

A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS: LANGUAGE AND MEANING IN PAKUWON TRADE CENTER'S FOOD COURT

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ABSTRACT

The linguistic landscape has emerged to be a significant field of research in terms of it depicting the visualization and socialization of languages by the community. With the ongoing globalization and cross-cultural migration in the contemporary societies, commercial spaces are becoming more multilingual, using signs to convey both informational and symbolic messages. The study is guided by Linguistic Landscape theory, particularly the informational and symbolic functions introduced by Landry and Bourhis and developed further by Gorter and Pütz. These frameworks help explain how signs not only convey practical information but also express prestige, cultural identity, and ideological meanings. The study gathered photographic evidence of signs in the food court and classified them according to the language variety, and functional uses using a qualitative descriptive approach. The information was interpreted using visual, functional and semiotic interpretation. The findings, consisting 65 data, reveal a highly multilingual environment dominated by English for both informational clarity and symbolic prestige. Other languages, such as Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Arabic, French, and Latin appear strategically to evoke cultural authenticity and enhance brand identity. The findings show that the language environment of PTC Food Court has a hybrid identity of localized accessibility, global orientation and cultural diversity.

Keywords: *commercial space; language functions; language variety; linguistic landscape; multilingual signage*

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Landscape includes the ways in which languages are displayed in public, mostly using signs, advertisements, billboards, road names, shop signs and notices (Gaho, 2022). It may also include spoken and media-based language, according to the framework researchers use. Through its study of written language in public spaces, Linguistic Landscape (LL) studies forms a distinct and cross-disciplinary section of linguistics. Unlike the areas of linguistics looking at spoken language, grammar or learning, linguistic Landscape sees how language is used in society and reflects major issues of identity, power and culture. One emerging area of research in the sociolinguistics of multilingual communities is linguistic landscapes, or the visual manifestation of languages in the spaces of the city, in signs, billboards, advertisements, and graffiti (Wardhaugh, 2015). All these visual displays are not mere reflections of the official status of the languages, multilingual composition of the population, and interrelationship between various languages. Rather, the digitization of languages and their activities in the public domain reflects more basic social ideologies of the languages and their speakers (Wardhaugh, 2015).

The proposed research on the Pakuwon Trade Center Food Court will help address this gap by offering a perspective on how linguistic landscape as a form of communication and as an embodiment of urban commercial identity and language ideology can be observed in contemporary Surabaya. Based on the background above, the research is conducted to address the following questions:

1. What languages are used in the public signs of the Food Court of Pakuwon Trade Center?

2. What do these signs function as in the public spaces in Pakuwon Trade Center Food Court?
3. What do these signs reflect the attitude and identity of the community in Pakuwon Trade Center's Food Court?

This study scopes within the field of Linguistic Landscape (LL). This research focuses on analyzing public signs located in the food court area of Pakuwon Trade Center (PTC) in Surabaya, and focuses only on visible written language, as it aims to describe how language functions and conveys meaning in a commercial public setting. Nonetheless, there are some limitations associated with this study. The research is only limited to the signs appeared at food court section of Pakuwon Trade Center and not extending to other sections of the mall like retail stores, entertainment area, and exterior advertising. It is restricted to visible written text and does not include oral communication or customer language behavior. Also, the information that will be obtained is the signage which was present at the time of observation hence it would be out of scope to scrutinize any changes that may be made to the linguistic landscape in the future.

Earlier works on linguistic landscape of Surabaya have mostly concerned ethnic areas, transportation centers and tourism destinations, but little has been given to commercial inner environments like shopping malls and food court. As an example, Herianto (2020) studied multi-ethnic areas such as Ampel, Kya-Kya and Pakuwon and found the dominance of languages and their informational or symbolic roles but did not focus on the micro-linguistic setting such as a closed food court, where multilingual signs are interacting more dynamically with branding and consumer identity. Likewise, Eliza (2025) examined Kya Kya (Kembang Jepun), but her study focused on the outdoor and public spaces, rather than semi-private commercial settings. Hermoyo et al. (2023) on Pasar Turi Station and Laela (2021) on tourism sites in Surabaya studied the issue of diversity and role of language in transportation and tourism, finding patterns of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signage and their functions as information or symbolic tools. Thus, a research gap exists in exploring how the language choices and functions of signs in indoor commercial environments such as food courts are indicative of consumer-targeting strategies, multicultural identities, and sociolinguistic attitudes of business owners. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Identify and categorize the languages used in the public signs of the Food Court of Pakuwon Trade Center.
2. Analyze the functions of these signs within the public spaces of the Pakuwon Trade Center's Food Court, whether informational or symbolic.
3. Analyze the attitude and identity of the community in Pakuwon Trade Center's Food Court.

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative Approach focuses on description and interpretation rather than numbers (Creswell, 2018). In this study, the qualitative approach is used to understand how language is used in public signs at Pakuwon Trade Center's food court and how it shows language pattern and variety, and sign function. The researcher observes and interprets the signs to explain how language works in real situations. This approach is suitable because it helps the researcher describe and understand the function and meaning of the signs in their actual context. The research design used in this study is observation. Observation is a way of collecting data by watching and recording behaviors or things as they naturally happen (Creswell, 2018).

