

Language Aspect of Form in Samosir's Tourism Public Signs: A Linguistic Landscape Study

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores the forms of language being used in the public signs around the tourist objects in *Samosir* regency, North Sumatera. Investigating forms of language in public sphere is a relatively new approach in applied linguistics and the branch of linguistics studying such forms is called Landscape Linguistic (or sometimes called Linguistic Landscape). The paper is both quantitative and qualitative. The first method identifies and calculates numbers of types of verbal and nonverbal languages and groups them into tables of percentage. In other words, the method also focuses on macro linguistic phenomenon. The second explores micro language forms involving morphology as content analysis strategy. The paper aims to investigate and answer the following two questions: what are the linguistic forms of language in public signs? and what are the nonlinguistic forms of language in public signs? The findings are: i) most of morphological forms are dominated by the forms of words followed by phrases, clauses and sentences respectively, ii) linguistic type forms show the outstanding numbers of translation forms, multilingual, mono-/bi-lingual, speech act and politeness strategy with less number of acronym, iii) visual design proves the forms of fonts size and type, colours, LL material, salience, and framing, and iv) spatial design indicates that media of LL is designed with more empty space. Few LL is seen fully loaded with information.

Keywords: forms of language, linguistic, macro and micro, visual, spatial, landscape linguistic, morphology

INTRODUCTION

Language has two aspects, namely aspect of form and aspect of meaning. Forms refer to audio and visual of a language. Audio is the sound of the language we hear, while the visual form is a systemic sound symbols that appear if the language is written down. These symbols can be divided into linguistic and non-linguistic unit symbols. The first are manifested in the form of words, phrases, clauses and sentences and the second can be found in the forms of images, signs, symbols, colors, and so on. Meanwhile, the aspect of meaning refers to the understanding caused by the form of audio

or visual form of the language. In this research, the focus of discussion talks about the form aspects of language on public signs.

The linguistic and non-linguistic units symbols are the signs or configuration marks. So, symbols are also called signs or configuration signs. The symbol or sign is a visual form of language. Humans communicate through signs or configuration marks (Oktavianus, 2017). Furthermore, Oktavianus argued that linguistic signs form spoken and written language, while non-linguistic signs form body language and non-body language, i.e., messages expressed through images. Signs or configuration

marks on written languages are sorted into words, phrases, clauses and sentences. In the paper, the focus of the analysis is to examine the language forms found in public signs in tourist objects in Samosir regency.

Tourists face language performance whenever they visit to a tourist object. For the first time, tourists do not talk but they read the language. They are 'served' with written language attached on public signs: at the airport, on the streets, at hotel accommodation, at restaurants, on tourist attraction sites, etc. Then, spoken language will be a later 'type of service' given by the tourism staffs. It is, therefore, very important to investigate the form of language on public signs.

Furthermore, language connects tourist objects with their visitors. Tourist objects in Samosir Regency are well-known with cultural and historical sites of Batak Tribe. So, how far the forms of language reflect themes and connect tourist objects with their visitors will be a very significant study. Forms of language on public signs are considered under the study of Landscape Linguistic which is a branch of sociolinguistics study investigating the language used in society.

Based on the background above, the writer proposes two research questions: what are the linguistic forms of language on public signs? and what are the nonlinguistic forms of language on public signs. The objectives of the research are to describe forms of linguistic and non-linguistic designs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Landscape Linguistics (LL) was first introduced by Landry and Bourhis (1997) on their seminal work on ethnolinguistic vitality and signage in Canada as "*Visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a given territory*". Hence, as the increase of researches and studies, LL is seen as the scene where the public space is symbolically constructed (Ben-Rafael, et. al., 2006; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). Moreover, the

languages used in public signs indicate what languages are locally relevant, or give evidence of what languages are becoming locally relevant (Shohamy, 2010; Kasanga, 2012). So then, LL is becoming a useful method to understand the evolution of an urban space or any other area where there is a lot of language contact occurs including a tourist destination. LL signs describe the identity of a city and almost 'speaks the language' of its inhabitants at a moment in time, as well.

