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## The Linguistic Landscape of Accommodations in Ubud

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigates what language signs in the accommodation businesses use in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia to promote their businesses. The data source of this research was in the form of signs owned by private accommodation businesses in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. The total numbers of signs collected were 328 signs. The collected data were further classified into different subcategories. The method applied in collecting the data was the observation method. The collected data was analyzed based on subjective interpretations to determine the contestation of the languages used on signs of the accommodation business in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. The results of the contestation analysis are analyzed descriptively to further understand which languages are predominantly utilized on public signs along with figuring out the influencing factor. The finding of this research shows that among the entire 328 collected signs in this research, Balinese is used as many as 266 times in bilingual signs, Indonesian is used as many as 258 times in bilingual signs, English is used as many as 373 times, both in monolingual and bilingual signs. This finding shows that English still dominates the communication system in this area, therefore Balinese and Indonesian need to be promoted more in public spaces.

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### 1. Introduction

Ubud is globally known as the cultural heart of Bali, Indonesia. The beauties in nature and the culture of Ubud appear to be two important factors influencing tourists' decisions to visit this village. Besides being one of the most famous tourist destinations in Bali, this village has also become the melting pot of international interaction. Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Bali or the Bali Provincial Tourism Office via its official website (<https://disparda.baliprov.go.id/>) releases a statistical report summarizing direct foreign tourists' arrival to Bali. The arrival numbers are as follows: 5.697.739 foreign tourists arrived in Bali in 2017, 6.070.473 in 2018, and 6.275.210 in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. These numbers can be an initial indication showing that the international interaction strongly formed and developed in Bali in general and Ubud specifically. As one of the sub-districts, Ubud has become one of the must-visit destinations in Gianyar Regency. Another interesting data shows the high volume of tourist arrival, both domestic and international tourists to this regency. Bali Provincial Tourism Office further summarizes those 1,917,691 tourists visited Gianyar in 2015, 2,953,581 in 2016, 3,842,208 in 2017, 4,550,940 in 2018, and 5,037,459 in 2019. These numbers provide another obvious indication of the existence of the international interaction happening in Ubud. This interaction then causes further impacts in many different parts of local communities' lives in this village.

One of the impacts caused by the rapid growth of the tourism industry and international interaction happening is on the linguistic situation of Ubud. This research, therefore, attempts to analyze the linguistic situation of Ubud by selecting the accommodation business as the unit of analysis. The research specifically selects and analyzes public signs utilized by many different accommodation businesses in this village to communicate their messages to the public, both domestic and international audiences. This research expects that selecting the accommodation business and the public signs can provide a clear understanding of the linguistic situation of this village.

Public signs can be seen throughout the area of Ubud, from the main commercial areas, public facilities, and to the most visited recreation centers. These public signs serve major roles in communicating particular messages to public audiences. From introducing the identity of a brand, advertising products or services, providing important information, or even just a simple direction, it might then be safe to conclude that public signs can be a form of both marketing tools and public services. Considering the power public sign possesses in attracting the audiences' attention and creating exposure to the product or services, it is no wonder that most of the accommodation businesses in Ubud opt to style their public signs to get the most out of their signs. Attractive visualization will potentially obtain customers' attention and help in increasing sales for businesses. It may not seem to be realistic that audiences or passers-by in Ubud will be spending their time reading all of the information on each of the public signs. However, it is certainly possible for them to notice at least parts of the information on those signs. This is one of the challenges encountered by companies in composing or styling their public signs. The styling strategy can include selecting the strategic placement, providing a unique visualization, composing a compact yet extremely clear message, and utilizing an appropriate language among many other important considerations. Paying attention to varied language uses opted by accommodation businesses to introduce their brands and articulate their messages can provide a clear picture regarding the dominance a language possesses over another in Ubud. Language use on signs then appears to be one of the most important key factors in understanding the linguistic situation in this region. In this competitive era, building a robust brand by utilizing an appropriate language use seems to be one of the most selected strategies opted by companies as their communication system.

