



Public Signs in Komodo National Park, Flores-NTT: A Linguistic Landscape Study

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Abstract

This article aims at investigating language/s used in public signs in Taman Nasional Komodo (TNK), Labuan Bajo, Flores-NTT. It was designed as a qualitative study as the data are pictures, words and sentences found in the public signs in TNK. The data were collected by doing an observation where every single sign found in TNK was photographed by using a Vivo y17 camera. After collecting the data, the data were analyzed by the following steps: data reduction, data display and data verification and conclusion. The result mentions that public signs in TNK divided into two types; they are monolingual and bilingual signs. The monolingual signs confirm that the public signs in TNK just use one language either Indonesian or English. However, bilingual refers to the public signs in TNK using both Indonesian and English for the same public sign. There are nine types of signs applied in TNK public signs. They are signs of place name, place manager, place description, map, history, notice, warning, appeal, and esthetic. Also the signs have served purposes related to conveying information, representing symbols, and aiding in education.

Keywords: *bilingual, monolingual, public signs*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bahasa yang digunakan dalam papan publik di Taman Nasional Komodo, Labuan Bajo, Flores-NTT. Penelitian ini dirancang sebagai penelitian kualitatif karena datanya berupa gambar, kata, dan kalimat yang ditemukan pada papan publik di TNK. Data dikumpulkan dengan melakukan observasi dimana setiap rambu yang ditemukan di TNK dipotret dengan menggunakan kamera Vivo y17. Setelah data terkumpul, data dianalisis dengan langkah-langkah sebagai berikut: reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi data serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menyebutkan bahwa, papan petunjuk umum di TNK dibagi menjadi dua tipe, yakni papan berbahasa tunggal dan berdwibahasa. Rambu monolingual menegaskan bahwa rambu-rambu publik di TNK hanya menggunakan satu bahasa saja, yaitu bahasa Indonesia atau bahasa Inggris. Sedangkan bilingual merujuk pada rambu-rambu publik di TNK yang menggunakan bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa Inggris dalam satu rambu publik yang sama. Ada sembilan jenis rambu yang diterapkan di rambu-rambu publik TNK. Rambu-rambu tersebut adalah rambu nama tempat, pengelola tempat, deskripsi tempat, peta, sejarah, pemberitahuan, peringatan, himbauan, dan estetika. Juga tanda-tanda tersebut berperan dalam menyebarkan informasi, merepresentasikan simbol, serta berperan dalam dunia pendidikan.

Kata kunci: *bilingual, monolingual, papan publik*

Introduction

The study of public signs is well known as linguistic landscape. LL had been introduced by Landry and Bourhis in 1997 to refer to the study of public signs (Huebner, 2016; Mulyawan, 2019). It is a study that combines theories of sociology, linguistics, anthropology, cultural theory, cultural and identity studies, cultural geography and psychology (Monica Barni et al, 2019). The linguistic landscape is more often used to describe signs and announcements that are placed outside or inside of public or private companies in a particular geopicture area (Ben Rafael et al, 2006). Focusing on the given descriptions proposed by Landry and Bourhis, Monica Barni et al and Ben Rafael et al, it can be mentioned that linguistic landscape is the study of public or private signs in a certain area by combining several theories in its study.

Furthermore, Gorter (2006: 3) categorises linguistic landscape into two categories namely top-down and bottom-up signs. The top-down linguistic landscape deals with the official signs cited by the government, however, bottom-up signs refer to unofficial signs cited by businesses or other private entities or individuals. Supporting Gorter, Backhaus (2007) proposed two categories of public signs. They are official and unofficial signs. The term official signs are used to refer to the reflection of open “power”, while the unofficial signs are claimed as the voice of “solidarity” (Backhaus, 2007). As a consequence, there are differences between the language used on government signs and private’s signs or commercial advertisements that often appear (Yendra & Ketut, 2020)

Based on its function, public signs in the linguistic landscape have two functions: informational and symbolic functions. According to Bourhis (in Landry & Bourhis, 1997), an informational function of LL mostly functions as a typical sign of the geopictorial territory by a given language community. The informational function refers to the information of place name, general information and name of goods and services (Ardhian & Soemarlarn, 2018).

