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The (In)Visibility of Torajan Language: A Study on Linguistic Landscape in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Torajan language is the heritage language of the Torajan people, which reflects the local wisdom and identity of the people. Yet, with the popularity of Indonesian and English as the lingua franca, there is a concern for the domain, status, and vitality of the Torajan language within the society. Therefore, this study aims to study the visibility of the language. This study offers a novel approach by looking at the use of the Torajan language in the linguistic landscape in two regencies, Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara, to determine its position in the community. The research utilized a case study design, and the source of data is linguistic landscapes found along Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale which connects the two regencies. The images of linguistic landscapes were collected by viewing the Google Street View facility provided by Google Maps, and the languages in those linguistic landscapes were noted. The findings show that Indonesian and English dominate the linguistic landscape in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara, and the Torajan language is minimally represented in the public space of these two regencies. The lack of visibility of the language in the public space might be caused by the restricted use of the language for familial talks at home and oral indigenous rituals. However, the Torajan language needs to be used more frequently in public spaces since it could promote a positive attitude of the people, which would in turn solidify the position of the language in the society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world (Cohn & Abtahian, 2017; Collins, 2022). Home to over 700 regional languages, Indonesia is blessed with the existence of Indonesian (*bahasa Indonesia*) as the official and national language of the country. The language is proudly considered the language of unity since it enables people from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds to communicate (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). The regional languages, which are often referred to as heritage languages (Kelleher, 2010), are commonly spoken by the ethnic groups spreading across the country.

Many heritage languages (henceforth, HLs) in Indonesia are threatened and on the brink of extinction (Collins, 2022). When two languages converge, the privileged language will trump the less-privileged languages by occupying more societal domains (Crystal, 2000). Without proper maintenance and preservation efforts, the number of speakers of the less-privileged language would decrease, and the language would die along with the absence of active speakers of the language.

This phenomenon is currently happening in Indonesia (Suwarno, 2017) as the Indonesian language occupies most domains in the country. On October 28th, 1928 – long before Indonesian Independence Day – young Indonesian nationalists from different regions and ethnic backgrounds organized a youth congress in Batavia (now Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia). In the congress, they declared what is famously called *Sumpah Pemuda* ‘the Youth Pledge’ and proclaimed three historically important points: one motherland (Indonesia), one nation (Indonesian), and one language (Indonesian or *Bahasa Indonesia*). Even though the youth attending the 1928 congress came from different ethnic groups and thus had their own HLs as their mother tongues, the Youth Pledge in 1928 sparked the spirit of many young people to build their nationalism and use Indonesian as the language of unity. The status of Indonesian as the official and national language was cemented further in the 1945 Constitution. It was a successful language policy as the language is widely accepted all over the nation. As such, Indonesian enjoys the status as the lingua franca in Indonesia, and it is dominantly used in various situations and interactions. This success, unfortunately, has brought an impact on the declining use of many HLs in Indonesia (Suwarno, 2020). HLs are now relegated and marginalized into smaller domains, such as homes, as evinced by many studies on various fields of sociolinguistics (among others Anderbeck, 2015; Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014; Collins, 2022), including the study on linguistic landscape.

Linguistic landscape (henceforth, LL) is the study of the languages featured in the public domain. Landry and Bourhis (1997) explained that LL includes “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (p. 25). This scope is expanded to languages on mobile signs such as protesters’ signages, clothes, bags, and many more (Caldwell, 2017; Kasanga, 2014; Marten et al., 2012). Lou (2016) stated that the study on LL does not merely focus on studying signs in

isolation. The study on LL may reveal the hierarchy and status of languages and the operationalization of language policies, including the hierarchy, status, and operationalization of HLs.

A number of studies in the Indonesian context have analyzed the use of HLs through LL. For instance, [Kweldju \(2020\)](#) and [da Silva et al. \(2021\)](#) observed the use of Javanese in the public signs found in the public spaces and streets in Malang and Yogyakarta, respectively. [Mulyawan and Erawati \(2019\)](#) examined the LL of six main streets in a tourist destination in Desa Kuta, Bali. In a different context, [Purnawati et al. \(2022\)](#), investigated the use of Balinese and Roman scripts in the LL of a heritage area in Denpasar, Bali. The results of the studies are similar, i.e., Indonesian and English are heavily featured on the LL, whereas the heritage languages are rarely used.