Studying the phenomenon of LL entails a brief historical and etymological review of the word landscape along with a good definition of the concept of linguistic landscape and its forms, signs and signage as approached by some linguists (Spolsky, 2009; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Such review drew a distinction between the newly adopted concept of landscapes and the more traditional ones such as tourism and commercial landscapes. According to Gorter (2006), the word landscape exists in various languages and it typically means the same thing in all languages. Even the use of the word landscape in English, which is from a Dutch origin, Gorter, (2006) dated back to 1598, studying the landscape linguistically is, however, still a new field of research. Thus, though the term landscape is used in English, no agreed definition of the concept of LL was reached among scholars and linguists until 1997 where Landry and Bourhis, (1997) defined it as follows:

"The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (p. 25).

Languages written on public signs are forms of modes of communication – verbally and nonverbally. In other words, verbal language is also called linguistic design which in turn can be divided into two parts namely: 1) morphological forms of language and 2) linguistic types, i.e., forms of translation, transliteration, speech acts, politeness strategy, multilingualism,

acronym, homonym, code-switch and lexical blends (Alvarez, 2016). On the other hand nonverbal language consists of visual and spatial linguistic designs. In terms of Landscape Linguistic, both visual and spatial designs strengthen messages conveyed by verbal language (Oktavianus, 2017).

This research explores and identifies forms of language used on public signs. Also, it will describe all type of forms of language. To do so, a combination of quantitative and qualitative method will be applied. A simple quantitative method identifies and calculates forms of language both linguistically and non-linguistically. Meanwhile, the qualitative methodology investigates the micro forms of language under two types: morphological and linguistic types. Morphological types refer to the forms of words, phrases, clauses and sentences (Mustakim, 2015). Linguistic types refer to linguistic designs under such categories as: translation, transliteration, multilingual situation (Oktavianus, 2017; Backhaus, 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Edelman, 2006), acronym, lexical blends, code-switching, speech acts, politeness strategy (Thongtong, 2016), etc.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Analysis is done by using content analysis for morphological forms. Content analysis is meant to describe micro linguistic forms. Another one is combining analysis of examining the production of text LL (Alvarez, 2016) to determine the macro linguistic types of the languages written on

public signs. Analyzing the form of language on public signs can be done by two methods. First is the quantitative method. This method is used to describe forms of language based on LL categorization in Samosir Regency, for instance, LL under restaurant category and so on. In addition, quantitatively there will be a percentage of foreign language choices or multilingual situations of language found on public signs. Categorization and language choices can create and reflect a tourist area.

Second is a qualitative method. When examining text of LL, qualitative method is able to investigate and describe the types of linguistics, strategies or literacy devices and the multilingual situation including the existence and absence of a language that can help create and determine a tourist area. Types of linguistics include: 1) the form of words, phrases, clauses and sentences; 2) translation; 3) transliteration; 4) lexical blends; 5) acronyms; 6) homonym; 7) code mixing; 8) politeness strategies; 9) speech acts, etc. Furthermore, for forms of language morphologically, the content analysis approach is carried out through morphological theory. Meanwhile, other forms of linguistic types will be known simultaneously.

The data gathered by photographing languages on public signs. The public signs are mostly from the tourist objects in Samosir Regency. Data taken only from two key tourism areas in Samosir, namely Pangururan and Simanindo Subdistricts. The following is the map of those areas.



Figure 1. Map of Samosir Regency
Source: <http://repository.usu.ac.id>, 2018

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of words are manifested in the linguistic unit of symbols. The use of languages on the public signs in Samosir Regency also uses variations in the forms of word, phrases, clauses and sentences. The form of basic words and words formation are elements that form phrases, clauses and sentences. Therefore, in the analysis of morphological forms, the data is presented through several LL located around two subdistricts Pangururan and Simanindo. Here I have chosen four photos of LL as the representatives. Through examining LL texts and using content analysis with both quantitative and qualitative methods, I will

describe forms of language written on public signs in two tourism areas of Samosir Regency.

Tourist attractions spread out through several tourist objects in Pangururan and Simanindo Subdistricts. As mentioned earlier, they offer cultural and historical attractions. Since Samosir is located around Lake Toba, panorama seightseeing is another attraction they can offer. Thus, the language in its written forms should have reflected the identity of cultural, natural and historical attractions. The following figures are several LL taken from Pangururan and Simanindo.