In this study, the researcher only observes the public signs in the Pakuwon Trade Center food court without interacting with the people or shop owners. The observation is non-participant, meaning the researcher does not take part in any activity but only records what is seen. The data are collected by taking photographs and notes of the signs that appear in the area. These signs are then analyzed based on the languages pattern and their functions. The written texts and visual elements of language

appearing on the public signs in the Pakuwon Trade Center food court in Surabaya are the data in this research. The data sources are from the signs themselves, store name boards, menu boards, banners and posters and any other written language display. The data are selected, as they reflect the way language is employed in the commercial space and the way language identifies and conveys style of communication in the polylingual context. The study only considers visible written signs in the food court area.

The researcher made first hand observations and took notes in the form of photographs of all the signs that had written language in the food court setting. The images were captured with a handphone camera in order to make them easily accessible and convenient in the process of collecting the data. All the signs have been included on the name boards of the store, menu boards, posters, adverts, direction boards and banners. The signs were noted accompanied by their respective location and context to help make the correct classification on analysis. A total of 65 images of visible written signs were gathered and stored to be analyzed further. By using Microsoft Excel, the research easily sorted the data out based on the language and function that will be later added to Google Drive. Lastly, the researcher uploaded the images of the signs to Google Drive and sorted all of them out on folders based on groups of their language pattern and variety, and sign functions.

After uploading on Google Drive, the analysis was started by sorting and systematizing all the linguistics features on each sign and then the classification of the signs by their linguistic structure and functionality. The researcher uses Microsoft Excel as an instrument to sort the data of the signs. Each of these signs was then interpreted and identified according to the language pattern and variety, and sign function find out how language application portrays identity, modernity, and cultural meaning in the PTC food court. The researcher makes a data code used to identify the data that is used in both discussion and appendix. The coding formula is Data Number AB (A refers to the language variety, and B refers to the sign function). The data has a number that shows the amount of data found and as an order based on the appearance on the discussion and appendix. The language variety coding consists of Mo (Monolingual), Bilingual (B), and Multilingual (Mu). The Sign function coding consists of Informational (I), Symbolic (S), and Symbolic & Informational (SI). For instance, if a sign is Monolingual Informational, the coding will be MoI, or if a sign is Bilingual Symbolic, the coding will be BS. Lastly, conclusions were drawn to demonstrate the preponderant language trends and the social linguistic significance of the language use in the business society context.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section exhibits and reads data of linguistic landscape in Pakuwon Trade Center (PTC) Food Court in Surabaya. The different ways of using language and the meanings contained in language are looked at through 65 signboards, banners and directional signs that are located in the food court. Some fundamental sociolinguistic dimensions are used to make up the discussion, they include language pattern and language variety, and sign functions. Through the multilingual and stylistically eclectic signage, this research paper provides the insight into how the language selection in PTC Food Court acts as an extension of the general ideological standpoints, sociocultural preferences and commercial policies in the constantly changing urban environment.

3.1 Language Pattern & Language Variety

This section presents the overall patterns of language use found in the linguistic landscape of the PTC Food Court. Based on the collected 65 data, the analysis focuses on identifying the languages displayed on sign and examining how these languages are combined within individual signs. The classification includes monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs, allowing for a systematic overview of linguistic diversity in the food court environment.

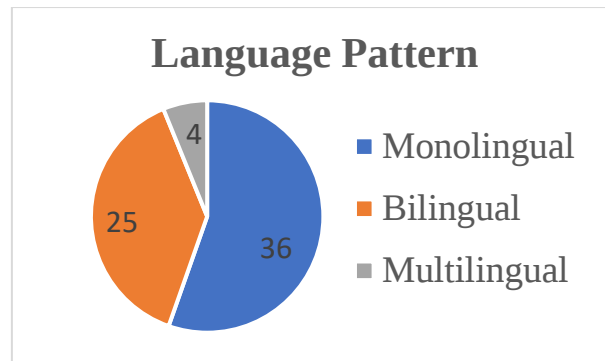


Figure 3.1 Chart of Language Pattern

The pie chart indicates that monolingual signs are in majority in the PTC Food Court, with the largest proportion of 36 signs, and then there are 25 bilingual signs, and the final 4 multilingual signs. This shows that majority of business owners would rather identify their brand with one language that can be English or Indonesian. The use of bilingual and multilingual signs demonstrates effects of globalization and multiculturalism in the food court set up. The dominant signs are monolingual, representing the fact that the majority of the shop or brand boards are written in a single language and then it is either English or Indonesian, depending on the target groups and the image of the brand. The bilingual signs suggest that there is a common blend of English and another language (Indonesian, Chinese or Japanese) indicating the impact of the global business tendencies and multicultural identity in the mall.

