A linguistic landscape study in Indonesian sub-urban high school signages: an exploration of patterns and associations

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Abstract - English is the most used lingua franca and its permeation is mainly through education sector. This expansion is reflected through the display of English coexisting with other languages in education sites. Linguistic landscape study in school sites helps to explain the functions of language choices in school signs. In Indonesia, the use of English captured in school signs have been frequently investigated focusing in their relation with urban communities, yet, the co-existence of languages in signages in sub-urban schools are still rarely investigated. To fill this gap, we scrutinized the languages present on Indonesian sub-urban schools focusing on their patterns and associations. 101 school signs were collected from three senior high schools in sub-urban areas in Jember, Magetan and Situbondo. The display patterns were analyzed based on the number of languages present in the signs and interpreted socio-culturally. This study found three patterns of the sub-urban school signs: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs consisting of five different languages: Indonesian, English, Arabic, Sanskrit, and Latin. Indonesian becomes the dominant language used, and is followed by English. English is mostly used in schools that have history as international schools. In addition, Arabic is mostly used in school located in Islamic environment as a form of self-identification, and Sanskrit is used as a cultural symbol in the school located in dominant Javanese community. In conclusion, location and socio-cultural context influence the language used in school.

Keywords: association, English as a lingua franca, linguistic landscape, language patterns
1. Introduction

Nelson and Aarts (1999) confirm that English has spread to all five continents and has become a global language, and the most used language than others. With the widespread of English nowadays, it is not only used in communication between native speakers (NS), native speakers with non-native speakers (NNS), it is also used in communication between non-native speakers. Indeed, English has become the fastest-growing lingua franca in the world. A quarter of world’s population is fluent and competent in English, and the number keeps growing (Crystal, 2003). Kachru’s Three-circle Model of World Englishes (1985) provides the description of the spread of English in terms of three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle includes countries, including Australia, Britain, Canada and United States, where English becomes the first language. The inner circle countries use English for government business, school life and daily life. Meanwhile the outer circle includes British and American post-colonial countries where English is chosen as a second language and extensively used in social life and the government sector. In these countries, English are also used as a lingua franca in inter-ethnic interactions. In Singapore, for example, English has privileged the most while the other languages are taught only as subjects (Kirkpatrick, 2012).

The last is expanding circle which includes countries that use English as an important foreign language to facilitate them for international trade and communication exchanges. In these countries, English takes an important role in education. Countries fall into this circle are for instance China, Germany, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Japan.

Crystal (2003) highlights that English has become the normal medium of instruction in higher education for many countries – and is increasingly used in several areas, especially science and technology where the language has no official status. Both in outer and expanding circle countries the role of English is increasing (Bolton & Bacon-Shone, 2020). In China English is a compulsory subject, one of three core subjects, for all students from Grade 3 in elementary school (Kirkpatrick, 2020). Foley (2005) describes, in Thailand, English is a necessity and mandatory subject that must to be given in school. Brazil uses English as an optional foreign language in school where English is one of the foreign languages that is offered in fifth grade. In higher education English is taught as international language (Finardi & Archanjo, 2015). In Indonesian schools, English is taught as a foreign language together with Bahasa Indonesia and local languages. According to Dardjowidjojo (2003) English in Indonesia has never been considered an official language coexisting with the national language and English is the first foreign language, which emphasizes the status of English as mandatory for all types of secondary education, but it is still put on a lower level of priority.