To date, no studies on linguistic landscapes have been conducted in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara, two neighboring regencies in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This study aims to discover the visibility of the Torajan language in the linguistic landscapes within the two regencies. The language plays a key role in keeping the Torajan tradition ([Smeets, 2004](#)) and is mostly used orally by the Torajans as a “cultural representation” and is “passed down orally from generation to generation” ([Baan & Suyitno, 2020, p. 212](#)). The language is also utilized in informal contexts such as home or market domains ([Dewi et al., 2018](#)). Besides, it is formally taught as local content at various education levels in the regencies of Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara ([Garing, 2016](#)). Considering the important role of the language for the Torajan ethnic group, we would like to fill the gap in the literature by focusing on the public signs on the main street connecting two major subdistricts in the two regencies, i.e., the subdistrict of Makale in Tana Toraja and the subdistrict of Rantepao in Toraja Utara. The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What types of LL can be found in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara?
2. Which languages are featured on the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara and to what extent is the visibility of Torajan language in both areas?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Linguistic Landscape

The concept of Linguistic Landscape (LL) has been largely used to describe language texts that are displayed in the public domain ([Cenoz & Gorter, 2006](#)). As described by [Landry and Bourhis \(1997\)](#), the study on LL includes “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration” (p. 25). In other words, LL covers all instances of languages found in public spaces, such as streets, shopping avenues, parks, squares, markets, and many more. Based on this definition, it was implied that the scope of LL was limited to signs that are intended to be installed permanently or at least for a long period. However, the scope of LL research was then expanded. According to [Marten et al. \(2012\)](#), [Kasanga \(2014\)](#), and [Caldwell \(2017\)](#), current research on LL may also include temporary and mobile signs that are non-permanent as long as they are displayed in public spaces and can be seen or accessed by all people.

Lou (2016) explained that the function of LL is twofold: informational and symbolic; the former focuses on how LL reflects the language use, “linguistic situation and the boundaries of speech communities” while the latter zooms in on how LL provides hints on “relative power and status of respective ethnolinguistic groups” (p. 3). In other words, LL does not merely study the languages on public signs in isolation; in fact, it relates the analysis to wider contexts such as the social status and power hierarchy of the languages, the issues of language vitality, planning, maintenance, and revitalization, the implementation of language policies, and many more. Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) and Puzey (2012) emphasized that besides revealing the operation of languages in a particular community, the linguistic landscape could influence how people perceive and choose the languages. In addition, the studies on LL cannot be separated from the topics on the people, the community, and the government where the LL is displayed as it is the people who consciously choose the languages to be put on LL and those languages represent those people’s purposes, intentions, and beliefs. Alternately, it is also the people who see the languages on LL and interpret the messages conveyed by the creators of LL (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). As a result, the people, the community, and the government are significant and crucial factors in the LL analysis.

This study follows the framework of identifying and classifying LL by Cenoz and Gorter (2006). In their study, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) considered any signs as the unit of analysis for their research. Then they classified those signs into types based on various factors such as the content of the signs, the location of the signs, and so on. In the end, the types of signs are arbitrarily coded into clothing store signs, food store signs, and so on.

2.2 Torajan Language: A Depiction of Local Wisdom and Ethnic Identity

Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara are two neighboring regencies in the province of South Sulawesi, and they are located next to each other. The data from Badan Pusat Statistik Tana Toraja (2021) or Statistics of Tana Toraja Regency mentioned that the regency area is 2.504,30 kilometers square with 19 subdistricts. The 2020 census revealed that the number of citizens is 280.794 people, with Makale as the subdistrict with the highest density of citizens. Meanwhile, the data from Badan Pusat Statistik Tana Toraja (2021) shows that the area is 1.151 kilometers square with 21 districts. The 2020 census on this region showed that the number of citizens is 261.086 people, with Rantepao as the subdistrict with the highest density of citizens.

One of the largest HLs spoken in South Sulawesi is the Torajan language. It is spoken by the Torajan ethnic group, who mostly inhabit two neighboring regencies in South Sulawesi, namely Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara (Donzelli, 2020). Toraja originated from a Buginese term *to riaja* which was used to refer to the “people from above or highlanders” (de Jong, 2013 p. 116). Torajan language is classified under the Austronesian language and Malayo-Polynesian language family (Garing, 2017). There are different views regarding the level of this language. Researchers such as Garing (2016) and Patiung and Sitoto (2021), stated that Torajan is a language, comprising a variety of dialects, such as the Makale-Rantepao dialect, Saluputti-Bongga Karadeng dialect, and so on. Meanwhile, Grimes and Grimes (1987) mentioned that Torajan, also called Toraja Sa’dan, is a sub-family of South Sulawesi languages that consists of

five distinctive languages, i.e., Kalumpang, Mamasa, Rongkong, Toraja-Sa'dan, and Toala' (p. 43).

