



The Variation of Bilingual Outdoor Signs in Tourist Attractions in Gianyar, Bali

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ABSTRACT: This research investigates the linguistic landscape (LL) of tourists attractions in Gianyar, Bali, focusing on the variation and visibility of bilingual public or outdoor signs in Indonesian and English. The research aims to identify the distribution of top-down and bottom-up signs and analyze their construction within the sociolinguistic context of multilingualism. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through observation, photography, and note-taking, the research draws on Landry and Bourhis' (1997) framework of LL, supported by Gorter (2006).

The findings reveal 415 public or outdoor signs across 61 tourist attractions, categorized into five linguistic landscape of cultural, village, nature, museum, and artificial sites. Bottom-up signs predominate, indicating a strong influence of individual and commercial agency in shaping the multilingual visual space. The research underscores the symbolic and informative functions of bilingual outdoor signs and highlights the significance of LL as a medium of cultural identity negotiation in Bali's tourism context.

KEYWORDS: Linguistic landscape, bilingualism, tourism destination, tourist attractions, top-down, bottom-up, Gianyar.

INTRODUCTION

The linguistic landscape (LL) constitutes a growing field in sociolinguistics that examines how languages are visually represented in public spaces. In multilingual regions like Bali, public signage not only serves informative purposes but also symbolizes linguistic identity and cultural dynamics. Despite Bali's prominence as a global tourism hub, studies on its linguistic landscape remain limited, particularly in Gianyar regency, home to renowned destinations such as Ubud, Tegenungan Waterfall, and Tirta Empul Temple. The current research addresses this gap by analyzing bilingual public or outdoor signs those written in both Indonesian and English, at tourism destinations, particularly in tourist attractions in Gianyar. It explores two main questions: (1) What are the dynamics of the linguistic landscape in Gianyar's tourist attractions? (2) How are bilingual outdoor signs constructed across different types of destinations? The study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to linguistic and tourism studies by mapping how linguistic choices reflect local identity, tourist orientation, and socio-economic influences.

Previous research on linguistic landscapes in Bali includes studies by Mulyawan (2017), who analyzed commercial signs in Kuta and concluded that LL reflects tourism-driven globalization, and Artawa et al. (2020), who examined Balinese script usage in public spaces as part of local identity preservation. Puspani et.al (2021) explored signposts in Nusa Penida, Bali to answer Gorter's idea which says that nowadays monolingual signpost are rarely found. Purnawati et.al (2022) writes about Linguistic Landscape in heritage area of Denpasar, Gajah Mada. Internationally, Gorter (2006) and Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) introduced the concepts of top-down (governmental) and bottom-up (private or individual) signage, which remain central in LL analysis. In Gianyar, the LL reflects a layered interaction between state-mandated bilingual information and creative, commercially driven expressions of multilingualism. The prevalence of English in outdoor signs underscores its global communicative role and economic value in tourism contexts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research employs Landry and Bourhis' (1997) model of linguistic landscape, which conceptualizes LL as both informational and symbolic. The informational function refers to the role of signs in communicating practical information, while the symbolic function relates to identity, power relations, and sociolinguistic hierarchies. The dichotomy of top-down and bottom-up signage (Gorter, 2006; Backhaus, 2007) provides analytical grounding for categorizing signs according to their producers. Top-down signs originate from government institutions, while bottomup signs are created by private entities such as business owners. The interaction between these two categories in multilingual settings like Gianyar illuminates broader sociocultural and economic processes.



METHOD

This qualitative descriptive research was conducted in Gianyar Regency, Bali, which contains 61 tourist attractions (DTW) Data collection employed observation, note-taking, and photography of bilingual outdoor signs written in Indonesian and English. The data were analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1992). Triangulation was used to validate the findings. The outdoor signs were classified into top-down and bottom-up categories based on the producers' authority, visual characteristics, and linguistic content.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 415 bilingual outdoor signs were identified across 61 tourist attractions in Gianyar, Bali. According to Bali Tourism Office Statistic 2022, there are sixty-one (61) places that included as tourist attractions in Gianyar regency. Those places are categorized into five Linguistics Landscape dynamics, they are: (1) Nature, (2) Culture, (3) Village, (4) Museum, and (5) Artificial Sites.

There are twenty (20) places that categorized as Nature. It includes beaches, rice paddy, river valley, cliff temple, natural cave and waterfall. Culture includes temples, and palace and performance stage. Village categorization shows six (6) villages and two (2) urban villages; the villages are Batubulan, Celuk, Batuan, Bona, Mas, Peliatan and the other two (2) urban villages are Ubud and Gianyar. There are six museums included as tourist attractions in Gianyar, they are Museum Arma, Neka, Puri Lukisan, Rudana, Blanco and Museum Purbakala. Artificial sites expose fifteen (15) places such as Bali Bird Park, Reptile Park, Bali Safari Marine Park, Elephant Park and others.

Table 1. Distribution of Variation of Outdoor Signs across categories of tourism destinations in Gianyar

OUTDOOR SIGNS	CULTURE	VILLAGE	MUSEUM	NATURE	ARTIFICIAL SITES
TOP-DOWN (7%)	2	5	14	2	6
BOTTOM-UP (93%)	11	22	20	4	320

The dominance of bottom-up outdoor signs (93%) indicates that linguistic representation in Gianyar's LL is largely shaped by individuals and commercial entities rather than governmental agencies. This finding aligns with observations by Blommaert and Maly (2014), who emphasize the non-neutral nature of language use in public spaces as a reflection of socio-economic power relations. Top-down outdoor signs (7%) are typically regulatory or informational, displaying standardized bilingual text with official logos and institutional language. In contrast, bottom-up signs exhibit creative multilingual expressions aimed at attracting international tourists.

The outdoor signs of artificial sites show the dominant number among other LL dynamic categories. This reflects the economic power is shaped through linguistic exposure within those attractions. The availability of outdoor signs is fundamental for the growth of tourism in this regency; the standard information such as procedures, location, warnings and other details. In contrary, the table shows that the dynamic of culture LL is presented in a small number. The LL dynamic of culture here refers to temples, palace and a performance stage. The findings showed that temples of this landscape have not been taken concern maximally by the local government. Signage for tourists in temples are less found. Signage or outdoor signs should be well provided so that tourist will be able to be exposed with appropriate bilingual written information of the outdoor signs.

It can be seen that the top-down variation of outdoor signs in culture LL is the least compare to the other LL categories. This in line with the fact that the least findings of the bottom-up outdoor signs found in this LL category. Besides culture category, the nature LL also showed similar found numbers of outdoor signs. Temples or palace implicitly treated different; the needs to have more outdoor signs in this LL category should be taken into priority. The top-down outdoor signs mostly found in museums.

CONCLUSION

The linguistic landscape of Gianyar's tourism destinations illustrates a vibrant interplay between local and global linguistic forces. The prevalence of bottom-up outdoor signs suggests a strong commodification of language within the tourism industry. While Indonesian remains the base language, English dominates the LL as a global tourism language. It also functions as a lingua franca



for communication and branding. The predominance of bottom-up outdoor signs highlights the agency of individuals and private businesses in shaping the public linguistic environment. These findings underline the importance of bilingual and culturally sensitive signage in sustaining Bali's tourism identity while accommodating international communication needs. Further research could expand into multimodal analysis or comparative studies across Balinese regencies.

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