On the other hand, the symbolic function of LL is most likely to be prominent in situations where language has emerged as the most important dimension of ethnic identity (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Language policy, language imperialism, linguistic marginalization, language discrimination, and social variables are all mentioned in the symbolic function (Ardhian & Soemarlarn, 2018). In this context, cultural relations, group identification (ethnicity, gender, and social standing), power relations (economic, political, and social demopictures), and language status (official and unofficial) are included in social variables.

In addition, Shohamy (2015) mentions two functions of LL, namely social and educational functions. The social functions of LL deal with both local and national identities and expresses a social group’s attitudes towards the issue of the signs (Yendra & Artawa, 2020). The ability of LL to provoke readers to learn a new

language is known as an educational function. LL has the power to encourage readers to learn a new language in case the language used in the sign is different from the language used by the readers. For instance, is LL in Komodo National Park. People in Komodo are the native speakers of Komodo, Bima and Bugis languages. They speak these three languages in their daily communication. They also have the Indonesian language as their national identity. However, they have to be able to understand English due to the presence of international tourists as well as the signs written in foreign languages.

Landry & Bourhis (1997) underline that what and how the language/s used in public signs reflect the diversity of the language/s that exists in the given territory. In terms of language used, LL can be classified into monolingual, bilingual or even multilingual. The relative power and status of competing language groups are mirrored by the predominance of one language on public signs relative to another language (Bourhis, 1992).

Komodo national park is one of the national parks in Indonesia. It was built in the 1980s by the Indonesian government. Administratively, it is located in Komodo Subdistrict, West Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. Komodo National Park includes 3 main islands, Komodo, Rinca, and Padar, as well as many smaller islands, which together cover a land area of 603 km². The current total area of Komodo National Park is 1,817 km². Expanding by 25 km² (Banta Island) and 479 km² of marine waters would bring the total area to 2,321 km² (Finaka, 2018).



Picture 1. Map of Komodo National Park. Source (googlemap.com)

The uniqueness of Komodo National Park is in its species. There live 2.500 Komodo, 26 bird species, hundreds of fish and coral species, dolphins, green turtles, sharks and stingrays. Due to its uniqueness, Komodo National Park becomes one of the most interesting and famous tourist objects in the world.

Based on the data released by merdeka.com, international tourist dominates visits to this park during 2017-2019, totalling 348,459 people (Faqih, 2021). However, in 2020 local tourist dominates the visits due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of international tourists decreased due to the existence of rules for keeping social distancing during the pandemic.

Regarding the data above, it is clear that Komodo National Park is popular and crowded by both local and international tourists. As a famous tourism object, it is a must for Komodo National Park to have public signs within its area. The public signs play a significant role in the park. They provide convenient information for tourists about the area, what is and is not allowed, the history of the object, etc. As a requisite part of international cities and tourism objects, a public sign is a vital part involving language and the human environment in those areas (Qiannan, 2012).

Studies in LL had been conducted by some researchers. Mulyawan & Erawati (2019) conducted a study on LL in Desa Kuta. They focused on the languages used, the types of signs and the functions of the signs. Their study confirms that the dominant language used in the signs is English (52%). The signs are mostly included in commercial signs (65%) and the function of the signs is informative (95%). Another study was done by Wulansari (2020). She reports that there are four languages used in public signs in Bali namely Indonesian, English, Balinese and Chinese. Among those languages, English is mostly used in the signs then followed by Indonesian, Balinese and Chinese. Rastitiati & Suprastayasa (2022) investigated the types of signs and languages used in public signs in Nusa Dua, Bali. They found 13 types of signs, such as signs of maps, museums, accommodations, restaurants, warning and so on. In terms of the language used, those signs are categorized as Indonesian; English; bilingual Indonesian and English; bilingual English and Indonesian; bilingual Balinese and English; multilingual Balinese, Indonesian, and English; multilingual Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean; multilingual Balinese, English, Japanese, Chinese; and multilingual Russian, Hindi, Jerman, Korean, Indonesia and French.