As in other HLs in multicultural Indonesia, the Torajan language is commonly used as a “vehicle” (Smeets, 2004, p. 156) in performing rituals and traditional ceremonies (Waterson, 2009). This language is distinguished into two levels of speech style, namely *kada dipamalo* ‘straight talk’ and *kada-kada disalopak* ‘paired words’ (Sandarupa, 2013, 2016). The first mentioned is used for daily interactions in informal domains, while the latter is mainly for rituals (de Jong, 2013; Waterson, 2009). Torajan’s socio-cultural elements are typically expressed in high speech level (Baan & Suyitno, 2020; Garing, 2016), such as in *rampanan kapa* ‘or *rambu tuka* ‘marriage ritual’ (Dewi et al., 2018) and *rambu solo* ‘funeral rituals’ (Baan et al., 2022).

The Torajan ethnic community is known for a strong “focus on their own culture” (Sari et al., 2019, p. 1474) and ethnic identity (Baan et al., 2022). Their culture is “rich with ritual and ritual speech” (Sandarupa, 2016, p. 234) performed in the Torajan language (Waterson, 2009). In ritual ceremonies, speaking is “displayed by skilled speakers” known as *tominaa* or “the ones who have extensive knowledge” (Sandarupa, 2016, p. 235). The high speech level is locally called *basa tominaa*, which means “highly metaphorical, semantically indirect, and socially prestigious” (Donzelli, 2020, p. 176).

Some studies show that there is a tendency for the Torajan younger generation to be more proficient in Bahasa Indonesia rather than their HL (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021). However, other studies indicate that the Torajan language is still spoken in the family domain (Sari et al., 2019, 2020). In their study on contextualized bilingualism among adolescents from four ethnic groups in Indonesia (namely Javanese, Batak Toba, Toraja, and Chinese Indonesian), Sari et al. (2019) mentioned that Torajan people were similar to the Javanese “in maintaining their ethnic language and culture” (p. 1471). Sari et al. (2019) also found that of the four ethnic groups, the Torajan adolescents who became their research subjects speak both Indonesian and Torajan at home. However, in the public domain, they tend to speak in Indonesian (p. 1477). In a more recent study, Sari et al. (2020) tested how much three bilingual ethnic groups—Javanese, Torajan, and Chinese Indonesian—acquired the ethnic vocabulary in their respective HL. They found that the Javanese and Torajan scored higher on ethnic vocabulary skills rather than the Chinese. In this context, it can be implied that the Torajan ethnic group has a strong sense of their cultural tradition and identity.

2.3 Heritage Languages in the Linguistic Landscape of Indonesia

A number of studies about HLs in the LL of some areas or provinces in Indonesia have been conducted. Fakhroh and Rohmah (2018) and Kweldju (2020), for example, analyzed the public signs found in the public spaces and streets in Sidoarjo and Malang, East Java, respectively. Both studies reported that the dominant languages, i.e., Indonesian and English, significantly dominated the LL in both cities. Meanwhile, Javanese occupied a modest 2% of the entire public signs in Sidoarjo and 9% of the total public signs in Malang, even though it is the mother tongue of most people living in East Java. Another study in East Java was conducted by Ramadhani (2018), who researched the language used as lingua franca in LL in Gresik. The researcher primarily focused on restaurants’ names in a business center and found that Indonesian and English dominated the top restaurant names in Gresik. A small percentage of

Italian, Japanese, and Chinese were also found. Javanese was also present in the LL, albeit with other languages.

In a broader context, [Sakhiyya and Martin-Anatias \(2023\)](#) compared the languages used in the LL in three regions in the island of Java: Semarang in Central Java, Yogyakarta in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, and Depok in West Java. Similar to the studies above, Indonesian and English dominated the LL in all three cities. Meanwhile, 5% of public signage in Semarang used Javanese exclusively, and 30% of public signage in Yogyakarta used Javanese in conjunction with other languages. No instances of Javanese could be found in Depok as the official HLs of this region are Betawi and Sundanese, yet neither of the HLs was featured in the public signages.

Some other studies were conducted outside Java. [Sinaga \(2020\)](#), for example, observed the LL at international schools in Medan and found that no HLs were used around the school environment. Indonesian and English took a significant portion as the languages used the most in LL. Another study conducted on a school in Indonesia was conducted by [Riani et al. \(2021\)](#), which focus on signs found in schools located in suburban areas of Jember, Magetan, and Situbondo in East Java. They found that HL such as Latin, Arabic, and Sanskrit never occurred exclusively on the signages; instead, they were always combined with the dominant languages, i.e., Indonesian and English.