He further argues that the adoption of English as the first foreign language in Indonesia is mostly due to the influence of science and technology. During 2006, the vitality of English in Indonesian schools was accentuated through the national implementation of RSBI (Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional) or International-standardized School by state schools, where the schools used English as the medium of instruction and teaching (John et al, 2013). The strict compliance criteria set by the minister of education and culture made the use of English in RSBI Schools were more intense. The students, the teachers, and also the staffs at the schools should learn and understand English. Some student’s books were in bilingual, Bahasa Indonesia, and English. After much criticism and protests concerning its practicality and fear of the detraction of Indonesian cultural and linguistic values, RSBI was stopped by the Indonesian constitutional court (John et al, 2013) (Evaluation of International Standard School in Indonesia). Though the RSBI policy has stopped, English remains a vital language in Indonesian education. According to the parents, the present time is not the same as their past. Students have to keep up with the times, in this case, English is considered extremely important because it is a lingua franca, and also one of the keys to successful communication in the world (Faqihatuddiniyah & Rasyid, 2017).
The use and position of English in Indonesian schools are observable through the written signs visible in school settings, and Linguistic Landscape study helps to explain this. Landry and Bourhis (1997) provides a complete definition of linguistic landscape as the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or a given region. Linguistic landscape examines all the semiotic signs in public spaces such as advertisement signs in the business sector and school signs in the education sector. The study of Linguistic Landscape focuses on the representations of languages in public sign and the object of the linguistic landscape study is the written language and how people interact with the signs (Mensel et al, 2016). The vitality of English in Indonesian education sector is potentially interpreted through its representation in school signages along with other languages. This research looks at the vitality of English in Indonesian education context through the linguistic landscape study in Indonesian school signages. Much research has reported the vitality of English in education sector. Siricharoen (2016) investigated Linguistic Landscape in the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkon University, which found that Thai-English was the most frequently used language, and it is proof that Thai-English bilingualism is supported strongly within the faculty of arts in the University. Among myriad of investigations done on school signs, very little is known about the LL in Indonesian schools. Andriyanti (2019) has done the investigation in five high schools in Yogyakarta that found three lingual patterns of LL in school sites: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Andriyanti’s study found some associations such as language dominance and marginalization, less capability of international languages, language as a school identity marker, and language as a cultural symbol. LL study on school signages especially on Indonesian urban cities were frequently investigated while LL study in sub-urban cities were not much frequent. The research questions guiding his study are what school signages in sub-urban cities are? How many languages are used by school signages in the sub-urban area? How is the language used in the signages were associated with the social life and culture in the suburban areas?

2. Method

This research is a study on Linguistic Landscape to find how languages are used in school signs, the associations, the functions, and the context of the school and the areas. It aims to find the patterns based on the languages that present in the signs and the association of the language used in the school sign with the social life and culture in the areas of the school.

The data were 101 signages taken near the researchers’ residence because it is easier to approach if the researchers need to retake the photographic. The data were from 3 high schools from suburban areas in East Java. There were 15 data from Magetan, 12 data from Situbondo, and 74 data from Jember. To help analyze the data, the schools’ names were pseudo names; S1 for Magetan, S2 for Situbondo, and S3 for Jember. All of the data were collected for two weeks. The data were checked to find that there are no signs taken more than once. One sign means one data. For detail, the number of the data is shown in table 1.

| Table 1 Number of Data |
|------------------------|
| No | School code | Number of the data |
|----|-------------|-------------------|
| 1. | S1          | 15                |
| 2. | S2          | 12                |
| 3. | S3          | 74                |
| Total |          | 101               |

The signages were treated as textual data. The texts as qualitative data were also quantified for their frequency of appearance during the analysis to get a comprehensive understanding of the observed phenomenon (Gorter, 2006). The data were classified based on the language present in the signs to find the patterns. The data were interpreted to find the
associations of the language used in school. Based on 101 data, we found three patterns; monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual of five languages: Indonesian, English, Arabic, Sanskrit, and Latin.

2.1 Research Design

This research employs a qualitative method since the data are in the form of texts in signages that need researchers’ interpretation and analysis to find the results. No numerical and statistical data is used in this research, so qualitative is the suitable method for this research. It is supported by a statement by Denscombe in which he states that qualitative research tends to be associated with words or images as the unit of analysis (2007). The analysis is in the form of interpretation on qualitative studies, in which the analysis is interpretative rather than statistical (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This research needs the researchers’ analysis to find out the linguistic pattern in the signage and researchers’ interpretation to find out the associations of the language used in the signages.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Pattern

One hundred and one (101) signs as the data was collected from three high schools in East Java, Indonesia. They are Magetan (S1), Situbondo (S2), and Jember (S3).

Table 2 Sign Patterns

| School code | Monolingual | Bilingual | Multilingual | Total |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| S1          | 3           | 12        | 0            | 15    |
| S2          | 4           | 8         | 0            | 12    |
| S3          | 43          | 20        | 11           | 74    |
| TOTAL       | 50          | 40        | 11           | 101   |

According to table 3, monolingual pattern is the most used pattern among the others. There were 50 signs that were found as the data; 27 signs were written in Bahasa Indonesia, and the rest 23 are written in English.

Table 3 Languages in monolingual patterns

| School code | Bahasa Indonesia | English | Total |
|-------------|------------------|---------|-------|
| S1          | 0                | 3       | 3     |
| S2          | 0                | 4       | 4     |
| S3          | 27               | 16      | 43    |
| TOTAL       | 27               | 23      | 50    |

Bilingual pattern placed second after monolingual pattern, there are total 40 signs that were found as the data; 31 of them are written in Indonesian + English, 6 were written in Indonesian + Arabic, 2 were written in Indonesian + Latin, and 1 Indonesian + Sanskrit.

