Linguistic Landscape at Malindo Swimming Pool: Patterns and Representation in a Multilingual Context

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the linguistic landscape (LL) of Malindo Swimming Pool, a multilingual public space in Gresik, to explore patterns and representation of language use and their cultural implications. Using qualitative methods, including visual documentation and content analysis, the research identifies the functions and representations of languages in signage. Findings reveal that Bahasa Indonesia dominates practical signs, ensuring clarity for local visitors, while English is strategically employed for branding and inclusivity, appealing to a broader audience. Notably, the absence of regional languages like Javanese highlights a prioritization of national and international communication. Semiotic analysis uncovers the denotative and connotative meanings in the LL, reflecting modernity, cultural identity, and social dynamics. This research contributes to understanding multilingualism in public recreational spaces and provides insights for managing linguistic diversity in tourism settings.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, mulitilingual, language, public space

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji lanskap linguistik (LL) Kolam Renang Malindo, sebuah ruang publik multibahasa di Gresik, untuk mengeksplorasi pola dan representasi penggunaan bahasa serta implikasi budayanya. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, termasuk dokumentasi visual dan analisis isi, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi fungsi dan representasi bahasa dalam berbagai papan informasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bahasa Indonesia mendominasi tanda-tanda praktis guna memastikan kejelasan bagi pengunjung lokal, sementara Bahasa Inggris digunakan secara strategis untuk tujuan branding dan inklusivitas, sehingga menarik bagi khalayak yang lebih luas. Menariknya, tidak adanya bahasa daerah seperti Bahasa Jawa menunjukkan adanya prioritas terhadap komunikasi nasional dan internasional. Analisis semiotik mengungkap makna denotatif dan konotatif dalam lanskap linguistik, yang mencerminkan modernitas, identitas budaya, dan dinamika sosial. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman tentang multibahasa di ruang rekreasi publik dan menawarkan wawasan untuk pengelolaan keberagaman bahasa dalam konteks pariwisata.

Kata kunci: lanskap linguistik, multibahasa, bahasa, ruang publik

1.   Introduction

Public spaces are rich arenas for exploring language use, cultural representation, and social interaction. The concept of the linguistic landscape (LL), as introduced by Landry and Bourhis (1997), refers to the languages visible in public spaces, including signs, banners, advertisements, and other forms of written communication. LL serves a dual purpose: it functions as a practical tool for communication and as a symbolic representation of social identity. According to (da Silva et al., 2021; Paramarta, 2022; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008), LL reflects the cultural, economic, and political dynamics of a society, making it a critical area of study in multilingual communities. This research delves into the linguistic landscape of Malindo Swimming Pool to uncover patterns of language use and the cultural meanings embedded within them.

In multilingual societies like Indonesia, LL is particularly significant. The country is home to over 700 regional languages, with Bahasa Indonesia functioning as the national language that unifies the diverse population. At the same time, foreign languages, especially English, play a role in branding, tourism, and modern identity. LL in Indonesia often reflects the complex interplay between these linguistic layers, balancing national unity and local diversity(Fakhiroh & Rohmah, 2018; Purnanto et al., 2022; Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias, 2023). This interplay is vividly observable in spaces where various languages converge, such as public recreational facilities.

According to (Gorter et al., 2021), recreational spaces often utilize LL not only for practical purposes like directions but also for projecting cultural identity and creating an inclusive environment for visitors. Thus, the LL at Malindo Swimming Pool offers valuable insights into the relationship between language use and social representation in a multilingual context. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding language use in tourism spaces. Tourism spaces like Malindo Swimming Pool require a different linguistic strategy to cater to both local and international audiences. Niedt and Seals in (Taylor, 2023) suggested in such spaces serves not only to inform but also to promote inclusivity and enhance visitor experiences. By focusing on Malindo Swimming Pool, this research expands on these findings, exploring how multilingualism shapes the communication patterns and cultural narratives of public spaces.