Public signs and Linguistic Landscapes (LL) have an extremely strong connection. The study of the LL can, among others, provide important insights and a different perspective on language awareness and multilingualism (Cenoz, Gorter, & May, 2017:234). They further elaborate the focus of LL appears to be on any display of visible written language, but not exclusively, also multimodal, semiotic, other visual, and even oral elements can be included. LL can also provide a thorough understanding to view the connection between the existence of a language and the social change in the community. The use of language on public signs in Bali has been regulated like in many areas of the world as part of language policies. Peraturan Daerah (PERDA) Nomor 1 Tahun 2018 or the Regional Regulation (PERDA) Number 1 of 2018 is one of the examples showing the local government's effort in managing language use in public spaces in Bali. Article 8 Paragraph 4 B of this Regional Regulation stipulates the use of Balinese language, script, and literature in various media and public spaces throughout the island, both owned by the government and private sectors. Public signs containing Balinese script can easily be found in Bali. Most of the companies in both sectors tend to mix the languages, combining Balinese, Indonesian, English, and other languages to communicate their messages publicly. This is one concrete implementation of this regulation. Applying this regulation will serve as an effective way in revitalizing and protecting the existence of the Balinese language in the globalized era.

Realizing the international interaction formed and developed in Ubud impacted by the globalization, immigration, and tourism industry, it can be concluded that the linguistic situation has become as diverse as the nature of this region itself. Linguistic diversity in Ubud shows which languages possess more access to being displayed in public space and on the contrary which of them are struggling for visibility. It is essential to always understand the linguistic situation of a certain region as the initial step to preserving and protecting the existence of the local language. Preserving and protecting the Balinese language is one of the issues, this research attempts to address.

The urgency of this research is to understand the linguistic situation in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. Understanding the situation is expected to be the initial step to providing a practical solution to address and cope with the linguistic problems in this region. The followings are several previous LL studies reviewed to situate this present study in the growing body of LL studies and identify the research gaps between this present study and the previous ones.

The first study (Purnawati, Artawa & Satyawati, 2021) focused on the contestation of languages in public spaces located in the heritage area of Gajah Mada Street, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. As the results, this first reviewed study found that Indonesian is the majority language in the heritage area of Gajah Mada Street. Although this area is mostly inhabited by residents of Chinese descent; however, Mandarin or Chinese is not very commonly used on public signs in this region. Meanwhile, the second language that is widely used is English. The first difference between this present study and this reviewed study can be identified through their research locations. This present study selects the region of Ubud,

Bali, Indonesia. Meanwhile, this first reviewed study selected the region of Gajah Mada Street, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. The second difference can be identified through their units of analysis. This present study takes specific public signs of the accommodation business; meanwhile, this first reviewed study selected two different types of signs. They were top-down signs and bottom-up signs (Gorter & Cenoz, 2006). Top-down signs are produced by the government, which include street names and buildings owned by the government. Meanwhile, the second type (bottom-up) signs are produced by the private sector. These signs include store names, billboard advertisements, and private offices. The results of this first reviewed study motivate this present study to identify which language is predominantly utilized in the communication system of the accommodation business. This presence study eagers to find out whether the local language (Balinese) is predominantly utilized.

The second study (Andriyanti, 2019) focused on sign patterns in school and what they represent in terms of language situations in multilingual contexts. As the results, this second reviewed study found that the use of English on signs at school was frequent but indicated the sign makers' less capability of the language. Moreover, the use of Arabic was related to the schools' Islamic identity. Meanwhile, Javanese was used as a cultural symbol. This second reviewed study further emphasized that schools in Yogyakarta are suggested to put more consideration on having more Javanese signs in their LL to give their students natural exposure to that local language. The research locations and units of analysis between this present study and this second reviewed study seem to be different. However, one of the most important insights obtained from this second reviewed study is the fact that the local language does not always possess the position it deserves in its region. This present study attempts to utilize this finding to further analyze the possible factors causing this phenomenon. Furthermore, the third study (Ardhian & Fajar, 2017) focused to analyze the use of both monolingual and bilingual languages and analyzing the motive of using the language code on signboards, road signs, and banners taken from Kertanegara, Soekarno Hatta, Sigura-Gura, Malang City area in Indonesia. As the results, this third reviewed study found that the top-down pattern showed the Indonesian monolingual and bilingual codes, English, and Javanese, while the bottom-up pattern indicated the existence of monolingual and bilingual patterns in Indonesian, English, Javanese, Arabic, Japanese, and Dutch. Meanwhile, there were four motifs of the emergence of language code, which include modernization, branding strategy, expansion strategy, and culture. Despite sharing a different research location and unit of analysis, the results of this third reviewed study motivate this present study to analyze the motif of the accommodation business in Ubud in utilizing a particular language as a means of communication.