Figure 2. LL at Tourist Attractions, Pangururan and Simanindo
Source: Rahmat's personal collection, 2018

Figure 2.1 above contains four public signs at tourist attractions in Pangururan and Simanindo Subdistricts, Samosir Regency. Examining the production of LL we can find out three different designs of language forms, namely: 1) linguistic; 2) visual and 3) spatial designs. Linguistic design can be categorized into two: morphology and linguistic types (micro), whereas visual and spatial designs (macro) can be seen from the

nonlingual performance excluded voice and gestures. Here are the results and discussion based on figure 1 above.

Figure 2.2 shows a welcome signboard contains sentences consisting of a series or arrangement of basic words. There are several arranged sentences based on the use of basic words in figure 1.b above. There are three sentences:

Sentence 1.1.a : *Senyumlah, maka beban anda akan hilang.*

Sentence 1.1.b : *Minum "Aek Sipaulak Hosa Loja" rasa sakit dan capek akan hilang.*

Sentence 1.1.c : *Tidak jauh lagi, anda akan sampai ke lokasi "Aek Sipauhak Hosa Loja".*

The three sentences above consist of basic word forms. The description of the basic word forms is as follows. Sentence (1.1.a) contains six basic words. However, one word "*Senyumlah*" at the beginning of a sentence is a word formed by using article "*lah*" (in bahasa) which means that it falls into the category of word formations or affixed words. The other two sentences (1.1.b) and (1.1.c) also consist of basic words that form two sentences. As mentioned above, the basic form of words is not only in the form of sentences, but also in the form of phrases and clauses. Basic words are the forming elements of phrases, clauses and sentences. Therefore, the presentation of basic word forms also includes phrases, clauses and even sentences. The analysis of linguistic design using content analysis for words, phrases, clauses and sentences is effectively describing forms of language. Quantitatively, it shows the numbers of words, phrases, clauses and sentences in a logical matter. We can also identify and finds out right away and group them into the percentage. Nevertheless, qualitative method investigates and describes the forming elements and their rules of words, phrases, clauses and sentences.

We can describe the linguistic types as follows. Analysis of linguistic types shows that linguistic type has the following language literacy and rhetoric (Alvarez, 2016). There is no translation nor transliteration. Lexical blends and code-switch are at a rare. However, we can see a bilingual situation as sentence (1.1.b) "*Minum "Aek Sipaulak Hosa Loja" rasa sakit dan capek akan hilang*". Bahasa Indonesia and bahasa Batak combines the

sentence. For example the words "*minum*" (drink) and "*rasa sakit dan capek akan hilang*" are in bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Batak is clearly reflected in the word "*aek*" which means "*air*" (Indonesia) and water (English). Speech art and politeness strategy is shown in sentence (1.1.a) "*Senyumlah, maka beban anda akan hilang*" (please smile and you will be happy). In short, linguistic types can be explored by analyzing the content of LL text.

Moreover, figure 1.1 shows a public sign located in a traditional village Siallagan, Simanindo. LL above contains several phrases. To be able to see basic word forms, let us take a look at the following analysis. The *Batak Blanket* (1.2.a) phrase has two basic words, namely *batak* and *blanket*. Furthermore, the phrase *Kitchen in the Middle of the House* (1.2.b) consists of forms of words in English, namely: *kitchen, in, the, middle, of, and house*. The phrase *Please enter* (1.2.c) consists of two basic words as *please* and *enter*.

This is how we analyse those phrases. The forms of *batak blanket* phrase are considered as adjective phrases (AP) marked by proper name *batak* describing the noun *blanket*. Basic word forms are also found in the LL. A single word base like the place name such as *Museum*. Meanwhile, the phrase *kitchen in the middle of the house is the phrase* falls into prepositional phrases (PP). All forms of these basic words form a prepositional phrase. The types of words in a preposition phrase varies. In the context of the use of English, prepositions *in* and *of*, followed by articles and the included in the category of basic words. The next is a phrase of *please enter* is a verb phrase (VP). Still, the verb phrase is formed because it contains the elements of the verb *please* and *enter*. These verbs are basic words.

