. Temples, inscriptions, gates, and government building signage are complemented with texts in Balinese language/script. The preference for Balinese language and script used in public signs shows the identity of the place, in that they serve as symbolic markers of Balinese ethnicity. This is in stark contrast to the implementation of the Balinese Language Policy on personal signs, where foreign languages such as English, Indonesian, and other non-Balinese languages are more dominant. Although there are also personal signs such as those in shops, restaurants, hotels, and other business commodities that use Balinese language/script, it is not clear whether the Balinese language/script used signifies the existence of the Balinese linguistic community, or is merely a symbolic presentation of participation in support of the Balinese language policy.

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