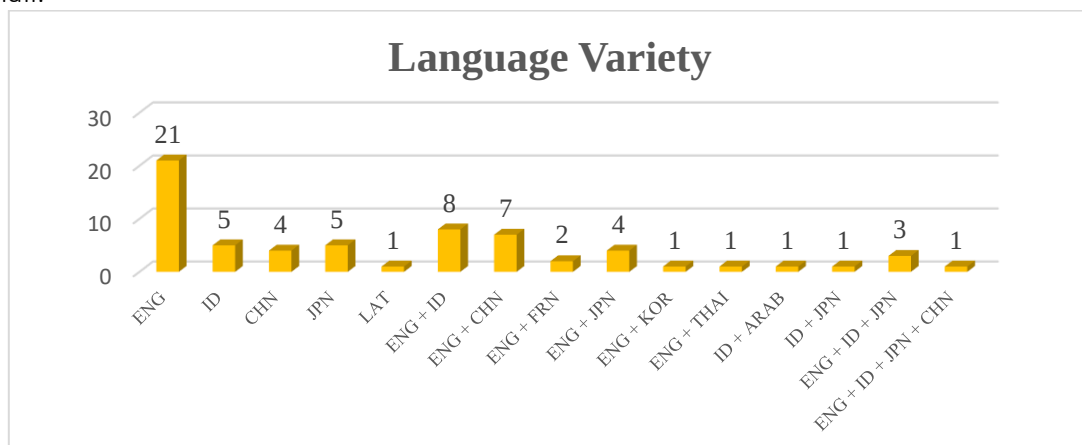


Figure 3.2 Chart of Language Variety

The bar chart has shown that the most used language is English which appears in 21 signs either as an individual language or as a mixture of languages. English-Indonesian and English-Chinese are the most widespread bilingual variations, then there are English-Japanese bilingual combinations. These findings are important because English is a symbol of being modern and prestigious, whereas inclusion of local and Asian languages is an indication of cultural diversity and business approaches to appeal to diverse audiences. The most common language, in monolingual and mixed versions, is used in 21 signs; English. This points to its high status in business naming and marketing. The most common pairs of English and other languages are English-Indonesian (8 signs), and English- Chinese (7 signs).

The language pattern and language variety refer to the way specific languages are presented and mixed in the form of the sign boards of the general use (Gorter, 2006). The language environment of the Food Court in Pakuwon Trade Center forms part of the linguistic landscape in this research to illustrate how languages co-exist and interact to form social meaning. The manifestation of language in the open space is a reflection of the social reality in the community, and it shows the way multilingualism works in an urban context (Wardhaugh, 2015).

3.1.1 Monolingual

Monolingual signs that have only one language show linguistic superiority and governmental power in the public space (Gorter, 2006). Such signs are frequently used in the PTC Food Court using only English or Indonesian to gain a definite identity and branding. The selection of language implies social meaning; in this way, the fact that English is used represents the notion of modernity and prestige, and Indonesian emphasizes nationalism and ease of use (Holmes, 2013). Monolingual signage is the most commonly utilized signage in this business environment, and this is the evidence of the sociolinguistic hierarchy at work, where a single language is used to create the image of oneness and purposeful intentions to a target audience.

3.1.1.a English



Figure 3.3 Data 1 (MoI 2)

The “PICK UP” sign is written entirely in English and functions as a simple instruction for customers to collect their orders at a specific counter. The wording is clear, short, and easy to understand, which makes it highly effective for communication in a busy food court environment. The use of English instead of Indonesian indicates that the shop aims to create a modern and international impression.



Figure 3.4 Data 2 (MoI 4)

The “Order Here” sign is also written fully in English and serves as an instruction for customers to place their orders at a specific counter. Its short and polite phrasing makes it easily recognizable to anyone familiar with basic English expressions, especially in a commercial setting. Like “PICK UP,” this phrase is widely used in many international food chains, which helps to create a sense of familiarity and consistency in customer experience. The use of English reflects an effort to make the brand appear more global, appealing to modern consumers who associate English with good service.



Figure 3.5 Data 3 (MoS 2)

The sign “BAMBOO Traditional Food” uses English as its main language to represent the name and identity of the establishment. The word “BAMBOO” is presented in bold red letters beside a green bamboo illustration, visually reinforcing the brand name. The phrase “traditional food” gives customers an immediate understanding of what the place offers, which is a local-style dish, and its use of English adds a modern touch to the overall presentation. This combination of English words with a local cultural concept suggests that the establishment wants to highlight tradition while maintaining a global and contemporary image.

3.1.1.b Indonesian



Figure 3.6 Data 4 (MoS 9)

The “Roti’O” is a monolingual Indonesian display with a word “roti” meaning “bread” and this tells the people to what the primary product being sold is. Although the name has the foreign-styled apostrophe and uppercase letter “O”, the major name is still in the Indonesian language, which demonstrates that the brand accepts the local language, but still allows a modern and fashionable look. This shows how the Indonesian language can be adapted to show national identity and at the same time adapt to the modern globalized commercial setting of the PTC Food Court.



Figure 3.7 Data 5 (MoS 14)

Another such sign of the monolingual Indonesian display, incorporating elements of foreign culture, is the sign of the “Kebab Turki Baba Rafi”. The term “Kebab Turki” is a blend of an Indonesian word with a foreign borrowed one and this illustrates the way local language has a natural absorbing nature of foreign foods.

