

LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF TWO ONLINE MARKETPLACES IN INDONESIA

Ardi Nugroho¹, Rex Stardy²

English Language Department
Bunda Mulia University
Jakarta, Indonesia

ardi_n4382@yahoo.com¹, rexstardy@yahoo.com²

Abstract

Various studies have investigated the linguistic landscape (LL) used in public places. However, not many have explored the LL of online marketplaces, especially in Indonesia. This paper aims to fill that gap by examining the LL of two popular online marketplaces in Indonesia, namely Tokopedia and Shopee. More specifically, it takes a closer look into what languages are used in these two online marketplaces. It is limited to examining the Indonesian and application version of Tokopedia and Shopee, not the website version as the latter has some slight differences in the overall layout. These two applications are compared to see whether there are any similarities and differences in the way the languages are employed in five selected sections, i.e., the home screen, settings, *keranjang*, feed, and personal main menu. The data is analyzed qualitatively and is limited to merely providing a description of the utilization of the languages without deeply exploring the reasoning behind it. The result shows that Indonesian and English are found in most of the analyzed sections, with Indonesian being the dominant language. There are also some similarities and differences, but they are generally more similar than they are different.

Keywords – *linguistic landscape, bilingualism, online marketplace*

Introduction

In recent years, there have been several studies on Linguistic Landscape (LL) that have been conducted by numerous researchers. LL itself can be defined as “the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997 as cited in Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias, 2020). These studies have focused on the representation of language(s) in various public spaces. For instance, a study by Wang (2015) has investigated the LL in one campus in Japan, and another by Manan et al. (2015) explored the LL of a wider area, namely the city of Kuala Lumpur. Besides the public spaces abroad, several studies on LL have also been conducted in Indonesia. For example, Purnanto et al. (2021) inspected the languages used in various public signs in Surakarta, while Riani et al. (2021) explored the languages used in signs in several sub-urban high schools in Jember, Magetan, and Situbondo. In addition, some studies have also been done not only on physical public spaces but on online digital places as well such as the one by Ivkovic and Lotherington (2009) which observed multilingualism in the virtual space and a study by Yao (2021) which examined the online LL of social media platforms.

Although research into LL has received more attention lately, not many have focused on the LL of online marketplaces, especially in Indonesia. In order to fill this gap, the researchers have become interested in exploring the language used in two popular online marketplaces in Indonesia, namely Tokopedia and Shopee. Two research questions are proposed for the current study as follow:

1. What languages are found in the two online marketplaces?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the languages used in the two online marketplaces?

Methods

The source of data for the current study is the screenshots of the two online marketplaces, i.e., Tokopedia and Shopee. The sections that are analyzed include the home screen, settings, *keranjang*, feed, and personal main menu. These sections are selected as both of the online marketplaces have these particular sections and can be compared directly. It should be noted that only the Indonesian and application version is analyzed and not the website one since the layout is somewhat different.

For the data collection, the writers collected the screenshots by opening the applications and taking the screenshots of the selected sections of these two online marketplaces. After the data was collected, they are analyzed qualitatively in terms of the languages that are used in these sections as well as the similarities and differences between the LL of Tokopedia and Shopee.

Findings and Discussion

There is a total of 10 screenshots taken from both Tokopedia and Shopee. The screenshot is of the five sections previously mentioned, namely the home screen, settings, *keranjang*, feed, and personal main menu. These sections are examined one by one starting with the home screen. The screenshots of the home screens can be seen in the figures below:



Figure 1. Tokopedia Home Screen

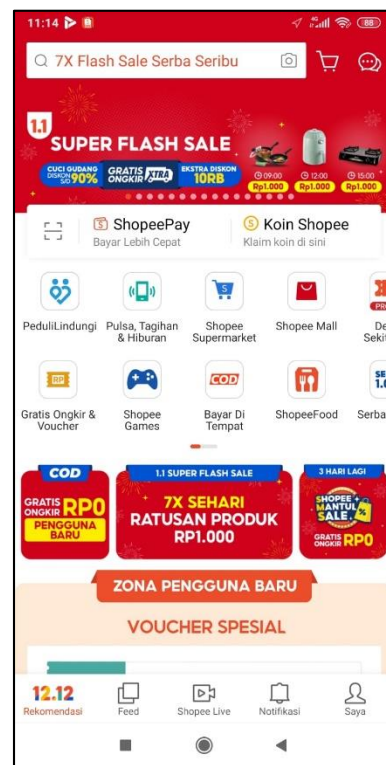


Figure 2. Shopee Home Screen

In terms of the languages used, it can be seen from **Figures 1** and **2** that both Tokopedia and Shopee use both Indonesian and English. Most of the words are in Indonesian, but there are some that are in English, especially when related to the names of specific features of the marketplaces such as **feed**, **official store**, **Wishlist**, **Shopee Live**, **Shopee Games**, etc. There are also advertisements on the home screen and they use a mixture of Indonesian and English. For instance, in Tokopedia there is an ad with the words “**Cashback Spesial**” which uses both languages. The first word is in English and the second word is the Indonesian spelling of the word ‘special.’

In terms of the similarities and differences, it can be seen that both uses English for some specific terms such as **feed** and **live**. Another similarity is the fact that both of them mostly use Indonesian on the home screen. This is most likely for convenience reasons as this application is intended for Indonesians, so they may not have included too much English in order to avoid confusion when using the app. As for the differences, it would seem that Shopee has slightly more specific terms that uses English compared to Tokopedia such as **Shopee Games**, **Shopee Food**, and **Shopee Mall**.

The next section to be analyzed is the settings menu. The screenshots for this can be found below:

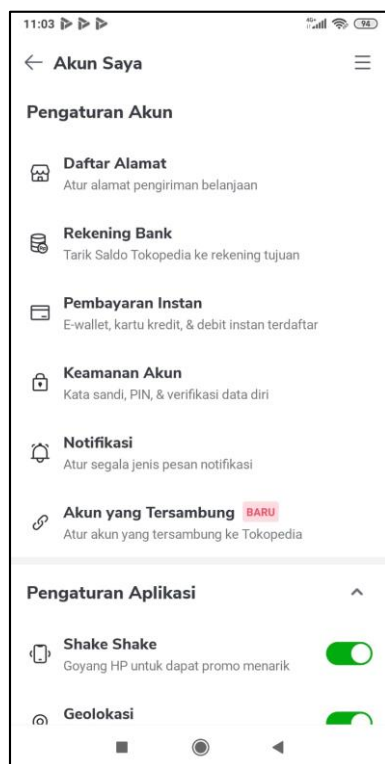


Figure 3. Tokopedia Settings

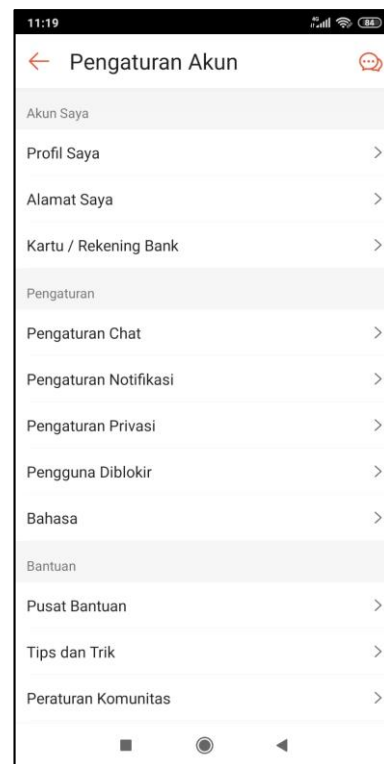


Figure 4. Shopee Settings

Based on **Figure 3** and **4** above, it is clear that the language that is mostly used in the settings menu in both Tokopedia and Shopee is Indonesian. We believe that it is made this way because setting is an important aspect of any application, and Indonesian should be used so that the users would not get confused and set the application incorrectly. There are only few instances in which English is used such as the words **shake shake** and **e-wallet** in Tokopedia and **chat** in Shopee.