Previous studies have also shed light on the symbolic functions of LL. For instance, Spolsky emphasizes the semiotic aspect of LL(Spolsky, 2020), where language in public spaces conveys both denotative (literal) and connotative (cultural) meanings. Applying these theoretical frameworks to Malindo Swimming Pool, this research examines how its signs, advertisements, and visual symbols represent the facility's cultural and social context. By interpreting the social and cultural meanings conveyed through language choices, the research reveals the deeper narratives embedded in the pool's linguistic landscape.

In summary, this research aims to investigate the language use in the linguistic landscape of Malindo Swimming Pool, with particular attention to its social and cultural implications. Through qualitative methods such as visual documentation and content analysis, the study categorizes the signs based on their languages and functions. By examining how language choices are displayed in this public space, the research seeks to reveal the broader societal and cultural dynamics reflected in the linguistic landscape of the Malindo Swimming Pool.

2.   Literature Review

Linguistic landscape (LL) refers to the use of language in public spaces that is visually observable, such as signs, plaques, and advertisements found in various places. Click or tap here to enter text.LL is defined "the languages visible in the public space" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). This concept is essential in understanding how language is used for communication in public spaces, serving as a mirror of the social, cultural, and political dynamics of society. Building on this definition, (Pennycook, 2018)further extends this by suggesting that LL not only reflects language use but also reveals broader issues of power, identity, and globalization. Similarly, (Spolsky, 2020) highlights the semiotic dimension of LL, in which public signage communicates both literal (denotative) and symbolic (connotative) meanings.

These theoretical frameworks underpin the current study by framing LL as a complex communicative tool influenced by social, political, and cultural dynamics factors.

Previous research has applied LL theories in various public contexts. (Gorter et al., 2021; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008) show that LL often involves multilingual displays that reflect the sociolinguistic makeup of communities. In tourism areas such as Malioboro Street in Yogyakarta, (da Silva et al., 2021) found that English and Indonesian are strategically used to attract both local and international tourists. Similarly, (Paramarta, 2022) explored how Balinese and Indonesian appear in street signage in Singaraja, Bali, revealing the tension between local identity and national language policy. These studies emphasize how LL can shape visitor perceptions and support cultural narratives through language choices.

In spite of these contributions of LL, there remains a gap in studies focusing specifically in non-urban or semi-rural settings such as Malindo Swimming Pool. While LL in tourism zones and urban areas is well documented, less is known about how LL functions in more localized environments. This research addresses that gap by examining how signage at Malindo Swimming Pool reflects the linguistic diversity and sociocultural norms of its users.

This study is significant because it expands the scope of LL research into underexplored settings, contributing to our understanding of how public signage shapes inclusivity and identity in recreational spaces. As (Taylor, 2023) notes, LL in such contexts serves not only to inform but also to facilitate interaction and to create a sense of belonging. By focusing on the intersection of language, space, and social meaning, this research provides valuable insights into how linguistic choices in signage influence public perception and engagement.

3. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which is appropriate for providing a comprehensive summary of observed phenomena in everyday contexts (Creswell., 2017; Nassaji, 2015). The research focused on linguistic landscape elements found in Malindo Swimming Pool, including nameplates, banners, posters, advertisements, and other public signs. Malindo Swimming Pool, located in Lowayu, Dukun, Gresik, was chosen as it provided a unique setting for this research. As one of the largest and most comprehensive swimming facilities between Gresik and Lamongan, it attracted a diverse group of visitors, including local residents and tourists. This diversity is mirrored in its linguistic landscape, which showcases a mixture of Bahasa Indonesia, regional languages like Javanese, and English.

Data were collected through direct observation and visual documentation, using a photographic survey to capture language signs in their natural environment, as suggested by (Gorter et al., 2021; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). This approach allowed for a systematic recording of the multilingual signage present across different areas of the swimming pool.

The collected data were analysed using content analysis (Krippendorff, 2022)where the signs were categorized based on the languages used, social functions (informative, directive, symbolic, etc.), and representational purposes. This classification aimed to uncover patterns in language visibility and use within the recreational setting.