3.1.1.c Chinese



Figure 3.8 Data 6 (MoS 5)

The “X.O Suki” sign is a combination of the Romanized Chinese with modern typography. “Suki” is a Chinese term used to refer to a hot pot dish in China. The brand name “X.O” can have a reference to high quality which will put the restaurant in a position with excellence and sophistication. Therefore, it fuses both Chinese food vocabulary and international brands to appeal to the local and foreign clients.



Figure 3.9 Data 7 (MoS 10)

The Sign “Nam Heong” is a mixture of Chinese characters (南香) and Romanized letters. Despite the sign has two different scripts (Roman and Mandarin Scripts), the sign is still considered as a monolingual. Dual communicative nature of the two writing systems is that both Chinese and non-Chinese customers can be attracted by the writing systems either using their native characters or using the Roman alphabet.

3.1.1.d Japanese



Figure 3.10 Data 8 (MoS 4)

The “Tori-YO” sign consists of a mixture of Romanized Japanese and graphics. “Tori” is the Japanese word meaning chicken and it is in line with the specialization of the restaurant. The font is stylized and the colors are vivid, which makes the environment friendly and relaxed, which is a characteristic feature of the Japanese culture of street food.

3.1.1.e Latin



Figure 3.11 Data 9 (MoS 8)

The restaurant name “Solaria” is derived from the Latin root “Solaris”, meaning “of the sun”. According to the owner, Aliuyanto, the term conveys warmth, brightness, and vitality, qualities that are appealing in the food and hospitality industry.

3.1.2 Bilingual

Bilingual signs are used which involve the use of two languages and reflects the interaction of local and global speakers (Gorter, 2006). The attempts at reaching different audiences with preserving the international image, the combinations like English-Indonesian or English-Chinese are offered in the PTC Food Court. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) believe that this type of variation indicates the level of social identity and recognition by the audience. These bilingual signs are not only informative, but symbolic, they represent a compromise between prestige in the world and familiarity in the local.

3.1.2.a English & Indonesian



Figure 3.12 Data 10 (BI 1)

The banner is in both the Indonesian and English language to convey precise and interesting information. The title, “Mari Berbagi Kebahagiaan” (Let’s share happiness) is written using Indonesian so as to emotionally touch the local consumers whereas the names of the products such as Special Shrimp Spicy and Great Braised Chicken are written using English to depict sophistication and standardization.



Figure 3.13 Data 11 (BI 6)

This signboard is written in both English (No Outside Food or Drinks) and Indonesian (Halal Indonesia) to ensure that everyone who has visited is able to understand the message. The official certification of “Halal Indonesia” is depicted in the upper part to enforce national religious standards and consumer confidence. Under it, the phrase is written in English that speaks directly to the population in a polite but strict manner so that even the non-Indonesian speakers would be able to abide by the rules.

3.1.2.b English & Chinese



Figure 3.14 Data 12 (BS 15)

The sign “Onde Onde Maker” is a combination of a Chinese word “Onde Onde” and the English word “Maker”. The word “Onde” is derived from Chinese script which means “round”. This combination forms a modern and catchy brand image that glorifies the local cuisine and attracts modern consumers. “Onde Onde” is repeated to emphasise familiarity and national pride and Maker is used to enhance creativity and internationalism.



Figure 3.15 Data 13 (BS 4)

The “海底捞火锅 Haidilao Hot Pot” sign has a perfect representation of the bilingual system with both English and Chinese being used together. The Chinese (海底捞火锅/ Hǎidǐ lāo huǒguō) writing emphasizes the origin and authenticity of the restaurants and will attract any customers who speak the Mandarin language or understand Chinese foods. In the meantime, the English version “Haidilao Hot Pot” has an informational role to non-Chinese readers, which is very inclusive.



Figure 3.16 Data 14 (BS 5)

The mark “三六九 369 Shanghai Dumpling and Noodle” is a mixture of both numerical and linguistic elements which are a combination of Chinese as well as English. Chinese numerals are shown in the red vertical rectangle on the left (三六九/sān liù jiǔ), which directly translates to “369” which stands out in English next to this number.

3.1.2.c English & French



Figure 3.17 Data 15 (BS 16)

The sign of “Monsieur Spoon” directly reflects the French aspects but can be easily read by the English speakers. “Monsieur”, which is “Mister” in English, has cultural implications of elegance and formality, which creates the image of the French patisserie culture. “Spoon”, on the other hand, is English and allows the non-French audience to receive a semantic clarity between the style and understanding.



Figure 3.18 Data 16 (BS 17)

The sign "Paris Baguette" combines both English and French words to create the image of authenticity and the world quality. The use of “Paris” as a symbolic allusion to the culinary excellence immediately makes people associate the concept of elegance, romance, and high-quality bakery. At the same time, the name of the brand, "Baguette" gives the name a distinctly French meaning to the brand, despite the fact that some of the customers may not speak French.