In Bali, [Mulyawan and Erawati \(2019\)](#) conducted a study on six main streets in Desa Kuta, a popular tourist destination in Bali. They reported that Balinese was found in public signs of the village, both exclusively and in combination with other languages. Nevertheless, the number of signs containing Balinese was meager compared to signs in Indonesian and English. On the other hand, a recent study by [Mulyawan et al. \(2022\)](#) investigated language contestation at the Batukau Temple in Bali which is known as a tourist destination. The findings showed that the Balinese language still dominates the LL contestation since the language is used in religious activities in the Balinese communities. Meanwhile, [Purnawati et al. \(2022\)](#) found that the majority of LL in shops and stores in Denpasar city, Bali, predominantly used Indonesian despite the fact that the shops and stores are owned by people from various ethnicities such as Chinese, Arabic, and so on. Other languages were also used in the LL, including the Balinese language, yet the use of the Balinese language in the LL was always accompanied by other languages. Similar findings can also be found in the research by [Foster and Welsh \(2021\)](#), who analyzed the public signs on main roads in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. They reported that Indonesian, English, and a combination of both were used heavily in public signage in Balikpapan. Meanwhile, no instances of HLs were detected in the public signages.

These studies have demonstrated the lack of representation of HLs in public spaces in Indonesia. Some studies indicated that HLs were used at low frequency, while others highlighted that HLs were not included in the LL. Instead, Indonesian seems to dominate the content of LL in many areas in Indonesia. The dominant use of Indonesian in LL in Indonesia is, in fact, understandable since Indonesian acts as the lingua franca in Indonesia and provides a standard tool of communication for all ethnic groups of Indonesia. In addition, the use of Indonesian in LL follows the Law Number 24 of 2009 concerning the national flag, language and emblem, and national anthem ([Indonesian Central Government, 2009](#)) and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019 concerning the use of Indonesian language ([Indonesian Central Government,](#)

2019), which stipulates that Indonesian should be the only language used on public signs and space (Kweldju, 2017). Other languages may be used upon special consideration. It is also stipulated that the responsibility to preserve the HLs falls on the shoulders of the local government. However, as previous studies have revealed, HLs are nearly invisible in LL in many local regions of Indonesia.

The dominant use of English in the LL in Indonesia, on the other hand, is peculiar but not entirely unexpected. The use of English contradicts the laws and regulations of Indonesia in regard to LL. Nevertheless, since it is widely accepted as the lingua franca of the world and the language of science, technology, trade, business, and tourism (King, 2018), it is not surprising that English dominates the LL in Indonesia.

As stated in Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, the responsibility to preserve the HLs falls on the shoulders of the local government. In line with those regulations, there have been some efforts from the local government of the province of South Sulawesi to maintain and preserve the HLs in South Sulawesi, including the Torajan language. For example, in 2012, the Language Development and Fostering Agency of South Sulawesi held the second International Congress of Heritage Languages in South Sulawesi (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2012). In 2018, the agency held the Third International Congress of Heritage Languages in South Sulawesi (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2018).

The agenda of making HLs more visible in public space was also actualized in the *Peraturan Gubernur (PERGUB) Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan Nomor 79 Tahun 2018* or Governor Regulation of South Sulawesi Province Number 79 of 2018 (Dinas Komunikasi Informatika, Statistik dan Persandian Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, 2023). The regulation stipulates that the HLs of South Sulawesi, including the Torajan language, must be taught for at least two credits per week and must be actively used on Wednesdays at schools. In addition, the Lontara scripts (the writing system of the Bugis language and Makassar language of South Sulawesi) should be used in street names, billboards, and gates in several areas in South Sulawesi. However, there have been no instructions regarding using the Torajan language in public spaces in South Sulawesi.

3. METHODS

This research, which is ethnographic by nature (Blommaert & Maly, 2015), applied a qualitative approach. Creswell and Creswell (2017) defined qualitative research as “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). This approach emphasizes inductively building and drawing conclusions about a concept based on some data. Since this research seeks to reveal linguistic composition through instances of LL in a specific area, we believe that a qualitative approach is the most appropriate method for this study. In addition, this research used a case study as the research design. Creswell and Creswell (2017) defined a case study as a design that focuses on an in-depth and detailed analysis of a single case. As we zoomed in on the use of languages in a particular area (Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara) to provide an in-depth analysis of the linguistic composition in those areas, the case study would be appropriate for this research.

In obtaining the data for this study, we utilized the Google Street View facility provided by Google Maps. The usage of Google Maps as a tool for data collection on LL has been implemented and legitimized by many researchers, among others Waliński (2014), Huebner (2016), and da Silva et al. (2021).

The source of data is the LL found in the main street connecting the subdistrict of Makale in the regency of Tana Toraja and the subdistrict of Rantepao in the regency of Toraja Utara—Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale. The street is approximately 20 kilometers long, and the street view on Google Maps was taken in October 2019 by Google. The steps in collecting the data are illustrated in Figure 1. The overview of Google Street View and some examples of LL found on Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 respectively.