To deepen the interpretation, a semiotic analysis was also conducted, drawing on Barthes' theory of denotation and connotation (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021). This framework enabled the examination of how signs convey both literal and cultural meanings, revealing the social values, identities, and power relations embedded in the linguistic landscape. The integration of semiotic and content analysis provided a richer understanding of how language operates in shaping the visitor experience in a multilingual public space.

4. Results and Discussion

The public signs at Malindo Swimming Pool varied in their locations, purposes, and language use. These signs served to provide information, reinforce branding, convey rules, and promote services or products. Below is a detailed explanation of each public sign based on its location:

Figure 1. Linguistic Landscape at the Entrance by the Main Road

The sign located near the entrance on the main road displayed the text "Malindo Swimming Pool Wave Pool River Swimming Pool"(see Figure 1). This sign primarily used English, a language often associated with modernity and professionalism (Ardhian & Fajar, 2017; I Gusti Bagus Wahyu Nugraha Putra & Devi Maharani Santika, 2023; Purnanto et al., 2022). The use of English suggested that the swimming pool aimed to appeal to a broader audience, potentially including tourists or visitors who viewed English as a symbol of quality or international standards. According to (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Malinowski, 2020; Spolsky, 2020), this type of signage served a dual purpose: providing information about the pool's facilities and projecting a positive image to passersby. The strategic placement of this sign ensured high visibility and created an inviting first impression, aligning with the idea that public signage is a critical tool for identity representation.

Figure 2. Linguistic Landscape After the Entrance

Just past the main entrance, a sign read "Welcome to Malindo Swimming Pool, as shown in Figure 2. The use of English here reinforced the welcoming atmosphere of the facility. (Gorter et al., 2021) noted that LL in recreational spaces often focused on creating inclusivity and enhancing the visitor experience, which this sign achieved through the universal appeal of English. Furthermore, the phrase emphasized hospitality, a cultural value often associated with tourism in Indonesia. This sign not only informed visitors but also communicated the pool's efforts to maintain a professional and guest-friendly environment.

Figure 3. Linguistic Landscape in the Parking Corridor

Figure 3 shows a sign placed in the parking area displayed the text "Malindo Swimming Pool". This sign contributed to brand reinforcement and consistent messaging, which is a common feature in the linguistic landscape (Malinowski, 2020; Spolsky, 2020). The repeated use of the facility's name across various locations ensured that visitors easily recognized the brand and connected it to their overall experience. Such branding also reflected an argument that LL helps maintain the visibility of an institution's identity in public spaces.

Figure 4. Linguistic Landscape at the Ticket Counter

As shown in Figure 4, at the ticket counter, a sign in Bahasa Indonesia read "Tiket Rp. 15.000", alongside Wi-Fi details written in English ("Nama Wi-Fi: Malindo, Malindo 1, Malindo_AP; Password: Malindo1"). This combination of languages highlighted Gorter's (2006) concept of multilingualism in LL, where different languages served distinct functions. Bahasa Indonesia was used for ticket pricing, catering to the local audience, while English for Wi-Fi information addressed a tech-savvy or potentially international audience. The terms Wi-Fi and password were used instead of jaringan nirkabel and kata sandi because they are shorter, more familiar, and easier to understand. The inclusion of English reflected an idea that economic and cultural factors influenced language use in public spaces, as Wi-Fi access was likely seen as a modern convenience expected by visitors (Pennycook, 2018).

Figure 5. Linguistic Landscape at the Entrance to the Pool Area

Figure 5 displays the sign at the entrance to the pool area repeated the name "Malindo Swimming Pool". This consistency in branding through English-only text emphasized the importance of maintaining a professional and recognizable identity. It reinforced the pool's efforts to present itself as a modern and well-maintained facility while ensuring visitors associated the brand with quality and reliability.


Figure 6. Linguistic Landscape at Minimarket

As shown in Figure 6, the sign for the minimarket simply displayed the text "Malindo". This minimalist approach to signage reflected Landry and Bourhis' (1997) concept of LL as a tool for reinforcing identity. By using the brand name, the pool management assumed that visitors already understood the function of the minimarket. This simplicity demonstrated how LL can prioritize branding over detailed communication in areas where the purpose of a location is self-evident.