3.1.2.d English & Japanese



Figure 3.19 Data 17 (BS 1)

The signage "Gold Cake" has a writing in Japanese Katakana on top (ゴールドケーキ) and English on the is written as “Original Japanese Cake”. These two languages labeling supports the cultural nature of the product, underlining its Japanese heritage, and yet making sure that non-Japanese users of this product can tell what it is all about.



Figure 3.20 Data 18 (BS 9)

The sign “Chikuro” fuses English letters with Japanese Katakana characters (チクロ/Chikuro) with the help of the tagline “WORLD’S 1st LONG FILLED CRUNCHY CHICKEN”. The combination of scripts and linguistic associations of the brand with Japanese culinary creativity makes it readable across the international audience as well. The Katakana text is authentic and makes it seem like it was created or inspired by the Japanese, but the English tagline is future-directed, providing lexical clarity and encouraging innovation.

3.1.2.e English & Korean



Figure 3.21 Data 19 (BS 10)

The sign combines the elements of English and Korean language with colors and the playful design that catches the eyes. “SEUTA”, or “스타” in Korean, means “star” and the brand name is visually enforced in two alphabets. “HK WAFFLE”, which means “Hong Kong Waffle” and “Love Life Like Waffle” are used as English words and slogans, which introduce a globalized and light-hearted tone, which welcomes the audiences, both local and international.

3.1.2.f English & Thai



Figure 3.22 Data 20 (BS 2)

The sign " Thai Coconut Pancake" is written in big and white English letters with a Thai translation under it (แพนเค้กมะพร้าวไทย/Phæn khêk maphrâw thiy). The English usage is useful as those who do not speak Thai can find the name of the product and its nationality with ease since it is spelled Thai.

3.1.2.g Indonesian & Arabic



Figure 3.23 Data 21 (BI 4)

The sign has the logo of the “Majelis Ulama Indonesia” (MUI) with the word “Halal” written in big Arabic letters in the center and encircled by the Indonesian text “Majelis Ulama Indonesia”. This two-language presentation has an informational role. Arabic means religious cleanness and compliance with Islamic food regulations whereas Indonesian can be used to give institutional clarity to local listeners. The circular design and green color of the sign have a cultural meaning, they represent faith, safety and harmony that is linked to Islam and the national identity of Indonesia.

3.1.2.h Indonesian & Japanese



Figure 3.24 Data 22 (BS 8)

The sign "RamenYA!" combines Japanese Katakana and Kanji (ラーメン屋/Rāmen-ya) with Indonesian linguistics. The Japanese text is translated as "Ramen", and the word "YA!" at the same time serves both as a Japanese particle (屋) and also as an Indonesian interjection that can be translated as "yes!" or a friendly exclamation. It is a very smart linguistic game that allows crossing two cultures in the same word, which makes the brand have a distinctive bilingual personality.

3.1.3 Multilingual

Multilingual signs use three or more languages and depict the inclusiveness and cultural diversity visually (Gorter, 2012). These signs are not numerous in the PTC Food Court and usually pertain to international or fusion brands, which focus on the cosmopolitan identity. The fact that there is more than one language written down represents a globalized language environment where more than one identity can successfully coexist together (Gorter, 2023). Therefore, the usage of multilingual signs here depicts the multicultural nature of the city of Surabaya in terms of commercial character and shows how linguistic diversity serves as a semiotic means of expression, which conveys openness, creativity, and international orientation.

3.1.3.a English, Indonesian, & Japanese



Figure 3.25 Data 23 (Mul 2)

The sign has the name of the restaurant "Yoshinoya Japanese Restaurant" displayed in English which is the most widely spoken language in the world hence it identifies its international brand name and it is easily recognizable to the international customers. The English slogan, "serving over 200,000,000 bowls a year, Yoshinoya is fast becoming a cultural icon in Japan", serves to be a marketing slogan that makes the brand more successful and culturally valuable. The informational purpose of this paragraph is to provide the background information and link the Japanese brand with the Indonesian audience. Lastly, the Japanese aspect, the name of the restaurant: Yoshinoya and the smaller Japanese characters have cultural significance, connecting the brand with the Japanese cultural background in which it is a restaurant.



Figure 3.26 Data 24 (Mul 1)

The sign is a promotional sign displayed in English, Indonesian, and Japanese. The English slogans, which are “Yoshinoya Tori Don Crispy Chicken Bowl”, and the menu name below the bowls, shows to international customers to expand the brand’s identity more. The Indonesian scripts, such as the hashtag at the bottom of the sign, serve as a addition for local customers to find out what’s the dishes are. As for the Japanese script, it functions as a cultural heritage for a Japanese restaurant and as a symbol of Japanese dishes.

