Linguistic Landscape (LL) and Communication Strategies: Insights from the Local Living

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Abstract. LL has been used to promote socio-cultural product (artifacts) in the public sphere either through commercial or public signages. This paper intends to discuss Linguistic Landscape (LL, henceforth) from the perspective of its function as linguistic choices and as robust strategy to show socio-cultural identities. What is of special interest of the paper regarding to LL relates to its function in reflecting social and cultural dynamics of the society in communicating their ideas. In order to have comprehensive perspective of the linguistic landscape, the data of this paper were taken from various location around Mataram representing commercial ads in culinary and cultural events as well as public/official signage issued by the government on public spheres (drug abuse, public traffic regulations signage). The focus is especially given on the representation of local epithets in the signages. The trend shows that the LL has been maximally elaborated to promote and foreground the content of local richness and the trends toward informal, collegial, solidarity creating between the governmental bodies and the public.

Keywords: Social Dynamics · Foreground · Collegial · Solidarity

1 Introduction

The main objective of the paper is to discuss the issue of social, cultural and official landscape by making close observation on the linguistic landscape in private and government signage. The problems in LL issues relate to the access of local richness in meeting the public domain. On the part of governmental issue, there exists a commonsense belief that governmental communication monotonous and hegemonies which finally establish boredom on the part of the public. The study is thus interested in conducting comprehensive observation in order to have insight of the bottleneck which blocks the communicative ends of both local and governmental sides in coming to term with the public.

The focus of the observation is oriented towards capturing private and official signages which mainly the expression of local commercial product as well as the governmental issues for public. The advantages of such observation turn to be beneficial in exploiting the diverse function of LL. The Study in the paper indicates that the communicative strategies in LL appears to be dynamic as expected. New paradigms in the media of expression exists and refreshes the old and commonsense. In that way, LL strengthens and establishes its function to facilitate the spirit of anti-mainstream. The last model

motivates the new strategy called negative polarity of language use. It is observed to be effective to increase product marketing.

The data of the study were gathered around Mataram Municipal and surrounding area (outskirt). The capturing of data were conducted in multi-year system compiled in a documentary. It is started from 2019 to date.

2   Communication Strategies and Local Linguistic Innovation

2.1   Expression of Power and Solidarity

This writing focuses on multilingual signs in Mataram Lombok. The main issues to observe is the distinction between official and non-official signs. Based on the observation then we would like to demonstrate the characteristics distinguishing the two types of signs. A study on multilingual signs in Tokyo by Bachaus interprets the differences in terms of expression of Power and solidarity, claiming that official signs are designed to express and reinforce power relation, while the non-official which he found to make use of foreign languages are used to communicate solidarity with thing non-Japanese. Although Japan is well known as prototypes of monolingual society, with highly homogeneous demographic Fig. 1, and compared to other global cities registered foreign population in Tokyo is low. What is interesting that such low heterogeneous nature of Tokyo contrasts with its language landscape, there exists diversity of languages used other than Japan [1]. What Backhaus observed about power solidarity relation in Tokyo is challenging with regards to what happens in Mataram. What happens in Lombok is quite the reverse to what happen in Tokyo. Official signs in Mataram make use of foreign language (Arabic) in addition to Indonesian and Sasak. However, Sasak is represented by Sanskrit grapheme instead of Latin base graph which is widely used in Sasak. On the basis of such discrepancy between the language (symbol) used and the people intelligibility, I tend to take the sign more as foreign. So, street sign is multilingual dominated by foreign language. In contrast to Bachause Tokyo case, in Mataram, it is the official signs which communicate solidarity.

2.2   Language Hegemony-Fighting for Space

Language choice is multilingualism: Indonesian, Arabic and Sasak *Anacaraka.*

Indonesian spelling applies Latin grapheme and it relatively creates no problem on the part of the readers (public).

Arabic makes used of two systems, Malay Arabic and Arab Arabic. Lombok with majority of its population are Muslims could be the reason for using Arabic transcription. However, there two competing graphemes are applied arbitrarily. In one such for jalanselaparang chooses Arab Arabic ([biʃsari']), the symbol ['] is used to represent laryngeal sound, while jl.Sarkapanaka the jalan is spelled in Malay Arabic [ʤalan]. So far, no systematic explanations for the variation are found.