Figure 1. Data collection procedures.



Figure 2. Overview of Google Street view.



Figure 3. The LL on Jalan Poros Rantepao – Makale.

After collecting the data, we analyzed the data. The steps for data analysis can be seen in Figure 4.

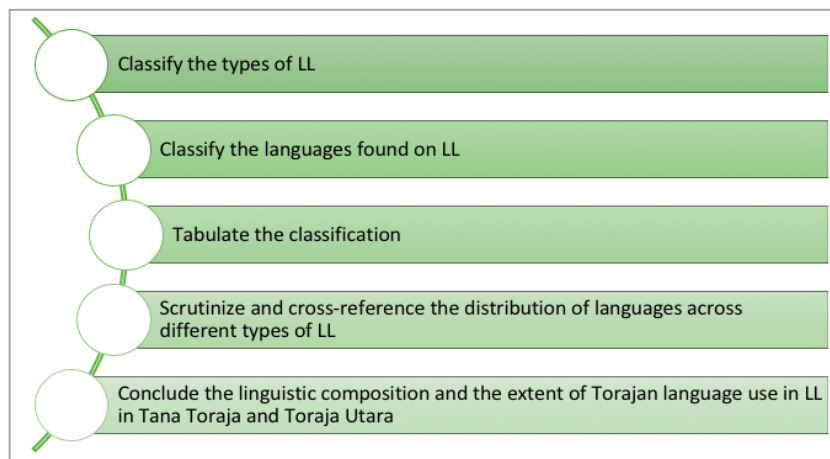


Figure 4. Data analysis procedures.

To answer the first research question, the types of LL were classified into several categories, such as political campaign materials, store names or descriptions, and many more. The categorization for the LL types was inductively created from the emerging data. To answer the second research question, the languages found on the LL were classified into two major categories: monolingual and bilingual. The monolingual category consists of LL, which only uses one language, while the bilingual category consists of LL using two languages. The monolingual category is divided into monolingual Torajan language, monolingual Indonesian, and monolingual English. Meanwhile, the bilingual category is divided into three subcategories: bilingual Indonesian and Torajan, bilingual Indonesian and English, and bilingual English and Torajan. The categorization was based on our initial hypothesis that there would be three languages found in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara: Indonesian (because it is the national and official language of Indonesia), English (because it is the lingua franca and the international language), and Torajan (because it is the HL of the Torajans). The result of tabulation was scrutinized further to find out the distribution of each language. Then it was used to provide analysis and conclusion on the linguistic composition in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara and the extent of Torajan language use in the two subdistricts.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 LL Types in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara

Along Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale, which connects the subdistrict of Rantepao in Toraja Utara and the subdistrict of Makale in Tana Toraja, 177 signs can be found. Those signs can be classified further into several types. Table 1 summarizes the typology.

As seen in Table 1, the variety of signs along the specified street is relatively limited. Political campaign materials dominated the LL found around the area since the image collection by Google Maps coincided with the election period for the local government positions.

Table 1. Summary of LL types.

Types of signs	Number of signs	Percentage
Political campaign materials	52	29.38 %
Store/organization names	49	27.68 %
Advertisements	41	23.16 %
Eatery menu	20	11.30 %
Greeting/warning signs	15	18.47 %
Total	177	100.00 %

Several features characterize such LL. The first feature is the use of the candidates' photos, names, and represented parties on the campaign materials, and this feature occupies the most significant portion of the campaign materials. This feature may be included and designed to familiarize the voters with the candidates' general information. The second feature is the candidates' allocated numbers on the ballot papers. This feature might be included in the campaign materials to remind voters which numbers represent the candidates. The third feature is the concise vision statements and the tagline of the parties. This feature may be included in the campaign materials to attract voters' attention and persuade voters to choose specific candidates. Those features can be seen in examples of political campaign materials in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Political campaign materials.

The second most dominant type of LL is the store or organization names. This LL type is commonly found along the street since the street connects two of the most crowded subdistricts in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. Two features characterize this type of LL. The first one is the names of the stores and organizations which typically dominate the LL. This feature might be intended to make the stores and organizations more visible to increase the viewers' awareness of the businesses so that they would be attracted to visit the stores and join the organizations. The second feature is the general description of the stores and organizations. This feature might be included in the LL to provide information on the goods and services provided by the stores and organizations. Some of the features are demonstrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Store/organization names.