Figure 7. Linguistic Landscape in Children's Play Area

In the children's play area, the signage also displayed "Malindo"(see Figure 7). The repetition of the brand name across different spaces aligned with Shohamy and Gorter's (2008) observation that LL helps create a sense of unity and identity within a public area. The consistent branding ensured that visitors associated every part of the facility with the main brand, reinforcing a cohesive and professional

image. However, to its place function as playground area, there was supposed to be signboard or wall sign.
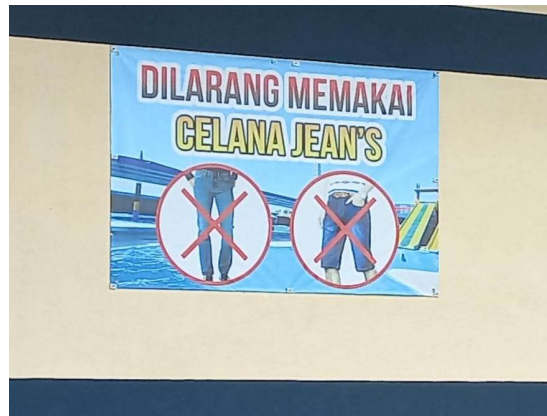
Figure 8. Linguistic Landscape Near the Toilets

The sign near the toilets read "Dilarang Memakai Jean's" (Do not wear jeans). Written in Bahasa Indonesia, this warning addressed local cultural norms about appropriate swimming attire, reflecting societal values. However, the use of an unnecessary apostrophe in "Jean's" indicated casual attention to language accuracy, aligning with Pennycook's (2009) idea that LL often reflects local linguistic habits. The prohibition against wearing jeans while swimming is likely due to practical and safety concerns, as denim is not suitable for water activities—it becomes heavy when wet, restricts movement, and can clog pool filters. The sign's placement near the toilets, a high-traffic area, emphasized its importance in maintaining rules and cultural expectations.

Figure 9. Linguistic Landscape in Toilets

As shown in Figure 9, the toilets were with "Toilet Pria" (Men's Toilet) and "Toilet Wanita" (Women's Toilet) in Bahasa Indonesia. This exclusive use of the national language indicated the

dominance of Bahasa Indonesia in functional signage, consistent with Andriyanti's (2019) findings on the prevalence of Bahasa Indonesia in multilingual contexts. Using the local language for these practical signs ensured clarity for the majority of visitors, reflecting a pragmatic approach to language use in LL.

Figure 10. Linguistic Landscape on the Boundary Wall Around the Pool

Figure 10 shows a promotional message on the boundary wall read "Keep Swim and Eat Mie Sedaap Cup". This sign combined English and a product name, blending informational and commercial purposes. According to Cenoz and Gorter (2015), LL in recreational spaces often incorporates advertising to appeal to visitors. The English phrase "Keep Swim" encouraged physical activity, while the reference to Mie Sedaap represented the influence of economic interests in shaping signage. This dual-purpose sign demonstrated how LL can convey both lifestyle encouragement and commercial promotion.

Figure 11. Linguistic Landscape of Food Stands

The food stand menu was written in Bahasa Indonesia and listed local dishes such as Nasi goreng ayam telur (chicken fried rice with egg) and Gorengan (fried snacks) (See Figure 11). This exclusive use of the local language conveys cultural identity through language. The choice to include only Bahasa Indonesia emphasized the pool's connection to local culinary traditions, catering primarily to domestic

visitors. However, spelling errors such as "black chiken" for "black chicken" and "Soft Es Cream" for "soft ice cream" suggested a more informal or casual approach to signage, aligning with Pennycook's (2009) view that LL reflects local sociolinguistic realities. These errors were likely due to limited knowledge of English spelling and grammar, which is common in contexts where English is not the primary language, further highlighting the influence of local linguistic capabilities on public signs.