Sasak is represented by Sanskrit base graph, *Anacaraka* instead of using Latin transcription (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Selaparang Street

Fig. 2. Sarpakanaka Street

2.3 Language Hegemony

This situation prompts questions upon the motivation for such application. Sanskrit, the Anacaraka, is not intelligible for the majority of Sasak speaker. Sanskrit or Anacaraka is limited in register, only introduced in limited schools and just makes minority sections in local content. What do we expect by the Anacaraka as street sign? In our linguistic landscape today in Lombok, English is much more readily intelligible for majority of people as compared with Anacaraka. The use of English in addition to the three languages or instead of Anacaraka seems to be more acceptable. Lombok tourism is booming and that's international language for public concern is highly required. It is interesting, with regard to anacaraka, to elaborate the motivation and justification of Anacaraka use for public signage. I assume that instead for intelligibility purposes, the Anacaraka represents something beyond textual comprehension. It marks the desire to foreground [2]. The locality of Sasak for national and international domain. This is a kind of fight for survival, by fighting for public space (See language and power, solidarity) [3, 4]. The impact is that the local government imposes government's hegemony on

social life. Apart from its legitimacy, the promotion of Anacaraka makes an interesting phenomenon in the study of Linguistic Landscape [5].

2.4 Negative Polarity and the Boosting of Exclusiveness

Another trend in communication is what we name as negative polarity. The model operates on the opposing polarity that is by highlighting the negative side of the content in order to promote the expected response [6]. This model makes use of understatement in order to foreground the value and in so doing it makes the panorama linguistically and pragmatically marked [7]. For instance in order to invite the customers to by the cigarettes the ads tells the customers not to purchase the product because the price is much lower than in other places. In effect the readers get attracted and wish go against

Fig. 3. Negative Polarity

mainstream spirit. In creating such spirit on the part the readers or potential customers the ads is essentially boosting the exclusiveness on the part of the potential buyer (Fig. 3).

2.5   Emotional Affection

The clearest way people have of signaling their desire to be close or to be different from those around them is through their choice of languages [8]. There is a common stance in relation to this which can be proven by such completion of the gap in a proposition, say, 'if they speak my 'language' (including my style), they must be_____'. The gap can be filled by geographical terms such as Aussie, British or American. The gap can also be filled by social affiliation such as 'my tribe', 'my religion', 'immigrant', ''well educated', 'rich', 'servant', 'enemy' [9, 10]. So choice of language matters in relation to social identity and identification. With regards to such affiliation, we are interested in seeing how this surface in the language choice reflected in language landscape representing public signage. The focus is mainly focused on how police department 'smoothens their image via the diction which affiliates the juvenile style to mark and establish towards the target readers for solidarity.

Governmental signage is characterized by formal, instructive, authoritative use of language [5]. The relation between the writer and addressee are thus formal, serious (shown by diction) because the writer holds power and is akin to hegemony. The language is expected to show power instead of solidarity. To some instances, what Bachaus [1] cited proves to be confirmed with regards to our data in Mataram. However, there are growing tendencies for the public, government owned signage to go towards the other way, solidarity dominance [11]. In relation to this, we are interested in conducting deeper study on the language landscape which represents the public signage by focusing how writer's and addressee's relation surface of public signage [12].

Cases of solidarity function of language are performed in the signages related to:

a. Narkoba/education for fighting drug abuse (mother intensely listens to her kid whisper): the key idea is that the orientation for education in drug abuse recovery is that it should touching the heart instead of purely mental state. In addition, the education is emphasized more in family life or parental involvement (Fig. 4). The signage exposes an invitation to the heart by listening and caring mother to share with the kids. Power sharing between the two parties is more like a power sharing between two equal in which the more powerful parental) sacrifice their ego and status for the sake of the less powerful kids) to meet mutual relation. The situation expected to happen would be trustworthy and released. Implied message out of the signage is so far the parents are too instructive (more talkative), sharing less time for listening and it is now time to communicate in its truest form.