The third most dominant type of LL is advertisements. This type of LL generally consists of two features. The first feature is the names of the brands and the taglines, which usually dominate the LL in terms of font size or font colors. This feature might be included to increase people's awareness of the brands. The second feature is the pictures of the products, which may be included to associate the products with the brands. However, this feature does not always appear in advertisements due to two reasons. Firstly, the product is already included in the names of the brands. Secondly, the pictures of the products are prohibited from being displayed in the advertisements. For instance, advertisements on cigarettes in Indonesia must not include pictures of the cigarettes as stipulated by the Government Regulation Number 109 of 2012 and the Regulation of the Minister of Health Number 28 of 2013 (Kompas. com, 2013). Figure 7 demonstrates some advertisement features.



Figure 7. Advertisements.

The following common type of LL is the eatery menu. There are many eateries along the specified street. To attract the people to come, the eateries provide the menu in banners installed in front of the eateries. The features of this LL are typically very straightforward, i.e., the names of the eateries, the menu catered by the eateries, and sometimes, the pictures of the food, as seen in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Eatery menu.

The last type of LL is greeting or warning signs. The message of the signs is typically conveyed through writing. Pictures are absent in this type of LL, and it might be caused by the intention of the creators to convey the message as straightforwardly and concisely as possible. Examples of such LL can be seen in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Greeting/warning signs.

These findings are consistent with Mulyawan and Erawati's (2019) and Benu et al.'s (2023) findings, albeit with different frequency. In their study in Desa Kuta, Bali, Mulyawan and Erawati (2019) also found political advertisements, commercial signs, and traffic signs in their data. In addition, Benu et al. (2023) found a wide range of LL in their study in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, including warning signs and commercial advertisements. This similarity shows that these types of LL are very common in different places in Indonesia.

4.2 Linguistic Composition and the Position of Torajan Language

After classifying the LL into several types, we scrutinized the instances of languages used along the road of Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale. As earlier hypothesized, we could find the instances of Indonesian, English, and Torajan language. We also found instances of Arabic on some of the LLs. Table 2 below summarizes the linguistic composition of LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. As seen in Table 2, the number of monolingual signs ($n=118$) is significantly higher than the number of bilingual signs ($n=59$).

Table 2. Summary of linguistic composition.

Languages	Number of Instances	Percentage
Monolingual Torajan	2	1.13 %
Monolingual Indonesian	107	60.45 %
Monolingual English	9	5.08 %
Bilingual Indonesian and Torajan	12	6.78 %
Bilingual Indonesian and English	42	23.73 %

Table 2 continued...

Bilingual English and Torajan	1	0.56 %
Bilingual Indonesian and Arabic	4	2.26 %
Total	177	100.00 %

Among monolingual signs, signs in Indonesian dominate ($n=107$). Figure 10 provides examples of LL in monolingual Indonesian. We then cross-referenced the frequency information of the LL with the LL types and found that monolingual Indonesian is commonly used in all types of LL. Table 3 summarizes the types of LL which only use exclusively Indonesian.



Figure 10. Monolingual Indonesian.

Table 3. Frequency of LL using monolingual Indonesian.

Types of LL	Number of LL	Percentage
Political campaign materials	40	37.38 %
Store/organization names	29	27.10 %
Advertisements	17	15.89 %
Eatery menu	11	10.28 %
Greeting/warning signs	10	9.35 %
Total	107	100.00 %

The use of Indonesian exclusively on LL is in line with the Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, which stipulates that Indonesian should be the only language used on public signs and space (Kweldju, 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that Indonesian is dominantly used on the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. In addition, Indonesian is used as the medium of instruction in educational institutions all over Indonesia. As a result, it is expected that the people who view the LL are familiar with the language and capable of understanding the messages exposed in the public signs. As illustrated in Table 3, the most common type of LL, which is exclusively Indonesian, is political campaign materials ($n=40$). The use of Indonesian in this type is also logical since the political candidates aim to hold positions in the government office, and Indonesian as the national and official language is dominantly used in the government setting. The dominance of Indonesian in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara is in congruence with the result of previous studies conducted in many regions across Indonesia (among others, Fakhroh &

Rohmah, 2018; Foster & Welsh, 2021; Kweldju, 2020; Mulyawan & Erawati, 2019; Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias, 2023; Sinaga, 2020).

The next sign is the monolingual sign in English. These signs only occur nine times on advertisements ($n=4$), store or organization names ($n=4$), and greeting or warning signs ($n=1$). Figure 11 demonstrates two examples of monolingual English.



Figure 11. Monolingual English.

The use of English on the LL does not follow the Indonesian government's laws and regulations. However, as stated in the literature review, it is not surprising to find instances of English on LL since English is considered a global language (King, 2018). Compared to LL, which exclusively uses Indonesian, the number of LL, which exclusively uses English, is significantly lower. The monolingual use of English can be seen in advertisements in the form of the brands' taglines. In addition, instances of monolingual English can be found on LL containing names of the stores or organizations and seasonal greetings, as seen in Figure 11. English might be used in the context since it distinguishes the brands and the stores from similar businesses. A study by Nikolaou (2016) revealed that commercial signs tend to use English in order to give the impression of a "cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and trendy outlook" (p. 160). It is suspected that those businesses use English to project the framings and values of modernity and popularity to attract potential customers who see and access the LL.