The aforementioned prior studies offer valuable insights into the utilization of languages within public spaces. These studies, focusing on specific perspectives, significantly contribute to the understanding of linguistic landscapes. Therefore, the author intends to undertake a similar study. While this current investigation may appear akin to its predecessors, it differs in some key aspects, particularly in terms of the research setting and areas of focus. The earlier studies were conducted in Denpasar, Bali (specifically in Desa Kuta and Nusa Dua), whereas this study was carried out within Komodo National Park in Labuan Bajo, Manggarai, Flores, Nusa Tenggara Timur. It is noteworthy that Wulansari (2020) and Rastitiati & Suprastayasa (2022) primarily concentrated on linguistic aspects and the typology of signage, without delving into the functional aspects of these signs. Hence, this investigation was undertaken to address the following inquiries:

1. What are the types of public signs in Komodo National Park?
2. What is the function of public signs in Komodo National Park?

3. How is the language used in public signs in Komodo National Park?

Method

This study was conducted under the qualitative research method. The data used for this study were 14 pictures of public signs found in the Komodo National Park area. Those data were collected by doing direct observation method where the photopicture technique was applied. All the signs were documented by taking pictures using the Vivo y17 camera in September 2022. The data were analyzed qualitatively whereas the subjective interpretation of the data did. The interpretation was beneficial to categorise the data into some categories to see their types using the theory proposed by , to analyze and find their function by the theory from Landry & Bourhis, 1997 supported by Shohamy (2015) and how language is used in them.

Result and Discussion

Result

This part consists of two points to be discussed: 1) types of public signs in Komodo National Park, 2) Functions of public signs in Komodo National Park, and 3) the language used in public signs in Komodo National Park.

Types of Public Signs in Komodo National Park

There are fourteen (14) public signs exist in Komodo National Park. Those signs are categorized as top-down or official signs as all the signs are placed by the government (Gorter, 2006; Backhaus, 2007). They are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Types of Public Signs in Komodo National Park

No	Types	Numbers	Percentage (%)
1	Sign of Place Name	1	7.1
2	Sign of Place Manager	1	7.1
3	Sign of Place Description	2	14.2
4	Sign of Map	1	7.1
5	Sign of History	2	14.2
6	Sign of Notice	1	7.1
7	Sign of Warning	4	28.5
8	Sign of Appeal	1	7.1
9	Sign of Esthetic	1	7.1
Total		14	100

Based on Table 1 public signs in Komodo National Park are divided into nine types. Among those types, the sign of warning is mostly found there with the total signs being four signs (28.5%). It is followed by signs of place description and

history, in which each of which consists of two signs (14.2%) and signs of a place name, place manager, map, notice, appeal, and esthetic one sign for each (7.1%).

Once that strongly confirms that signs in Komodo National Park are top-down signs is illustrated on the sign of the place manager.



Picture 2. Sign of Place Manager

Figure two enlightens the readers about who is the manager of the place. It confirms that the park is under the *Kementrian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan's* responsibility, especially the *Seksi Pengelolaan Taman Nasional Wilayah II P. Komodo*. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is under the President and is responsible to him. *Perpres Nomor 92 Tahun 2020* Chapter 1, article 4 mentions that The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is responsible for organizing government affairs in the field of environment and forestry to assist the President in organizing the state government (Kementrian Lingkungan Hidup & Kehutanan RI, 2020).

Functions of Public Signs in Komodo National Park

Based on the data, public signs in Komodo National Park have three functions namely, informational, symbolic, and educational functions (Landry & Bourhis, 1997 supported by Shohamy (2015)). In this research, there is no specific difference between symbolic and social functions as they refer to the same thing such as national identity, language policy, and group identity. For that reason, public signs in Komodo National Park are divided into three categories, considering that linguistic landscape is the study of public or prived signs in a certain area by combining several theories in its study.

Informational function deals with the information of place's name as well as geopictureal territory and general information, (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Public signs primarily serve the purpose of conveying information to the public. This can include providing directions, instructions, warnings, or conveying

essential information about a place, event, or object. For instance, road signs that indicate speed limits, exit directions, or distances to destinations fall under this category. The informational function ensures that people can navigate and interact with their environment effectively.