The linguistic landscape at Malindo Swimming Pool demonstrated a mix of practical communication, branding, and cultural representation. Bahasa Indonesia dominated functional signs, reflecting its role as the national language, while English was used strategically for branding and inclusivity. Notably, there was an absence of Javanese, despite its status as a widely spoken local language, suggesting a deliberate prioritization of Bahasa Indonesia and English to cater to broader and more diverse audiences.

The linguistic landscape (LL) of Malindo Swimming Pool showed a variety of languages used in different areas for specific purposes, such as welcoming visitors, providing information, and promoting products. At the entrance and along the main road, signs like "Malindo Swimming Pool Wave Pool River Swimming Pool" and "Welcome to Malindo Swimming Pool" were written in English. This use of English aimed to create a modern and professional image, making the pool more attractive to tourists and visitors from outside the area. These signs also helped make the pool feel welcoming to a broader audience, reflecting the role of public signs in shaping visitor impressions (Gorter et al., 2021).

Inside the pool area, including the parking corridor and pool entrance, signs focused on repeating the name "Malindo Swimming Pool." This repeated use of the name helped reinforce the pool's identity and brand, ensuring that visitors would recognize and remember it. Studies like Shohamy and Gorter (2008) highlight how this type of signage strengthens a facility's image and builds a sense of consistency throughout the space. The consistent use of English in these signs also helped the pool project a modern and professional image, which is especially important for attracting visitors in a competitive tourism environment.

At the ticket counter, the signs showed a mix of languages. Ticket prices were written in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity for local visitors, while the Wi-Fi details were in English, appealing to tech-savvy or international visitors. This mix of languages shows how the pool caters to different groups of people, balancing local needs with the expectations of global visitors. Such language choices reflect the practical use of multilingualism in public spaces, as discussed by Gorter (2006). This combination made the space feel accessible to everyone, while still addressing specific needs.

Signs in practical areas, like the toilets and food stands, were more focused on function and cultural identity. Toilet signs were in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure they were easy to understand for local visitors, which aligns with Andriyanti's (2019) findings about the dominance of the national language in public signage. Food stand menus were also written mostly in Bahasa Indonesia, reflecting local culture through the dishes offered. However, some English terms, like "Soft Es Cream," showed small spelling errors. These mistakes highlight how informal or casual the signage can be in recreational spaces, reflecting everyday language habits, as Pennycook (2009) noted.

Finally, promotional signs, like the one on the boundary wall that read "Keep Swim and Eat Mie Sedaap Cup," combined English with advertising. This sign not only encouraged visitors to stay active but also promoted a specific product, blending health messages with marketing. By using English, the pool aimed to appeal to a wide audience while promoting a modern lifestyle. This type of sign demonstrates how public spaces can use language to serve multiple purposes, combining practical information with branding and cultural messages. Overall, the linguistic landscape at Malindo Swimming Pool played an important role in shaping visitor experiences, creating a welcoming environment, and promoting the pool's identity.

5.   Conclusion

The linguistic landscape (LL) at Malindo Swimming Pool reflects a strategic and dynamic interplay of languages tailored to its diverse audience. Bahasa Indonesia dominates functional signage, emphasizing clarity and practicality for local visitors, while English is employed to project modernity, professionalism, and inclusivity, particularly for tourists or international guests. The absence of regional

languages like Javanese underscores a deliberate prioritization of broader communicative reach over local linguistic identity. This multilingual approach enhances visitor experiences and aligns with cultural and commercial objectives.

Signage within the facility serves multifaceted roles, from branding and information dissemination to cultural representation and marketing. Errors in English usage on certain signs highlight the informal and localized nature of language practices in public recreational spaces, reflecting the sociolinguistic realities of the surrounding community. These findings emphasize that LL not only informs but also symbolizes cultural and social values, shaping the identity of Malindo Swimming Pool as a modern, accessible, and welcoming public space. This research contributes to understanding the role of LL in multilingual and recreational contexts, highlighting its importance in balancing inclusivity, identity, and practicality. Future research could explore visitor perceptions and the impact of linguistic choices on their overall experiences.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest related to this article's research, writing, and/or publication.

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