Table 4 Languages in bilingual patterns

| School code | Bahasa+ English | Bahasa+ Latin | Bahasa+ Arabic | English+ Sanskrit | English + Arabic | English total |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| S1          | 12              | 0             | 0             | 0                | 0              | 12           |
Multilingual pattern is the least pattern used according to the data. There were only 9 signs written in Bahasa Indonesia + English + Sanskrit, and 2 Bahasa Indonesia + Arabic + English.

Table 5 Languages in multilingual patterns

| School code | Indonesian + Sanskrit + English | Indonesian + Arabic + English | TOTAL |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| S1          | 9                               | 2                             | 11    |
| TOTAL       | 9                               | 2                             | 11    |

From 101 data, the most used pattern on signs in East Java sub-urban area was monolingual in which Bahasa Indonesia is the most used language. Bahasa Indonesia as the national language, therefore, used compulsorily in this academic setting was the reason why sub-urban high schools use Bahasa Indonesia. For the bilingual pattern, it was found that English + Indonesian was the most used one. Two out of 3 schools were where English was mostly used were an international school where English was used as their communication in the classroom and school in general. The multilingual pattern was found to be the smallest data because some schools do not obligate the third language, and sometimes multilingual only used as a language combination to complete the other language depends on its location. For example, a multilingual language such as Indonesian + English + Sanskrit was only found in the school where the people use Javanese (S1 and S3). The use of Arabic + Indonesian + English was found in every school because the majority is Muslim.

3.2 Association

In Indonesia, the use of English captured in school signs has been frequently investigated focusing on their relation with urban communities. The principal perception that students’ mastery of English is very important and it seems to motivate schools to create signs in English (Andriyanti, 2016). It means that using or learning English at school can motivate students to develop school status to be internationally recognized.

Indonesian as National Language

In all patterns, Bahasa Indonesia becomes the dominant language used. Besides it is used as a national language of Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia also can help a student in understanding the meaning of signs. The obligatory to use the Indonesian language as a language of instruction in education (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003; Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Republik Indonesia, 2009) and have it as a compulsory subject taught at all school levels (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003) have developed perception in the community that it is mandatory for students to use Bahasa Indonesia at school both in speaking or writing.
Figure 1 Indonesian in monolingual pattern

The sign in figure 1 is a quote about the environment. It is a kind of quote that invites people to save the earth. The sign uses Indonesian because this language is already understood by all the Indonesian people. The use of Bahasa Indonesia usually takes precedence of Indonesian as the mother language and also the unity. However, everyone will understand what is meant in figure 2. It is easier for everyone to know what the picture asked. “Tanam sebatang pohon, petik sejuta kebaikan” means by planting one tree, we can get a million of benefit. This quote aims to attract people to plant trees because trees can give lots of benefits and using Indonesian became an effective way.

Figure 2 Indonesian in bilingual pattern

Based on the previous research by Andriyanti has mentioned that Indonesian is most used in a school environment because understandable. She also argues the use of Bahasa Indonesia in school in communications through signs in LL can be relatively effective because everyone at school understands the language. The sign in figure 2 has the same theme as the signs in figure 1. In this sign, it used English and Bahasa Indonesia which English is used to emphasize the world. English as lingua franca and also international language is known by many people in the world. The words “save the world today” show that we should pay attention not only around us but to every part of the world we live in and keep caring about the environment. The use of English reveals that the sign is not only for Indonesian but also for all people around the world. Meanwhile, Bahasa Indonesia is used to make it clear, especially for Indonesian.
The sign in figure 3 was written in Indonesian “titik kumpul” which was followed by the English translation “Assembly point”. This is what we call a bilingual pattern, where the first language uses Bahasa Indonesia, which is the mother language of Indonesian. It aims to make students easy in understanding the message conveyed. English is used to improve student’s high school ability. It can be seen from how the sign maker only used phrases rather than a sentence, which means students should understand little by little.

The third example is a multilingual sign which used Bahasa Indonesia because it is the national language and the common language used in East Java, the second language is Sankirt or Javanese alphabet. Sanskrit is used to help students become more familiar with the character of the Javanese alphabet and able to read it. Javanese students are expected to be able to understand Sanskrit because it is a part of Javanese culture. The last language is English that is used because it can help students to be familiar and be able to remember English vocabularies. English becomes one foreign language that is taught at the school and English is an international language so that is why English is important to be understood by the students. This sign is a direction sign used for the classroom.