Picture 3. Sign of Place's Name

Picture 3 is included in the informational function. The informational function of that figure is specially related to the name of a place. Through the sign, the visitors are informed about the place they visit. In addition, the sign is not only informing about the place's name. It also greetings the visitors to welcome to the park. Another informational function found in the park is the geopictureal territory of the park.



Picture 4. Sign of Geopictureal Territory

Regarding the picture in picture 4, the visitors are informed about the park's area. Through the map, visitors would be able to find the specific area to do short,

medium or long tracking. Besides the map provides information related to the location of facilities such as toilets, offices, cafeterias, etc. By looking at the map, visitors can find the way how to get to the place they are looking for.



Picture 5. Sign of History

The last sign which functions as an informational sign is the sign of general information. For general information, there are two types of signs namely signs of history and signs of place description. Picture 5 is categorized as a historical sign. It provides information related to the historical story of when the park is officially confirmed by the government. The informational function of the sign is also found in the sign of place description.



Picture 6. Sign of Place Description

Picture 6 contains information related to the park. The figure is full of the park's description of the area, birds, flora, fauna, available activities and even warming. By that description, visitors get information on the kinds of birds, flora, and fauna around the park. In addition, reading the sign makes visitors be able to choose the kind of activity to do at the park and prevents them from prohibited activities.

The symbolic function of public signs deals with group identity, political status, language status, and so on. Those characteristics could be reflected through the sign of place manager, the sign of history and the language used in the sign. The sign of place manager (figure 2) and the sign of history (figure 6) mirror the political status of Komodo national park which is officially under the government's authority, Indonesia. Furthermore, how the language used in the sign mirrors the language status of the territory where the signs exist. The official language where Komodo National Park exists in Indonesia. The use of the Indonesian language in the signs means that the Indonesian language is the official language used in Komodo national park.



Picture 7. Sign of Notice

Picture 7 is written in the Indonesian language. It demonstrates the Indonesian language has a high status in the area where it plays as a national language. Even though there are also signs written in another language, namely English, it does not mean the English language is the official language used in Komodo national park. Another way to detect language status is by identifying language order in bilingual or multilingual signs. The official language is always written in the first line then followed by another language. For instance, languages are used in the following sign.



Picture 8. Sign of Appeal

The educational function of public signs deals with how languages used in the sign provoke people to learn a new language. Since Komodo national park is located on Komodo Island, Flores-East Nusa Tenggara Timur, the language used in the sign is Indonesia language. It is the official language of Indonesia country. The use of the Indonesian language in the signs attracts international tourists to learn Indonesian language to be able to understand the message written in the text. On the other sides, English which is also used in the sign invites the local people to study English.

Language Used Public Signs in Komodo National Park

There exist three distinct language models employed in the creation of public signs within Komodo National Park. These models include monolingual signs featuring the Indonesian language exclusively, monolingual signs utilizing English as the sole language, and bilingual signs incorporating both Indonesian and English. These specific language models are detailed in the accompanying table for reference.

Table 2. Language Used in Public Signs

No	Type of Language	Number/s
1	Monolingual Indonesia	7
2	Monolingual English	5
3	Bilingual Indonesia-English	2
Total		14

Regarding the data in Table 2, the most dominant language used in LL is monolingual Indonesia (7 signs). It is then followed by monolingual English (5 signs) and bilingual Indonesian English 2 signs. The term monolingual in LL refers to the use of a single language in a sign. Monolingual Indonesia means the use of the Indonesian language in the sign.



Picture 9. Sign of Monolingual Indonesia



Picture 10. Sign of Monolingual English

Picture 10 is an example of monolingual English used in a sign. It is identified as monolingual English because the English language is the only language used in the sign. However, the term bilingual in LL refers to the use of two languages in a sign. The bilingual Indonesia-English means the use of Indonesian and English languages in the sign.

The public signage within TNK exhibits variations in linguistic composition, encompassing both monolingual and bilingual forms. These signs have been classified into signs of place name, place manager, place description, map, history, notice, warning, appeal, and esthetic. They are serving three primary functions: conveying information, symbolizing elements, and imparting educational content.