3.1.3.b English, Indonesian, Japanese, & Chinese



Figure 3.27 Data 25 (Mul 4)

The sign, with a list of different restaurants, is a navigation tool sociolinguistic report on the rich culinary and cultural diversity of the place where it is found. It is a combination where English, Indonesian, Japanese and Chinese interact functionally to display a local identity that is constructed around global tastes and localized tradition. The most dominant one is the depiction of East Asian culinary, mostly denoted by Japanese and Chinese words. Brand names such as the “Okiwalla Sushi” and “Ippudo” show the status and reputation of authentic Japanese food worldwide. The Chinese touch is also present in the names like “Sauerkraut Fish”, “Chien Kang Tang”, and “XO Suki”. The sign is placed in the local context by means of the inclusion of Indonesian names. The national brand is popular, “Kopi Kenangan”, which means “Coffee of Memories” in English and makes the international offerings of the company be related to a well-known and heritage-based beverage. Another Indonesian term, which defines local ownership or localized theme, is the word “Fajar”, or (Dawn) in English. It uses English as the lingua franca and the main media of international brands. Words such as Signature, Fish, the use of English alphabet in all transliteration and so forth, make it universally legible. English offers an unifying and neutral platform on top of the varied language bases, enabling fast access and wayfinding among a cosmopolitan client base.

4.2 Sign Functions

This section discusses the functional roles of the signs identified in the PTC Food Court's linguistic landscape. Drawing on the distinction between informational and symbolic functions, the analysis categorizes each sign based on its primary communicative purpose. The distribution of sign functions is presented through graphical data to illustrate the extent to which signage is used for practical communication or for expressing identity, prestige, and branding.

The sign classification into informational and symbolic functions is based on linguistic landscape framework suggested by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and developed by Gorter (2006, 2023). The categorization is not based only on the language that is used in the signs, but on the main communicative goal that every sign fulfills in the context of food court. Informational signs are identified based on their role in conveying practical and functional information necessary for customers. These signs typically provide details such as product names, menu items, prices, ingredients, or operational instructions that assist customers in making decisions or navigating the commercial space. A sign is categorized as informational when its meaning can be clearly understood and its function remains effective without reliance on aesthetic design or symbolic association (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). Symbolic signs are classified based on their function in expressing identity, prestige, and cultural or social meaning. Symbolic signs often emphasize brand names, logos, stylized typography, or the use of foreign languages that are not strictly necessary for comprehension. In the PTC Food Court, the frequent use of English and other foreign languages such as Japanese and Chinese functions symbolically to convey modernity, global orientation, and culinary authenticity. These signs do not primarily aim to inform customers about specific products or services, but instead construct an image and evoke particular cultural associations (Landry and Bourhis, 1997).

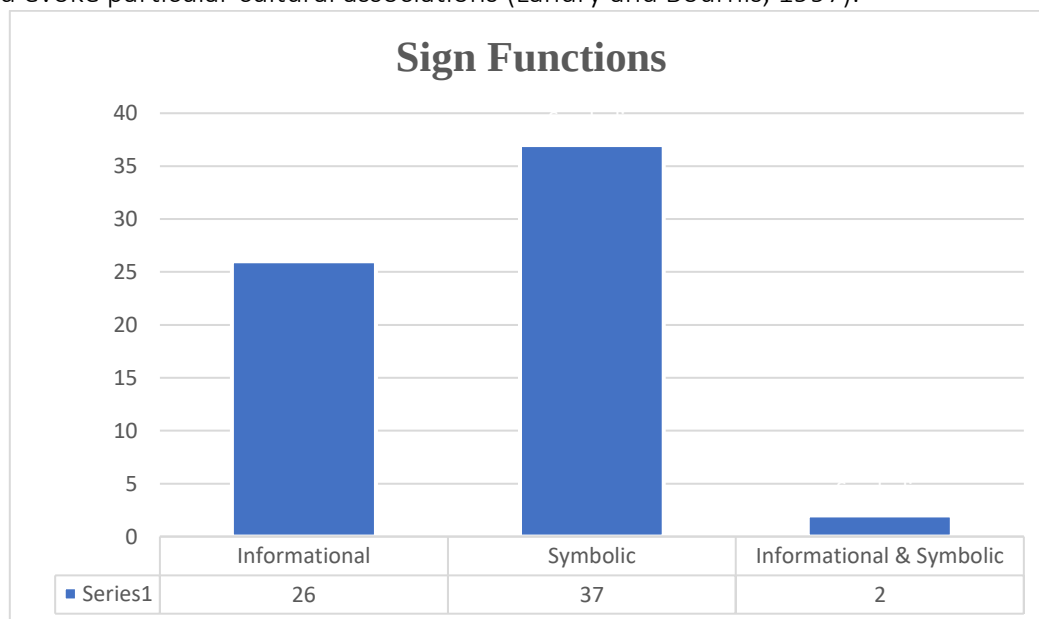


Figure 3.28 Chart of Sign Functions

The chart proves that the symbolic signs (37) are more than informational ones (26) as only two signs are used both. This implies that the majority of the signs in the food court of PTC are not only meant to deliver information, but also to elicit identity and style as well as brand image. The symbolic role takes the pre-eminence of 37 signs, indicating that the majority of signs are to convey image, identity or cultural values instead of merely informing. These contain the names of shops in English, or other foreign scripts that demonstrate either modern or ethnic identity. Informational signs (26), like menu or directions are aimed at being clear and accessible and two signs combine both functions, in most cases, menu signs that combine aesthetic design with useful information.