**English as School Signs to Show School Standard**

English is the second most used language after Bahasa Indonesia and became the language used as the medium instruction (Ngatu & Basikin, 2019).
Using English as a sign is one way for teachers to train their students in understanding meaning. For example, the use of formal English in monolingual signs in the picture above. The phrase “Guidance and counselling” is a room where students can ask free for the guidance of their study or their problem during the study at that school. This sign is used in S2 to exercise students in understanding English so that students will be familiar with all the phrases in English. The school also tries to create enthusiasm of community at school because English is very influential for education as the lingua franca and global language.

The sign says “Knowledge without religion is lame, ilmu tanpa agama adalah pincang”, it reminds young generations especially School S1 students to still learn religion along with knowledge because knowledge is not enough. English is used as the second language because the school was an international school. It means that the school (S1) wants to show the idealism of English as internationally-standardized schools.

In this sign, English is used to inform about what gender is the room for which in the signage is written ‘female’ means that it is room for female. It can also be seen from the sign of girl beside the word “Female”.

Figure 5 English in monolingual pattern

Figure 6 English in bilingual pattern

Figure 7 English in multilingual pattern
In addition, the use of English in the signage is to make students more familiar with English vocabulary because the use of English in a certain place does not always indicate that the people around are capable to use English (Ben-Rafael, et al., 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Piller, 2001, 2003). English is an international language that is important for students to be able to understand, English is a compulsory subject that will be tested in the national examination and taught at least four or five times a week (Departement Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003). English is mostly used in school signages to show that the school is a reputable school because English is known as a modern language as well as English is an international language. As Landry & Bourhis (1997) argues, that languages are used to show the power and status of a Linguistics community in a certain place.

**Arabic in School Signs to Show Morality And Religion**

Arabic is mostly used in the school signage where the school is located in the Islamic environment and Islamic culture, especially in Jember (S3) and Situbondo (S2).

![Figure 8 Arabic in bilingual pattern](image)

In the signage above, Arabic is found in a bilingual sign together with Bahasa Indonesia. The signage aims to show that the school wants students to understand that cleanliness is a very important thing to do. The sign is written in Arabic because the quote is originally a hadith and it is followed by Bahasa Indonesia to show the meaning of the hadith. The sign was taken from S2 where is also called “Kota Santri” or the city of Islamic students.

![Figure 9 Arabic in multilingual pattern](image)

Arabic is found in multilingual signs in S3. It is written together with Bahasa Indonesia and English. The sign is actually kind of appeal to give students understanding before and after they enter the toilet. The first sign is written in Indonesian "Doa masuk toilet" which means Du'a to enter the toilet in English. This reminds someone to pray before entering the toilet. Then in the next, followed by Arabic or known as Du'a and the meaning is written in Bahasa Indonesia “Ya Allah, sesungguhnya aku berlindung kepadaMu dari setan laki-laki dan setan
perempuan” in English translation means O Allah, I seek protection in You from the male and female unclean spirit. This is the same as the next sentence “doa keluar toilet” or Du’a leave toilet that also follows by Arabic (Du’a) without translation in Bahasa Indonesia.

Arabic is mostly used in school signage for a hadith and Du’a that is originally written in Arabic. Then, the Arabic followed by Indonesian to show the meanings. Hadith and Du’a shown in the school LL aims to make students more familiar with hadith and Du’a since the majority of the students are Muslim. Moreover, S2, is a school that is located in Situbondo which is called “Kota Santri” or the city of Islamic students. It makes the use of Arabic in the school signage become the identity of where the school is located. It is supported by the statement from Landry & Bourhis (1997) that ‘the choice of language in public signage indicates the status in the community of the language used and as such marks the relative power and status of the linguistic communities in a given territory’. Arabic is also taught at the school which is included in religious subjects (Islam) where students sometimes should remember that a kind of Du’a and hadith is Arabic.

Arabic in school signage is also found in the research of Andriyanti (2018). In the research was found signages contain a hadith written in Arabic and followed by the meaning in Bahasa Indonesia which means ‘Indeed, Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty and ‘And when I fall sick, He (Allah) is the one who cures me’. The use of Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic in these two signs implies that giving the meanings is important for the reader where the majority the student is Islamic students. The research also found Arabic in a multilingual sign that is written together with English and French. These three languages are used because the language is a foreign language taught at school.

From this research and Andriyanti’s research, it can be concluded that Arabic is mostly used in school signage where the school is located in a Muslim environment which means that the majority of students of the school are Muslim or Islamic students. Another reason why Arabic is used in school signage is that Arabic is included in the religious subject (Islam) that is taught at the school.