b. A girl standing-bowing by the signage in a park (Fig. 5). The figure promotes solidarity by appealing to romantic invitation of a sweet seventeen addressing her partners. Such language is expected to arouse demanding effect on the part of the prospective readers. The Object exposed/promoted are natural beauty, in which metaphorical and literal facts are fuseded. The language diction constitutes slang and highly informal in nature. The language is expected to reach the potential addressee, the juvenily group. By applying such informal, slank terms the expression reaches its open states

Fig. 4. Parental Improvement

touch the heart and emotional state of the reader. In so doing the signage intended invite in a collegial manner to care about beauty, harmonizing mother nature (the woods, the trees) and girl who would make a caring, charming and welcoming the future mother. In this way, there is expected a balancing in the treatment between the mother earth and the future mother.

c. Police notice and warning on accident experienced by Mark Marques (Fig. 7) features police welcome and friendly address to the youth. The most expected impact is to promote the image of police as friends, parental to the riders instead of as military figure. Police take a collegial stance in relation to the public.

d. Police notice *jatuh di aspal tak seindah jatuh cinta* (Fig. 7) strongly suggests the jocular and cool language of the police. Police are not monstrous anymore to the public. It is highly expected that from now on, the police are here and now accompanying the public.

Intension of the signage in Fig. 7 is more oriented toward affectionate, touching the heart instead of mind and unfortunately risking truth quality. The images that is intended to manifest is an image of civilian Police (jocular) and this friendly police address the public to have romantic relation (close, intimate).

Fig. 5. A girl standing-bowing by the signage in a park

Intended goal of such signage is to offer: solidarity. The foregrounding of solidarity in such jocular manner should be taken with extra-care. On the one hand, the signage promotes the image of Police and riders as being equal. On the other hand the signage can be misleading and risky. Such white lies may lead to the contradictory perception. On the one hand police might be charming but less dignified because they make white lies. The lies although a white one remains a lie, it leads to the decrease in psychological trustworthiness.

2.6   New Order Regime, the Police, Social Concerns and Communication

The New Order regime, Suharto's regime was characterized by totalitarian system, a total control of people's life. The government has a full control on almost every aspect of human affair in the republic of Indonesia. During his era, positive development topped the best achievement in the national development including life expectancy, education, technology and socio-cultural and military lives. Indonesia lead Asian and was the most respected one among the emerging force in Asia next to Japan and China. Overall, Indonesian supremacy created the nostalgic landscape [12] of New Order regime makes superior picturesque on contemporary people during 70th and 80th.

Indonesia enjoyed economic boom and the majority of people benefit a better improvement in their social condition. Our credit is highly addressed to Soeharto's achievement. However, life is never perfect, every bright sight is accompanied by the

dark side whether it is in a background or foreground state. In health, there follows the shadow of sickness, positive is paired with negative, in the same way good lives side by side with badness (that's what is believed in Yin Yang) and other universal values. A case in point is what happened with our republic lives. The success in New Order regime was haunted by the latent danger. Government was so powerful, they extremely controlled every aspect of the people's business. Government power is implemented by the so called military control in which Police used to be integrated in the military commands. Police as an institution which directly touch the lowest ground in our national infrastructure enjoyed a full power to control social system. They are the extension and the real copy of the Regime heartbeat. Here comes the principle into application, power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. In their full access for power, the power combined lust individual motives, police as individual grew overact and counterproductive, and such crawls to the institution as a whole, belief it or not. On the level of the grass root the police were in weird relation with the people especially the people on the road, to mention the real events. Police can stop and fine you anytime anywhere with or without legal basis. Firstly, they stopped you and asked the registration, whether or not you got license. If everything is okay, then they could find ways to legitimize 'getting your money', such as searching the valve cap or anything that is unlikely to be there in your vehicle just to justify the fine (not registered fine). For sure there good police, but the general impression is usually derived from the bad conducts.