Between the two online marketplaces, it is found that the main similarity is the fact that both mostly uses Indonesian in the settings menu. They also employ similar terms such as *akun saya*, *pengaturan*, *alamat*, *rekening*, *notifikasi*, etc. On the other hand, one main difference between the two is that Shopee uses the word *pengaturan* more often than Tokopedia as it appears 5 times in the former and only twice in the latter.

The third section is *keranjang* which is basically the place that we go to when we have selected something to order and would like to specify various details regarding the item such as the quantity, the type of delivery service, payment method, etc. **Figures 5** and **6** portray the screenshots for this section in both online marketplaces.

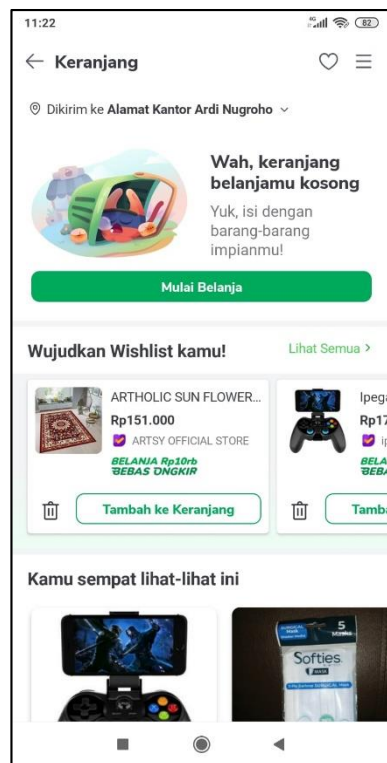


Figure 5. Tokopedia *Keranjang*

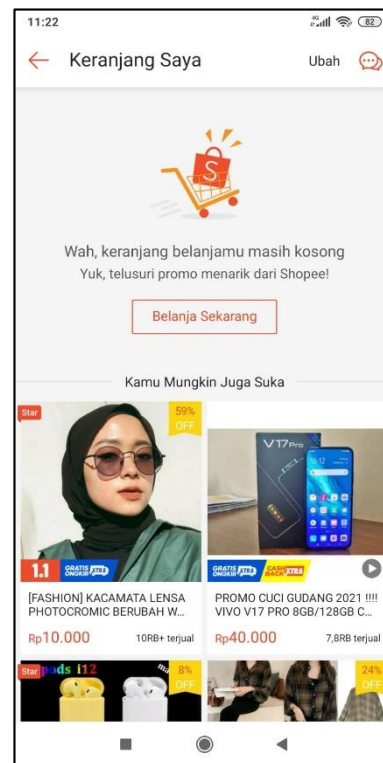


Figure 6. Shopee *Keranjang*

As can be seen from the two figures above, the language that is used is dominantly Indonesian in Tokopedia. The only English word present here is the word **Wishlist**. While in Shopee, Indonesian is the only language found in this section. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this section is like this since no items have been selected to be purchased. If an item has been selected, the screen would look slightly different and have more information related to the details of the item. Once again, it is likely that Indonesian is the main language found here since this is also a sensitive part of the application and it is necessary to use Indonesian to make the purchasing process go smoothly. If English is used here, the users may not fully understand and may end up choosing the wrong information concerning the purchase.

For the similarities between the two, the language expressions in Indonesian are more or less the same. Since no items have been chosen, the main sentence that appears is “*Wah, keranjang belanjamu kosong*” in Tokopedia and “*Wah, keranjang belanjamu masih kosong*” in Shopee. Another similarity is the main button that can be found below the main sentence which is “*Mulai Belanja*” in Tokopedia and “*Belanja Sekarang*” in Shopee. Although they do not use the exact same words, they more or less have the same information. As for the

differences, there are not any major differences between the two since both are quite similar in terms of the language used.

The next section that is analyzed is feed. The two figures below illustrate the screenshot of this section from Tokopedia and Shopee.