**Sanskrit as Cultural Symbol and Identity Marker**

Local content (muatan lokal) is oriented to bridge family and community needs for educational purposes national. It can also argue, and this subject provides opportunities for students to develop the ability deemed necessary by the region concerned (Michael, 2019). Therefore, local content subjects must contain regional cultural characteristics, skills, values sublime local culture and raise social problems and environment that is ultimately able to equip students with basic skills as provisions in life (Nasir, 2013). According to that statement, Sanskrit, which is contained in local content is used as a cultural symbol, especially for Javanese. It is also used as an identity marker for the schools that are located in Java. Sanskrit and Java language also become subjects that should be studied by the students at school in local content. Sanskrit is a part of the culture that should be understood and comprehended by the students, so that is why Java language and Sanskrit are taught at school in Java. The use of Sanskrit in the signages is aimed to help the students to practice more and be able to read Sanskrit by reading those signages at school. On figure 9, for example, Sanskrit is used in a multilingual pattern where it is placed after Bahasa Indonesia and before English. By looking at the signage, students will recognize that the Sanskrit characters of ‘Gudang Alat’ are like what is written in the signage.
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The local content curriculum is a major component of Indonesia’s which has sought to promote the localization of educational methods for communities, including schools (Bjork, 2003). According to the statement, local content aims for the development in the local communities in educational terms, and this community includes the schools. The local content itself actually predated Indonesia Federal Law Number 22/1999 on local government that The authority to implement and to manage the education should be transferred from the national government, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MONE) to local district/municipal governments. The goal is to make national standards and subject matter more relevant to students in their localities.

**Latin Associated with Adiwiyata School**
Throughout the data, Latin is used in school signages mostly placed to describe plants and trees. At senior high school, Latin is usually used in the science lesson because it is always related to the name of Fauna. Attaching the sign of the plant’s name in Indonesian, English, and Latin could enhance students’ understanding of learning a foreign language (Eko, 2013). According to that statement, and there is also a program designed by the government, namely, ‘Adiwiyata’ school, a school that has a program for environment caring to many kinds of plants and trees are planted at the school area. The ‘Adiwiyata’ always give special treatment for plants, and by giving the plants a name, it makes the plants recognized by people in the school. In figure 10, for example, the Latin name in the signage is placed below the name in Indonesian. By giving the Latin name in the plants and trees, It can add the students’ knowledge and help them in a science subject.

4. Conclusion

In every pattern (Monolingual, Bilingual, and Multilingual), we found that Bahasa Indonesia is the most used language in signages in every school chosen. English came out second, Arabic is third and followed p by Sanskrit and Latin.

Indonesian came out the first place is that of the mandates to use Bahasa Indonesia as the language of instructions (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003; Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Republik Indonesia, 2009) and have it as a compulsory subject taught at all school levels (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2003) both in speaking and writing. Other reasons are that Indonesian is the national language of Indonesia and could help students understand the meaning of signs.

English is a lingua franca, in the mean which, English is used by many people worldwide, and that reason linked to the second reason, that English is a compulsory subject taught at schools, especially schools that are international schools. English became the language used as the medium of instruction, that is to develop various abilities among students, such as how they understand what they read and hear and how they can express their ideas through oral or writing.

Arabic is also used by many Islamic boarding schools in an Islamic environment, Islamic culture. We chose only Islamic boarding schools that are in Jember and Situbondo. There is only one reason why we chose only two Islamic boarding schools. That is, Jember and Situbondo have the most Santri (Islamic students). Thus, the two cities are famous of being a Kota Santri (City of Islamic Student). Arabic is used as the second language because the school wants students to understand that cleanliness is a vital thing to do. It is related to religion, where the Arabic sentence shows the existence and sacred meaning of cleanliness.

Sanskrit is a local language spoken by local ethnicities. It is a cultural symbol, especially for Javanese and Madurese. It is used as an identity marker for the schools in certain areas. In this term, Sanskrit is used by the sub-urban schools we chose in D.I. (Daerah Istimewa or Special Region) of Yogyakarta. The other language, Latin, is used by schools with adiwiyata (school program to care the nature) status, or as a part of learning subjects that are learned at school.

The achievement we have achieved during this paper’s process was all but only a little since we lack a database, interviewees, etc., regarding the matter of association and pattern in the linguistic landscape in sub-urban school signages. In future studies, we suggest raising funds and collect materials as much as possible from any potential sources. Also, to research from other perspectives.

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