Discussion

The result above confirms clearly that public signs in Komodo National Park are included in top-down or official signs as the sign is organized by the government (Gorter, 2006; Backhaus, 2007). Since the signs are top-down or official signs, none

of the signs contains information related to private sectors or ads. This result is in contrast with the result of Mulyawan & Erawati's study (2019) in which they mention that the signs in Desa Kuta are included in commercial signs. It means that the signs in Desa Kuta refer to bottom-up or unofficial signs.

Moreover, the top-down or official signs of public signs in Komodo National Park are categorized into some categories namely signs of place name, place manager, map, notice, appeal, esthetic, warning, place description and history. The categorization is based on the message presented by the signs. Among those signs, signs of warning are mostly presented in the signs. The number of signs categories in Komodo National Park is lower than the number of signs categories in Nusa Dua Bali. Rastitiati & Suprastayasa (2022) report that there are 13 types of sign categories in Nusa Dua Bali where the sign of map or traffic is the highest in number (33,62%).

Based on sign functions, this research deals with Landry & Bourhis (1997) and Shohamy's (2015) theory. The result underlines that there are three functions found in public signs in Komodo National Park namely, informational function, symbolic function and educational function. The informational function of the signs consists of the information of place name, geographical territory and general information. The symbolic function of the signs deals with the sign of place manager and the sign of history. The educational function of the sign connects to the language/s used in the sign. What language and how the language used can attract someone or a reader to learn the language. To understand the message written on the public sign, the reader has to understand the language used. For that reason, public sign is mentioned have an educational function.

Those three sign functions can also be found in Desa Kuta Bali's public signs. Mulyawan & Erawati (2019) confirm that symbolic and informative functions are two functions played by public signs in Desa Kuta Bali. They mention these two functions as they focused on the theory offered by Landry & Bourhis (1997). The educational function is not mentioned yet in this research report. The results of this study and Mulyawan & Erawati's study are different due to the different theoretical concepts used in examining the data.

The language used is another important point discussed in this part. The language used refers to the issue of how language/s is used in public signs. Language in public signs varies. There are signs which use a language, two languages, three languages or even more languages. Regarding the result of this study, three types of language combinations are identified such as monolingual Indonesia, monolingual English and bilingual Indonesia-English. Among those three types of language used, monolingual Indonesia is highly presented in the data.

That finding confirms that the language used in public signs in Komodo National Park is not rich as what Wulansari (2020) and Rastitiati & Suprastayasa (2022) found in their study. They mentioned that the language used in public signs in Bali is rich where more than two languages are used together in a single sign. The languages are not only Bali language, Indonesian and English but also Mandarin,

Japanese, Korean and many other languages. Regarding that fact, it could be mentioned that the language used in public signs in Komodo National Park is still far from expectations. As one of the most interesting places to be visited in the world, Komodo National Park attracts people from around the world to come. Those people are coming from different linguistic backgrounds and they have a different language from Indonesian. The use of English is not enough to cover the need of international visitors in understanding messages written on signs.

In summary, knowing the language used, the types, and the functions of a public signs is essential for effective communication, safety, cultural awareness, legal compliance, efficiency, education, and the overall well-being of individuals and communities. It ensures that signs fulfil their intended purposes and positively impact society.

Conclusion

Focusing on the result and discussion above, it is clear that Komodo National Park is organized by the Indonesian government as the public signs in there are included top-down. Those signs have played informational, symbolic and educational functions. The categorization of the type was based on the message written on the signs. However, this study underlines that public signs in Komodo National Park are limited in the languages used. They just have Indonesian, English and bilingual Indonesian-English. It is not able to cover the need of all visitors to reach the message written on the signs. The limitation of language used in public signs in Komodo National Park can be an obstacle to the tourism sectors in Labuan Bajo. For that reason, the government is strongly suggested to pay more attention to the issue of language used in public signs in Komodo National Park. Besides, since the area of Komodo National Park is large, the government needs to place more signs around the park. Future researchers interested in analyzing public signs in Komodo National Park should establish clear research objectives, conduct a thorough literature review, and address ethical considerations related to working in a protected environment. Comparative analysis with other parks, assessment of signs' contributions to conservation, and recommendations for improvements should be integral to the researches.

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