Signs in the monolingual Torajan language have the lowest frequency in monolingual signs in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. We only found two signs of greeting in this language. As demonstrated in Figure 12, the phrases *kurre sumanga* and *karampoanta* (respectively mean 'thank you' and 'everyone' in English) are used. The greeting signs are meant to be read by people who are leaving the village area, and the use of this language, in this case, is not peculiar since most of the Torajan people would understand what the phrases mean. In cases in which the non-Torajan people happen to see the signs, they might not be able to understand the meaning of the phrases. However, they would interpret the use of this language as a characteristic of the local culture.



Figure 12. Monolingual Torajan.

Among bilingual signs, signs that combine Indonesian and English have the highest frequency ($n=42$). Figure 13 below provides some examples of such LL. The cross-referencing result with the LL types reveals that the instances of Indonesian and English can be found in advertisements ($n=20$), store or organization names ($n=16$), eatery menus ($n=5$), and political campaign materials ($n=1$).



Figure 13. Bilingual in Indonesian and English.

As mentioned in the previous analysis, the Indonesian use of LL is in line with the Indonesian laws and regulations. Nevertheless, such a combination of languages occurs in the findings. As seen in Figure 11, the relationship between Indonesian and English in the LL is not a translational one. In other words, the information conveyed in Indonesian is not the same as the information conveyed in English and vice versa; thus, the use of the two languages on LL is not intended to clarify the message of one language by using the other language. The finding of this study confirmed the previous finding by Zahra et al. (2021), who analyzed the LL on coffee shops in Medan, North Sumatera. They found that “there is no partial or complete translation” in the bilingual

signs (Zahra et al., 2021, p. 5451). Thus, the reason for Indonesian and English bilingual use on the LL cannot be precisely determined. By using English, the creators of the LL might intend to promote the image of sophistication (Kweldju, 2017; Nirwana & Sharma, 2022) or attract customers (Fakhiroh & Rohmah, 2018), yet at the same time, they might want to keep the content familiar and understandable to the local people who do not understand English, and thus, they decided to use both Indonesian and English on the same LL.

The next most frequent bilingual sign is the signs which combine Indonesian and Torajan language ($n=12$). Figure 14 below provides some examples of such LL. Based on cross-referencing with LL types, the LL which uses a combination of Indonesian and Torajan language is political campaign materials ($n=11$) and greeting signs ($n=1$).



Figure 14. Bilingual Indonesian and Torajan.

The instances of the Torajan language and Indonesian in Figure 14 are not translations of each other. The use of the two languages does not clarify the meaning of one language using the other language. On the LL, the Torajan language phrases *Ta Sangkutu' Banne*, *Pengkilalai Tossok Nomor 1* and *Misa'kada Dipotuo* (respectively mean 'we are united', 'remember to choose number 1', and 'we are stronger in unity') are not accompanied with the Indonesian or English translation. This finding indicates that the use of Indonesia and the Torajan language on the LL is not merely for communicating messages. The most probable reason why the Torajan language is used in conjunction with Indonesian in this particular case is that the Torajan language may be used as a political tool, which might be intended to create imagery that the political candidates are from the local areas and consequently they must have a great concern for the betterment of the Torajan community. In addition, the Torajan language may be used to create a sense of kinship and closeness between the political candidates and potential voters.

Bilingual signs that combine Indonesian and Arabic also emerge in the data. There are four LLs with such a combination, all of which are eatery menus. Figure 15 provides some examples of such LL.



Figure 15. Bilingual in Indonesian and Arabic.

The translation of the Arabic writing is ‘There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet.’ Although the majority of the population in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara is Christian (Sandarupa, 2013), such eatery signs can be interpreted that the food served in that place is *halal*, and therefore, it is permissible for Muslims to consume the food. As far as our knowledge is concerned, there is only one study on culinary signs in the Indonesian context which is conducted by Iwana and Sudarwati (2021). The researchers investigated the LL of culinary signs in Malang, East Java, and found that the Arabic language also appeared in their data.

Finally, the last bilingual sign category is a combination of English and Torajan. This combination only occurs on one LL, and it is categorized as a greeting sign (see Figure 16).



Figure 16. Bilingual in English and Torajan.