Linguistic type analysis shows that there is an acronym *etc* (1.2.d) stands for *et cetera*. The entire phrases are mostly in the monolingual form of English except a batakese word *horas* (1.2.e). *Horas* is like a welcome greeting in English. In a tourist

object like Siallagan Village, it is very common to see an LL with no bahasa Indonesia. It is because Siallagan Village has been known for decades around the world as a cultural and historical tourist attraction. Since then countless of foreign tourists arrival have been visiting it. Speech act “*senyumlah, maka beban anda akan hilang*” (1.3.b) and politeness strategy *Ladies and Gentlemen* (1.4.a) are some evidence found.

The analysis of visual and spatial designs will describe forms of nonlinguistic features. The discussion is as follow. On LL (figure 1.2), there is a different size fonts. Bigger size of word MUSEUM (1.2.a) compared to smaller ones such as BATAK BLANKET (1.2.b), KITCHEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HOUSE (1.2.c) reflects the form of *saliency*. All forms of fonts are in capital letters (1.2). At the same time, we can also describe the colours of LL. Red colour (1.2) dominated the LL performance. White for the fonts indicates saliency. Thus, the visual design forms can be analysed to justify the effectiveness of an LL to attract the readers. Red as the background and white as the foreground are the common forms of visual designs of an LL (1.2). It is a very contrastive and eye-catching forms of an LL.

Spatial design analysis shows the ‘form’ or in term of LL, the writer suggests a synonymous word ‘shape’, instead. Shape refers to physical condition of LL connected to the performance of LL media. A Public sign can be made by wood, metal, paper, plastic, stones, triplex, etc. According to Alvarez (2016), spatial designs analysis is suitable for a pictorial student text book. Some blank space on the text book is intended to put some ‘extra notes’ for students to learn. However, the writer proposes such an analysis for nonlinguistic features of an LL with some adjustment and justification. For example, too much blank or ‘empty’ space on LL shows whether an LL is fully loaded with information or not. Thus, if an LL performs too much blank space (figure 1.3) or a little blank space

(figure 1.1) indicates the fulfillment of standard requirement of LL or not. Therefore, analysis of spatial design forms of language will justify comprehensive and holistic performance of an LL, of course, combined with the analysis of linguistic and visual designs.

To strengthen this point, let us take a brief look on figure 1.3 and 1.4 above. Figure 1.3 leaves us a moderate blank space. On the other hand, figure 1.4 shows LL in a piece of copied paper. These shapes are different. Media of LL (1.3) is made of board, while the other one (1.4) is made only on a piece of paper. Thus, the spatial ‘forms’ of LL reflect a quality performance of an LL. This analysis is proven to be effective in describing the whole forms of language written on public signs.

Most of the research applies the qualitative methodology. Quantitative methodology is simply used only to count numbers of morphological forms (words, phrases, clauses and sentences) of forms of linguistic designs analysis, features of linguistic types, visual and spatial. Whereas, qualitative methodology describes in details about all phenomenon of LL in three areas: linguistic, visual and spatial.

Quantitative method shares us the percentage of all forms of language. They can be categorized based on linguistic or nonlinguistic features. For example, from all data which results belong to linguistic design and how many they are (percentage). It also goes the same way to the other two type of analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

As an approach, LL applies the examination of text production as an analysis to describe forms of languages on public signs. Under the examination of text production, there are three steps analysis, namely: linguistic, visual and spatial designs analysis. Linguistic designs analysis describes the morphological forms and linguistic types. Most of morphological forms are in the forms words (basic and compound) followed with clauses (AP, NP,

PP and VP) and sentences (single, complex and compound sentences). Linguistic types forms are in the forms of multilingual, monolingual, speech act, politeness strategy and acronym.

Visual and spatial designs analysis are to describe nonlinguistic features. The visual designs explored are in the forms of types and size fonts, colours, layouts and salience. Spatial designs analysis proves the 'forms' or shapes of LL in term of material of LL used, filled and blank space, standardization of LL production and framing. It is effectively proven to describe forms of language on public signs. Therefore, the combination of three analysis describes forms of language in a comprehensive and holistic results.

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