Figure 7. Tokopedia Feed



Figure 8. Shopee Feed

Figures 7 and **8** above clearly show that both Indonesian and English are employed in this particular section. The English words include words such as **update**, **explore**, and **timeline**. As for the Indonesian words and expressions, some examples are “*Nonton yang seru-seru*” and “*Lihat Semua*” in Tokopedia and “*Racun Shopee*” in Shopee. There are actually not too many words and sentences here because the main purpose of this section is to show different feeds or links to various products or even stores. Nonetheless, there is one advertisement in Shopee and there is a button that uses a mixture of Indonesian and English, namely “**Tap untuk melihat Produk.**” So, the first word is in English and the rest is in Indonesian.

In terms of the similarities between these two, both Tokopedia and Shopee uses both Indonesian and English. Not much is written in this section so we cannot really say which language is more frequently used here. Moreover, both uses the word **explore**. As for the difference, one main difference that is found is the word that is used to refer to the same thing, where in Tokopedia the language that is used is English while in Shopee it uses Indonesian. This word can be found at the bottom left in both online marketplaces, i.e., the word **Home** in the former and the word **Beranda** in the latter.

The final section to be analyzed is the personal main menu. The screenshots from this section can be seen in the figures below:

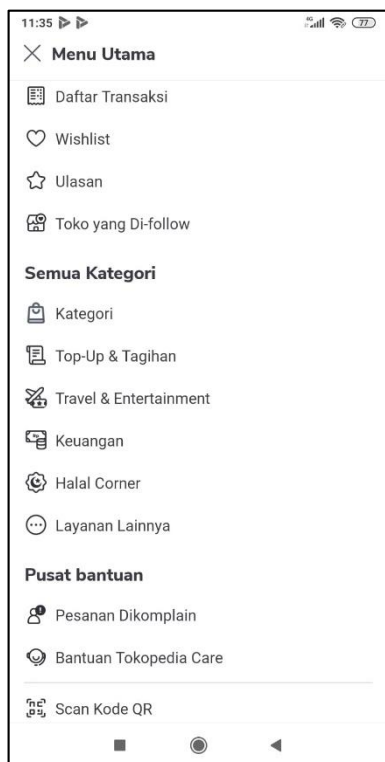


Figure 9. Tokopedia Personal Main Menu

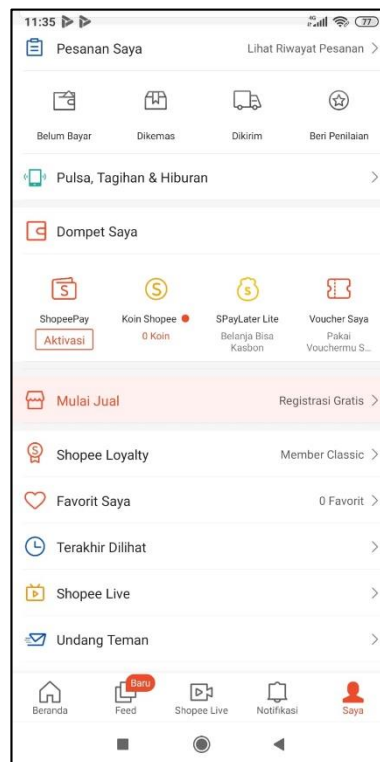


Figure 10. Shopee Personal Main Menu

From **Figures 9** and **10** above, it can be seen that both Tokopedia and Shopee utilize both Indonesian and English in this section. The dominant language is Indonesian with a few English words such as **Wishlist** and **Travel & Entertainment** in Tokopedia and **Loyalty** and **Live** in Shopee. There are also instances of code-mixing between the two languages in both, namely “*Toko yang Di-follow*” in the former and “*Voucher Saya*” in the latter. Similar to the other sections, it would seem that Indonesian is most dominant here as there are a lot of items and information presented in this section, and presenting them in full English may cause confusion for the users.