There are two primary uses of the public signs and they are: informational and symbolic (Gorter, 2006). Informational function presents the practical communication and the symbolic one presents the cultural values, ideology and social identity. According to Gorter (2023), the two functions tend to overlap in business areas where language performs aesthetic and persuasive functions. The linguistic signs that are used in the PTC Food Court are mostly symbolic meaning that business owners can use language to create brand image and demonstrate prestige. Here, the part discusses the operations of the two functions as an individual and combined entity in the signage under observation.

3.2.1 Informational

Informational signs are meant to guide, identify or give commands with practical communicative roles (Gorter, 2006). This can be in the form of menu boards, direction signs or advertisements that give the customers the necessary information. With the assistance of such linguistic performances, people can navigate commercial facilities, orienting and interacting in the open space (Putz, 2019). The informational signage in the PTC Food Court is most likely to be written in Indonesian to make sense or English to be understood by everyone, which demonstrates the role of language in establishing a communicative gap between different customers.



Figure 3.29 Data 26 (Mol 1)

This sign is written in Indonesian and is directly telling the customers about certain rules, that is, not to bring outside food and drinks and do not allow to bring animals to the dining area. The message is composed in a polite but firm way, at first it starts with the word “Mohon Maaf” to express courtesy and then with the definite prohibitive words in capital letters to make it clear. Its clarity is explained well by the use of familiar objects (like a red prohibition circle with crossed-out photos). This is an indication of the informational role because it provides simple guidelines to ensure cleanliness and order in the food court. Its location at the entrance or at the dining area makes it visible and it does not create a misconception amongst the visitors.



Figure 3.30 Data 27 (Mol 7)

This English sign is a direct and visually attractive way of displaying information about the products. It has an image of a roasted chicken with brief descriptive statements that show the texture and quality of the food. The huge font size of product name attracts attention instantly, whereas the tag line is rather small and does not affect the product in any way, except describing it in an explicit manner using bright adjectives, such as crispy, juicy, and perfect. Having the price in the Indonesian currency also serves its informational function so that the customers have no doubts as to the nature of the offered product and its price.



Figure 3.31 Data 28 (BI 2)

This sign is a huge promotional billboard where vital business and product information is expressed. It is primarily written using the English language, but is mixed with Indonesian phrases such as the one known as “Hadir di 12 Negara and Di Seluruh Dunia”, as it focuses on the word global presence and global success of the restaurant. The key message in bold writing that includes the “6000+ outlet” and the number “40,000,000,000 Porsi Terjual” gives statistical information that supports the success and credibility of the brand. Existing in these details, the sign assumes a distinct informational task, it tells the customers the size of the brand, its fame, and its existence since 1878.

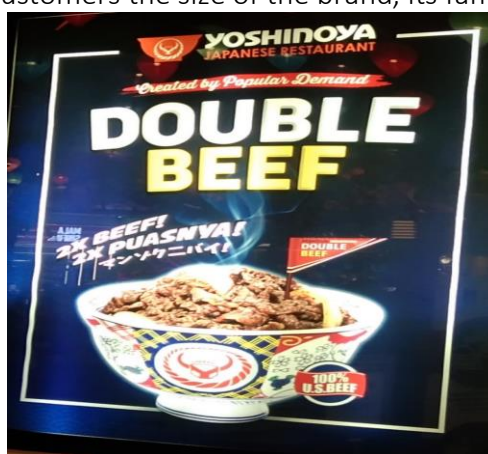


Figure 3.32 Data 29 (Mul 3)

This sign is a food promotion with the combination of text, images, and bilingual expressions. The most important informational element is the key phrase that is the “DOUBLE BEEF”, which helps to understand clearly what product is being sold. Such supporting texts such as “2x Lebih Puasnya” and “100% U.S. Beef” are additional descriptions which help customers to know the quality and quantity. Use of English makes the sign look international and modern whereas the Indonesian features render it familiar to the local customers. Overall, this display is a good informational sign, it provides the customers with what is being sold, highlights its main characteristics and supports the message.

3.2.2 Symbolic

Sign has symbolic meaning, which has values, prestige, and identity associated with the use of language (Landry and Bourhis in Gorter, 2006). The symbolic meaning goes beyond literal information and it is a cultural and ideological expression (Gorter, 2023). The prevalence of English and other foreign languages in the PTC Food court indicates a tendency to modernity and global acceptance and is also an indication of local scriptures which are culturally genuine. This conforms to Holmes (2013), who concludes that language choice executes social actions of identity creation. Therefore, the symbolic signs in this setting denote the way language is used as aesthetic and ideological signifier in branding.



Figure 4.33 Data 30 (MoS 6)

The sign “Fried Chicken Master” has a symbolic meaning of professionalism and the competence in preparing food. The association carried by the word “Master”, which is a symbol of superiority, confidence, and high-quality, places the brand in a superior position to compete in its category. The modern and international image projected here is assisted by the English language, which creates an impression in the mind of the customers that the brand is of global standards.



Figure 4.34 Data 31 (BS 11)

The House of Matcha sign consists of a mixture of English and Japanese writing and has a solid cultural and aesthetic identity. The Japanese characterizes provide the sense of authenticity and origin and the English below translation allows letting more people in and understand of what the Japanese letter means.



