CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background, research problems, objectives, significance, and scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The linguistic landscape (LL) has become an important area of sociolinguistic research, particularly in understanding how languages are used, displayed, and interpreted in public spaces. In this study, the term Negara is used to refer to the administrative urban area of Negara in Jembrana Regency, Bali. Landry and Bourhis (1997) established LL as a key indicator of linguistic identity, arguing that the presence of certain languages on public signs reflects sociocultural power dynamics and group vitality. Gorter (2006) added that the LL shapes how people experience a place, making signage not merely informational but also cultural and symbolic. Shohamy and Gorter (2009) later broadened this view by emphasizing that LL is multimodal, incorporating not only written text but also colors, images, fonts, logos, and other visual cues that collectively construct meaning in public environments. This means linguistic signs are deeply intertwined with visual semiotics, functioning together to express identity, authority, and social relations.

Culinary businesses are among the most dynamic sectors of the linguistic landscape because signboards serve both communicative and persuasive functions. Rajan (2009) notes that language choices on commercial signage directly influence customer perceptions, while Pertiwi (2019) and Khazanah et al. (2021) show how English, Indonesian, and local languages work together to build brand identity, convey modernity, and signal cultural belonging. In culinary contexts, signage not only presents the shop's name but also showcases images, colors, and symbols related to food, often creating a multimodal text that attracts customers. This highlights the need for LL studies to consider not only linguistic distribution but also the semiotic dimension embedded in culinary signage.

Previous LL research in Indonesia has explored various locations and themes. Studies in Bali, such as Wulansari (2020) and Dewi (2020), document how Indonesian remains dominant in public signage, while Balinese is used to highlight cultural identity, and English serves touristic or prestige functions. Research outside Bali, such as in Yogyakarta (Pertiwi, 2019; Khazanah et al., 2021), Malang (Iwana & Sudarwati, 2021), and Kupang (Benu et al., 2025), shows that language combinations are diverse and shaped by local demographics, business goals, and globalization. However, most of these studies are concentrated in metropolitan or tourism-heavy locations. The linguistic and visual dynamics in semi-urban or non-touristic cities remain comparatively underexplored.

Negara in Jembrana Regency presents an interesting and distinctive context for LL research. As a semi-urban area with strong Balinese cultural roots and a predominantly local consumer base, Negara exhibits linguistic behaviors distinct from those of tourist regions. Unlike Ubud, Kuta, or Denpasar, where English and multilingual signage reflect international tourism, businesses in Negara rely on Indonesian and occasional English, along with visual signs that resonate with local cultural and religious norms. Culinary businesses in this area have grown rapidly, making storefronts and promotional banners an ideal medium for observing how language choice interacts with cultural identity, consumer expectations, and marketing strategies. Signage in Negara often features Islamic symbols, Arabic script, and halal logos, elements shaped by Jembrana's demographic composition, adding another layer to its semiotic landscape.

A particularly notable phenomenon in Negara's culinary signage is the recurring combination of Indonesian, English, and Arabic. The appearance of Eng–Indo–Arab multilingual signs, along with the integration of halal logos with food imagery, indicates a pattern not widely documented in previous LL studies. The visual elements found, ranging from icons of steaming bowls, chocolate drips, and ice cream characters to indices of freshness and sweetness, show how culinary signboards mix language with visual semiotics to communicate meaning effectively to local audiences. These patterns demonstrate that the linguistic and semiotic environment of Negara simultaneously reflects cultural familiarity, religious trust, and modern commercial branding.

Although there have been numerous LL studies, the exploration of language distribution and multilingual typology with semiotic interpretation remains rare. Prior studies focus on language choice or bilingual patterns but do not examine how linguistic symbols interact with icons and indexes to form meaning Moreover, the phenomenon observed in Negara, especially the strategic use of Arabic script, halal symbolism, and the Eng–Indo–Arab combination, has received limited scholarly attention in existing LL studies, particularly within semi-urban, non-touristic culinary contexts. This distinguishes Negara not only geographically but also theoretically. The gap lies not only in the lack of research on small cities but also in the absence of studies exploring the interplay between multilingual strategies and visual-semiotic constructions in non-touristic culinary environments.