In this LL, the English phrase ‘Lovely December 2016’ is combined with the Torajan language phrase *Toraya Maelo*, which means ‘Toraja, a land with beautiful nature’. Similar to previous findings, the English and Torajan phrases are not translations. In this context, it is most probable that the visual elements in both English and Torajan are used as a medium to attract foreign and domestic tourists. In their study on the LL of Malioboro Yogyakarta, da Silva et al. (2021) stated that language use on public signs can “promote a sense of security and contentment among tourists” (p. 296).

Based on the results elaborated above, it can be concluded that the Torajan language is minimally represented in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. The exclusive use of the language only occurs two times within 177 data, and when

combined with other languages, the occurrence only amounts to 13 occurrences. This result shows that the Torajan language lacks visibility in the public space in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. This finding is in line with the results of previous studies by Fakhroh and Rohmah (2018), Ramadhani (2018), Kweldju (2020), da Silva et al. (2021), Zahra et al. (2021), and Benu et al. (2023), in that HLs are marginalized in the LL. To sum up, the extent of Torajan language use in the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara is also minimal at best.

This minimal representation of the Torajan language might bring detrimental effects to the vitality of the language. As previously described in the analysis, the use of Indonesian and English is significantly higher than the use of the Toraja language. If this situation continues, the Torajan language might be confined to smaller and smaller domains. More of its speakers would shift towards using the more dominant languages, in this case, Indonesian and English (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021), which are considered more beneficial for the community. The mass language shift would, in turn, result in language loss and death of this language. It is imperative to maintain the language continuously to prevent that from happening as this language reflects the local wisdom and values of the Torajan people (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021).

As mentioned in Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, the issue of maintenance and preservation of HLs in Indonesia is the responsibility of the local government. Patiung and Sitoto (2021) pointed out that the government is the most influential in maintaining the HLs in Indonesia since they have the power to issue language policies. As explained in the literature review, there has been some effort by the local government of South Sulawesi to ensure that the HLs in South Sulawesi can be maintained and preserved for generations to come. However, the lack of visibility of the Torajan language in the public domain indirectly shows that the local government did not focus on enforcing the language in public spaces in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara.

LL and the community are interrelated, and both are significant factors for the maintenance and preservation of HLs. LL does not only reveal the community's general perception of one particular language, but it can also influence the community's attitude toward that language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Puzey, 2012). Based on that reasoning, more visibility of HLs in the public space might affect HL's image in society and improve the community's perception and attitude towards HLs. If people have a favorable view of HLs, they will be more likely to use and maintain those languages.

The same logic would also apply to the Torajan language in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. When the community is exposed to the high frequency of the language on LL in the public domain, the community members would consider the language essential to use, learn, and teach. Their attitude towards the language may improve further, and they would be more eager and motivated to utilize the language and transmit it to future generations. The favorable attitude and perception of the language would lead the people to expand larger domains for its language use in the community.

5. CONCLUSION

The instances of languages on LL and the extent of use of Torajan language as the HL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara in LL have been discussed at length. Various

types of LL were found along the specified area of study, which is Jalan Poros Rantepao–Makale. The types of LL are political campaign materials, advertisements, store or organization names, eatery menus, and greeting or warning signs.

Further analysis of the languages found on LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara has revealed that Indonesian dominates the monolingual signs, followed by English and the Torajan language. In terms of bilingual signs, LL with a combination of Indonesian and English is the most frequently found along the specified street, followed by a combination of Indonesian and Torajan language, a combination of Indonesian and Arabic, and a combination of English and Torajan. Lastly, it was found that the Torajan language is minimally featured on the LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. The findings suggested two further implications. The first implication is that the Law Number 24 of 2009 and Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019, which stipulates that Indonesian should be the only language used on public signs and spaces are not closely adhered to. The second implication is that the local government and people might not put the issue of Torajan language visibility in the public domain as a priority. Languages that are not actively used in public domains would not be able to compete with the power and influence of dominant languages. As a result, more and more people would leave their heritage languages and focus more on mastering the dominant languages. This possibility might happen to the Torajan language, whose speech domain is currently limited to familial talks at home and indigenous rituals (Patiung & Sitoto, 2021). To remedy the situation and to provide a better opportunity for the language to grow, one of the ways that local government and people could do is to expand the domain of this language use into the public domain so that the people in the community can easily see, access, and use the language.

Regarding the research limitation, the current research focuses only on observing the LL to gain a better understanding of the linguistic composition of the LL and the extent of Torajan language use on LL in Tana Toraja and Toraja Utara. In this study, we inductively built the arguments and drew the conclusion based on the emerging data and by cross-referencing the result of the research with previous studies. Researchers who are interested in the topic may try combining the observation on LL and interviews with the creators of the LL and local authorities to acquire a more grounded and nuanced understanding as to why specific linguistic composition is set on LL and why HLs are rarely exposed and featured on LL.

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