

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Bali is recognized as a leading Indonesian province and global tourist destination, distinguished by its unique culture and natural attractions. According to the 2024 Bali Provincial Statistics Agency, international tourist arrivals reached 6,333,360, an increase of 20.10% compared to 2023. The TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Awards 2024 also ranked Bali as the second-best tourist destination worldwide after Dubai. These data underscore Bali's exceptional appeal, particularly its beaches, arts and culture, and authentic tourism experiences.

The increase in tourist numbers has prompted the government and community to strengthen public infrastructure, including bilingual public signage in Indonesian and English. This phenomenon reflects a global trend in the linguistic landscape (LL), where multilingual signage facilitates tourist access, supports tourism development, and represents local culture (Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2013). In Bali, English signage not only serves as a communication tool but also reinforces the island's international image while preserving its local identity (Astiti & Suryasa, 2019; Rahmawati, 2021).

Tulamben in East Bali is a significant area for tourism research. The region is renowned for its mountainous landscapes, beaches, and diverse marine life (Widiastuti & Suamba, 2020). Tulamben has developed into an international marine tourism center, particularly for snorkeling and scuba diving, with the USAT Liberty shipwreck serving as a major artificial reef and global attraction (Yasa & Suryanegara, 2022). Tourism development in Tulamben emphasizes sustainability through coral reef restoration, marine conservation, and voluntourism programs that engage visitors in environmental stewardship. This emphasis on sustainability is consistent with broader discussions on sustainable and inclusive tourism in Indonesia, including linguistic landscape perspectives that highlight the role of

public communication in supporting sustainable tourism practices (Nenotek & Paramarta, 2024). Consequently, public signs in strategic locations, such as dive centers, restaurants, beaches, and temples, increasingly display English, Indonesian, and, occasionally, Balinese. This trend illustrates the intersection of local culture and global communication.

In sociolinguistic studies, language variation is an important topic. Fishman (2001) states that language variation arises from the interaction between language and social factors such as age, gender, education, social status, and communication situations. Sunahrowi (2007) emphasizes that many dynamic factors influence language variation in social life. In the context of the linguistic landscape, language variation is evident in the way languages are juxtaposed, stacked, or sequenced on signboards. Thus, LL analysis can provide an overview not only of practical communication functions but also of a community's identity and cultural orientation.

Several previous studies in Indonesia have shown the important role of LL. Abdullah and Wulung (2021) in the Tangkubanparahu tourist area highlighted multilingual patterns in facilitating tourist navigation. Laela (2021) in Surabaya found a diversity of monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signboards that reflect socio-cultural dynamics. Siregar (2020) at Lake Toba noted that English is often used to convey prestige, while Putra and Arka (2022) in Ubud found a combination of English and Balinese terms as a cultural branding strategy. Research in Malaysia also emphasizes the importance of good translation so that signs are easily understood by tourists (Yasin & Rahman, 2019).

However, these previous studies have limitations. Most have focused on multilingual patterns or the visual aspects of signage, while language variation, syntactic units, and the functions of public signs in East Bali tourism areas remain underexplored. Specifically, there is a lack of research examining how local (Balinese), national (Indonesian), and global (English) languages are positioned and interact within Tulamben's public spaces. Based on these conditions, this study is titled *"Language Variation on Public Signs: A Linguistic Landscape Study in Tulamben Tourism Area."* This study aims to analyze language variation on public

signs in Tulamben, focusing on the language variation used, syntactic units, and the functions of LL. The novelty of this research, Syntactic unit analysis, is important in the context of the Tulamben tourist area because public signs not only display language variation but also reveal distinctive patterns in language structure, particularly through the use of technical diving terms and simplified phrase forms. Many public signs in Tulamben use short nominal phrases or clause fragments rather than complete sentences to improve communication efficiency in the context of international tourism. Furthermore, syntactic unit analysis enables researchers to identify code-mixing phenomena in phrase structures, where English lexical elements are inserted into Indonesian grammatical patterns. Thus, syntactic unit studies not only reveal what languages are used, but also how these languages are structurally organized to fulfill specific communicative functions within the linguistic landscape of tourism. This study is expected to provide new perspectives on global-local interactions in the linguistic landscape of tourism and offer practical recommendations for sustainable tourism communication strategies in Bali.

1.2 Problem Identification

Preliminary observations indicate that public signage in the Tulamben tourism area shows a dominance of English, with Indonesian used inconsistently and Balinese appearing only in limited cases. Some signs are monolingual in English, while others apply bilingual or multilingual formats without consistent patterns. In addition, preliminary observations suggest the presence of literal or non-standard translations on several signs. These conditions indicate potential inconsistencies in multilingual practices and a possible limited representation of local language and culture. However, these observations are exploratory and require systematic analysis through this study.

These problems highlight the absence of clear linguistic strategies in managing public signage. This situation not only affects accessibility and tourist satisfaction but also challenges the balance between global communication and

local identity in a multilingual tourism context. A systematic examination of the types, functions, and diversity of language used in Tulamben's signage is necessary.

1.3 Research Limitation Scope

This study is limited to the analysis of public signs located along Jalan Kubu in the Tulamben tourism area. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all public signage in the wider Tulamben area. The study focuses on this bounded research site to provide an in-depth qualitative description of language variation, syntactic units, and functions of tourism-related public signs within this specific tourism corridor. Due to time and resource constraints, the study excludes a diachronic analysis of Tulamben's signage history. The investigation is limited to the current state of the linguistic landscape, reflecting contemporary practices and interactions in tourism.

1.4 Statement of Research Problem

This study aims to analyze the language variation on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area. There are three problems to be solved in this research:

1. What language variation is used on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area?
2. What syntactic unit is used on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area?
3. What is the functions of linguistic landscape on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the types of language variation used on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area.
2. To analyze syntactic units used on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area.
3. To describe the functions of the linguistic landscape on public signs in the Tulamben tourism area.

1.6 Research Significance

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the growing field of linguistic landscape (LL) studies, particularly in tourism contexts. It expands theoretical understanding of how language variation is used on public signage in Tulamben. The study also highlights language use in public signs, offering insights into multilingualism, syntactic units, and the function of Language variation within tourist areas.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Readers

This research is expected to provide insights that may assist the local government in formulating more effective language policies for public signage in tourism areas. Furthermore, the findings can guide tourism businesses in crafting more appealing, accessible language, thereby attracting international visitors and enhancing the overall tourism experience.

b. For Other Researchers

The findings provide a foundation for further studies on LL in other tourism destinations, enabling comparative analyses and deeper exploration of language dynamics in multicultural settings.

c. For Tourism Stakeholders

This study offers practical guidance to tourism businesses on designing signage that is clear, attractive, and responsive to international visitors. Using language variation strategically helps strengthen communication, improve the visitor experience, and position Balinese culture as a key element of the brand.

d. For Local Government

The findings provide an empirical basis for shaping language policy in tourism. Consistent bilingual or multilingual signage supports accessibility, reinforces Bali's global reputation, and ensures that local language and culture remain visible in public space.