## **2. Methods**

The data source of this research was in the form of signs owned by private accommodation businesses in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. The total numbers of signs collected were 328 signs. The collected data were further classified into different subcategories. The subcategories classified include Inn (18), Homestay (40), Guest House (79), Villa (47), Bed and Breakfast (8), Hotel (24), Resort (20), Cottage (18), Bungalow (59), Accommodation (2), Backpacker's Lodge (1), Hostel (5), Pondok Wisata (2), Motel (1) and Suites (4). The method applied in collecting the data was the observation method. The initial observation was conducted to distinguish many different types of signs in Ubud. As it is known that there are many different types of businesses supporting the tourism industry in Ubud. Observing the appropriate signs suiting the nature of this research played a major part in the initial step of collecting the entire data. Meanwhile, the technique applied was by taking photos of the signs. The entire data was taken in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. Ubud is one of the sub-districts in Gianyar regency. Bali itself is divided into eight regencies (Kabupaten) and one city (Kota). Those eight regencies include Badung Regency, Bangli Regency, Buleleng Regency, Gianyar Regency, Jembrana Regency, Karangasem Regency, Klungkung Regency, and Tabanan Regency. Meanwhile, the city of Denpasar serves as the capital city of the province of Bali, Indonesia. The exact locations include five different areas, which are Ubud Kaja, Ubud Tengah, Ubud Kelod, Sambahan, and Jalan Raya Ubud. The method applied in the analysis process of this research was descriptive qualitative. The collected data was analyzed based on subjective interpretations to determine the contestation of the languages used on signs of the accommodation business in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. The results of the contestation analysis of these languages are analyzed descriptively to further understand which languages are predominantly utilized on public signs along with figuring out the possible factor influencing this phenomenon. In addition, the analysis is

conducted to understand the position Balinese as the local language plays in the communication system in this region as well as Indonesian as the national language. The methods applied in presenting the results of the analysis were a combination of formal and informal methods. The technique in applying the formal method was by utilizing several photos to provide the contestation of the languages used. Meanwhile, the technique in applying the informal method was by utilizing descriptive elaboration to detail the entire analysis.

### 3. Results and Discussion

As the first result of the analysis, this research investigates that the entire 328 collected signs utilize Balinese 266 times, Indonesian 258 times, and English 373 times. This first result indicates that English as an international language dominates the existence of Balinese as the local language and Indonesian as the national language. This result leads to another understanding that there is a strong sense of multilingualism conveyed by each sign. Mixing more than one language seems to be one of the common practices opted for by the accommodation businesses in Ubud. The sense of multilingualism evolved appears to have something to do with the minor position possessed by local and national languages over the international language in this region. Analyzing this intricate relationship is what this research is all about. Investigating several impacts caused by international interaction, a sense of multilingualism, and diversity in the globalized era nowadays is what this research attempts to address. This research utilizes the LL to address social issues focusing on linguistic situations in the community and providing a practical solution to cope with the problems. LL helps people to better view linguistic and cultural phenomena in social life.

This section presents five representative data to show languages used by those collected signs in Ubud. These representative signs are also expected to show the idea of multilingualism in this area along with the positions of Balinese as the local language and Indonesian as the national language in the communication system.



Figure 1: Balinese, Indonesian & English Sign  
Bagus Homestay

Figure 1 shows that they are three languages used in communicating the message of this business to the customers. Those three languages are Balinese, Indonesian, and English. The word 'Bagus' can be identified in both the Balinese and the Indonesian language. In Balinese, the word 'Bagus' means handsome. Meanwhile, in Indonesian, the word 'Bagus' means good or nice. In addition, the word 'Bagus' is one of the most popular names for males both in Bali and in Indonesia. This sign also uses English to show the nature of their business, through the word 'homestay.' Another three words, which are 'phone,' 'free' and 'WiFi' can also, be identified as the English words that consisted on this sign.