In general terms, police emerged as a monster who can destroy your business and in people's perception rob you 'legally'. One of the quintessentially victims in such cases is the public transport operators/drivers who are made the ATM. Whisper turns in to melody among the driver with dirty words followed among the operators and indeed in such silent conversations the passengers seemed to agree with the drivers. Very often in the car during the travel passenger added their own experience in dealing with the police, and this is negative in nature. My car was stopped many times by the police on my way to Mataram. In each 'stopping' the driver showed the registrations in a pocket which is inserted sum of money. The police on 'duty' skillfully grab the money and returned the pocket to the driver. In a single route driver spent twice or thrice bribes, you can just imagine how bribery turned as routine. Its ultimate danger is more to the attitude; we in that way fail to perceive bribery as bribe anymore. It turns later as legal income. Very often it is rationalized with such and such justification. Social whisper intensified, perception got established and thus in its turn it surfaced and impacted public distrust to the police both as individual and institution. Such national and long-lasting disaster unfortunately destroyed the police. People in general and mainly the people on the road perceived the police, the cop more as terror or threat. They are frightened instead of afraid of police. The 'respect' they performed before the police is indeed a hatred inside the minds [13]. Instead of being secured in the presence before the police, their presence is a nuisance. A nation in this regards is surely a fail state. To tell the truth police is perceived more as a legal robber in peoples mind.

It makes sense, and old truck, attracts our mind with its graffiti voluntarily socialize 'police article' by quoting police rule (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6. Graffiti voluntarily socialize 'police article'

2.7 Public Distrust and Police Communication Reform

The Ultimate of such distrust and hatred went nation-wide, and it makes sense that what happened during the reformation era is indeed mostly targeted towards the police in addition to the central government. Hatred to the police surfaced explicitly with distinct verbal language. The government specifically are made to listen to what the people say. We thank honestly from our deepest heart, the police accommodate and realize the 'wrong conduct' taking place so far. Officially, the police was reorganized, it used to be integrated in military organization, now it is positioned as independent department. Such a positive solution is intended to avoid government intervention in police affairs. In such position, analysts claim that police is more civic in nature. Police are expected to be civilian instead of being militaristic approach in dealing with the civilians, in dealing with public affairs. The shift in orientation is reflected in signages published by the police department which promote the solidarity approach which is highly marked in diction [14, 15]. One positive contribution of reformation is reflected in the reformation of police organization. Its separation from the military division, allows police greater access for internal reorganization and structure. Police slowly but surely gets on the track, getting closer to people's heart.

Linguistic landscape indicates and notes how police work seriously toward winning people support and cooperation to their program. More and more civil-oriented programs to be realized and placed on the ground, the grass root. Police has been trying to improve their image by changing their verbal method of communication. This is reflected by the public signage, which significantly shifts from militaristic word choice to more solidarity diction (figure available).

(a)

(b)

Fig. 7. **(a), (b)** Police notice "*jatuh di aspal tak seindah jatuh cinta*"

2.8 Metaphorical Extension

The linguistic landscape also reveals the widely applied strategy in making concrete abstract ideas such as the use of metaphorical extension [16]. For instance, the stunning effect of the rujak has on the consumer is exaggerated and dramatize by the word kemeng. Kemeng is a mental state in which someone fails to pay attention on his surrounding simply because he cannot hear. His ears are filled by the single sound in the head. The rujak which is notably spicy creates such wonderful effect when consumed by which having the spicy *rujak* you are warranted to share the specific experience you

are supposed to enjoy. You taken to fly to the moon and forget your complicated noisy surrounding. The spicy *rujak* helps you in solitude and enjoy the experience you deserve.

3 Conclusion

LL has been revealed to be functional in mediating local richness both by the private and local government information. The success in the communication, in spite of the potential disadvantage of being counterproductive (police case), is supported by the linguistic strategies which involves the trends toward a more solidarity, equal, welcoming use of language promoted. The majority of the signage is observed to shift from the highly formal manner of language by the official and governmental bodies towards collegial relationship (the use of informal, slank and vernacular diction).

The study also reveals that the representation of the values is made possible by the application of such strategies as metaphorical extension of abstract concept, linguistic solidarity, understatement for negative effect in relation to polarity, and the accommodation of emotional affection. LL in that way has been proven to show it maximal functioning in mediating social cultural affairs.

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