

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. It provides the research background outlining the importance of the linguistic landscape (henceforth abbreviated as LL) in school settings, with a particular focus on language distribution, syntactic structures, themes, and character education values represented in school signage. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the identification and limitations of the problem, the research questions, the study's purposes, and the significance of the study. These components are intended to give a clear overview of the research focus and its contribution to the field.

1.1 Research Background

Languages showcased in public spaces convey more than communication. It represents social, cultural, and political dynamics, offering insights into identity, language policies, and multilingual interactions. Both globally and in Indonesia, LL serve as a lens for understanding language use in educational and public contexts. LL focuses on the use of language in public spaces, including signs, banners, and directional boards. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), LL refers to the visibility and prominence of languages on public and commercial signage within a specific area or region. These signs appear in various forms and locations frequently

visited by the public, and they communicate messages that may be informative, commercial, educational, or regulatory (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). LL in such signage is often influenced by language policy and reflects broader patterns of societal interaction. In schools, public signs function as an extension of the language space, illustrating how language policy is enacted in daily life. (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

Globally, studies on LL in school settings reveal similar trends, reflecting not only institutional policies but also sociocultural dynamics shaped by multilingual realities. As shown in previous studies, for instance, Clorion et al. (2023) at Western Mindanao State University, English-dominated signage was used, whereas local languages were minimally represented. Their findings underscore how LL in educational institutions often reflect internationalization policies and the dominance of global languages in academic communication, while also revealing the underrepresentation of local languages on campus signage. In addition, a study of Kenyan universities by Muriungi & Mudogo (2021) found that English predominated in public signage, whereas Kiswahili was used minimally. This reflects the presence of international students and lecturers, the status of English as a global language, and a gap between language policy and actual practice in multilingual educational contexts.

In Indonesian schools, LL is primarily shaped by public signage, reflecting a language policy that prioritizes Indonesian as the primary medium of communication. Article 36 of the 1945 Constitution of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (*Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945*) affirms Indonesian as the national language. It underscores its role in

fostering national identity and unity, as reflected in official communications, including school signage. Despite this emphasis, globalization and the implementation of bilingual policies in some schools have introduced foreign languages into educational LL. For example, Riani et al. (2022) identified three language code types in Javanese revitalization: monolingual (Javanese), bilingual (Javanese-Indonesian), and multilingual (Javanese, Indonesian, English, Arabic), with Javanese appearing in both traditional and Roman scripts. Similarly, Widiyanto (2024) observed Arabic-English bilingualism, Indonesian monolingualism, and Indonesian-English code-mixing on school signs at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 17 Jakarta, with Arabic as the dominant language. These studies demonstrate that LL in educational settings reflects language distribution, multilingual codes, and diverse writing systems.

This multilingual phenomenon is particularly complex in Bali, where local language preservation intersects with global language influences. Bilingual policies, alongside regional regulations, play a significant role in preserving the Balinese language in public domains. Additionally, the pressures of globalization have led to a growing emphasis on English in educational contexts, creating a dynamic interplay between cultural heritage and modern linguistic trends. The LL reflects the implementation of these bilingual policies. In addition to Indonesian and English, Balinese is used on school signage. The use of Balinese aligns with Bali Governor Regulation No. 80/2018, which encourages the incorporation of the Balinese language and script in public spaces, including educational institutions. This initiative aims to preserve the region's local cultural heritage. This is evident

in the presence of Balinese script alongside Roman letters on signboards and posters bearing Balinese-language slogans.

In addition to language distribution, the syntactic units used in school signage also deserve attention, as they reveal how languages are structured and combined to convey specific meanings and messages in educational settings. In LL studies, syntactic units in school signage are crucial because they reveal communication patterns in school contexts. Gapur et al. (2024) found that public signs in Medan elementary schools commonly employ syntactic units, such as phrases and sentences, to convey information, make invitations, issue prohibitions, and display slogans. Similarly, Sumarlam et al. (2021) found that signage in Malang's junior and senior high schools is dominated by clauses and clause combinations rather than isolated words, highlighting the role of syntax in communicative functions. These findings suggest that the syntactic patterns in school signage are not merely stylistic but are shaped by educational intentions. In contrast, informative signs are more likely to feature complete syntactic forms, supporting the transmission of values embedded within the messages.

Syntactic units provide insights into the structural composition of public signs, while their arrangement enhances the transmission of deeper meanings. Previous research has demonstrated that public signs serve not only as directional or informational tools but also as vehicles for various themes that reflect cultural, social, and psychological dimensions. Within the school context, these themes frequently align with educational values, moral messages, or institutional identity, making them a significant focus in recent LL research. Selli et al. (2023) demonstrates that LL plays a significant role in shaping visitors' perceptions and

emotional responses toward a place. Using local language, cultural symbols, and emotionally resonant messages in signage helps build identity and create meaning. Similarly, in educational settings, public signs function as communicative devices and as media through which students internalize specific values and ideas. Ornanphratt (2024) studies of LL in political demonstrations further support this notion by illustrating how signage fosters collective consciousness and shapes public perception. This function also applies in schools, where signage themes go beyond instructional content to influence students' thinking and behavior.

In addition, a study conducted in the Badung Smart Heritage Market, Bali, by Purnawati et al. (2025) shows that public signage designed using effective communication strategies can strengthen community cultural identity, enhance engagement, and foster an educational, interactive atmosphere. Similarly, school signs may be intentionally designed to instill values such as discipline, cleanliness, and teamwork. Sumarlam et al. (2021) found that school signage in Malang City generally covers eight major themes, grouped into two main categories: character education and social behavior. These themes include the environment, motivation, attitude and behavior, juvenile delinquency, health, discipline, religion, and nationalism. The most common environmental themes include saving water, reducing waste, and conserving energy. Other themes encourage a spirit of learning, respectful behavior, drug prevention, healthy habits, religious values, and love for the country. Their findings highlight that school signs convey information, promote values, and shape students' character.