The assumption, which can be drawn from this naming strategy might indicate a few possibilities. The first possibility is that the owner of this homestay may have been named Bagus. The second possibility is that the company may wish to inform their prospective buyers or customers that this homestay is a good or nice place to stay.

Figure 1 is the first evidence showing that language diversity and multilingualism strongly exist in the area of Ubud. This naming strategy can also be identified as one of the most promising strategies for introducing local culture to public audiences, especially international audiences. The word 'Bagus' can be considered one of the most practical and versatile expressions many people can use in their daily communication in Bali or Indonesia. Take for instance, when a tourist wishes to express how well the services they received from their place of stay, they can easily practice their linguistic skill by commenting 'Bagus' to the staff. Moreover, tourists can also easily comment on how nice the view they see while they are on vacation, by using this adjective. The word 'Bagus' is relatively easy to pronounce by speakers from many different countries. This creates even more opportunities for international audiences to delve in-depth into the beauty of local linguistic features around them by paying attention to the languages used on signs along Ubud Street.



Figure 2: Balinese, Indonesian & English Sign  
Pondok Mua Guesthouse & Yan Santi Guest House

Figure 2 consists of two different signs, which share similarities. They both use three languages in communicating their brands to the public. The Balinese language can be identified through the words 'Pondok,' 'Mua' and 'Yan Santi.' In Balinese, the first word 'Pondok' means a hut, which is often located in the rice field. The second word 'Mua' is the name of the neighborhood, where these two signs are located. The upper sign, therefore, means a little hut surrounded by a rice field in the neighborhood of Mua, Ubud. Meanwhile, the lower sign, which read 'Yan Santi Guest House' means a guesthouse, which is owned by a person named Yan Santi. The phrase Yan Santi can be identified as one of the most common names in Bali. The clue is on the first word 'Yan.' The word 'Yan' is the nickname of 'Wayan.' In Balinese culture, either the firstborn will be named Wayan or Putu followed by the given name and family name if there is any. Therefore, 'Yan Santi' can be assumed as the owner of this guesthouse. The first word 'Yan' is the nickname of 'Wayan.' Meanwhile, the second word 'Santi' is the given name of this owner.

Besides using Balinese, the upper sign also uses Indonesian and English as means of communication. The Indonesian word can be identified through the word 'Pondok,' which means a

little hut, buildings for temporary places (such as those built in the fields, forests, and so on), home (a derogatory term), or a residential building with cubicle walls and thatched roofs (for several families to live in). Therefore, the word 'Pondok' can be identified as both Balinese and Indonesian words. The third language used on these two signs is English. 'Guesthouse,' 'Free,' 'WiFi,' 'Hot,' 'Cold' and 'Water' are all English words found on these two signs. The names of these accommodation businesses are in Balinese and Indonesian, meanwhile, the supporting information is in English. Figure 2, therefore, can be identified as another example indicating the approach to the mapping of language diversity and multilingualism in a public setting. The local language appears to be prioritized, however in terms of quantity, English seems to be dominant. Both signs contain more words in English than in the other two languages.



Figure 3: Balinese & English Sign  
Lila Cita Inn

Figure 3 shows a sign, which uses two languages. Those two languages include Balinese and English. The name of this inn is 'Lila Cita.' This phrase can mean happy, pleased, satisfied, or a state of being content or amused. This phrase consists of two Balinese words, which are 'Lila' and 'Cita.' The first word 'Lila' means happy, pleased, satisfied, or content. Meanwhile, the second word 'Cita' means a feeling, condition, or state of being something. The Balinese language seems to be prioritized in this case. The company chooses to use Balinese phrases to show the identity of its business. It can be identified as one of the strategies for introducing Balinese as a local language in the communication system. The assumption, which can be drawn from this naming strategy is the possibility that this inn is expected to be able to make people staying here feel happy, pleased, satisfied, or in a state of being content, or amused. This phrase also sounds very catchy. The first word 'Lila' and the second word 'Cita' seem to be in rhyme, thus this makes non-Balinese speakers interested in trying to pronounce them. In addition, they may find the rhyming sounds interesting, which is another plus point in attracting them to learn even more dictions in Balinese. Besides using Balinese, this sign also uses English in articulating its messages to the public audience.