Figure 4.35 Data 32 (BS 3)

It is a symbol that reflects the prestige of the brand and its nationality, with the advantage to be Japanese with the phrase of its being “JAPAN’S No. 1 Beef Bowl”. Its massive font is very white and prominent on red, which represents national colors of Japan, as well as, a powerful pride. The message of the brand of “No.1” provides not only a sense of excellence and leadership but also transforms the use of language into a metaphor of superiority and genuineness.

3.2.3 Informational & Symbolic

There are signs that do an informational and symbolic role at the same time. In multilingual cities, the boundary between these functions is not always very clear since the visual language creates

meaning both in content and form (Gorter, 2023). Readable information is mixed with style foreign expressions in some of the menus and promotional boards within the PTC Food Court with regard to clarity and prestige. In this case, there are semiotic resources of language and design employed in such multimodal displays to capture attention and create identity (Putz, 2019). Thus, these two-purpose signs represent the example of how useful communication and cultural symbolism can co-exist in the commercial linguistic environment.



Figure 4.36 Data 33 (BSI 1)

The “Ci Pork” sign serves both informational and symbolic functions. From an informational standpoint, the sign provides essential business details such as the location “PTC Lt. UG blok E7 no 32–33”, contact numbers, and social media handle “@ciporkkerryuk”, which help customers easily find and reach the establishment. These practical elements show the sign’s role in direct communication, offering clarity and accessibility to potential customers. At the same time, the sign carries a strong symbolic dimension through its name and visual design. The playful pink pig character wearing a chef’s hat and apron represents friendliness and humor, creating a lighthearted and welcoming image. The choice of the word “Ci Pork”, a creative blend of local and English expression, gives the brand a catchy and memorable identity while signaling the type of food being served.

3.3 Language Identity and Attitude

The findings presented in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 reveal that the linguistic landscape of the PTC Food Court is shaped by deliberate language choices that reflect both the identity of the businesses and the attitudes of the community that occupies the space. The dominance of English, followed by Indonesian and several foreign languages such as Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Arabic, indicates that the food court functions as a cosmopolitan commercial environment rather than a purely local eating space.

From the perspective of business identity, the frequent use of English and other foreign languages, particularly Asian languages associated with specific cuisines, suggests that vendors aim to construct images of modernity, authenticity, and global belonging. Language choice is not neutral but performs social actions, including identity construction (Holmes, 2013). In this context, English symbolizes international prestige and trendiness, while languages such as Japanese or Chinese symbolize culinary authenticity. The fact that symbolic signs outnumber informational ones further implies that visual language is primarily used to project brand image and cultural value, not merely to convey practical information.

From the perspective of customer attitude, the acceptance and prevalence of multilingual signage imply that the food court community holds a positive attitude toward linguistic diversity and global culture. Customers are expected to recognize, tolerate, or even value foreign languages, even when full comprehension is not required. This aligns with Landry and Bourhis’s (1997) notion that symbolic functions of language reflect how a linguistic environment shapes and mirrors collective

attitudes. The presence of Indonesian alongside foreign languages also suggests that while global identity is emphasized, local accessibility and national identity remain important

The linguistic landscape of the PTC Food Court reflects a community that is urban, consumption-oriented, and globally aware. Language is used as a semiotic resource to align businesses with customer expectations of modern lifestyle, cultural diversity, and international taste. Thus, the findings imply that the food court is not only a place of eating but also a site where social identity, language attitude, and globalization intersect in everyday commercial practice.

4. CONCLUSION

The linguistic landscape of the PTC Food Court indicates how language can be used as a means of communication and as a way of cultural signification in a multicultural commercial setting. The multilingual signs in evidence, including Indonesian, English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Arabic, and Latin-form based languages along with local languages like Javanese demonstrates that the space is influenced by a wide range of languages. Both languages are used to achieve a different goal based on the circumstances under which they are used.

English is the most dominant and practical language that is used equally in the signs that contain directions, prohibitions or simple details about the products. This is an implication of its status as international language and primary means of the clarity and accessibility among the masses, and English is a prestigious and modern and branding language. The additional symbolic value is added by such foreign languages as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, French and Arabic. In food related signage, the languages bring out a sense of genuineness and aid in the creation of some cultural identities relating to food.

The numerous signs are executed both informational and symbolic functions. They do not only give useful information about their menus or product names but also give stylistic foreign phrases, scripts and design features to show prestige or authenticity of a culture. This intertwining of roles is indicative of the characteristics of multimodal commercial signage in which the use of language, typography and imagery combined to achieve attention and influence brand identity.

The interaction between informational and symbolic functions demonstrates that signage does more than convey practical messages; it also shapes perceptions, identities, and cultural meanings within the space. The findings support the idea that linguistic landscapes are socially constructed and reflective of the attitudes, values, and identities of both businesses and their customers.

Overall, the linguistic diversity of the PTC Food Court illustrates how language becomes a strategic resource in commercial settings, facilitating communication while simultaneously constructing cultural authenticity, market distinction, and a vibrant multilingual identity.

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