Comparing between the two, it can be seen that there are some similarities and differences. First of all, both online marketplaces employ both Indonesian and English for this particular section. Another similarity is that there are instances where Indonesian and English are mixed in one sentence or phrase. The last similarity is the fact that both use Indonesian more frequently than English in this section. As for the differences, one main difference that is worth noting is the use of the word **Wishlist** in Tokopedia and **Favorit Saya** in Shopee. They actually refer to the same thing, which is basically a list consisting of our favorite items that we have selected to be purchased in the future. They even have the same icon, i.e., a heart. Nonetheless, in Tokopedia the term is in English while in Shopee it is in Indonesian. This is probably a matter of preference, where **Wishlist** is a common term in Tokopedia while “*Favorit Saya*” is the common expression in Shopee.

Conclusion

To conclude the current research, the findings and discussion are summarized in order to answer the two research questions. First of all, in terms of the language that is found in the two online marketplaces, both of them employ Indonesian and English. Although it should be noted that these two languages are not found in all of the sections analyzed from Shopee as English does

not appear at all in the *keranjang* section. There are also times where instances of code-mixing occur. In other words, both Indonesian and English are used in the same sentence or phrase. Based on the findings, although the two languages are utilized in most sections, it can be concluded that Indonesian is the most dominant language found throughout Tokopedia and Shopee since they are intended for Indonesians. Moreover, it is likely that Indonesian is mostly employed to make it easier for the users to navigate through these online marketplaces and complete their purchases. However, it would seem that for some specific terms, English is preferred over Indonesian. This is probably because the Indonesian version of these terms are actually less familiar compared to the English ones. For instance, the words **live** and **chat** actually have Indonesian equivalents, but since they are already commonly used in online contexts, using the non-familiar Indonesian words might actually cause confusion.

As for the second research question, it is found that there are some similarities and differences in the language utilized. The main similarity between Tokopedia and Shopee is the fact that both mainly use Indonesian throughout the five sections that are analyzed in this research. Additionally, the use of English is reserved for specific terms in both online marketplaces. Another important similarity worth mentioning is that the words and expressions used in the different sections are quite similar between the two. Lastly, there are certain times when code-mixing between Indonesian and English occur. As for the differences, there are only slight variances between Tokopedia and Shopee. One example is the use of different languages to refer to the same thing. More specifically, the words **home** and *beranda* as well as **Wishlist** and *favorit saya*. Another noteworthy difference is that there are some sections where one language is used more often compared to the other in one of the online marketplaces. For instance, the Shopee home screen has more English terms compared to Tokopedia's home screen. Nevertheless, the differences are not as frequent and significant as the similarities. In brief, it can be concluded that between Tokopedia and Shopee, they have more similarities than differences.

Last but not least, considering that the scope of this research is very limited, i.e., just comparing between Tokopedia and Shopee, it is suggested that further studies regarding the LL of virtual spaces are explored further by examining other online marketplaces in Indonesia such as Bukalapak or Lazada. It is also suggested that future studies compare between the application version and website version as there are some differences between them.

References

- Ivkovic, D. & Lotherington, H. (2009). Multilingualism in cyberspace: conceptualising the virtual linguistic landscape. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 6(1), 17-36.
- Manan, S.A., David, M.K., Dumanig, F.P. & Naqeebullah, K. (2015). Politics, economics and identity: mapping the linguistic landscape of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 12(1), 31-50. doi: 10.1080/14790718.2014.905581
- Purnanto, D., Yustanto, H., Ginanjar, B., & Ardhian, D. (2021). Symbol behind the sign: linguistic landscape in Surakarta, Indonesia. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, 12(13), 659-672.
- Riani, Y.W., Ningsih, A.W., Novitasari, M., & Zulkarnaen, M.S.S.R. (2021). A linguistic landscape study in Indonesian sub-urban high school signages: an exploration of patterns and associations. *Journal of Applied Studies in Language*, 5(1), 134-146.

Sakhiyya, Z. & Martin-Anatias, N. (2020). Reviving the language at risk: a social semiotic analysis of the linguistic landscape of three cities in Indonesia. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. doi:10.1080/14790718.2020.1850737

Wang, J. (2015). Linguistic landscape on campus in Japan - a case study of signs in Kyushu University. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 24(1), 123-144.

Yao, X. (2021). Metrolingualism in online linguistic landscapes. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. doi:10.1080/14790718.2021.1887197