There are three English words utilized on this sign, which include 'Inn,' 'Balinese' and 'Style.' Another interesting finding can be observed from these first three signs. They share a similarity in positioning the Balinese and the Indonesian language as the name of the business. Each of these businesses positions the Balinese and the Indonesian language at the very beginning of the sign, which automatically attracts people's attention immediately. This strategy will not only attract people to their business but also encourage curiosity in finding out the meaning behind of place, where they are about to choose. The naming strategy will always play a crucial part in attracting people's attention besides the visualization strategy. Even though the priority seems to be set out for local languages, Balinese and Indonesian, however, these three signs show an interesting linguistic situation based on the number of English words used on them. The quantity of English words on each sign seems to be dominating

compared to the quantity of Balinese or Indonesian language. This situation can be identified as an indication that local language still needs to be promoted continuously to make sure that local languages can still play an important role in the communication system and their region.



Figure 4: English Sign  
Happy Inn

Quite different from the first three signs previously, Figure 4 shows a monolingual sign, which only uses English as a means of its communication. As observed, the name of this business is 'Happy Inn.' The standing details informing their best way to contact this company also seem to be in English. The indication can be observed from the acronym PH followed by numbers (0361) 9081399. This acronym certainly stands for 'phone,' which is an English word. Meanwhile, in Balinese and Indonesia, the acronym for the phone is commonly written as 'Telp.' Another example showing a monolingual sign using the English language can be observed in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5 also indicates that the company solely uses English as a means of communicating their business. There are three English words used on the above sign. Those three words are 'Nick,' 'Hidden' and 'Cottages.' As observed, there are no other languages than English used on this sign. These last two signs also support the entire finding of this research that the monolingual signs collected tend to use only English as a means of their communication. There are no monolingual signs found used other than the English language. Among the entire 328 collected signs in this research, Balinese is used as many as 266 times in bilingual signs, Indonesian is used as many as 258 times in bilingual signs, and English is used as many as 373 times, both in monolingual and bilingual signs. The fact that English is used in monolingual signs shows how independent and capable English is and has been considered in communicating the identity of the accommodation business in the area of Ubud.



Figure 5: English Sign  
Nick's Hidden Cottages

Meanwhile, the other languages, namely Balinese and Indonesian tend to be supported by English as a means of elaborating the nature of the business, providing additional information, and many other important features an accommodation company has to offer. This form of independence, which the English language possesses, can be considered an important indication that English still dominates the communication system in a public setting in this area. Balinese and Indonesian languages tend to be used as the name of the business. These languages often are combined to form unique names as part of the identity of the brand promoted on signs. Meanwhile English can serve varied roles in the communication system. Most of the signs collected use English as the name of the company, the additional services a company has to offer, contact information, and many more. Different roles English plays in the communication process further show the superiority of this international language possesses compared to the other two languages found, which are Balinese and Indonesian. This finding appears to be contradictive since Balinese and Indonesian shall have to possess this role, instead. In a logical sense, these two languages should have more 'power' and dominant position in their region.

In coping with this issue, the use of Balinese and Indonesian shall have to be promoted more. One of the most practical solutions to do this is through public signs. Every company running an accommodation business needs to utilize a good portion of both the local language and English. It is hard to deny that English will always be needed since most travelers are from abroad. However, putting a balanced amount of language in public spaces will open a huge opportunity for the public to get to know the local language as part of the local culture. Providing information in more than one language seems to be one of the solutions worth trying to benefit the community. Local people can get themselves acquitted with the international language; meanwhile, the international audiences can get themselves immersed in local culture.

#### 4. Conclusions

This research concludes that Balinese as the local language and Indonesian as the national language need to be introduced or promoted more in public communication in the area of Ubud, Bali, Indonesia. Among the entire 328 collected signs in this research, there are Balinese is used 266 times in bilingual signs, Indonesian is used 258 times in bilingual signs, and English is used 373 times, both in monolingual and bilingual signs. This is an indication that English dominates the communication system in this area. The frequency of English being used on the collected signs compared to the other languages show that English has a superiority in terms of position. The use of a balanced amount between local language and the international language on public signs can be one of the most practical solutions to promote local languages and provide an adequate amount of exposure from international audiences.



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