Given these reasons, the present study analyzes the linguistic and visual-semiotic strategies used in culinary business signage in Negara. It aims to identify language distributions, classify multilingual typologies using Reh's framework, and interpret how linguistic elements interact with visual semiotics using Peirce's triadic model. By situating Negara within the broader LL scholarship, this research contributes new insights into how multilingualism and visual communication operate together in a semi-urban culinary landscape that is culturally grounded yet increasingly modern. This study differs from previous linguistic landscape research not only in terms of location but also in its analytical focus. By integrating language distribution analysis, Reh's multilingual typology, and Peirce's semiotic framework, this research examines how linguistic and visual elements interact in a semi-urban, non-touristic culinary context. The presence of English–Indonesian–Arabic combinations and halal-related semiotic resources positions this study as a contribution to both linguistic landscape and semiotic studies in underrepresented local settings.

1.2 Problem Identification of the Study

Negara, as the center of government in Jembrana Regency, has been experiencing growth in its economic and tourism sectors, including the culinary business. This growth contributes to an increasingly multilingual public space, with signage often combining Indonesian, Balinese, and occasionally English. However,

variations can be observed in how languages are selected and combined across culinary business signboards. Some culinary business signboards rely heavily on Indonesian without considering multilingual audiences, while others attempt to include English in ways that seem forced or incorrect. There is a visible lack of balance and intentionality in the linguistic choices made by business owners, which may limit the effectiveness of the signage in communicating with diverse customers, including domestic visitors and potential tourists.

In addition, the visual elements used on signboards often do not align with the linguistic message. Some signs use attractive colors or large fonts, but the language is unclear, or vice versa: well-written signs are visually unappealing. This creates a gap between what the business intends to communicate and what the public actually perceives. Without a clear strategy that integrates language and visual design, signage may fail to attract attention or effectively reflect the business's identity.

These observable inconsistencies in language distribution, multilingual practice, and visual-linguistic integration highlight the need for deeper analysis. Research is needed not only to document which languages appear, but also to understand how they are used and combined with visual elements in culinary signboards. This will help identify whether these signs function effectively as tools for communication, cultural expression, and business promotion in a multilingual society.
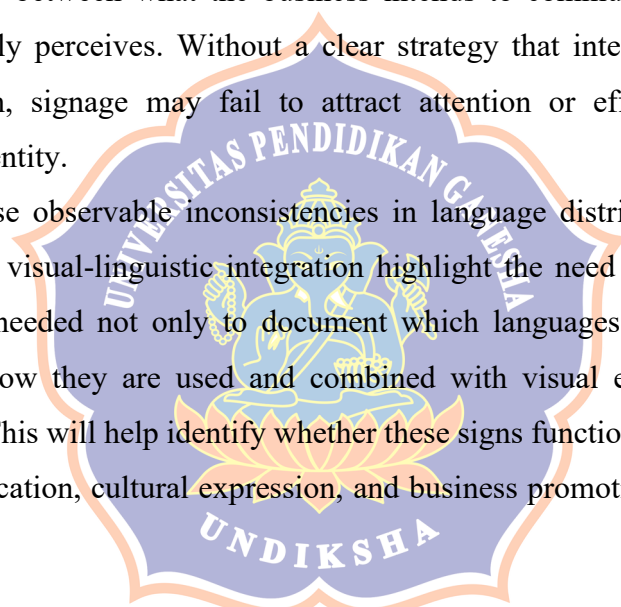
1.3 Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on linguistic and semiotic analysis of signboards for culinary businesses in Negara, Jembrana. Linguistic analysis covers the distribution of languages on signage, including Indonesian, English, Balinese, and other languages, as well as multilingual typology based on Reh's (2004) classification. The semiotic analysis focuses on the relationship between linguistic elements (words, phrases, writing) and semiotic elements (icons, indices, and symbols) according to Peirce's theory. Visual elements are only analyzed insofar as they function as semiotic signs, such as images, dominant colors, and basic compositions that support meaning; this study does not discuss technical design aspects such as

typography, font size, or detailed layout. Colors and imagery are included because they function directly as icons, indices, or symbols within Peirce's semiotic framework, whereas typography and layout are excluded as they primarily involve technical design considerations beyond the analytical focus of this study. The research is limited to signboards in public spaces used by culinary businesses, such as restaurants, food stalls, cafes, and food outlets. Other media, such as indoor menus, packaging, digital banners, and online promotions, are not included in the study. Balinese script is also only interpreted as part of the language if its meaning or use is explained by the signboard maker through interviews; the script is not analyzed structurally. The structural analysis of Balinese script falls outside the scope of this research, as the study focuses on its communicative and symbolic function rather than orthographic or grammatical features, and this limitation is not expected to undermine the interpretation of meaning on culinary signboards. Overall, this study is limited to linguistic and semiotic elements relevant to the formation of business identity and the conveyance of meaning on culinary signboards in Negara. This focused scope is intended to avoid overly broad interpretation and to maintain analytical consistency with the research objectives.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background and problem identification above, the problem formulations in this study are:

1. What is the distribution of languages used on culinary business signboards in Negara?
2. What multilingual typologies are implemented by the sign makers?
3. How are the linguistic elements combined with the semiotic elements on the culinary sign boards?

1.5 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. To identify and describe the distribution of languages used on culinary

business signs in Negara.

2. To analyze the multilingual typology applied by sign makers.

3. To examine how linguistic elements are combined with semiotic elements in culinary signs to construct meaning.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to provide a real picture of the linguistic landscape conditions in the culinary business sector in Negara.

1. Theoretical Significance

   Theoretically, this study makes an important contribution to the development of linguistic landscape studies, particularly in semi-urban contexts such as Kota Negara, which have rarely been discussed in previous studies. This study enriches sociolinguistic literature by mapping the distribution of languages on culinary business signs and by conducting a semiotic analysis using Peirce's framework (icons, indices, and symbols) to understand the interpretation of visual and linguistic meanings. In addition, the application of multilingual typology (Reh, 2004) further expands the discussion of language use strategies in public spaces, enabling the findings of this study to serve as a reference for the development of theories on language choice, identity representation, and communication practices in public spaces in underrepresented local contexts.

2. Practical Significance

   In practical terms, this research provides direct benefits for English language education and culinary businesses. In the context of education, authentic data from culinary businesses can serve as learning materials in courses such as Sociolinguistics, Multilingualism, or English for Specific Purposes (ESP), enabling students to develop critical awareness of the relationships among language, identity, and visual communication strategies. For culinary business owners, the results of this study offer insights into how language choices and visual elements on signboards influence consumer perceptions. This knowledge can help business

owners design signboards that are more communicative, attractive, and aligned with local cultural values, thereby increasing communication effectiveness and the business's appeal

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Linguistic Landscape

    The linguistic landscape is the display of different languages seen in public spaces, such as shop signboards, billboards, and banners. In this study, the term refers to the visual forms of language used by culinary businesses in Negara in their signboards and banners. The linguistic landscape reflects aspects of identity, communication, and the socio-cultural dynamics of the local community. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), linguistic landscape can be defined as the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region. They emphasize that the linguistic landscape not only provides information but also serves as a symbolic representation of the linguistic and cultural identity of the community. Thus, the languages displayed in public signage are powerful indicators of social and political realities, reflecting the status and vitality of languages within a society.

2. Culinary Business

    A culinary business is a type of business engaged in providing food and/or drinks to the general public. In the context of this study, culinary businesses include traditional stalls, restaurants, modern shops and other eating places located in Negara.

3. Language Distribution

    Language distribution is the distribution of the use of certain languages on the signboards of culinary businesses in public spaces. This distribution includes the frequency of occurrence of Indonesian, Balinese, English or other languages, as well as the pattern of their use in monolingual, bilingual or multilingual forms.

4. Linguistic Elements and Semiotic Elements.

    Linguistic elements refer to parts of text such as words, phrases, or

sentences listed on the signboard. Semiotic elements include visual elements that function as signs within Peirce's semiotic framework, such as images, colors, icons, symbols, shapes, and simple layout arrangements. These elements help construct meaning through the categories of icons, indices, or symbols.

5. Multilingual Typologies

Multilingual typologies in this study refer to the ways multiple languages are arranged or combined on signage based on Reh's (2004) classification. The typologies include duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping, and complementary multilingual writing. These categories are used to identify how sign makers present and organize languages to convey information to diverse audiences.

6. Semiotic Strategy

Semiotic strategy is the way sign makers use visual elements, such as images, colors, symbols, and layout, to construct meaning. In this study, semiotic strategy is understood through Peirce's categories of signs, namely icons, indices, and symbols, which are analyzed based on how each element contributes to the message to be conveyed.