Based on preliminary observations, public signage displayed a variety of languages, including Indonesian, English, and occasionally Balinese. These signs

employed a range of syntactic forms, such as phrases, clauses, and complete sentences. Their linguistic diversity reflects both local and global influences, shaped by school policies that promote multilingualism and character development. The signage often conveys implicit social and character-building values, which are important to examine to understand how educational messages shape students' attitudes and influence school culture. The content commonly focuses on themes such as discipline, hygiene, motivation, environmental care, and national pride, aligning with the goals of character education.

Although several researchers have studied LL in educational settings, they have primarily focused on language distribution, with limited attention to syntactic structures, thematic content, and the character education values conveyed through school signage. In the broader Indonesian context, LL research has also concentrated on public or commercial domains rather than educational institutions. In Bali, for instance, most studies have focused on tourism and commercial signage. Dewi et al. (2024), for example, examined the functions and languages of public signage in tourist areas but did not explore the educational context. Similarly, Artawa et al. (2023) investigated signage in hotels and restaurants, focusing on the commodification of language. Other studies, such as Paramarta et al. (2022), analyzed virtual LL on government websites. Although these studies are valuable, they do not examine how school-based signage, particularly in senior high school environments, linguistically represents educational values. These aspects remain underexplored, especially in the context of senior high schools in Singaraja.

Therefore, this study is urgently needed to provide a deeper understanding of how LL are represented through school signs. Given the lack of research on

school-based LL, particularly studies that examine themes and the values of character education, this study is important to conduct. It contributes not only to LL research but also to educational practice by offering insights into how schools communicate messages and values through signage. To respond to the identified gaps and contextual needs, this study employs a qualitative approach to explore the LL of senior high schools in Singaraja. This study analyzes four key dimensions, which are (1) the distributions of language and script in signage, (2) the syntactic units used, (3) the themes conveyed, and (4) the character education values reflected in the signage.

The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth analysis of how school signage conveys linguistic expressions and educational values within a localised, multilingual school context. Rather than quantifying linguistic elements, this study emphasizes the meanings, functions, and values conveyed through signage as a medium of communication and character formation. The findings are expected to offer new insights into how educational signage reflects broader sociolinguistic realities and character-building efforts. They may inform future research and support schools and policymakers in optimizing signage as a strategic tool for developing educational and cultural identity.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Studies on LL in Indonesia have begun to develop, especially in urban areas and tourist destinations, where public signs often reflect cultural identity, language contact, and economic interests. In Bali, most LL research has focused on tourism and commercial contexts, while studies on LL in school settings remain limited. To

date, no research has systematically examined public signs in school environments in Bali. On the other hand, LL studies outside Bali have extensively examined public signs in schools, particularly regarding language distribution and the syntactic units employed. However, there remains a lack of research on the themes and values of character education embedded in those signs. Signs in school environments function not merely as tools for conveying linguistic information but also as media for conveying educational and character values to students. Therefore, this research aims to address a gap in LL studies in school contexts in Bali, specifically in the Singaraja area, by focusing on the distribution of language and script, syntactic units, themes, and character values represented in school signs.

1.3 Limitations of the Problem

This study is limited to the LL of two senior high schools in Singaraja, comprising one public and one private institution. The scope of analysis focuses specifically on school signs. The term includes informational, instructional, warning, motivational, and identity signs located both inside and outside the school buildings. This study is further limited to two main analytical dimensions. First, language use, which refers to the distribution and presence of written languages and scripts on the signs. This analysis excludes spoken language and sign language. The linguistic analysis focuses on syntactic units, including words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, as well as text. Also examines sentence structures without addressing social or cultural interpretations. The study identifies character education values based on the messages displayed on the signs. This analysis focuses solely on the representation and presence of character values, without examining how these

values influence students' behavior or how they are implemented in daily school practices. This study's limited number of schools and qualitative approach mean the findings are not meant to be generalized to all senior high schools in Singaraja, but rather to offer in-depth insights into specific contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are formulated based on the research background, identification of the research area, and the above research limitations as follows.

- a. What are the distributions of languages and scripts used on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja?
- b. What are the syntactic units used on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja?
- c. What themes are presented on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja?
- d. Which character education values are represented on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja?

1.5 Purposes of the Study

In accordance with the earlier research questions, this study aims to achieve the following objectives.

- a. To identify the distributions of languages and scripts on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja.

- b. To analyze the syntactic units used on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja.
- c. To analyze the themes presented on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja.
- d. To examine the values of character education displayed on school signs in senior high schools in Singaraja.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research aims to offer an insight into the LL and to provide both theoretical and practical purposes as follows.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research aims to advance LL studies in education by focusing on key aspects of school-based LL, including language distribution, syntactic structures, thematic content, and the representation of character education values. As such, the findings of this study may serve as a theoretical reference for future research in sociolinguistics, language education, and language policy.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For Schools

The results of this study can help teachers, principals, and school policymakers better understand the importance of LL in visual

media and how such media can support character building among students and raise students' awareness of multilingualism.

b. For Local Governments

This research will serve as a crucial foundation for developing effective language policies and clearly visualizing educational values in public school spaces. It aligns perfectly with programs designed to preserve local languages and strengthen national identity.

c. For Other Researchers

This study opens the door to further research on LL in other educational contexts, such as junior high, elementary, or university levels. It will encourage interdisciplinary research between linguistics, education, and cultural studies.

